



All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1)

By Julie Parker

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The three books in Julie Parker's Fabric Reference Series explain the different fabrics made from silk, cotton and wool, using plain English instead of technical jargon. A detailed description of each fabric is illustrated with a real cloth example, right there on the same page, which clarifies in the simplest way what a silk shantung, cotton seersucker or boiled wool actually looks and feels like.

All About Silk is the first volume in the series. A brief introduction covers the history of silk, the main sources of silk and the silk textile industry, followed by descriptions and samples of 32 silk fabrics, in alphabetical order: batiste de soie, broadcloth, brocade, charmeuse, chiffon, China silk, cloque, crepe, crepe de Chine, douppioni, four-ply silk, gabardine, georgette, habutai, jacquard, knit, matelasse, matka, noil, organza, peau de soie, pongee, printed silk, sandwashed silk, shantung, suiting, surah, taffeta, Thai silk, tussah silk, tweed, velvet.

All About Silk is packed with information about the different weaves, yarns and finishes used to make silk fabrics. Terms such as cultivated silk, wild silk, raw silk and spun silk are clearly explained. The author uses simple drawings, an easy-to-read, consistent format and clear uncomplicated language.

Other books in the series include All About Cotton, with 40 cotton samples, and All About Wool, with 35 wool samples.

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Editorial Review

Review

Explores the most versatile, popular and luxurious of all fabrics. Information on silk's history, the silk industry and silk's allure and limitations are included along with some details about the *Bombyx mori* (silk moth) a creature whose behavior makes it as singular as the fabrics made from its cocoons. The 32 swatches give you a chance for hands-on evaluation of the various silk types before seeking one for your next silk creation. Accompanying each swatch is a checklist covering more than 100 aspects of the fabric, including its care, uses, price range, wearability, suggested styles and the ease or difficulty of working with the fabric. ...A readable and enjoyable exploration from the "soft-as-down" habutai to the slubs and texture of douppioni. -- *Ann Price, Sew News, Nov. 1992*

A new concept in sewing books is not easy to come by, but Julie Parker has one, and it's a winner. Her *All About Silk* includes real samples of 32 different silk fabrics, which clarifies in the most obvious way what a matelass or a peau de soie actually looks and feels like. Each mounted swatch is 2-1/2 by 4 in., and comes with a full-page checklist explaining its qualities from the sewer's point of view. Mail-order silk sources and a host of silk facts are included. Great idea! -- *David Page Coffin, Threads, Dec. 1992/Jan. 1993*

A set of very readable, useful books. ... Many not-so-well-written 'trade' manuals run into the three figures if they include samples, so these are certainly being pushed to the front of my birthday 'wish list.' They would make a great buy for a club library and excellent gifts for any textile student. -- *Machine Knitting News, July 1997*

At last, there are two resource books available to the home sewer that provide everything you need to know about cotton and silk. ...Easy to use and a pleasure just to leaf through, these two books are definitely worthy of being included in your home library. -- *Vogue Patterns, Sept./Oct. 1993*

Fascinating information about commercial silk fabrics accompanies the 32 swatches in this handy reference, and tips for sewing and care are included with each swatch. Written to help the home sewer judge fabric before buying, this book should also be useful to anyone weaving or printing on silk. -- *Handwoven, Nov./Dec. 1993*

If you would like to be able to ask for a fabric by name, hold an intelligent conversation about fabric, or locate a fabric you have spotted in ready-to-wear, Julie Parker's Fabric Reference books are for you. -- *From Sandra Betzina Webster, syndicated sewing columnist, Oct. 1993*

This thorough and well-organized handbook will prove valuable to anyone working with silk, whether focusing on clothing design or construction. -- *Julie Berner, Northwest Fiber Network, Nov./Dec. 1992*

Though written primarily for sewers, a weaver's knowledge is much enriched by the contents of these books. ... Julie Parker's background is in editing and she puts her skills to good use in making the text absolutely clear. If you've ever felt a little overwhelmed in a good fabric store, these books are for you. -- *Madelyn van der Hoogt, Weaver's, Spring 1997*

Unlike many textile books, *All About Silk* is understandable and not at all dry. The attractive layout of the book should win an award for clarity and ease of use. -- *Teri Hales, Sewer's SourceLetter, Winter 1993*

About the Author

Julie Parker is a former newspaper editor turned fabric junkie. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in communications from the University of Washington in Seattle and a second bachelor's degree in apparel design from Western Washington University in Bellingham. She was a newspaper editor for 10 years before returning to school to study clothing design. She is the author of three books and recently was hired by the Wool Bureau in New York to write a guide to wool fabrics that was distributed to members of the garment industry throughout North America. Her most recent book, *All About Wool*, was a finalist in the crafts category of the 1997 Small Press Book Awards. She lives in Seattle.

