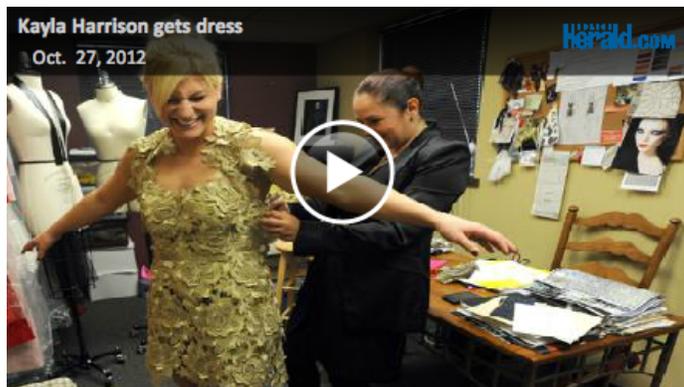




## Golden girl, country gem

By Jill Radsken | Thursday, November 1, 2012 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Style & Fashion](#)



Of course, it had to be gold.

When Olympic gold medalist Kayla Harrison hits the red carpet tonight for the Country Music Awards in Nashville, she'll be wearing a custom gold dress by Boston fashion designer Nara Paz.

"It's gorgeous. I love it. It's so fun! I love it," gushed Harrison at the final fitting this weekend.

Twirling in the floral lace gown at Paz's Woburn studio, Harrison said the last three months "have been like a dream." She pinched herself when Paz called, offering a dress after seeing a Boston Herald article chronicling Harrison's unsuccessful search for the perfect dress.

"She's so easy to work with," said Paz, who handstitched Swiss lace into the cocktail dress in her New York and Woburn studios. "The gold blends with her skin."

Harrison wanted a bodice that showed off her back, and Paz, a Lasell graduate, said the collaboration was effortless. Only the hemline — the Brazilian-born designer wanted the 22-year-old to show off her legs — was cause for debate.

"Nara's adventurous. As a by-product, I'm becoming adventurous," Harrison said.

Getting her body red-carpet ready was a much different challenge than getting Olympic Games-ready.

"There's a big difference between show muscles versus go muscles," said Harrison, who has relaxed some of her workout regimen since winning Olympic gold. "I look good, but can't pick up 10 pounds."

Paz said the original dress she designed was inspired by the Elf Queen ("Lord of the Rings").

The Marblehead resident's gold medal win has presented many golden opportunities for the judo star, and one was a personal invitation from country rocker Kix Brooks to attend the CMAs.

"We're staying at his ranch," said Harrison, who will enjoy the festivities with a childhood friend. "He has a four-bedroom guest house."

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