

# GRAY'S ANATOMY of STYLE

Eight leading ladies have scintillating encounters with this most glamorous neutral. Softer than black, stronger than beige, gray works with any color, responds beautifully to a mix of shades and textures, and can do a shimmering backless gown as convincingly as a terrific knit dress or pinstriped suit. It's the shade of the day—or night—and could play a starring role in your closet.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ROBERT TRACHTENBERG

## TRACEE ELLIS ROSS

A more dedicated fashionista than Joan, her alter ego on *Girlfriends* (the eighth season begins this fall), Ross, 34, makes even her prized genie pants look chic. Other trademarks: pencil skirts ("I live for them"). Vintage clothes ("My taste began in my mother's closet"). Anything feminine ("I don't mean pink and girly; I mean *woman*"). GRAY AREAS "This color is a great backdrop," she says. "All gray with red or shocking-pink lipstick is a kick-ass look!" This full-sleeved belted coat (Max & Co., \$535) mixes textures—flat, shiny, intricately knit—with aplomb, and the rich, gold-based gray is right for yellowish or warm coloring like Ross's. "I don't like clothes to wear me," she says, "and gray is one of those colors that accentuate *you*, not what you have on." Tights, DKNY. Heels, Christian Louboutin.



## ◆ KRISTEN JOHNSTON

Don't typecast this tall, witty woman as a sit-comic, despite her Emmy-winning success on *3rd Rock from the Sun*. She's done theater in New York and London and has lately started producing. "After years of being someone else's mouthpiece, it's cool to finally have some gravitas." Clothes that try too hard turn her off, she wears "really good, well-cut staples," and would rather splurge on trips and great dinners than handbags. **GRAY AREAS** "It's so classy and European and chic," says Johnston, 39. "Like a cloudy Paris sky." Here she transforms a charcoal pinstriped suit (Giorgio Armani) from the men's department, a good resource for taller women, with a sequined tank (Robertta Freymann, \$95) that illuminates the skin—so smart to put a sparkly piece near the face. Sapphire pumps (Stacy Adams) show how gray makes brights pop. >




## BECKI NEWTON

A little show called *Ugly Betty* has put Newton, 29, on the map, and she's excited—even though her character, Amanda, the scheming sexpot receptionist, wears clothes "the size of a pot holder." She also plays Jonathan Rhys Meyers's girlfriend ("It's tough at work these days") in a new film, *August Rush*.

**GRAY AREAS** "Amanda considers gray a power color," Newton says. "She thinks it will make people take her seriously. I like it because it goes with everything: black, earth tones..."

This pearly silk blend fit-and-flare dress (Rickie Freeman for Teri Jon, \$540) has a 1940s flavor, with its portrait collar, covered buttons, slanted pockets, and jewel-buckled belt. Long, vertical front seams and sky-high heels (Emilio Pucci) give Newton, who's small, the illusion of extra length. Hose, Givenchy. Ring and earrings, Newton's own.





Stiffer silks—  
great at giving  
shape to  
the body—are  
making a  
welcome  
comeback.

## NOÉMIE LENOIR

"It was fun, but I'm tired of it." The subject is hair—that blonde crop, only two months old and soon to be history. Messing around with her exotic looks is nothing new for this emerging actress (*Rush Hour 3*) and veteran model (she started at 17): Her father is French, her mother is from an island near Madagascar, and she represents "mixed people," as she puts it, for L'Oréal.

GRAY AREAS "Soft colors stand out against the red carpet," says Lenoir, 27, who picked two gray gowns—a low-cut Versace and a long, clingy Armani—for the Cannes Film Festival. But she's equally stellar in a silk suit that looks like molten steel (Burberry London jacket, \$995, and pants, \$495). For day, mute the shine of a metallic gray with a cotton jersey cami (Liz Claiborne, \$49). Pumps, Jimmy Choo. Ring, Lenoir's own. ▶

*Beauty Intelligence* A red or pink lipstick is just the thing to brighten up a stormy gray ensemble. "The burst of color provides contrast with the clothes," says makeup artist Denise Markey, who created the gorgeous looks on this shoot. "Those shades keep you from looking washed out." (Try Prescriptives Colorscope Lipcolor in First Crush Blush; its rosy-red hue adds that requisite oomph.)

