

Sew WHAT?

MAGAZINE

The International Magazine for Custom Home Furnishings Professionals

Volume 11, Number 10

October 2003



**The "TOTAL EXPERIENCE"
at the Biltmore Estate**

**It Never Hurts to Ask
Zippered Valance
Anchors for Drywall**



Biltmore
Guest Cottage



**Pick up ADO ad from inside front
cover September 2003 issue.**

SEWWHAT?

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Publisher/Editor

Cheryl Strickland

Managing Editor

Layout/Design

Mary Zellers

Graphic Design

Kelly Ross Terry

SEWWHAT? motto:

**"Sew generously and you will
reap generously."**

SEWWHAT?'s mission:

To help drapery, slipcover, and upholstery professionals with all of their fabrication and design needs. To eliminate the unnecessary wasting of time, the frustration of not being able to find resources, the discouraging and lonely moments of being a small business, and the managerial challenges faced by larger businesses.

All featured products, services, or suppliers are intended for information-sharing purposes only.

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October 2003

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FROM CHERYL

Do I have your attention?

Wow! Why in the world did I make this *entire* "From Cheryl" section in bright yellow? Did it get your attention? Well, that's why I did it. I have several very important things to share with you. First, it's time to renew your subscription for next year. "Oh my gosh," you may be saying to yourself. "Why make such a fuss about renewing now?" Please let me explain.

I know how busy you all are. It's tough to keep up with everything and renewing isn't on the top of your 'critical' list by any means. It is critical to **us**, however, for several reasons. All subscriptions are by calendar year so everyone renews at the same time—before December 31st. Many don't remember to renew until way into the following year, even though we put renewal forms into the October, November, and December issues as reminders. Issues are mailed monthly via *second class* mail for periodicals, which is much less expensive than first class. When subscribers wait until after the first of the year, we must send the issues that they have missed by *first class*. Mailing first class costs us over \$1.50 for *each* issue. No other magazine sends past issues that have been missed because it is too much trouble and too costly. We do not want you to miss any issues, but, as you can see, this is a costly service for us to provide.

On another, more exciting, note: Each month we have a difficult time fitting in all of the articles that we would like to share, so we have decided to increase the size of the magazine from 20 to 24 pages! (This does not include advertising pages, which remain in the center.)

In November of last year we changed our format to full color, tripling our printing cost, but we did not increase the subscription price. In fact, we have not raised our subscription price for seven years, even when we expanded from 16 pages to 20. So, to help defray some of those "forgot to renew" mailings, the expense of color printing, and the cost of adding four new pages, we have decided to raise our price. But, not to worry, we're keeping the increase to only \$2. Wow, what a bargain! And better yet, we are going to let you renew at the old price of \$34.95 **if** you subscribe before December 31st. All subscriptions after that date will be at the new rate of \$36.95. So renew now!

The bright yellow renewal form is in the center of this issue. You can't miss it; it's the same bright yellow as this note. It's crucial that you take a moment to fill out all of the questions. We need your Tricks of the Trade to publish and we need to know what topics you would like us to feature next year. We want to know, so please speak up!

~ Cheryl



*Cheryl Strickland
Publisher/Editor*

The Historic Biltmore Estate

By Cheryl Strickland

While my mother, sister, and I had our drapery business, we were honored to have the world-renowned Biltmore Estate as one of our customers. The Biltmore Estate consists of a 250-room French chateau, several guest cottages, spectacular gardens, vineyard, winery, and an inn on 8,000 beautiful acres in the heart of Asheville, North Carolina, in the magnificent Blue Ridge Mountains.

The chateau, referred to as the Biltmore House, was created in 1985 by George Vanderbilt and is still owned by his descendants. America's largest home, Vanderbilt's "country retreat" covers four acres and has 34 bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, 65 fireplaces, and 3 kitchens. Vanderbilt traveled the world selecting furnishings for his estate, including art by Renoir, Whistler, and Sargent; exquisite 16-century tapestries; and more than 20,000 books in seven languages. He included technological marvels such as telephones and electric lights to provide unequalled comfort for family and friends. Today the Biltmore House is open to the public, with over 60 rooms carefully preserved to appear the same as they did a century ago, which is where we



The sheers on these arched windows of the Biltmore Estate are the ones we created out of ADO sheer fabric several years ago.

came in. We created window treatments, canopies, bed treatments, canopies, and table coverings. We sold our business in 1989 and many of the treatments have since been replaced by other companies. However, all of the sheers on the arched windows across the front and the back of the house are still the ones we created out of ADO sheer fabric several years ago. I believe some of the velvet cantoniers (drapes that can close over a doorway) are still our originals.



The Biltmore Guest Cottage

Well, all of this is certainly interesting, but why am I sharing all of this with you? Because it's the background for the rest of my story. The Director of Education at the Custom Home Furnishings School, Margie Nance, came up with a terrific idea. Rather than only having window treatment classes that strictly focus on fabrication, why not also offer a class that covers from start to finish, providing a better look at the overall process. Called the Total Experience, the class would cover from analyzing the window and the customer's needs to installing the treatment. How could we do this at a school? Take the students into a real home. We thought about beautiful new homes being built in the area of the school, but I also had in my mind that historical window treatments are of great interest today. I decided that if we were going to try this real-world experience, why not go to the BEST house in the area—the Biltmore House! Margie thought the idea was phenomenal, but she kept stammering, "the BILTMORE HOUSE! D...d...do you really think we could?" "Why not?", I said. "It couldn't hurt to ask!" I couldn't think of a better experience to offer our students.

