

2020 Gift Guide

Inspiring and practical tools for a new year of sewing

*T*his is the season to enjoy—and share—sewing. This year, the *Threads* staff thought about holiday gift ideas that would not break the bank but would improve and inspire your sewing. We also sought out presents that would help our readers spread the joy of our favorite pastime, such as a new machine, a handy notion, or an educational book for a loved one or friend.

Whether you're set to buy yourself a present, or to pick out something for someone else, we've organized lists of suggested notions, sewing machines and sergers, and books.

Compiled by the Threads staff.



ECO-CONSCIOUS CLOTHING LABELS

This assortment of labels from Kylie and the Machine is only a small representation of their wonderful offerings. With droll sayings such as “This is the back,” “Ta-Da!,” and “It has pockets,” these labels add a touch of positivity to everything you sew. They are made from Oeko-Tex certified polyester and rayon yarns, meaning they adhere to guidelines for sustainability and responsible material sourcing. The designers wrap the labels in packaging made from recycled cardboard that is fully biodegradable. KylieAndTheMachine.shop; \$8.90 AUD

Classic and innovative notions

New gadgets and tools can set any sewer's heart racing. These handy items are appropriate for sewers of all skill levels.

CUSTOM PATTERN WEIGHTS

These pattern weights, created by Bianca Springer of the Etsy shop "Thanks! I Made Them," feel truly special. They come in a set of nine, which form a larger image when put together like a puzzle. Choose from several preloaded images, or send in your own to customize them. Each weight is 2 inches square and is backed with felt to protect the pattern tissue from the tile edges. The tiles are made of marble and have the images painted or printed on. They each weigh about 2 ounces, just the right weight to hold down pattern tissue. The shop also has the option to print the same, smaller image on each pattern weight if you do not wish to have the puzzle option.

Etsy.com/shop/ThanksIMadeThem; \$30.00



SPECIAL-EDITION CUTTING TOOLS

From LDH Scissors, these Midnight Edition tools are striking as well as functional. The Midnight Edition series is made from industrial-grade high-carbon steel and coated with a black anti-rust coating. The bent-handle shears are available in 8-inch, 9-inch, 10-inch, 11-inch, and 12-inch lengths, measured from handle to tip. They have a 10-year warranty, and LDH offers a sharpening service for a fee, so these shears will remain in top shape for years. The blades are slightly concave, enabling them to cut smoothly through thick layers. The thread snips are made from industrial-grade stainless steel, with the same black antirust coating as the shears. They come with a small plastic tip guard for storage and safe transport.

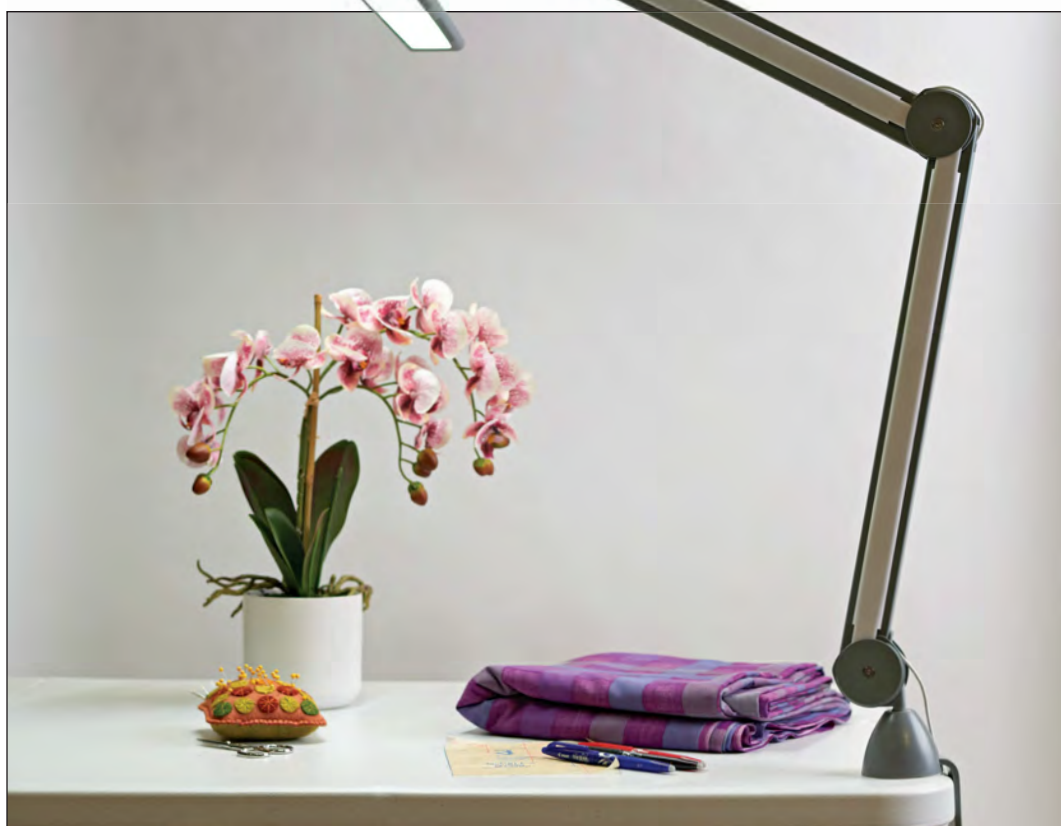
LDHScissors.com; shears, \$38.00–\$54.00; snips, \$25.00



