DESIGN & MAKE

BY HEATHER LUKE

Sylva: side buttoned cushion

Side buttoned cushion

The tree design is chic, restful and timeless; the buttoning is, to say the least, subtle, but it is there and none the worse for that. So often it's the subtlety of detail that supplies the mystery, the 'je ne sais quoi'. Why does this thing work and that not ?

The lack of piping or edging detail – any kind of 'frame' – allows the tree to remain free, and the design is complemented rather than constrained by the single line of buttoning along one side .

DESIGN

The single line of buttoning used here complements the order and structure of the design, and just adds that little something – if you cover the right side and look at it without, you can see how the cushion is still lovely due to the pattern, but also how the whole cushion is elevated by this simple detail.

Buttons can be larger or smaller, placed closer together or further apart or in patterns. The button row can extend from the top of the cushion to the bottom or be limited to just a few. The only thing to watch is that the sides don't gap between buttons. As a rule of thumb, the fewer buttons the deeper the facings would need to be. So for just a single button, extend the facings to approx. 10– 15 cms (4" – 6"). If in doubt pin a lining or calico cover over the cushion pad to check how deep the facings will need to be, before you start.

Big cushions are needed for big spaces, where small ones can look a bit silly – and certainly lost. In the right place one or a few large cushions look so much better than any number of smaller ones. They make impact, fill an empty space or a chair back, are perfect for good floor cushions, afternoon naps and dens. They are comfortable and supportive for garden siestas.

The trees fabric is from Larsen and is called Wind – black L8861 – 02.
For the back and the garden sofa seat we used an outdoor material from Pierre Frey's Verandah collection – Ipanema 24

Make

MATERIALS

1. Cushion pad: We used a 65 x 65 cm (26" x 26") feather / down pad which is quite a substantial pad, and can be on the expensive side. Instead you could use large square bed pillows. Or any other size of pad.

2. Fabric: The cover is made with the button and buttonhole facings integral to it, so it needs approx. 15 cms (6") to the width of whatever cushion size you're making.

So for the width 1.5 + 65 + 15 + 3.0 x top to bottom 1.5 + 65 + 1.5. Or for the width (5/8"+ 26" + 6" + 1 1/4") x top to bottom (5/8" + 26" + 5/8")

The back and the front for this cushion require approx. 70 x 83 cms (approx. 29" x 33") for each.

We used different fabrics for the cushion photographed, but the principle remains the same whether the fabrics are the same, or two, or patchworked...

3. Buttons: 3- 6 depending on the size of buttons and the cushion size. They can be fabric covered or bought, in any design. Or beads.

4. Thread: Buttonhole thread or perle to make the buttonholes by hand.

5. Optional: 2 pieces fusible interfacing 68 x 15 cms (27 1/4" x 6") for lightweight fabrics.

CUT OUT

1. Cut out the cushion fronts and backs, bearing in mind that the cushion will be 65 cms (26") finished size , and that anything beyond this will become the facing, so plan any pattern accordingly. Press to remove any creases.

TO MAKE THE COVER

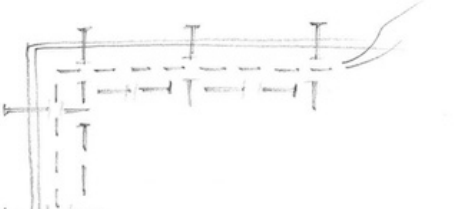
1. Place the cushion front onto the worktable right side up.

2. Place the back piece over the front piece, right side down. Pin the two layers together, pinning at approx. 3 cms (1 1/4") from the outside edges and then all around at right angles - these pins will stay in whilst the piece is being machined.

* If there is a definite pattern, direction , or motif that needs to be placed or centred on the cushion, it make life easier and avoids potential problems to always work with the fabrics placed on the table top to bottom, with the bottom edge nearest you.

Make

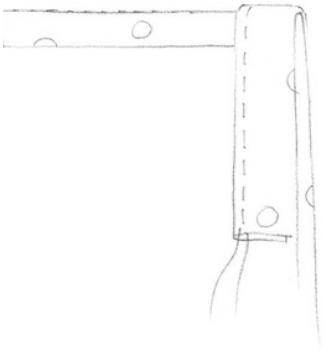
3. Stitch around three sides, the two longer sides and the non-buttoned end. Take out the pins.



