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# Farm & Fiber Knits

PREMIER ISSUE | 2024

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## TELLING THE STORIES

Across continents and cultures, humans make yarn from fiber and transform it into functional and decorative textiles. Over centuries, styles of knitting and motifs have arisen in many parts of the world. The *Farm & Fiber Knits* team envisioned a lush print magazine that takes readers on a journey to explore some of the traditions that thrive today. We wanted the magazine to be visual, of course, full of photos that make you feel like you are there—or inspire you to plan your next knitting trip. We wanted to delve into the stories behind the fiber production and knitting traditions of these places, discover what makes each one unique, and offer patterns inspired by these stories.

How did we choose what to include? It wasn't easy! When we were planning this special edition of *Farm & Fiber Knits*, we noticed that many knitting traditions have developed on islands. Legendary designer Alice Starmore shares how the landscape and knitting culture of her island home in the Outer Hebrides inspire the fantastical yarn tales she and her daughter, Jade, tell. We visit the island nation of Iceland, long a favorite knitting destination, to learn what makes Icelandic wool so unique and the *lopapeysa* so iconic. Designer and Shetland native Gudrun Johnston takes us on a woolly stroll through her landscape and heritage. And in the United States, we venture to Maine to visit the hardy, solitary sheep of Nash Island.

Off-island, longtime friend Meg Swansen takes us to Austria to learn about the origins of twisted-stitch knitting—and provides a chance to try it out. The richly cabled Aran-inspired pullover on the cover accompanies a yarn about Donegal tweeds and heathers.



P.S. Thanks to Debra Stensrud, of FOUND, the art of home, for finding the perfect location for the project photography throughout this issue.

## ON THE FARM ... OR OFF

Modern fiber farmers share some of the realities, challenges, and rewards of fiber production and sustainable agriculture as we visit a working farm. And finally, the Farm & Fiber Essentials collection offers six practical and enduring styles to knit for your own life on the farm—or wherever you find yourself.

We hope you enjoy the journey!

*Karin*

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# Farm & Fiber Knits

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# Farm & Fiber in Fashion

A handful of companies and designers with a passion for sustainability and a love of Mother Earth are bringing the farm-to-fiber movement to the fashion world, and vice versa.

BY CAROL J. SULCOSKI



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KELBOURNE WOOLENS



The iconic Misha & Puff Popcorn Sweater is now available in child and adult sizes.

## PUFF MOMMY

When Anna Wallack went shopping for baby clothes after the birth of her first child, she couldn't find the shapes or silhouettes she was looking for. She decided to make her own: bonnets, rompers, bloomers, and more, handknit in lovely wool yarn. And that's how Wallack's company Misha & Puff was born. Wallack stocks Misha & Puff with handknitted garments for babies, children, and adults, featuring a vintage-modern sensibility Wallack describes as "stylish yet unfussy, hard-wearing, and long-lasting."

Soon knitters and crocheters who loved the company's aesthetic were clamoring for patterns to make their own Misha & Puff garments. Wallack got to work, releasing a few handknitting patterns using commercially available yarns so fans could download the patterns and make their favorites. Around the same time, the company began thinking about ways to minimize yarn waste. One easy way: winding off skeins of wool from yarn cones left over after a season's garments were made and offering them to customers. The skeins sold faster than they could be wound.

Wallack mulled over the next step, producing a Misha & Puff yarn line with dedicated pattern support. She turned to Kelbourne Woolens, a Philadelphia yarn manufacturer and distributor, for collaboration and support. They combined forces to create Studio Misha & Puff, beginning with a four-ply worsted-spun superwash merino that premiered in late 2023. Ellie Jackson, assistant creative director at Kelbourne, describes it as "a lovely, bouncy, soft yarn with dynamic hand-dyed color." Indeed, color is central to Misha &

Puff. The initial palette of colors includes earth tones and brights along with space-dyed and confetti yarns, which are some of the most popular shades in Misha & Puff garments.

Misha & Puff was already committed to ethical practices—contracting with Peruvian cooperatives that pay their knitters directly based on the amount of work required to create a specific garment—so it is no surprise that the company’s handknitting wool is carefully sourced. All wool is Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) certified. The RWS ensures that farms, ranches, and everyone along the production chain meet stringent standards of care for their animals, environment, and workers. As Jackson explains, “When you sit down to knit with RWS wool yarn, you can be confident the sheep that provided you their winter woollies have been treated with the quality care and respect they deserve.”

Given that Misha & Puff fans are looking to re-create their favorite designs from the company’s finished garment line, pattern support is paramount. Kelbourne Woolens, with its deep experience in pattern publishing, will reverse-engineer an existing Misha & Puff garment and draft a pattern. The pattern is then edited, graded, tested, and formatted in the company’s style. The iconic Misha & Puff Popcorn Sweater is one popular pattern now available in child and adult sizes. Baby bloomers, baby cap, blanket, and scarf patterns are also downloadable.

Look for more good things to come from Studio Misha & Puff. Response to the yarn line has been strong, and more colors have been added to the yarn’s palette. The team is also working to create patterns for more knitted and crocheted items. Jackson describes the collaboration as a “really lovely creative partnership,” brought by people who love yarn and knitting.

*Shop for ready-made clothing at [shop.misha-and-puff.com](http://shop.misha-and-puff.com). Purchase Studio Misha & Puff yarns and patterns through their website or from Kelbourne Woolens at [kelbournewoolens.com](http://kelbournewoolens.com).*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDSAY DEGEN

## DEADSTOCK NO MORE

It’s a shocking statistic: An estimated 92 million tons of textiles are sent to landfills every year by the fashion industry. Addressing the issue of textile waste—only 15 percent of which is recycled each year—is a priority for knitwear designer Lindsay Degen.

Degen describes her eponymous company as “a lifestyle brand for creative people.” She sells finished sweaters, accessories, and baby items as well as cute craft-related tools on her website. She also offers handknitting patterns for some of her most popular designs.

Degen translated her personal interest in sustainability into a clever business decision: exploring the possibilities presented by deadstock textiles. Deadstock textiles are the unused fabrics and yarns left over at the end of a season, often the result of a manufacturer overestimating its needs. Instead of letting perfectly good textiles languish in landfills, intrepid designers such as Degen use them to make their own products. Degen is currently collaborating with The Endery, a company specializing in deadstock design. The result? A popular capsule collection made with 100 percent deadstock materials.

*To read more about Lindsay Degen’s passion for sustainable style, go to [farmfiberknits.com](http://farmfiberknits.com). You can learn more about her products at [degen.us](http://degen.us); her handknitting patterns are also available on Ravelry.*



## NATIVE KNITTER

Jennifer Berg didn't set out to be a knitwear designer. She took up the craft in college as a way to counter stress and make gifts for family and friends. As she became immersed in the knitting world, she noticed a lack of authentic Native representation and design in the industry. Explains Berg, "I wanted Navajo design to be authentically added into this space so that my people were not seen as a stereotype of 'native' but as real people." At the time, Berg was knitting other designers' patterns and wanted to add her own truth to her knitting. Her first design, the Eye Catcher Hat, featured a Navajo "eye dazzler" motif often used in saddle blankets and rugs. The hat's dynamic and striking geometric motifs gained buzz online, and the pattern was quickly picked up by a national crafting magazine. Soon, Berg found herself in demand as a knitting designer, incorporating colors and motifs intrinsic to her Navajo (or Diné) heritage.

Berg grew up on Navajo tribal lands, near the New Mexico–Arizona border. The *Dinéyah* (or homeland) is surrounded by four mountains held sacred by the Diné people. Berg is grounded by a visceral connection to the land: "Whenever I'm in this space, I always feel like I'm home." The landscape and colors of the desert are one major inspiration for her work, such as her Tsekoah Cow pattern, featuring a blue "river" section bordered by yellow canyon "walls."



Another significant source of inspiration is Navajo rugs. In addition to seeing rugs in her grandmother's home, Berg is part of the family who owns Chee's Indian Store. "I would sit in the office as the women (and some men, too) would bring their rugs in to sell. My father would often be the one to make the deal. We have so many rugs in our home because he'd struggle to pass up any rugs that came through the door. Having so many motifs and the stories connected to them is very valuable to me and my connection to the culture."

*Read about Jennifer Berg's collaboration with the clothing brand Faherty at [farmfiberknits.com](http://farmfiberknits.com). Find her on Instagram @Native.Knitter or her website [nativeknitter.com](http://nativeknitter.com). Her designs can be found on Ravelry, and she offers a stranded knitting course on the platform [domestika.org](http://domestika.org).*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIFER BERG

## MAMA FARMER

What would persuade an award-winning actor to start tending livestock on a small New York farm? If you're Isabella Rossellini, the answer is biodiversity and breed preservation. In addition to her other achievements, Rossellini holds a master's degree in animal husbandry and behavior. Conservation and protecting species are a natural outgrowth of that degree.

Rossellini is also keenly aware of the dangers of monoculture. Industrial production favors raising one or a few breeds, whether livestock, vegetables, or flowers, owing to issues including disease resistance and scalability. As producers shift to a single breed (say, merino wool or Red Delicious apples), others may eventually go extinct. Rossellini's Mama Farm in eastern Long Island aims to nurture endangered breeds of sheep, chickens, turkeys, goats, and more. Organic heirloom vegetables are also grown on the farm, helping protect plant biodiversity.

In a sense, moving to a working farm is full circle for Rossellini. She grew up in a coastal town in Italy where chickens, pigs, and sheep were raised by local farmers and the line between "city" and "country" was less distinct than in America. When she learned that a 28-acre tract in Brookhaven, Long Island, needed saving, Rossellini jumped at the chance. The developer who originally purchased the land found environmental regulations and the thick shrubby undergrowth to be too big a challenge, abandoning the idea of building houses on the site.

About 23 acres of the property remain unworked due to a conservation easement. Rossellini and her daughter, Elettra Wiedemann, built Mama Farm on a portion of the rest. What started with a box of heritage-breed chickens soon grew to a flock of 100-plus. When Rossellini learned that a museum restoring an old tapestry

**The Kahlo Poncho, modeled here by Rossellini on her regenerative farm, is made with wool from one of Mama Farm's sheep.**

PHOTOS BY PATRICE CASANOVA,  
COURTESY OF MAMA FARM



PHOTO BY CAROLINE OWENS, COURTESY OF MAMA FARM

Rossellini is wearing the O'Keefe vest from Aisling Camps's 2023 Mama Farm capsule collection.

couldn't source the original type of wool because the breed was extinct, she became motivated to protect heritage-breed sheep. Mama Farm is now home to a small flock of rare breeds including Lincoln, Santa Cruz, and Jacob. The sheep are named after iconic female artists: There's a Duse, a Garbo, and a Kahlo.

*Find out how Isabella Rossellini's farming foray has evolved into fashion collaborations with the brand Moda Operandi and designers Katya Ekimian and Aisling Camps at [farmfiberknits.com](http://farmfiberknits.com). For more information on the farm and its bed-and-breakfast, visit [mamafarm.us](http://mamafarm.us).* 🌸



# Bringing Heritage-Breed Wool to Knitters' Hands

The search for local wool transformed one knitter into a breed-specific yarn company.

BY SANDI ROSNER

Farah Knudsen's obsession with locally grown, breed-specific wool began when she learned that Utah, her home state, was the fifth largest wool producer in the United States. When she was unable to find Utah-grown yarn in her local yarn store, internet research led her to Cunnington Farms in Moab, about three hours from her home in Provo. Farah visited the farm, bought a bag of Romeldale fleece, and located a mill in Salt Lake City to turn it into yarn. Knudsen Knits was born.

That first batch of yarn set the pattern for Knudsen Knits: Farah seeks out local wool growers, selects fleeces, and works with small local mills to produce yarn. She sells that yarn to knitters through her website and at fiber festivals in the western United States.

Farah joined the Utah Wool Growers Association and placed an ad in their newsletter seeking breed-specific fleeces. She found an agricultural college with a flock of Targhee sheep. Along the way, she was building her network of fiber farmers. It takes more than good fleece to make beautiful yarn, and she is constantly on the lookout for fiber mills, preferably in Utah, that can work with small batches (sometimes just one or two fleeces).

Farah is looking forward to retiring from her day job so she can devote more of her time to minimally processed breed-specific yarn. Her motto is "Heritage Yarns—History in Your Hands." She loves talking with knitters about the benefits of non-superwashed wool and highlighting the characteristics of each breed. 🌱

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*Learn more about Knudsen Knits at [farmfiberknits.com](http://farmfiberknits.com) and on Instagram @knudsenknits. Find updates about Farah's small-batch yarns at [knudsenknits.com](http://knudsenknits.com).*



Farah Knudsen found Polypay fleeces in storage. It was the new farm's first shearing, and they had no established market for the wool. Farah bought the entire clip.



Farah examines a Romeldale/CVM fleece to remove the waste portions, a process called skirting.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FARAH KNUDSEN

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# Cactus Hill Farm

Beginning with a few bottle lambs, a young rancher revives her family's heritage as shepherds. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE COCA

ELENA MILLER-TER KUILE IS A YOUNG RANCHER and sixth-generation farmer in Capulin, a tiny town in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, near the New Mexico border. Her ancestors have stewarded the land in the area since the 1850s, and today she is carrying on the tradition. Editor **Karin Strom** chatted with her about the ranching and fiber life.

## Have you been farming your whole life?

I grew up on the family farm, and my father, Alan, and my grandfather, Bob, used to run sheep in this area, but they had sold them off before I was born. My grandpa did pass on his love for sheep to me when I was young by teaching me to raise *pecos* (orphan lambs). We'd go out together to feed them—I think he was programming me at a young age to want to raise sheep! My sisters Ana and Diana and I grew up swimming in irrigation

ponds, harvesting hay, and assisting our dad on the farm.

## Do you still live on the land where you grew up?

Yes, and most of my family is still here, which is a huge support to me in my farming and parenting efforts! I'm a single mom of two daughters, Amalia (4) and Itzel (1). My family has a diverse heritage—Hispanic, Mexican, and Native American, as well as Dutch/European. *Tias* and *tios*, we all live around the farm.



**OPPOSITE**

Three generations—Elena, her father, and her two daughters—loading organic hay raised on the farm to feed the sheep.

**LEFT**

The San Luis Valley is a high alpine valley over 7,000 feet in elevation that receives as little as 7 inches of precipitation per year.

**BELOW**

Diversity is part of the Cactus Hill sheep operation, with many breeds of sheep yielding different fleece colors.



**Have you always been on this land, or did you ever venture to other places?**

I went away to college on the East Coast and had the opportunity to do some world traveling. I attended Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, on a scholarship. It was a long way from home, and I probably would have flunked out if it weren't for knitting! It kept me awake during lectures. I majored in Interdisciplinary Studies in Agriculture, graduating with honors. As part of a study-abroad program, I traveled to India, Tanzania, New Zealand, and Mexico and was inspired by the rich textile traditions wherever I went. But I always dreamt of coming home to the farm to work with regenerative agriculture and combine it with my passion for fiber.

**When you returned home, how did you get back to the family tradition of sheep ranching?**

Since my mom, Maya, my sisters, and I are all into knitting, crocheting,

felting, and spinning, it was a natural progression for us to buy a few sheep for fiber. In 2012, a friend mentioned that her mother had some pencos, so I purchased six Columbia bottle-fed lambs for \$2 apiece. Raising them was not without its challenges: One night I came home to find all of the lambs were bloated; I spent a very long night feeding them home remedies to try and reduce the gas in their bellies. All the lambs survived and became the founding mothers of my current flock. My last bottle lamb, Bart Simpson (named for her very prominent overbite), died in 2022.

**Did you stick with Columbia sheep?**

Columbia sheep are primarily raised for meat, but their lofty wool is a great basis for felting and yarn. I really wanted to expand to other breeds, though—especially naturally colored sheep. I picked up eight California Variegated Mutant (CVM)/Merinos from Nancy Irlbeck of ANIROONZ Sheep Company at the Taos Wool Festival. Nancy is known for her top-quality wool



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**

Adobe ruins dot the landscape.

Hispano settlers brought Merino and Churro sheep to the area, moving them up from northern New Mexico.

Elena and her family continue the family ranching tradition on this generational farm.

fleeces, including colored breeds like CVM. Dad joined the fun, buying 30 Suffolk sheep, since, as he pointed out, “taking care of a hundred sheep is as easy as taking care of ten.”

**It seems like you were a natural sheep farmer!**

Well, not entirely! My first time lambing was a bit dicey. Basically, I didn’t have a system. The Suffolk sheep were wild and rebellious. The new wool sheep were young and inexperienced. Thankfully, there weren’t too many disasters, and my father quickly realized he needed to be more involved in order to impart more of the skills and generational knowledge I needed to successfully raise sheep.

That small flock has grown to more than 200 ewes. We’ve added Merinos from Jewell Ranch and a variety of naturally colored sheep with moorit and gray Merinos from Apple Creek Merinos and Steitzhof Merinos, and we’ve brought in some Wensleydale, Teeswater, Cotswold, and Bluefaced Leicester (BFL) from ANIROONZ and other breeders. Diversity is important, as it helps with disease resistance and making breeding and daily activities more interesting. They all have different personalities. The Merinos are docile and gentle, while the

Teeswater, BFL, and Wensleydale are rebellious and independent. Cactus Hill fleeces win awards at fiber shows regularly.

I try to breed for the highest quality animal that does well in our dry, high-mountain desert. At almost 8,000 feet above sea level and receiving only seven inches of precipitation annually, this is a harsh environment. Long-term drought in the area has made creative solutions for reduced water use a necessity.

### **The climate challenges in your area must be a huge focus for you.**

I'm following in the footsteps of my ancestors. The Hispano settlers of the San Luis Valley grazed their sheep in the surrounding mountains and created hand-dug *acequias* (community-owned ditches) to deliver snowmelt and spring water to irrigate crops and pastures.

I often think about how traditional farming communities dealt with living in the desert. Indigenous and Hispano farmers used sheep for meat and fiber and tied their lives to their animals. These traditions are rooted in creating resilient systems that were adapted to an arid climate. They lived within the limitations of their environment. Sheep require less water than other livestock and will even eat snow during the winter.

### **What are some of the other challenges you've faced?**

Bordering the Alamosa River corridor, Cactus Hill Farm has its fair share of predators, including coyotes, mountain lions, bears, and wild dogs. And we have lost sheep to them. To counter this, we have guard dogs and pens to keep the sheep safe at night. This non-lethal predation control collects manure, which is used with rotational grazing to build soil. Improved soil health has many benefits, including sequestering carbon from the atmosphere and increasing organic matter, which improves water retention and filtration. The result is carbon-rich, drought-resistant soils with added fertility. Along with rebuilding soil on the farm, my dad and I have put the farm into a conservation easement, and we've worked with the community to plant trees and restore the river and riparian areas.

I got into farming because it is my passion and I care for the land, but I quickly realized I also



**ABOVE**  
Elena uses livestock guard dogs to protect from the variety of predators that use the Alamosa River as a natural highway up and down from the mountains.

**LEFT**  
Alan Miller, Elena's dad, mentors her and helps care for sheep, crops, and grandchildren.

needed to support my family. Farming is a tough business, and value-added wool products have helped me be a present mother for my young children while having a lot of enjoyment. I sell raw fleeces and pelts, and we work with Yampa Valley Fiberworks in Craig, Colorado, to create roving, yarn, and other products.

### **Tell us about being a yarn farmer.**

I really love this part of the business. My roving and naturally colored yarns are made from a single fleece, so you get the experience of working with that one animal. My favorite fiber is the CVM/Wensleydale cross because it is lofty and wearable with the luster of longwool. From creamy white



Cactus Hill Farm works with regional mills to create roving and yarn from their naturally colored flock.



Elena restored one of the historic adobe buildings on the property to serve as a dye house, storage area, and shop for the raw fleeces, roving, and yarns she sells.

to shades of gray, pale tans to dark browns, and longwool and finewools, we have tons of natural color and unique fiber options. Each sheep has its own texture and color tone and undertones. I really want to showcase these variations. I love that naturally colored fibers remove the need for dye, which is a significant source of pollution and water waste worldwide.

