

Wisteria

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This evening gown, which I titled Wisteria, was inspired by the climbing Wisteria shrub with fragrant purple flowers. Wisteria has beautiful delicate clusters of flowers, in an elegant deep purple, a color associated with royalty through the ages. On the other hand, it is a hardy plant, native the eastern United States, commonly grown and easy to grow. The contrast between the royal, exquisite flower and the common, accessible plant formed the inspiration. I wanted my dress to be ornamental and elegant, seemingly expensive like the flowers, yet developed from basic, sturdy, and low cost materials like the plant.

My design is constructed from a hand dyed cotton lace, which is used in the front bodice and the skirt of the dress, and a brown/gold mesh with glitter, which is used in the back bodice and part of the front bodice of the dress. I mixed black and wine colored dyes to dye the white lace to achieve the dark purple hue, and I embellished selected seam lines with glass beads. I also used a navy piping in the center front and back seams of the dress as well as on the seam lines that outline the curves of the hips. The placement of these details were very important because they helped to emphasize the natural curves of the body. I designed the silhouette to compliment the natural curves of the female figure, keeping selected areas sheer to show the body curves through the dress. I drafted the pattern for the dress, creating a basic princess bodice, and an 8-gore skirt with a mermaid-flare that starts just above the model's knees.

The woman I envisioned wearing my dress is elegant but loves simplicity. She does not want the shape of her body to be hidden under a number of design details or a boxy silhouette. She wants her natural curves to be enhanced. She appreciates the details in designs, but does not want to have the details to overpower each other. She strives to feel elegant, yet seductive. The simplicity





of the shape of the dress balances out the intricacies of the lace fabric along with the glass beading details. The result is a evening dress with eye-catching details, but with an overall simplistic look.

Wisteria is alluring in the way it contours to the model's natural hourglass figure, just as the climbing shrub clings to a building or a wall. Wisteria is enchanting and seductive, regal and majestic, strong and a survivor.

This garment was designed for the student organized fashion show at Cornell University on April, 12, 2014.