I did call and ask, and they were thrilled with the idea. We get real windows for our students to work on and they get free window treatments! The Biltmore House itself did not need any treatments right now, but the Guest Cottage, which was as old and historical as the house, did need re-decorating. The family and special clients of the owners stay in the Cottage. It will also be available for rent to visitors in the future. The 106-year old cottage was perfect! We identified seven different hands-on window treatment projects in the Cottage for students participating in what we now call the "TOTAL Experience". We also will be offering slipcover, upholstery, and installation projects at the cottage. But, this is where Margie's story takes over...

The "TOTAL Experience" at the Biltmore Estate

By Margie Nance

From concept to completion, the "TOTAL Experience" at the Biltmore Estate will show students how to work with a real client in a real environment, including design, fabrication, and installation of a window treatment for the home. Offering something for everyone, the class is designed for those just starting out and veterans that have been in the business for many years.

The 5-day class begins in the Biltmore Guest Cottage, the former home of the market gardener for the Biltmore Estate. This 4-bedroom cottage decorated in early American includes the original furniture from the 1800's. The brick-walled courtyard of the home was the location for the farmer's market and still stands today. From the cobblestone driveway to the antique mahogany beds, the Guest Cottage still has the feel of a bygone era.

Students take an active role in measuring the windows for the chosen room, discuss design options based on the room setting and owner preferences, photograph the room, and record information on timesaving forms. In the afternoon, students become invited guests of the Biltmore House and take a special tour with emphasis on window treatment design and fabrics.

The second day of the class is conducted at the Custom Home Furnishings School where students learn organizational skills and proper paperwork necessary in to run a profitable window treatment business. Topics include terms and conditions, contracts, creating a unique presentation folder, and how to keep an organized client information binder. Other topics include design concepts, such as how to properly select colors, coordinate fabrics, and design a window treatment.

The third day includes final design plans, calculating yardages, and filling out a workorder for our project. Then the fabrication process begins, as the paperwork and fabrics come together to become a new window treatment for the Guest Cottage. Students learn a variety of fabrication methods based on the style of chosen treatments. Each monthly class brings it's own design challenges and a variety of classic and elegant styles will be selected. A mixture of Biltmore Collection and other historical-based fabrics and trims will be used.

Designers attending this class will get hands-on practice in proper window treatment design along with a priceless behind-the-scenes experience in a real workroom, learning how window treatments are fabricated. Workroom personnel attending the class will learn timesaving tips, industry tricks, and proper fabrication methods and will also experience working with the industry's newest tools and equipment.

The fabrication of the treatment will be completed on the fourth day, including any board-mounting of valances and proper packaging and/or transportation methods required for the installation.

On the last day students return to the Guest Cottage and oversee the installation. An overview of proper installation tools and techniques will be discussed. Once completed, a review of the week, along with an open discussion, will be the focus for the remainder of the day.

This five-day class is just \$995, which includes transportation from the School to the Biltmore Estate, entrance to the Biltmore House, lunch, workbook, and all fabrics and supplies. Only seven classes will be offered in 2004, beginning in January. Space is limited to eight students per class. Please call the Custom Home Furnishings School at 800-222-1415 or 828-686-3185 to register for a class or to learn more about this unique real-life, hands-on learning opportunity that combines yesterday's charm with today's techniques.

Biltmore Guest Cottage Interior



It never hurts to ask!

By Cheryl Strickland

In our cover story you will read that the world-renowned Biltmore Estate was one of our customers when we had our drapery business. We have been asked many times how the business my mother started with just herself grew to have 21 employees and how we acquired such a prestigious customer. Well, believe it or not, all we had to do was ask. (Granted, we also had to produce a good quality product, or they would not have said yes.) You would be surprised how many times you can pick up new clients, simply by asking. You never know until you try, whether someone is looking for your type of services. Don't be afraid to ask.

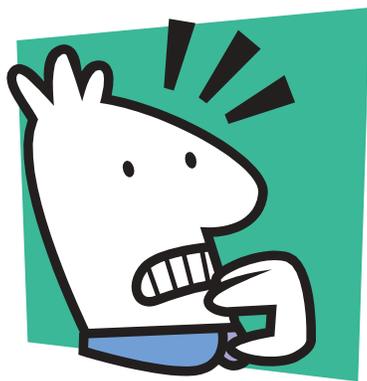
You do not have to be pushy.

Many times it's just a matter of carrying your business card wherever you go and letting people know what you do. When we still had our drapery business, I registered for an accounting class at our community college to help me understand our accounting records. The school registrar asked for a business card when she found out what I did because she needed window treatments. While I was on the road doing seminars in Las Vegas, two different people from the conference center asked me for business cards when they saw my seminar samples. Each had brand new houses they had built and wanted me to provide window treatments. I explained that I was from North Carolina and only taught now, but I gave them the business cards of two local firms that were attending my class. (Boy, you never know what you are going to get out of attending one of my seminars!)

Don't take it personally!

When I say don't be afraid to ask, I truly do mean don't be AFRAID to ask. Most people that really are *afraid* to ask are frightened about how they will *feel* if they get a "no" answer. That's because they take it personally. Finding out

if someone has a need or not has nothing to do with you personally. *Their* situation should not effect *your* feelings. By sharing what you do, you are actually just seeking information from them about their needs. Think of it this way: You are the *solution* to their *problem*. But, if they don't have a problem, they don't need you as a solution, that's all.



Don't be afraid to ask others to recommend you.

Most people enjoy helping others. When they can provide a solution to a neighbor, fellow office worker, or church friend, they are delighted to do so. Approach builders and ask them if they would recommend you. Believe me, they are asked by their clients to recommend all kinds of resources, including sources for custom home furnishings. Why not let it be you? It will not be an imposition; it makes the builder look good to have an answer (solution) to their client's request. And, if the client is happy with you as a good recommendation (solution), it makes the builder look even better in the client's eyes!

Don't take no as the "final" answer.

