

GIFTS

TO SPARK CREATIVITY

INSPIRE YOUR FAVORITE SEWIST WITH
COVETABLE TOOLS AND MATERIALS

BY CAROL J. FRESIA

For those of us who like to make things, the holiday spirit is about sharing our embroidered, quilted, felted, or other hand-sewn textile objects with those we love.

We can also share the joy of making itself, by offering gifts that kindle the imagination and help the recipients expand their skills. Our editors have curated an assortment of items that are sure to be appreciated. This collection ranges from high-quality sewing and pressing equipment to kits, materials, inspiring books, and fun stuff that shows one's bona fides as a sewist and/or textile geek. Long after the holidays are over, these presents will keep your friends, family, and yourself happy and busy.

Carol J. Fresia is Threads' editor.

Makers won't be able to resist a thoughtful present of quality tools, materials, and supplies.



Kits and Supplies

High-quality materials are the catalyst to making something wonderful. For garment sewers, quilters, and any DIY enthusiast, experts have assembled kits and sets to ensure success.

FELTING PALETTE

Needle felting is like drawing with wool, and Acorns & Twigs offers roving in sets that are the equivalent of your big box of crayons. You can also purchase a tool set, with felting needles and holders in assorted sizes, protective finger guards, and a large foam mat to work on. With these sets, you can add felted designs to fabrics and garments, including mending knits by filling in holes with felted wool.

AcornsAndTwigs.com; roving set, \$18.50; large tool kit, \$26.00



BLOCK OF THE MONTH

Missouri Star Quilt's Block of the Month subscription is a perfect way to maintain a creative rhythm. Each month, you receive a block kit for the quilt of your choice, consisting of fabrics, patterns, and instructions for one or more blocks. There's a wide variety of styles and skill levels to choose from. By the end of the subscription, you'll have a fully pieced quilt top, plus fabric for borders and binding. Subscriptions vary in length, from four to 12 months.

MissouriQuiltCo.com; subscriptions: \$24.95 to \$74.95/month



WONDERFIL THREADS

Designer and quilt artist Alison Glass has partnered with Wonderfil threads to create collections of pearl cotton balls. These smooth Egyptian cotton threads are intended for decorative stitching. They come in several nature-inspired color arrays. Shown is "Flora," in Wonderfil's Eleganza thread. Choose a collection that matches your project, or let the threads lead you on an embellishment journey.

ShopWonderfil.com; 12-pack assortments, \$33.40 to \$50.00



DIY FASHION KITS

Needle Sharp offers garment-sewing subscription boxes for your preferred skill level. Each month, you have a choice of patterns (printed), and several fabric options. The box includes closures, thread, and any other materials you need to stitch a stylish garment. The kits are available separately, and you have flexibility in your subscription, as well. The patterns come from independent designers, and the overall aesthetic is modern and chic.

Needle-Sharp.com; Prices range from \$75.00 to \$135.00/month for a subscription.



Machines and Equipment

Well-designed equipment is essential for great sewn results. From pressing to stitching, these items help you do work you can be proud of.

FUTURISTIC IRON

The CHI Touchscreen Iron lets you see when the iron is at the right temperature and ready to steam. Tap the color display on the handle to choose a fiber type, then the display reports the preheating progress. Turn the iron on or off, change settings, and monitor the auto-off status via the touchscreen, too. More features include a sliding steam control, 10-foot cord, and water reservoir fillable while the iron is flat. The soleplate has 400 steam holes and a titanium-infused ceramic coating.

Amazon.com; \$149.00



COSPLAY EUPHORIA

Unleash your costuming imagination with Bernette's b79 Yaya Han Edition sewing and embroidery machine. This model is decorated with a cool-looking pattern to enhance your sewing space, but that's just window dressing. The combination machine is affordably priced. Plus, it has hundreds of integrated stitch patterns, exclusive embroidery designs, multiple hoop sizes, and Stitch Designer to create your own stitches. These features make many types of embellishments possible. Bernette Dual Feed handles all sorts of fabrics and keeps layers feeding smoothly. With the Yaya Han edition, you'll receive Bernina's Embroidery Software 9 Creator, an additional \$1,100 value.

