



Connoisseur's Guide Superstar Stylists

[Lauren Sherman](#), 10.13.06, 12:00 AM ET



Famous people follow fashion closely--just as fashion follows famous people.

Take New York's Fashion Week in September, for example. The stars--from Kate Bosworth (at Jill Stuart) to Hillary Duff (at Michael Kors)--were front row and center at runway shows. Pampered with primo seats, gift bags and attention, they flaunted signature looks featuring their favorite designers--looks that help propel the celebrities onto fashion pages and the clothing to coveted status.

After all, when a public figure develops a distinctive and appealing style, you have women clamoring for the perfect pair of oversized vintage sunglasses (à la Nicole Richie), or the exact Yves Saint Laurent bag Sienna Miller was toting around London.

In Pictures: Ten Stylists And Their Stars

But these stars often aren't making their mark on fashion by themselves. Like many of us not pursuing careers in the spotlight, they find that developing a strong sense of what works--and what really, really doesn't--can be tricky. So, they rely on wardrobe stylists like Robert Verdi, Britt Bardo and Nicole Chavez to create the clothing combinations others crave.

While you may not know their names, these super-stylists play powerful roles in the fashion-fame collaboration. And by placing a hardware-heavy handbag in the crook of an actress's arm, or a pair of retro sneakers on an action star, they've probably influenced what you wear.

Stylists must be fully aware of the latest and greatest designers, know how to create a look, understand the importance of event dressing (on the red carpet, the line between daring and disastrous is eating-disorder-thin) and maintain excellent relationships with fashion publicists, the people who lend celebrities designer duds.

That sartorial expertise doesn't come cheap. Stylists like Verdi, whose current client roster includes *Desperate Housewives* star Eva Longoria, can charge \$2,000 to \$2,500 for an award show prep day and \$25,000 to \$50,000 for an extensive project, such as a photo shoot or a commercial.

And, their power is reaching ever-farther. Some, like Rachel Zoe, are becoming celebrities themselves. Many, like Bardo, have designer aspirations.

"It has definitely opened up other doors," says Bardo, the woman behind Kate Hudson's haute-hippie image. "I've been talking about how I want to start a small clothing line, or an intimate apparel line."

Chavez and her client Rachel Bilson, who stars in the Fox television show *The O.C.*, considered collaborating on a clothing line, but instead now focus on supporting fledging designers whose collections they like. Now, those designers are reaping the benefits of Bilson's shining star. Her signature style--a mix of designer and vintage--has landed her on the covers of glossies like *Teen*

Vogue and in the pages of weeklies like Life and Style, where red carpet looks are regularly featured.

As Chavez puts it, "Nowadays with the weeklies, when [readers] see somebody they recognize, they notice which designer they're wearing, and it just resonates."

Designer Brian Reyes flew Bilson and Chavez from Los Angeles to New York to create a one-of-a-kind dress for the starlet, just in time for his New York Fashion Week show. Chavez also often dresses Bilson in Brooklyn-based designers Vena Cava and Los Angeles-based designer Jenni Kayne. So, Bilson will be the first to don Vena Cava's Spring 2007 collection while promoting her latest film, *The Last Kiss*, in Europe.

With so much emphasis being placed on the appearance of film and television stars, ordinary people are also feeling pressure to look perfect. That's where Michelle T. Sterling, founder of Global Image Group, comes in.

Sterling, who has worked in both finance and fashion, began Global Image Group six years ago to help men and women "refine their image and style" through personal style overhauls, closet makeovers and personal shopping trips. Fees range from \$150 to \$350 per hour--vastly cheaper than Robert Verdi, though you don't get to brag about sharing experts with Eva Longoria's.

Some stylists are adamant that this kind specialized attention is unnecessary for the woman next door. Verdi's experiences with "normal" people, some who have paid up to \$25,000 in a charity auction for a day of his services, have been lackluster, he says.

"[Styling is] about balancing the image of the celebrity," Verdi explains. "A normal person doesn't need that."

Verdi says women simply need "an understanding of the trends in general."

Chavez, however, cites three important rules for every woman: invest neutral basics, stay on-trend with accessories, and use a tailor to make clothes fit to perfection.

"It's more affordable, and in the end you will be able to get dressed faster and with more ease," she says.

Of course, if ease isn't what you're looking for, there's always an expert out there--for a price.

http://www.forbes.com/forbeslife/2006/10/12/fashion-celebrity-stylist-life-collect-cx_ls_1013style.html

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Superstar Stylists



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Rachel Zoe

Clients: Nicole Richie, Mischa Barton, Lindsay Lohan, Kiera Knightly

Zoe, who is photographed nearly as often as her clients, is credited with taking Nicole Richie from a simple mess to a style icon. She's now collaborating with Judith Leiber on a line of evening bags.

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Britt Bardo

Clients: Kate Hudson, Eva Mendez, Jennifer Lopez

Bardo's Midwestern roots have kept her grounded in the worlds of celebrity and high fashion. Her closest client--Kate Hudson--shares her hippie-chic aesthetic.

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Nicole Chavez

Clients: Rachel Bilson, Jamie King, Kristen Bell, Melinda Clarke

Chavez began her career in fashion as a set costumer, but quickly moved onto personal styling for her good friend Rachel Bilson. Her newest client is *Veronica Mars*' Kristen Bell.

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Phillip Bloch

Clients: Halle Berry, Sandra Bullock

Bloch was one of the first celebrity stylists to become a "personality," frequently appearing on television. He also published a book in the late '90s called *Elements of Style*. He is widely noted for dressing former client Halle Berry in a daring Elie Saab gown, with sheer top and draped skirt, on the evening of her first Oscar win.

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Annabel Tollman

Clients: Scarlett Johansson

Former *Interview* fashion director Tollman has contributed to Johansson's Sexiest Woman Alive status, outfitting her in sweet-yet-sultry tea dresses.

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Robert Verdi

Clients: Eva Longoria

From the cover of *Maxim* to the Emmy Awards, Verdi keeps Longoria's look simple, sexy and loaded with color.

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Anna Bingemann

Clients: Uma Thurman, Gwyneth Paltrow, Rachel Weisz, Naomi Watts

British stylist Anna Bingemann favors floor-skimming, ethereal looks from designers like Rochas, Valentino and Atelier Versace.

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Kate Young

Clients: Natalie Portman, Michelle Williams, Jennifer Connolly

New York-based stylist Kate Young can seemingly do no wrong--Michelle Williams's Vera Wang was the standout gown at this year's Academy Awards, even though it was a tricky mustard yellow. And Natalie Portman is a regular on best-dressed lists, preferring Parisian houses like Lanvin and Balenciaga.

Superstar Stylists



Cristina Ehrlich and Estee Stanley

Clients: The Olsen Twins, Mandy Moore

Ehrlich and Stanley should be credited with Mandy Moore's transformation from bubble gum beauty to high fashion heavyweight. Yet their most notable contribution to the scene might be the duo's Miss Davenport fashion line which, after only two seasons, has developed quite a strong cult following.

Your Own Superstar Stylists



Michelle T. Sterling and Her Team of Stylists

Clients: Indra Zuno for Mervyn's, Gallo Winery, American Gem Society, Yahoo, Google

Michelle T. Sterling and her team of stylists worldwide specialize in making you feel like a superstar everyday.