

## Chapter 8 Clothing Design and Shaping

In the nineties, when I was first introduced to brain tanned buckskin, it was in the midst of being "rediscovered". At the time, the general feeling seemed to be that buckskin was such wonderful and exciting stuff that something made of it, or

really, *anything* made of it, was inherently worthwhile. One saw a lot of clothing that was just thrown together with a few ties here and there, in what I call the "caveman aesthetic". While I tend to agree that something made of buckskin is inherently better than the same thing made of most anything else, I am also a big advocate of really well designed and planned buckskin clothing. There is nothing wrong with the caveman aesthetic, it can be a great look and really draw attention to and showcase the wild, primal aspects of the leather. It is also good, however, to know how to make clothing of any style you choose, so that you are sporting the Pebbles and Bam-Bam style only when that is the look you are really going for, and not just because it is your only option. In my own work, I have tended to



Figure 1: A nicely crafted buckskin top using panels of different shades for shaping and visual effect.

move toward increasingly fitted and tailored garments, as I have generally found them to be more comfortable and functional. An added advantage is that it makes them easier to wear anywhere I want to—including around town. Of course, you could wear any kind of buckskin clothes anywhere you go, but you will quickly become aware that they draw a lot of attention. I consider wearing buckskin in public and urban environments and engaging with people about it to be important work. At the same time, there are times when all I want to do is buy some gas or groceries and go home. I don't always want to feel obliged to have conversations with strangers about my clothing. The more fitted garments make it easier to fly under the radar in town when you want to.

Regardless of the style you are most drawn to, my aim in work and in this book is to give you the tools you need to design and to create really functional, practical, beautiful clothing, which has the added advantage of being made out of the best material on earth. While more elaborate designs take more time in the planning