PATTERN REVIEW: Riva Shirt and Shorts in Midweight Linen

Description

Christopher Bradt

Matching button-down shirt and shorts sets have been dominating my inspo files since early spring, but I had yet to make one because I just couldn't pin down the perfect patterns to create the *exact* look I was dreaming of.Â Cue the Riva Pattern Collection. It's comprised of a button-down shirt with either long sleeve or short sleeve options, and trousers with a shorts option. Classic tailored elements such as pleating, sleeve plackets, and double welt pockets really elevate these classic wardrobe staples, so I was excited to dive right into the process of sewing these up.

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The size chart put me between sizes 10 and 12, but I decided to size down to a 10 because the finished garment measurements looked like the best fit for me. I chose to make the long sleeve version of the shirt and the shorts version of the trouser pattern in Fabrics-Store's 1C64 softened linen in the color New Safari. This range of linen is similar in weight to their IL019 midweight linen but instead has a tighter weave and the same high thread count along both the warp and the weft, making for a luxuriously soft and smooth hand-feel.Â New Safari's warm beige tone was a very welcomed addition to my wardrobe, as it fills a neutral color gap.

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In the past I would usually make a toile first with a new pattern, especially a pants pattern, but as a new mom with very limited time these days, I now throw caution to the wind and go straight to sewing the garment right up! I still am on #TeamTrace, though, when it comes to cutting out the pattern because I like to retain the original pattern for future makes and to reference for adjustments as needed…so maybe I'm not throwing all the caution out just yet! Since I decided to sew up the garment straight from the pattern, I made no fit modifications. The only minor changes I did to the garments were aesthetic: exposed the button loops of the shorts' welt pockets – I used pretty petite Mother of Pearl buttons that I wanted visible, and left out buttons and buttonholes on the shirt placket as I prefer to style this perfect shirt worn open with a crop top underneath. I still might add matching Mother of Pearl buttons down the line, but that's for another day to be decided upon. The only adjustments I would make in the future would be to enlarge the pocket bags of the front slant pockets as I prefer more room to put my hands in and shorten the sleeve length by 1 inch or so.

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The beautiful instruction booklet and pattern record included with the pattern were so helpful throughout the entire sewing process. The instructions were very clear and detailed with step-by-step illustrations, while the pattern record acted as a quick reference sheet to ensure I had all the correct pattern pieces as I worked through completing each garment. I absolutely loved the unique construction of the collar on the shirt as it was sans collar stand and used bias binding to neatly cover and finish the raw seams along the neck. Billowy volume on the back of the shirt is all thanks to the structurally elegant deep pleat (of which I've written out a tutorial over on the Sewing Glossary section of this blog!). The high waistband of the shorts showcase a notched detail at the center back which adds cool visual interest and, again, really elevates this classic silhouette. I'm really so pleased with how well these two garments came out. The aspect of fine tailoring techniques against the roomy, effortlessly cool silhouettes of the shirt and shorts is exactly the type of sartorial splendor that I crave when making my own clothes. Next up, the short sleeve and trousers versions!

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