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THE FRENCH QUILTED JACKET

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This is a jacket that was developed by the famous French house in Paris. The jacket was so profound that it is *still* in style today.

NOTE: Although this jacket is considered the penultimate in sewing achievement, it doesn't require any highly technical skills other than time. If you know how to basically put a garment together, that is the major instruction you will need to make this jacket. It is the time that is involved in making the jacket that is so expensive. The jacket today is sold in the major metro areas such as London, New York, Los Angeles, Milan, Paris, Riyadh and Tokyo. And although we will be visiting the boutique in Neiman Marcus that has this jacket, it will be the Ready-to-Wear version, and not the lined, quilted and fully accessorized, couture version that is sold in the major metro areas. You will be making the couture version.

Inspiration and Ideas for Your Jacket

The internet is a great resource for inspiration ideas for your jacket.

Design:

The pattern type I recommend is with the couture princess seam, which varies slightly from the armscye to hem princess seam. See here for more explanation.

After you have that seam, you can do a lot of variations like a notched collar, a stand-up collar, no collar, over lap the front to create one panel look when buttoned, exposed zipper front, covered zipper front (zippered fronts work best with double separating zippers that zip up and down and separate - [Pacific Trim](#) and [Zipper Stop](#) are two good sources), $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve length or full sleeve length, longer jacket to short bolero-length jacket - really the variations are infinite. As long as you stay with a straight couture princess seam, the pattern will work. If you have any questions about your pattern - contact me and I will help you with it.

Fabrics:

The inspiration for fabrics is also as numerous out there. This jacket does the very best with a loosely woven fabric more commonly known as a bouclé (boo-clay). The fabric content can vary from silk, cotton, linen, wool or any blend. Polyester and rayon are excellent blends with natural fibers. Most often these bouclés are woven with larger yarns which makes the fabric that much more unusual and artistic looking.

Trim: Karl Lagerfeld has said that it's the trim on the couture jacket that separates it from RTW or even "happy hands from home" type jackets. And he's right. The trims on the couture jackets are totally gorgeous and truly make the jacket. This is the type of trim I want for your jacket, but this is something we will develop in class so that you can have a gorgeous trim. Here are some ideas that you can ruminate on, but for more click on to my [Pinterest Jacket Trim Ideas](#).



Notice they most likely won't be something you see in the trim section at Joann's. These will be constructed by hand often from some of the yarns of your jacket fabric.

This is a screen shot of Shirley MacLaine in *Steel Magnolias* wearing a gorgeous jacket. Here you can see that the lining goes all the way to the edge so that when the jacket flops open, it shows the lining, and the lining is also used for the shell under the jacket.



Linings: These need to be very tightly woven, very slick (or shiny) surfaces that move smoothly across the body. Usually these are bold and bright prints and coordinate in some way with the fashion fabric of the jacket. They don't have to match and in some instances they even clash, which sounds illogical, but these are the linings that work the best. Shirley MacLaine wore a beautiful jacket in *Steel Magnolias* and what makes her jacket so special is the lining that shows through. In this particular version the lining came all the way to the edge of the jacket so that when it flops open it can be easily seen.



These are from a store in New York (if you want their name, it's [Mendel Goldberg Fabrics](#) - be prepared for sticker shock, but also be prepared to see some of the most beautiful fabric you can possibly imagine. Alice is a consummate editor of beautiful fabrics. Head over to the [End Cuts](#) for some excellent bargains).

Here are some other ideas. There are many sources for inspiration: Pinterest, (click here for my page on the jacket), Google Image search, Vogue.com has extensive runway shows from this couture Parisian house. OK so let's look at some jackets:



Here are some great looks on notables - starting upper left Rihanna a famous music star in her couture jacket and skirt; the Queen of England in her famous jacket, the famous original jacket on model Marie-Hélène Arnaud, the designer in her own jacket in the 1960s and again in the 1970s, me in my jacket, from a television add of a cute little girl who started a lemonade stand and then turned into an entrepreneur in a typical jacket in the style we will be making. In the middle in the pink suit is the suit Jackie Kennedy wore in Dallas when her husband was assassinated. These all show the enduring classic quality of this jacket.