For those who do want bright color, we offer a line of worsted and chunky kettle-dyed merino wool yarns, and we're currently expanding to natural plant-based dyes. We've been planting and wild-harvesting dye plants around the farm and homestead, collecting rainwater to irrigate them. These dye flowers also offer a benefit to bees and other pollinators. I see the business headed toward more naturally colored fibers and natural dyes. I'm looking at ways to reduce water use while tying ecosystem benefits to the fiber arts.

### How do you see things evolving for Cactus Hill Farm and your family?

I want to build more community, both in this area and beyond. I've recently collaborated with Tressa Weidenaar, the owner of Tsin bikee Knits. Tressa is Diné (Navajo) and Dutch. She designed the Silversmith Hat and new Silversmith Sweater patterns with my yarn. I'd love to build more partnerships with designers

for patterns and continue to work with small family; black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC); and women-owned businesses.

In addition to raising sheep, Cactus Hill Farm also grows certified organic hay and specialty grains, and we sell grass-fed lamb. I believe we must respect and honor the lives of the animals we care for. I'm trying to reduce the waste that often goes along with meat processing and have worked with local butchers and Driftless Tannery, who uses natural tanning methods to turn hides into stunning finished pelts.

I'm always thinking about how we can enhance the farm and create a brighter future for the next generation. I'm working to buy the farm from my dad, who is a continuous support as a grandfather, father, and rancher. I serve on the Colorado Agricultural Commission and hope to bring positive change to agriculture and this community.

The most important thing is: I am not alone. I have a supporting family and a community of friends stepping in to help. I couldn't do it without them. 🌱

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*Cactus Hill Farm offers a variety of products for fiber artists. Elena sells in person at several regional fiber shows as well as online at [cactushillfarm.com](http://cactushillfarm.com). You can follow her on Instagram @cactushillfarm or on Facebook as CactusHill.*

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# *Twisted-Stitch Knitting*

A Long Path to Publishing a Traditional Work

By Meg Swansen

## ABOVE

The motifs in the sweaters worn by these children all appear in *Twisted-Stitch Knitting* by Maria Erlbacher. The sweaters pictured were worked flat and seamed.

"This looks as if it had been carved in wool" was my husband's comment when he first saw an item I had knitted using twisted-stitch motifs. A true twisted-stitch project may have nary a single knit stitch in an entire garment, just purl, twisted knit, traveling stitches, and possibly cables, though all the "knit" stitches are actually knitted into the back—thus, twisted.

The technique was new to me when, in 1982, our mail-order business, Schoolhouse Press, began importing a

trio of books from Bavaria: *Bäuerliches Stricken (Peasant Knitting) 1, 2, and 3*, by Lisl Fanderl. This collection was a compendium of stitch patterns, not unlike Barbara Walker's *Treasury* quartet, and included a number of twisted-stitch motifs. Not surprisingly, we called the technique Bavarian Twisted Stitch.

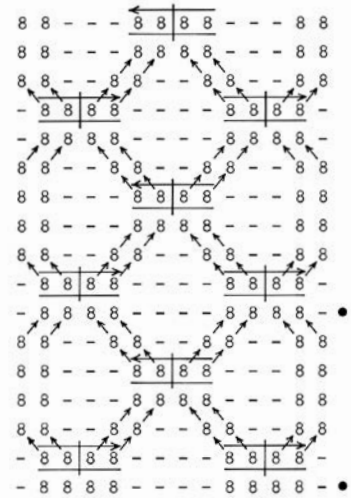
Years later, we discovered a series of booklets by Maria Erlbacher, which was an improved continuation of the Fanderl series. Frau Erlbacher described

the origins of the patterns as Austrian—specifically, from the Alps region of the Enns Valley—and not Bavarian at all.

Maria's booklets, *Überlieferte Strickmuster aus dem Steirischen Ennstal* (*Traditional Knitting Patterns from the Styrian Ennstal*), came from the Landschaftsmuseum shop of the Trautenfels Castle in the Styrian Enns Valley of Austria, about 70 miles south-east of Salzburg. It was through the castle museum that Maria taught knitting classes in this traditional twisted-stitch technique, which had been passed down through many generations of knitters by word and demonstration only. Maria had learned from Thekla Zeiler, who taught knitting at the Graz Folk Life Museum and who contributed many of the motifs to the books.

Soon thereafter, Maria began making a physical record of all the patterns she could find in the area—nearly 180 entrancing motifs that are still popular today.

It took a while to grasp her unique charting method, but luckily each chart was placed adjacent to a clear photo of the finished knitting (see photo above, right). For the first few weeks, I knitted only from the photos but soon was able to decipher the charts. Now I, along with the expert American teacher of this technique, Candace Eisner Strick, find them to be superior. As I knitted the two cowls for this article, I was struck anew by



In Maria Erlbacher's charting method, the arrows that represent traveling stitches are positioned below the activity. The horizontal arrows above the crosses indicate the direction and result of pairs of cabled (traveled) stitches.

Maria's ingenious mode of charting for this particular technique.

Unfortunately, after decades of importing Maria's trio of booklets, we found that they were suddenly unavailable—apparently as a result of damage to or the loss of the physical plates—and no computer backup existed. As the years passed, we increasingly felt the lack of these unique books. My inquiries to the museum director about the possibility of an English translation and reprint were met with responses that were both tepid and noncommittal.

**BELOW**

The original three booklets by Maria Erlbacher (far left) have been translated into English and amalgamated into one book, published by Schoolhouse Press.



PHOTO BY GALE ZUCKER



Finally, in 2006, I asked if it would be possible to meet with the author in person to discuss the possibility of a translation and reprint. Since the answer to that query was not specifically *no*, I made an appointment with the director, and in August my sister Lloie and I booked a flight to Vienna. (A happy coincidence: Our cousin Michael was soon to be married in Vienna and we could combine that event with a trip to the castle.)

Our longtime friend Georg is Viennese, and he volunteered to drive us to our destination and be our translator. The three-hour drive to Trautenfels was breathtakingly beautiful, past alpine chalets perched in mountain meadows and through long tunnels underneath towering snowcapped peaks.

In due course, there was Schloss Trautenfels, at the foot of Grimming Mountain. In we went and met the director, Herr Wolfgang Otto, and Frau Maria Erlbacher herself. They had prepared a remarkable display of some of her knitted garments, which were arranged on a large table.

Possibly because of the language barrier (Lloie speaks German, but mine

is feeble, and Maria spoke no English), I sensed how very shy Maria was; she never once made eye contact with me the entire afternoon. This made me shy in turn and thus hesitant to aim my camera directly at her or even at her stunning knits. I am grateful to have been able to take any photos at all.

Finally, I broached the subject of how important her work was, and how I believed English-speaking knitters would be equally enthusiastic to learn the techniques and knit her patterns. I assured her that I would translate her text word for word, amalgamating the three booklets into one, exactly as originally presented, with no alterations. She hesitatingly expressed uncertainty, but did not actually say *no*.

Not wanting to be pushy, I left it at that. I asked her to please consider the idea, and I said I would send a contract for her perusal when I returned home.



**ABOVE**  
Maria Erlbacher in 2006, on the day she met Meg Swansen.

**AT TOP**  
Trautenfels Castle at the foot of Grimming Mountain.

We bade farewell and drove on to Georg's summer house on Millstätter See (Lake) in Carinthia for the night. During the drive, Georg proffered that Maria might be generally suspicious of Americans and concerned that Schoolhouse Press might somehow distort or debase her life's work. (Not unlike Emma Jacobsson, whose will specified that upon her death, all Bohus patterns were to be destroyed to preserve the integrity of the work.)

And so began a series of emails to Maria and the museum director, which involved waiting many months for a reply. Luckily, knitting one stitch at a time for so many decades had programmed me to have patience. I persevered, gradually convincing Maria that knitters would appreciate and cherish her work. Then, nearly three years after our in-person meeting, she signed the contract.

I immediately set to work and was pleased to find an excellent bilingual knitter/translator, Char Dickte. A few months later, I proudly sent Maria multiple copies of the finished book.

Surprisingly, Maria telephoned me, her English-speaking nephew on the line to translate. She was effusive in her praise of the work we had done and thanked me repeatedly.

HOW GRATEFUL I AM for the curiosity and tenacity of knitters like Frau Erlbacher, who disclose their knowledge and skills through teaching and writing to preserve traditions for our global knitting community. Their efforts inspire my own. While the path to publishing *Twisted-Stitch Knitting* in the United States was long, there is great satisfaction in contributing to the continuity of our knitting history.

Several years have passed since I last knitted on a twisted-stitch project, and I had forgotten how much I love working this technique. Yes, the design grows relatively slowly, but for me the result is especially gratifying and well worth the time. I hope you will give it a try.



PHOTO BY GALE ZUCKER

TRY A TWIST

## Twisted-Stitch Cowls

NEXT PAGE &gt;&gt;

You can find many examples of cardigans, vests, and stockings that Ravelry knitters have made from patterns in the book, listed under Maria Erlbacher. 🌿

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**MEG SWANSEN** is a knitting designer, publisher, author, teacher, and the owner of Schoolhouse Press ([schoolhousepress.com](http://schoolhousepress.com)). Meg is known for her color-pattern designs, technical innovations, and Knitting Camp events (founded by her mother, Elizabeth Zimmermann). She has written hundreds of patterns and magazine articles, plus a number of books. Meg continues to knit, design, and write from her one-room schoolhouse home in Wisconsin, with an upcoming book to be published in late fall 2024.



## PROJECT

# Twisted-Stitch Cowls

MEG SWANSEN

The cream wool piece, shown here as an ear warmer, can serve as a sampler to practice twisted-stitch patterns and establish your preference for executing the technique. It is straight-sided, so you needn't be distracted by shaping.

If you would rather have a deeper cowl with a flare at the lower edge, the blue version offers that option. All the shaping is worked in the purl sections between the patterns and not within the motifs such as might be required when shaping the top of a hat, for example.

The three main motifs are all taken from *Twisted-Stitch Knitting* by Maria Erlbacher (Schoolhouse Press, 2009). The motifs are separated by a “filler” that may be expanded or reduced as desired.



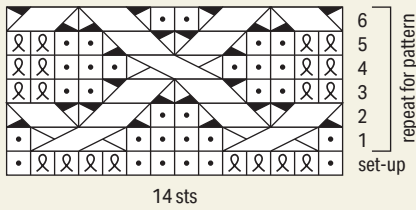
## MATERIALS

**YARN** Filature Lemieux *Québécoise* (100% wool; 210 yd [192 m]/3½ oz [100 g]; fingering); #92 Cream or #42 Medium Blue, 1 skein. Distributed by Schoolhouse Press.

**NEEDLES** Size 4 (3.5 mm): two 24" (60 cm) circular (cir) or set of double-pointed (dnp). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

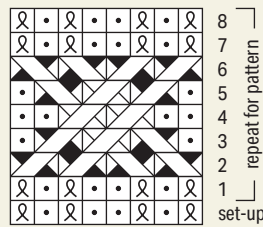
**NOTIONS** Markers (m); cable needle (cn); tapestry needle.

**Chart A**



14 sts

**Chart B**



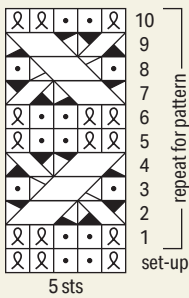
8 sts

**Key**

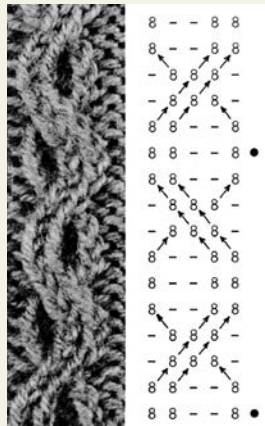
- purl
- k1tbl
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1tbl, then k1tbl from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in front, p1, then k1tbl from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1tbl, then p1 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, k1tbl, then k1tbl 2 times from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1tbl 2 times, then k1tbl from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, p1, then k1tbl 2 times from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k1tbl 2 times, then p1 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, k1tbl 2 times, then k1tbl 2 times from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in back, k1tbl 2 times, then k1tbl 2 times from cn

Note: work all knit sts tbl

**Chart C**



5 sts



Maria Erlbacher developed a charting method especially for twisted-stitch knitting that indicates the movement of traveling stitches with arrows below the activity. The chart at left shows Chart C using Erlbacher's charting symbols, and the photo shows the knitted cable.

**GAUGE** Cream cowl: 25½ sts and 23½ rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in patt, blocked. Blue cowl: 28 sts and 28½ rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in patt, blocked.

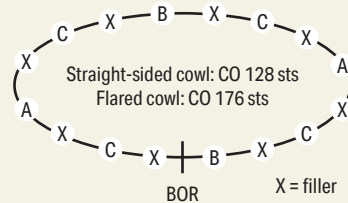
**FINISHED SIZE** Cream cowl: 20" (51 cm) circumference and 4¼" (11 cm) tall. Blue cowl: 25" (63.5 cm) circumference at lower edge, 18¼" (46.5 cm) circumference at neck edge, and 5½" (14 cm) tall.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

**NOTES**

- There are no plain knit stitches in either cowl.
- In the pattern layout, X marks the position of filler stitches between the charts. For the cream cowl, each X indicates 8 filler stitches. For the blue cowl, each filler panel begins with 14 stitches and gradually decreases to 8 stitches.
- This pattern is presented using charts with standard symbols. Compare the standard charting method with Erlbacher's method above.

**Pattern layout**



**STITCH GUIDE**

**K1tbl:** Knit 1 stitch through the back loop.  
**1/1 LC:** Sl 1 st onto cn and hold in front, k1tbl, then k1tbl from cn.

**8-Stitch Filler for Cream Cowl (8-st filler)**

**Set-up rnd** P1, k1tbl, p1, k1tbl 2 times, p1, k1tbl, p1.  
**Rnds 1-5** P1, k1tbl, p1, k1tbl 2 times, p1, k1tbl, p1.  
**Rnd 6** P1, k1tbl, p1, 1/1 LC (see Stitch Guide), p1, k1tbl, p1.  
 Rep Rnds 1–6 for patt.

## COWLS

### Straight-sided (Cream) Cowl

CO 128 sts and arrange on two cir or dpn. Place marker (pm) and join for working in the round, being careful not to twist sts. The cowl shown was cast on purlwise, but you can use the method of your choice.

**Set-up rnd** \*Work 8-st filler (see Stitch Guide), work 5 sts Chart C, work 8-st filler, work 14 sts Chart A, work 8-st filler, work 5 sts Chart C, work 8-st filler, work 8 sts Chart B; rep from \* once more.

*Note:* The cowl shown omits the two 4-stitch cables in Rnd 1 of Chart A for the first rep to preserve the purled cast-on detail. To duplicate this effect, work the first Rnd 1 of Chart A panels as p1, k1tbl 4 times, p4, k1tbl 4 times, p1. On all foll reps, work Rnd 1 as shown in the chart.

**Next rnd** (Rnd 1 of all patterns) \*Work 8-st filler, work 5 sts Chart C, work 8-st filler, work 14 sts Chart A, work 8-st filler, work 5 sts Chart C, work 8-st filler, work 8 sts Chart B; rep from \* once more.

Cont in est patt to desired length. The cowl shown contains 23 rnds, including the set-up rnd, and ends with Rnd 4 of Chart A, Rnd 6 of Chart B, and Rnd 2 of Chart C.

BO all sts. The cowl shown was bound off purlwise, but you can use any method you prefer. To prevent the top from rippling, when you come to a pair of twisted knit sts, work them together (shown here as p2tog) as you bind off.

### Flared (Blue) Cowl

CO 176 sts and arrange on one cir, two cir, or dpn. Place marker (pm) and join for working in the round, being careful not to twist sts.

**Set-up rnd** \*Work 14-st filler as [p1, k1tbl, p4, k1tbl 2 times, p4, k1tbl, p1], work 5 sts Chart C, work 14-st filler, work 14 sts Chart A, work 14-st filler, work 5 sts Chart C, work 14-st filler, work 8 sts Chart B; rep from \* once more.

*Note:* If you begin on one cir, change to two cir or dpn when there are too few sts to fit on the needle.

**Rnd 1** (Rnd 1 of all patterns) \*Work 14-st filler, work Chart C, work 14-st filler, work Chart A, work 14-st filler, work Chart C, work 14-st filler, work Chart B; rep from \* once more.

**Rnds 2 and 3** Work as established, working filler sts as they appear.

**Rnd 4** \*Dec 14-st filler to 12 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, p2, k1tbl 2 times, p2tog, p2, k1tbl, p1], work Chart C, work 14-st filler, work Chart A, dec next 14-st filler to 12 sts as before, work Chart C, work 14-st filler, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—168 sts; four 12-st fillers and four 14-st fillers.

**Rnd 5** Work as established.

**Rnd 6** \*Work 12-st filler crossing center 2 sts as 1/1 LC (see Stitch Guide), work Chart C, work 14-st filler crossing center 2 sts as 1/1 LC work Chart A, work 12-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart C, work 14-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart B; rep from \* once more.

**Rnd 7** Work as established.

**Rnd 8** \*Work 12-st filler, work Chart C, dec 14-st filler to 12 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, p2, k1tbl 2 times, p2tog, p2, k1tbl, p1], work Chart A, work 12-st filler, work Chart C, dec next 14-st filler to 12 sts as before, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—160 sts; 12 sts in all fillers.

**Rnds 9-11** Work as established.



**Rnd 12** \*Dec 12-st filler to 10 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, p1, 1/1 LC, p2tog, p1, k1tbl, p1], work Chart C, work 12-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart A, dec next 12-st filler to 10 sts as before, work Chart C, work 12-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—152 sts; four 10-st fillers and four 12-st fillers.

**Rnds 13-15** Work as established.

**Rnd 16** \*Work 10-st filler, work Chart C, dec 12-st filler to 10 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, p1, k1tbl 2 times, p2tog, p1, k1tbl, p1], work Chart A, work 10-st filler, work Chart C, dec next 12-st filler to 10 sts as before, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—144 sts; 10 sts in all fillers.

**Rnd 17** Work as established.

**Rnd 18** Work as established, working 1/1 LC in center of each filler.

**Rnd 19** Work as established.

**Rnd 20** \*Dec 10-st filler to 8 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, k1tbl 2 times, p2tog, k1tbl, p1], work Chart C, work 10-st filler, work Chart A, dec next 10-st filler to 8 sts as before, work Chart C, work 10-st filler, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—136 sts; four 8-st fillers and four 10-st fillers.

**Rnds 21-23** Work as established.

**Rnd 24** \*Work 8-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart C, dec 10-st filler to 8 sts by working [p1, k1tbl, p2tog, 1/1 LC, p2tog, k1tbl, p1], work Chart A, work 8-st filler with 1/1 LC in center, work Chart C, dec next 10-st filler to 8 sts as before, work Chart B; rep from \* once more—128 sts; 8 sts in all fillers.

Cont as established to desired length, working 1/1 LC in center of each filler every 6th rnd. The cowl shown contains 37 rnds, including the set-up rnd, and ends with Rnd 6 of Chart A, Rnd 4 of Chart B, and Rnd 6 of Chart C.

BO all sts.

## FINISHING

Weave in ends. Block to measurements.



# Exploring the Outer Hebrides

By Alice Starmore  
Photography by Jade Starmore



**T**he Outer Hebrides of Scotland are in a constant state of change. Patches of vibrant light sweep across the landscape, bringing intense pools of colour to the moor and lochs, which in seconds can be replaced by deep shadows, dark clouds and violent rain, which in turn give way to vivid rainbows and saturated colours. It is a place which, though geographically small, cannot be fully known and explored in days, months or even years. I have lived my entire life on the islands, intimately connected with both landscape and culture, and I still find myself surprised and inspired by the colours,

textures and moods of the moor and shore. As a Hebridean artist and designer, my issue is not finding inspiration—it is having enough time to bring a myriad of ideas to completion.

I was born into a typical Hebridean family of Gaelic-speaking crofter-fishermen on the Isle of Lewis, the largest island in the Outer Hebrides. *Eilean an Fhraoich* (the Heather Isle) is one of the names by which the Isle of Lewis is known to its native Gaelic-speaking population. It is an apt name since over 70 percent of the land mass is covered in peat. Human settlements are strung around the edges

**OPPOSITE**

The Boreray Cardigan, Sulairé Spencer, Levenish Hat, Linne Belt, Hirta Gloves and Dùn Cuffs worn by model Iona Mairead Davidson on the Lewis shoreline.



of the isle where the land is rendered more arable by coastal tills and sands.