4. Press over the stitching lines, from both sides. Press the seams open.

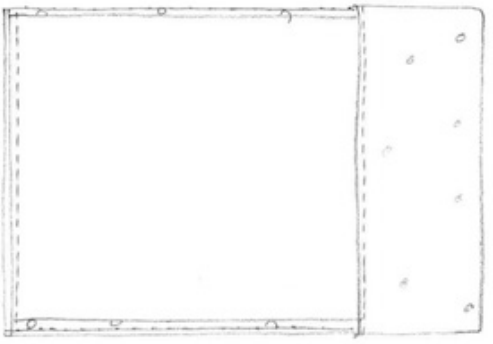
5. On the unstitched, buttoning side, press 3 cms (1 1/4") to the wrong side. Fold the raw edge under again to make a turning of 1.5 cms (5/8") with the raw edge tucked right into the folded edge.

* At this point, if the fabric needs to be interfaced, slip the interfacing under the fold, so that it goes right to the back. It should show 13.5 cms(5 3/8") beyond the folded edge). Pin. Stitch close to the folded edge. Take out the pins and press.



Make

6. Fold the right sides to the back by 15cms (6”). Press.



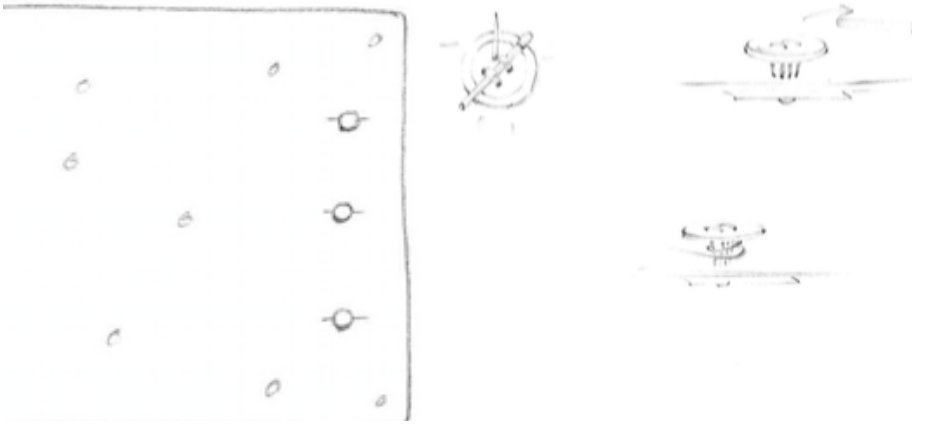
7. Turn the cushion right side out. Make good corners, press from the front.

TO MAKE THE BUTTONS AND BUTTONHOLES

1. Mark the button and buttonhole positions with crossed pins. Measure the gaps between them so that they are all equal. Mark the button position on the under layer and the buttonholes on the top layer. Here they are quite close to the edge, just 2.5 cms (1”) in.

2. Make the buttonholes, by hand or by machine. If you want to make them by hand, full instructions are in the Basic Techniques section.

3. When the buttonholes are made, check the buttoning positions. The buttons will be stitched to the facing only, not through to both layers. Cut out and pin a small square of fabric behind each button position. Stitch the buttons to the facing and through to the squares behind, which will help to support the main fabric. For thick fabrics, allow some easement, by making a longer shank. The tried an tested way to do this is with a matchstick, as shown.



An interior designers guide to home furnishings large and small, essential and ancillary, fun and serious. It's good to contribute to our own home furnishings however little time or expertise we have, so small projects like this , which are not so complicated and where the effect far outweighs the effort are well worth trying. Choosing a well woven, well designed fabric in the first place is a huge starting point, and if you really dislike making buttonholes, then they can be false.... without buttonholes.. ....sew the buttons right through and re-do them when you wash the cushion.

Project Ref: Sylva: side buttoned cushion

All rights reserved. Please make copies only for personal and educational use, and then always in entirety and with full credit. Thank you