



Suzanne Hyland, from Quilters Touch, demonstrated how easy it is to choose the quilting style and type that will enhance your quilt.

Quilts have three elements:

1. Pattern, the layout and design of the quilt top.
2. Color.
3. Quilting, the thread that holds the layers together.

Quilt as Desired

A quilt pattern usually describes two of the three elements, telling what fabric colors to use, what shapes to cut and how to piece the quilt top. But most patterns give no direction for quilting, stating three dreadful words to most quilters, “Quilt as desired.” Many quilters, not knowing what to quilt, give up and just meander or ditch stitch.

Take the mystery out of “quilting as desired” by auditioning or pre-viewing quilting designs before quilting your quilt. Finding quilting designs that will complement the pattern and color of your quilt will enhance the beauty of the finished quilt.

General guidelines for quilting

There are no hard and fast rules for selecting quilting designs. But, you can ask yourself a few questions to help narrow your choices.

Does the quilt top stand on its own merits? Would a patterned or interpretive design take away from the beauty of the top? [Figure 1]

Meandering and ditch-stitching will hold the three layers of the quilt together, but they don’t do much to complement the quilt. Meander a quilt when the quilt top has so much design that interpretive quilting would draw away from the design of the quilt. Ditch stitching is also an effective way to hold the top together without taking away from the design.

Many quilters suggest meandering when a quilt will be washed or used heavily. In this case, Suzanne prefers to meander with style, that is, add a flower, leaf, star, heart, or some other motif along with the meandering. Meandering with style adds an element of beauty to the quilt without compromising its durability.

Are the fabrics in the quilt top the same value? [Figure 2]

These quilts are good candidates for an all over quilting design. An all over quilting design is applied to the quilt randomly, edge to edge across the entire quilt. It could be a printed quilting pattern or could be free-handed by combining several shapes randomly such as flowers, leaves, and loops.

Contrast what would happen if you apply an all over design to a quilt with changes in value. If you have a quilt that has a light patch next to a dark patch, and if a flower is part of the all over quilting pattern, the flower will probably cross both the light and dark patch. If you use light thread, the portion of the flower on the light patch will disappear, while the part of the flower on the dark patch will scream, “look at me.” You’ll only see part of the flower. On a quilt top with the same value fabrics, you’ll see the entire design because the thread color appears the same on all of the fabrics and doesn’t disappear from light to dark.

Sewing Supplies

- ✂ Pfaff creative 2144 Sewing and Embroidery Machine
- ✂ Quilters Preview Paper
- ✂ Permanent marker
- ✂ Machingers™ Quilting Gloves



Figure 1

Suzanne’s snowman quilt is a block of the month called “Snowman Collector”. Info: Stitch Connection
43601 Gatehouse Ct., Canton, MI 48187
(734) 451-7281

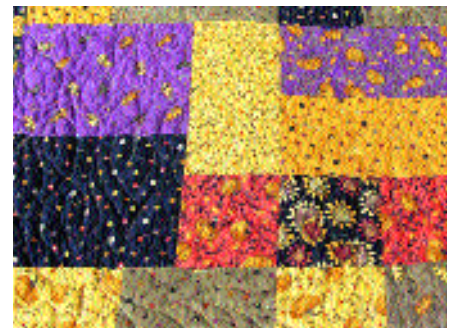


Figure 2

The fall-colored quilt is a Yellow Brick Road pattern from:

Atkinson Designs
19160 Zane St., Elk River, MN 55330
Ph: (763) 441-1825, Fax: (763) 441-1825
E-mail: kirk@atkinsondesigns.com



Figure 3

Does the quilt have a theme? [Figure 3]

A theme quilt can give clues for determining the quilting design. If it's a garden quilt, use leaves and loops as the background around an appliqué, instead of stippling. In the snowman quilt, the quilting design suggests wind and blowing snow. Fabrics in your quilt can also suggest possible quilting designs. Theme quilts beg for quilting designs that support the theme of the quilt.

Are there spaces in your quilt with no piecing such as alternating blocks or a wide border?



Figure 4

The open spaces in your quilt are fabulous spaces for letting your quilting designs shine. If you design your own quilt tops, leave spaces with no piecing to showcase your quilting. The simplest way to do this is to set the blocks in your quilt with alternating blank blocks, or to add simple borders. [Figure 4]

Quilting shows best in spaces that are solid or that read as solid from a distance. Don't bother with fancy quilting designs in busy prints; the quilting gets lost in these fabrics.

Is your top made of many different values of fabric, with piecing changing from light to dark? Are there defined areas of your quilt that call for a variety of quilting designs, such as a landscape or pictorial quilt?



Figure 5

These quilts are perfect for interpretive quilting design. Look for the defined spaces in the quilt as an opportunity to capture and enhance the beauty of your quilt through quilting. Group the spaces based on the value of the fabrics. If you have a space with light fabrics, choose a design that will fill the entire space without spilling into the medium or dark fabrics around it. Look for unexpected spaces in your quilt, the not-so-obvious spaces defined by the piecing.