Don't be a pest, but, also, don't give up on a possible customer. Just because they may not need you now, doesn't mean they may not need you in the future. Just because they may not be convinced of your quality now, doesn't mean they won't be impressed after seeing some of your work in someone else's home or office. One of our industry suppliers said he did not like that we started adding advertising to *Q&A* **WHAT?** and also said that he would never advertise in it. He was afraid that working with advertisers would change the content of the magazine itself. I assured him that it would not and asked him to please keep a watch on the content and to keep an open mind. About a year and a half later he called us to say that not only did he want to advertise, he wanted a prominent position and a THREE-YEAR contract!

Turn a complaint into a sales opportunity.

A vendor at one of the educational conferences I put on didn't like their position on the floor and had a couple of problems. They were very upset with us, which meant that I was upset, too. I wanted to make up for any problems they had and turn them back into a happy customer. What did I do? I offered them a much larger booth at the next show in a better location with a section of it free. They were very impressed that we cared enough to try to make amends and they were impressed with the offer. My hope was that not only would it make up for their past unhappiness, but that it would also end up in the sale of a bigger booth in future years if they were happy with the new booth.

It never hurts to ask!

As long as you are professional, it never hurts to ask. Be bold, but not obnoxious. Be persistent, but not pesky. Offer good work, be dependable, care about your clients, and ASK! You'll be amazed at the clients you may find!

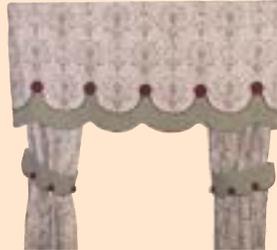
And The Winner Is ...

Each year the *SeW*WHAT? magazine sponsors a workmanship/design contest for its subscribers. This year there were four categories: window treatment workmanship, window treatment design, slipcover design, and pillow workmanship/design. The winners received prizes valued up to \$1395 and a commemorative plaque. Every entrant receives a 1½-hour Education Conference video of their choice, just for entering. The instructions for all entries are published in *SeW*WHAT?, beginning with the first place winners next month. All entries are displayed at the Educational Conference sponsored by *SeW*WHAT? and are judged by the Conference attendees. Congratulations to the following winners ...

Window Treatment Workmanship Winners



First Place Elizabeth McGinley



Second Place Terry Kowatch



Third Place Pascale Tutt

Window Treatment Design Winners



First Place Christi Cooper



Second Place Christi Cooper



Third Place Leslie Fehling

Slipcover Design Winners



First Place Dian Garbarini



Second Place Claudia Buchanan



Third Place Leslie Fehling

Pillow Workmanship/Design Winners



First Place Susan Schurz



Second Place Terry Kowatch



Third Place Cheryl Bray

*SeW*WHAT? Magazine gave a special one-year subscription incentive to encourage early entries. The first five entrants were Elizabeth McGinley, Pascale Tutt, Laura Nelson, Meryln Corcoran, and Becky Gray. Start planning YOUR entry now for next year's contest. The deadline is July 1, 2004.

2002 Window Treatment Design Contest Entry

Zippered Valance

By Donna Skufis

This valance was copied from a photo in a trade-decorating magazine. I liked it because it used a zipper both functionally and as decoration. Fun fabrics work well with this design. I selected the berry patch fabric so I could use contrasting solid fabrics.

The valance is constructed from a flat piece of fabric split in half with the zipper set in.

Determine the finished length and width, plus returns. Calculate for seam allowance and hems. I suggest using a jacket zipper or zipper by the roll. Add a zipper pull to each end of the zipper since it will open from both ends of the finished treatment. Use a fun zipper pull for decoration.

The valance is contrast lined. The lining shows when the zipper is opened. Finish the top edge and the hems edge, including the side hems. I selected contrast welt, but fringe, beading, or other trims will also work well.

My first choice for installation is to hook and loop the treatment directly to the window or window frame. If the treatment must be mounted, use a mount board with legs to keep the valance straight.

I prefer to leave open the space revealed at the top of the valance when the zipper is opened. When using a mount board, the space can remain open by cutting the mount boards in half, leaving a space between them. However, as shown, a contrast piece of fabric can be added to the top of the treatment to fill in the open space. To create the contrast fabric, open the top zipper to the desired position when the treatment is finished, and measure the



open space. Cut a contrast fabric to size, plus allowance to slide the edges under the opening in the treatment. Line the fabric and glue or sew it in place.

Finally, open the zipper, pull back the corners, and tack them in place. Then add your choice of covered buttons, beads, and tassels.

Triple Layer Soft Cornice

By Donna Skufis

This treatment is constructed of three layers built on top of each other. Upholstery skirt lining was used to provide the stiff, smooth look. It is available from most upholstery suppliers on 100-yard rolls, 5", 6", 9", 12", 18", and 30" wide. My favorite supplier is Sunshine Foam Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 513-681-7300.

Cut the first section of the valance one-third of the over-all length. Be sure to add for all returns. It is important to cut the face and returns all one piece. Cut the second piece in the same hem shape as the first. Returns are $\frac{1}{4}$ " narrower and this

section needs to be 1"-2" longer at the top edge. The added length allows for the overlapping of the sections. Cut the third piece in the same hem shape as the second, with each return $\frac{1}{4}$ " narrower than the second section. This section also needs to be 1"-2" longer at the top edge. Cut the fabrics and prepare welt or trims of your choice. Preshrinking the face fabric with a steam iron assures that the soft cornice will keep its shape.

Each section of the valance, including welt or other trims, is covered with the face fabric separately. To cover the stiffener, use iron-on tapes or glue,

folding the raw edges of the fabric over to the backside of the stiffener. Do not apply the lining yet.

