

Emmys 2013: U.S. designers deserve a blue ribbon on red carpet

With European fashion houses mostly ignoring the Emmys, the Americans keep it sublimely simple.

By Booth Moore, Los Angeles Times Fashion Critic

September 23, 2013, 5:30 a.m.

The Emmys mark the official kickoff of awards show season, but there's the impression that less is at stake when it comes to red carpet fashion because the audience is not as global as it is for the Oscars and the Golden Globes. Traditionally, the European houses don't dress many Emmys attendees, which can mean a lot of bland fashion.

But not this year.

Chic simplicity is a real trend right now, and American designers are the masters of that anyway. They got their moment in the spotlight Sunday night — and rose to the occasion. The other big fashion news? The many hues of cool blue, from royal to Caribbean, that graced the red carpet.

Tina Fey has never looked better than she did in her custom cobalt-blue halter gown by New York-based Narciso Rodriguez, which fit her like a glove. And "New Girl" actress Zooey Deschanel's azure-blue side-slit column gown by J. Mendel managed to be sweet and sleek at the same time. But "Top Chef" hostess Padma Lakshmi took the blue ribbon for her modern-goddess gown in icy blue by KaufmanFranco, accessorized with bold gold jewelry by Robert Lee Morris.

Also strong and sleek? Taylor Schilling's white silk crepe column gown by Thakoon Panichgul, who is also a favorite designer of First Lady Michelle Obama's, and Morgan Saylor's graphic black-and-white gown by Honor designer Giovanna Randall.

Along with blues, shades of pale were also popular — for better or worse.

"Veep" star Julia Louis-Dreyfus wore a stunning all-over embroidered rose gold Monique Lhuillier column gown that shined like a pearl. "Homeland" actress Claire Danes chose an ethereal nude tulle Armani Privé gown that was uncharacteristically unremarkable and too foofy for the red carpet champ. And forget the bra-top trend — Julianne Hough moved on to the exposed underwear brief, choosing a sheer gray sequin tulle off-the-shoulder gown by British designer Jenny Packham that left little to the imagination.

We're guessing we won't see Packham fan Kate Middleton wearing that one.