

On the Level: a Minimal Waste Bias Evening Gown
Achieved through Creative Pattern Draping, Seam Angles, and Grain Placement

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The goal was to create an evening gown that included the stretch and beautiful drape of bias cut fabric on the body while solving some problems associated with bias cut: (1) fabric waste and (2) seam rippling caused by inadvertently stretching bias grain piece edges while sewing seams.



Design Process and Techniques

Draping process: Straight-grain rectangles of muslin were draped on the dress form with the lengthwise grain in the center of each panel and seamlines at a 45-degree angle, as indicated by a bubble level. Two seamlines crossed the bust points, to shape the garment to the female form. Seamlines wound around

the body, ignoring traditional seam locations, such as side and shoulder. Seams perpendicular to the seamlines were introduced when more ease was required on one side of the rectangle than the other (i.e. waist vs. hip).

Construction process: The resulting long rectangle pattern pieces were easily cut side-by-side on the fabric's lengthwise grain with little waste. This also caused the piece edges to be cut and sewn on the straight grain, simplifying the sewing of the seams. However, because the seamlines ran at a 45-degree angle on the body, the bias grain stretched around the body circumference, eliminating the need for a zipper. Plain seams were finished with serging. Edges were hand-hemmed.

Materials

The gown was constructed of crepe-back satin with alternating panels layered with coordinating knit lace, to give understated highlighting to the patternwork.

Completed

May 31, 2013

Measurements

Bust 34.5", waist 25.5", and hip 35.5".