Bernette.com; MSRP \$3,335.00



QUILTING CONFIDENCE

Janome takes into account the needs of a dedicated quilter in two new Horizon Memory Craft machines, the 9410QC and the 9480QC Professional. Both offer sizable areas for managing large projects; 300 or 400 built-in stitches, respectively; and alphanumeric fonts. For garment sewers, they include 11 one-step buttonholes. The 9480 QCP can use Janome's Accurate Stitch Regulator as an optional attachment for even free-motion embroidery. If you machine-quilt, the 9480 QCP is for you. If you mostly sew clothing or patchwork and want a machine with proven engineering and useful bells and whistles, consider the 9410QC.

Janome.com; 9410QC MSRP \$4,999.00; 9480 QCP MSRP \$5,999.00



Photos: (p. 37, bottom left) courtesy of Missouri Star Quilt Co.; (p. 38, top) courtesy of CHI Steam; (p. 38, second from top) courtesy of Bernina of America; (p. 38, second from bottom and bottom) courtesy of Janome America; (p. 39, top right; p. 41, top right and bottom right) Jeffrey H. Kogan; (p. 39, bottom right) courtesy of JennHogg.co.uk; all others, Mike Yamin.

Tools and Notions

For every step in sewing, starting with design and ending with organization, you'll love using implements that provide accuracy and comfort.

HERITAGE SCISSORS

The Canadian company Ciselier offers luxury tools made by craftsman they know personally. In addition to classic sewing shears, they carry some special pairs. The Alpen Grande Stork enlarges the mini stork scissors found in many sewing baskets, to a 6½-inch length. Their sharp points make them handy for embroidery or other trimming. The 5-inch Robuso weaver's scissors cut smoothly through heavy fabrics and would be excellent for grading seam allowances, clipping, and notching. Ciselier.com; **Grande Stork, \$79.00; Robuso 5-inch weaver's scissors, \$99.00**



HOLD-EVERYTHING TOOL BAG

Contributing Editor Kenneth D. King travels frequently to teach, and he likes to have his favorite sewing and patternmaking tools organized and easy to access. He has designed a bag that accommodates everything he needs and that is easy to carry, with short handles and a removable shoulder strap. With multiple pockets and elastic retainers, the bag can hold marking, measuring, and cutting tools, and much more. Although he has designed it specifically for sewing notions and tools, it would make a handsome everyday bag, too. It comes with Kenneth's logo, a status symbol for those in the know. SewingAndDesignSchool.com; **from \$82.58 to \$135.00**



SKETCH IN STYLE

Fashion-design teacher Zoe Hong wants you to understand that illustration skills require practice. She's designed a sketchbook with pages printed (lightly) with her templates for fashion flats as well as figures. The 5½-inch by 8¾-inch, hardcover sketchbook is sized so you can take it with you wherever you go. The environmentally friendly pages are made of a stone-based material that is deliciously smooth. You can write and draw with just about any medium (watercolor paints might pose challenges). Follow Zoe on YouTube for lessons and tips on fashion sketching.

EtchedStonePaper.com; **\$29.99**



SEAMS ACCURATE

Jen Hogg, semifinalist in the 2019 *Great British Sewing Bee*, has developed the sewing tool you didn't know you needed: circular seam allowance guides. These wooden disks and rings enable you to trace seam allowances of different widths along pattern edges, without measuring and rulers. The Jenerates Seam Circles come in metric and imperial diameters with common seam allowance widths; each set includes eight circles. They're made in Scotland from Forest Stewardship Council-approved cherry wood.

JennHogg.co.uk; **\$27.92**



Dress-up Accessories

Show your love for sewing and textiles with these fun items.

FEET FIRST

You're a sewist down to your toes. At Redbubble.com, search for "sock" and "sewing" to discover a plethora of designs that represent all aspects of your favorite hobby. (In many cases, you'll also find matching items from T-shirts to phone cases.) These make excellent stocking stuffers, as well as secret Santa presents.