These are the various jackets I've made that I photographed. There are a couple that got away without photographing. The first (below right and left) was made from a beautiful silk tweed I got in Hong Kong that had a skirt that matched. Although the trim is not all that spectacular, it was applied in such a way that required a lot of hand work with the huge amount of mitered corners I had to accomplish to make the look work.



One of the features I used on my first jacket were the buttons. The original designer of this

jacket was a Leo and she loved using the lion as an emblem on a lot of the work she did. So if you can't find the original designer logo on the buttons, which is very hard to find, you can use lion-head type buttons which work very well.



In the mid 1980s, a new creative director was hired for the maison in Paris, and the very first thing he did was update the silhouette (on the right) of the suit to make it look more up-to-date.

Below left, you can see the difference between the original silhouette and the more modern silhouette.



Fabric Ideas

What distinguishes a French quilted jacket from any other jacket is that it is quilted. Using a loosely woven bouclé which can consist of wool, silk, viscose, polyester and/or rayon or any blend, the fibers are loosely twisted and then woven into a fabric. Usually the fibers are large and sometimes they differentiate from each other adding an extra dimension to the fabric. This makes for a more difficult assembly, and uses a special technique in the handling of the fabric.



Here are some other cuff and trim ideas, and the inside of my jacket (it's at Bernina OKC if you want to see it in person) to show the quilting of the jacket.



Class Description

Class I Series - September 10th and 16th from 10am to 4pm

You will be fitted in muslin for your jacket. You will bring your muslin to class already sewn up and Claire will help you fit it. Then you will take this jacket and use it as your pattern to cut out your fashion fabric and your lining fabric for the next series.

Class II Series - October 1st and 2nd from 10am to 4pm

You will cut out and start quilting and then assembling your jacket. We will begin to start to create your trims and talk about what you want for your trims.

Class III Series - November 4th and 5th from 10am to 4pm

You will finish assembling and start the finishing of your cuff, pockets (if any) and jacket trim and the finishing application of the chain.

Class Make-Up (if needed) - December 5th from 10am to 4pm

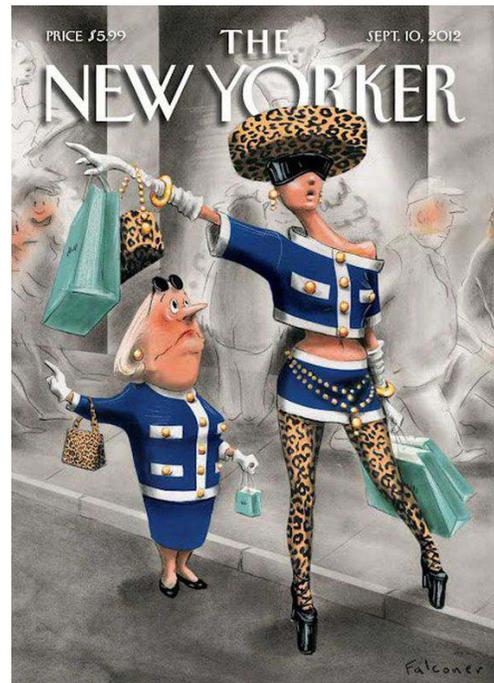
This is an extra day we have scheduled, you may not need it and it's not part of the course. We scheduled this to give you extra time - if you need it.

Luncheon at La Baguette - after we've finished - it's time to show off your jacket at luncheon at the French bistro just a little north of Bernina - we will set a date that's convenient for everyone.



This jacket is considered the penultimate luxury garment, hence the reason why Beyonce and Lady Brooke Astor wore the jacket. It has even garnered it's own cover from the New Yorker magazine.

