



# THE SEWING GAZETTE

AUGUST 2009

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## *Sewing Lessons from a Motorcycle Ride*



You may think I'm a little crazy. OK, maybe very crazy. I have been sewing for over 40 years, I have been riding a motorcycle for over 20 years. Most would think those two hobbies were unrelated. Here are a few things I have learned along the way that apply to both activities.

- Don't get on the motorcycle, or sit down at your sewing machine unless you are in the right state of mind. I have to be ready to focus on the task at hand, or all kinds of unwanted craziness may ensue. I

find both a long ride or an hour at my sewing machine very relaxing, but I have to be ready to allow that to happen.

- Make sure you have the right tools. It may be the right pair of gloves for the weather, or the right pencil to mark the fabric. Things go much smoother with the proper tools at hand.
- When buying new equipment, buy the best you can afford. Your motorcycle, or sewing machine can provide years of happiness if you consider how your hobby may change over time. Give yourself a little growing room.
- Don't be seduced by the latest gadget. We all enjoy trying new things, but many of them sit on the shelf. Pause for a moment

before you hand over your credit card to ask yourself if you will really use this new toy. You may be happier buying more fabric.

- Most importantly, enjoy the ride. It is too easy to get caught up in reaching the finish line. The enjoyment of our hobbies is in the journey, each seam, zipper and buttonhole or each mile along the road. When I choose to fly to a new city, I am bypassing the beautiful country along the way. I cannot always ride, but I feel as though I am missing something when I fly. I feel the same way when purchasing a blanket, somehow I am missing out.

*Julie Peri*  
Editor

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## *On the Road*



I've been on the road this summer and I like to take my hobbies with me when I go. With a little research before each trip, I have found some fantastic shops in every town I have been through. I plan my sewing stops the same way I look at hotels or airlines. My sewing research is usually easier and certainly more enjoyable.

I start with the [Quilter's Travel Companion](#). This book lists quilt shops by state. Each shop is shown on

a map, which makes planning easy. I find myself browsing through the state maps, dreaming of new destinations. Quilter's Travel Companion's web site has a listing of [quilt shows](#). Just click on the country and state you are visiting to see the shows mapped out with the month of the event.

One of my favorite planning web sites is the [Quilt Shop Locator](#). When you search by state, you can view all the shops along your route, review what they offer and link to their web sites. I also use Google to enter the city name and either quilt or sew, "Jacksonville Sewing" for example. I typically get a listing of quilting or sewing businesses with addresses and

phone numbers. Web sites are also listed if available. Make sure to include museums and attractions in your search. The Lowell Mill in Lowell, Massachusetts is on my list to visit someday. After collecting all this shop information, I can browse each web site and plan my route.

I love planning these private shop hops. I have met many fabulous people along the way. Each shop carries a unique variety of fabric and notions based on the area they serve. Take a few minutes to add sewing to your next trip. I'm hoping to include a garment district and a several new shops next time. Just remember to save room in your suitcase!

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## Cool Tools



Were you one of the template generation? Quilting and sewing before rotary cutters was very different from today. Quilters would trace cardboard shapes onto fabric and cut them out with scissors. Garment sewers also used scissors, working carefully to keep from snagging delicate fabrics.

Rotary cutters came on the market in 1979 and have had an undeniable impact on how we cut fabric. The rotary cutter is a circular cutting blade, similar to a razor blade, attached to a handle. They allow the user to cut fabric much faster and more accurately.

## Rotary Cutting Links

Rotary cutters come in many colors and styles, for a variety of uses. Check out these links to help decide which rotary cutter will work best for you and see some tips on using them.

Rotary Cutter Tutorial  
[www.purlbee.com/rotary-cutter-tutorial/](http://www.purlbee.com/rotary-cutter-tutorial/)

Olf  
[www.olf.com/RotaryCutters.aspx](http://www.olf.com/RotaryCutters.aspx)

## Scrap-tastic Coasters

My scrap basket is overflowing. I have had good intentions to make a scrap quilt, however, it is hard to focus on a scrap quilt with all the new fabric I keep buying. These coasters are a simple solution and take just a few minutes to put together. Here is how I do it.

- Start with a 5” square of fabric. You can use charm squares, leftover cotton blouse fabrics, or make a 5” quilt block.

Today’s rotary cutters come in many shapes and colors. You can choose from an 18mm blade up to a 60mm blade. The 45mm blade is the most popular. In general, the larger the blade, the easier it is to cut long straight cuts. Smaller blades work well for curves and intricate details. You can choose straight handles or ergonomic handles.

I keep 3 sizes handy: 45mm, 28mm, and 18mm. I use the 45mm for most projects. The 28mm blade is handy for minor trimming and for paper piecing. I also keep a 28mm and a 45mm cutter in my class bag. Last, I have a special circle cutter that uses the 18mm blade. This tool is similar to an engineer’s compass. The pin end marks the center of the circle and the blade cuts an even radius around the center. I have looked

at the 60mm for heavier fabrics or fleece and may add it to my shopping list.

