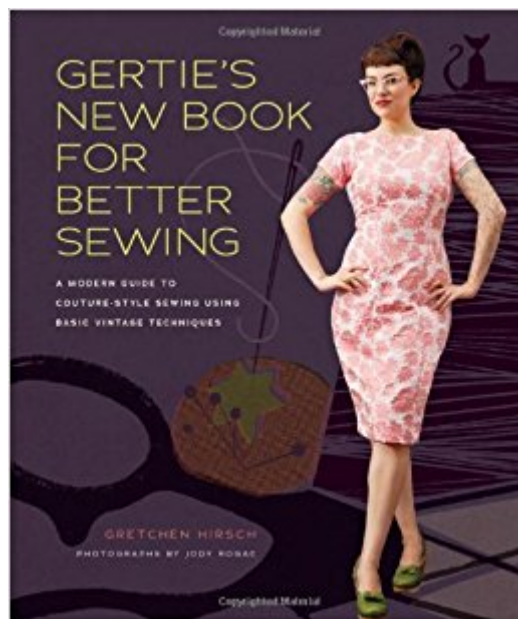




The book was found

Gertie's New Book For Better Sewing:: A Modern Guide To Couture-Style Sewing Using Basic Vintage Techniques (Gertie's Sewing)



Synopsis

Gretchen Hirsch is a passionate home seamstress, a sought-after sewing teacher, and the creator of one of the web's most popular sewing blogs: *Gertie's New Blog for Better Sewing*. The blog began as a way for readers to follow Hirsch's progress as she stitched all 14 fashions from the iconic 1950s sewing book *Vogue's New Book for Better Sewing* (a Julie & Julia-esque experiment for the modern sewist). It quickly became a place for Hirsch to share tutorials and lively posts about sewing as it relates to fashion history, pop culture, body image, and gender. An extension of the blog, *Gertie's New Book for Better Sewing* is a hardworking reference title packed with lessons on couture techniques and customization, as well as an inimitable pattern collection featuring 25 wardrobe essentials and variations inspired by vintage fashion and Gertie's spirited, modern style. Praise for *Gertie's New Book For Better Sewing*:

- "If you read *Gertie's New Blog for Better Sewing*, you already know that Gretchen Hirsch is all about teaching basic sewing skills that some of us (guilty!) may have skipped right over when we learned to sew. Now you can find all of Gretchen's sewing knowledge in one place." —Martha Stewart.com
- "Like her blog, Hirsch's book is like a chat with a friend who happens to be an expert seamstress. Even if the vintage-inspired garments aren't your style, there's plenty to learn from this book." —Library Journal
- "The styles are all rocked out with the tattoo-clad Gertie as the model. If you love a retro pattern, then this book is the one for you." —CraftGossip.com
- "White paper templates, not tissue! These will make it easier to trace." —Sew Spoiled
- "I personally love the finishing details on well-made garments and found this book to be a fantastic resource for adding techniques to my repertoire." —ThreadBias.com
- "Maybe my favorite part of the book is the Vintage to Modern dictionary. If you ever use vintage patterns or shop for vintage or retro-y clothes, you'll love this spread!" —Adventures in Dressmaking
- "The featured wealth of skills in a range of garment-sewing techniques are perfect for the home sewer with a thirst to learn how to create pieces for her own wardrobe." —EcoSalon.com
- "Her new book is an excellent extension of the blog that includes a fantastic collection of nine patterns to create your own vintage-inspired wardrobe." —SewNews.com
- "One of my favourite aspects of the book is that it pulls back the curtain on construction and reveals what the insides of the garments look like. It's really helpful to take a peek at how another stitcher finishes her seams and keeps the whole thing hanging together — a very clever touch." —Tilly and the Buttons
- "We love it, and we're so excited to

have it in hand. It's wonderful to be able to infuse some "Gertie style" into our sewing. All the projects are great, and the layout of the book is really easy to use and navigate. It has a great vintage, yet modern look.

Sew Mama Sew "Gertie's New Book for Better Sewing is a fun, new pattern book, featuring sewing patterns that embody author Gretchen Hirsch's fresh take on vintage style."

CRAFTzine.com "If you read Gretchen Hirsch's New Blog for Better Sewing, you already know that Gretchen Hirsch is all about teaching basic sewing skills that some of us (guilty!) may have skipped right over when we learned to sew. Now you can find all of Gretchen's sewing knowledge in one place."

MarthaStewartLiving.com "This is not down-and-dirty sewing, but studied and time consuming. Which is awesome."

Angry Chicken "Since most women are a size bigger in the hips than in the waist, the pattern proportions in the book are already adjusted to take this difference into account. When I read this in the sizing guide, I actually got out of my chair and did a little happy dance. Three cheers for patterns that are actually shaped like the women who will be using them!"

The Zen of Making "This book overflows with pictures, drawings and diagrams to ensure your sewing success. She also includes a whopping 25 patterns, making this book a steal! Sure to be a reference for your sewing room and guaranteed to be a resource you turn to for zippers and buttons . . . even if you don't make a single pencil skirt."

Generation Q Magazine "If you are a fan of the mid-century vintage look, this book is a must-buy. Hirsch's instructions are excellent, and use new technologies and techniques that didn't exist 50 years ago."

Examiner.com

Book Information

Series: Gertie's Sewing

Hardcover-spiral: 208 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams; Spi edition (September 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1584799919

ISBN-13: 978-1584799917

Product Dimensions: 8 x 1.4 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 149 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #150,845 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #112 in Arts, Crafts & Sewing >

Sewing > Sewing Patterns #170 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Needlework](#) #199 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Fashion](#)

Customer Reviews

Gretchen Hirsch writes *Gertie's New Blog for Better Sewing* (blogforbettersewing.com) and teaches sewing in New York City, around the country, on PBS's *It's Sew Easy*, and on Craftsy.com. She lives in Beacon, New York.

