



Mid Week Moments #70

Wednesday 28 July 2010

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Welcome to your Midweek Moments. This week, we make a return to our popular Show and Tell column in which a quilter puts one of their creations under the spotlight and tell the story behind its creation. And in Who wants to be a Milliner?, we take a look at the famous.... Nah, why spoil the surprise? Read on and find out what it is and where it takes you...

Show and Tell with Angella Partridge

Show us the item and tell us the story

Angella's Batik Octagon quilt



What attracted you to this particular quilt?

I really liked the warmth in the colours, which isn't my usual thing as I tend to normally go for cooler colours like blues and greens. But the autumn tones attracted me. Maybe it's because I made it during autumn.

How long did it take you to complete?

It took me a couple of months. It probably would've taken longer, but it was a present for a friend's 70th birthday, so having that deadline really helped me get my act together.

Have you been quilting for long?

About ten years now, although I still wouldn't describe myself as being very experienced.

What's the next project?

An auntie has just had a double mastectomy, so I'm making another version of the same quilt, but this time in softer, more feminine colours.

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New Books

We have had some fantastic new books arrive, here are a few samples...

Not Your Grandmother's Quilt



Everything old is new again with these 6 time-savvy quilts that recapture the splendour of grandma's quilts - with an imaginative twist. Sheri Howard has updated 6 classic pieced block designs with a cheerful palette of appliqué flowers and finery.

\$35.00 Click [here](#) to purchase.

Feedsack Secrets



The poverty of the Depression and fabric shortages during World War 2 made feed-sacks highly important to the quilter during the 1930s and 1940s.

In *Feedsack Secrets*, quilt historian Gloria Nixon gives us fascinating tidbits about the patterned feedsack. Women met regularly for fabric swaps. Fabric restrictions dictated styles. Feedsacks played a part in political contests, accurately predicting Truman's win in the 1948 presidential election. A feed-company held a contest for the best dressed chicken.

Nixon's *Feedsacks Secrets* is a colourful, fun and fascinating ride through a great period of American fabric history.

\$40.00 Click [here](#) to purchase.

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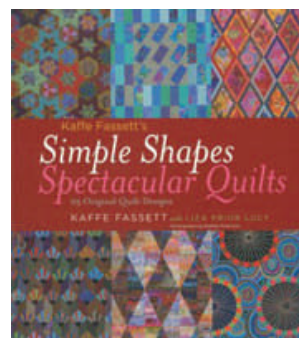
Country Inn



Welcome to Blackbird's Country Inn. Come in, sit down and stitch with Barb Adams and Alma Allen. You'll find some quick cross stitch projects, a pieced quilt that goes together in the wink of an eye and beautiful appliqué quilts that are so Blackbird Designs.

\$35.00 Click [here](#) to purchase.

Simple Shapes Spectacular Quilts



In Kaffe Fassett's *Simple Shapes Spectacular Quilts*, world-renowned quilter Kaffe Fassett demonstrates how basic geometric forms - squares, rectangles, triangles, diamonds, circles, and quarter circles - found in natural and manmade environments inspire his quilt designs. Twenty three of his magnificent, inventive quilts - ranging from the relatively simple Tilt, ideal for beginners, to the more complex Circle of Stars, for advanced stitchers - are showcased in the book, along with step-by-step instructions for making each one.

\$65 Click [here](#) to purchase.

Click [here](#) to see more.

Who wants to be a Milliner?

The Secret Life of Hats, Episode 20 - The Sombrero



Sombrero wearers; a quartet of mariachi musicians in full flight

Grab the Tequila, and your brightest-coloured poncho because this week we're off to sunny Mexico to check out the origins, customs and mysteries of that most iconic item of Mexican headwear – the Sombrero.

Actually, it was in old Spain, not Mexico, where the sombrero was first invented, coming across the Atlantic in the carry-on luggage of invading Spanish explorers in the early 16th century. This original Spanish version had a flat crown, rather than a conical one, something the Mexicans must have decided was either too boring or just looked plain daggy, which led to the high, cylindrical designs most recognizable in Mexico today.

But what about that fabulously cool name? Let's all say it together now... som-brear-roh. The word has Spanish origins, not surprisingly, basically meaning any hat with a brim. It's derived from yet another Spanish word, 'sombra', which means shade or shadow. You don't have to be a genius to see how the name came to be applied to these extra-wide-brimmed hats. When outside of Mexico, Spanish-speaking folk refer to the sombrero as the "sombrero Mexicano" (Mexican hat), possibly to avoid confusion with Spain's flat-crowned Sombrero Cor-dobés, named after the city in which it's manufactured.



*Speedy Gonzales –
"the fastest mouse in
all Meck-icko"*

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As the etymology suggests, the Mexican sombrero's primary job was to protect its wearer from the harsh sun, with those extra-wide brims designed to cover the head, neck and shoulders. Early Mexican cowboys (known as the vaquero) and ranch workers were its most common wearers, as they were exposed to the sun more than anyone else, and usually for lengthy periods. As the decades passed, the brims gradually grew even wider and the crown became taller and more conical. Unfortunately these modified sombreros no longer cut the mustard (or should that be the guacamole?) as they were too clumsy and unwieldy for the practical demands of ranch work and horseback riding. However, they were quickly picked up by Mexico's famous mariachi musicians, quickly becoming a familiar and identifiable look of a mariachi band member's outfit.

Sombreros are made from a variety of materials, but the most common are straw, used primarily for peasants and farmers, and felt for the wealthier classes, often with velvet lining as well. Most sombreros come with a chinstrap to keep it in place, and the more elaborate ones are sometimes decorated with hanging wooden beads. It's during the famous Mexican Hat Dance (Jarabe Tapatio), that these beads really come into their own, giving the hat life and movement as the man cavorts deliriously around the woman before finally throwing the sombrero at her feet. Just imagine trying to do that with a plain old bowler or trilby.



Chevy Chase, Steve Martin and Martin Short in The Three Amigos (1986)

These days the sombrero has become an important national and cultural icon for Mexico, still used in many traditional celebrations and as a symbol of pride for Mexicans, similar to our idolatry of the Great Aussie Akubra (see Episode 9, Midweek Moments Issue #59). In recent decades, however, the sombrero has been lampooned mercilessly by popular western culture, portraying it as a symbol of laziness with recurring images of the sleepy Mexican having a siesta against a cactus (ouch!) with his big floppy sombrero pulled down over his face. This does the hat a great injustice, though, as it owes its very existence to the hard-working innovation, tenacity and ingenuity of the Mexican people. Now raise a Tequila glass in tribute.

Quote of the week: To quilt is human, to finish divine.

Til next week!
The Blueberries Team