

Embellish To Cover Up Or Make New

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Got a stain on your favorite blouse? Worn out your jacket cuffs?

Don't despair. "Embellish to cover up a rip or stain. Make it new and wear-

use couching, which is zigzagging over yarn, cord, and ribbon with nylon thread that doesn't show.

For machine bobbin work, fill bobbins with pearl cotton, heavy rayon, and metallic threads to create different textures.

A simple but dramatic effect

to seven layers of rayon fabric and stitching, slitting, and washing.

Adams said that gets her ideas from everywhere. During a flight, she noticed the beauty of farmers contoured fields. Using this concept, she fashioned a vest with different fabrics arranged similar to contoured fields.

Adams has her own line of patterns that introduces a new concept in patterns. For example, her Alternatives 100 Classic Vest includes patterns and instructions to create 25 different styles by using couching, color blocking, bobbin work, weaving fabric strips, wrinkling fabrics, applique, and other effects.

"It's no sense in making the same thing over and over again. Make an original," Adams said of her theory behind her patterns.

"You don't need to be an artist. Everyone can do this," she said of designing.

At the workshop at the Berks County Extension, Adams showed how to adjust patterns to help clothes hang correctly. Most people have a higher shoulder or hip on one side. Adams said that adjustments should be made at the waist to enable skirts and pants to hang perfectly. She also demonstrated changing sleeve and bodice patterns to fit one's body type.

"Nothing is a mistake. If you don't like the effect, consider it a creative opportunity to change it," Adams said. She showed how a few of her "mistakes" took on new life when buttons, loops, and additional applique were added.

Adams, a former Indiana extension specialist, taught sewing workshops via television for many years. She travels the states teaching workshops.

Adams uses only four basic patterns to create a whole wardrobe of 75 garments. The patterns are available in sizes XS to XXL with instructions on how to fit the pattern to your size.

Each pattern offers instructions and variations in add-on pieces, style changes, size increases, and embellishment procedures. Garments can also be



Nothing goes to waste in Shirley Adams' sewing room. A former television sewing instructor and Indiana extension agent, Adams demonstrates the ease with which a wardrobe can be updated and embellished using scraps of materials, fabric ravelings, threads, yarns, and buttons. The jacket she is holding was created by couching variegated yarns on a fabric backing.

“You don't need to be an artist. Everyone can do this”

Shirley Adams
 Adams said.

able," advises Shirley Adams.

At a recent workshop held at the Berks County Ag Center, Adams showed hundreds of clothing pieces where she performed her magic by using fabric scraps, yarn, and ravelings. Yes, ravelings, those pieces of threads you throw away.

If it sounds tacky, then you've got to see the works of art Adams performs by using bobbin work, couching, machine applique, and other sewing techniques.

"I got this idea from seeing a \$4,000 Armandi jacket in a shop," Adams said as she lifts up a black silk jacket with artistic embellishing.

"If you use scraps, you have nothing to lose. It's just fun," Adams says of creating and updating wardrobes.

Don't think that she's spent a lot of time on items such as patchwork vests. She uses fusible interfacing to built a log cabin pattern, presses with an iron, and finishes with machine decorative stitching to hide raw edges.

Some other favorite designs

is using ravelings dropped on top of a black background and stipple stitched to hold in place.

Evening and matching purses made with fabric scraps, discarded scarves, crazy quilt stitches, and buttons, add a coordinated look to wardrobes.

Although Adams knows all the rules of sewing, she occasionally breaks them to create an effect. For example, fabric should always be cut on grain. If cut off grain, the finished garment will pull out of shape. Knowing this, Adams sometimes cuts a piece off grain, but fuses it to a backing to retain its shape. However, she stressed that tubes, piping, and binding need to be cut on the bias to curve without puckering.

Adams also uses bits and pieces of scarves to stitch on jackets and vests. She likes the dramatic effect created by the play of textures on the same garment.

"If it's a pricey fabric, think how little you can use," Adams said. She showed how she created several different coordinated outfits by using a touch of fabric in different ways.

Adams recommends that most embellishment be done at the neck and shoulders to draw attention to one's face rather than one's body.

"If you don't like a fabric, wrinkle it for an entirely different look," Adams said. She demonstrated fusing fabric while wrinkling with fingers and



Using bobbin work, Adams created this wild flower garden by duplicating a design from a flower catalog. First, place the stems, leaves, and foliage. Then top with loopy flowers.

If it doesn't fit, cut it up and make it new.

stitching with metallic thread to hold wrinkles in place.

Pin weaving is another concept she incorporates. Using a curved tapestry needle and pretty yarns and ribbons, she weaves a design to a fabric back.

Adams demonstrated making your own chenille by using three

made adornment free.

For more information on Adams' patterns, books, and videos, write to The Sewing Connection, P.O. Box 688, Plainfield, IN 46168. Phone 1-800-237-4475. Website is www.sewingconnection.com

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Some articles are just for fun. Adams created this when she needed a Western outfit for a party. The dancing stick figures are an example of Adams' philosophy that one doesn't need to be an artist to create original designs.



Committee members who arranged the workshop at the Berks County extension office, from left, are Jeanne Maddaloni, Elaine Baro, Sylvia Blomquist, Fay Strickler, Berks County consumer science agent; Nancy Evans, Carol Miller, and Catharine Smith.