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I wrote this book because I wanted to know what I was looking at when I went to the fabric store. I have been sewing for more than 20 years, but until recently, fabric made no more sense to me than it did when I made my first dress back in the sixth grade.

A trip to the fabric store was inspiring and confusing. Colors and textures caught my eye, but I knew little about the different types of fabrics and their characteristics.

I was familiar with terms like twill, tissue faille and crepe, but I didn't know what they meant. I didn't understand the distinction between crepe chiffon and chiffon taffeta. I thought organdy and organza were the same thing. I thought damask and jacquard were different.

When I began to ask questions, I didn't get satisfactory answers. I got more confused. And I discovered that many other people who work with fabric don't know any more about it than I did.

I consulted sewing and textile books, and quickly discovered that some fabrics have three or four names, some terms describe three or four fabrics, and some terms have three or four spellings. It's normal to be confused.

I was overwhelmed by vague and conflicting descriptions and industry jargon. Textile dictionaries are quite technical: They speak of picks and ends, bilateral fibers, warp beams, eight-harness looms, weft yarns, calendaring, gassing, singeing and face-finished goods.

None of that makes much sense to me. What I want to know is how each fabric looks, feels and behaves, how to use it and how to care for it. I want to know how much I can expect to pay for it and where to buy it. When I pay \$30 a yard for three yards of silk, I want to make that purchase with confidence in my ability to choose the right fabric for my project.

Those who lack confidence in their fabric-selecting skills are advised to stick to the list of fabrics suggested on the back of most pattern envelopes. This is not as easy as it sounds, for two reasons:

The lists usually include confusing, oversimplified or vague terminology.

Even when the information is clear, it is not very useful, because fabric stores seldom use such terms to label their products.

Most fabric labels include the fiber content, the price and, in many cases, a recommended method of care. Some stores routinely provide additional information about the weave, the country of origin, the fabric's weight and so forth, while others make no effort to do so.

This is not a conspiracy to keep customers in the dark. Many stores do not identify fabric types because they simply don't know what they are.

For starters, only a few fabric types can be easily identified and accurately labeled. Descriptions of similar types of fabrics often overlap; distinctions are not clear and usually represent someone's preference or opinion rather than fact. You might call a fabric "damask," while I prefer to call it "jacquard." We would both be right.

That's because there are no hard and fast rules about defining fabric. The textile industry is creative and competitive, driven by consumer demands for fashion and function. Weaves, fibers, dyes and finishes can be mixed together in a mind-boggling number of combinations. As fabrics evolve, definitions change.

Adding to the confusion is the natural desire of textile mills and garment manufacturers to market their products by suggesting an air of distinction, novelty or exclusivity. The easiest way to do this is to give the product a catchy name. And almost anything goes, as long as the manufacturer gives equal time to the fabric's fiber content.

The catchy name may refer to the fiber, the weave, the finish or the garment itself, resulting in a jumble of confusing terms. A number of very different items often wind up bearing similar names, even when they have nothing in common.

The confusion is compounded when an item becomes popular enough to receive media attention. Constant use of a catchy marketing term often creates the impression that the name refers to a standard type of fabric with clearly defined characteristics, when it does not.

Finally, some fabrics don't have assigned names. Mills frequently use numbers, rather than names, because it is easier to keep track of fabric No. 3754 than "lightweight silk crepe with jacquard figures." When one of these numbered fabrics is described in terms of fabric types, it is based on the expertise and opinion of the person giving the description, rather than an industry standard for the fabric.

In spite of this, some fabrics are easily defined. It's not difficult at all to conjure up an image of corduroy, velvet, denim or canvas. Most people can visualize a terry cloth bathrobe and an oxford shirt.

These are what the textile industry calls staple fabrics. Staple fabrics have steady sales over an extended period of time. They are produced in response to a large and continuous demand, they have been around for years and they aren't going to disappear in the near future.

Novelty fabrics are variations of staple fabrics. They usually resemble certain fabrics, even if they aren't exactly the same. So while it is next to impossible to accurately define all fabrics, it is easy to describe staple fabrics and to apply that knowledge to everything else. That's where this book fits in.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Musselwhite:

This All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1) usually are reliable for you who want to become a successful person, why. The main reason of this All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1) can be on the list of great books you must have is usually giving you more than just simple studying food but feed you with information that possibly will shock your previous knowledge. This book is actually handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions in e-book and printed ones. Beside that this All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1) giving you an enormous of

experience such as rich vocabulary, giving you test of critical thinking that could it useful in your day exercise. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

Enrique Hayes:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the extra time or they will get lots of stress from both way of life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not really a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is actually All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1).

Mia Shaw:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you is All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1) this reserve consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. That book was represented how does the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That's why this book ideal all of you.

Ashley Johnson:

Is it you who having spare time subsequently spend it whole day through watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This All About Silk: A Fabric Dictionary & Swatchbook (Fabric Reference Series, Volume 1) can be the solution, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these ebooks have than the others?

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