



Hello Sewing Enthusiasts,

Happy New Year! I'm typing this with arms that feel like wet dish rags due to my New Year's resolution: Work on the old BODY!!! I signed up at the YMCA and have been beating myself up in classes. (I refuse to turn into the very foodstuff I detest...marshmallow!)

New Year, New Leaf, New You... right? We all do it every year and then two months later, the resolutions fade into the background. This year we can keep them alive and growing and we'll celebrate together in December of '09 when we measure our accomplishments. Deal?

I think that if you look closely at mass produced items, you'll be surprised. There is little tailoring, poor fit and sloppy finishes. If you're going to make something that looks mass produced, just go buy it, it's probably less expensive. But if you want to make interesting items that stand out from the rest, unique garments that you can't find in the stores, pieces that exceed your expectations, then you have to invest some quality time with your new love...sewing.

My father always told me that anything worth doing was worth doing well so this year we're going to improve our sewing skills. I'm asking you to put aside the gluegun (at least for sewing projects) and dust off the sewing machine. If you're going to show it... You have to sew-it! We've got clothes to restyle and items to repurpose and throw-aways to recycle so set your thinking cap to 'out-of-the-box' and let's begin.

Let's consider a quick wardrobe assessment. What patterns, textures and styles are pleasing to you? Do you love the neckline on one blouse and the sleeves from another? If you haven't worn the garment for over a year, it's time to cannibalize your old styles to create something exciting and new by using proven elements that you know will work for you. It's the subtle art of borrowing.

Think of being a sewing adventurer when it comes to mixing fabric types such as silk and knits or when using color waves in unexpected combinations. 'Borrow' a sweater's full sleeves to add an unusual element of interest to a silk sheath dress or cut an old mini's hemline on the bias and add diagonal layers to make it the length you want.

If you get stuck, I invite you to Google me and write. Together in 2009, we can make a difference in your life with our sewing machines. I'll be adding projects and introducing quilting this month so keep checking back and feel free to browse our website first for all your sewing needs.

EMBROIDERY TIPS:

FUTURA embroidery with AUTO CROSS STITCH is for embroidering any digital design in a finish that resembles the fine skill of cross stitching. The advantage to doing it by machine is that the machine does all the work, it takes much less time and leaves no knots on the backside of the fabric. Below is a cross stitch of clip art or digital artwork. This is different than a photograph for which you would use the photo stitch software. Notice how all the stitches below on the pillowcase border are executed in tiny "X" patterns. You can set the size of these crosses in your AUTO CROSS STITCH wizard as it takes you step by step in the set up process when you're planning your embroidery design. The default setting as well as the one directly below are set at 2mm.



The stitches below on the kitchen hand towel are even closer and the border around the outside has been satin stitched for contrast. Remember that the larger the stitches are, the more 'hand-cross-stitched' it will look. So when you're looking for that 'heart-to-hand' touch, delve into your auto-cross-stitch software and go to town discover the new generation of cross-stitching!



NEW ITEMS

MELROSE CRAFT IRON

Introducing...My brand new “hot off the press” powerful Melrose Mini Craft Iron with temperature control and bursts of vertical steam that fits in the palm of your hand. It’s the perfect size for small clothes, quilt blocks, sewing & crafting --- even travel! This charming dynamo sports a non-stick Teflon soleplate with 4 steam holes and a seven foot nine inch cord!!!

The travel friendly Melrose non-stick iron has a detachable brush for vertically steaming napped fabrics while removing lint and pet hair. The vertical steam also helps to eliminate odors on dry clean items. This dual voltage wonder works dry or with steam to eliminate wrinkles and to set in pleats. The tiny presser is also a favorite among sewers and crafters for small piecework and appliqué projects.

The Melrose Mini Craft Iron comes with a two ounce beaker to measure and pour water into the opaque Caribbean blue reservoir.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: How do I make the FUTURA do the serging feature?

A: Make sure that the sewing machine is turned off and disconnected from your computer. (removing the silver USB cable). 2- Reset the feed dogs to their uppermost sewing positions. 3- Change the tension back to regular sewing. 4-Thread the machine upper and lower thread now as it is extremely difficult once the serging attachment is in place. 5- remove the embroidery foot or whatever foot you currently have on

the machine including the ankle or shank screw. 6- screw on the serger attachment making sure that the bent metal is grabbing the shank bar and that the lobster claw is around the needle bar on the opposite side . (see photo)



Once you have the foot in place,7- be sure to pre-clip the first inch BEFORE you set the fabric in place under the foot. 8- choose the overcasting stitch and give yourself plenty of room in the width to clear the center bar on the foot.



Q: What size needles do I use when I'm embroidering?

A: Your FUTURA comes with an assortment of needles for both wovens and stretch. I have the best success with the 14/90 for most embroidery, including those done with my Melrose thread. When you are embroidering a knit, use the ballpoint needles or else you could end up with a big jam of fabric in your bobbin area and subsequently, a ruined project. Remember to change them when you change projects or fabric types.

Q: My thread is shredding. What am I doing wrong?

A: If you're using a 40 weight tri-lobal polyester and are experiencing shredding, loosen the tension a bit. I often embroider with my tension all the way to 'O'. It doesn't *HAVE* to be on "E". I have to admit that when I use rayon thread on the FUTURA, I am also frustrated with shredding and disappointed with the results. Rayon is not as strong for high speed embroidery and the FUTURA really hauls butt when embroidering. If

you're using the size 11/80 needle, move up to a larger size such as the 14/90 or even the 16/100 if your fabric is extra heavy or the stitches are very dense. You may want to try my Melrose Polyester thread. It is a commercial grade thread available for home use in value packs.

WHEN TO WATCH

January 29th - A new SINGER Sewing machine Today's Special

You're starting the year off on the right foot if you have made the commitment to learn new sewing techniques every month. Together in 2009 we will surprise ourselves with improved creativity and skills. You CAN do it!

Sew Your New Years Dream,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darlene". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail on the "e".