Once all three stiffener pieces are covered, with right sides to the worktable, overlap section two over section one. Measure the overlap, whatever you added, 1"-2" and glue section two into place. Rowley's



2002 Window Treatment Design Contest Entry

Colorado Ranch Home

By Joan LaFon

The western look of this Colorado ranch home's great room was created by using the reverse textured side of Wesco fabric for the panels. The panels were lined with putty lining to match the stucco exterior of the home. The valances were made by using the suede side of leather hides. The natural raw edges of the leather created a unique and rustic feel that

complemented the western furniture and accessories in the room. The top of the leather valance was folded over 2½" and secured with 2-sided tape on the back side. Drapery hooks were used to attach the valance to the rings. ¾" twisted wrought iron rods were used with an arrow finial on one end and tail feather finial on the other.

The western look continued into the adjoining kitchen with three stagecoach valances that were made with a heavy textured Kravet fabric. All three of the valances were mounted on cornice boards. The straps on the valance were made from the smooth side of the leather hide. The strap edges were folded back and secured in the middle of the back side with 2-sided tape to give it a more finished look.



Joan LaFon is the owner of Window Treatments, Etc., a home-based business in Franktown, CO. Joan has an MBA and worked for a large corporation prior to having three children. Her business is a "dream come true" as it has allowed her to stay at home with the children but also have a career.

fringe adhesive works well. Now, add section three and glue the same way. You will notice that the return edges do not meet. Fold up the returns, and the stack of the layers should allow the returns to line up. Do any adjusting to the returns. If they do not line up, pull the face fabric away from the stiffener and cut the stiffener to line up. Reapply the face fabric and check the glue. Add more glue if needed.

It is best and faster to line all three sections as one. Ignore the lumps and bumps and lay the lining over all sections, turning the raw edges over if possible and adhering them to the

back of the soft cornice, at the hem. If the hem shape is too complex, cut the lining to that shape and glue the raw edge down, then cover with gimp.

Finish by mounting on a mount board.

For very valuable information about constructing soft cornices, Donna suggests viewing her videos "Fast Soft Cornices" (Item #V02-9a/10a) and "Fast Soft Cornices II" (Item #V03-9c/10c) from the 2002 and 2003 Custom Home Furnishings Industry Educational Conference and Trade Show. You can get a copy by calling 800-222-1415 (828-686-3185).



Donna Skufis is the owner of a one-person workroom serving designers and direct customers in Florence, KY, since 1991. Donna has 23 years industry experience, specializing in design and installation of window treatments, bedding, and light upholstery.

2002 Window Treatment Design Contest Entry

Arched Sheer Overlays

Barbara Anne Gellendin

Cynthia Musickant is the designer for this treatment and the workroom is Creations by Barbara Anne.

The client wanted the window treatment to be light and airy to compliment the faux painting on the walls. She wanted the palladium part of the window covered without obstructing the beauty of the window. Cynthia's design intent was to frame the outline of the window and the palladium using white sheer fabric cut into narrow strips for the base, hanging from the top of the window trim. The shape of the top of the arch was followed on the bottom below the mullion, covering the shade in the raised position. She introduced color with knotted overlay strips. An inside shade was mounted below the mullion.

Fabrication:

- 1) Make a template of the palladium.
- 2) To calculate the finished width of each base strip, divide the face of the window by an even number. An even number of base strips is necessary so an overlay can be between every two base strips. The base strips in this treatment had a finished width of 6.5". Add $\frac{3}{4}$ " for overlap and $\frac{1}{2}$ " for seam allowances ($\frac{1}{4}$ " to each side) to the finished width of the base strips. Add returns to the two extreme end strips. Cut the overlays 1" narrower than the base strips to allow more white to show.
- 3) To calculate the cut length of the base strips, use the finished length, plus the return at the top, plus 10" for work. For the overlays allow approximately 12" to 14" for knots.
- 4) Each strip, base and overlay, is fabricated from two layers of fabric that is treated as one. When calculating yardage, be sure to double the amount.
- 5) Cut each strip separately.
- 6) Treat the two layers as one when roll hemming the edges. The differential feed was worth its weight in gold here! Metallic thread was used in the upper looper only with regular color matched sewing thread in the lower looper and needle. Use a three thread rolled hem. Be sure to estimate high for the thread amount as a great deal of thread is used.
- 7) Serge the long edges first, using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Angle the bottom 3". Angle the base strips in pairs, meeting in the center. Angle the bottoms of the overlays.
- 8) Layout all the strips on the table over the template, and size. The overlays are shorter in length than the base strips. Remember to tie the knots in the overlays before sizing.
- 9) Lots of pinning was the key to keeping the strips from shifting when going to the machine to baste on the sizing line. Serge off the top. Sew on hook and loop at the top for mounting. Start and stop the hook and loop at the mullion.
- 10) Staple hook and loop to the top of the window trim. Use 2-sided tape on the returns to secure to the lower part of the trim.

This treatment sounds easy enough in print, but it was very time-consuming and labor intensive.



Finished arch window treatment.



Side window without arch.



Barbara Gellendin is the owner of Creations by Barbara Anne, a design studio and workroom located in Menomonee Falls, WI. She also teaches window treatment and home accessories fabrication classes at the Waukesha County Technical College.

2002 Decorative Pillow Workmanship Entry

Green/Lavender Plaid Pillow

By Jody Jessup

Materials

- 1 yd face fabric for the pillow front and bias cording
- 20" fabric for the pillow back and shadow piecing on the front
- 20" contrast print or plaid for the front piecing
- 20" interlining
- 3 large buttons to cover
- 4 tassels
- 18" pillow form (I used 50% poly/50% feather form.)
- 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ yds small cording

Fabrication

- 1) Cut the face, back, and interlining pieces.
- 2) Serge interlining to the front and back pieces along all the edges.
- 3) Cut 2 strips of the pillow back fabric approximately 19" x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Press under $\frac{1}{2}$ " on each length

and center on the pillow front as desired. Adhere with Rowley trim glue or other adhesive.

