

The Vermilion Bay Light

The Monthly VBYC Newsletter

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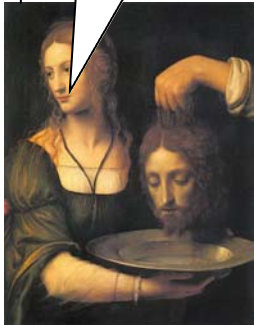
September 2010



A word from Jason about Blocking and Garment Care

I've never really understood why it is. You can get the slickest, most fabulously documented macro description of knitting, the most comprehensive and encyclopedic fiber arts guide, but, try to ask it a simple question: how do I block my sweater, O wise book of knowledge? It's easy to find out what blocking is, what the benefits are, that you should do it, but finding out *how* to do it often remains a mystery. Well, folks, there ain't no secret to it. Although it might appear so from the lack of practical written information, we don't veil our heads having fasted 40 days in order to enter with

I told him merino felts. And did he listen ???!



Johnny learns the hard way

contribute hearts into a consecrated space to stretch our fabric to size. It's much less complicated than that. Blocking project pieces causes the stitches to "bloom", to take on a good, even shape. It brings each piece into the finished size so that the garment fits as it should. How is this done? You need these items: T-pins, a blocking surface, a tape measure, heat, moisture, patience, and about 24 hours. T-pins are literally pins shaped like the letter T. They're heavy pins that anchor your fabric to the blocking surface without damaging your work. You get them at VBYC in the notion baskets for a couple bucks. They come in little boxes of 20 or so. Blocking surface? For small things like scarves, use your ironing board with a bath towel thrown across it. For larger things like sweater pieces, go to a home improvement store and purchase yourself a set of 4 interlocking foam floor tiles (like the ones you see in play rooms or exercise spaces) for less than \$20. When joined together, the mat is about 16 square feet. It's about 1/4" thick and can be pinned into with no problem. Cover your blocking surface with bath towels. Tape measure: you need it to measure the pieces as you pin them up. Heat and moisture: a good steam iron (or even better a good steamer that doesn't drip) will make your blocking experience easy. I swear by Rowenta, both for irons and for steamers. For little jobs, you can use the steam from an iron, for big pieces, I use my Rowenta pressure steamer. It provides a constant jet of steam, while the steam from the iron has to be pumped constantly. You'll need patience to wait for your piece to dry — about 24 hours before you unpin it. Prepare your surface with towels. Lay each piece out and pin it down, making sure that you have stretched it to the proper dimensions. Fabric straight from the needles is a bit contracted, so stretch it to size. Pin up each piece like this, as many pieces as you can, depending on how much room you have. Fire up your steamer and unload heat and moisture into your piece. Just hover your iron or steamer over the fabric. The sole plate never makes contact! Be careful, though. Heat and moisture are also the two elements required to make felt. When smoothing down curling edges, use a light touch. Don't force it into place. Ask it nicely. Coax it to behave, and it will. Heat and moisture relax the fibers in the fabric and cause it to take the shape you want. When the pieces are unpinned, they will stay in the size and shape to which they were blocked. If something is really argumentative, you can do what's called "wet blocking". Dampen the entire piece, set it onto your surface, pin it, and let it dry. Don't handle it too

much, though. Your goal is not to end up with a hunk of felt. Now the good news: *only natural fibers will block properly*. Acrylic yarns won't do it. You can steam them, pin them out, but in the end, they'll thank you for the spa treatment then return to the shape they want to be. Fiber choices? My recommendation: when making a good, well-fitting garment, choose a natural fiber to ensure it can be finished properly. If machine washing is a major factor for you, choose a cotton yarn or a blend with high cotton content that you can machine wash. Otherwise, buy a bottle of easy care detergent, run the bathroom sink full of cold water and let the garment soak then air dry flat, having been shaped carefully. If it's worth making, it's worth finishing, if it's worth finishing, it's worth wearing, and most certainly worth caring for. If you're gifting a fiber project, be sure to inform the receiver of the care instructions for the yarn you've used. Handmade garments are fine things, and must be treated with care. They'll last forever and are quite resilient if handled properly!

Ask Stuart...

