

ON TRACK!

WINTER 2011 PASSION ~ ARTISTRY ~ BUSINESS



A Special Report on

ONLINE EDUCATION

Fresh Ideas!

Featured Quilt Pattern:

Jellystone Park

Tales from the

customer TRENCHES

MQS® Tools of the Trade Award

Licorice & Lace

Quilted by Birgit Schueller

On the COVER

By Birgit Schueller, Germany



This is one of the quilts that I started out with just an idea and then I let it grow – in the truest meaning of the word as I never expected this quilt to end up being so HUGE (96" x 100")! Also, in the beginning this quilt was not intended to be a show quilt.

What got me started in mid-2009 was a jelly roll of the Sultry fabric line by Moda.

Since I had been involved in making (and quilting) a number of quilts from 2.5" strips, I started to look for a different way of using these strips rather than half square triangles, flying geese, squares and rectangles yet again. This led to me wanting to work with 60° cuts and equilateral triangles. I had used a similar approach a few years back when I used my triangle cutting technique to construct a series of quilts – among them my MQS® Rookie of the Year 2006 winner *Trinity*.

This time, I chose a bright fuchsia batik fabric for my block centers. Then I cut the individual sections of the block "borders" from my 2.5" strips and arranged them around the centers. I ended up with 63 triangle blocks!

I decided that a dark brown would be a wonderful background fabric color to show off the various shades of pink, fuchsia, lime green, cream and brown featured in the fabric strips. Since I wasn't able to find yardage in just the right shade of brown, I purchased extra wide 100% cotton sateen fabric and dyed enough of it dark brown for my background, backing and the binding needs.

After I had decided on the block layout, the top was pieced – and set aside to be quilted whenever my busy customer quilting schedule would allow me to do so.

Shortly after New Year's 2010, I had a free slot in my schedule and loaded the top. Like so very often, the top and I started an intense conversation. While stitching-in-the-ditch around all the triangles, I thought that the pieced triangles were very busy and that the dark brown background was a very strong contrast. Thus, I decided to opt for rather plain quilting in a tone-on-tone thread color for the triangles and contrasting thread colors and fancy motifs for the background quilting.

As this is another of my quilts with a very strong focus on geometry, I tried to come up with geometric quilting designs as well. The year before, I had purchased Kim Brunner's Melon template set – and had not had a chance to use these guides before. Now was the time to do so! I'm always excited and amazed to see how one simple shape can be the source for wonderful motifs! Apart from the melon templates I used more tools like the Hartley base expander, the Dainty Ditcher guide by Sherry Roger Harrison, a straight line ruler by A-1, and Arc set #1 by Renae Haddadin.

Extending the quilting of the triangles into the background was my first step towards trying to dilute the high contrast a bit. On to the background quilting! Since my background portions were clear-cut in the center of the top, I started there. The center hexagon called for a medallion-style motif. I love the way that the quilted and unquilted areas complement each other and completely cover up the original construction of the motif.

Next, I worked on the diamond-shaped background areas that outline an enlarged version of the six-pointed star design formed by the pieced triangles. To stress this "shadow effect", I chose to quilt these diamonds using a bright lime green thread. Also, I tried to come up with a

design that was a simplified version of the center medallion, yet would keep the Celtic feeling of the design.

Each of the six-pointed stars surrounding the center star feature three triangular background sections of the same size as the pieced triangles. I chose a fuchsia thread color and denser but less complex quilting to imply that these areas are part of the respective stars.

For a while, I didn't know what to do with the background portions surrounding the stars. Prior to coming up with a solution regarding the quilting problem, I decided that it would be neat to use the same templates that I had used for quilting for shaping the quilt's edge. While marking the final edge line, it suddenly occurred to me that I could subdivide the entire outside background area into the same size diamonds as the ones quilted in lime green!

At first I feared that it would be too brave to use the nutmeg thread color I chose – but after I had a chance to look at the quilted piece in its entirety I was more than happy that I did what I did!

I'm still very pleased with how the quilting with contrasting thread colors smoothes the strong contrast between the pieced areas and the dark background. But I couldn't resist to add just a little bit of sparkle as well. I tried not to overpower the quilting with the use of Swarovski hotfix crystals but just to enhance it a bit.

As great as the irregular edge treatment looks and as happy as I am with the effect this has, binding this quilt was more than tedious and the least fun part of working on the entire piece! I LOVE to use cotton sateen in my quilts but I'm going to re-think using it for approximately ten yards of double-fold bias binding on an irregular edge next time around... ■



Editor's Note

Licorice & Lace won first place in the Tools of the Trade category at MQS® 2010.