



## No biz like Showbiz to give Ferrell flashiness

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Photo provided

Clinton Kelly, star of television's "What Not to Wear," prepares to present Amy Ferrell with a million-dollar check. The glitzy stage was part of the show at Wenatchee's Performing Arts Center on May 24.

Have you seen the slick YouTube video of Wenatchee's own Amy Ferrell learning that she won the Macy's Million Dollar Makeover last Tuesday?

The flashy production — lights, props, mega-TV screens, even a snazzy red carpet — that transformed the stage at the Performing Arts Center sure didn't happen overnight.

Oh, wait a minute ... it practically DID happen overnight.

When the New York production company in charge of the Ferrell filming realized — uh-oh — that Wenatchee wasn't near Hollywood, they knew they'd need help in wrangling specialized video equipment and a crew of skilled electricians, carpenters, camera operators and caterers. Even celebrities gotta eat, y'know.

So they called Showbiz Northwest, the Wenatchee planning and event company responsible for much of the razzle-dazzle we see in many local shows and productions — spectacles like the Fourth of July fireworks show at Walla Walla Park, the performance stage at the Apple Blossom Festival and lots of other

concerts and gatherings.

"We looked at all the requirements for what they needed," said company owner James Wallace, "and realized we didn't have much of it here, maybe not even in Seattle."

Consider, for instance, the 200 feet of anaconda-thick power cable that ran from the production truck (a huge semi) into the PAC. "It didn't exist here," Wallace said. Heck, the production truck itself, along with lots of the lighting equipment, had to come up from Los Angeles, "where you can snap your fingers and have this kind of stuff on a moment's notice."

Wallace knew he was going to need help on this project, so he called Carl Polson, a guy he's worked with for the last 10 years. "Carl can find just about anything you need," said Wallace.

A 60-foot length of high-end red carpet — what glitzy gala doesn't have a red carpet? — couldn't immediately be found in the Wenatchee Valley, so Polson worked through professional contacts to find just the right roll in Spokane. "Had a rendezvous with the carpet guy in a parking lot at midnight," said Polson. Let's see, that would be the midnight immediately before the big show the next day?

"We were cutting it close," said Wallace. "But everything about this was cut pretty close."

The saving grace, said Wallace and Polson, was that the one thing Wenatchee has in abundance is a force of skilled craftspeople. About 25 local carpenters, electricians and general laborers joined with about 40 production folks from New York and L.A. to get the Ferrell show broadcast-ready in less than two days.

Of course, the PAC's technical director, Don Fox, was a key component to the whole production's success, said Wallace. As was a handful of other local companies.

Those local crews included three camera operators from Howell at the Moon Productions, the award-winning film and video makers based in Wenatchee. "You hear about uppity production people from New York and Los Angeles, but that wasn't the case here," said Howell at the Moon's Jeff Ostenson. "These people were thoughtful and respectful of the local talent. It was a great experience for us."

Also fun was that the whole project was top secret, said Wallace, because Macy's wanted the announcement of the winner to be a nationwide surprise. "We were sworn to secrecy. We just put our heads down and kept on working."

(See Amy Ferrell win a million dollars at [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), keywords: Macy's Million Dollar Makeover.)

And speaking of New York glitz: Clare Barron, a popular Short Shakespearean under the troupe's founder and director Sherry Schreck, has nabbed some rave reviews for her portrayal of Miranda in a New York production of "The Tempest."

Time Out New York, an online art-travel-opinion site, singled her out for praise in a May 13 review of the Target Margin Theater's staging of the classic. Likewise, a review in the Village Voice describes Barron's performance as "delicately ethereal" and "bewitching."

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Years ago, Barron, 24, played Miranda in the Short Shakes' own "Tempest" and studied under Paul and Kelly Atwood.

Schreck, her daughter Heidi and members of the Barron family were scheduled to jet cross-country last week to attend the final performances of the New York production, which ended its three-week run Friday.

This week's Worm was compiled by World reporter and blogger Mike Irwin. Got a tip? Email [newsroom@wenatcheeworld.com](mailto:newsroom@wenatcheeworld.com).