- 4) Cut 2 strips of the contrast print approximately 19" x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Press under $\frac{1}{2}$ " along each length and center over the first strip of fabric. (About $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the first strip should peek out along the length of each side.) Adhere with glue and topstitch close to each edge along the length of each strip.
- 5) Make and apply bias cording.
- 6) Place a tassel at each corner.
- 7) Cover and attach 3 buttons along the center front of the pillow.
- 8) Sew pillow front to pillow back.
- 9) Stuff with the pillow form. Add extra stuffing at the corners to eliminate dog ears. Close.



Jody Jessup is the owner of Designs Sew Creative, a home-based retail and wholesale business in Sheridan, IN.

2002 Decorative Pillow Workmanship Entry

Materials:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ yard of two contrasting fabrics
- 16" pillow form
- 8 button forms: 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ " and 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Fabrication:

- 1) Cut two 21" squares of pillow back fabric.
- 2) Place the face sides together and pin. Duplicate the pillow back pattern for wave edge and center on wrong side of fabric. Trace around the pattern, remove, and sew along traced lines. Trim and clip excess seam allowance. Cut a slit in the center of one back piece of fabric. Turn the face sides out through the slit, and press.
- 3) Cut two 19" squares of pillow front fabric. Repeat step 2 using pillow front pattern.
- 4) Cut one 11" square from the front and one 11" square from the back. Place them face sides together.

Duplicate overlay pattern, center on pieces, trace around the pattern, and sew along the traced lines. Cut a slit in the center of the front fabric. Turn the piece face side out through the slit, and press.

- 5) Cover four $\frac{5}{8}$ " button forms with the face fabric and four $\frac{3}{4}$ " button forms with the back fabric.
- 6) Center the overlay on the front and attach with the buttons on each corner of the overlay.
- 7) Center the front and overlay piece on the back piece. Topstitch 2" in from the outermost edges of the back piece, leaving an opening for inserting the form.
- 8) Insert the pillow form and stitch opening shut using a zipper foot. Stitch the back fabric buttons to the corners of the pillow.
- 9) Fluff the pillow and admire!

Wavy Edge Pillow

By Amy Bartol



Amy Bartol is the owner of AB Designs, LLC, a home-based wholesale workroom in Berlin, WI.

2002 Decorative Pillow Workmanship Entry

Acorn Pillow

By Jeanelle Dech

Shhh! Don't tell my sales rep! But, this pillow was inspired by a small memo sample of beautiful woven fabric by Stroheim and Romann. The "acorn" weave was so adorable, I couldn't bring myself to send the sample back!

Instead, I used some scrap silk and fringe, and created a kidney pillow to enter in the 2002 pillow design contest.



- 1) On either side of the "acorn" fabric, shirred sections of gold silk are stitched in with 1/2" band of contrast fabric. Shirred sections are flipped back and glue-basted at outer edges.

- 2) Zipper inserted.

- 3) Fringe inserted to left and right sides only.
- 4) Final stitch around sides and top of pillow.



Jeanelle Dech is the owner of Crab Apple Farm Interiors, a retail home furnishings store in West Chester, PA, specializing in historic and traditional designs.

FYI

\$3,248 Raised for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

During the 2003 Custom Home Furnishings Industry Educational Conference and Trade Show this year, attendees participated in a unique raffle called a Tombola. A Tombola is actually a British word for a lottery in which tickets are drawn from a revolving drum. Even though we didn't use a drum, we loved the name—suggested by attendee Linda Noakes of England—so much that we decided to use it anyway.

The Tombola was organized to raise money for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, an organization founded to raise awareness about breast cancer. Attendees and Custom Home Furnishings forum members from all over the USA were asked to clean out their workrooms and donate leftover workroom supplies, fabrics, trims, etc. A team of volunteers put together several "goodie baskets" using the donations. Cheryl Strickland contributed to the effort by donating a booth space for the Tombola on the Vendor Floor, and a grand prize of a free conference registration for 2004.

In addition to raising money for a worthy cause, everyone had a great time working to make it happen. We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped to make the event such a success. A special thanks goes to Ann Rotunno, Connie Sikora, Welmoed Sisson, Debbie Bader, and Terri Schlather for organizing and administering the project.

Tricks Of The Trade

- Alice Smith from Rockledge, FL, has found workroom uses for **Grip Deck™**. She uses it to stabilize very slippery fabrics to keep them from sliding off the work area while sewing. Place a strip of **Grip Deck™** about 2' long along the side of the sewing machine where the fabric is placed. You can also put a strip across your lap when working with multiple widths and place it on top of the sewing machine table to keep small items such as clippers and metal rulers from vibrating off the machine while sewing. For more information about **Grip Deck™** visit their website at www.gripdeck.com. Alice says that inexpensive non-slip shelf lining, available at most department stores, also works well.
- Here are five simple rules for understanding how to **recreate a pattern from a photo** that Amy Burton shared in her seminar, *Old World Inspiration*, at the 7th Annual Custom Home Furnishings Educational Conference.
 1. Dissect or separate the image into pieces and recognizable parts.
 2. Decipher or decode the image and begin thinking about how it may be constructed.
 3. Determine the image proportions using see-through measuring tools.
 4. Decide what the proportions will be on the finished treatment.
 5. Draft the pattern based on the desired proportions.
- Ann Neal suggests the following from her *Secrets For Working With Sheers* seminar at the 7th Annual Custom Home Furnishings Educational Conference.
 1. Loosen the tension on the sewing machine to avoid puckering and crimping.
 2. Be sure to check the machine for sharp edges, especially around the throat plate where a needle may have hit the plate and left a burr.
 3. Encase the raw edge of a double-width drapery panel with a folded 1"-wide satin ribbon.

