

# The Vermilion Bay Light

The Monthly Newsletter of The Vermilion Bay Yarn Company

YOUR Local Yarn Shop

2100 Verot School Road, Suite 8

Lafayette, Louisiana 70508 337.216.4564

www.vermilionbayyarn.blogspot.com

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## A word from Jason about

One day in the early years of the past century, a photograph was made in Sonnenberg, Austria of 10 or so persons sitting in front of a house. They were busy at their lace-making bolsters — cylindrical pillows for bobbin lace. They worked outside because there were no electric lights in the house, and lace-making requires good light. One of the people in the photograph was Maria Höllmann, my grandmother. This was a *Klöpfelschule*, a group of novice lace-makers learning the nuances of the craft, perfecting the art. Her entire life, my grandmother made lace, both at the lace pillow as well as the crocheted variety. Among the few items she was able to bring with her when my grandparents escaped from East Germany was a valise full of *Klöppebriefe*, lace-making cards (schematic pattern-drawings) and her bobbins. Many of these lace cards are original designs made for her by my mathematician grandfather, each meticulously drawn on heavy cardboard with a fountain pen. I treasure the lace produced from these cards. They are unique, priceless artifacts. My grandmother passed on the art this lace-making to me, and I still use her own ancient bobbins. The wood feels smooth and silky in the hands. How many millions of twists have these bobbins made in a century? What altars in Germany and Austria are still adorned with the wide, intricate tapes they produced? What dresses were accented by lace collars, what table settings were made extraordinary by the work resulting from the gentle clicking of these simple tools? In my shop, I have a little oblong box which once held spools of crochet thread. My grandmother recycled it to keep her collection of crocheted motifs. She never read any crochet patterns — she reproduced them from photographs or originals, or designed them herself. This is her sample box: motifs, stitch-swatches, lace centers, flowers. A catalogue of lace work. I have referred to some of her designs in my own work, using the techniques she taught me herself, to approach design with logic and precision, to puzzle things out, to innovate and create, to seek inspiration and to make the design one's own. Valuable lessons. I tell you all this, because these things are memories — living memories made present now through telling and re-telling, like antique lace cards penned by a stoic mathematician for his wife decades ago and re-worked by their grandson. A crocheted motif devised in the 1940's, sampled, stored away, and shared with a friend at VBYC in 2011. These are the stories we tell. This is what makes our work so special. It is a long-lived art passed on through generations, passed along to friends and neighbors. This is why I am so excited about the Story Book project scheduled this month. It is a project that provides an opportunity for your own re-telling. Old yarns worked together into a story of projects, a story of you, your family, your friends. The Story Book Scarf is a way to embrace yourself in living memories, a crocheted piece made of project remnants. As you work each of the 34 small motifs, recall the project first made of the yarn, a single chapter of your story. Recall the recipient of the project, remember when you made it. We fiber artisans all have stories — important ones — and, as we create, our stories find their ways into our stitches. Our boxes of swatches, yarns, threads, tools are part of who we are, an expression of us, our dreams, hopes, hurts, and loves. Celebrate all these things in your work!



## Knitting Cruise!

November 12, 2011 is sailing day for this year's annual knitting and stitching cruise! Three sea days of our 7-day high seas adventure will feature project and technique classes taught by instructors from participating yarn shops throughout the Gulf Coast region. Join us this fall aboard Royal Caribbean! For booking information, email Jane Hebert at Travel Machine: [janetotrvl@aol.com](mailto:janetotrvl@aol.com).



## Ask Stuart

Q: *I've heard that Continental knitters knit faster. Is that true?*

A: I've heard that if you really want to excel at sports, you need to find the sneakers with the stripes on the side. They'll make you run faster. And I can tell you that the shade of the grass in my human's front yard is called "basil" according to the Amy Butler color card, but next door, the grass is more of a Felted Tweed "pine". Personally, I like "pine", but since I'm here and not there, "basil" works just fine for me. Sure there are Continental folks who knit pretty darned fast, but there are also some Germans who're slower than Christmas when it comes to finishing a potholder. English knitters? I've seen some fast throwing, but I've also seen some pokey stitchers snarf 12 scones and spill half a pot of tea faster than they can complete a single row of purls.

