

Volume One
Issue Two



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Focused
Joyful

Articles

- [Fashion](#)
- [Interior Design](#)
- [Food and Nutrition](#)
- [Grammar](#)
- [Media](#)
- [For Kids](#)

Features

- [Bitmap Theatre](#)
- [3-D Scansion](#)
- [Philosophy Illustrated](#)

Coming Soon

- [Photography](#)
- [Business/Politics](#)
- [Gardening](#)

Past Issues

- [Volume 1, Issue 1](#)

[RETURN TO
CURRENT ISSUE](#)

Fashion

Billowesque
by
Etienne

Sylvie's caftan fluttered as she crossed the room, a wafting sleeve catching on a potted cactus. The other guests barely noticed, but she felt her embarrassment begin to blossom. It was not the entrance she had dreamt of.

Yes, they sometimes make it difficult to be graceful. In favor for their slimming effect, caftans can also be awkward and, in the wrong light, more revealing than intended. They may shimmer delightfully in an early May breeze, but in the turgid humidity of August, they cling in all the wrong places and droop soggily beneath the arms. Often, the V-neck style is charming, but it tends to overemphasize and draw attention to the midriff. A separate sash makes a wonderful accessory that counteracts this effect and adds flow to the look.

**In the turgid humidity
of August, they cling
in all the wrong places.**

The hooded caftan offers an entirely different image. It conjures up the exotic sensuality of the Mediterranean and the timeless treasures of the Orient while adding an extra layer of mystery. It functions perfectly as a beach cover-up as well.

Let's take a look, shall we, at some of the more common caftan fabrics:

Silk

Of course, la creme. Smoothly accentuates each curve, regardless

of proportion. An allurements to view, an enticement to touch. Has a tendency, however, to "bunch and ride".

Polyester

Don't laugh. This proletarian fabric wins the practicality and durability awards hands down. And, curiously, is the material that best works for floral prints.

Cotton

Rugged, but prone to fading. And let's not even begin to discuss ironing. Most appropriate for caftans with bodice and sleeve trimming.

As for Sylvie, well, her runway triumphs seemed so far away. She had forgotten that the garment is always in control. Take note the next time you prepare your evening's wardrobe.

[RETURN TO
CURRENT ISSUE](#)



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