ZIPPERED STORAGE CONTAINERS

Every sewer has struggled with storage at one point or another. If there's one thing that's always necessary, it's more places to organize all the bits and bobs projects call for. The Hard Core Storage Solutions zippered cases from Storable Bliss are a durable and versatile option to store everything from presser feet to bobbins to machine accessories, and more. The structured cases are covered with a durable fabric, and feature a soft, felt-like lining and in some versions, sewn-in zippered or mesh pockets. A set of five cases includes the large foot and accessory case, the medium foot and accessory case, the scissors and cutter case, the bobbin case, and the notions case. These can also be purchased separately. Included with many of the cases is a customizable foam insert to hold feet or bobbins of a specific size or maker. The larger cases have a cushioned handle for ease of transport. When ordered as a set, the cases have the same zipper color, from a choice of red, orange, blue, green, and purple. Visit the site for more information about case dimensions and presser foot brand compatibility.

StorableBliss.com; \$354.95 for the set, also available separately



POWERFUL TABLE LAMP

Good, strong light is always a necessity in a sewing space, and a quality lamp can be the difference between easy sewing and a headache. The Luminos table lamp from The Daylight Company clamps to the side of a table or other surface and is highly maneuverable so you can position the light where you need it. It has a maximum reach of 44 inches from the attachment point. The head measures 26 inches wide and has 120 LED light bulbs. The long-life light bulbs have a color temperature of 6,000 degrees Kelvin, designed to mimic daylight, and there are three brightness settings. The lamp comes with a two-year guarantee from the manufacturer.

DaylightCompany.com; \$415.00

Affordable sewing machines

It's a great time to give the gift of a sewing machine and encourage friends or relatives to begin sewing. Or maybe you need a simple machine yourself that is portable and ready to go for simple projects or a class.

EVERSEWN CELINE

EverSewn's Celine sewing machine boasts 197 stitch patterns: 26 utility, 72 decorative, and a full block-style alphabet, and a memory function to store stitch combinations. It has a maximum stitch width of 7.0 mm. In addition to the thread cutter on the side of the machine, it is able to cut threads with the press of a button. The presser foot pressure is adjustable via a knob on top of the machine. A sliding switch controls the sewing speed, with a maximum speed of 850 stitches per minute. The machine features a drop-in bobbin system and 6½ inches of throat space. It comes with seven presser feet, as well as a 13-inch-wide table attachment. It weighs 14 pounds. EverSewn.com; \$329.00



SINGER M2100

Ideal as an introductory machine, the Singer M2100 includes many features for convenience and ease of use. It has eight built-in stitches, which can be used on a variety of fabric types and weights, as well as a four-step buttonhole. The straight stitch and zigzag stitch have different options for preset length and width. The machine has a front-loading bobbin case and comes out of the box prethreaded, so it is easy to get started. The machine weighs just under 11 pounds and has a heavy-duty metal interior frame for durability. It comes with a number of feet and accessories, including a zipper foot, buttonhole foot, and soft dust cover. Singer.com; \$159.99

BROTHER CS7000X

From Brother, the CS7000X is a hardworking machine with a wide range of stitches and included accessories. Among the 70 stitches are utility, quilting, decorative, and heirloom. The machine comes with 10 feet for sewing and quilting, including a zipper foot, blind-hem foot, and walking foot. It also has a wide table attachment and a protective hard case. The drop-in bobbin case is designed to resist jamming. The LCD display clearly shows the selected stitch, stitch length, and stitch width. It has an automatic needle threader to make it easier to get started, and because it weighs only 10½ pounds, it is also easy to carry. Brother-USA.com; \$199.00



Entry-level sergers

If you've considered adding a serger to your sewing equipment but have been put off by high prices, you'll be happy to know there are excellent affordable models available. These machines perform all the key functions you'll want for stitching professional-looking garments. Some offer enough options to take you in new creative directions, too. Note that manufacturers often run promotions in stores and online that bring prices significantly below the MSRP; do a little research to find the best price.