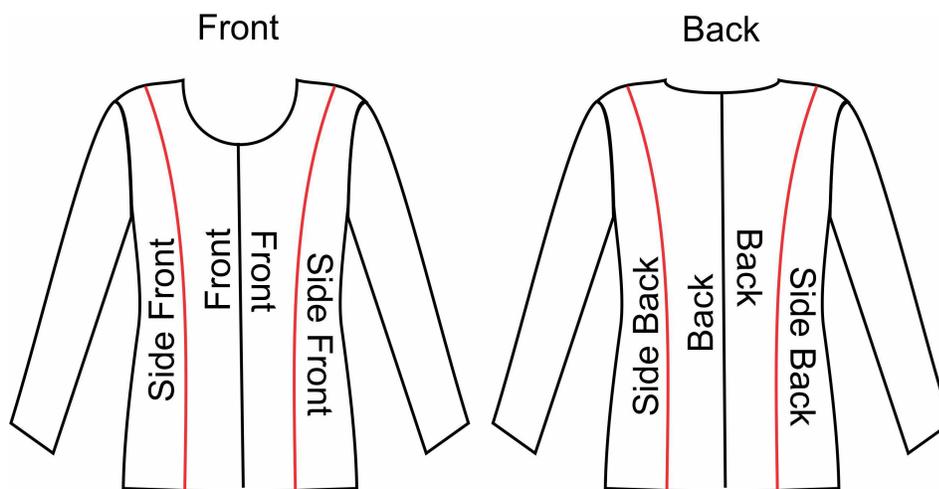
Even though it's also considered the pinnacle of sewing prowess, amazingly enough it doesn't take an expert's knowledge of sewing. What the jacket mostly takes is time, that's why the cost to couture customers is so high. It will become one of your most classically treasured items in your wardrobe, and you will leave with a fitted jacket pattern. We're going to make a combination of the two in our class!



What you will need for class:

- Bouclé or bouclé-type fabric,
- lining (usually a print or something that blends with the bouclé),
- interfacing,
- trim components,
- buttons (these are important as the originally designer considered these jewelry for the jacket)
- sewing machine (if you don't want to bring yours, let the store know)
- sewing machine needles (however the store has plenty)
- scissors, trimmers, pins, seam rippers and other tools you use around the sewing machine
- muslin for your pattern
- A good Jacket Pattern, click [here](#) for a good selection. (Some of these patterns may be out of print, but there's a good selection of those in print or downloadable) My favorites are:
 - [Bouclé Jacket, BurdaStyle 11/2010 #104](#)
 - Neue Mode Stil M23264 (go to [sewingpatterns.com](#) to search for this)
 - Neue Mode Stil S23165 (go to [sewingpatterns.com](#) to search for this)
 - [Shiny Jacket with Trim 12/2013 #111](#)
 - [New Look 6583](#)
 - [BurdaStyle 6596 Coat](#)
 - [Vogue 8804](#)
 - [Butterick 6602](#)
 - [Simplicity 8844](#)

What you want in a jacket is at least 7 pieces (front, side front, side back and back) like this:



What is important is the red line seam. This is a couture seam that great couture designers use to really fit well. It's easier to assemble than the princess seam that goes from the armhole to the hem and fits much better too. All of the above patterns have this seam. You may

want to individualize the length or have a notched collar like Simplicity 8844, or a stand up collar like Butterick 6602. You can make this the way *you* want which is the whole idea!

I have also scheduled a trip to Dallas (click [here](#) for more info) to see the Dior exhibit, check out the designer boutiques at Neiman Marcus and travel to the best fabric store in Dallas to purchase your fabrics.

Jackets Created in Past Classes.

Beverly elected to use a chiffon for her jacket and keep it short and use a button chain for a closing. This is the sort of individualization that you can do to your *own* jacket.



Another student elected to use a black and white theme to her jacket.





This is from a beautiful black bouclé that had several different textures of black fiber to make the fabric.



Close up of her detail work on the pocket and the jacket cuff



She also purchased enough fabric lining to make a beautiful scarf to coordinate with the jacket.



bea



This student was lucky enough to find some buttons with the designer logo on them and made beautiful mitered corners with the other side of the boucle fabric and a border trim between the binding and jacket as her trim.

This student elected to use several trims to detail her jacket.





This student entered her jacket in the state fair and won first prize. She elected to make it $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve length, again individualizing the jacket to her personal taste.

Details from her jacket. Her buttons were an intricate pearl with crimson center and her trim was a bias cut satin using a soutache braid to set off the satin.



Another student also wanted $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves and what we were most proud of was that she had not had a jacket that closed on her in years and this jacket, because it was tailored for her size and shape, closed naturally on her figure.



Here's the intricate detailing on her sleeve and trim that she used. She used a sequined trim that was bordered by another gold trim with gold and black buttons.

After the class is over, we all meet at La Baguette, just up the street from Bernina of OKC, for luncheon at this French bistro to show off our jackets!