I use my rotary cutter for garments as well, using pattern weights instead of pinning, then cutting with the 28mm blade. Rotary cutters are easier to use with fabrics that are slippery, prone to snagging (like silk) or are very dense (like leather). The rotary cutter will roll over the fabric while cutting. With scissors you have to lift the fabric, which may cause the fabric to slip or snag. You can achieve a smooth line every time you use a rotary cutter.

Take some time to look at the new styles. There is a rotary cutter designed for every craft. Most importantly, use these tools with care - the blades can be very sharp.

Martelli  
[www.martellinotions.com/](http://www.martellinotions.com/)

Gingher  
[www.gingher.com/product/45mm-rotary-cutter/42/](http://www.gingher.com/product/45mm-rotary-cutter/42/)

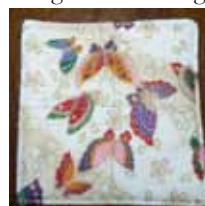
Fiskars  
[www.fiskarscrafts.com/articles/t\\_rotarytools.aspx](http://www.fiskarscrafts.com/articles/t_rotarytools.aspx)

Fiskars fingertip tools  
[www.fiskarscrafts.com/tools/s\\_fingertiptools.aspx](http://www.fiskarscrafts.com/tools/s_fingertiptools.aspx)

Simplicity’s Rotary Cutting Machine  
[www.fiskarscrafts.com/tools/s\\_fingertiptools.aspx](http://www.fiskarscrafts.com/tools/s_fingertiptools.aspx)

Clover  
[www.shopatron.com/search/181.0?q=rotary+cutter&a=115405&q=all](http://www.shopatron.com/search/181.0?q=rotary+cutter&a=115405&q=all)

- Choose a batting or filler. I use leftover batting from my quilts. You can also use leftover flannel.
- Quilt the batting to the wrong side of one 5” square. I sew straight lines through



the center of the square, top to bottom and side to side.

- Line up a second 5” square with your quilted piece, wrong sides together.
- Sew around the edges, with 1/4” seam allowance. Leave a small hole to turn right-side out.
- Clip corners and turn right-side out.
- Turn in seam allowance at opening and top stitch around the entire coaster.

**Sew** \’sō\

Function: verb

Inflected Form(s): sewed; sewn Listen to the pronunciation of sewn

\’sōn\ or sewed; sewing

Etymology: Middle

English, from Old

English sīwian; akin to

Old High German siuwen

to sew, Latin suere

Date: before 12th century

transitive verb 1 : to unite

or fasten by stitches 2

: to close or enclose by

sewing <sew the money

in a bag> intransitive verb

: to practice or engage in

sewing

Provided by the Merriam  
 Webster Online Dictionary

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## Knit Tricks

Have you been avoiding knit fabrics? Are you like me..just a little nervous? In the past I avoided knit fabrics, afraid of the challenges they brought. This year I am ready to admit the challenges were created by my own impatience. Here are a few tips I have run across to help smooth out some of the wrinkles that are part of the nature of knit fabric:

- Be careful not to stretch the fabric when cutting or sewing. Pattern weights and a rotary cutter can be helpful to eliminate the distortion pinning can cause.
- Use a ballpoint or stretch needle. Some needle

manufacturers make knit or jersey needles for T-shirt fabric and a super stretch needle for swimsuit fabrics.

- Match your thread to the fabric. Synthetic threads tend to have more stretch than cotton threads. A cotton wrapped poly is a good choice for cotton knits.
- Many sewing machines have a stretch or knit stitch on them. If your machine does not, choose a narrow zigzag stitch. Sergers are a great choice when working with knits.
- A roller foot or a walking foot may help feed the fabric under the needle. If you do not have either of these, stretch the fabric slightly. Let

the machine feed the fabric through. Your goal is to have the layers of fabric feed through evenly.

- Don't pull your fabric or allow it to overly stretch - that is where those wavy seams come from. Unless of course you are looking for a wavy seam.
- Use a fusible knit interfacing on the wrong side of your fabric to help stabilize a buttonhole.

With a little practice you'll be a champ and have a closet full of beautiful knits!

## A Quick and Easy T-Shirt Quilt

T-shirt quilts are a great way to re-purpose your old shirts and make a little room in your drawers for new items. I have seen grown men cry when they received a quilt made from their old concert shirts. These quilts can be as simple or as complicated as you like. Here are the basics for making one:

- Make sure your shirts are clean and the designs are free from holes.
- To determine the block size, measure the largest image and add at least 1" to all

sides. Cut all shirts to the same size block, or combine images to make up the block size.

- Apply fusible non-woven interfacing to the back of each block. This will help stabilize the knit fabric as you sew.
- You can use a woven cotton fabric between the blocks as sashing if you choose. It is not necessary.
- Arrange your blocks by laying them out on the floor or table.

- Sew your blocks together in rows and then sew the rows together.
- Add a woven cotton border if you like.
- For a lighter weight quilt, omit the batting and quilt the top to the backing.
- If you have enough shirts, you can make a double sided quilt with a backing in similar to the top. Flannel also works well as a backing.
- Quilt as desired.