In the quilt, "Tropical Rays," different quilting designs are applied to the sun rays, to the flowers, and to each leaf. The quilting gives definition to the leaves and adds texture elsewhere. Choose interpretive quilting designs by auditioning or previewing the design before quilting the quilt. [Figure 5]

How to audition quilting designs

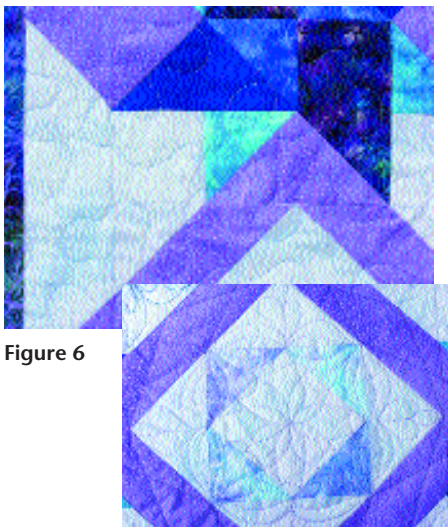


Figure 6

Look at this purple and blue quilt. The quilt is made of only two blocks that create new shapes when placed together. Look at the quilting spaces defined by the changing values—the purple square on point and the lighter square within, the star, the small purple squares, and the white diamond shapes. Look at the white spaces just inside the border; they are not all triangles, but a straight quilting line could define a triangle space. [Figure 6]

Begin by auditioning quilting designs on Quilter's Preview Paper. Trace or freehand designs using a permanent marker. Audition stencils, printed patterns, or freehand a design. Drawing freehand designs

is Suzanne's preference, because it allows her to truly interpret the space. Look for proper fit of the design along the patchwork. Also preview thread color choice by observing where the quilting design crosses from light to darker fabrics.

Quilter's Preview Paper can also be used to make a quick stencil, especially if you find the perfect design in the wrong size. Re-size the pattern to fit the space and trace it onto the paper. Cut around the design leaving at least 2" on all sides. Cut one or more additional layers of Quilter's Preview Paper. [Figure 7]

Layer the Preview Paper on top of the traced paper pattern and take them to your sewing machine. Drop the feed dogs, use a free-motion foot, and perforate the layers using a size 90 needle following the marked line. Be sure to remove thread from the top and bobbin. CHANGE your needle before using on fabric. [Figure 8]

Place one of the perforated Preview Paper pieces onto your quilt and rub loose chalk into the perforations with a chalk pounce, or rub with a small piece of cotton batting dipped into the loose chalk. You will have a pin-point outline of the design. After quilting the design, a lint brush will help remove excess chalk from the quilt. [Figure 9]

Let's Quilt—Tips for Successful Machine Quilting

- Support your quilt on a flat surface, bunching and folding as needed to create a 9-10" area you can move freely under the needle. When you've quilted that area, adjust quilt in the same manner to generate a new area ready for quilting.
- Lighten up! Don't apply too much pressure with your hands. Relax your hands slightly to use your fingertips to guide the fabric rather than palms. Relaxed fingers can walk and guide fabric under the needle better and longer than the U-shaped palm grip.
- Fabric, just like paper, will take the oils out of your hands and cause you to lose your grip on the quilt. Use gloves, such as Machingers™ quilting gloves, to maintain your grip. [Figure 10]
- Most people look at the needle as it goes into the fabric as they sew. Get used to looking ahead and anticipating where you're moving next, looking only occasionally at the needle. It's amazing what happens when you make this transition and trust your hands to follow your eye.
- Always set needle stop down, and try to stop at a point rather than in the middle of an arc.
- Thread color choice is very important. If you're unsure about what thread will work best, preview the thread in a small section by loosening the top tension so the stitches can be quickly removed. Another way to preview thread is to quilt with water soluble thread in the bobbin. To remove the stitching, spray the water soluble thread until it is soft enough to pull the top thread away.

