



Mid Week Moments #66

Wednesday 30 June 2010

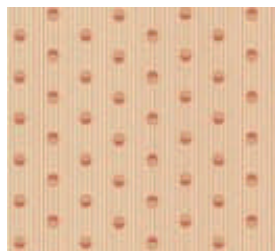
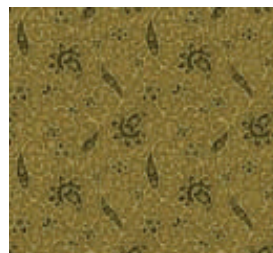
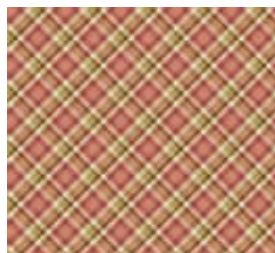
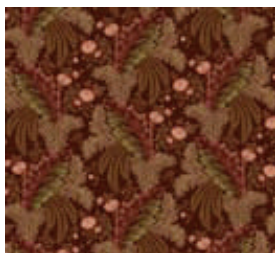
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Welcome to your Midweek Moments. In this week's issue we take a look at another well-known special-purpose hat in Who wants to be a Milliner? And as we stand poised on the brink of another new financial year, the big question is what to spend this year's tax return on? How about some of those gorgeous fabrics that you've had your eye on for a while down at Blueberries?

### 100 new fabrics from Puzzle Pieces



### Olde Cedar Chest



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Who wants to be a Milliner?

### The Secret Life of Hats, Episode 16 - The Chef's Hat



Like the academic's mortarboard (see Episode 3), the chef's hat is another example of special-purpose headwear that will probably never be worn as an item of fashion. Tall, voluminous and far too easy to parody, it is often mandatory in large commercial settings like the busy behind-the-scenes kitchens of hotels and restaurants, but will never be seen on the heads of style conscious television kitchen gurus like Nigella Lawson or Curtis Stone.

Also known as a toque blanche, which is French for "white hat", the classic chef's hat is often heavily starched and was originally pleated with exactly 100 folds, which was popularly supposed to represent the number of different ways of cooking an egg. The origins of this rather eccentric notion are unclear, although the number of pleats on modern chef's hats can still often indicate the rank of its wearer – the more experienced the chef, the more pleats on their hat. In 18th century France, where the toque blanche originated, it was the height of the hat that denoted rank in the kitchen, with taller hats indicating superiority.

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On a more practical level, the other reason for the enduring tradition of chef's hats was for sanitation and personal hygiene. It was Monsieur Boucher, the personal chef of 18th century French politician Talleyrand, who was the first person to insist on the wearing of the toque blanche for this purpose. This, combined with the influence of well-known French chefs of the time such as Auguste Escoffier and Marie-Antoine Careme, combined to make the chef's hat an internationally utilized item of headwear in the kitchen.

*Quote of the week: Ask not what your fabric can do for you, but what you can do for your fabric.*

Til next week!  
The Blueberries Team