

# Austin American-Statesman

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By Michael Barnes May 13, 2013



Austin Fashion Week wrapped with a bigger and, once again, better Austin Fashion Awards ceremony. The Austin Music Hall looked uncharacteristically classy with white-against-black classical allusions and -- necessary for this venue -- giant screens for those who could not see action easily.

Emcee and radio personality **Sandy McIlree** landed some fine jokes, mostly at his own expense. That was classy.

(As was his Twitter nudge to say that I had mistaken him for on-air partner **J.B. Hager**. Not cool, Michael.)

More than 40 mash-up teams of designer, stylists, photographers, models and other creative types competed to compose the most compelling images.

The models also walked the runway -- good idea -- before the winners were announced: **EON** won Critics Choice while **Vintage Deity** copped the People's Choice.

Wisely, the number of awards has decreased. Leaders put the emphasis on Rising Stars (**Daniel Esquivel, Jennifer Martinson, Sandra Anton, Priscilla Barroso**) and Trailblazers (**Cheryl Conley Bemis, Kendra Scott, Lance Avery Morgan, Stephen Moser**).

Yet all awaited the four fashion collections from top local designers.

Everyone knows my fascination with **Boudoir Queen** and the Smithville-based label's innovative use of vintage fabrics and silhouettes.

With plays on early-20th-century fashion, the collection drips with rich fabrics and elaborate accessories. SoCo pioneer **Gail Chovan** contrasted that with jagged, stripped-down, layered looks in leather and textured fabrics. This was some serious stuff, as was the music and the pace of the walks.

Austin's fashion miracle, **Kendra Scott**, whose jewelry is now available in more than 1,000 stores, applied her imagination to wrap-around, full-impact pieces, while utilizing many of the materials that make her work so accessible.

Then there was Stephen Moser. What can I say? It was theater. It was religious ritual. It was wild.

Somebody could really stage an opera around his horns, furs and magical fabrics, parlayed as if **Andy Warhol** staged **Shakespeare's** "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Couldn't top that. So they didn't. Time for the after-party.