JANOME 8002D

If you're searching for a basic machine to finish seam allowances and sew narrow and rolled hems, this attractively priced 4/3-thread model is worth looking at. The 8002D has been part of the Janome line for several years, and it flies under the radar compared to sergers with more features. However, it is straightforward to use, reliable, and versatile. It has adjustable stitch length from 1.0 mm to 4.0 mm, and cutting width from 3.1 mm to 7.3 mm; an adjustable differential feed ratio from 0.5 to 2.25; and adjustable presser foot pressure. Because its lower looper is a bit tricky to access for threading, the owner's manual (and owner reviews) recommend the tying-on method of threading when changing looper thread. The brand offers many accessory feet that are compatible with the machine, so you can perform a surprising range of functions for a small investment.

Janome.com; MSRP \$399.00



BROTHER ST4031HD STRONG & TOUGH

For anyone in the market for a solid 4/3-thread serger—Brother presents its Strong & Tough model. This machine can be adjusted to a stitch width of 5.0 mm to 7.0 mm, and it offers a differential feed range from 0.7 to 2.0. The serger's heavy-duty metal frame is built for durability, but home sewers are more likely to be excited by the free arm and detachable extension table, which together make it a breeze to serge projects large or small. Included with the purchase of the Strong & Tough serger are two bonus presser feet: the blind-hem foot and the gathering foot. With these feet, you can hem knits with an unobtrusive stitch, gather and seam fabrics in one pass, and create many decorative effects. The serger's black-on-white design lends a sleek, utilitarian look to your sewing space.

Brother-USA.com, \$299.99;
MSRP \$499.00



BABYLOCK VIBRANT

The BabyLock Vibrant is a 4/3/2-thread serger by the company known for the quality of its overlock machines. The Vibrant includes differential feed (0.7 to 2.0), an LED light for a clear view as you serge, a maximum stitch width of 7.0 mm and stitch length of 4.0 mm, adjustable presser foot pressure, and a built-in retractable thread cutter. There's also a lint tray to catch trimmings and keep your space tidy. To convert to rolled hem, you need to change the stitch finger; two-thread stitching requires the installation of a converter part. With the two-thread setup, you can create lightweight overlock and rolled hems. With the purchase of the machine comes access to BabyLock's online video class library, SewedClasses.com.

BabyLock.com; MSRP \$699.00



Pages of inspiration

In our current digital age, it's still lovely to enjoy the tactile appeal of a good sewing book. A nice heft, glossy paper, and informative pages to pore over make these new and classic books ideal for collectors as well as information seekers. Look for a title on a topic missing from your references, or give a copy to a friend who's expressed an interest or asked a question.

FINDING THE THREAD

A colorfully photographed, 64-page reference guide, *The Ultimate Thread Guide: Everything You Need to Know to Choose the Perfect Thread for Every Project* by Becky Goldsmith is ring-bound to stay open as you consult its handy reference charts. It measures 5½ inches by 9 inches, small and light enough to bring to the fabric store. The guide begins with brief overviews of thread types, fibers, and characteristics, then moves along to the features of hand- and machine-sewing needles. A chapter on thread manufacturing touches on some of the processes and terminology involved in thread finishing. The last portion of the guide is devoted to charts from 14 major thread manufacturers, detailing each thread's name, fiber content, typical use, and appropriate needle. This guide delivers on its promise to help you choose the correct thread, and would make a nice stocking stuffer for any sewer or quilter.

C&T Publishing, 2019; \$14.95



EXQUISITE ASIAN DESIGN

Based on examples in the collection of London's Victoria and Albert Museum, *Japanese Dress in Detail*, by Josephine Rout with Anna Jackson, explores the meticulous design and embellishment of historic and contemporary Japanese garments. An outstanding feature of this 208-page, softcover book is the extensive, close-up photography. Many images are full-page size, and reading the book is akin to holding a kimono in person and examining the hand embroidery. This is the latest entry in the publishers' Fashion in Detail series, and it covers Japanese clothing from the 18th century through today. It has an educational approach, including line art to reveal construction details for some of the garments. Sewers will find inspiration for colors, prints, embroidery, and construction, as well as a welcome feast for the eyes.

Thames & Hudson, 2020; \$40.00



CURATE A SEWN WARDROBE

Planning a stylish, wearable wardrobe of self-sewn garments is almost as challenging as actually sewing said wardrobe. That's where Sarah Gunn's and Julie Starr's *A Stylish Guide to Classic Sewing: Explore 30 Timeless Garments with History, Styling & Tips for Ready-to-Wear Results* comes in. The 176-page softcover book is divided into chapters by garment type, such as skirts, tops, and outerwear, further broken down into specific silhouettes, such as the pencil skirt, the turtleneck, and capri pants. The history of every garment is explored, as well as styling options, fabric suggestions, and sewing tips. The chapters feature charming fashion illustrations, but at the book's center is a gallery of photographs of the authors and other sewers in self-sewn garments. If you feel the need for some attainable inspiration for real-life sewing, this is a book you can read through, then turn to again and again. Bonus: It includes a pull-out pencil skirt pattern, so you can start sewing a classic right away.

C&T Publishing, 2019; \$29.95

