

Darlene's Thread

Hello Sewing Friends,

January was a month of trying new things and right now my right knee feels like a cantelope. I have discovered that I'm more of a Yoga, dance and sculpt gal and that kickboxing and sports conditioning requires too much muscle cream. But I'm keeping up my happy neuron inducing mornings at the gym and I hope that you are sticking to it as well! I encouraged my mother to sign up at the YMCA and she has been going to classes there five days a week at age 83! If she can do it, so can you☺

Speaking of what you are capable of doing...Have you been finding ways to make last year's favorites into something fresh and exciting? I amputated the sleeves from an old cotton sweater to make a funky flowered scarf. You may want to recycle old ribbons by sewing them together to make your own fabric or try your hand at pin weaving. Check out my new projects this month.

January was also a domestic make-over month. After the holiday decorations are put away, it's an opportunity to take off the 'house blinders' and reassess your living environment. That's exactly what I did at **Bobbi Ray Carter's home**. Bobbi wanted her bedroom to feel more like a luxurious and romantic sanctuary where she could go to unwind and rejuvenate. Her varied schedule occasionally requires her to sleep in the daylight hours so we wanted the room to be inviting, peaceful and luxurious. I used only a straight and zig-zag stitch and my new SINGER Athena sewing machine.



The room is about 600sf—we're looking at the smaller corner but it expands with a vaulted ceiling on the opposite side. The enormous hand carved bedroom set is extremely weighty and the room needed more balance. The white walls were stark and the window treatments were outdated and too much light flooded in. Bobbi agreed that new end table lamps would be a worthwhile investment. The new lamps are three way and have a soft mood lighting option in the base. The intricately styled

stained glass lamps were not in scale with the room but they found a new home in the downstairs guest room.



This is an angled view exposing a side window.

It's amazing what a few cans of paint, fabric and trim can do! Bobbi is still going to have the green carpet replaced with a beautiful latte travertine to go with the end table and dresser tops but the contractor could not do it in time for our photo deadline. Look for another makeover in April when I turn Joan's new breakfast nook into a modern café.

Whether you're redecorating a room in your home or restyling an old wardrobe favorite, don't underestimate the allure of ornate details. The exotic beaded tassel trim added an audacious embellishment! Taking your time while planning the preliminary stages will pay handsome dividends on the back end.

SEWING TIPS:

1. When you rethread your machine, make sure that the presser foot lever is UP. Imagine the inside thread tension as a set of cymbals. The cymbals have to be open to slide the thread through. When you place your presser foot down to sew, the cymbals close and create tension on the thread. If you try to rethread with your cymbals closed, the thread rides on the outside rim of the cymbals and cannot engage proper tension. The sewing results can be disastrous! Remember to lift the presser foot.
2. Scotch guarding your winter outer ware can help the snowflakes and drizzle to accumulate on top of the fabric and not penetrate. This will not affect the texture or appearance of the base fabric.
3. If you plan to launder your project, wash and press the fabrics before you begin to remove sizing and finishes and avoid post wear shrinkage and color running.

4. You can gather lightweight fabrics and silks without having to change presser feet simply by tightening the tension. Backtack when you begin and the use a basting straight stitch. This is a quick and easy way to make ruffles.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: What Iron do you recommend?

A: When I'm not using my Rowenta Steam Generator , I use my Oliso electronic iron for many reasons. It's easy to fill, it heats up fast, it has plenty of steam, it has auto shut-off and I never have to tip it up. It stays flat all the time. After the first day I was comfortable with the touch sensitive up/down function.

Q: Can I sew Denim and Fleece on my new Inspiration?

A: Absolutely! For denim, use a denim needle or at least a size 16/90. Also use caution. Slow down over the speed bumps! For fleece, use a tiny zig-zag or a stretch overcasting stitch to avoid seams popping.

WHEN TO WATCH

There are no sewing shows until March. Check back again during our National Craft Month for more offerings from SINGER and BROTHER. Until then, feel free to browse our website first for all your sewing needs and if you have any questions or concerns, I invite you to write!

Together in 2009 we will surprise ourselves with improved creativity and skills. You CAN do it!

Continue to Sew Your Dreams,

Darlene