

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



Kylie Bunbury during a scene from the Disney film 'Prom.'

## Making a Statement with the Prom Dress

Gowns get picked for personality, self expression

(AP) -- Prom-dress trends come and go — bright colors and bohemian looks this season — but the fashion personalities of the high-school girls celebrating the end of the school year in probably the fanciest dress they've ever worn are consistent: Every ballroom has its princess, glamour puss, trendsetter and rebel.

"You need to cover a lot of girls, and a lot of girls who want to show their personality, but you always, always need certain styles," says Michael Shettel, the designer of bridal and eveningwear label Alfred Angelo.

Girls think about their dress — a lot — and they started this process months ago. That means that while red-carpet style and runway looks might influence some girls, you can

count on some wanting a retro '50s ball gown while others want to be all grown up in something slinky with a slit.

Shettel collaborated with Walt Disney Pictures for the movie "Prom," and covered the bases. One of the main characters wears a champagne-colored strapless with a short hemline, another a bright purple corset style, and another in a hippie-esque halter.

High schoolers are a whole "new crop" of girls learning to embrace fashion and use it as a tool of self-expression, says Jane Keltner de Valle, fashion news director of Teen Vogue. The prom outfit is more just a dress, it's a statement of who they want to be remembered as with their old friends, and it's a glimpse at who they will be in the future, she says.

The film accurately mirrors the scenes playing out across the country, Shettel says. Girls go into stores and try on sometimes dozens of dresses, but they know when they hit the right one.

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