If you enjoy these tips, call 800-222-1415 (828-686-3185) to purchase the video of Amy's seminar, Item Number V03-1f/2f or the video of Ann's seminar, Item Number V03-2b, and learn even more great ideas.

For YOUR Eyes ONLY!



Tip Of The Month

Mitered Top-Stitched Banding Using Two Pieces of Banding

By Cheryl Strickland

The March 2003 issue of *See WHAT?* described how to make mitered banding with one long piece of banding. If you must use two separate bands to create the miter, it is more time-consuming, but, sometimes we just can't make one band long enough. Also, some printed fabrics can't be turned sideways. To miter with two pieces, sew one band onto the treatment stopping about 8" from the corner. Place a pin at the exact outside corner along the outside edge of the band. Fold out the two edges on the un-sewn section, being careful not to dislodge the pin. Open out the folded edges of the second band and place on top of the first. Place the pin in the exact same spot, through both layers. Using a small square, draw a 45-degree angle from the pin to the other fold. Flip the square around and lay along the folded edge. Draw a 45-degree angle the opposite direction as the first, through the unfolded edge. Repeat on the other side, to create a "Z" shape. Sew along the line, trim and turn right side out. Finish topstitching or ironing-on the leftover 8" on the first band, turn, and continue onto the second band. The "Z" stitching creates the perfect miter and keeps both folded edges tucked under.



Next month I will show you how to create a mitered flange (banding that extends out from the edge.)

See this helpful tip demonstrated by Cheryl Strickland in a live video online at CHFindustry.com. The secret username and password to view this video are hidden in the Supplier Resource Directory and look like this:

username: xxx
password: xxx

Installation Insights

Anchors for Drywall

By Beth Hodges

Always use the proper anchor for the type of wall surface. Here are my recommendations for dry wall.

Most of the installing that I do is into drywall. The very best anchoring is to find the stud and screw the bracket into it. There are excellent, low-cost stud finders on the market now to help do just that. **HOWEVER**, most times we are not at liberty to decide where the END brackets will go. They have to go where they have to go—stud or no stud! This forces you to use a wall anchor of some sort when installing in drywall.

RULE NUMBER ONE: You may only use a screw alone when it is anchored into wood. Never put screws into drywall without an anchor unless you hit wood behind the drywall.

Start with the lowest level of support and increase as necessary. If the window treatment is not extraordinarily heavy, and if it will receive no downward pressure (pulling), a simple wall plug is



Illustration 1

sufficient. See Illustration 1. My supplier sells three kinds of plugs. For a little better hold, I prefer the ones with barbs. All the plugs are designed for use with a certain size screw. (The ones I use are designed for 1/4" #8 screws. No need to use self-drilling screws here. I use the plain screws shipped with hard treatments for this purpose.) To use these plugs, simply make a hole with an awl, tap in the plug, then screw through the bracket into the plug. I prefer to use two per bracket, and keep the hole positions on the bracket as far apart as possible.



Illustration 2

The next level of support are drill-in fasteners. These look like big screws themselves, and are mounted to the wall simply by inserting a Phillips head driver or bit into the anchor and screwing it in. See Illustration 2. A 1/4" screw is then inserted. Be sure to use lower torque and speed on the drill to avoid screwing right through the dry wall.

RULE NUMBER TWO: Any time that there is downward pressure on a window treatment such as a shade that is pulled up or down or a traverse rod that is opened and closed, use an anchor that opens up behind the wall for maximum support.

The first of these “opening” anchors is the hollow-wall fastener. See Illustration 3. It is inserted through a hole in the drywall and opened using a tool specially made for the purpose. It is easy to over-tighten and break the drywall when using these anchors, so I strongly suggest that you get a scrap of drywall from a construction site and practice, practice, practice!



Illustration 3

The next item up the holding scale is the self-drilling toggle. See Illustration 4. It is almost like a combination of the “screw” type anchors and a toggle bolt. It is screwed into the wall and

the toggle falls open when the provided screw is inserted.

The best possible hold is the good, old-fashioned toggle bolt. See Illustration 5. It comes in two parts: a long screw and a winged attachment that opens behind the wall. However, there is a drawback to the toggle bolt. The hardware must be attached to the screw right from the beginning, and if you have to remove the screw, the wings fall off behind the wall, requiring a new toggle bolt. The wings



Illustration 4

must be inserted in a way that they open against the wall when they are inside. Otherwise the wings will close when pressure is put on from the outside and it will slide back through the hole. It is helpful to pull back on the screw as the toggle is tightened so that the back of the wall will hold the “wings” in place instead of spinning around and not tightening.

A new anchor that I have been using is called a “toggler”.

See Illustration 6. It is similar to a plastic “butterfly”.

The wings fold in and are inserted into a hole made by an awl. A small plunger that comes in the box is inserted, and the wings open up behind the wall without digging into the drywall. It also has a



Illustration 5

clearer plastic “lip” around the edges that is less conspicuous when in the wall. You may order these by calling 800-222-1415 (828-686-3185) and ask for Item #S-176.

If the treatment is large and requires a center support or supports, it is your choice where to place them. If you place the center supports on studs, the treatment will be much more secure. If you are not sure of the strength of the hold of an anchor, place an extra support bracket in a stud as near to the anchor as you can.

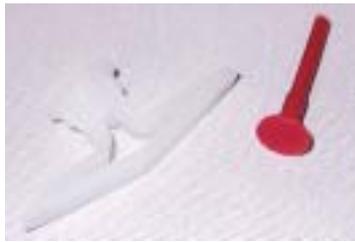


Illustration 6



Beth Hodges is the owner of a workroom in Elberton, GA. In business for over sixteen years, it has expanded to employ four full-time employees, providing wholesale workroom services around the country.

