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Below Discuss For the second year in a row, Obama's style puts her on Vanity Fair's list

Ap Associated Press
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The votes are in: Michelle Obama is best-dressed.

Obama made Vanity Fair's International Best-Dressed List for the second year in a row, based on a poll of fashion insiders in the issue that hits newsstands Wednesday.

"Michelle Obama connects to the modern woman. She has a real woman look to her but is even bigger and better," said Amy Fine Collins, a special correspondent for the magazine. "She has a sleek style that's not overdone. ... She's beautifully dressed without too much fuss. She puts on the dress and goes — and it's always a good dress."

One of the best, according to Fine Collins, was the purple one by Maria Pinto that she wore with a black Azzedine Alaia belt on the campaign trail in Minnesota last month.

"The Alaia shows she's a little bit of a fashion insider, but it's more of her intelligence and independence that shows through," Fine Collins says.

Obama was named to the list alongside French first lady and former model Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, actress Sarah Jessica Parker and Kate Middleton, best known as Prince William's girlfriend, among others.

Vanity Fair inherited the best-dressed list from Eleanor Lambert, the fashion publicist who had established it in 1940. She died in 2003. Ballots go out to fashion insiders and are compiled by the magazine. "We consider ourselves the electoral college that oversees the popular vote," Fine Collins explains.

She thinks Obama has taken the right cues from Jackie Kennedy, including the pearls and sheath dresses, but seems much more modern because she's not overdone. "You have a sense of her as a physical person on the move and on the go, not a paper-doll cutout."

Meanwhile, Fine Collins says Cindy McCain's style is fairly unremarkable. "It's a style people have seen before. It's not going to inspire someone to say, 'I want to look just like that.' She's not doing anything wrong — she's nice looking and has nice clothes — but then you move on and forget her."

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