

Quilting Design: How to choose the finishing touch for your quilt!

Purpose of the quilt

- Who is it intended for? What is the recipient's style or personality?
- What is its expected use? How will it be cared for?
- Will this quilt be entered in a show?

Factors which affect the look of a quilt

- Piecing pattern and fabrics in quilt top
 - Traditional vs. modern*
- Batting choices
 - 100% Cotton*
 - 80/20 Cotton/Poly blend*
 - 100% Polyester*
 - Discount batts*
- Backing choices
 - Pieced vs. wide cloth*
 - Busy vs. plain*
 - Sheets - thread count, shrinkage*
- Thread choices
 - Cotton vs. poly*
 - Monofilament and other specialty threads*
 - Blend in or stand out*
 - Thread weight
 - Color - solid, variegated
 - How to "audition" thread color*

Steps in choosing your quilt design

- Let the quilt top speak to you
 - Intended use*
 - Piecing pattern*
 - Designs in the fabric*
 - Characteristics of the quilt*
- Use opposites to create contrast
 - Curving design on geometric piecing*
 - Crosshatch around appliqué*
- Which should be dominant? Piecing or quilting?
- Size/scale/shape of area to be quilted
- Consistency in density

How to "audition" your quilting design

- Acrylic design board (be sure to check pens)
- "Press 'n Seal" wrap
- Photocopies

Once you have settled on a design:

- Practice, practice, practice! Before ever stitching it.
- Draw design on design board, take a photo, or keep board near quilting area
- Be open to changing your design once you're ready to start quilting - design may be too ambitious, quilt may "say" something new to you

How to "practice" your quilting designs

- Acrylic design board
- Write on/Wipe off board
- Overhead transparency sheets
- Photocopies
- "Sew" it without thread

Potential quilting techniques

- Pantographs
- Pattern boards with stylus
- Meander - plain vs. patterned
- Overall freehand
- Continuous curve
- "Design With Lines"
- "Stitch in the ditch" (SID)
- Crosshatch - diagonal, wavy
- Echo quilting
- Stippling
- Pebbling
- Feathers

Border Quilting

- Types of borders [include examples]
 - Collision*
 - Dead end*
 - Corner/middle resolution*
 - Continuous around the quilt*
- Freehand vs. drafted

Marking your quilt pattern

- Chalk markers or pencils
- Chalk "pounce" pads & stencils

Miscellaneous tips

- Take a photo of your quilt top before quilting. Will help in progressive planning of the quilting.

Sources of inspiration

- "Long-Arm Machine Quilting" by Carol Thelen
- "The Ultimate Guide to Longarm Machine Quilting" by Linda Taylor
(www.lequilters.com)
- Assorted Pocket Guides by Darlene Epps (www.trilliumhousedesigns.com)
- DVDs/workbooks by Pam Clarke
- Photos of existing quilts in books, magazines, on the internet
- Training classes for Longarm Quilters (Innovations, MQS, Longarm University)