

## About.com Women's Fashion

### Michelle Obama's Favorite Fashion Designers

Learn to Pronounce the First Lady's Favorite Labels

By [Cynthia Nellis](#), About.com Guide

#### What You Might Not Know

- Michelle Obama reportedly paid for all of her inaugural looks out of her own pocket. She borrowed the expensive diamond jewelry.
- Michelle Obama's main style advisor is the store owner of [Ikram boutique](#)<sup>1</sup> in Chicago, 41-year-old Israeli-born Ikram (pronounced e-crom) Goldman. The 4,000 square foot Ikram boutique carries high-end American, European and Japanese labels and was the source of Michelle's special-ordered inaugural styles. Goldman is known for her eclectic styles (the store also includes vintage pieces).



A close-up of the ruffled bodice on Michelle Obama's gown.

*Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images*

#### Michelle Obama's Favorite Designers

##### Isabel Toledo (pronounced toe-lay-doh)

Isabel Toledo made the [lemongrass wool lace dress](#)<sup>2</sup> lined with white silk that the First Lady wore on inauguration day. Cuban-born Isabel Toledo is a 47-year-old New York designer who is known for her artistic

bent (she is married to artist and collaborator Ruben Toledo) and her fine craftsmanship. She has been in business more than 25 years, but may not have the name recognition outside of the fashion world partly because she doesn't do fashion shows. Michelle Obama previously wore Isabel Toledo during the campaign: a black tunic and palazzo pants.. The NY Daily News reported that a \$1500 version of the First Lady's dress will be available in March at Barneys.

##### Jason Wu

The 26-year-old Taipei-born designer – who has only shown collections since '06 -- designed the [ivory chiffon, one-shoulder gown](#)<sup>3</sup> the First Lady wore to the inauguration balls. The gown was covered with organza appliques and Swarovski crystals. Jason Wu's work has been described as a younger version of Oscar de la Renta for it's couture-level look. He has dressed Michelle Obama before: the \$3,510 raw silk dress with hand-embroidered rosettes she wore for the Barbara Walters interview was also his dress. On his resume are stints at Narciso Rodriguez and time as a doll designer (the dolls have been sold at FAO Schwartz).

**Narciso** (pronounced nar-see-so) **Rodriguez** – A 47-year-old Parsons graduate, [Narciso Rodriguez](#)<sup>4</sup> first rose to fame in 1997 when he designed Carolyn Bessette's simple white gown for her wedding to John F. Kennedy Jr. For Michelle Obama, the Cuban-American designer created the [famous red and black dress](#)<sup>5</sup> she wore on election night, in addition to two inaugural looks (the best being the [camel and black suit](#)<sup>6</sup> Michelle Obama wore).

##### Thakoon (pronounced ta-koon)

A 33-year-old former fashion writer, Thai-born designer Thakoon Panichgul designed a [floral dress worn by Michelle Obama](#).<sup>7</sup> Thakoon debuted his first line in 2004 and has already been nominated for a CFDA award.

##### Maria Pinto

The 51-year-old Chicago-based designer was responsible for the sheath dresses Michelle Obama wore on the campaign trail, the most famous [Maria Pinto](#)<sup>8</sup> style being the [purple dress](#)<sup>9</sup> she wore when she fist-bumped her husband.

##### Tracy Feith (pronounced fith with long i)

Surfer-turned-designer [Tracy Feith](#)<sup>10</sup> created the full-skirted print dress First Lady Michelle Obama wore during the final inaugural event. The dress was from the Fall 2008 collection, \$720.

*This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit: <http://fashion.about.com/od/celebritystyle/a/michelleodesign.htm>*

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1. <http://chicago.about.com/od/shoppingandbusiness/p/IkramStore.htm>
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10. <http://fashion.about.com/b/2009/01/22/michelle-Obama-wears-tracy-feith-to-national-prayer-service.htm>