## JANE KRAKOWSKI

Although Krakowski has traversed the country plenty—born in New Jersey; a Los Angeles stint for *Ally McBeal*; a new movie, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl Mystery* (yes, linked to the doll empire), set in Cincinnati—she'll definitely take Manhattan. This certified Broadway hooper (she won a Tony for *Nine*) is now in the sardonic and hilarious *30 Rock*, which is about as urban as TV gets.

**GRAY AREAS** "New York is all silvers and grays—think of the Chrysler Building or the Empire State," says Krakowski, 38. "I love heathered grays but also things with a little sparkle." Make that a truckload of sparkle: This amazing sequined gown (Naeem Khan) looks like liquid silver, and Krakowski's petite figure is perfect for it (you really can't wear a bra with backless). Heels, Prada.

## AUDRA McDONALD

"If it's clean, put it on; if it's not, how dirty is it? That's my personal style," McDonald says. This phenomenal performer (four Tonys!) is perpetually in gowns or costumes (in an upcoming TV version of *A Raisin in the Sun*; for John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* at the Metropolitan Opera in 2008; and in the new *Grey's Anatomy* spin-off, *Private Practice*), so at home it's jeans all the way.

"It drives my daughter crazy. She's very princessy." GRAY AREAS "Gray is like tofu," says McDonald, 37. "You can dress it up or down; you can turn it into cheesecake or chicken." This pewter linen topper (Anne Klein New York, \$495) can be a tunic or a coat (over a Donna Karan Collection skirt, \$895); it's an incredible transition piece (summer-fall, day-night...), capable of nonstop layering. Belt, Be & D. Tights, Emilio Cavallini. Boots, Escada. Necklace, McDonald's own. >



## ⊕ JANE ALEXANDER

What Julia Child was to French cooking, this brilliant actress is to American drama: If our government handed out titles, she'd be a Dame. If there were any justice, the former head of the National Endowment for the Arts would live in designer suits ("I like Armani. I can't afford it, but...") while attending to provocative new projects like the romantic movie *Feast of Love*, due in September, based on the novel by Charles Baxter, and September's HBO sex-therapy drama, *Tell Me You Love Me*.

**GRAY AREAS** "With my hair? Of course I wear it. It's wonderful how gray puts a little pink in my cheeks." Alexander doesn't normally do froufrou, "certainly not at my age [67]," but this tiered tulle coat (Marc by Marc Jacobs, \$698) has dignity as well as whimsy. Sheer dark hose (Donna Karan Hosiery) and silver and black patent leather heels (Giuseppe Zanotti Design) highlight terrific legs and clinch a slimming head-to-toe line. Go to [oprah.com/omagazine](http://oprah.com/omagazine) for behind-the-scenes shots.





*Is it green?  
Is it brown?  
This chameleon  
shade of gray  
is hard to  
identify but easy  
to wear.*

## HEATHER GRAHAM

A self-proclaimed slob and latter-day bohemian (*cool* and *vibe* are pet words), Graham has a noticeably independent posture toward clothes. "Sometimes adults get too serious about how they dress," she says. "I like to be playful." She's equally free-spirited about acting, and boy, does she have range: a grieving mother in the upcoming *Adrift in Manhattan*; a self-destructing rocker chick in *Broken*, also new. GRAY AREAS Graham had a smoky moment in an "hourglassy" dress at the *Boogie Nights* premiere; for less Hollywood-ized occasions, she'd more likely do jersey, perhaps a strategically draped sheath like this one with a curve-enhancing crossover bodice (Costello Tagliapietra, \$1,100) and wide leather belt (Costello Tagliapietra). If you're afraid gray will make you a dull girl, try this resonant borderline shade—in certain lights it looks green or brown. Heels, Dior by John Galliano. For details see *Shop Guide*.

*Fashion editor: Kim Meehan. Hair: Kevin Woon for Woon NY and Jed Root Inc., and Harry King for Halley Resources using Kiehl's products. Makeup: Denise Markey for artistsbytimothypriano.com. Manicure: Roseann Singleton. Set design: Sergio Esteves.*