

Threads

A A Z I E

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**Pullout
Pattern
for
Bonnie
Cashin's
Noh
Coat**



Designed for Living, Not for Fashion

American
designer
Bonnie Cashin
defined
the '60s'
functional
minimalism



by Mary Elliott

A gridded pattern and sewing instructions for Cashin's Noh coat at left appear between pages 34 and 35.

Binding with leather, real or fake

By Mary Elliott

I've experimented with some scraps of Cashin's original fabrics and leathers and found that with a little basting I could get good results when binding a substantial fabric like a tweed or bouclé. The drawings at right show how I duplicated Cashin's signature ¼-in. binding.

I used a #11 leather (wedge-point) needle, setting my stitch length to about 7 per in. (3.5 metric). My iron was set to wool with no steam, and I found that pressing over ordinary brown paper worked fine to keep the leather from buckling. As long as the leather strips were uniform thickness, I had no problem folding them evenly over to the wrong side; I basted them in place with an ordinary heavy needle. When I did the final stitching from the right side, the leather was too thick to allow me to get exactly on top of the earlier seam, but I examined Cashin's seams and they were always a little away from the first seam, too. A final press with brown paper made a big difference in the finished appearance.

Using synthetic leathers—

I also tried binding with UltraSuede, Facile (which is the lightweight version of UltraSuede), and UltraLeather (see Sources at right). My results with these new manmades were marvelous. UltraLeather created beautiful, uniform bindings on the thickest Cashin tweeds I had. It was so pliable that I could narrow the binding width to ⅜-in. without a problem, impossible (at least for me) with real leather. Because it has a knit backing and stretches easily I was able to manipulate it around corners with no difficulty.

UltraSuede and Facile worked equally well. I found Facile ideal for binding wool jersey because it's so lightweight. I had to staystitch the edge seam carefully, but after that it was a breeze.

Ronda Chaney, a sewer with lots of UltraSuede experience, has these suggestions for handling synthetic leathers: For binding strips, cut them on the crossgrain, the direction of greatest stretch. Rotary cutters with new blades are the best choice for accurate strip cutting; if you prefer scissors, use your sharpest ones.

Treat the fakes like knits, using a size 75/11 stretch needle, like a Schmetz HS, and sew with a long staple poly thread, like Mettler or Gutermann. Set your machine for 10 to 12 stitches per inch (2 to 2.5 on a metric machine) when you're making seams, and 6 to 8 per inch (3.5 to 4 metric) for topstitching, and test liberally on scraps for the best tension and pressure settings. A walking foot is a great help with these fabrics, particularly if they drag, which can increase the stitch density enough to perforate the fabric. Roller feet can help, but walking feet work best. If you don't have either, try pulling the fabric taut as it feeds, with equal pressure in front of and behind the needle.

Contrary to rumor, it's definitely possible to pin into the fakes, and to rip seams. If you're careful to use new needles and sharp pins, and the settings above, the holes will close within 24 hours. UltraLeather is less forgiving, so try a smaller machine needle, like a 60/8 or 65/9. Use long glass-headed pins and test them to see if they slip in easily. Change needles as soon as the stitches seem less than perfect, or every

five hours. For hand basting, use the smallest leather needles you can find, and the same poly threads you're sewing with.

You can press the fakes, and fuse to them; use a wool setting. EasyKnit is a good choice for stabilizing strips and trims, and you can position the strips securely at edges with ⅛-in. strips of fusible web. Cover your ironing board with a thick terry towel, and always keep the napped side of the suedes next to the pile. To fuse, dampen and wring out a construction press cloth, and layer this over the fusible against the wrong side of the fake; use the same pressure you would to fuse an ordinary fabric. For the final press of a binding strip, sandwich the strip between layers of towel, if it's sueded.

Sources for leather, real and fake

Real leather

Any leather from Tandy or other dealers that's called garment leather, and most leathers under 2½ oz., can be sewn on ordinary machines and will work for bindings.

Tandy Leather Co.
Box 2934, Dept TH,
Fort Worth, TX 76113

Tandy offers a variety of smooth and sueded garment leathers. Send \$2 (refundable) for Tandy's 100-page mail-order catalog.

Synthetics and Notions

Mary Jo's Cloth Store Inc.
401 Cox Rd.
Gastonia, NC 28054
(800) MARY-JOS (627-9567)
All colors of UltraSuede and Facile, some UltraLeather, good prices, no minimum order.

G-Street Fabrics
11854 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
(800) 333-9191
Most colors of all three fakes, including 12 colors UltraLeather; minimum order ⅛-yd.

