



SUMMER *Daze*

by Gigi Renee

*A*s a natural-born treasure hunter and gatherer, I have been collecting beautiful textiles including silk, velvet, lace, embroidery, needle point, and other unusual finds all of my life. These pieces come to me through vintage shops, flea markets, thrift stores, antique malls, and the castoffs of others. After years of collecting these treasures, I was inspired to purge my obsession and use these pieces to create things of beauty and function. This has become my creative outlet and results in beautiful items for others' enjoyment.

Recycling is an integral part of my work. Taking throwaways and transforming them into treasures by creating something uniquely beautiful and functional is my passion; a reincarnation of magical times forgotten that translates into romantic, playful garments that are inspiring to wear. Unconventional fashion has always been a part of my avant-garde life and free-spirited expression. You can find me wearing these pieces as well as fashioning them for others.

For me, it's always about finding a new challenge and discovering the evolution of my designs. It would not be as much fun to make the same pattern over and over again. Although some designs may be similar along a theme, there are always variations making each piece different. It is part of my originality to intentionally use imperfect pieces of material because I believe some flaws give the garment its own

character. In the end, every design created is a unique one-of-a-kind wearable piece of art where you can always expect the unexpected. Each design starts with the spark of an idea that leads into an intentional dream process and a silhouette sketch. Then the fun begins with the delightful process of sorting through my personal bins of incredible textiles to find that one inspirational piece to build a design around. It is part of my creative process to play with the fabrics I have chosen on the dress form to start building a design before strategically beginning the sewing process. Summer Daze can be layered in combinations with many other garments. Tank tops in the summer, knits in the winter, over a slip dress, with jeans or a full skirt. Just stand in front of your mirror, use your imagination, and have fun with it. ▶

Tools & Materials

- Buttons: vintage
- Doilies
- Dye: organic, color of choice
- Fabric softener
- Lace
- Serger
- Sewing machine
- Thread: matching dye
- Trim: crochet



Tips

- Decide on the color you will be dyeing the garment before you start to sew so you can match thread to the color of the dye. White thread will not dye and your stitch line will be very visible. This is not attractive, of course, as I learned by trial and error.
- Preshrink all fabric before assembly. This will ensure the desired fit.
- Use quality materials no matter what. It makes a difference between a cheap design and an elegant one.

Gigi Renee is the innovative visionary and owner of Vintage Moon, an eclectic vintage boutique and design studio in Asheville, North Carolina. It is here she creates and sells her clothing line, Runaway Gypsy. For more information, go to vintagemoonasheville.com.

Technique

There are two ways you can complete the dyeing process. You can dye pieces before assembly or after the garment is already sewn. If you have stiff pieces of crochet or lace, soak them in warm water and fabric softener for one hour using 1 gallon of warm water to one cap full of softener. Wash and dry. Set up your color dye as per instructions on package. Do not wet garment before dipping. Dyeing a dry garment will give the color a more vintage, uneven, faded look. If you want a solid, even look, soak in water before dyeing. Wash in cold water and dry on low. Gather your fabric pieces together and start assembly. It is best to double stitch everything for extra support because of the wide gaps between the crochet. ♦

