

ASG SEWING HALL OF FAME

MEET: CLAIRE SHAEFFER

At ASG Conference 2012 in Houston, Claire Shaeffer was inducted into the ASG Sewing Hall of Fame.

Like so many others, Claire's original interest in sewing grew out of a quest for clothes that fit. A youthful enthusiasm for acrobatics left her with a slim frame but strong shoulders. When she got married, the only ready-to-wear that would fit her was Pucci. But with her new husband in medical school, fine fashion was definitely not in the budget. And so she learned to sew, then she received an A.A. degree in fashion design and industrial sewing from Laney College in Oakland, Calif. (She also holds a B.A. in art history.) Through thrift shops and store sales, Claire slowly built a collection of couture clothes that includes treasures from Yves Saint Laurent, Hardy Amies, Ungaro, Balenciaga, and, of course, Chanel. She has visited factories and workrooms for couture and high-end ready-to-wear in cities around the world, including Paris, London, New York, Rome, Florence, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

As a respected researcher and authority on couture techniques, Claire has taken the concept of sewing as an art to its highest level. She was the first sewing educator to introduce sewers to the wonders of the Chanel jacket, with its unique construction details and unusual trims. She has a legion of fans who have created couture-worthy, Chanel-



Claire shows the inner construction of a Chanel jacket.

inspired jackets following the techniques that Claire teaches in her books, articles, and workshops.

Her expertise has been recognized far beyond the borders of the sewing world. Claire has been a guest of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, working with their docents and helping them to identify couture construction. She is also on call to identify vintage finds for the Phoenix Art Museum and serves on the Costume Council for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In 2009, she worked six weeks in New York City as a consultant on the Worth/Mainbocher project at the Museum of the City of New York.

As a sewing educator, Claire covers a wide range of topics. Her books, including "Fabric Sewing Guide," "The Complete Book of Sewing Shortcuts," "Couture Sewing Techniques," and "Sewing for the Apparel Industry," as well as her new CDs and DVDs and her continuous stream of sewing articles, promote a standard of excellence that makes them key additions to many sewers' libraries. She is a contributor to *Threads* magazine and *Vogue Patterns* magazine. She has also designed a popular collection of couture-inspired classic designs for Vogue Patterns. In 2003, the Association of Sewing & Design Professionals honored Claire with their Lifetime Achievement Award.

Claire is a long-time supporter of the American Sewing Guild. From ASG's beginnings 35 years ago, Claire has enthusiastically supported the



concept of an organization devoted to advancing sewing as an art and life skill. She has taught at ASG conferences, conducted workshops and seminars for many ASG chapters, and has generously donated her time and writing expertise to contribute articles to *Notions*.

*Dear Sewing Guild Members,
I am truly thrilled to receive the Sewing Hall of Fame Award. I treasure your many years of support and your friendships.*

*Thank you for this wonderful honor.
All good wishes for continued success in the years ahead and many happy hours of sewing.
Fondly,
Claire Shaeffer*