## Chicken Empanadas

Try these little tasty treats and share them with your friends. You can make the pies ahead of time and freeze them. Bring them out to bake when your friends are on their way. Or bake them early and serve them cold.

### Filling:

- 1c. cooked chicken
- ½c. grated monteray jack
- ½c. grated cheddar
- 1 can green chilies
- 1t. minced garlic
- 3T. minced green onions
- ½t. ground cumin

- 2 frozen pie crusts
- 2 eggs
- 2T. kosher salt
- 1T. chili powder

Mix together chicken, cheeses, chilies, garlic, green onions, and cumin. Store in refrigerator until ready to assemble pies.

Roll out pie crusts on a floured surface and cut into 4" circles. Place 2 tablespoons of filling on each circle. Fold in half and crimp edges with a fork. Mix salt and chili powder together. Brush

pies with beaten egg and sprinkle lightly with salt and chili powder mixture. Freeze at this point if desired.

Thaw pies if they have been frozen. Bake at 400F degrees for 12-14 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.



KNIT FABRICS  
CAN BE FAST,  
EASY AND FUN.

I CANNOT COUNT  
MY DAY COMPLETE  
'TIL NEEDLE,  
THREAD AND  
FABRIC MEET.

-AUTHOR  
UNKNOWN

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*Quilted Pleasures*

3210 Washington Avenue  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16508

Phone: 814-864-0466

e-Mail: [julie@quiltedpleasures.com](mailto:julie@quiltedpleasures.com)

[www.quiltedpleasures.com](http://www.quiltedpleasures.com)

## THE SEWING GAZETTE

3210 Washington Avenue  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16508  
Phone: 814-864-0466  
e-Mail: [julie@sewinggazette.com](mailto:julie@sewinggazette.com)



Alex Veronelli  
Aurifil Thread  
Via S. Maria Valle, 3/A  
Milan 20123 Italy  
Phone:  
+39 0296799694  
e-mail:  
[alex.veronelli@aurifil.it](mailto:alex.veronelli@aurifil.it)  
Website:  
[www.aurifil.com](http://www.aurifil.com)

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### How did Aurifil begin making thread?

Established in 1983, Aurifil is an accomplished Italian Company based in Milan. We started manufacturing high quality cotton threads for the leading Fashion & Bed linen Companies in Italy in order to be their preferred partner for embroidery & sewing solutions. Our Company headquarters is the place where new ideas generate original items, always more refined and advanced. Nowadays, we have a full-grown experience in producing superior quality cotton threads also for professional and domestic quilters and embroiderers.

### How do you help educate consumers on the benefits of using better thread?

Aurifil has started its business in the needlecraft world since 2000 and I have to admit we are still a little late. We are now starting filling in the gap of education thanks to a new Designer Program, called "A-Team", where we are involving several teachers, educators and artists in order to increase consumers' knowledge on our products and how to get the best benefits while using our threads. We are also developing a lot of literature about our range of products, including tips suggested by our sewing specialists using shots and brochures we distribute through the net.

### How do you think the sewing world is changing or staying the same?

I find it a little hard to have a worldwide vision about this matter. I think the craft sewing world is changing but not everywhere in the same way. For example, I'm feeling a change in style in the US with the growth of contemporary art while in Europe I can also see a change in the development of a "younger market". I am starting noticing an awakening of sewing wishes from the Far East (Russia and China) - of course, in this case, it is not a change but is a desirable start of a new market. The development of technology on sewing machines and the availability of new devices are for sure opening the market to the use of new products and accessories.

### What is your most popular product and why?

Our Best Seller is Cotton Makò 50wt. This is the finest of the Makò threads. Our Cotton 50wt gives excellent results for foundation piecing. The "secret" here is that the fine thread allows you to stitch a flat seam! Aurifil long staple Makò Cotton is very smooth and strong at the same time. It is also recommended for detailed machine quilting and to prevent bulky thread build up when you are stitching micro stipple. It is also perfect for invisible ditch stitching, as the thread disappears into the gap between the seams. This yarn gives an elegant touch to your creations when used decoratively on

the serger for rolled edges, flatlocking and rolled edge piping. It can be used in the loopers of a serger and its quality makes it easy to set and maintain tension. Consumers can take advantage of 1422 yds of thread on a regular spool to sew and quilt their pieces together without moving to another spool! Our customers are all attracted by the amazing, wide color selection made up of 216 shades, including some variegated.

### What makes your products stand out from the rest?

Aurifil is the only Thread Company that carries a Cotton range made up of 4 different weights, ideal for machine and hand quilting up to embroidery and embellishment. Through a contemporary creative concept quilters can find what they need. Our success is also based on developing projects carefully looking for high quality and style. We commit to create contemporary products that will have a great appeal on everyone. Last but not least our products are 100 % Made in Italy.

### What else would you like us to know about your organization?

Aurifil is strongly committed to be recognized in giving the customers quality and perfection. The fastest and most sophisticated technology is the strength to aesthetically manufacture all our products and supplies that allow the company to be popular in the market.

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