

A Study of Fabrics

Part II – Voile

Many of you have noted from the Australian publications how much voile is used ‘down under’. So often I am asked what the difference between voile and batiste is. So I thought I would feature voile in our fabric study this month.

Voile is a plain weave, lightweight fabric that is semi-transparent. Voile is derived from the French word which means veil. It is most often made of 100% cotton, although it may be made of wool or silk. When made of wool, it is called ‘Voile de Laine’. Silk voile is the most difficult type of voile to cut and work with as it is slippery in texture. It is, however, very luxurious and is also known as silk chiffon. Cotton voile is one of several grades of cotton fabric. It is one of the lightest weight types, in contrast to denim, one of the heaviest cotton weaves. Today it is used for such clothing as blouses, baby clothes, lingerie, and summer dresses. Because of its’ wonderful draping characteristics, it is often used in wedding veils or to add volume to dresses or skirts.

Cotton voile is usually made with cylindrical combed yarns. To obtain the best quality fabric, voile is made by highly twisted yarns in both the warp and weft. If you look at the voile yarn you can see the 2 threads twisted together. If both the warp and weft have twisted yarns we call it Full Voile, which is what Bear Threads, Ltd. carries. For cost reasons, some voile is woven with only the warp having the twisted yarn and weft having a single yarn. It is then known as ‘half voile’. Bear Threads voile is always produced with a No. 100 yarn which is quite fine. Usually, voile is not as densely woven as batiste, which is woven from single yarns, not 2-ply. The highly twisted fine yarn, combined with the not so dense weave, gives the crisp finish to voile. Some may interpret this as the famous ‘grainy touch’. You may also often see the ‘moire’ effect on voile fabrics which is acquired from the finishing. The combination of these characteristics renders voiles’ crease resistance.

Voile is a delight to sew with and finds many uses both in clothing and home decorations. To answer your question of why Australia uses more voile than batiste – it simply is a matter of personal preference. Our guest artist this month, Jeannie Baumeister, has used our blue Swiss voile in the beautiful baby dress. Bear Threads, Ltd. carries voile in a full range of colors. Visit our website at www.bearthreadsltd.com to see the entire listing of colors and patterns available.

Sheila Nicol



“Emma’s Smocked Baby Dresses” pattern from The Old Fashioned Baby.

Lovely Lace Yoke

By Jeannie Downs Baumeister

It is quite easy to turn a plain yoke on baby’s little dress into a vision of lovely lace! The dress pictured above is made from a luscious soft baby blue Swiss Voile and trimmed with exquisite Maline laces and Swiss insertion. The focus of the dress is the lace embellished yoke that is framed with gathered lace edging. The dress pattern, “Emma’s Smocked Baby Dresses” looks very pretty without smocking!



The fancy lacy sleeve and hem reflect the lace in the yoke for a very fancy little dress!



Easy Lacy Yoke

1. Cut a block of fabric that is slightly larger than the yoke of the dress. Emma's Dress required a block that measured 9 ½" wide X 5 ½" high.
2. Embellish the yoke as desired, using the yoke pattern as your guide.
3. Place the larger piece of Maline insertion between two matching insertions to make a lace band. Stitch regular entredeux onto either sides of lace band and attach it to the fabric (to do this, cut the fabric in half, then stitch the fabric to either side of the lace band) .



4. On each side of the center lace band, stitch a piece of lace insertion 1" away from the edge of the entredeux.



5. When yoke is finished, place pattern piece onto the yoke to position. Remove the pattern and pin the yoke right sides together, matching the lace insertions and entredeux. This is an important step. It ensures that both sides of the yoke will match perfectly. Cut out yoke, using the yoke pattern piece.



6. Stay stitch the yoke along the lace areas, using a short (2.0) stitch length.
7. Stitch the dress according to the patterns instruction, allowing for a fancy sleeve and hem if desired.
8. When dress is complete, whip gathered lace edging around the front yoke.

Jeannie is the designer for The Old Fashioned Baby Pattern line. Visit her Heirloom Sewing Shop at www.oldfashionedbaby.com and read her Old Fashioned Baby Sewing Room Blog at <http://oldfashionedbaby.blogspot.com/>



We have many fabrics to satisfy your love of sewing. Our Heart Damask in white is perfect for someone special. Another perfect choice is our Dotted Swiss in Red Dots on White. We offer the following fabrics in Red: Swiss Cotton Flannel, Silky Cotton (shown), Textured Pique 978, Silky Superfine Twill and Poly-Wool Challis.

Embroidery and Lace to match -- our Heart series -- E-20 (2" insertion), E-21 (6" edging) & E-22 (3.3" edging) with L-22 (3/4" insertion), L-21 (3/4" edging), L-24 (1-1/2" insertion) & L-23 (1-1/2" edging)



Don't forget the details. Heart-shaped shank buttons and Antique Motifs can add a lovely touch to any garment.

For the love of our customers, we offer the following February specials.

Heart Shank Buttons shown in the photo below.

BP-20SH 1/2"

Heart Swiss Cotton Damask 54"

Heart White French Lace

L-21 3/4" Edging

L-22 3/4" Insertion

L-23 1 1/2" Edging

L-24 1 1/2" Insertion

'Love' Motif shown in photo

These are exceptional buys and sure to bring Hugs and Kisses from your customers.