18th-century
Indian charmer

Soledad in
her closet

A fall '97
Sole coat

que beaded
from Paris

Beads for
color
inspiration

Soledad's Inspiration

Soledad's ideas come from art, books and the sexy tango women in Buenos Aires, her hometown. "They are all very feminine, with lots of heels and slits, lots of leg," she says. "I would love to dress characters in books, like Lady Chatterley. She needs to be sexier to keep up with her lover!"

Soledad in an 18th-century Afghan costume, a gift from her mother-in-law

Jade buttons from China

Vintage snakeskin bag from Buenos Aires

"Give me a bracelet and I can make a dress out of it," teases Soledad Twombly, the glamorous Argentine-born designer who launched her own clothing line, Sole Wardrobe, two years ago.

When you arrive at her airy, art-filled apartment on Gramercy Park, Soledad greets you with a bottle of glue in one hand and an antique marble in the other, which she's busy making into a ring to match the celery-green blouse she's wearing. Then she whisks you off to see the vintage buttons she's picked up, destined for the knee-length cashmere coat still on her drawing pad.

"I started making all those things I couldn't find," explains Soledad. "The perfect white shirt, the perfect pair of slacks—those basic things that everyone looks for but never finds."

Not only does this petite 31-year-old designer offer a selection of chic, classically tailored separates—sexy douppioni-silk blouses, simple, well-cut wool gabardine pants, sleek satin evening dresses, slinky bikinis in lilac and plum velour—she also makes beautiful one-of-a-kind pieces, using vintage fabrics and ethnic trinkets she finds in Asia and the Middle East. "I'm constantly on the move and always gathering," says Soledad, who

in her closet

By appointment only:
Soledad Twombly opens up her home
and even her own **closets** to a lucky clique of customers.
By Andrea Barnet

with her husband, painter and sculptor Alessandro Twombly, travels between New York, Argentina and Italy, where Alessandro's father, artist Cy Twombly, and mother live.

"For me, the fun is in the details," says the designer, who recently began reaching ready-to-wear customers through her design work for Stria, a New York company that makes private-label goods for Barneys New York, Burberrys and Paul Stuart. And the details are her stock-in-trade. Soledad is not just vigilant about the quality of every button and every bolt of fabric, she's also a fanatic when it comes to fit. "There is so much architecture to dressmaking—and all sorts of optical tricks. I can tailor a piece to make the legs look longer or the bust smaller. I have clients who say they can't wear sleeveless dresses. Then I show them a dress that is curved to flatten the upper arm, and suddenly their whole life has changed."

Sound impossibly expensive? It isn't. Though the prices of vintage pieces vary, pants retail for $175 to $190, silk blouses for $120 to $150, suits for $490. And even better, it's one-stop shopping. Clients wondering about jewelry or fretting over footwear need not worry; Soledad has already thought it out. "I love to collaborate," she says. "If you need a hat, I have someone to call. If it's shoes, I've already scouted for them."

"My clients are people who work," she says. "They don't have time to waste. I like them to leave knowing they've got everything they need."

Once, she even went so far as to pack a client's suitcase for her before a trip. Talk about traveling in style! ∎