Important dates →

**Mondays: Men's Club 6-8pm. Tuesdays: Knit Café 6-8pm. Sunday Tea: Sundays 1-5pm**



### REVIVE!

One of the new yarns from Rowan, Revive is a DK weight strand in silk, cotton, and viscose. Old garments, ends, and pieces are gathered, unraveled, re-carded and re-spun into this fabulous and colorful yarn. As you draft your spring and summer knitting and crocheting lists, add Revive to your fiber options. Cotton and silk in a smooth, slightly textured yarn offer pleasing colorways and a light, comfortable feel. Breath new life into your wardrobe: Revive!



### Seek the council of the wise...

Wisdom Yarns brings us this amazing sock weight yarn called "Poems". Knitting with it won't transform you into Confucius, Socrates, Plato, or Oprah (ok, Confucius maybe), but it *will* have people gathering at your feet to check out your new fabulous socks! They call this stuff "smart yarn" because of the way the colors transition — pure genius on a size 2 stick. A color spectrum, from one hue to the next. It's not a "variegated" that pools and swirls. Ordered, groovy, instant, beautiful color work. Knit a poem. Become a guru.

### It's Bamboo, Baby!

Need a breathable DK weight yarn that's easy to work and easy to wear, has great drape, that feels like silk, but without a silky price? You like vibrant colors with options in solids and variegated colorways? Select Southwest Trading Company Bamboo. Don't shriek at the thought of knitting *this* bamboo. If you've done it before and had to endure the splitting nightmare, the horror of strand pulls, and the balls that fall apart and tangle, you're not alone. Good news: SWTC bamboo will make you reconsider working this luxurious fiber. All the good benefits of bamboo without all the unnecessary commotion.



### Plays well with others

For a gossamer, feather light fabric, use a single or double strand of Rowan Kidsilk Haze by itself. Next to day-old Madeleines and coffee in a scalded demitasse, very little else compares to the dreamy pleasure you'll enjoy from knitting Kidsilk Haze, the guilt-free indulgence you'll garner from wearing it, and the countless compliments you'll receive from others who wish they were you. Raise the stakes a bit and pair Kidsilk Haze with another yarn, one with a slightly edgy texture or feel and create a new, soft combination. Kidsilk Haze allows you to mix color and texture. Mohair and silk blended to perfection. Enjoy it neat, with a twist, or mixed in the perfect cocktail.



### Greetings from Lenpur

Just kidding. Lenpur is a fiber, not an exotic vacation destination with grass huts hovering atop a cerulean bay. Although you could wear your new spring/summer knits to such a place. Lenpur is a manmade fiber produced from tree limbs. Rowan pairs it with linen, another plant fiber (flax) for a soft, nicely draping fabric. Linen pure takes some getting used to. It softens up as you work it. Linen carries a deferred reward for those who trust it. Lenpur Linen gives you the softness you like straight from the ball, along with the benefits of summer soft linen. It's like pushing the proverbial "Easy Button". Now, knit yourself a fine summer shell and book your passage to Tahiti. Postcards appreciated.



Indisposed? We Ship!



### Texture and Fashion

For many of us "Tweed" evokes a notion of "woolly, heavy, prickly". Tweed is a texture, not a weight. It's not a feel either. Rowan Summer Tweed is a slightly "nubby" worsted weight blend of silk and cotton that is ultra-light to wear year round in South Louisiana. It contains flecks of color like typical tweed, but is amazingly cool.



Attain.

### Amy Butler and Belle

#### Organic

Vermilion Bay Yarn is proud to announce the addition of Amy Butler designs and Belle Organic cotton. Known for her exquisite fabrics, interior décor designs, Amy Butler has introduced an amazing line of knitwear, crocheted garments and Belle Organic cotton yarns. Exclusively through Rowan, exclusively at VBYC.

ROWAN + amybutler



### Handknit Cotton

The finest 100% cotton DK yarn is Rowan Handknit Cotton. Color choice, a soft hand, precise stitch definition. Choose Handknit Cotton for spring and summer items, all seasons wear, and baby and toddler items.



