

Sewing GIFTS

A wish list from our staff and authors

As the holidays draw near, the time has come to think about what you or the other sewing enthusiasts in your life might like as a gift. To help you get started with your shopping, we asked our editors, authors, and friends to share what they are hoping to receive this year.

We've divided the list into three categories: Better basics, where you'll find elevated tools for every level of sewer; Sewing literature, which includes books about sewing techniques and design; and Tools & technology, where you'll find interesting machines and gadgets.

Compiled by Threads assistant editor Erica Redfern.

GOOD AS GOLD

There are practical considerations in selecting the correct pins for a project, such as length, head, diameter, and point. Gold-plated pins from Merchant & Mills make me think beauty should also be a factor. I dream of using these on my most aspirational, painstaking garments. Each has a small metal head, like a silk pin, so they are best for securing closely woven fabrics. They are 30 mm, or slightly more than 1 inch long, narrow, and sharply pointed. The pins come in packages of 150, in a vintage-style, cylindrical cardboard case with elegant lettering.

MerchantAndMills.com; £9.00

—Sarah McFarland, editorial director

Better basics

SCISSORS WITH FLAIR

When I first began sewing, I purchased a simple pair of scissors from my local craft store. They get the job done, but I've found myself wanting tools that are beautiful as well as functional. This rose gold scissors set from Klasse is just what I've been looking for. The set includes 8½-inch dressmaking shears, 3½-inch embroidery scissors in the classic stork shape, and a thimble. Both scissors are sharp and cut smoothly. The dressmaking shears are heavy and can handle thick fabrics with ease. The metal thimble is ⅝ inch wide at the base, ½-inch wide at the top, and ¾-inch high. CreateForLess.com; \$25.99

—Erica Redfern, assistant editor



THEMED WEIGHTS

These are lovely sewing-themed pattern weights. The metal weights are printed with a tough, scratch-resistant coating. Choose from designs such as buttons, vintage sewing machines, sewing notions, and more. They come in sets of four, in a hinged metal case with a flocked plastic insert that holds the weights snugly. The weights are 2⅜ inches in diameter and weigh approximately 3.8 ounces each, just enough to hold the pattern and fabric down while cutting.

SewEssential.co.uk; £11.75–£11.95

—Norma Bucko, staff seamstress



QUIRKY CUTTING

Cutting can be serious business. You can have some fun, though, with the 4-inch Rainbow Unicorn Scissors from Sew Tasty. These scissors' handles—from the finger holes to the pivot point—are shaped like the body of a unicorn, and the blades extend to create its horn. Made of stainless steel, the scissors feature a fine, sharp tip and a glossy, multicolor finish. The whimsical, yet functional, design makes them a good bet for grown-ups who want to add a little magic to their sewing.

AnniesCatalog.com; \$6.99

—Jeannine Clegg, managing editor, production



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ARTISTIC CURVES

Whether you are altering existing patterns, drafting new ones, or creating templates for embellishments, it is easier and more accurate to use good curved rulers as a guide. This set of three design curves from Lost Art Press is gorgeous. It's made of five-ply bamboo veneer, so the curves are stable, somewhat flexible, and have enough grip that they don't slip on paper the way plastic curves do. Also unlike the clear plastic curves I have, these won't disappear in plain sight on my worksurface. They are so graceful and attractive I'd probably hang them on the wall as decoration when I'm not using them. The Kentucky-made curves are die-cut and sanded to a smooth finish.

LostArtPress.com; \$37.00

—Carol J. Fresia, senior technical editor



WARDROBE PATTERN BUNDLE

Sewing a wardrobe from base patterns is a practice I want to try. Rae Cumbie and Carrie Emerson of Fit for Art Patterns offer a pattern bundle that is a terrific start for a well-planned wardrobe. The pants, knit top, and jacket patterns come with different pieces for a fuller bust or a curvier derrière, and instructions on fitting and construction. The Tee and Tunic and Tabula Rasa Jacket are designed with a square armhole: The sleeves have a set-in-style shoulder but are simple to fit and sew at the underarm. The Eureka pants, designed in collaboration with Sarah Veblen, are a classic slacks style. At FitForArtPatterns.com, there are video tutorials on fitting and sewing the pieces. I'm excited by the possibilities these core patterns offer—and I know I'd want the available add-on patterns as well, which enable sewers to change sleeves, necklines, and collars, and to convert the slacks to trousers, sporty pants, or a wide-legged style.

FitForArtPatterns.com; \$55.00

—Carol J. Fresia



STARTER SEWING TABLE

The cost of sewing furniture can be prohibitive for beginning sewers, so they miss out on the benefits of sewing with the machine bed at table level. Give a sewing protégé the Comet Sewing Desk by Studio Designs, an affordable option for a small or multipurpose sewing space. It has a contemporary look, with black metal legs and white shelving. A folding leaf extends the table surface to the left of the sewing machine. The 23-inch-by-10³/₄-inch sewing machine platform can be lowered for a sewing machine, or raised to be flush with the 56³/₄-inch-by-23¹/₂-inch table top (with the leaf up). The table's height is 30 inches. It has two open shelves and a soft-sided drawer.

