

PATTERN REVIEW: Cameron Dress with Hemstitched Detailing in Midweight Linen

Description



Summer may be over, but with many of us still sheltering in place, clothing suitable for the home is a wardrobe necessity. Enter the CAMERON dress: this shirt dress is perfect for lounging about oneâ??s house in comfort and style, a beautifully understated piece in its minimalism.

Initially, I had grand plans when I first received this pattern- my plans being the addition of a dramatic tiered ruffle hem and full romantic sleeves to match. So eager to pursue this concept, I did not realize until halfway through the toile what a mistake I was making! To create such drastic changes altered the very essence of the Cameron dress â?? its simplicity. I paused in my process to reconsider, this time paying closer attention to what the fabric was trying to tell me. The linen, a mid weight in Antique White, gave an heirloom quality with its color and weight. I decided to stay true to the pattern â?? stripping away a few details to incorporate drawn thread work as a subtle nod to an older time. A time when handmade garments were not just clothing, but family treasures made with tender patience and the intent to pass down to another generation. Drawn threadwork is an heirloom technique Iâ??ve only recently learned (see attached tutorial), but have been eager to incorporate it in a garment since mastering the basic Ladder Stitch. I forged ahead, confident in my new idea, abandoning the toile to cut right into the fabric. I knew I wanted the drawn threadwork to be the main feature, while highlighting a few details of the pattern such as the neckline, yoke, and cuffs. With what I had in mind I was able to eliminate a few pattern pieces, cutting only the front, back, yoke, and sleeve pattern pieces. I also cut two strips 2â?³ wide â?? the length of my neckline â?? to replace the existing placket and two strips 7â?³ wide -the length of the sleeve wrist- for my cuffs.



With all pieces cut, I began at the yoke, gently pulling out 10 threads. I took my time handstitching a ladder stitch all along the bottom edge, right above the seam allowance. I sewed in the box pleat on the back pattern, and attached the yoke using French seams. After a quick press, the back was complete, and I moved on to the front of the dress. This was to become the most time-consuming aspect of this garment, and a true lesson in patience as I proceeded to embroider the entire center front with the ladder stitch. At first, I aimed for perfection, taking my time to count out every 6 threads as I slowly stitched, looped, and knotted my way down the front.



Perfectionism is an aspect I strive for; not having something come out just perfect used to leave me feeling devastated and questioning my skills. Through gentle words of encouragement and love Iâ??ve received from my sewing community, Iâ??m slowly learning to embrace imperfections in my work. A mere quarter of the way down the front, I let myself stop counting the threads and fell into a quiet rhythm, simply eyeballing the groups of thread and not caring about the inconsistencies with each knot. As I finished the front, I sat back to review my work thus far. My stitches were far from perfect, but there was a charming quality to be found in the obvious handwork involved, and a story because of it. One of of love, patience, and care, just like in heirloom pieces from the late 20th century. Inspired by this feeling, I quickly finished the drawn threadwork details along the neckline and cuffs.


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appreciated. The instructions for sewing were not only clear, but thorough due to the full instruction booklet that came with the pattern itself. I used French seams throughout, and finished my dress just in time to enjoy wearing it on vacation in Vermont, where I spent the rest of the week feeling comfortably elegant. Sewing this dress taught me not only patience, but also to remember to find beauty in lifeâ??s imperfections.

With love and nimble fingers,

Nayila

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