Q: What's the better way to knit socks? Toe-up or leg-down?

A: Honey, there's more than one way to skin a ca...uh, there're always a few ways to get the same result. I've heard some humans claim toe-up is better because they don't run out of yarn. Never quite understood that. If you're going for knee socks and only have a 50g ball, you're gonna run out whether you go up or down. That's like saying it's easier to drive to New Orleans on Hwy 90 because you won't run out of gas using that route. Silly, if she doesn't fill up before she leaves, Madame's gas tank will be empty by the time she gets to the speed traps in Hahnville, like it or not. So what's better? Neither. Toe-up has been trendy and seems glitzy and new these days, but it's actually just as ancient, and perhaps an even older method than leg-down. So go in whichever direction you like best. Just be sure you have enough yarn to finish.



The Cruise date is fast approaching!



It's time to start thinking about what classes you're interested in taking while aboard. The classes will all take place on the first sea day so that we all have the rest of the time to work the projects. Rosa from Nana's will be teaching magic loop and seaming/finishing. I'll be teaching beginning lace and fixing mistakes, and Heloise from Houston will be teaching beginning knitting. Why should you be making these decisions now? As you read in Jane's letter, the cost for classes is the cost for yarn and supplies you need. For this reason, we ask you please to procure your supplies from your instructor. If you are in one or both of my classes, you may place your orders now for colors/yarns, and I will bring them along for my "mini shop" — prices will be a bit lower on board. Let me know! Otherwise, you might be stuck knitting a bit of lime green lace.



Just plain smart, y'all!

The new additions to the Namaste line are here, and they're fabu-stupendous! Messenger and Hip Holster. Unlike the other bags from Namaste, these are made of a tough, woven fabric. They're available in Peacock and Black. Sublime practicality, divine niftiness. Namaste Messenger and Hip Holster.



Ravel-what?

It's Ravelry! Connect with knitters, crocheters, spinners, weavers, lace-makers, (insert additional fiber activities here) in your neighborhood, in Lafayette, in Louisiana, nationwide, worldwide. Ravelry.com not only offers us a fun and friendly social component, but just as important and amazingly useful is the immense and vast data base of yarn and pattern information available to its



Puppy Spectrum!

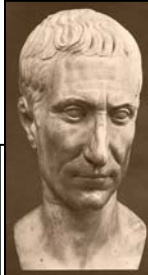
We've waited many moons for that colorful Mama Dog to deliver this litter! And now they're here and oh, so cute! Puppy Snips are the tiny scissors that you can link to your key chain, your knit kit, your project bag. They're also air travel friendly. Adopt an adorable puppy!



membership. Basic yarn info like yardage, weight, gauge, and fiber info is just a click away! Your Ravelry.com membership is free! After you become a member, join the VBYC group there. If you're already a member but haven't joined our group, then join our group!

Guys Knitting

Yes, it's actually a room full of guys knitting. Every Monday night, 6-8, it's Men's Knit Club at VBYC. It doesn't matter if you don't know how. You'll leave knowing how. Ladies, if you know a guy who isn't knitting but probably should be, pass the word!



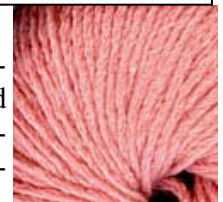
Dolce: *adj.*, soft, sweet.

And that's why this Alpaca blend from Cascade carries the name. No wonder. Soft and warm, light-weight but cuddle-luscious. Use it to make shrugs, wraps, garments for children and infants!



Kumara Camel!

This voluptuous yarn from Classic Elite is fantastic for your fall/winter knits. Merino and Camel blended together in a soft and cozy-warm combination. Exotic camel, sensual merino. Sounds like a hot date, folks!



Indisposed? We Ship!

Need a quickie?

This is the book. 60 Quick Knits. Packed with perfect little projects for everyone!



St-Denis designs by Veronik Avery!

And at long last, Veronik is available! This pattern collection from Quebec is a must-have!



Jared Flood. Made in Brooklyn.

Vogue-Bliss

Magazines that inspire! The fall editions of Vogue Knitting and Debbie Bliss are here! *Colour* work is in, so get ready for a large share of fair isle and intarsia! And there'll be none of this "I can't do that!" Of course you can!