Throughout my life, I have maintained a close connection with the land. I explore the moors, hills and shorelines for both research and pleasure and so the environment and all the life it contains is a constant part of my life. In addition to my work as a textile artist I am dedicated to keeping my family tradition of crofting alive, but I find that often these two occupations go hand in hand. My croft, highland cattle and garden all require daily contact. There are times when rain and gales make the work of feeding and tending to both animals and plants a heavy task, but the balance lies in the moments that can unfold and disappear in the blink of an eye. There are days when mist rolls in from the sea at the foot of the croft behind the beach, making the clouds

appear to touch the sand; there is crisp winter light which makes the mainland mountains appear close enough to swim to, despite being 50 miles away; there are late evening checks on the cattle in the byre that take place under the dancing Northern Lights; and there are mornings where the cattle walk out into the croft rimmed in golden light. These glimpses of otherworldly beauty never fail to inspire my textile design work.

I designed my Hebridean yarn range to work in harmony with the landscape of my home island. The colours are inspired by the shoreline, moorland, flora and fauna in all seasons. I created complex colour blends to reflect the land and seascape, and all the light, shade and life within, so that it is always present at the heart of everything I create in textiles. These shades are the medium for all of my

## ISLAND INSPIRATION



### ABOVE

A selection of Alice Starmore Hebridean Yarn and Designs worn by model Emma MacRae on a Lewis beach. Handwoven basket by Dawn Susan at Hebridean Baskets.

### RIGHT

The Lapwing Collar, Mountain Hare Hat, Elizabeth I and Maidenhair wrap designs. Worn by model Emma MacRae on the Harris shoreline.



current textile work. No matter what the inspiration or idea I begin with, the island is always there, woven into the fabric of everything I create. The Marina Hat set is a direct result of explorations of rock pools and the Briodag Hat Set is rooted in vivid memories of the water patterns of the moorland loch I spent my childhood playing in.

Over the last few years, the more mystical and fairytale cultural elements of the island have come to the fore in my work. Mountain Hares, Lapwings and Ravens have shapeshifted across my imagination and appeared in reality as full costumes, formed by pushing the medium of hand knitting in new directions. These costumes and explorations of construction and form have been creatively liberating, returning the focus of my work entirely to the island landscape. This has been hugely enhanced by my collaboration with my daughter Jade, who writes stories, designs fabric and garments for styling, and photographs all of



the work for books and our website at Virtual Yarns. We bounce ideas off each other constantly and I find our collaborations have proved to be the most exhilarating chapters in my design career.

Our current project is inspired by the landscape and life in the most remote part of the Outer Hebrides—the islands of St Kilda, a curve of high volcanic stacs and tiny islands which lie 40 miles to the west of Lewis. St Kilda centres around the island of Hiort, which contains the uninhabited village on the islands.

With the exception of Village Bay, Hiort, Boreray and the Stacs of St Kilda are edged by the highest sea cliffs in Scotland. These vertiginous and deadly drops were an essential resource for the community of St Kilda, which depended on seabirds for not only a vital food source but also a valuable commodity to be bartered.

Feathers were of huge economic importance and from the eighteenth century onwards they were harvested and sorted for export, constituting a major part of the rent paid to the landlord. Feathers were in great



The Lapwing Collar and Lapwing pullover designs. Worn by model Emily Davidson on her croft on the Isle of Lewis, with her dogs Coco and Bellag at foot.

demand throughout the country and used for a wide variety of purposes, from bedding to a component in the making of golf balls. By the late eighteenth century, *Taigh na Iteagan* (The House of Feathers) or The Feather Store, as it is commonly referred to now, was the largest and most modern building on Hiort. It was situated at the shoreline so that the hundreds of sacks from the season's harvest could be conveniently moved to a waiting ship for onward transport to the mainland.

Sailing around Boreray and the Stacs is an experience like no other. This is the domain of the seabirds. The sounds and sights of thousands of them on every ledge and wheeling

**BELOW LEFT**

The Marina Hat Set, Boreray Pullover and Am Baile wrap. Worn on the Lewis shoreline by model Yasmin Macaskill with hair & make-up by Julia Clark, The Hebridean Make-up Artist.

**BELOW RIGHT**

The Briodag Hat Set design worn by model Emma MacRae in the Lewis moorland.

I HAVE LIVED MY ENTIRE LIFE ON THE ISLANDS, INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH BOTH LANDSCAPE AND CULTURE, AND I STILL FIND MYSELF SURPRISED AND INSPIRED BY THE COLOURS, TEXTURES AND MOODS OF THE MOOR AND SHORE.



**ABOVE**

The Eagle Collar, Sulaire Spencer, Levenish Hat and Dùn Cuffs worn by model Iona Mairead Davidson at the Gearrannan Blackhouse Village on the Isle of Lewis. Blackhouse Boots by Deniz Uster of Otherscapes Studio. Handwoven basket by Dawn Susan at Hebridean Baskets. Boreray fabric and skirt by Jade Starmore.

in the sky is unforgettable. Though I am well used to heaving seas and high cliffs, I still found it unimaginably awe-inspiring and humbling that through sheer necessity, people became adept at traversing places that are on the very edge of human possibility. This lifestyle, rooted in an incredible symbiosis with the landscape itself, inspired my St Kilda designs.

The spectacular natural landscape, its wildlife, ecology, history and cultural heritage are so extraordinary that it is all too easy to become overwhelmed. The aim of this project is to celebrate all these aspects of this tiny yet majestic archipelago through works made using the medium of wool. It takes time, thought and patience to let the kaleidoscope of inspirations resolve into a distinct narrative thread.

From this research and imaginative thought the project has begun to resolve itself into final designs, beginning



with The Queen of the Waves. This set of designs represents the spirit of a young woman of St Kilda who grows up in her ancestral village artwork of stone and spends her teenage years climbing the huge, precipitous cliffs of Hiort and Boreray to harvest seabirds' eggs. This tiny archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean is her whole world, but one day she must leave along with the rest of her community, knowing she will never return. Her last sighting of her home would have come as she passed the towering pinnacles of Boreray and the Stacs with the air filled with thousands of gannets, puffins and fulmars; a stunning vision which seems to come from another, far more ancient, world. The Queen of the Waves collection comprises the imaginary contents of her travelling kist; garments she would have made to incorporate treasured aspects and memories of her old world as she embarked on her new life.

THESE  
GLIMPSES OF  
OTHERWORLDLY  
BEAUTY NEVER  
FAIL TO INSPIRE  
MY TEXTILE  
DESIGN WORK.

From that stepping stone we have travelled on to the House of Feathers, taking inspiration from the islanders, who frequently looked like birds themselves, covered from head to foot in plumage from their toil. The women also wore slippers made from the cushioned, feathered skins of gannet necks. This spectacular concept of flight-footed, feathered women poured fuel on my imaginative fires and so the House of Feathers collection will be redolent of knitted feathers in one form or another.

The ideas multiply as quickly as the weather changes, with designs and costumes spinning out of every spectacular moment that flits across the horizon. 🌿



*ALICE STARMORE is a Scottish artist, designer and author whose textile books are in use throughout the world. She was born on the Hebridean island of Lewis into a family of Gaelic-speaking crofter-fishermen. The culture in which she was brought up and the nature of the landscape around her have greatly influenced her work.*

*She became a professional textile designer in 1975 and three years later was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship which enabled her to travel to Norway, Sweden and Finland to study the textile traditions of those countries. She started to write after this, and has since had twenty books published, plus numerous magazine articles. She has established an international reputation as a leading expert on knitting design and technique. Her books on Fair Isle and Aran knitting are regarded as important standard texts on the subjects, and she has taught and lectured extensively throughout Britain, Europe and the USA.*

*Photography, drawing and painting are constant threads weaving through all aspects of her career. As well as textile art and design, her current work includes lens-based digital media which tends strongly towards the natural world and is often linked to nature conservancy.*

*Alice's portfolio website, which spans her career from 1975 to the present day, from background, through books, design, colour experimentation, textile and photographic art can be found at [www.alicestarmore.com](http://www.alicestarmore.com) and her shop website can be found at [www.virtualyarns.com](http://www.virtualyarns.com).*





**ABOVE**

The Raven Capelet, Ruabhal Gloves, Sporrán Bag, Breacan Wrap and Linne Belt worn by model Iona Mairead Davidson at the Gearrannan Blackhouse Village on the Isle of Lewis. Arch headpiece and dress by Jade Starmore. Boreray fabric and dress by Jade Starmore.

**LEFT**

The Sulaire Spencer, Linne Belt, Sporrán Bag and Dùn Cuff worn by model Iona Mairead Davidson on the Lewis shoreline.



*Knitwear Designs and Hebridean Yarn*  
**ALICE STARMORE FOR VIRTUAL YARNS**  
[www.virtualyarns.com](http://www.virtualyarns.com)

*Photography, Styling and Fabric Design*  
**JADE STARMORE FOR VIRTUAL YARNS**

*Models* **EMMA MACRAE, EMILY DAVIDSON, IONA MAIREAD DAVIDSON, RACHEL MURRAY, YASMIN MACASKILL**

*Hair & Make-up for Rachel & Yasmin*  
**JULIA CLARK - The Hebridean Make-up Artist**

*Arch Headpiece and Blackhouse Boots*  
**DENIZ USTER AT OTHERSCAPES STUDIO**  
[www.denizuster.com](http://www.denizuster.com)

*Accommodations*  
**GEARRANNAN BLACKHOUSE VILLAGE**  
*A museum and holiday accommodation on the Isle of Lewis*  
[www.gearrannan.com](http://www.gearrannan.com)

*Handwoven Baskets*  
**DAWN SUSAN AT HEBRIDEAN BASKETS**  
[www.hebrideanbaskets.co.uk](http://www.hebrideanbaskets.co.uk)

*Ziggy the Pony*  
**TRAIGH MHÒR PONY TREKKING**  
[www.tolsta41.com](http://www.tolsta41.com)

The Sulaire Spencer, Eagle Collar and Hirta Gloves worn by model Rachel Murray on the Lewis shoreline. Hebridean Sky fabric, culottes and jacket by Jade Starmore. Ziggy the pony from the Traigh Mhòr Pony Trekking riding school.

# A Woolly Walk in Shetland

By Gudrun Johnston

MY LIFELONG CONNECTION to Shetland recently led to my unexpected dream job, which combines my love of knitting and my family history with the company I now represent. As brand director for Simply Shetland, part of my role is raising awareness of Jamieson's of Shetland yarns among North American knitters. This job got me thinking about home even more than usual. And home, among other things, means walking the Shetland landscape.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GUDRUN JOHNSTON UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

One walk in particular weaves together elements of my knitwear career and my heritage, giving it special significance. I do it often when I visit home: the walk from my dad's croft house, Muckle Boust, in Sandness, that follows the coast to Norby Beach and the small gathering of dwellings that make up the village of Sandness itself. This is also where the Jamieson's of Shetland spinning mill resides.

Walking in Shetland is a great way to immerse yourself in the flora and fauna of the landscape and fully experience all of the natural elements firsthand. Scotland's open-access law allows you to roam wherever your heart desires. Just make sure to close the gates, don't trample the crops, and don't scare the sheep!

The Shetland landscape is low-lying and mostly treeless, providing uninterrupted views and miles and miles of coastline to explore. Many of the most dramatic walking routes are along these edges, where the ocean pounds the rocks, throwing up a mist of salty spray.

The weather is very changeable in Shetland, the wind always a factor. Whatever the time of year, you are going to need to layer up before you head out the door. My walking knitwear always includes a good head covering and something around my neck. (Cowls are my go-to, because no matter how strong the winds are, this neck piece is not going anywhere.)

When my parents retired back to Shetland almost 20 years ago now, they bought Muckle Boust, which sits directly across a tiny bay from Little Boust, where we lived when I was a child. Back then, my dad renovated Little Boust from a ruin. It's where my parents lived when my mum ran her own knitwear business in the 1970s. There are many photos of us woolen-clad bairns creating our own adventures on and around the shoreline, climbing rocks, running down to the beach to greet boat-traveling friends, or disappearing off with the dog and cats. How my mum managed to wrangle four kids and run a successful business is beyond me.



**ABOVE**

As a wee bairn, wearing a Shetland wool romper.

**LEFT AND OPPOSITE**

The west side of Shetland is home to some of my favorite locations.

## A KNITTER'S HOMECOMING



As I set off, I am immediately filled with memories of playing in rock pools. I was only five when my family left Shetland, so these memories are pieced together from photos and older siblings' remembrances. Right from the beginning of my walk I am connected to my heritage and to the woolly importance of my immediate surroundings. I can already pick out the colors that make their appearance in my Fair Isle cowl (shown on page 37): the pale gray-green of lichen on the rocks, the varying hues of purple heather on the hill, and the deep earthy green of moss. It is not hard to find all 220-plus colors of Jamieson's Spindrift yarn represented in the Shetland landscape. Some may appear only at certain times of year, like the bright pops of wildflowers in the spring and summer or in the *Mirry Dancers*' (Northern Lights') bold but elusive showings in the winter night sky. But many of these colors are there year-round. The range of blues is particularly impressive. Shetland waters can range from Caribbean turquoise to moody gray-blue. One never lacks for color inspiration in this place.

With so many sheep roaming the hills, there are many stone walls and fences to be crossed, and this involves a variety of stiles that all take a slightly different amount of bodily coordination to climb over. It could be the original stone steps built into the



**ABOVE AND FAR LEFT**  
It's easy to find color inspiration in the Shetland landscape.

**LEFT**  
On my walks I like to gather stray tufts of wool called *hentilagets* and bring them home to spin.

dyke, or the A-frame wooden ladder that takes you easily up one side and down another, or a basic two-step structure over a modern wire fence. This last one involves careful timing to swing one's leg over so as not to get stuck in an awkward position. Although they can pose their challenges, these crossings make for good markers to keep me going in the right direction.

I may find myself naturally following the narrow tracks forged by the sheep. Before I go too far, I remind myself that these sheep are small and nimble and like to live life on the edge. Native Shetland sheep are a hardy breed that has lived on the islands for centuries and has fully adapted to the environment. They eat the heather on the hill, go down to the beach for a seaweed snack, and mostly are left alone to get on with things. These are wild animals and are unlikely to let humans get too close.

Although I might not be able to get up close and personal with the animals themselves, I will no doubt find *bentilagets* that I can gather for a bit of spinning. These are tufts of wool that get caught on fenceposts and stone walls as the sheep rub up against them. Sometimes the birds snag them for insulating nests. Shetland sheep naturally shed their fleece. Back in the day, crofters would “roo” the fleece directly from the animal. These days, electric shears make the job a bit more efficient, but it’s still possible to spot some scraggly, semi-naked-looking sheep that have escaped the clippers.

Another thing Shetlanders did in days gone by was to walk and knit at the same time. Knitting has long been a source of supplemental income here. Being able to knit and take care of crofting chores was a way to get the most out of the daylight hours, which may have meant walking to market or getting the peat off the hills and working on your *makkin* (knitting) at the same time. Shetlanders then and now typically knit with very long double-pointed needles anchored into a knitting belt. This allows you to let go of your work and have it remain in place if you need to, say, stir a pot of soup. It also allows for greater dexterity, and Shetland knitters are known for being among the fastest in the world.

I don’t usually attempt to walk and knit when I head out on the hills, but I do like to find a sheltered bank—likely with some left-behind woolly offerings—to stop for a cup of tea and a little something sweet. If the weather isn’t too wild, I might pull out my knitting for a few grounding rows as I take in my surroundings.

For the last portion of this walk, I head along the cliff edge and down toward Norby Beach. I can see the Jamieson’s mill off in the distance. This fifth-generation family business has been in the woolen trade for 130 years. It contributes so much to this small community located on the west side of Shetland, employing many locals. Some of those people attended the local primary school with my older siblings, a place where my brother is now the principal teacher.

I will usually pop into the mill for a catch-up and to stock up on yarn and perhaps treat myself to one of their beautiful woven blankets. (They are simply irresistible.) It is always a hive of industrious activity in there, with noisy and hardworking machinery taking the raw fleece (likely from some of the sheep I passed on my walk) through all the processes necessary to make it into the beautiful, lofty woolen-spun yarn perfect for Fair Isle knitting. As is the case

SHETLANDERS THEN AND NOW TYPICALLY KNIT WITH VERY LONG DOUBLE-POINTED NEEDLES ANCHORED INTO A KNITTING BELT. THIS ALLOWS YOU TO LET GO OF YOUR WORK AND HAVE IT REMAIN IN PLACE IF YOU NEED TO, SAY, STIR A POT OF SOUP.



PHOTO BY GALE ZUCKER

### SHADES OF SHETLAND

## Identity Cowl

NEXT PAGE >>

for the sheep, this wool is also perfect for protecting us from the elements when out and about on the hills and coast of Shetland. 🌿

*GUDRUN JOHNSTON is a Shetland-born knitwear designer currently living in western Massachusetts. She is the brand director for Simply Shetland, the North American distributor of Jamieson’s of Shetland, yarn made in the mill down the road from her dad’s house in Shetland.*



## PROJECT

# Identity Cowl

GUDRUN JOHNSTON

Gudrun Johnston's mother was a knitwear designer in Shetland in the 1970s, working under the name The Shetland Trader. This cowl is inspired by one of Gudrun's mother's designs, and the colors are influenced by the landscapes on the west side of the island, where Gudrun still loves to walk. The name, Identity Cowl, reflects her deep roots in Shetland.

## MATERIALS

**YARN** Jamieson's of Shetland *Double Knitting* (100% pure Shetland wool; 82 yd [75 m]/0.88 oz [25 g]); 1130 Lichen (MC), 2 balls; 576 Cinnamon (CC1), 233 Spagnum (CC2), 237 Thistledown (CC3), and 567 Damask (CC4), 1 ball each. Distributed by Simply Shetland.

**NEEDLES** Sizes 4 (3.5 mm) and 6 (4 mm): 24" (60 cm) circular (cir). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Marker (m); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 27 sts and 30 rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in Fair Isle pattern, blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** 9½" (24 cm) tall and 25" (63.5 cm) circumference.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

## NOTE

- Watch Gudrun demonstrate the German Twisted Cast-On at [youtu.be/etUuAlMVnSk](https://youtu.be/etUuAlMVnSk).

## COWL

With MC and smaller needle, CO 168 sts as foll:

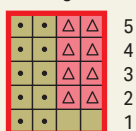
Make slipknot and place on needle as the first cast-on st. CO 1 st using the Long Tail method, CO 2 sts using the German Twisted method. \*CO 2 sts using the Long Tail method, then CO 2 sts using the German Twisted method; rep from \* until 168 sts have been cast on.

Place marker (pm) and join for working in the rnd, being careful not to twist sts.

Work Rnds 1–5 of Ribbing Chart.

Change to larger needle.

### Ribbing Chart

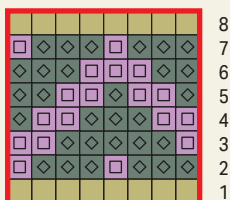


repeat 42 times

### Key

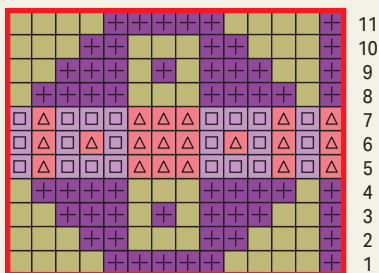
- k with MC
- p with MC
- k with CC1
- k with CC2
- k with CC3
- k with CC4
- repeat

### Chart A



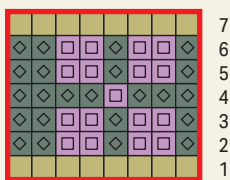
repeat 21 times

### Chart B



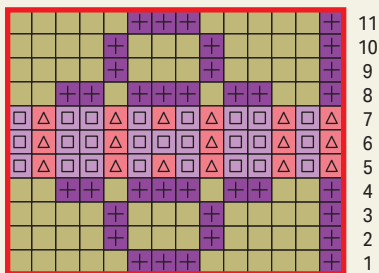
repeat 12 times

### Chart C



repeat 21 times

### Chart D



repeat 12 times



Work Rnds 1–8 of Chart A.

