How Silk Wraps are Made by Jermaine Brewer

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Pure silk is a luxurious fabric, still much sought after though now much more commercially available than it used to be. Modern silk production methods ensure that the silk used in the silk bags and silk wraps seen in this country is affordable and much easier to get hold of than in the past, when emperors and potentates used to use the fibre as currency.

In general, the silk of the silk moth caterpillar is used for manufacturing the fibre we know as silk. The industry is so large and lucrative that the moth silkworm is reared in captivity, farmed in massive quantities for the cocoon it weaves.

The shine you see in real silk wraps is caused by the triangularstructure of the fibre. When seen in cross section through a microscope, silk fibres look like prisms â€“ and because they are translucent they refract light. Hence the sheen on the silk, which it retains even after being dyed. Naturally, silk is white in colour.

Silk falls naturally in a pleasing fashion â€“ this is known as â€œdrapeâ€•. The natural tendency of silk to fa this way, combined with its sheen and its ability to keep the wearer cool in warm climates, and warm when the evening temperature starts to fall, has made it popular as a material for making high quality clothing for centuries. Silk wraps, which are designed to be worn as light embellishments to evening wear, are readily available in the UK in a variety of tones and colours.

Silk wraps are commonly used to added warmth and embellishment to outfits for special occasions â€“ garden parties; cocktail parties; launches; red carpet affairs; and weddings. Many wedding dresses are also made of silk.

It is thought that the quality of the silk depends on the food source the caterpillar is exposed to before it pupates. Caterpillars reared in large numbers in the controlled conditions of sericulture (the given name for silk farming) have a carefully controlled diet and may spin as much as a mile of silk before they die. The silk is harvested in one continuous thread, which is thought to be of better quality than the rougher wild silk, where food sources are not controlled and the cocoon is harvested once the animal has left it.

Silk wraps can be manufactured in two tones, with a front and reverse, making them suitable for use with a wide range of outfits and colour combinations. The silk wraps are simply reversed from light to dark in accordance with the prevailing theme of the outfit.

Modern silk garments, hand woven and embellished with designs, make excellent visual complements to the formal wear usually adopted by UK wearers. Hand weaving and complexity of design or embellishment adds a concomitant price tag to the item â€“ though even silk wraps of this standard are much less expensive than wild silk or the extraordinarily rare se silk, which comes from the noble pen shell.

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