Pattern Review: The FS Fred Crop Top

Description

Back view of the Fred Crop Top.

Sometimes, as a sewist, you need a palette cleanser. Something without buttons or buttonholes, zippers or snaps. Something that doesnâ??t take a lot of time or effort to cut out. Something without repeated trips back and forth between machine and iron. Something that comes together effortlessly in just a few steps.

The FS Fred Crop Top is one of these simple, palette cleansing designs. The whole garment is made from only two pattern pieces, a front and a back. The top is lined, using the same pattern pieces for the main and lining fabrics; this also means hardly any time is spent on taping or gluing the pattern together. The topâ??s most daunting step is also the first, sewing four bust darts. This is merely a speed bump, as the top quickly assembles in the remaining 11 steps. Itâ??s the kind of project that can be finished in one afternoon, or broken into chunks to complete over a few short sewing sessions.

As a design, the Fred exudes â??Business in the front, party in the back.â?• The front features a subtle, high sitting v-neck. What really makes the top stand out is the knotted-tie open back. The back pieces slope downwards from the shoulders and upwards from the bottom of the side seams, joining to tie together in the mid-center of the back. Of course, any top that has an open back invites the question â??Can I wear a bra with this?â?• Yes. I found the thinner the band the better, but the knot position can be slightly adjusted or tightened/loosened as needed to cover a bra.

When I first saw the Fred, visions of summer holidays came to mind. I imagined it casually tied over a bikini with shorts and sandals, leaving the sand for sunset dinner. Dressed up with a midi skirt and little heel. Or maybe paired with a long wide legged trouser, clutch, and a fun earring.

The first version I made is in a warm milk chocolate cotton voile. Since the top is fully lined and I live in a hot climate, I wanted to sew it in a lightweight fabric to avoid getting too hot. When styling cotton voile, I prefer to either lean into the casualness of the fabric by pairing it with something like denim shorts, or play into the fabricâ??s lightness by dressing it up with a skirt in a fabric that is equally light but with a different surface texture, like satin.

A casual styling of the Fred Crop Top with denim shorts and sandals.

As lining is integral to the garmentâ??s design, the Fred is a great opportunity to explore fabrics that are sheer or have transparent elements. This is how my second version came to be, sewn in a white cotton embroidered eyelet and lined with a lighter weight cotton voile also in white. I considered cutting the back lining pieces from the main eyelet fabric so the solid white voile wouldnâ??t be seen in the back knot, but decided I actually didnâ??t mind it. If anything, I thought it might add some dimension.

I donâ??t tend to wear fabrics as traditionally â??girlyâ?• or youthful like eyelets, but when I saw this roll at the store, I liked that the eyelets werenâ??t arranged into flowers. Knowing I like to dress with contrasting colors, textures, or silhouettes, I thought the top would ground nicely with pleated dark denim shorts and black accessories. I also wanted to see it paired with an even lighter weight fabric, like my green breezy linen Sara Trousers, also by The Fabrics Store.

While I do think the open back and sleeveless design more obviously call to mind summer fabrics, once I started styling my own I started coming up with other fabric explorations for the Fred: velvet, lace. Something shiny. A midweight denim. A two-tone/reversible design, which would be perfect for carry-on travel.

A simple top lends itself to simple styling, and simple styling lends itself to versatility. There is a unique satisfaction that comes from sewing something that requires little effort but yields high rewards, and Iâ??m pleased to report the Fred Crop Top is one of those designs.

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