The first part of this book is great. Lots of information on vintage sewing techniques explained in an easy to understand way. The art for the book is spectacular. Sun Young Park is a wonderful talent and I look forward to seeing more of her work. The problems are centered around the patterns. First- the size chart doesn't have an accompanying figure to show you where exactly to measure yourself. Early in the book Gertie talks about measuring and recommends using your high bust measurement. But I'm still not clear if she wants the reader to use a high bust or bust measurement. (see edit below) Second- there are no technical drawings of the garments. There are some artistic renderings throughout, but not all of them match the patterns, nor are they paired with the patterns. And there are no technical drawings of back views. Third- the patterns lack lengthen and shorten lines. Fourth- some of the patterns seem like they're not just inspired by Vogue's New Book for Better Sewing, but that they are the exact same Vogue patterns that have been made larger and then multisized. i.e. the portrait blouse, the bow-tied blouse, and the sultry sheath (she says that she wanted to include a version of that dress but with a different neckline. It appears to be the same dress (jumper version) down to the uneven dart placement). The uneven dart placement drives me crazy. I wish Gertie had moved the darts so they lined up. For someone who wants to sew the Vogue projects, but doesn't want to spend the money buying the individual patterns, this is a great option for them, but it didn't appeal to me and I wish the book had stated that some of the same patterns were included. And yes, the fit bothered me a little. Some of the clothes look too tight in some areas and too loose in others. And sometimes the clothing looks vaguely upholstered. Anyway, the first part of the book is wonderful, the information for sewing the patterns is ok, but the patterns present a few problems.

*the sizing~ Early in the book Gertie recommends using a high bust measurement. Hers is 36". Her full bust is 39" and her waist is 30". Later she says she created her own sizing using herself as a size 8 and then graded up and down from there. But when you get to the sizing chart, size 8 is 38"-30"-42". So do you use a high bust like she recommends

earlier or a full bust which is closer to the size 8 given in her chart? There lies my confusion.

My biggest beef with this book is the writing style: I wish Ms. Hirsch had cleaned up her blog-style writing a little bit more in favor of something that sounded more professional and more like something we would expect from someone who bills herself as an editor and a writer. She starts far too many sentences with "Being a [whatever] . . . ". I know she meant to sound approachable, but it makes the book feel a bit flavor-of-the-month and less like a respectable sewing reference. Her section on fabric types wasn't meant to be expansive but I still wish it had been more comparative. Descriptions are nice but less useful to people who don't have samples on hand to determine whether organza is lighter than chiffon. I wish that she hadn't snubbed quilting cotton wholesale. I thought it was odd that she passed over denim and chambray--the classic casual shirtwaist fabric--in her section on fabric types but included gingham, apparently because it's cute. Most cotton gingham readily available today is either sloppily-woven faux homespun or awful cotton-polyester blend, and the stuff that isn't is usually, well, printed quilting cotton. Furthermore, if you're in the market for a crisp white cotton blouse, you cannot do better than Kona, which is opaque and an absolute dream to handle (as anyone who does applique can tell you). I agree, too, with the reviewer I read somewhere (?) who wished that the clothing had been shown on somebody other than a whole series of Gerties. Between the drawings and the photographs, there is an awful lot of Gertie in the book. Not that we don't like her, but she happens to have a figure that lends itself well to 1950's-style clothing, and those of us who have figures that don't would like to see what her designs look like when adapted, say, for my thin shoulders and low bust. Page 84: Half-size patterns " . . . are delineated by odd numbers, rather than the even numbers of misses sizes". This isn't very clearly stated: Petite patterns are sized in *odd-number body measurements* (bust 37, for example) instead of the even-number measurements (bust 34, 36, etc.) used for regular misses' sizes. Petites are also proportioned a little differently to fit womanly figures. Juniors' patterns are given odd size numbers (size 11, 13, etc.) but the body measurements are still usually given in even numbers. I have not yet had time to try the patterns but I like the way the directions are laid out, with necessary materials and "Key Skills" in a colored box on the first page of the project. I wish, though, that Gertie had been standing in the picture of the drop-waisted cocktail dress so we could see what it looked like, and I wish overall that the dresses in the examples had been made of lighter fabrics without busy patterns so that their details would show up better. This book might be useful as a bridge book between beginner projects and more advanced and demanding dressmaking. I would say it's advanced-beginner level. I haven't decided yet if I will keep it. Readers will need to be familiar with

standard sewing terms and comfortable with their machines but won't already need to have learned more than basic skills. None of the information here is groundbreaking but she does a reasonable job of explaining not only what to do, but why it should be done.

I've made two outfits from the enclosed patterns, which I traced with Swedish Tracing paper. I find her drawings clear and photos were you need them. Since Gertie, or Gretchen Hirsch, loves tailoring, you do get a lot of that throughout. This is not a beginners book. This is for making realistic, but not perfectly vintage clothing, because I prefer nylon zippers, or you can go all out and find the metal zips and vintage fabric. I don't find her pieces costume-y at all. I am not sure head-to-toe vintage is my thing, but one retro piece made well, and you get clear instructions for sewing, adds character to your look and compliments. No one ever asks me if I made that. I have made the Portrait Blouse, The Pencil Skirt and the Bow Tie Blouse. I am about to start the strapless party dress.

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