Joann.com; MSRP \$279.99

—Sarah McFarland

Sewing literature

WORLDWIDE WEAVING

Catch a glimpse of fabrics from around the globe in *Threads Around the World: From Arabian Weaving to Batik in Zimbabwe* by Deb Brandon (Schiffer Publishing, 2018). Deb is a weaver and textile enthusiast who seeks out authentic and interesting textiles wherever she goes. This book is filled with photos of beautiful fabrics and images of the weaving process and daily life in far-flung locales. It also contains philosophies from different cultures and anecdotes from Deb's travels. Reading her book is like looking through a window with a view of faraway places.

SchifferBooks.com; \$24.99

—Erica Redfern

DIOR IN DETAIL

Christian Dior: History and Modernity 1947–1957, by Alexandra Palmer (Royal Ontario Museum, 2018), is a comprehensive study of one of the most well-known fashion designers of the 20th century. The hardcover book contains nearly 500 color photos, diagrams, and fashion sketches. It is organized into two parts: "History and Modernity" and "Dior Anatomies." The former dissects individual elements of Dior's designs to analyze how the garments were influenced by the culture of the time. The latter section examines some of Dior's most famous garments, revealing how they were cut, constructed, and finished. This book is an indispensable reference for anyone who looks to Dior for couture inspiration.

HirmerVerlag.de; \$49.95

—Susan Khalje, contributing editor

SEW KNITS CONFIDENTLY

Learn the ins and outs of sewing knit garments from an expert. Pattern designer and author Linda Lee's easily digestible, 144-page *Sewing Knits from Fit to Finish* (Quarto Publishing Group, 2018), is intended as a comprehensive reference book. It is divided into six chapters focusing on understanding knit fabrics, pattern fitting, fabric preparation, testing stitches and seams, construction techniques, and making knit activewear and lingerie. You don't need a serger to try the techniques because Linda includes her methods for sewing knits on a conventional sewing machine, too. Ample illustrations and photos throughout the book make it simple to follow.

SewingWorkshop.com; \$24.99

—Jeannine Clegg



Tools & technology



TICKLE ME PINK

Sewing personality Tula Pink's playful aesthetic is reflected in her fabric prints, books, machine-embroidery motifs, and branded notions. Combine her carefree style and the quality and features of a Bernina sewing machine and I'm sold. The Tula Pink 570 QE has a polka-dot faceplate and a rainbow-hued take-up lever and free-arm cover. The machine comes with a Tula Pink sewing package, with built-in decorative stitches she designed, a collection of her rainbow-finish metal cutting tools, and signature embroidery designs. This model is a Quilter's Edition, with 8.5 inches of space to the right of the needle, and a 15.7-inch by 5.9-inch embroidery module. Visit the website for complete specifications and videos, or a local dealer for a demonstration. It's a fun edition for sewers who enjoy whimsy and expect performance.

Bernina.com; MSRP \$5,999.00

—Sarah McFarland



CURATED TOOL KIT

The sewing tools I use the most, I tend to lose the most. That is, until I came across this tool kit with a zippered case from Sulky. Described as an embroidery tool kit, it contains five items in consistent use while sewing and serging garments: a seam ripper, flathead screwdriver, angled fine-point tweezers, large-handle embroidery scissors, and spring-action thread snippers. It is easier to keep track of these versions of the tools I use most because they have bright red handles and a convenient carry case to keep them together. It is a clever kit for home or for travel to a sewing event.

Sulky.com; \$19.99

—Sarah McFarland



PRESSER FOOT SET

When I'm sewing, I often find myself wishing I had more variety in my presser foot options. I can visualize myself easily sewing invisible zippers, cording, pin tucks, and more, but I have been reluctant to purchase more feet because of the high cost. The Ultimate Presser Foot Set from Madam Sew includes 32 snap-on presser feet, a low shank adapter, and an instructional DVD to help answer your presser foot questions. It comes with common feet such as a straight-stitch foot, a zigzag foot, and gathering foot, as well as more specialized feet such as a roller foot, bias binder foot, and an overcast foot. They are designed to fit machines that use snap-on feet, but the low shank adapter enables the set to fit most sewing machines. The feet arrive in a sturdy plastic box, each foot nestled in firm foam that is labeled for easy identification.

MadamSew.com; \$119.99

—Erica Redfern

TAPE AND MEASURE

Many times, while I am sitting at my sewing machine, I need to take a measurement. Adhesive ruler tape, such as Peel n Stick tape from Therm O Web, stuck to my sewing machine table makes this quick and easy. The tape is bright yellow, removable, and comes in 10-yard rolls. The markings repeat in 12-inch perforated segments to make applying the tape simple. It includes imperial and metric measurements. Although I like to place the tape near my sewing machine, you can also use it on your cutting table or even on your fabric.

ThermOWebOnline.com; \$3.98

—Norma Bucko



PRESSING NEEDS

My trusty sleeve board has become old and tends to collapse when I press, so I'm in the market for a new one. Helen Haughey Designs offers a lovely option made of wood and covered with sewing-themed cotton fabric. The sleeve board section has cotton fleece padding so seams can be pressed without creating impressions on the garment's right side. The board's sturdy base, made of unfinished wood, includes a point presser for handling sharp corners. You can also use the base as a clapper. Helen is a couture-level sewer, so she knows what is needed to get professional results when pressing. This is the upgrade I've been looking for.

Etsy.com/Shop/HelenHaugheyDesigns; \$60.00

—Carol J. Fresia

