

Mary Lou MacFadyen

My lifelong interest in sewing follows the same path as many women of my generation with similar creative interests. It begins with a gene, which, I am told by my daughters, they did not inherit. In any event, if it is a gene, I've got it! I have loved sewing for as long as I can remember and actually feel a sense of peace and relaxation when I am working on a project.

I started at the knees of my mother, aunt, and grandmother. Knitting and crocheting came first. Then the proverbial required Junior High Home Economics sewing classes which in those days were actually a requirement of the curriculum. By the time I was a teenager, I was making prom dresses, graduation dresses and dresses of all kinds as they were what we wore.

I left my Southern New Jersey home at 20 to become a Flight Attendant for TWA working both domestic and international trips. I had little time for sewing but enjoyed finding dressmakers in Spain and England who would use a customer's picture to create in one week a completed garment that looked just like the photograph, fit perfectly and cost a reasonable amount. No Patterns!!! This piqued my interest and later in life prompted me to take patternmaking courses at the French Fashion Academy in NYC and draping and tailoring classes at Parsons School of Design on 7th Avenue.

In 1994, after sewing for 25 years in Westchester County NY on my Singer Slant Needle (circa 1965), and my 60 year old Singer 3115 factory machine, and occasionally teaching tailoring at the wonderful local fabric store, we moved to Richmond, VA. There I found a dedicated quilt store. It was a wonderful little shop called Sew Special in Midlothian, VA that had many quilting classes and carried the new, beautiful lines of designer quilt fabrics. I was so impressed with this little shop that I practically begged to work there. I was hired at minimum wage and a 20% discount. I abandoned my Singer and bought a Bernina 1230. I took every quilt class the shop had to offer, went to my first Mancuso Quilt Show in Williamsburg VA where I took more classes.

We retired to Cape Cod in 1996 where I happily found the interest in quilting was just as intense as it was in Virginia. I joined Bayberry Quilters Guild where I have continued to learn from association with the very talented members. I believe that taking classes and learning quilting techniques from the wonderful quilt professionals who came out of the 70's and 80's and the newer talents is the best part of this wonderful quilting experience. I continue to take these classes today and appreciate that Bayberry makes these wonderful teachers available to members.