For more great tips on installation take Beth's installation classes at the Custom Home Furnishings School or take Beth's classes at the Custom Home Furnishings Educational Conference. For more information, call 800-222-1415 or 828-686-3185.

SUPPLIER PROFILE

M&L Trims Design Studio designs and makes custom tassels and trim for the home furnishings industry. Its owner, Mary O'Connel, got the idea for the company about 4 years ago when she became fascinated with the creation of tassels. She had been working in a high-end interior design firm and had started her own drapery workroom. While researching the creation of tassels she discovered that most books about tassels and trims and truly unique materials for creating tassels originated in England. Several wonderful artisans directed her in the design/creation process and gave her access to many unique materials.

Mary uses wood and plaster/resin tassel forms and she purchases all of them from England. One of her suppliers for plaster/resin forms introduced her to the Japanese art of braiding cords—*Kumihimo*. Fibers for the tassels and trims are chosen for their extraordinary and unique presentations of color and texture and yarns that have character are chosen over straight strands of threads. These fibers include double strands with satin squares of variegated color, various sized loops, and ribbon-like appearance. Fibers for the tassel skirts are made of silk, cotton, viscose, and nylon.

The tassels, braids, and trims of M&L Trims Design Studio are inspired by the beauty of decorator fabrics. The fabric is used as the palate for the design. M&L offers inspired designs from their in-house collection or their creative design team can assist with custom enhancement of any project. Design, fiber, and color selections are presented in M&L Trims sample books. The client may choose every aspect of the enhancement, including the tassel form, the decoration of the form, the yarns for the skirt, and the style of the cord.

For more information about these beautiful trims visit M&L Trims Design Studio at www.mltrims-designstudio.com. You may also call 877-MLTRIMS (877-658-7467), send a fax to 410-418-4692, or send an email to info@mltrims-designstudio.com.

These hand crafted tassel forms are chosen for their unique appearance and quality.



The Easton Collection is designed with ribbon-like yarns for full skirts and plump cords.



The Mirabet Collection offers bright colors and fanciful textures.



Impressive designs are created for cords and braided trims using the Japanese art *Kumihimo*.

Challenging Window Treatment

By Carol Peters

After more than 28 years in the drapery business, we have had many unusual window treatment requests. But this one was definitely one of a kind.

The local funeral home is located in an older building that had been remodeled several times. The building has four large windows that face Main Street. Each one is about twelve feet wide. From the inside of the building, you can see only three of these windows in the large reception room. During the remodeling, the fourth window had been covered with a stud wall and sheet rock. The builder had painted the back side of the sheet rock and the studs black, assuming that with the dark-tinted window glass, no one would be able to see from the outside.

We sold the funeral home pinch-pleated ADO sheers for the visible three windows. We measured, ordered, and then installed the traversing sheers. The owners were pleased.

However, when the East sunlight hit the windows each morning, you could see construction details of the backside of the wall through the fourth window. It was so ugly, that they asked us to install a fourth sheer to match the other three. But this sheer would be between the glass and the backside of the wall and the only way to install was from the *outside of the building!*

So we measured and “guesstimated” from the outside of the building, not knowing exactly what surface we would be able to mount the rod on, and not knowing how far we could extend the length past the opening without hitting an obstruction. I had to order the sheers without knowing the outside mount details.

My husband Ron has faithfully installed my designs for years. We consult together over unusual or difficult installations before I even quote them. Occasionally he has even had to create a special bracket or two, in order to achieve the correct look. Our customers are often amazed that a man can do such a good job of dressing our draperies and valances.

On installation day, we had the glass company remove the glass from the outside on only three of the window panels. Ron stood on his ladder on the



sidewalk in front of the building, and reached inside the openings to mount a drapery rod from the outside. Mind you, we placed the rod on the inside of the exterior wall, so he had to drill towards himself without being able to see! Then he hung the drapery. Imagine 13 yards of pinch-pleated 118” sheer billowing in the Kansas wind as he worked the fabric in thru the openings.

Thank goodness for the wonderful weighted hems. The sheer hung perfectly. The glass was replaced by the glass company. Now the fourth window matched the other three and our customer was pleased.



After teaching middle school for six years, Carol Peters, and her husband Ron, purchased an existing business, Hesston Decorating Center. They have been in business for over 28 years. They employ several decorators and have an interior designer on staff.

Have you accomplished a challenging window treatment that you would like to share? If so, please contact Managing Editor, Mary Zellers, at 800-222-1415 (828-686-3185) or send an email to mary@sewwhatmagazine.com.

Looking Up

Harmonious Living

By Susan Schurz

My husband and I own and operate a home-based workroom specializing in hand-crafted window coverings and home accessories. I sometimes feel that what we do isn't all that important in the big scheme of things.

Right around the time war was declared against Iraq, I stumbled across an excerpt in one of my vintage decorating, sewing and home furnishings books that changed my thinking. The book, *Fashions in Furnishings: A Guidepost to Decorating*, was published in 1948 but its timeless message is just as relevant today as it was then.

The focal point of harmonious living is the home. In a world torn apart by war, weakened by hunger, and blasted by atom bombs, it is more important than ever before to pick up the pieces and rework them into a fabric that will endure. Brotherhood of man can flourish best in warm rooms, on full stomachs, and in good company. A home charged with security, comfort, and beauty prolongs the battery of peaceful living. By incorporating your highest values in your home, you support one of the strongest pillars of a peaceful society.

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So by helping turn houses into harmonious homes we are really contributing to "providing peace, comfort and security" for families in our world.

One thought in the book for readers of that time did make me chuckle. The author warns that the "maid-less household is a war product—face it or not." Maybe that explains my messy house and piles of laundry at times!

