

BACKSTAGE

WEST

Fresh Eye for the Style Shy

BSW calls in a team of makeover experts to update two actors' images.

by Laura Weinert

"It's amazing," said style expert Remi, with a tone of exasperation. "I go to cocktail parties, and I see all these people who want to be actors. I take one look at them, and I'm like, 'Where do you go shopping? You are trying to make it in the business. But you're wearing these, like, acid-washed jeans. What's up with that?' For evening, every guy should have a pair of black pants. How hard can that be? A waiter has a pair of black pants."

Remi is a fashion and image designer who makes his living consulting industry professionals (www.remiofbh.com). He has

a point: Like it or not, an actor's appearance is one of his or her most important tools. For an actor in Los Angeles, looking good is not just a smart idea, it is a professional obligation.

For this year's Focus on Health and Beauty, *BSW* assembled a team of experts to take two actors through the finer points of putting it together in a one-day makeover session that culminated in a final headshot. These weren't extreme makeovers—no liposuction or facial reconstruction here. Rather, *BSW* chose two readers who had an interesting look but, by their own admission, needed a little oomph, a little guidance on how to develop a nimshtr that would help them stand apart from the masses.

We started our day at the Irene Vaksberg Salon, at 7803 Beverly Blvd., L.A., where actors were coiffed, colored, and consulted on how to achieve and maintain a flattering look. We then moved on to a shopping spree at the Beverly Center, where Remi helped actors select clothes that suited their personalities while showing off their best assets and camouflaging their worst—and all for less than \$75.

Shop 'Til You Pop

Our freshly coiffed subjects headed to the Beverly Center for a crash course in shopping, with image designer Remi of Beverly Hills.

"Where do you usually shop for clothes?" Remi asked Bennett.

"Wherever," said Bennett.

"How much do you usually spend on clothes?"

"Not much," admitted Bennett.

"Remember, you are investing in yourself," said Remi. "When you go on auditions or out in public, you never know who you are going to meet."

According to Remi, actors need not spend a fortune to build a great wardrobe. "The whole idea is to buy pieces that are versatile," he explained. "I teach people by telling them, 'Before you buy something, make sure you can think, right off the top of your head, of two ways to wear it. If not, it's not worth the investment.'"

In the case of Bennett, Remi's challenge was to find pieces that would elongate and slim Bennett's frame while bringing out his bright blue eyes. "You need to buy things that are not clinging to your body," Remi told him. "Looking at you, you have great shoulders, so if there's something to emphasize, it's your upper chest and shoulders, but the body should be flowing. You want a V-neck. The crew neck will chop your neck right off."

Things for a big guy to avoid? "Bulky clothes, horizontal stripes, light colors, white—anything light brings out your weight," said Remi. "Also try as much as you can to wear pants because it creates the illusion of length. Put on little boots. Create a little height. Do a little cheating." For Bennett's final look, Remi selected a \$39 Calvin Klein shirt from Bloomingdales in dark blue to accentuate his eyes.

Davis needed something more fun. "I want something that shows off my personality a little more," she told him. "Something fun, quirky, but also..."

"Sexy," he added.

"Yes," she enthused. They headed into Forever 21, and Remi set out to find something that would accentuate her great body and bring out her eyes without washing out her fair skin. Pinks and taupes seemed to make her face fade away. Bright, bold patterns also seemed to take too much attention away from her features.

"You want to be the one standing out, not your shirt," he warned her. He also selected a wide variety of shirts to determine which cut showed off her shape the best. "Always try different looks, different necklines to see which is more flattering," he said. For Davis' final look, Remi selected a red, off-the-shoulder shirt with tie on the side, and a black, V-neck tank top to show off her shoulders and décolletage.

Their reactions to their makeovers? "It's been great," said Bennett. "Everything is more than I expected. And to make me look that good really took some doing. It is a different look, but it still looks like me."

Said Davis, "As an actor, it's like having your own small, one-person business, and I feel like I am making all the decisions all the time. I always want input, so it's nice to have somebody who knows what they are doing to give you a nudge in the right

Remi's style tips:

- "Don't necessarily follow the trends," said Remi. "Just know what your body is like, what areas you want to hide, and what areas you can show."
- "Make sure your clothes are always pressed. If you are going to an audition, wear an undershirt and leave your shirt on a hanger in your car, and when you get out of your car put it on. That way it doesn't get all wrinkled like you slept in it all night."
- "Always bring a backup outfit with you in the car. If you walk into an audition in dress pants and you see everyone else is in jeans, run out and change."
- "There are no real 'can't-dos' as far as color. I believe there are certain colors you can't wear next to your face, but you can wear them on the bottom. You can still get away with it as long as you do it right."
- "A black shirt is a great item. When in doubt, wear all black. That's a good rule of thumb for men. Even just a nice black knit and black pants. If you are too dressy you are still safer than if you are too casual."