Work Rnds 1–11 of Chart B.

Work Rnds 1–7 of Chart C.

Work Rnds 1–11 of Chart D.

Work Rnds 1–7 of Chart C.

Work Rnds 1–11 of Chart B.

Work Rnds 1–8 of Chart A.

Change to smaller needle and work

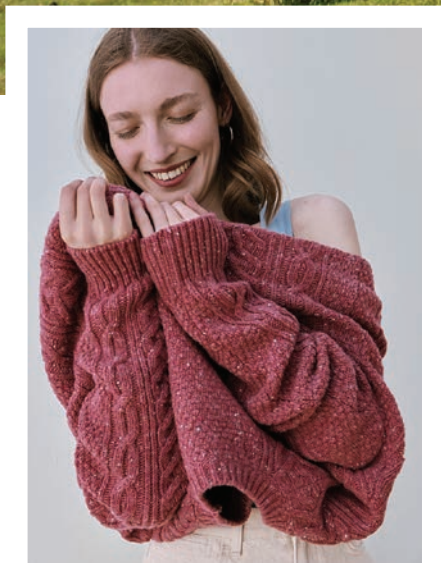
Rnds 2–5 of Ribbing Chart.

With MC, BO all sts in rib patt.

### FINISHING

Weave in ends. Wet-block cowl in warm water.

Press dry between towels.



# EXPLORING DONEGAL TWEED

By Vawn  
Corrigan

To many, the word “Donegal” evokes images of the rugged Irish coast or rustic tweed woven cloth. To knitters, Donegal means luscious nubby yarn. Who’s right?

DONEGAL, IN NORTHWEST IRELAND, is a dramatically beautiful county featuring some of the highest sea cliffs in Europe, hundreds of acres of unspoiled woodland, and breathtaking vistas. Small flocks of sheep dotted around the vividly green landscape are a familiar feature of the local scenery.

Sheep, Donegal tweed fabric, and the Aran sweater remain closely bound up with the Irish national identity, and County Donegal plays a large role in preserving textile traditions across the country. The

**LEFT AND OPPOSITE**

The dramatic cliffs and local sheep welcome Donegal visitors to this beautiful county.

PHOTO OPPOSITE COURTESY OF DONEGAL YARNS

In the carding process, fleece is broken down and fibers are pulled apart and prepared for spinning. Most of the yarns spun in Ireland and all of the Studio

people of Donegal are particularly renowned for their culture of weaving and knitting, and the region is alive with handweavers, makers, designers, and a range of companies proudly focused on natural-fiber knits and handwovens. (See “Woven in History” on page 42.)

**SPINNING AN IRISH YARN**

Four mills spin yarn in Ireland today. Studio Donegal, situated in the beautiful rural coastal village of Kilcar, is a handweaving mill and, importantly, has its own spinning facility. Wool is dyed, blended, carded, and spun on-site. Nearby is Donegal Yarns, the largest spinning mill in Ireland. Donegal Yarns does not weave but supplies textile mills and knitwear companies nationally and globally. If you travel south of Donegal, you’ll find two very old, important mills that also weave and spin. These are Cushendale Woollen Mills in Kilkenny and Kerry Woollen Mills near the Ring of Kerry.

All of the weaving and spinning mills use a combination of Irish and imported wool. Native Irish sheep, including the Galway and Roscommon breeds, were developed well over a century ago. As a result of the country’s year-round damp climate, the sheep that thrive here have strong, coarse fleece. Irish-grown wool is best suited to outer garments, upholstery, home interiors, carpets, and furniture. When it is spun for use in finer textiles for clothing, Irish wool is skillfully blended with other fibers—merino wool from Spain, South Africa, and New Zealand, for example—to give it the softness that contemporary tastes demand. Donegal yarns regularly use cashmere, lamb’s wool, merino, British wool, New Zealand wool, and Irish wool. Knitters find that these mixed-fiber yarns provide the body and definition that suit Irish knits so well.

Donegal yarns are woolen spun. The loft created using this spinning method makes knitwear fluffy, warm, and light. This is especially effective for heavily cabled garments.

Ireland produces about 7,000 tons of wool from around 35,000 flocks annually. The small family-farm model continues to be the norm. Over the years, provenance has become more and more important. With such small-scale production, it’s possible to trace finished goods, whether they be skeins of yarn, woven fabric, or knits, from farm to yarn.

Ireland’s four spinning mills are all located in rural areas. The mills adhere to strict guidelines and offer transparency about their processes to ensure that their collective impact is not detrimental to the people, animals, or local environment.

**OPPOSITE**

Soft Donegal Aran sweater by Moss + Cable.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSS + CABLE

**ABOVE**

Pure wool yarns from Donegal Yarns.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DONEGAL YARNS

## WOVEN IN HISTORY

Donegal's weaving tradition dates back centuries. In Europe, weaving skills had largely moved out of the home by the late 1800s, but they persisted in Donegal. Several villages in County Donegal, notably Kilcar and Ardara, sponsored tweed marts (markets), where handweavers from the surrounding isolated cottages and villages would travel by donkey with their bolts of tweed to trade. After the Great Famine (circa 1852), handweaving was

further established as an important home industry when it was bolstered by government programs to help alleviate poverty. A prime example of living heritage, Donegal tweed cloth reached its zenith in the nineteenth century and has continued through the generations in an unbroken line.

During the revival of the wool trade in the nineteenth century, new mills were built and ancient ones reinvigorated. After the formation of the Republic of Ireland in the 1930s, the government



**Donegal herringbone tweed coat.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF BERNIE MURPHY



*Connemara Peasant Home-Spun Industry: XII — Rolling the Tweed*

continued to support the wool trade, and Ireland was dotted with small textile mills that produced everything from carpets and blankets to luxurious cloth. Gradually, due to the availability of low-cost imports, recessions, and a turn toward synthetics, textile manufacturing declined. Fortunately, Irish mills that had already carved out a niche for themselves, particularly in the export market, were able to survive into the twenty-first century.

There are about a dozen artisan cloth mills throughout the country, and Donegal is home to four of them. In Donegal town, generations of locals have worked at Magee 1866, the country's largest weaving mill, established in 1866. The other three mills, McNutt of Donegal, Molloy & Sons Weaving, and Studio Donegal, all make their own lines of goods and/or create cloth for international designers.

## DONEGAL TWEED

Donegal tweed is a slightly fuzzy woven cloth beloved for its flecked appearance. Yarn is created by dyeing raw fleece, then multiple flecks of contrasting color, known as neps, are blended into the base tones. Sometimes as many as 10 different hues pop out against the base, and the color combinations frequently take their inspiration from the surrounding landscape. In the past, rougher, more rustic wool made up the yarn used in Donegal tweed, but softer fibers are more commonly used today.



**Handwoven tweed.** PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN & HOWLIN

## ARAN KNITTING ACROSS IRELAND

Although the Aran sweater originated on the three Aran islands that lie in the Atlantic Ocean off the country's west coast, the Aran style of knitting quickly usurped all others to become known simply as "Irish knitting." Donegal women have always had a strong background in knitting and a flair for design and business, so it's not surprising that they embraced the Aran sweater when it rocketed in popularity in the 1950s. Like weaving, handknitting was supported by government programs. Because it was destined for the export market, the work had to be of a very high standard. Stitch patterns were passed down among family members. Knitting was taught in schools, and it became a wonderful expression of creativity—and an expression of the people of Donegal as well.

Aran sweaters were originally knit using undyed local fleece yarns. Older knitters recall how their hands were always soft because the wool retained so much of its natural oils. In the days when knits needed to be weatherproof, this was a significant advantage. The sculptural elements of the stitches—cables, diamonds, zigzags, honeycomb, trinity (also known as blackberry) stitch, and tree of life—are best achieved using traditional woolen-spun Irish yarn. Yarn used for Aran sweaters today may be softer, but it is still a heavier-gauge yarn that maintains structure, allowing the stitches to stand proud. Aran knits have a generous, embracing feel that speaks of home and belonging.

While undyed yarns remain popular for Aran knits, both tweeds and heathers offer wonderful ranges with dozens of sumptuous colors. Classic Donegal tweed yarns are made by blending together several shades of fiber and adding short lengths of brightly colored fiber, or neps, before carding. More subtle heathered yarns known as Irish heathers are created by simply carding different shades of fiber together before spinning.



**ABOVE**  
A classic handknit Aran cardigan in undyed Irish yarn from Moss + Cable features diamond and blackberry (or trinity) stitches, the only stitches a machine cannot replicate. PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSS + CABLE



**CLASSIC CABLES**

## Daingean Pullover

PAGE 46 >>

The Irish handknitting cottage industry system provided thousands of women with ready cash during times of high unemployment. Total numbers remain largely undocumented, but it was not unusual for designers to be able to draw on teams of up to 200 home knitters, even in remote areas of Donegal, to create professional-looking knits. This practice continued up until the late 1980s. There are fewer professional handknitters in Donegal now, but those within the tradition are passionate about passing on their skills to the next generation. As a result, interest in learning Irish knitting is on the rise once again.

## MODERN IRISH KNITWEAR

Because knitting is a living tradition, each new wave of designers and makers renews and enlivens it. Many handknits are purchased with the name of the individual knitter proudly displayed. Contemporary Donegal designers including Edel MacBride, Faye Dinsmore, and Pearl Reddington draw on small teams of handknitters to bring their designs to life. Many knitters and knitwear designers, such as Carol Feller and Kieran Foley, share their original patterns so that knitters across the globe can participate in the tradition.

Today, knitwear is one of Ireland's largest textile exports. In addition to handknits, several small companies in Donegal handloom (a regional term for knitting on flatbed knitting machines) or machine-loom knitwear of their own design in small factories. Knitwear companies including Bonner of Ireland and Fisherman Out of Ireland export to many countries around the world, and the past decade has seen a mushrooming of new knitwear companies and an expansion of older ones.



**LEFT**  
Irish artist Edel MacBride designed both the Success Aran Sleeveless Wrap and the Sliabh Liag yarn it is knitted with.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF EDEL MACBRIDE

**BELOW**  
The colors and knitting traditions of Ireland are reflected in Carol Feller's classic Woodburne Cardigan pattern.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STOLEN STITCHES



At the Fisherman Out of Ireland knitwear company, garments are machine-knitted and hand-finished.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FISHERMAN OUT OF IRELAND

All goods are more valuable when they are made slowly, with care. Such objects satisfy us on an intrinsic level that is hard to articulate. Creating with wool is a deeply rooted tradition, and we connect with the makers and gain a sense of place through what they make. This is what makes the yarn you knit with, the sweater you pull on each fall, or your tweed hat more than the sum of its parts. It makes you part of the story, too. 🌿

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**VAWN CORRIGAN** is an author of Irish heritage living in Dublin. She writes about craft, the social history of making, and the development of Irish textiles. She feels strongly about preserving heritage crafts. Her books *Irish Aran* and *Irish Tweed* (The O'Brien Press 2019, 2020) are available from Casemate Publishers US.



BLUE SKY.  
- FIBERS -

CONSCIOUSLY CRAFTED  
FIBERS & PATTERNS

## malabrigo DOS TIERRAS

50% Merino Wool  
& 50% Baby Alpaca

*Dos Tierras is the synthesis of what home means for all of us at Malabrigo.*

*It's a homage to the two regions that contribute to the yarn's distinct character – the highlands of Peru and the grassy plains of Uruguay; alpaca and sheep. It is a symbol of appreciation for the natural treasure that surrounds us.*

*A legacy that multiplies with every stitch and knot.*





## PROJECT

# Daingean Pullover

KATE GAGNON OSBORN

This heavily cabled pullover features a drop-shoulder silhouette with fully fashioned shoulder shaping and a funnel neck. Worked in a classic Irish heathered wool, this sweater is as lovely as it is long-lasting.

## MATERIALS

**YARN** Kelbourne Woolens *Erin* (60% fine Irish wool, 40% New Zealand wool; 158 yd [144 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); #512 Foxglove, 7 (7, 8, 9) (9, 10, 11, 11) hanks.

**NEEDLES** Sizes 9 (5.5 mm) and 7 (4.5 mm). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Cable needle (cn); removable markers (m) or scrap yarn; stitch holder or scrap yarn; tapestry needle.

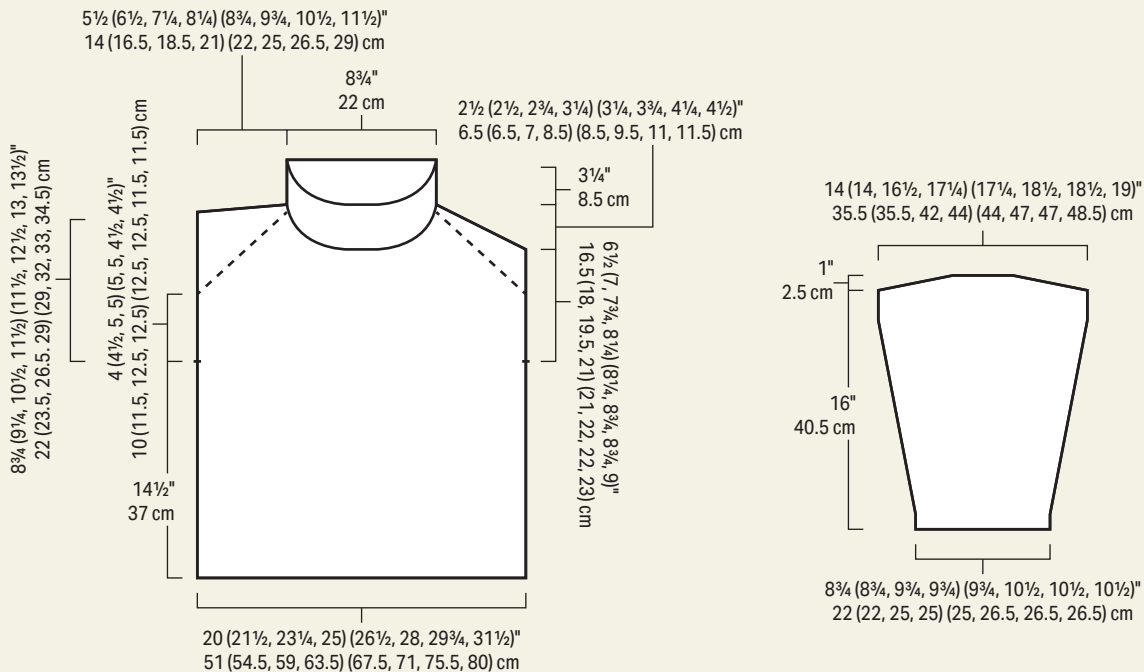
**GAUGE** 18½ sts and 23 rows = 4" (10 cm) in pattern from Body Chart using larger needles, blocked; one 30-st pattern repeat measures about 6½" (16.5 cm) wide. 19 sts and 22 rows = 4" (10 cm) in pattern from Sleeve Chart using larger needles, blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** 40 (43, 46½, 50) (53, 56, 59½, 63)" (101.5 [109, 118, 127] [134.5, 142, 151, 160] cm) chest circumference.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](https://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

## NOTES

- This project is worked in pieces, back and forth in rows, and seamed during finishing.
- During shaping, work stitches in the established pattern as much as possible, working stitches as they appear (knit the knits and purl the purls) when there are not enough stitches to work a complete cable crossing.
- The short-row neck shaping adds extra rows to the pattern on each side of the neck opening, so the stitches at sides of the neck and center front will be on different pattern rows when you need to start the funnel neck.
- It is important that the center front pattern continues up into the funnel neck, so work the first rows of the neck according to the pattern established by the center eight front stitches. For the four smallest sizes, which have three repeats of the Body Chart, these will be the center eight stitches of a diamond panel. For the four largest sizes, which have four repeats of the Body Chart, these will be the eight stitches of a wishbone cable between the diamonds. Work the stitches on each side of the neck as they appear until you can



resume working in pattern on the same row as the center stitches.

- The back shoulders are sloped, but the front shoulders are worked straight across, which is sometimes called fully fashioned shoulders. The extra front length at the armhole edge is folded down to meet the back shoulder, creating the shoulder slope. The shoulder seam is offset to the back of the wearer's shoulder line and is indicated by a dotted line on the schematic. The schematic shows the right shoulder before sewing the shoulder seam and the left shoulder after seaming.
- Because Erin is a woolen-spun bulky-weight yarn, you may find that sewing the seams using a finer worsted-spun yarn produces better results. The sweater shown was seamed using a coordinating color of Kelbourne Woolens DK-weight Scout yarn.

## SWEATER

### Back

Using smaller needles, CO 74 (80, 86, 92) (98, 104, 110, 116) sts.

**Next row** (RS and WS) S1 1 pwise wyf, knit to end.

Rep until piece measures 1" (2.5 cm).

### BEGIN BODY CHART

Change to larger needles.

**Inc row** (RS) K1 (selvage st); beg where indicated for your size, work the first 0 (3, 6, 9) (0, 3, 6, 9) sts before the red outlined patt rep once, inc them to 0 (4, 8, 12) (0, 4, 8, 12) sts; work the patt rep 3 (3, 3, 3) (4, 4, 4) times, work incs each rep foll chart from 24 sts to 30 sts; work the 0 (3, 6, 9) (0, 3, 6, 9) sts after the patt rep once, inc them to 0 (4, 8, 12) (0, 4, 8, 12) sts, and ending where indicated for your size; k1 (selvage st)—92 (100, 108, 116) (122, 130, 138, 146) sts.

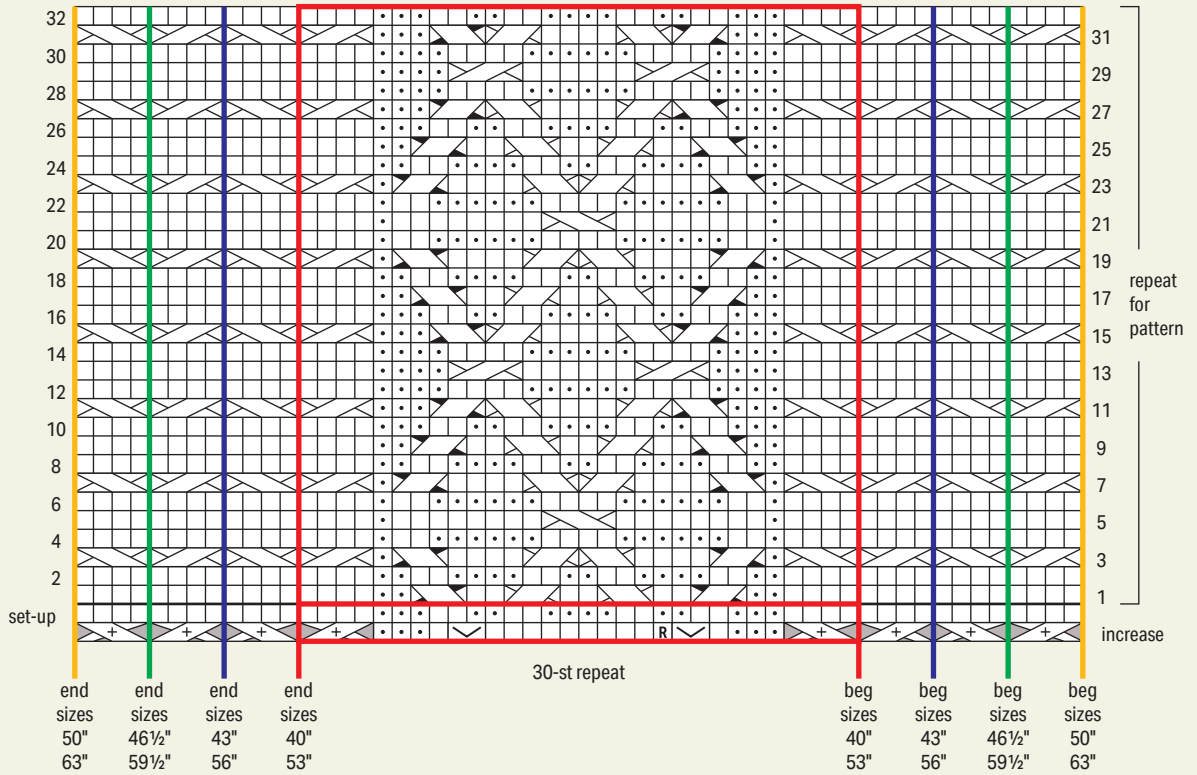
**Set-up row** (WS) P1, work the chart set-up row, beg and ending where indicated for your size over 90 (98, 106, 114) (120, 128, 136, 144) sts, p1.