Ponte dei sospiri

The infamous Bridge of Sighs is, of course in Venice, the waterlogged Italian city — Venezia — immortalized by Lord Byron and Thomas Mann. It's a city that you either love or hate, either having actually traveled there or visited with a literary passport. One Venezia that you're guaranteed to love is Cascade Venezia: the silk and wool yarn with a fantastic sheen and luxurious feel. Pair it with Tilli Tomas Beaded Plie, and you'll be ready for an audience with the Doge. Pass on the Venezia for your next fine project, and, well, you'll be walking the Bridge of Sighs.



Want to learn to make socks?

Socking-making is really a standard knitting skill. Schedule a lesson for yourself or for a group at your convenience. The method is up to you: DPN's, 2 circulars, or Magic Loop!

CLASSES IN SEPTEMBER

Saturday, Sept. 11: 10:30am Using Double Points
1:00pm Debbie Bliss Cabled Cowl
Saturday, Sept. 18: 10:30am Rowan *Lima* Sean Scarf
1:00pm Debbie Bliss Fair Isle Beret



Mystery Lace KAL

The mystery lace project continues! Watch the blog for tips and hints. It's not too late to start in on the project if you missed the first day last month!

Welcome to Vermilion Bay!

This fall we welcome two new lines of fine yarns and patterns to VBYC. Many of you have worked with the Cotton Classic yarn of Tahki. 100% mercerized cotton in a DK weight strand. Tahki Classic is known for its vibrant solid colors and excellent stitch definition. Spun in Greece, Tahki Classic is a hard-wearing fiber work standard.



To round out the new yarns from the Classical world, we also welcome Filatura di Crosa, a leading Italian mill

of fine yarns and outstanding patterns. Look for both Tahki and Filatura di Crosa in the next few days as the first shipments from the Mediterranean arrive at the Bay!



Crochet an Advent Calendar!

Here's a cute little project to crochet, especially if you have a child or two in the house! Each day is marked with a special "pocket" buttoned to a length of ribbon attached to a handle. Stuff each pocket with special treats!

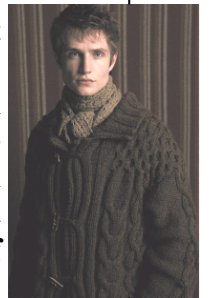
Download this and/or other excellent free patterns from the Rowan website: www.knitrowan.com.



September Classes!

Projects and techniques selected for your Christmas gift giving in mind! The trend this season is colorwork. So many fantastic patterns from many of the leading knitwear designers include multiple colors, either fair isle or intarsia. Tackle the colorwork with a small scale project from this season's Debbie Bliss Magazine: the **Fair Isle Beret** (September 18). Cowls are ever popular and make great gifts. Make another fabulous Debbie Bliss design, her **Cabled Cowl** (September 11). If you have yet to try the Rowan Lima, here's a quick small scale project from the Lima collection: the **Sean Scarf** (September 18) We start off this month's class offering with a child's hat

on **double points**. Master the traditional method of knitting in the round (September 11).



Custom Knit For Christmas!

Vermilion Bay Yarn offers custom knitting services year round for any project. You select the design and the yarn, we do the knitting. Ask About custom orders!

Sunday Tea

Sunday afternoons are for relaxing, so why not relax in the knitting circle? Come by for Sunday Tea at VBYC from 1pm—5pm each Sunday afternoon. Sunday Tea: the fiber fans' answer to the Lazy Sunday.



Vermilion Bay Yarn Labor Day Schedule

Your favorite yarn shop will be open for regular business hours the weekend before as well as on Labor Day, Monday September 6!



Visit us online:
Vermilionbayyarn.blogspot.com

When are Y'all open?

The Vermilion Bay Yarn Company is open Mon. Noon-8pm, Tues. 10am-8pm, Wed. 10am-6pm, Thurs. 10am-6pm, Fri. 10am-6pm, and Sat. 10am-4pm. **Men's Knit Club**, Mondays, 6pm-8pm
Knit Café Tuesdays, 6pm-8pm. **Sunday Tea**, 1pm-5pm