Our two actors were chosen from a pool of online submissions. Our male subject was Bob Bennett, a 50-year-old actor who recently retired from a career in sales to pursue his dream, presented by Cunningham-Escott-Dipene for commercials. Bennett has already snagged a national spot for SBC, but he has yet to secure theatrical representation. He describes himself as a low-maintenance kind of guy.

"I live in shorts and T-shirts," wrote Bennett in his submission. "I need professional clothes. My hair? I usually wash it with one-step Pert and then I dry it by driving down the street and sticking my head out the window. I am about 30 pounds overweight.... So I need 'slimming' tips."



The before...

Our female subject was 27-year-old Hattie Davis. Originally from Kansas, Davis recently received her MFA in acting from Cal State Fullerton and is now in L.A. pursuing acting full time. She too has commercial representation—she's currently with Kazarian-Spencer & Associates—but has yet to find a theatrical agent.

"I need a new look and new shots that will show people who I really am, so I can put all my hard-earned training to work," wrote Davis in her submission. "I just want to be a working actress, and I need a look and a headshot that says, 'I'm here, I'm talented, and I'm ready to work.'" BSW set out to give both of these actors just that.



...and the after.

photo by Bryan Beasley



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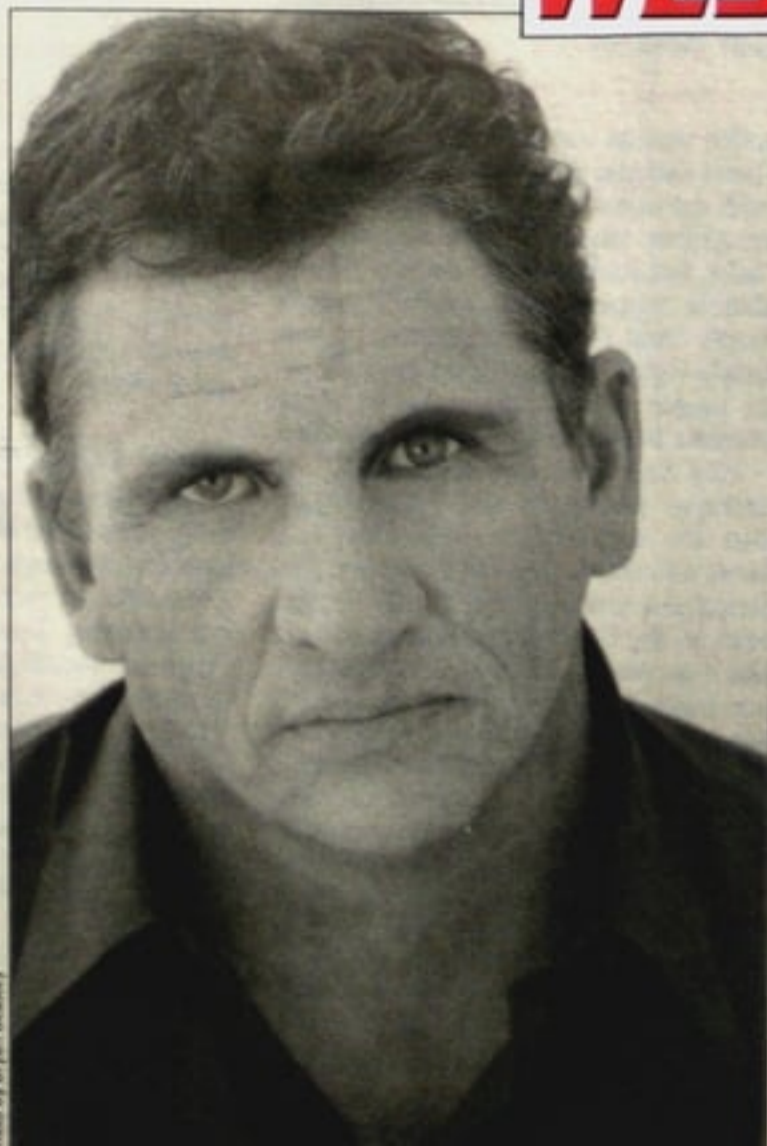


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