

## Sculptural Chartreuse

Andrea Caro, Texas Woman's University, Denton, USA

Key Words: Sculpture, gown, cowl

### Purpose

Paradise, bright colors, dramatic details, and elegant shapes inspired the design of a sculptural, sophisticated evening gown. After researching and observing the work of designers such as Oscar de la Renta and Balenciaga, their designs inspired me to drape a fluid, yet sculptural work with a flair toward the dramatic, and lines that detailed and accentuated the hips. The goal was to create a flattering, yet statuesque evening gown embodying structure and fluidity in harmony.



Both the color and the fabric choices for the dress were influenced by Balenciaga. The classic combination of designer fabrics inspired the search for intricate, yet firm, fabrics that would maintain the shape of a sculptural dress yet be exquisite and rich looking.

### Process

Parallel to the designer's desire to create sculpture in dress through inner construction and fabric choice, was the approach to the design process. Searching for the perfect pairing of fabrics was key to the design interpretation. Once found, the combination of bridal weight satin, beaded delicate eveningwear lace, and china silk in an amazing consistency of hue, inspired and drove the draping and design process. The design was first sketched in several variations and one selected for interpretation through draping. The hip detail was created using combined side princess skirt panels to maintain the fluidity of

Page 1 of 2

the hip cowl. The body slimming layer, however, maintained the side seam so that the waist fit could be enhanced. A strapless treatment for the neckline was chosen so that the focus could remain on the hip. The base layer was draped and cut in a firm canvas weight cotton to enable the fit through the torso, with the length dropping to the high hip level. The outer layer was then draped in a fabric weight similar to the bridal satin. Experimentation with the grainline on the skirting allowed the discovery of the best drape into the side cowl. The finishing technique from side seam into the pocket of the cowl was planned to eliminate raw edges yet maintain the flow of line into the skirt.

### Techniques

The beaded lace layer was pieced and wrapped around the midriff and cascaded down one side of the front along the princess seam. The pattern of the lace was used to direct the cut and placement of lace motifs and the fitting structure through the tapered waistline area. The design



of the skirt planned for a statuesque platform for the overall silhouette. A slight amount of flair into the hemline further enhanced the curve of the silhouette and female form.

Using the base canvas layer as the framework, boning structure was used to shape and stabilize the bodice and torso and maintain the body fit of the garment. The hemline was stabilized with horsehair braid to provide body. The gown was then finished with a china silk lining, invisible zipper and understitching for a professional finish..

### Materials

Bridal weight satin, beaded Chantilly-type lace, china silk, cotton canvas, boning, and horsehair braid materials were used. The lace was pieced and stitched down, with bead and sequin embellishments added and repositioned in the final construction. An invisible zipper was used with top hook and eye closure.