



# Heirloom Quilting Designs

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*Sharing a passion for Free-Motion Machine Quilting Education and Designs*

*Am I ready to take a class and how do I prepare?*

## **How do I know if I am ready to take a class?**

Tell me if this sounds like you... You have been staring at the machine quilting at quilt shows for years and YOU LOVE IT! You would like to complete your own quilts but you either didn't know a regular sewing machine can be used for large quilts, have convinced yourself YOU could never do THAT, or you tried once with the wrong supplies or set-up and will NEVER try it again. But then why are you reading this? Deep down you really, really want to be a successful machine quilter, after all you have seen the results of all the other people who have gained this satisfaction. I know exactly how you feel because I WAS YOU before I went to a class that headed me on a path for success.

Are thinking about signing up for a class but the voice from within holds you back? You are just not ready, right? I don't think I have ever heard anyone say they didn't feel experienced enough to take my piecing or appliqué classes. Those students feel comfortable knowing they can just show up and I will teach them a new skill. Therefore, I will assume you clicked on this page for my free-motion motivational pep talk.

I still remember the days (years) when I freaked out over the thought of dropping the feed dogs. Now that I have taught so many others successfully, I have more confidence in you than you have in yourself and we haven't even met. Think of it like this: It just a piece of fabric, and really, how many of you don't have a square to spare? Consider the lifelong benefit of being able to complete your quilts on equipment you already own, compared to a few hours existing out of your comfort zone. And consider the economics! Think of how much stash money you would save not paying a longarm for the rest of your life. Compare that to the workshop fee.

Well the good news is I have everything ready for you. After teaching thousands of students, I know I can rely on the success I have seen right before my eyes! Why would I travel the country putting myself in this position if they were unhappy? Many reluctant students are amazed what they learn especially when they are in the classroom more than just one day. I believe that the strongest factor in learning anything new is desire, so bring your best machine and a positive attitude and you may surprise yourself!

The classroom has become a very comfortable place; making students feel at ease puts them in the best frame of mind to learn. Please understand that I do know my quilts look intimidating, but trust me when I tell you that free-motion quilting is just one more skill that you can learn to use your machine for. I believe the strongest factor in learning anything new is *DESIRE*, so bring a positive attitude and you may surprise yourself.

*If I have convinced you, read on...*

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### **Which class should I choose?**

If you haven't tried free-motion quilting before, choose a workshop listed as *Easy Machine Quilting*. However, if you find a beautiful design a great motivator, sign up for a *Refined Free-motion Quilting* workshop, book an appointment for a pedicure and be prepared to knock your own socks off!

### **What to expect in class**

Each workshop focuses on teaching a specific technique, with plenty of individualized coaching, without an expectation of prior experience. My goal is for each student to gain confidence in the operation of their machine for the essential free-motion quilting process, teaching the lifelong skills needed to complete your future quilts. Follow a well written pattern for an original project designed specifically to teach each step of a technique. You will thrive in a non-competitive environment; to produce a project so beautiful it motivated you to achieve better workmanship.

Class begins with introductory PowerPoint presentation allowing students to relax, focus on the topic and understand the plan for the entire day including...

- Illustrated explanation of the concept or technique
- Recommended supplies and machine set-up
- Practice skill building exercises to gain confidence
- Skills are put into action stitching projects, in manageable steps.

After teaching for many years, I have a pretty clear vision of the needs of students. Having tested supplies for years, I base my choice on getting the job done successfully. I instruct how to use a supply and why I like it. Many workshops require very little prep; rather, a kit assures exact supplies required. This avoids any struggle to purchase difficult to find products, assuring that class time is not wasted on unprepared supplies. With everything ready and waiting, you can relax knowing your job is to just listen to the suggestions.

### **What to do to prepare for a class**

First, stop worrying about what you don't know or haven't done. I have listed everything you need to prepare right here for you with clear instructions.

### **At least two weeks before class if not sooner**

Find the owners manual for your machine. Read the instructions for free-motion, lowering the feed dogs, adjusting the upper and lower tension (if possible) as well as how to adjust the pressure of the presser foot for thick bundles. Be sure the machine is clean and oiled if necessary according to the manufacturers recommendations.

Call or visit the dealer of your machine. Ask to see the smallest open-toe free-motion foot available for your machine. This is a case where **less is better**; avoid springs, wires, and clunky plastic parts that block the view of the quilt. Bernina - purchase a #24 foot, Viking - purchase an Open-toe Stippling foot, Pfaff - Embroidery/Free-motion foot, comes with most machines

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Gather the workshop supplies from the list I have provided. Go to a quality quilt shop, machine dealership or plan ahead to allow for shipping if you need to order online. If you are unsure about something, email me. If you are reading this at the last minute, don't worry, just bring what you have and we will have an opportunity to try something different. I always have thread, needles, and basting pins available for purchase in class.

Pre-wash your fabric and partially dry in the dryer. Then, press it completely dry. Next, use spray starch to stabilize the fabric before you cut the pieces. Use a generous application for both the top fabric that will be marked with the design, and for the backing fabric, to avoid stretching during the stitching process. Press with the straight of grain with a hot dry iron until it is completely dry.

Pin-baste your practice sandwich and experiment **with the lightweight thread** in your machine. (100/2 silk, 60/2 cotton) Adjust the tension if needed for the threads to catch one another in the middle of the layers. Read my book, *Joanie's Quilting Elements*. Stitch some loops, write your name, trace out a design and follow my stitching advice. You have done all I could ask to be ready for our big day.

### **Which Machine and Equipment**

Bring your BEST machine. I know you don't want to lug that heavy machine to class. If necessary, find help to get it into your car the night before class and ask for help when you arrive if you need it. Know your body and its limitations. I will be teaching you to adjust your machine so it only makes sense to learn on the machine that you will ultimately use to perform this skill. The only failure I have had teaching this workshop is when a tiny, lightweight machine unable to be adjusted it for the specialty thread, was used. Remember to pack of the cords, the foot pedal and all of the machine accessories listed on the supply list. Some students bring their own portable sewing table, adjustable chair or chair pad, extra lights and magnifiers. If you are wondering if we might need something, bring it.

### **Prepare for Success!**

This is one day in your life, and you have invested your hard-earned money on this workshop. You have this golden opportunity to learn this skill, put time into the preparation for the class. You will feel more relaxed when you arrive, better able to achieve success because you know you have done all you can to put yourself in the best environment to learn. Get a good night's sleep, eat a good breakfast and leave some extra time for traffic on the way to class!

From the first seeds of inspiration, right through to that very last stitch, each step of quilting is important and can be so much fun! Enjoy the process and delight in your progress. Do your best and you will achieve a great sense of satisfaction in your work.

Joanie

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