CLASSIFIED

For Sale: A 4-thread serger sewing machine, purchased brand new last October, and used twice. A portable blind hemmer, purchased last October, and used only a few times. A reconditioned Juki. I also have other workroom supplies. I am located in Louisiana. Buyer must pay shipping. For more information call 225-635-9001 or send an email to ccmill630@aol.com.

For Sale: Camedia Digital Camera. Includes Olympus D-510 zoom, 8MB smart media card, usb cable, power cord, and software. Asking \$185. Please email gmkdsgns@comcast.net.

For Sale: Used Tacsew T1718 Blindstitch Machine with motor and table. Cost \$1,300 new. Asking \$700. Contact Anita in Clayton, NC, 919-550-1611. Will deliver locally.

For Sale: Books: Carole Fabric (Spring line 2003), Creative Fabric books, Plumridge silk books (pro decorator), and 2-3 trim books. Asking \$300. Located near Raleigh NC. For more information email Pmd@nc.rr.com.

For Sale: Babylock Sewing/Embroidery Machine. Great condition. Cost \$6,000 new. Asking \$1,200. Call 919-870-0128 or email mkb@nc.rr.com for details.

For Sale: Mastervisions for Windows and Pillows. All updates included. Asking \$300, includes shipping. Checks only. For more information call 270-781-0945 or send an e-mail to jayceedesigns@peoplepc.com.

For Sale: döfix Boiler Iron. Rarely used. Purchased at Trade Show for \$600. Asking \$200. Buyer must pay shipping. For more information call 607-648-6117 or send an email to TBurczak@stny.rr.com.

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Videos

The 2002 Custom Home Furnishings Educational Conference and Trade Show was a huge success again this year. If you were not able to attend the conference this year, you can still take advantage of the wealth of information that was available there. All of the classes were videotaped. In the next several issues of *SewWHAT?* we will be featuring the videos of all the classes presented. Following are the first ones. You may also get more information or order the video for any of the classes by calling 800-222-1415 (828-686-3185).

2003 Educational Conference Videos

Item #V03-1b Great Gadgets

Lisa Echerd 1½ hrs

Travel the gadget-filled aisles of the home/hardware store to see how tools designed for other industries can make you more efficient in your workroom. This helpful class will include creative budgeting tips for prioritizing purchases.

Item #V03-1c/2c

Cascades, Jabots, Pelmet, and Horns

Ginny Conner 3 hrs

Whether they are called Cascades, Jabots, Pelmet or Horns, these components are used in one form or another on almost every window treatment. In this class you will learn all about cascade proportion and how to calculate the folds for any width and style cascade from a double-wide to a very narrow, “stacked” cascade. You will also learn how to adjust standard cascade and pelmet patterns to create unique and interesting variations. Veteran instructor Ginny Conner will share actual samples as well as numerous fabrication tips throughout the class. You will leave armed with a thorough understanding of cascades and pelmet, a handout full of styles and patterns, and the confidence of knowing you can easily create any style you desire.

Item #V03-1d/2d

So You Want to Open a Workroom—Part I

Ann Middlebrook and Susan Steele 3 hrs

Are you the first person your friends and family think of when they need someone to sew window treatments or bedding? Have they told you that you're so talented that you really should open a business? Are you beginning to think they're right, but you don't know where to begin? Or, have you recently started a workroom, but aren't sure you're doing it the “right” way? Then, this is the class for you. In this all-day introductory course designed for novices, successful business owners Ann and Susan will cover the basics you need to know to start and run a successful window treatment business. The goal of this class is to give you a foundation and make you comfortable as you move on to more advanced and specialized classes. Part I covers topics such as the industry in general, wholesale versus retail, business planning, licenses, sales tax, insurance, business forms, supplies, and equipment.

NOTE: These videos of live seminar presentations were not professionally filmed and are being sold for educational content only.

Item #V03-1e/2e Top Treatments

Boots Parker 3 hrs

This “show and tell” class will demonstrate simple and detailed top treatments for numerous designs including the Kingston valance. Through slide presentations and handouts, Boots Parker will share her techniques for creating perfect swags and jabots with contrasting color bands. You will learn how to adapt a swag pattern to different sizes, how to make and attach swags to a wooden pole, and how to construct unique designs for French doors.

Item #V03-1f/2f Old World Inspiration

Amy Burton 3 hrs

Join Amy Burton as she explores the art of historic drapery design. Throughout this class you will learn to analyze historic designs and recognize the components of these elaborate treatments. Using Old World designs as inspiration, you will see how different elements can be incorporated into beautiful treatments that will enhance any home today. You will gain a better understanding of techniques used to create these ancient works of art! If you want to offer your clientele unique original designs, then this is the class for you! This popular class is repeated as class 5e/6e.

Item #V03-1g/2g Slipcover Basics

Karen Erickson, Alicia Werner,
and Jeanelle Dech 3 hrs

Do you want to add slipcovers to your product line, but you don't know where to start? Learn to eat the elephant one bite at a time! This dynamic trio of slipcover experts will break down the art of creating slipcovers into “small bites”. You will learn of three different professional fabricating methods, workroom layout, equipment, pricing, fabric selection, fabric care, and details that will make each of your covers a work of art. An open panel discussion at the end of the session will be the perfect time to find answers for all of those nagging questions!

Item #V03-1h/2h

Building a Chair, Part I

Anita Boetsma 3 hrs

In part one of this two-part class, upholstery veteran Anita Boetsma will cover the upholstery process from starting with a bare wooden frame to a “ready for final fabric” state. You will learn how to install and hand-tie springs to create the proper base support for a solid seat or for a loose-cushioned application. Anita will cover materials and techniques to “break” the springs for comfort and layering padding smoothly. Pros and cons of various types of padding and “under cover” materials and their best usage will be discussed.

2003 Custom Home Furnishings Industry Educational Conference and Trade Show

Class Videos

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