Keeping 1 st at each side in St st, rep Rows 1–32 of chart until piece measures 14½" (37 cm) from CO for all sizes, ending with a WS row. Place marker (pm) at each end of the row to indicate the base of the armholes. Make a note of last chart row completed so you can mark the front to match later.

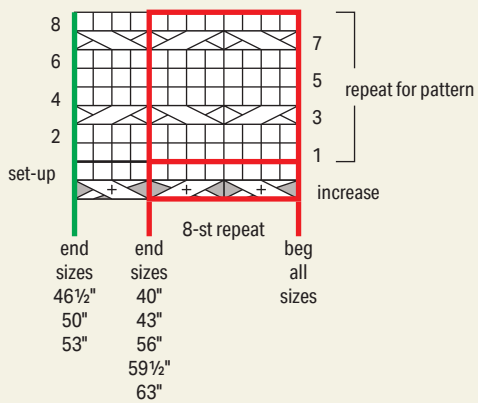
### Armholes

Cont as est until piece measures 4 (4½, 5, 5) (5, 5, 4½, 4½)" (10 [11.5, 12.5, 12.5] [12.5, 12.5, 11.5, 11.5] cm) from underarm m, ending with a WS row.

### Body Chart



### Sleeve Chart



### Key

- knit on RS; purl on WS
- purl on RS; knit on WS
- M1R
- pattern repeat
- k1f&b
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, k1, then k2 from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k2, then k1 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, p1, then k2 from cn
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k2, then p1 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, k2, then k2 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in back, k2, then k2 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn, hold in front, k1f&b, then k2 from cn (3 sts inc'd to 4 sts)
- sl 1 st onto cn, hold in back, k2, then k1f&b from cn (3 sts inc'd to 4 sts)

## SHAPE SHOULDERS

### SIZES \_ ( \_ , \_ , \_ ) (53, 56, 59½, 63)" ONLY

**Next row (RS)** K2, ssk, work in patt to last 5 sts, k3tog, k2—\_ ( \_ , \_ , \_ ) (118, 126, 134, 142) sts.

**Next row (WS)** P2, p2tog, work in patt to last 4 sts, ssp, p2—\_ ( \_ , \_ , \_ ) (116, 124, 132, 140) sts.

### ALL SIZES

**Row 1 (RS)** K2, ssk, work in patt to last 4 sts, k2tog, k2—2 sts dec'd.

**Row 2 (WS)** P2, p2tog, work in patt to last 4 sts, ssp, p2—2 sts dec'd.

Rep the last 2 rows 12 (14, 16, 18) (18, 20, 22, 24) more times—40 sts rem for all sizes; piece measures 8½ (9¾, 11, 11½) (12, 12¾, 13½)" (21.5 [25, 28, 29] [30.5, 32.5, 32.5, 34.5] cm) from underarms measured straight up in the center.

### Back funnel neck

**Next row (RS)** K1, work in patt to last st, k1.

**Next row (WS)** P1, work in patt to last st, p1.

Rep these 2 rows 8 more times.

**Next row (RS)** Knit all sts—19 rows completed; neck measures 3¼" (8.5 cm) from last shoulder-shaping row.

BO all sts kwise with WS facing.

### Front

Work as for back until piece measures 14½" (37 cm) from CO for all sizes, ending the same WS chart row as the back—92 (100, 108, 116) (122, 130, 138, 146) sts.

Pm at each end of the row to indicate the base of the armholes.

### Armholes

Cont working in est patt until piece measures 8¾ (9¾, 10½, 11½) (11½, 12½, 13, 13½)" (22 [23.5, 26.5, 29] [29, 32, 33, 34.5] cm), ending with a WS row.

### SHAPE FRONT NECK

**Next row (RS)** Work 42 (46, 50, 54) (57, 61, 65, 69) sts in patt for left side of neck (as worn), place center 8 sts on a holder or scrap yarn without working them, then place 42 (46, 50, 54) (57, 61, 65, 69) sts for RS of neck (as worn) on a holder—42 (46, 50, 54) (57, 61, 65, 69) left neck sts rem on needle.

Make a note of the RS row just completed so you can resume the patt on the center sts with the correct row later for the funnel neck.

### LEFT NECK SHORT-ROWS

Cont on sts of left neck only.

**Row 1 (WS)** Work in patt to last st at armhole edge, wrap next st and turn work (w&t).

**Even-numbered Rows 2-14 (RS)** Work in patt to center gap.

**Rows 3 and 5** Work in patt to 3 sts before prev wrapped st, w&t.

**Rows 7, 9, and 11** Work in patt to 2 sts before prev wrapped st, w&t.

**Rows 13 and 15** Work in patt to 1 st before prev wrapped st, w&t; wrapped st in Row 15 is the 28 (32, 36, 40) (43, 47, 51, 55)th st from center gap.

**Row 16** Work in patt to center gap.

**Row 17** Work in patt to end, lifting each wrap onto left needle in front of wrapped st and purling it tog with the stitch.

**Row 18** BO 26 (30, 34, 38) (41, 45, 49, 53) sts, work in patt to center gap—16 left neck sts for all sizes.

Place sts on holder and break yarn.

### RIGHT NECK SHORT-ROWS

Return 42 (46, 50, 54) (57, 61, 65, 69) right neck sts on needle and rejoin yarn at center gap ready to work a RS row.

**Row 1 (RS)** Work in patt to last st at armhole edge, w&t.

**Even-numbered Rows 2-14 (WS)** Work in patt to center gap.

**Rows 3 and 5** Work in patt to 3 sts before prev wrapped st, w&t.

**Rows 7, 9, and 11** Work in patt to 2 sts before prev wrapped st, w&t.

**Rows 13 and 15** Work in patt to 1 st before prev wrapped st, w&t; wrapped st in Row 15 is the 28 (32, 36, 40) (43, 47, 51, 55)th st from center gap.

**Row 16** Work in patt to center gap.

**Row 17** Work in patt to end, lifting each wrap onto left needle behind wrapped st and knitting it tog with the stitch.

**Row 18** BO 26 (30, 34, 38) (41, 45, 49, 53) sts, work in patt to center gap—16 right neck sts for all sizes.

Break yarn, but leave sts on needle.

## Front funnel neck

With RS facing, and needle with 16 right neck sts on left needle, add 8 held center sts and 16 held left neck sts to left needle—40 sts. Rejoin yarn with RS facing, ready to work a RS row (the next RS patt row required by the 8 center sts). Work sts on each side of center as they appear until they can be worked into the patt est in the center.

**Next row (RS)** K1, work 15 sts, work 8 sts in est patt, work 15 sts, k1.

**Next row (WS)** P1, work in patt to last st, p1.

**Next row (RS)** K1, work in patt to last st, k1.

Rep these 2 rows 7 more times, then work the WS row once more.

**Next row (RS)** Knit all sts—19 rows completed; neck measures 3¼" (8.5 cm).

BO all sts kwise with WS facing.

## Sleeves

### CUFF

Using smaller needles, CO 32 (32, 35, 35) (35, 38, 38, 38) sts.

**Next row (RS and WS)** Sl 1 pwise wyf, knit to end.

Rep this row the same number of times as for the body, until piece measures 1" (2.5 cm).

### ARM

Change to larger needles.

### BEGIN SLEEVE CHART

**Inc row (RS)** K1 (selvedge st); work the red outlined patt rep 5 (5, 5, 5) (5, 6, 6, 6) times, inc each rep foll chart from 6 sts to 8 sts; work the 0 (0, 3, 3) (3, 0, 0, 0) sts after the patt rep once, inc them to 0 (0, 4, 4) (4, 0, 0, 0) sts, ending where indicated for your size; k1 (selvedge st)—42 (42, 46, 46) (46, 50, 50, 50) sts.

**Set-up row (WS)** Purl all sts.

Keeping 1 st at each side in St st, work Rows 1 and 2 of chart.

**Inc row (RS)** K1, M1R, work in est patt to last st, M1L, k1—2 sts inc'd.

Keeping 1 st at each side in St st and working new sts into patt as they become available, [work 5 (5, 3, 3) (3, 1, 1, 1) row(s) even, then rep the inc row] 11 (11, 13, 17) (17, 2, 2, 4) times—66 (66, 74, 82) (82, 56, 56, 60) sts.

Cont as est, [work 0 (0, 5, 0) (0, 3, 3, 3) rows even, then rep the inc row] 0 (0, 2, 0) (0, 16, 16, 15) times—66 (66, 78, 82) (82, 88, 88, 90) sts.



Work even in patt until piece measures 16" (40.5 cm) from CO for all sizes or desired length to underarm, ending with RS Row 3 or Row 7 of chart (a cable row).

### SHAPE SLEEVE CAP

**Row 1 (WS)** Purl to last 12 (12, 14, 14) (14, 15, 15, 16) sts, w&t.

**Row 2 (RS)** Knit to last 12 (12, 14, 14) (14, 15, 15, 16) sts, w&t.

**Row 3** Purl to last 24 (24, 28, 28) (28, 30, 30, 32) sts, w&t.

**Row 4** Knit to last 24 (24, 28, 28) (28, 30, 30, 32) sts, w&t.

**Row 5** Purl to end, lifting each wrap onto left needle in front of wrapped st and purling it tog with the stitch—sleeve cap measures 1" (2.5 cm).

BO all sts.

### FINISHING

Soak pieces in cool water and wool wash, then wet-block to measurements. Sew (see Notes) sides of funnel neck using mattress stitch, then sew front shoulders to back shoulders. Sew the top edge of each sleeve between the underarm markers, easing to fit. Sew side and sleeve seams using mattress stitch. Weave in ends.

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**KATE GAGNON OSBORN** is the co-owner of Kelbourne Woolens, a yarn company and distributor that specializes in affordable, classic, quality yarns. Kate has a master's degree in textile design with a concentration in Jacquard weaving. When not knitting, crocheting, weaving, or sewing, Kate takes long walks in the woods with her supermutt, Wolfie. Kate lives outside Philadelphia with her family.



Ancient Arts  
YARNS

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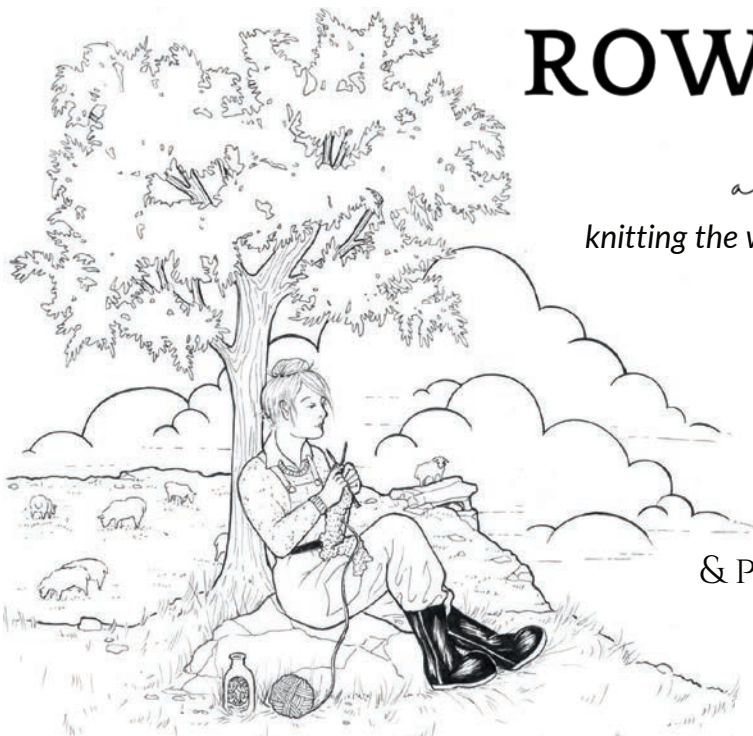
The Roman Villa Shawl  
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Featuring Lascaux DK  
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# Sheep to Shore

A chance invitation to shear sheep on a remote island off the coast of Maine opened up a new career path for naturalist knitter Jani Estell. **By Mary Lou Egan**

“Would you like to help shear sheep on a secluded island?” When Jani Estell, a longtime knitter and spinner, received this invitation from her friend Donna more than 20 years ago, little did she know it would reshape her life. That “crazy day of shearing” on Maine’s Nash Island sparked a new venture. Marrying Jani’s forestry background and commitment to sustainability with her passion for fiber, it marked the beginning of a journey tending to wild island sheep, working with their wool, and preserving a tradition.

The island’s flock traces its origins back a century, when 10-year-old Jenny Cirone—the daughter of the lighthouse keeper on Little Nash—began raising sheep, a cherished task she continued throughout her life. She bequeathed the heritage flock to the

Wakeman family, who continue to care for the flock “just the way Jenny always did” on a cluster of islands—Nash Island, Flat Island, and Little Nash Island—three miles off the coast of Maine, northeast of Acadia National Park.

For a number of years, only one business bought part of the clip; the remaining wool went into a wool pool to be sold dirt cheap. (Producers with smaller quantities to sell pool together with other producers to market the wool as a larger lot.) This waste of good wool stung Jani, who identifies herself as not only a conservationist but also a frugal Mainer. Jani, owner of a mini mill business—Starcroft Fiber Mill, serving local farmers and shepherds—asked to buy some of the leftovers to see if she could help this wool reach its full potential.

She spent a few months experimenting “to see how it was and what it wanted to be.”

After the other wool buyer sold its business, Jani offered to purchase the entire clip to produce a single-flock yarn. With Alfie Wakeman’s go-ahead to use the name Nash Island for the yarn, Jani’s Starcroft Fiber Mill turned away all other fleece to work exclusively with the strong, lustrous island wool.

## MANAGE THE FLOCK TO IMPROVE THE WOOL

“The sheep here are wild. It’s their island, and we are barely tolerated visitors,” says Jani. And so keeping her own words in mind, she and Wakeman try to minimize their interactions with the sheep. During lambing season, it takes a few days for the sheep to accept the human presence, and then only at a distance. The ewes drop their lambs, rain or shine, where they graze. “Occasionally we will scoop up a chilled lamb for warming in camp, or upright a cast sheep. But mostly our caretaking duties are to keep watch from afar, through binoculars.” (A “cast” sheep is one turned over on its back and unable to right itself.)

Shearing is a community undertaking and part of a centuries-old tradition of sheep grazing on uninhabited islands off the coast of Maine. Rounding up wild sheep without spooking them takes quiet determination and solid teamwork. Once the lambs and ewes have been separated and shorn, mothers and babies are reunited, and the fleeces come under Jani’s eagle eye. She identifies fleece for handspinning—fleece of good length and fine wool, and clean.

“There’s no chaff in island fleeces because the sheep eat only grass and seaweed,” she says. The handspinning fleeces are coveted, and most are presold while still on the sheep. The remainder goes to the skirting table, where willing friends and family remove the debris and dung.

Although the flock is wild, fine fleeces require breeding management. For example, rams are brought to the island in early December and remain until shearing in June. Individual rams are used as breeding stock for only two years, so they don’t end up breeding with their daughters.

The island sheep are their own breed. Jani calls it “landrace,” a breed that has developed over time to suit the conditions of a particular geographic location. Choosing the right ram to bring to the island is critical for the health of the flock and the future of the wool. The early buyers of the yarn introduced a Corriedale ram to soften up the wool, but the breed was not suited to island life, resulting in lambing problems and maternal mortality.

Jani and Alfie Wakeman wanted to bring in hardy rams that thrived in Maine’s rough climate. Because they live on the island over the winter, the rams needed to have a clean face and legs, as woolly legs and faces can freeze.



### ABOVE

Shepherding the flock on Nash Island requires binoculars and foul-weather gear.

### OPPOSITE AND LEFT

The sheep on the island thrive on a diet of grass and seaweed.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JANI ESTELL

## EVERY FLEECE HOLDS THE STORY OF THAT YEAR. EVERY SKEIN OF YARN HELPS TO KEEP THE TRADITION ALIVE.

—JANI ESTELL

Over the past decade, Romney and Coopworth rams have been brought in. Romneys, known for being calm and easygoing, are popular in Maine. Jani describes them as “the golden retriever of sheep. Both [Romney and Coopworth] are good hardy breeds, clean of face and legs, with a long, lustrous, strong wool and a healthy dose of wild.”

Finding the right rams has been so challenging that sometimes Wakeman and Jani have had to place an order for a ram lamb a year in advance. In addition, many of the smaller farms in the area now solely rely on artificial insemination. On Nash Island, they want to keep it a more natural process, interfering as little as possible. “Also, can you imagine trying to inseminate a wild flock?” Jani says, laughing.

The flock has adapted to living on a remote island by learning to forage along the shoreline for nutritious seaweed, delivered twice daily on the tide. The seaweed, a significant part of the sheep’s diet, imparts a special quality to the wool, according to Jani, who also believes that it acts as a natural wormer.

She is convinced that the secret behind this soft yet strong wool is “dewy island grasses, mineral-rich seaweed, and lots of fog washing.” Each clip is slightly different, reflecting the breeding, the quality of feed on the island, and the winter’s weather. “Every bit of a year’s clip is utilized, from handspinning fleeces to yarn to stuffing wool. Every fleece holds the story of that year. Every skein of yarn helps to keep the tradition alive.”

“It’s important to preserve the history of sheep in Maine. We don’t need to micromanage nature. We need to be observers and helpers.”

### MANAGE THE FIBER TO IMPROVE THE YARN

The color of the island sheep had always been white, “the way Jenny did it,” but Jani wanted to bring in more colors, particularly gray. It turns out Jenny Cirone only bred for white because she couldn’t sell gray fleece. Currently, gray fleece is a hot commodity in the fiber world. Donna Kausen, owner of Flat Island, agreed, and there is now a flock of “Flat Island Greys.”

Many decisions about yarn development were guided by what Jani and her “fiber flock” want to use for knitting. “This way, I can get what I want, because it is all about me!” explains Jani. She and Mary Jane Mucklestone, a Maine-based author and colorwork knitting expert, put their heads together to dream up their ideal colorwork yarn. Jani realized there would need to be a change in spinning techniques. The mini mill that Starcroft used could produce only a semiworsted, while ideally, colorwork yarn is woolen

The old brick tower is the only part of the Nash Island Light Station that remains. The lighthouse brought young Jenny Cirone and her family to Little Nash, where she began tending her flock.



## DARLING CLEMENTINE

Clementine, owned by Jani Estell's daughter, Leah Ondra, is a fabric boutique and modern haberdashery located in downtown Rockland, Maine. Clementine is the only stockist of Nash Island yarns, offering individual skeins and kits, along with other small-batch Maine yarns.

Leah's real dream had always been to design fabric. Maine-themed designs sell during tourist season, but the lobster fabric she was selling typically featured both lobsters and crabs. According to Leah, "Mainers and tourists want just Maine lobsters, and realistic ones to boot. I've also had Marylanders tell me their crab fabric has too many lobsters on it, so I'm not alone." The problem was that creating custom fabric needed a very large production run, making it financially impractical.



Then printing company Paintbrush Studio Fabrics contacted Leah, offering to print custom designs on small runs of fabric. LEO&SEA designs was born, and now authentic Maine patterns featuring lobsters, sardines, and blueberries are available.



Since Clementine can reorder quickly, these patterns are always in stock.

Being together in lockdown also provided time for the mother-daughter team to discuss what they wanted to do, and more importantly, what they didn't want to do. Now, Starcroft (Jani) and Clementine (Leah) have transitioned to working as a team. They envision, experiment, and develop colorways together. While the yarn simmers in the dye pots, Leah translates the colors into prints that work well with the yarn.

Clementine is open year-round, with Jani as summer staff when it is too hot to dye. The website, Leah says, is open all the hours of the day at [clementineme.com](http://clementineme.com).

spun. Jani met with Green Mountain Spinnery in Vermont to determine which fleeces would be best for creating a colorwork yarn with Nash Island wool. Green Mountain Spinnery took over the spinning of that yarn, named Nash Island Tide.

