

# SERENDIPITY

May 2007

## Design Inspiration

Serendipity was designed for the Simplicity/Threads Creative Challenge. Several ideas came together at once. Simplicity 4403 provided a pattern with interesting lines and an ethnic look that would showcase the striped silk for the body of the coat. A class on using piecework in wearables was the inspiration for the geometric, pieceworked bands that enhance the lines of the coat. To add interest to the design, the midriff seam has been emphasized by replacing the seam with a wide, pieceworked band that repeats the designs used on the borders of the coat. The same wide band is also used on the sleeves. The colors of the piecework echo the colors of the striped silks. All of the supporting fabrics came from my stash. Unfortunately, after completing the design, I realized that I didn't have enough striped fabric. It was serendipity to be attending a quilt show at the time. Not only did I find the same striped fabric that I had purchased several months earlier, but I also came across the companion handwoven stripe that became the bodice of the coat. The gray top, black pants and striped purse coordinate with the coat by repeating the pieced border detail from the coat's hem and collar.

## Fabrics

Coat: Thai 100% striped silk, Thai 100% handwoven silk, 100% silk dupioni, 100% Burmese silk, 100% silk organza underlining, 100% rayon Bemberg lining.

Pants: 100% Burmese silk, 100% silk dupioni, 100% silk organza underlining.

Top: 100% Burmese silk, 100% silk dupioni, 100% rayon Bemberg lining.

Purse: Thai 100% striped silk, Thai 100% handwoven silk, 100% silk dupioni, 100% Burmese silk.

## Embellishments

Coat, Pants, Top and Purse: geometric piecework on cotton flannel foundation, machine quilting with rayon and cotton threads.

## Patterns

Coat: Simplicity 4403 (modified).

Pants: Simplicity 4368 (modified).

Top: Simplicity 3744 (modified).

Purse: Simplicity 4646, View A (modified).

## **Special Sewing Techniques**

A number of pattern modifications have been made to the coat, pants, top and purse patterns. Hem, sleeve and center front bands have been added to the coat. The midriff panel is constructed by removing sections from the bodice and skirt panels. Center-front and center-back bands, similar to those on the coat, have been added to the purse. The top pattern is derived by shortening the dress and altering the facing altered to create a neck band. Hem bands have been added to both the top and the pants. Standard techniques of cutting apart pattern pieces and adding seam allowances as required have been used in developing all of the above pattern modifications.

The piecwork is made using strip piecing and foundation piecing techniques, as well as precision cutting and measuring when necessary. Careful attention has been paid to the grainline of all the patches. For the diamond border at the center front of the coat and on the purse, this necessitated doing all the seaming on the bias. For the hem and midriff bands however, it was possible to cut strips on the cross grain and use steam shaping on the cotton-flannel foundation to produce the gently curved shapes required. For the piecwork on the neckband of the top, this was not a possibility, and precision drafting and sewing based on the actual pattern pieces was required. All of the piecwork has been machine quilted using a diamond design. The quilting serves the dual purpose of securing the piecwork to the foundation and unifying the look of the piecwork. The completed bands have been inset using precision marking and seaming techniques and a lot of attention to detail.

The sleeves and skirt of the coat as well as the pants are underlined in silk organza to provide additional body to the lightweight fabrics. The top is fully lined. The purse contains extra stiffening to ensure that it does not lose its shape.

## **Exhibitions and Awards**

2nd place, Wardrobe, Simplicity/Threads Creativity Contest, October 2007.

Honorable Mention - Wearables, Road 2 California, January 2008.

2nd place, AQS/Hobbs Bonded Fiber Fashion Show and Contest, April 2008.