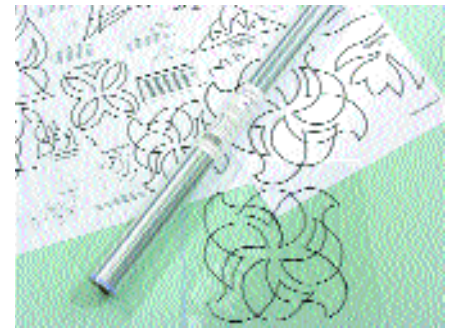


Figure 7

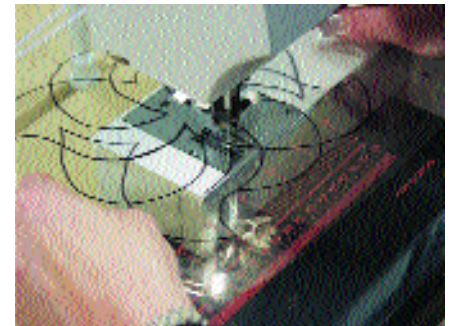


Figure 8



Figure 9



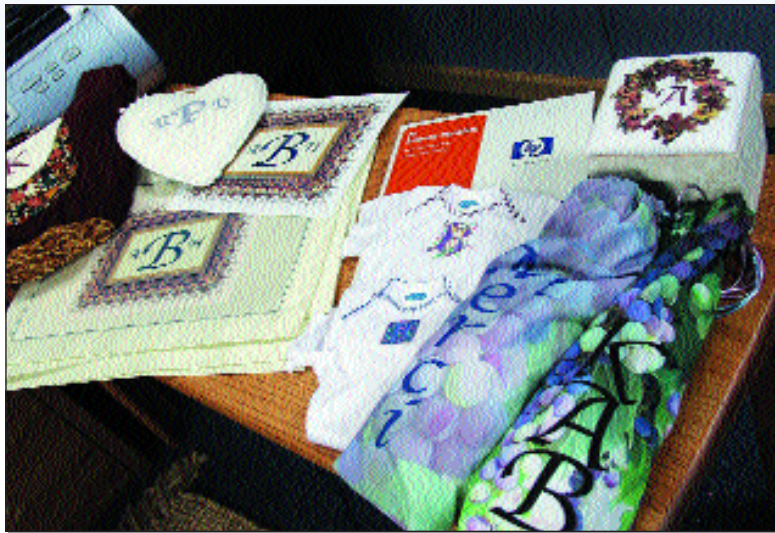
Figure 10



Creating Monograms with your Printer

Monograms are very popular and are a great way to personalize your gifts and quilted projects. A Ring Bearer Pillow is heart shaped, with the bride's initials. This was stitched as shadow work. Just print the letter in bright colors onto fabric. Then place a sheer fabric over it, and stitch the outlines by hand, or machine. The colors become muted, and very delicate and nice.

Gift bags become very special when made from special fabric. Take a background image of grapes, or whatever image is suitable for your theme. Place an initial, or initials on top of the grape image, and print. This makes a personalized fabric, which can then be made into a gift bag, book cover, used to cover a box, or placed on a purse. ■



What's New to Do!

Designing Pieced Sashing

Andrea Poulimenos from Electric Quilt joined Sue and Karen to show how easy it is to design a pieced sashing in EQ5 Software Program.

It's easy to try out different sashing designs to see what you like in EQ5 (#140001313) on your computer. That way you can choose before you actually sew the quilt. In some cases, you may want to make the sashing the focal point of the quilt! [Figure A]

Sometimes the interest is at the end of the sashing piece, where it meets the cornerstone. As you can see here, the triangles added to the ends of the sashing create a star, when combined with the cornerstone. Beautiful! And EQ5 means you see it before you sew it so you're sure you will love the finished look. [Figure B]

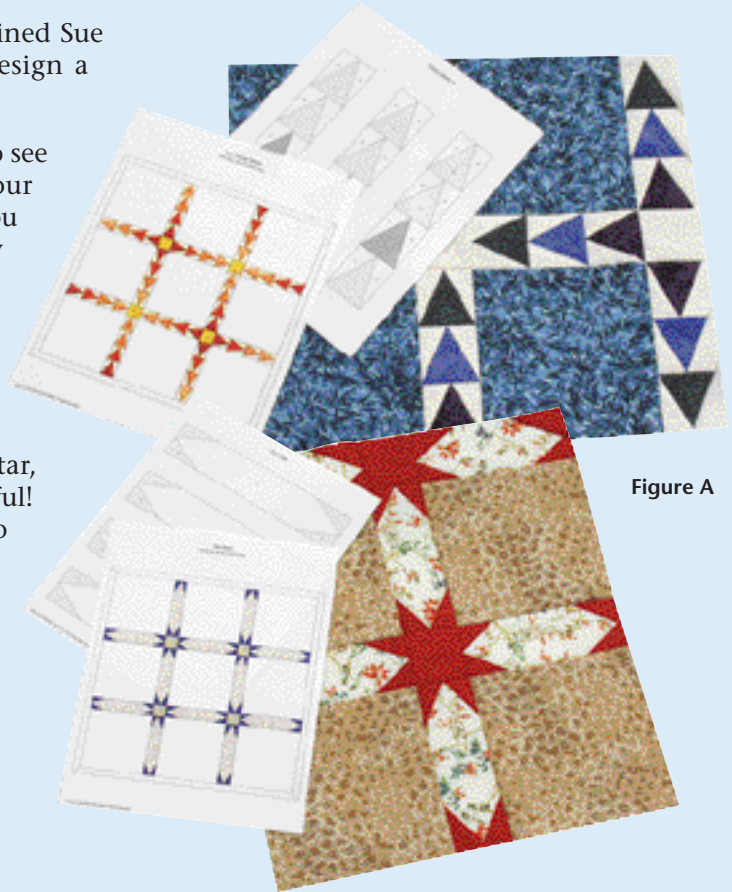


Figure A



Figure B