For Jani, the physical relief of not spinning all that yarn herself was a revelation. After 20 years of doing it all, two rotator-cuff injuries, and now wanting time to play with grandchildren, she realized she had to "choose what to give up in order to do the things I'd like to do. It was a tough decision, like sending your kids off to college."


One change is moving to partnership with her daughter Leah Ondra, the owner of Clementine, a fabric and yarn shop in Rockland, Maine. They select colorways together, and Leah designs prints that work well with the yarns.

Jani never stops planning improvements to the yarn made from the gorgeous wool of the island

sheep. Starcroft may change the Nash Island Light from a two-ply to a three-ply to provide better definition to textured and cable work, and they are actively seeking a mill to process that yarn.

There are now three Nash Island Yarns: Nash Island Light (named for the lighthouse), Nash Island Tide, and the limited-edition Lamb, from the first fleece of the flocks' lambs. Single-flock yarn has a limited supply; the next batch of Nash Island Light will be available in early fall 2024. 🍀

MARY LOU EGAN *has been designing and teaching knitting for many years. She teaches regularly at the Yarnery in St. Paul, Minnesota, and at shops and fiber festivals nationwide. The title of her last book, Drop-Dead Easy Knits (Clarkson Potter, 2016)—coauthored with Gale Zucker and Kirsten Kapur—sums up her knitting philosophy. Find her on Instagram @MLEganDesign.*



# *The Land of* **FIRE** *and* **WOOL**

By Leslie Petrovski

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This is the story of a country born of fire and sheep and a knitting tradition that looks folkloric but was actually the product of twentieth-century tourism. The country, of course, is Iceland, and the tradition, the *lopapeysa*, is an iconic garment that's arguably more a symbol of national identity than the country's flag.



LOPAPEYSA PHOTOS COURTESY OF ÍSTEX UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. ICELAND, LANDSCAPE, AND SHEEP PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROWAN TREE TRAVEL & FIBERCRAFT

## SHEEP AND WOOL AND AN ISLAND IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

There is no doubt that sheep shaped North America, but they don't occupy the outsized place in our national psyches that they do in Iceland. Icelanders generally accept as fact that there would be no Iceland without sheep. "The Icelandic sheep is the reason we have survived here through the centuries," observes Hulda Brynjólfsdóttir, a sheep farmer and founder, with her husband Tyrfinnur Sveinsson, of Uppspuni, Iceland's first mini mill. "Wool has kept us warm through the ages, and it continues to keep us warm today."

The sheep accompanying Nordic settlers in the ninth century were tough, short-tailed ruminant animals (from the same breed that gave rise to Shetland sheep, among others), which gave newcomers not only meat and milk but also two kinds of fiber: long, water-resistant wool on the outside (*tog*) over soft, warm fibers underneath (*Del*, pronounced "thel"). These dual-coated ungulates provided Vikings with raw materials they used for everything from fishing line, rope, and outerwear to cozy undergarments.

Because of geographical isolation—and laws restricting sheep imports into Iceland—Icelandic sheep have evolved into one of the purest sheep breeds in the world. Fast, agile, and not particularly given to flocking, they are good breeders and easy to keep. They dot the countryside like fuzzy thumb-tacks on a map.

When visiting Iceland, it's almost impossible not to encounter sheep on a drive or to find lopapeysur in convenience stores. Lamb is the national dish. Children learn to knit in grade school. It's even possible to purchase yarn in grocery stores. And as of 2020, "Icelandic lopapeysa" became a protected designation under the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF A WAY OF LIFE

People used to joke that Iceland had more sheep than people, but that's no longer the case. Today, it's more accurate to say that Iceland's human and sheep populations are roughly equal. Since 1978, when sheep numbered about 800,000 head, Iceland's sheep numbers have dropped by more than half, to about 400,000.



ICELANDERS GENERALLY  
ACCEPT AS FACT THAT  
THERE WOULD BE NO  
ICELAND WITHOUT SHEEP.

Because of low meat prices, farmers in Iceland struggle to make sheep farming pay. Hulda Brynjólfsdóttir estimates that at the annual roundup in their farming community last fall, farmers sorted between 2,000 and 3,000 sheep, down from 5,000 to 7,000 when sheep farming, at its height in the 1970s and 1980s, was far more profitable.

"Sheep numbers have been getting lower and lower in Iceland," Brynjólfsdóttir explains. "Because the price for meat is now very low, many farmers are giving up. They just can't survive by farming sheep anymore."

Védís Jónsdóttir, head designer at Ístex, the mill that makes Lopi yarn, grew up on a farm in Iceland—and she frets about the declining sheep population. "There is a very strong bond between the Icelandic people and the sheep," she says. "It worries me a lot that that's changing. There are both fewer farmers and fewer sheep than there used to be."

Brynjólfsdóttir is among the many farmers affected by the downturn in lamb prices. Rather than abandon sheep farming altogether, she and her husband decided to add value to their flock in 2016 by leaning in to Brynjólfsdóttir's long-time spinning passion by purchasing a mini mill. Though the couple has reduced their flock numbers, the money



## CAMP SHEEP

It's a summer ritual. Much like trundling children off to camp, Icelandic farmers trail their sheep to higher ground every June, where they're left unsupervised, no dogs or shepherds to bother them, happily foraging on wild plants. The solitary predator? The Arctic fox, which preys only on the sick and dying.

"They are in the fields and mountains where there is grass to eat," explains Védís Jónsdóttir, head designer at Ístex, Iceland's primary spinning mill, who grew up on a farm. "Icelandic sheep are wild at heart. Biblical sheep. We never understood the concept of the shepherd. Our sheep just run wild all over the place."

To avoid disease transmission, each community has its own designated area, though sheep sometimes stray; nobody worries too much. They tend to get sorted out come fall.

The summer idyll Icelandic sheep enjoy in the high country ends in September, when farmers all over Iceland start gathering them up from their grazing areas for winter. The annual roundups, called *réttirs*, are part camp-out, part community party, and part tourist attraction, in which farming communities head to the high country to find their free-ranging charges. Every *rétt* is unique.

In Brynjólfsdóttir's case, she and her husband are part of a group of 10 to 15 neighboring farms, which

drive their sheep miles to the center of Iceland's highlands behind Mount Hekla to spend the summer. In the fall, riding horses and driving ATVs, a small posse returns to spend three days finding, chasing, and capturing their charges.

Once sheep are apprehended, more community members join to form a line in front of the mountain, between the sheep and a large holding area. "The number of the people herding goes from eight to 30," Brynjólfsdóttir explains, "and we form a sort of line so the sheep don't get between us without us noticing. We drive them toward the paddock where they rest for one night."

On the final day of the roundup, sheep are sorted into a divided paddock (which from the air looks like a large sliced pie) according to their numbered ear tags—which matches the number posted on the "pie slice" for their farms. Once sheep are sorted, they're herded back home to spend the winter on their respective farms, tucked into barns away from the cold.

This countrywide sheep homecoming is not just how farmers protect their livestock investment, it's also a way for families and communities to connect to the animals that shaped their culture, providing the wool that warms them still.

In Norse mythology, hell isn't hot, it's cold. "You freeze in hell," says Jónsdóttir. "That's what we are afraid of."



they make from yarn sales and wool processing has made up for lackluster meat prices and has enabled them to continue raising sheep. It has also opened up new opportunities for knitters interested in knitting with Icelandic wool beyond Lopi.

## A NEW LOOK AT ICELANDIC WOOL

For much of the twentieth century and now in the twenty-first, Iceland's wool industry centered around one mill, the famous Álafoss. The mill went bankrupt in the 1990s and was resurrected as a farmer-owned cooperative called Ístex, which now processes about 99 percent of Iceland's wool. "Ístex survived a huge crisis," Brynjólfsdóttir observes, making it possible for the mill to purchase wool directly from growers. "They are the reason farmers aren't throwing their wool away in Iceland."

This is the mill that gave Icelanders—and the world—*plötulopi*, a pencil roving that combines the tough tog and softer Þel from Icelandic sheep into an airy contrail that's wound into a curious wheel the size of a vinyl record. Later, the mill also produced Lopi, a plump, softly spun two-ply yarn that looks like singles. Lopi is the medium that gave rise to the sweater heard 'round the world.

It's tempting to think of the iconic lopapeysa, loved by fashionistas the world over, as a slightly wild garment invented by Vikings. But the origin story is much more prosaic, beginning not with Dark Age marauders but with Elín Guðmundsdóttir Snæhólm, a clever crafter who in 1920 decided to skip the traditional process of spinning *plötulopi* prior to knitting and instead threw the roving onto her knitting machine and never looked back.

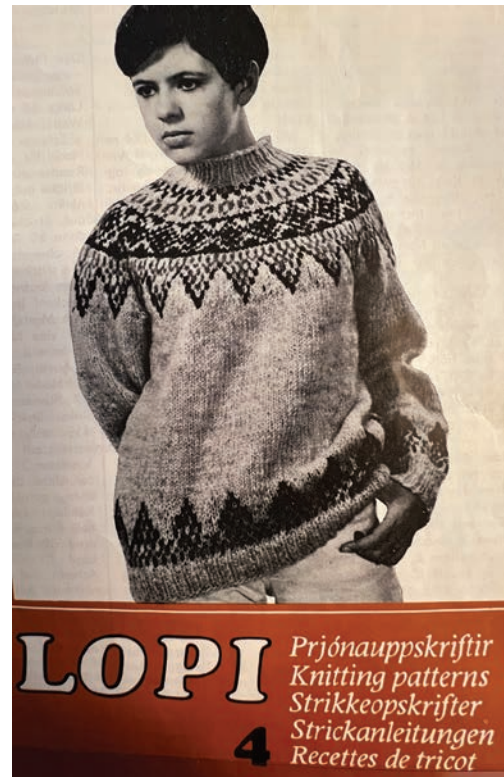
By the 1930s, Icelanders began modeling their sweaters after Norwegian designs (knitted in the round with drop shoulders), a construction that eventually morphed into the easier two-color yokes of the lopapeysa with evenly spaced decreases, sleeves, and shoulders incorporated—a modification, Brynjólfsdóttir says, that's quintessentially Icelandic: "We find ways to work smarter, not harder."

Quick to knit and suited to the climate and lifestyle, lopapeysur grew more Icelandic as knitters began adding Viking symbols and motifs inspired by their stark landscape and the country's active volcanoes.

"We needed touristic goods to sell during World War II, when Iceland was occupied by the US Army," explains Jónsdóttir about the proliferation of Lopi sweaters. "And we had these 'Eskimo' sweaters. We started making knits to sell."

For many years, knitting lopapeysur to sell as souvenirs was a booming cottage industry, with

Though shapes and colors have changed over time, *lopapeysur* retain their distinctive Icelandic identity.



*Lopapeysur* include not only the *tog* and *pel* of their unique sheep but also their range of natural colors.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROWAN TREE TRAVEL & FIBERCRAFT



Today Icelanders are knitting and wearing cropped and oversized *lopapeysur* on the farm and in Reykjavík.



sweater silhouettes ballooning and shrinking according to the whims of fashion. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, which devastated Iceland's economy, Icelanders newly embraced *lopapeysur* as a national symbol of down-to-earth simplicity in contrast to unfettered capitalism. Then, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, knitting surged again, creating a global Lopi shortage as Icelanders and knitters worldwide turned to their needles for solace. The demand was so great that Ístex found itself struggling to keep up.

### ONE COUNTRY, ONE YARN?

Despite Iceland's vibrant knitting and wool culture, there is precious little choice in yarns made from Icelandic wool. French-Icelandic knitwear designer Héléne Magnússon says that's starting to change, citing the opening of Uppspuni as an inflection point. "In the past 10 years, we are finally seeing a diversity of yarn in Iceland that we didn't have before. We just had Lopi and some handspun and that was it, with the exception of imported yarn."

Ístex does produce yarn for smaller companies—including the Þingborg Wool Shop, which sells spectacular *lopapeysur* and handspun, as well as its own line of soft Icelandic wool produced for them from specially scoured, hand-selected fleeces. But its specialty is Lopi.

Knitters can also avail themselves of yarns at Uppspuni, where Brynjólfsdóttir sells her own range and spins yarn for other farmers to sell or use. The purchase of a dehairing machine lets her spin yarn from Icelandic goats (made famous in the television adaptation *Game of Thrones*), which because of Iceland's climate grow exquisite cashmere-type fiber. Gilhagi, a second mini mill, opened in north Iceland in 2018, and it too has its own range of undyed yarn to sell.

Héléne Magnússon recently turned to product development, launching an Icelandic sportweight yarn, a plied laceweight, and Love Story Einband, a multiyear labor of love meant to replicate historic Icelandic lace handspun as part of her effort to revive Icelandic lace knitting. Using fleeces she hand-grades from the first shearing of lambs, she finally found a mill in Italy that could properly handle the *tog* and *pel* of Icelandic wool to create a fine laceweight yarn that approximates that which Icelandic women made by hand years ago.

## THE CASE FOR LOPAPEYSUR

Here's why you need a lopapeysa in your wardrobe:

1. *You can wear it over pajama bottoms* to walk the dog or out to dinner with vegan leather pants.
2. *It will never go out of style.* Though lopapeysur are having a global moment with designer knockoffs, they maintain their wearability in the same way Fair Isle, Faroese, and Norwegian colorwork garments do. They are forever pieces.
3. *You can knit one in a weekend*—if you really bear down. Lopapeysa construction is a model of efficiency. The sweaters are knitted in the round from the bottom up, with separately knitted sleeves that are joined before working the colorwork yoke—which includes shoulder shaping in the design. They require precious little seaming and whip up quickly in Álafoss Lopi, a bulky yarn with a gauge of about 13 stitches to 4 inches.
4. *Sustainability.* Not only is wool 100% biodegradable, but a heavy lopapeysa also insulates from the cold. So you can turn down the thermostat.
5. *Pattern choices are almost endless.* Search Ravelry by typing “Lopi” or “Ístex” and hundreds of patterns will surface, from classics in natural colors to dashy sweaters in a rainbow of palettes.
6. *It will wear like iron.* A 50-year-old Lopi sweater that my mother knitted in the 1970s has barely a pill on it to this day. Sturdy, insulating Icelandic wool stands the test of time. “I see the young generation take the sweaters my grandmother knit for my father,” explains Védís Jónsdóttir, head designer at Ístex, “and they still look amazing. They last forever.”



PHOTO BY GALE ZUCKER

DIAMONDS FOREVER

Tíglar Tveir

NEXT PAGE >>

Her micro-batch Icelandic Yarn Club, which she started five years ago, attracts about 150 subscribers annually. Subscribers get a shipment of four beautifully conceived kits. The patterns and yarns in the kits showcase the growing diversity of Icelandic yarns, many of which start with Magnússon's connection to a farmer whose sheep she admires.

“Uppspuni really changed all the possibilities,” she says. “Otherwise we would have to send the wool abroad, which costs so much. Since

Uppspuni started spinning, it's now possible to make all kinds of yarns. You can let your imagination soar.” 🌱

LESLIE PETROVSKI is a freelance writer who lives in Denver, Colorado. In 2016, she and her husband traveled to Iceland, where she cuddled newborn lambs and bought plötulopi to make a lopapeysa based on patterns in Védís Jónsdóttir's book *Knitting with Icelandic Wool* (St. Martin's, 2013).



## Tíglar Tveir

VÉDÍS JÓNSDÓTTIR

*Tíglar* means diamonds in Icelandic, reflecting the diamond motif in the yoke of this modern *lopapeysa*. *Tíglar Tveir*, or *Tíglar 2*, is an updated version of a classic Lopi pattern that was originally designed as a man's sweater featured in *Ístex Lopi No. 29* (Ístex Yarn, 2009). Its original creator, Védís Jónsdóttir, has reimagined it with updated shaping and coloring.

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Ístex *Álafosslopi* (100% Icelandic wool; 109 yd [100 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); #1232 Arctic Exposure (A), 5 (6, 6, 7, 7) (7, 8, 9, 9) balls; #9961 Bordeaux Heather (B), #1235 Ray of Light (C), #9967 Teal Heather (D), and #1239 Winter Morning (E), 1 ball each. Distributed by Berroco.

**NEEDLES** Sizes 10 (6 mm) and 7 (4.5 mm): 16" and 32" (40 and 80 cm) circular (cir) and double-pointed (dnp). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Removable markers (m); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 13 sts and 18 rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in St st with larger needles, blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** 37 (40, 43, 46¼, 49¼) (52¼, 56½, 60¼, 65¼)" (94 [101.5, 109, 117.5, 125] [132.5, 143.5, 153, 165.5] cm) chest circumference.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### NOTES

- Body and sleeves are worked in the round from lower edge to underarms, then joined to work yoke in the round. Round begins at left side of body. On yoke, round begins on left side of back at the joining of body and sleeve.
- As stitches are increased for sleeves and decreased for yoke, change to shorter circular needle or double-pointed needles as needed to work comfortably in the round.
- Short-rows are worked on the back after pattern is complete to add length at the back neck.

### STITCH GUIDE

**1x1 Rib Pattern** (multiple of 2 sts)

**Rnd 1** \*K1, p1; rep from \* to end.

Rep Rnd 1.



5, 6) (6, 7, 7, 8) sts of rnd to st holder—8 (9, 10, 11, 12) (13, 14, 15, 16) sts on holder, 38 (40, 42, 44, 46) (48, 48, 49, 48) sleeve sts rem. Make second sleeve.

### Yoke

Join body and sleeves with color A using larger 32" needle. Move last 4 (5, 5, 6, 6) (7, 7, 8, 8) sts and first 4 (4, 5, 5, 6) (6, 7, 7, 8) sts of body to st holder for underarm. Knit 38 (40, 42, 44, 46) (48, 48, 49, 48) sts of first sleeve, knit 52 (56, 60, 64, 68) (72, 78, 83, 90) front sts, knit 38 (40, 42, 44, 46) (48, 48, 49, 48) sts of second sleeve, move next 8 (9, 10, 11, 12) (13, 14, 15, 16) sts of body to holder, knit 52 (56, 60, 64, 68) (72, 78, 83, 90) back sts—180 (192, 204, 216, 228) (240, 252, 264, 276) sts.

### SIZES 56½, 60¼, AND 65¼" (143.5, 153, AND 165.5 CM) ONLY

Work 2 (4, 6) rnds even.

### ALL SIZES

Work Yoke Chart, eliminating rnds as noted, until all rnds have been completed—60 (64, 68, 72, 76) (80, 84, 88, 92) sts.

### SHORT-ROWS AT BACK

Place removable markers (pm) at mid-shoulders: Count 7 (7, 7, 7, 8) (8, 8, 8, 8) sts after beg of rnd, pm for left mid-shoulder, then count 29 (31, 34, 37, 37) (40, 42, 44, 46) sts, pm for right mid-shoulder. Work back and forth in St st as foll: work to 6 sts from left shoulder m, wrap next st and turn (w&t; see Stitch Guide). Work back until 6 sts from right shoulder m, w&t. Work until 3 sts from left shoulder m, w&t. Work to 3 sts before right shoulder m, w&t. Work to left shoulder m, w&t. Work to right shoulder m, w&t. Work to end of rnd.

### Neckband

Change to smaller dpn and cont with A.

**Next rnd** (dec rnd) K0 (0, 2, 2, 4) (0, 12, 8, 4), \*k28 (14, 9, 5, 4) (3, 2, 2, 2), k2tog; rep from \* to end of rnd—58 (60, 62, 62, 64) (64, 66, 68, 70) sts.

Work in 1x1 Rib Patt for 6 rnds. Change to D and knit 6 rnds. BO loosely.



