



Today's post is brought to you by Julia Trice, designer of [this lovely pullover](#) from our Fall issue. Julia has contributed many wonderful pieces to the magazine, and her designs are always characterized by classic shapes and thoughtful details (case and point- [Nyame](#), [Evendim](#), and [Wingspan](#), just to name a few). In this post, which you can also find on [her blog](#), Julia shares how she combined a few simple elements to create a really gorgeous sweater, that can be [worn](#) in lots of different ways!

One of the things I've learned over the last few years of designing is to pay attention to elements that I like in clothing, and to try to understand why I like them and what feel they impart to a design. For me, this comes in handy when I want to tweak a design to create a specific mood, but it is also useful for any knitter who likes to personalize a pattern with modifications.



*The original sketch submitted to Twist.*

Ahni uses a couple of different elements to achieve various aspects of its overall look. I started with the stitch pattern. I love texture of all sorts, but I tend to knit a lot of lace and cables, and I wanted to explore other textures. In looking through stitch dictionaries, the little scale pattern stuck out to

me. I haven't really seen it used much (at all? I'm sure someone somewhere has used it!), and it has a lot of nice advantages: 1) it's easy to work; 2) it's fun to work; and 3) it has a very small pattern repeat which makes it a dream to grade. The third advantage won't matter to many of you unless you decide to tweak the pattern, but believe you me, it makes any potential tweak so much easier. The little scale pattern on its own has a pretty amorphous character. Worked in a sport weight yarn it could be delicate, but at a worsted to aran weight it has a much more substantial, rugged feel.



*Check out that lovely textured stitch.*

I've noticed that designs that really draw me in have an element of the unexpected, even if only subtle. So after deciding on the textured stitch pattern in the heavier yarn with a woody feel, I wanted to juxtapose it with some femininity. A good way to do that is with the neckline. Necklines

are really important to me. They may not be radical, but they are always purposeful. The scoop neck on Ahni is a perfect example. It's sexy. And do you know why? It's all about the collarbone. Everyone has one, and when showcased properly they are just lovely. The scoop neck highlights your collarbone by creating those long rows of ribbing that all lead to it, while at the same time not revealing a lot of shoulder or cleavage. That means sexy, but yet everywhere appropriate, which is a nice feature. It elongates the neck in a swanlike manner. You can use a scoop neck like Ahni's on just about any pullover and instantly give it a touch of romance. It's a nice tool to put in your arsenal.



*With the model's hair pushed back you can really see the neckline.*

I wasn't quite ready to stop at femininity, though. I wanted just a little more character. Unlike many of you folks, although I love the look of vintage on others, it doesn't usually work out so well on me.



(And I prefer to design things I can wear!) There are a few exceptions, however, and one of them is deep waist ribbing. Add deep waist ribbing and you can give a sweater an instant 1950's feel - va voom! - yet still have the piece look modern.



[Dr. Steph](#) of *ravelry* models her finished Ahni.

The last thing I decided on was the sleeves. I went with set-in sleeves to continue in the vein of femininity. There is just not another fit like them (well, maybe a contiguous sleeve, but that's another adventure), and when you want to portray a touch of elegance a fitted set-in sleeve is a good way to go. The deep ribbing on the sleeve was an easy choice - that was simply to blend. It mirrors the waist and neckline nicely and doesn't draw attention away from either.





*I love this photo - vintage-y and fun.*

So that was the thought process. If you don't already have a good idea of what you like and why, I highly recommend going into your closet and noticing things like neckline, waist, and sleeves and thinking about what they do for you and how they make you feel. Then the next time you want to



change the aura of a pattern up just a little bit, you will have elements in mind to draw on. I had great fun going through this process with Ahni, and I hope that those of you who end up knitting it enjoy the details as much as I did.