# CLASSES IN FEBRUARY

Saturday, Feb 5, 10:30am: Fixing Mistakes

1:00pm: Vogue Aviator

Saturday, Feb 12, 10:30am: Zhivago Scarf

1:00pm: Story Book Scarf

Saturday, Feb 26, 10:30am: Knitting Brioche

## Men's Knit Club

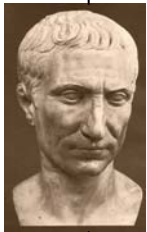
Monday nights at VBYC are reserved for the guys. We meet from around 6pm until 8 each week. All experience levels are represented at Men's Knit Club.

It's a time when guys learn to knit (or crochet), knit their projects — which vary from beginner's scarves, to socks, to hats, to intricate lace.

It's also a time to bring your spinning wheel if that's your thing. Guys: join us Mondays.

Bring your fiber gear. Many MKC participants receive a text each Monday morning just to remind them that it's Monday (guys need reminders). If you'd like to be included on the text list, let me know. Otherwise, just show up on Monday night at VBYC, and of course, spread the word!

**Another reminder, guys: Men's Knit Club will not meet on Monday, February 14! Join us again on the 21st!**



Gris-Gris got you down?  
Turquoise lifts the spirits.  
The "Evil Eye Talisman"

## FIX IT!

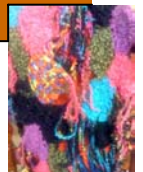
We've all been there: stitch count's off, pattern is skewed, stitches fallen out. What to do? The best option is to sign up for this class. You'll learn how to identify and fix many of the most common errors in your knitting, giving you the confidence to knit with accuracy and, ultimately, tackle most any project without fear! Saturday, February 5, 10:30am.



## The Vogue Aviator

Few hat patterns have been as impressive as this one, the Cabled Aviator. Innovative construction, striking design. It's a great "first cable" project, and is made relatively quickly. Learn how to cable and create this knitted masterpiece.

Our shop model has been created in Brown Sheep Lamb's Pride worsted. Feb 5, 1:00pm.



## The Zhivago Scarf

Inspired by the snowy landscape conjured for us by Boris Pasternak, and featuring one of the "hidden" cables of the Vogue Cabled Aviator. This is a scarf that relies on classic intarsia colorwork to combine the subtle shading on the main color, Brown Sheep Lamb's Pride, with a wash of Kid Silk Haze. There's much to learn from this elegant piece: the basics of colorwork and the use of cables to create not a solitary panel, but a *textured* fabric. Saturday, Feb. 12 at 10:30.



## Story Book!

Our stitches tell stories and so do the yarns we select. When the project's done, there're usually left-over's that get tossed into bins, tubs or bags at home, stashed again to await those "smaller projects". Here's a project class for crocheters that makes use of all those odds and ends: Story Book is a unique scarf that tells the story of your projects. Go to your left over stash and select the memories you'd like to include. Bring them to VBYC to make your very own fiber story book. You also have the option of creating a completely new story by planning your colors from new yarn. This project can be whimsical, avant-garde, or conservative. It's your story. You decide. Saturday, Feb. 12, 1:00pm.

## Brioche

Take part in learning this fascinating knitting technique. Redefine your knitting world. Discover Brioche. Saturday, February 26, 10:30am.

## Sari Revisited

This month VBYC introduces recycled sari silk from India. Each hank contains a good quantity of medium weight yarn spun of 100% silk from Saris. These colorful silks provide unique and absolutely beautiful knitting and crochet material for

some of your most luxurious garments and accent projects. Colorways are general: reds, blues, purples, greens, and the one pictured here: millefiori — "thousand flowers". This splendid Sari silk is scheduled to arrive soon. Watch the blog for arrival details!



**Useful Tip:** Know what needle materials work best with different yarns. Some needles are slick, while others offer a bit more resistance to yarns. Some woods are rigid, while others are warmer and bend naturally in your hand. Pair your needles to your yarn so that stitches remain firmly placed, but slide with ease. Needle tips should be sharp for lace, but a bit more blunt if a yarn tends to split.



## Knitter's Tool Box

Last Saturday's technique class was such a tremendous success, it has immediately grown in popularity. Another session is forming now for Sunday, February 27th at 2pm. Learn all those common decrease/increase, cast-on's and bind-off's you don't generally learn in beginning knitting. Fill your skills tool box! Be empowered!