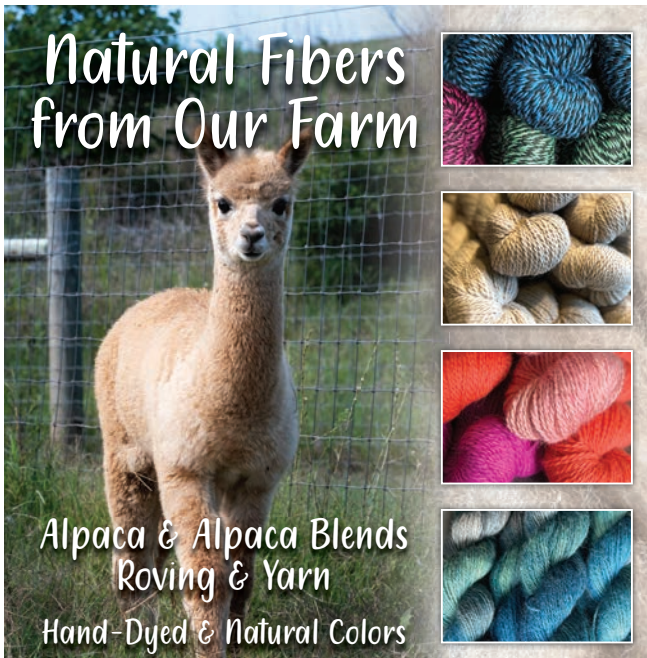
### FINISHING

Graft underarm sts tog and weave in loose ends. Rinse sweater by hand in lukewarm water. Lay flat to dry, and smooth gently into desired shape and measurements. Allow the St st neck edge to roll up.

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**VÉDÍS JÓNSDÓTTIR** is known for revitalizing Icelandic handknitting by updating styles and color combinations. Her Lopi designs for Ístex and other companies are widely knit, and numerous handknitting books have featured her designs, including her own book, *Knitting with Icelandic Wool* (St. Martin's, 2013). She has designed yarn color lines and knitting patterns for Ístex for years and is currently their head designer.

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A woman with dark hair in a braid, wearing a textured cable-knit sweater and a long, patterned skirt, stands on a gravel path. She is holding a wire basket filled with eggs. The background shows a white fence and a blurred landscape.

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## Chore Jacket

MARY LOU EGAN

This cozy cardigan is about to become your new favorite jacket. Throw it on to head out to the barn or to walk the dog. The body is worked in one piece to the underarms, then the left and right fronts and back are worked separately. The shoulders and handy pockets are shaped with German short-rows, and the sleeves are picked up and knit last.

**YARN** Brown Sheep Company *Harborside Aran*  
**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 76



## Chill Chaser Poncho

DEBORAH NEWTON

This stylish poncho is richly cabled with a touch of eyelet lace. It's the perfect all-season topper to take the nip off the morning air and a cozy top layer to cuddle up in. Knitted in the round from the bottom up, its decreasing cables create an elegant shape, and short-rows along the back neck ribbing create a perfect fit.

**YARN** Manos del Uruguay *Wool Clásica*  
**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 81







## Grand Picot Chunky Scarf

LORI STEINBERG

Lace doesn't have to be delicate—it can be bold and rugged enough to wear every day. The balance between the picot eyelet base and the knitted-on garter-stitch lace edging of this scarf creates a gently curved crescent that doesn't need blocking, and the combination of worsted-weight tweed yarn and the pretty lace motif gives it rustic appeal.

**YARN** Studio Donegal *Soft Marl*  
**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 84





## Rustic Colorwork Cap

JEN GEIGLEY

In the countryside, on campus, or on the slopes, this unisex beanie is a quick knit in worsted-weight yarn. With clever crown shaping and a band of graphic colorwork, it would make a great teach-your-friend-to-knit-colorwork project. Be prepared for please-knit-one-for-me requests.

**YARN** Blue Sky Fibers *Woolstok Worsted*  
**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 86





## Farmer's Favorite Socks

DEBBIE O'NEILL

Wear them with clogs, boots, or Birks. These comfy socks have a touch of colorwork and surprise cables running up the backs of the heels. Knit up in soft, lofty DK-weight wool, they fly off your needles—making them a good fit even for the sock-averse knitter.

**YARN** Laxtons *Sheepsoft*  
**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 88





## Brooklyn Mitts

OLGA PUTANO

Whether you're in the city or down on the farm, these stylish fingerless gloves leave you hands-free for texting or tending to chicks. The main color in the cuffs becomes the background as contrasting shades are added in the body of the mitt. They are a good first foray into two-color brioche knitting, and fingering-weight yarn keeps them lightweight and just squishy enough.

**YARN** Brooklyn Tweed *Tones Light*

**INSTRUCTIONS** Page 91



## Chore Jacket

MARY LOU EGAN

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Brown Sheep Company *Harborside Aran* (100% US Columbia and Rambouillet wool; 162 yd [148 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); HA52R Fisherman Green, 9 (9, 10, 10, 11, 11, 12) skeins.

**NEEDLES** Size 9 (5.5 mm) 16" and 32" (40 and 80 cm) circular (cir) and set of double-pointed (dpn), and size 7 (4.5 mm) 32" (80 cm) cir and set of dpn. Adjust needle sizes if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Markers (m); seven 1" buttons; stitch holders; tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 16 sts and 24 rows = 4" (10 cm) in St st using larger needle. 16 sts and 32 rows = 4" (10 cm) in Chart patt using smaller needle.

**FINISHED SIZES** 37½ (41½, 45½, 49½, 53½, 57½, 61½)" (95.5 [105.5, 115.5, 125.5, 136, 146, 156] cm) chest

circumference, buttoned. Sample shown measures 41½" (105.5 cm) and is worn with 5½" (14 cm) ease.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### NOTES

- Pattern right and left refer to right and left as worn.

### STITCH GUIDE

#### German Short-rows (GSR)

Sl first st pwise wyf. Pull the yarn firmly up and over the needle to the back, creating a "double stitch."

When you come to a double st on a subsequent row, work it tog as a single st.

#### 3-Stitch 1-Row Buttonhole

Sl next st pwise wyf, bring yarn to back, and drop it. \*Sl next st, pass first sl st over second and off the needle; rep from \* two more times (3 sts bound off). Sl next st from right needle to left needle. Turn work so WS is facing. Use Cable Cast-On method to CO 4 sts on left needle, bringing yarn to front between needles before placing 4th st on left needle. Turn work so RS is facing. Sl first st on left needle kwise, then pass last CO st over st just slipped and off the needle. Sl st back to left needle and cont in patt.

### CARDIGAN

#### Body

With smaller cir needle, CO 143 (159, 175, 191, 207, 223, 239) sts.

Work Rows 1–20 of Body Chart.

Change to larger 32" cir needle.

**Row 1** (RS) K2, k2tog, knit to end—142 (158, 174, 190, 206, 222, 238) sts.

Work in St st until piece measures 16½" (42 cm) from cast-on edge, or desired length to underarm, ending with a WS row.

#### DIVIDE FOR BACK AND FRONT

**Next row** (RS) K26 (30, 33, 37, 42, 44, 48) sts and place on holder for right front, BO 16 (16, 18, 18, 18, 20, 20) sts for underarm, k58 (66, 72, 80, 86, 94, 102) sts for back, place rem 42 (46, 51, 55, 60, 64, 68) sts on holder—58 (66, 72, 80, 86, 94, 102) sts rem for back.

#### Back

Work in St st until piece measures 8½ (9½, 9½, 11, 12, 12½, 13)" (21.5 [24, 24, 28, 30.5, 32, 33] cm) from armhole bind-off, ending with a WS row.

**SHAPE NECK BACK**

**Next row (RS)** K18 (21, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34) sts and place on holder, BO center 22 (24, 24, 26, 24, 28, 34) sts, knit to end—18 (21, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34) sts rem for left shoulder.

**LEFT BACK SHOULDER**

**Set-up row (WS)** Purl.

**Row 1 (RS)** BO 1 st, knit to last 7 sts, turn.

**Row 2 (WS)** Work GSR (see Stitch Guide), purl to end.

**Row 3** Knit to 4 sts before double st, turn.

**Row 4** Work GSR, purl to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 one (one, two, two, three, three, four) more time(s).

**Next row (RS)** Knit to end, knitting double sts tog as single sts—17 (20, 23, 26, 30, 32, 33) sts.

Cut yarn. Place sts on holder.

**RIGHT BACK SHOULDER**

Return held sts to needle. Join yarn at neck edge with WS facing.

**Row 1 (WS)** BO 1 st, purl to last 7 sts, turn.

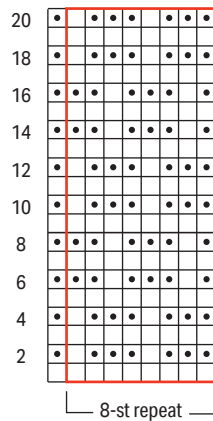
**Row 2 (RS)** Work GSR, knit to end.

**Row 3** Purl to 4 sts before double st, turn.

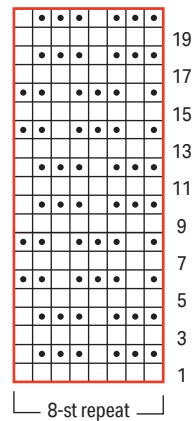
**Row 4** Work GSR, knit to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 one (one, two, two, three, three, four) more time(s).

**Body Chart**

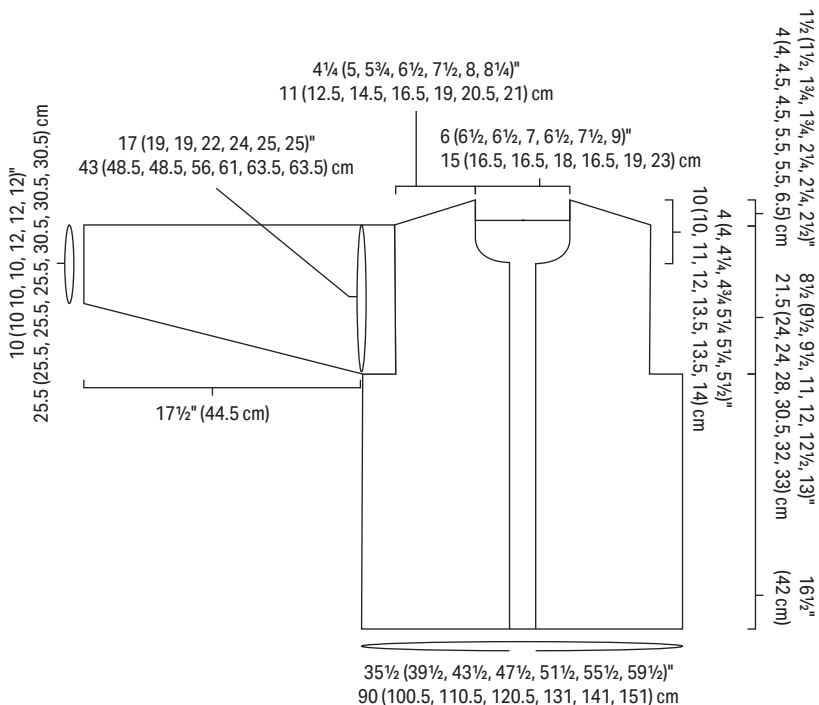


**Cuff Chart**



**Key**

- k on RS; p on WS
- p on RS; k on WS
- repeat



**Next row** (WS) Purl to end, purling double sts tog as single sts—17 (20, 23, 26, 30, 32, 33) sts.

**Next row** (RS) Knit.

Cut yarn. Place sts on holder.

### Left front

Return 42 (46, 51, 55, 60, 64, 68) held sts to needle. Join yarn at armhole edge with RS facing.

**Next row** (RS) BO 16 (16, 18, 18, 18, 20, 20) sts for underarm, knit to end—26 (30, 33, 37, 42, 44, 48) sts.

Work in St st until piece measures 6 (7, 7, 8, 9, 9½, 10)" (15 [18, 18, 20.5, 23, 24, 25.5] cm) from armhole bind-off, ending with a RS row.

### SHAPE FRONT NECK

At beg of WS rows, BO 4 sts 1 time, 3 sts 1 (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2) time(s), 2 sts 0 (0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1) time(s), and 1 st 2 (3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3) times—17 (20, 23, 26, 30, 32, 33) sts.

Work in St st until piece measures 8½ (9½, 9½, 11, 12, 12½, 13)" (21.5 [24, 24, 28, 30.5, 32, 33] cm) from armhole bind-off, ending with a RS row.

### SHAPE SHOULDER

**Row 1** (WS) Purl to last 7 sts, turn.

**Row 2** (RS) Work GSR, knit to end.

**Row 3** Purl to 4 sts before double st, turn.

**Row 4** Work GSR, knit to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 one (one, two, two, three, three, four) more time(s).

**Next row** (WS) Purl to end, knitting double sts tog as single sts.

**Next row** (RS) Knit.

Cut yarn, leaving a tail about 1 yd (1 m) long. Place sts on holder.

### Right front

Return 26 (30, 33, 37, 42, 44, 48) held sts to needle. Join yarn at armhole edge with WS facing.

Work in St st until piece measures 6 (7, 7, 8, 9, 9½, 10)" (15 [18, 18, 20.5, 23, 24, 25.5] cm) from armhole bind-off, ending with a WS row.

### SHAPE FRONT NECK

At beg of RS rows, BO 4 sts 1 time, 3 sts 1 (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2) time(s), 2 sts 0 (0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1) time(s), and 1 st 2 (3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3) times—17 (20, 23, 26, 30, 32, 33) sts.

Work in St st until piece measures 8½ (9½, 9½, 11, 12, 12½, 13)" (21.5 [24, 24, 28, 30.5, 32, 33] cm) from armhole bind-off, ending with a WS row.

### SHAPE SHOULDER

**Row 1** (RS) Knit to last 7 sts, turn.

**Row 2** (WS) Work GSR, purl to end.

**Row 3** Knit to 4 sts before double st, turn.

**Row 4** Work GSR, purl to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 one (one, two, two, three, three, four) more time(s).

**Next row** (RS) Knit to end, knitting double sts tog as single sts.

Cut yarn, leaving a tail about 1 yd (1 m) long. Place sts on holder.

With WS tog, join shoulder seams using yarn tail attached to front shoulders and Three-Needle Bind-Off method.

### Sleeves

Join yarn at center of underarm edge with RS facing.

Using larger 16" (40 cm) cir or dpn, pick up and knit 8 (8, 9, 9, 9, 10, 10) sts along bound-off underarm edge, 34 (38, 38, 44, 48, 50, 50) sts up armhole edge to shoulder seam, 34 (38, 38, 44, 48, 50, 50) sts down armhole edge to underarm, and 8 (8, 9, 9, 9, 10, 10) sts along bound-off edge to center—84 (92, 94, 106, 114, 120, 120) sts.

Do not join; the sleeve cap is worked back and forth in rows.

### SHAPE SLEEVE CAP

**Row 1** (WS) P75 (83, 84, 96, 104, 109, 109), p2tog, turn.

**Row 2** (RS) K67 (75, 75, 87, 95, 99, 99), ssk, turn.

**Row 3** S11, purl to 1 st before gap caused by last turn, p2tog to close gap, turn.

**Row 4** S11, knit to 1 st before gap caused by last turn, ssk to close gap, turn.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 six (six, seven, seven, seven, eight, eight) more times—68 (76, 76, 88, 96, 100, 100) sts rem.

Pm and join for working in the rnd.

### SHAPE SLEEVE

Knit 4 rnds.

**Next rnd** (dec rnd) K1, k2tog, knit to last 2 sts, ssk—2 sts dec'd.

Cont in St st, rep dec rnd every 8 (5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4)th rnd 3 (17, 17, 16, 16, 10, 10) more times, then every 6 (0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 3)th rnd 10 (0, 0, 7, 7, 15, 15) times—40 (40, 40, 40, 48, 48, 48) sts rem.

Cont in St st until sleeve measures 15" (38 cm) from underarm, or 2½" (6.5 cm) less than desired finished length.

**Cuff**

Change to smaller dpn.

Work Rnds 1–20 of Cuff Chart.

Bind off.

**Front bands****BUTTON BAND**

With smaller cir needle and RS facing, pick up and knit 93 (97, 97, 101, 105, 105, 109) sts along left front edge.

Work in patt as foll:

**Row 1 (WS)** P1, \*k3, p1, rep from \* to end.

**Row 2 (RS)** Knit.

**Rows 3 and 4** Rep Rows 1 and 2.

**Row 5** P1, k1, p1, \*k3, p1, rep from \* to last 2 sts, k1, p1.

**Row 6** Knit.

**Rows 7 and 8** Rep Rows 5 and 6.

**Rows 9–16** Rep Rows 1–8.

**Rows 17–19** Rep Rows 1–3.

Bind off.

**BUTTONHOLE BAND**

Mark position for 6 buttonholes along right front edge, with top buttonhole 2" (5 cm) below neck edge, bottom buttonhole 1½" (4 cm) above lower edge, and rem buttonholes evenly spaced between. Seventh buttonhole will be worked in Collar.

With smaller cir needle and RS facing, pick up and knit 93 (97, 97, 101, 105, 105, 109) sts along right front edge.

Work Rows 1–5 same as for button band.

**Row 6 (RS)** \*Knit to marked buttonhole position, make 3-Stitch 1-Row Buttonhole (see Stitch Guide), rep from \* 5 more times, knit to end.

Work Rows 7–19 same as for button band.

Bind off.

**Collar**

With smaller cir needle and RS facing, pick up and knit 13 sts along top of buttonhole band, 71 (71, 71, 79, 79, 79, 83) sts around neck edge, and 13 sts along top of button band—97 (97, 97, 105, 105, 105, 109) sts.

Work Rows 1–9 same as for button band.

**Row 10 (RS)** K7, work 3-Stitch 1-Row Buttonhole, knit to end.

Work Rows 11–19 same as for button band.

Bind off.

**Right pocket**

Working in first row of St st above lower border on right front, count 15 sts to the left of buttonhole band. Using larger 16" needle, with RS facing, beg with the next st, pick up and knit 25 sts in first row of St st above lower border.

**Row 1 (WS)** Purl.

**Row 2 (RS)** K1, M1, knit to last st, M1, k1—27 sts.

Work 23 more rows in St st, ending with a WS row.

**SHAPE POCKET TOP**

**Row 1 (RS)** Knit to last 5 sts, turn.

**Row 2 (WS)** Work GSR, purl to end.

**Row 3** Knit to 3 sts before double st, turn.

**Row 4** Work GSR, purl to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 four more times.

**Next row (RS)** Knit to end, knitting double sts tog as single sts.

**POCKET BORDER**

Change to smaller cir needle.

**Row 1 (WS)** P2, \*k3, p1, rep from \* to last 5 sts, k3, p2.

**Row 2 (RS)** Knit.

**Rows 3 and 4** Rep Rows 1 and 2.

**Row 5** P2, k1, p1, \*k3, p1, rep from \* to last 3 sts, k1, p2.

**Row 6** Knit.

**Rows 7 and 8** Rep Rows 5 and 6.

**Rows 9-11** Rep Rows 1-3.

Bind off.

### Left pocket

Working in first row of St st above lower border on left front, count 40 sts to the right of button band. Using larger 16" needle, with RS facing, beg with the last st counted, pick up and knit 25 sts in first row of St st above lower border.

**Row 1 (WS)** Purl.

**Row 2 (RS)** K1, M1, knit to last st, M1, k1—27 sts.

Work 22 more rows in St st, ending with a RS row.

### SHAPE POCKET TOP

**Row 1 (WS)** Purl to last 5 sts, turn.

**Row 2 (RS)** Work GSR, knit to end.

**Row 3** Purl to 3 sts before double st, turn.

**Row 4** Work GSR, knit to end.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 four more times.

**Next row (WS)** Purl to end, purling double sts tog as single sts.

**Next row (RS)** Knit.

### POCKET BORDER

Work same as pocket border for right pocket.

### FINISHING

Sew sides of pockets to RS of fronts.

Weave in ends. Block to finished measurements.

Sew buttons opposite buttonholes.

**MARY LOU EGAN** has been designing and teaching knitting for many years. She teaches regularly at the Yarnery in St. Paul, Minnesota, and at shops and fiber festivals nationwide. The title of her most recent book, *Drop-Dead Easy Knits* (Clarkson Potter, 2016)—coauthored with Gale Zucker and Kirsten Kapur—sums up her knitting philosophy. Find her on Instagram @MLEganDesign.

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# Chill Chaser Poncho

DEBORAH NEWTON

## MATERIALS

**YARN** Manos del Uruguay *Wool Clásica* (100% handspun wool; 138 yd [126 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); CW138 La Perla, 5 (8, 10) skeins. Distributed by Fairmount Fibers.

