

Handwoven.

Fabric Forecast

Fall/Winter '04-'05



PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN LANCASTER

ZEN
GARDEN

Brushed Mohair Cape

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This cape (sewn from Vogue pattern #7783) is luxurious, elegant, and soft—both the warp and the weft are mohair. The mohair fabric was brushed while under tension on the loom. The trim is made from a purchased Pendleton wool jacquard fabric in a contrasting color.

The warp is wound of several different mohairs in a selection of seven colors. To achieve a blended and random effect, I wound two colors together on the warping board for one stripe, then changed one of them to another color and wound those two, then changed one of them to another, etc., varying the number of times I wound each pair to vary stripe width; see Figure 1 and Project at-a-glance. To do this, you'll need more mohair than the 2,080 yards actually required for the warp. (Alternatively, you can plan a color sequence and calculate the amount required for each color before ordering the yarn.) Thread the loom following Figure 2, alternating the two colors in each stripe.

Weaving

Mohair is very hairy and requires special care. Before you load a bobbin into the shuttle, trim stray hairs off the ends of the bobbin with scissors to prevent them from wrapping around the shuttle pin and causing the bobbin to jam.

The hairs of a mohair warp tend to catch on one another and can make it difficult to open a clear shed. It helps to raise each shaft of the shed individually. For example, raise shaft 1, then shaft 2, weave, and beat. With the beater still forward, raise shaft 3, then raise shaft 4, push the beater back, weave, and beat.

Before advancing the cloth each time, tighten the warp tension, and with a dog slicker or dry cleaning brush, brush the mohair from the center out to the selvages to raise the nap.

Finishing

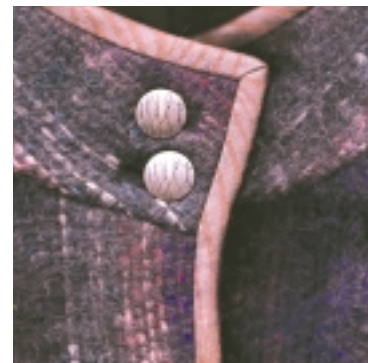
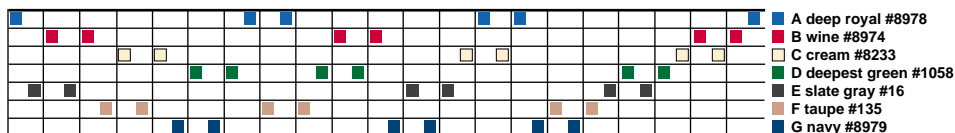
Machine wash the fabric in cold water for three minutes on a gentle cycle. Hang to dry and press lightly. Expect about 10% shrinkage in width and length.

Cutting, assembling, and sewing the cape

Cut out, assemble, and sew the cape following the Vogue pattern instructions for view C.

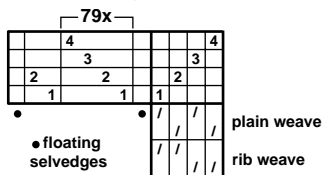
1. Warp color order

Wind the warp in pairs, randomly varying the numbers of pairs to make wider or narrower stripes. For a subtle transition from one stripe to the next, change only one color of any pair at a time. Some possible combinations are shown below. For example, you might wind AB 7x, BC 4x, CD 5x, DE 4x, EF 2x, FG 2x, GB 8x, BD 4x, etc. Wind a total of 320 ends.



Careful attention to details like buttonholes, button selection, and mitered corners of trim pieces are important—your fabric is special; your sewing should be, too.

2. Draft for cape



To reduce the tendency for the mohair yarn to stick, raise the shafts for each shed one at a time, then weave and beat. For example, with the beater forward, raise the shafts for the next pick one at a time, return the beater, weave, and beat.

Trim the long hairs of the mohair yarn at the ends of the bobbins so that they don't wind around the shuttle pin (see photo below). Before you advance the warp each time, brush the fabric on the loom, under tension with a dog brush (see photo at right).



PROJECT at-a-glance

Weave structure
Rib weave.

Equipment

4-shaft loom, 40" weaving width; 4-dent or 8-dent reed (a 4-dent reed is much preferred to prevent abrasion and shredding of the mohair); extra-large boat shuttle and bobbins; dog brush to use for raising mohair nap.

Yarns

Warp: Barrington Mohair (1,000 yd/lb), deep royal #8978, wine #8974, cream #8233, deepest green #1058, navy #8979; Victorian Mohair (1,175 yd/lb, Item 164), taupe #135; Classic Mohair (980 yd/lb, Item 165), slate gray #16. Allow 374–500 yd (6–8 oz) for each color

(only 2,080 total yd are used in the warp, but you'll need the extra to wind the random stripes).

Weft: Classic Mohair (980 yd/lb, Item 165), slate gray #16, 1,936 yd (2 lb).

Notions

Vogue #7783, Misses' Cape and Shawl, size 12–14; 1 yd medium-weight smooth wool fabric 45" wide for collar and cuff facings; 9 yd double-fold bias trim; interfacing; buttons as specified in the pattern; matching sewing thread.

Yarn and pattern sources

Barrington Mohair is available from Webs. Victorian Mohair and Classic Mohair are available from Halcyon Yarn. Vogue patterns are available from most fabric stores.

Warp order and length

320 ends 6½ yd long (allows 10" take-up and 26" loom waste) of random pairs of the seven colors as described in Figure 1. To thread, alternate the two colors in each stripe.

Warp and weft spacing

Warp: 8 epi (2/dent in a 4-dent reed or 1/dent in an 8-dent reed). Width in the reed: 40".

Weft: 8 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 198" (5½ yd).

Finished dimensions

Amounts produce a length of yardage 36" × 180" (5 yd), enough for a medium-size cape.