Redbubble.com; vintage geometric quilt socks, \$18.84; sewing tools and notions socks, \$16.15



ZIP CHARM

Cathe Holden's enamel zipper charms come with lobster hooks so you can attach them to your jacket, bag, or wherever else you need to decorate a zipper. There's no reason you couldn't make jewelry from these little charms, or use them to identify your scissors, or make wine glass charms for your next sip 'n' sew. The colorful depictions of sewing tools and notions will make you smile.

FatQuarterShop.com; \$8.98 to \$11.98 per pair



FINE FINISHINGS

Burnley and Trowbridge specializes in "accurate goods for historical fashion." But they focus on high-quality fabrics and notions that will enhance contemporary sewing just as well. We love their silk threads, including buttonhole and quilter's twist. They come in a selection of colors and make lovely hand-sewn buttonholes, but you could use them for thread buttons, hand-worked topstitching, or other decorative purposes.

The brass hook-and-eye set is based on a closure found in an archaeological excavation. It's 2¼ inches long when fastened and has an artisanal flair that would look equally good on a medieval cloak or a modern jacket.

BurnleyAndTrowbridge.com; silk thread, \$4.50/20-meter card; hook-and-eye set, \$10.00



ARTIST-DESIGNED BANDANAS

Join the Bandana of the Month club to receive limited-edition bandanas, printed on 100-percent cotton, with water-based inks. There's a new design each month, by a different artist. Bandanas are 22 inches square; some are fully hemmed, other have one or two selvage edges. Wear them as you like, or incorporate them as fabric into bags, quilts, or garments. You can also buy individual pieces from previous months, when available.

BandanaOfTheMonth.club; \$20.00/month for a subscription; \$24.00 for individual bandanas



Books of Your Dreams

You can't always be sewing. When you're not, you can keep your imagination alive with these top-notch selections.

PIECES OF HISTORY

Patchwork: A World Tour, by Catherine Legrand (Thames & Hudson, 2023), offers a wide-ranging view of pieced fabric traditions through time and around the globe. The author shares more than 300 images of patchwork items, including soft furnishings and clothing, that tell a diverse ethnographic story. The author, a knowledgeable textile artist, provides helpful and engaging descriptions of how the featured pieces were made.

ThamesAndHudson.com; \$50.00



VICTORIAN SECRETS

We know our clothes tell a story about who we are. But what can you learn from a collection of small scraps? Kate Strasdin's *The Dress Diary: Secrets from a Victorian Woman's Wardrobe* (Pegasus Books, 2023) shows that you can learn about individuals, communities, nations, and much more. The dress historian (see her article in *Threads* #214, Summer 2021) explores the evidence offered by a scrapbook filled with fabric swatches, compiled by Anne Sykes between 1838 and 1870.

BarnesAndNoble.com; \$28.95



MIMI G IN PRINT

In the past 10 years, Mimi G has gone from from stylish home sewer to influencer to role model for inclusivity and joy in sewing. Now she has published a comprehensive book on creating a wardrobe that expresses your personality. *Make it Yours with Mimi G: A Sewist's Guide to a Custom Wardrobe*, includes seven patterns (tops, bottoms, a dress, and a duster coat), with several ways to modify each design. Intermediate sewers will have no trouble with these patterns and detailed instructions; beginners may want an additional reference for some techniques. Patterns are sized XXS to 2XL (for busts 32 inches to 47 inches; hips 35 inches to 50 inches).

AbramsBooks.com; \$35.00



FASHION 1920–1990

Nicky Albrechtsen's *Vintage Fashion: A Complete Sourcebook* (Thames & Hudson, 2023), takes the reader on a stroll through fashions of the 20th century, with plenty of photos, as well as deep dives into style trends, fabrics, colors, and social history. Chapters cover fashion by the decades; specific garment and accessory types; and textile trends and silhouettes. The author includes sections on building a collection of vintage clothing and how to date, care for, and alter older garments. You're sure to find inspiration among the hundreds of garments shown, even if your personal style is contemporary.

Amazon.com; \$50.00