**NEEDLES** Sizes 10½ (6.5 mm) and 10 (6 mm): 24" circular (cir). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** 12 (14, 16) markers (m) in 4 different colors/ styles; cable needle (cn); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 14 sts and 22 rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in Garter Rib patt and larger needles, blocked. 23 sts = 5½" (14 cm) in Cable patt and larger needles.

**FINISHED SIZE** 52 (60, 68)" (132 [152.5, 172.5] cm) circumference at upper arm. Shown in size 52" (132 cm), modeled with 15" (38 cm) ease.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

## NOTES

- The poncho is worked in the round from the lower edge, with gradual decreases toward the neckline.
- The neckline ribbing starts with short rows to slightly lengthen the back of the poncho.

## STITCH GUIDE

**Garter Rib** (for swatch, multiple of 6 plus 4)

**Row 1 (RS)** K4, \*p2, k4, rep from \* to end.

**Row 2 (WS)** Purl.

Rep Rows 1-2 for patt.

## German Short-rows (GSR)

Sl first st pwise wyf. Pull the yarn firmly up and over the needle to the back, creating a "double stitch."

When you come to a double st on a subsequent row, work it tog as a single st.

## PONCHO

With larger needles, using long-tail method, CO 240 (280, 320) sts.

Place beg of rnd m and join, taking care not to twist sts.

## Eyelet ribbing

**Rnds 1 and 2** \*P2, k3, rep from \* to end of rnd.

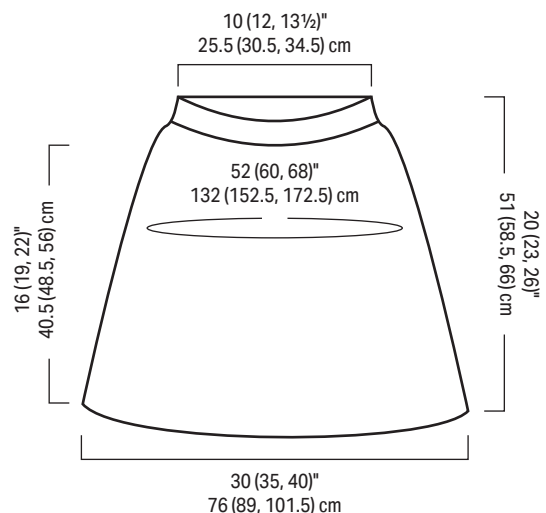
**Rnd 3** (eyelet rnd) \*Yo, p2tog, k3; rep from \* to end of rnd.

**Rnds 4-9** Rep Rnds 1-3 twice.

**Rnds 10 and 11** \*P2, k3, rep from \* to end of rnd.

## Size 52" (132 cm) only

**Rnd 12** Knit.



**Size 60" (152.5 cm) only**

**Rnd 12** K2tog, knit to end—279 sts.

**Size 68" (172.5 cm) only**

**Rnd 12** K2tog, k158, k2tog, knit to end—318 sts.  
Cont for all sizes.

**Body**

*Note:* Round begins at right back shoulder.  
Set up patt sections as foll:

**Rnd 1** [Work Rnd 1 of Cable Chart over 23 sts, pm, k16 (back divider section), pm] 2 (2, 3) times, work Rnd 1 of Cable Chart over 23 sts, place unique marker, k19 (left side section), place unique marker, [work Rnd 1 of Cable Chart over 23 sts, pm, k16 (front divider section), pm] 2 (3, 3) times, work Rnd 1 of Cable Chart over 23 sts, place unique marker, k19 (right side section).

**Rnd 2** [Work Rnd 2 of chart over 23 sts, slip marker (sl m), k4, p2, k4, p2, k4, sl m] 2 (2, 3) times, work Rnd 2 of chart over 23 sts, sl m, k4, p2, k7, p2, k4 (left side section), sl m, [work Rnd 2 of chart over 23 sts, sl m, k4, p2, k4, p2, k4, sl m] 2 (3, 3) times, work Rnd 2 of chart over 23 sts, sl m, k4, p2, k7, p2, k4 (right side section).

Rep the last 2 rnds in Garter Rib as est in divider sections, slipping markers and cont Cable Chart rows, until 2 (3, 4) reps of Cable patt have been completed—32 (48, 64) rnds above ribbing.

**Begin Shaping**

*Note:* The side sections are marked with unique markers. The side panels and the front/back divider

sections are decreased away at different rates, so read to end of section before proceeding.

**Rnd 1** (dec rnd) \*Work 23 sts in patt, sl m, ssk, work to 2 sts before marker, k2tog, rep from \* to end of rnd—12 (14, 16) sts dec'd—228 (265, 302) sts.

**Rnds 2-6** Cont in patt as est.

**Rnds 7-24** Rep the last 6 rnds 3 more times—192 (223, 254) sts.

**Rnds 25-37** Cont in patt, dec as est in front/back dividers only every 6th rnd (Rnds 25, 31, 37), and *at the same time* dec as est in side dividers only every 4th rnd (Rnds 25, 29, 33, 37).

**Rnds 43-44** Cont in patt as est, with 2 sts in each front/back divider and 3 sts in each side divider.

**Rnd 45** [Work 23 sts in patt, sl m, k2tog] 2 (2, 3) times, work 23 sts in patt, k3tog, [work 23 sts in patt, sl m, k2tog] 2 (3, 3) times, work 23 sts in patt, k3tog—144 (168, 192) sts.

**Rnds 46-47** Cont in patt as est with 1 st between each Cable Chart rep.

Change to smaller needles.

**Rnd 48** (dec rnd) \*K2tog, k3, k2tog, k2, k2tog, k1, ssk, k2, ssk, k3, ssk, k1, rep from \* to end of rnd, removing all markers except beg of rnd—108 (126, 144) sts.

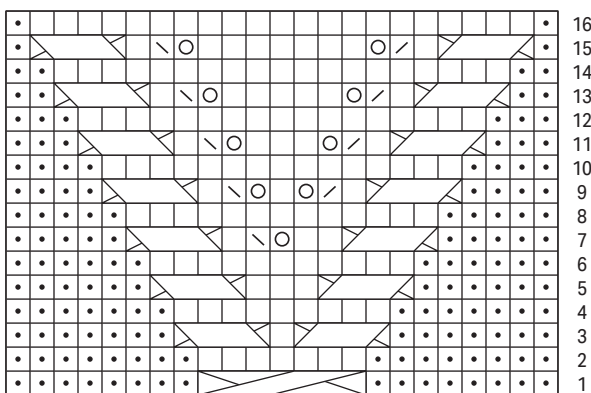
**Collar**

Set up collar ribbing and mark off 19 (19, 25) center back neck sts as foll:

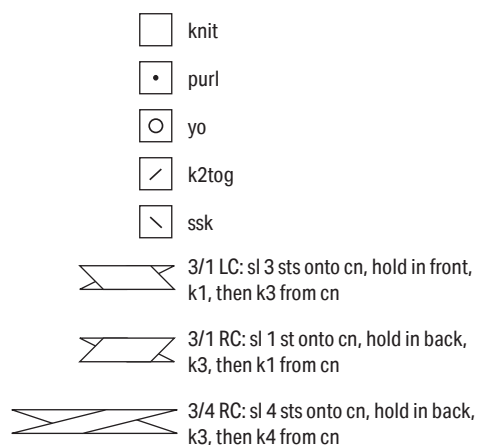
**Size 52" (132 cm) only**

**Set-up rnd** [K3, p2] 3 times, k2, pm, k2tog, [p2, k3] 3 times, p2, k2tog, pm, k2, \*p2, k3, rep from \* to last 3 sts, p2tog, p1—105 sts.

**Cable Chart**



**Key**



**Size 60" (152.5 cm) only**

**Set-up rnd** [K3, p2] 3 times, k2, pm, k1, [p2, k3] 3 times, p2, k1, pm, k2, \*p2, k3, rep from \* to last 3 sts, p2tog, p1—125 sts.

**Size 68" (172.5 cm) only**

**Rnd 12** [K3, p2] 4 times, k2tog, k2, pm, p2tog, p1, [k3, p2] 4 times, k2tog, k2, pm, p1, p2tog, \*k3, p2, rep from \* to end of rnd—140 sts.

**SHORT-ROWS**

Shape back neck using German short-rows (see Stitch Guide) as foll:

**Short-row 1 (RS)** Work in rib patt as est to 2nd marker (end of marked sts for back neck), turn.

**Short-row 2 (WS)** Make double st, work in rib to marker, turn.

**Short-row 3** Make double st, work in rib to 3 sts past last turn, working double st as a k2tog, turn.

**Short-row 4** Make double st, work in rib to 3 sts past last turn, working double st as a k2tog, turn.

Cont working 3 sts past the last turn until 12 sts have been worked past each marker. Turn to RS and work to end of rnd in rib as est. Remove m and resolve final double st on next rnd.

**Rnd 1 (eyelet rnd)** \*K3, yo, p2tog, rep from \* to end of rnd.

**Rnds 2 and 3** \*K3, p2, rep from \* to end of rnd.

Rep last 3 rnds 2 more times. BO loosely in patt.

**FINISHING**

Weave in ends. Steam lightly with damp cloth or wet-block if desired.

---

**DEBORAH NEWTON** teaches and designs knitwear in her native city of Providence, Rhode Island. She is the author of numerous knitting books including *Good Measure: Knit a Perfect Fit Every Time* (Sixth & Spring, 2015). Find her online at [deborahnewtonknits.com](http://deborahnewtonknits.com), on Ravelry as [deborahnewton](#), and on Instagram [@deborahnewtonknits](#).





## Grand Picot Chunky Scarf

LORI STEINBERG

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Studio Donegal *Soft Marl* (100% merino wool; 210 yd [192 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); #9588 Oatmeal, 2 skeins. Distributed by Kokomo Yarns.

**NEEDLES** Size 8 (5 mm). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Stitch marker (m); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 17½ sts and 24 rows = about 4" (10 cm) in Grand Picot Eyelet patt, not blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** About 55½" (141 cm) long and 7¼" (18.5 cm) wide at point of lace edge.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### NOTES

- Scarf is constructed by knitting an edging onto a narrow base strip. The strip pattern is worked over an odd number of rows, which makes it reversible.
- Because the garter-stitch fabric does not curl and the scarf naturally forms a gentle curve, it is not necessary to block it.

### STITCH GUIDE

**SK2P:** Sl 1 st kwise, k2tog, pass sl st over dec'd st—2 sts dec'd.

**Grand Picot Eyelet** (multiple of 3 sts plus 4)

**Row 1** K2, \*SK2P, yo twice; rep from \* to last 2 sts, k2.

**Row 2** K2, \*p1, k1 into double yo, p1; rep from \* to last 2 sts, k2.

**Row 3** Knit.

Rep Rows 1–3 for patt.

### SCARF

#### Base Strip

CO 13 sts. Knit one row.

Work Rows 1–3 of Grand Picot Eyelet patt (see Stitch Guide) 112 times—336 patt rows completed. BO.

#### Lace Edging

CO 22 sts. Knit 1 row.

**Set-up row (RS)** K1, [yo, k2tog] 7 times, yo, place marker (pm), k2, [yo, k2tog] twice, sl 1 kwise, pick up and knit 1 st along edge of base strip, pass sl st over picked-up st—23 sts.

**Row 2 (and all WS rows)** Sl 1 pwise, k2, [yo, k2tog] twice, sl m, k2, knit to end.

**Rows 3, 5, 7, and 9** Knit to m, yo, sl m, k2, [yo, k2tog] twice, sl 1 kwise, pick up and knit 1 st along edge of base strip, pass sl st over picked-up st—1 st inc'd.

**Row 11** BO 5 sts, [yo, k2tog] 7 times, yo, sl m, k2, [yo, k2tog] twice, sl 1 kwise, pick up and knit 1 st along edge of base strip, pass sl st over picked-up st—23 sts.

**Row 12** Rep Row 2.

Rep Rows 3–12 thirty more times along the length of the base strip, joining each RS row to the corresponding row of the base strip, to the end of the base strip. BO. *Note:* Occasionally skip a row along the base strip if needed to avoid crowding along the edge—join to the stitch that presents itself as you work.

## FINISHING

Weave in ends. Block if desired.

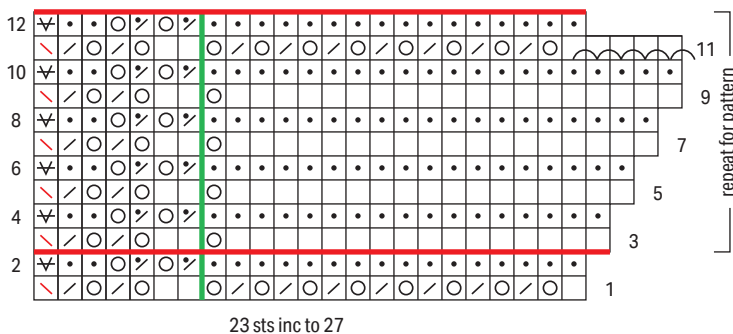
**LORI STEINBERG** has had designs published in many publications, including *Vogue Knitting*, *Noro Magazine*, *Interweave Crochet*, and *Knit Simple*. She was on the creative team of the revised and updated edition of *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book* (Sixth & Spring, 2018) and has a parallel career as a director of plays and musicals.



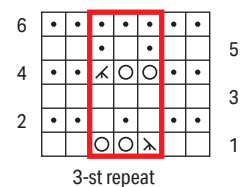
### Key

- knit on RS; purl on WS
- purl on RS; knit on WS
- yarn over
- sl 1, k2tog, pssso on RS
- sl 1, k2tog, pssso on WS
- k2tog on RS
- k2tog on WS
- sl 1 kwise wyf
- sl1, pick up and knit 1 into base, pssso
- bind off
- pattern repeat
- marker

### Lace Edging Chart



### Grand Picot Eyelet Chart





## Rustic Colorwork Cap

JEN GEIGLEY

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Blue Sky Fibers *Woolstok Worsted* (100% fine Highland wool; 123 yd (112 m)/1¼ oz [50 g]); Storm Cloud (MC) and Golden Meadow (CC), 1 skein each.

**NEEDLES** Sizes 6 (4 mm) and 7 (4.5 mm): 16" circular (cir); size 7 (4.5 mm): set of double-pointed (dpn). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Markers (m); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 21 sts and 24 rows = about 4" (10 cm) in St st using larger needle, blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** 20" (51 cm) circumference and 9" (23 cm) tall after blocking.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### CAP

Using MC, smaller cir needle, and German Twisted method, CO 108 sts. Place marker (pm) and join for working in the rnd, being careful not to twist sts.

**Rnd 1** \*K2, p2, rep from \* to end.

Rep Rnd 1 nine more times.

Change to larger cir needle.

Knit 3 rnds.

Join CC. Work Rnds 1–15 of Colorwork Chart.

Break CC. With MC only, knit even until piece measures 5½" (14 cm) from CO edge or 3" (7.5 cm) less than desired finished length.

### Shape crown

Change to dpn when necessary.

**Rnd 1** \*K27, pm, rep from \* to end of rnd.

**Rnd 2** \*K1, k2tog, knit to 2 sts before m, ssk, rep from \* to end of rnd—8 sts dec'd.

**Rnd 3** Knit.

Rep Rnds 2 and 3 ten more times—20 sts rem.

**Next rnd** \*K3tog, ssk, rep from \* to end of rnd—8 sts rem.

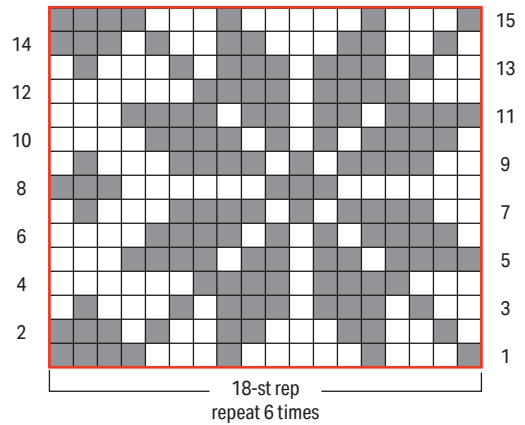
Cut yarn, thread tail through rem sts, pull tight to gather, and fasten off on WS.

**FINISHING**

Weave in ends. Block to measurements.

**JEN GEIGLEY** lives and knits in Des Moines, Iowa. She is known for creating clean, modern knitwear designs that are easy to wear and fun to knit. Jen's work has appeared in numerous knitting publications, and she has self-published knitwear patterns online since 2010, when she posted the GAP-tastic Cowl on Ravelry; it quickly became one of the most knitted projects on the site.

Colorwork Chart



**Key**  
 □ k with MC    ■ k with CC    □ repeat

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## Farmer's Favorite Socks

DEBBIE O'NEILL

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Laxtons *Sheepsoft* DK (100% British wool; 241 yd [220 m]/3½ oz [100 g]); Coverdale (MC), 1 (1, 2) skein(s); Kettlewell (CC), 1 skein.

**NEEDLES** Size 4 (3.5 mm): set of double-pointed (dpn). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Cable needle (cn); tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 24 sts and 34 rnds = about 4" (10 cm) in St st, blocked.

**FINISHED SIZE** 7 (8, 9)" (18 [20.5, 23] cm) leg circumference, lightly blocked. Sample shown measures 8" (20.5 cm).

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### NOTES

- This pattern is written for knitting with four dpn.
- To knit an in-between size, try knitting at a slightly looser or tighter gauge.

- The ribbing is very elastic. Your sock will appear very narrow until washed and blocked.
- The small colorwork band will be less elastic than the ribbing and cable portions. If you find the band to be too constricting, try working it on a needle one or two sizes larger for more ease.
- If you wish to make the leg or the foot longer, you may require an additional skein of MC yarn.

### STITCH GUIDE

**3x2 Rib in the round** (multiple of 5 sts)

**Rnd 1** \*K3, p2, rep from \* to end.

Rep Rnd 1 for patt.

**3x2 Rib in rows** (multiple of 5 sts)

**Row 1** \*K3, p2, rep from \* to end.

**Row 2** \*K2, p3, rep from \* to end.

Rep Rows 1 and 2 for patt.

**1x1 Checkerboard** (multiple of 2 sts)

**Rnd 1** \*K1 CC, k1 MC, rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 2** \*K1 MC, k1 CC, rep from \* to end.

Rep Rnds 1 and 2 for patt.

**3/3 RC:** Sl 3 sts to cn, hold in back, k3, then k3 from cn.

**3/3 LC:** Sl 3 sts to cn, hold in front, k3, then k3 from cn.

**Entwined Cable in the round** (panel of 9 sts)

**Rnds 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8** Knit.

**Rnd 3** K3, 3/3 LC.

**Rnd 7** 3/3 RC, k3.

Rep Rnds 1–8 for patt.

**Entwined Cable in rows** (panel of 9 sts)

**Rows 1 and 5** Knit.

**Rows 2, 4, 6, and 8** Purl.

**Row 3** K3, 3/3 LC.

**Row 7** 3/3 RC, k3.

Rep Rows 1–8 for patt.

### SOCKS

#### Leg

With CC, CO 40 (50, 60) sts. Divide sts onto three dpn as foll: 13 (17, 20) sts on Needle 1, 14 (16, 20) sts on Needle 2, and 13 (17, 20) sts on Needle 3. Join for working in the rnd, being careful not to twist sts. Work in 3x2 Rib (see Stitch Guide) until cuff measures 2" (5 cm), or desired length. Knit 1 rnd.

Join MC. With MC, knit 1 rnd.

Work Rnds 1 and 2 of 1x1 Checkerboard (see Stitch Guide) twice, then Rnd 1 once. Break CC. With MC, knit 1 rnd.

**Next rnd** Set up for leg as foll: With MC, k4, M1, k4, p2, work 3x2 Rib to end of rnd—41 (51, 61) sts. Cont as est, working leg with first 9 sts on Needle 1 as Entwined Cable (see Stitch Guide) and rem sts as 3x2 Rib beg with p2 until leg measures about 7" (18 cm) or desired length.

### Heel flap

*Note:* The heel flap is worked back and forth in rows with est Entwined Cable down the middle of 3x2 Rib. The first st of each row is slipped purlwise to create a chain of sts along each edge of the flap. These chain sts make it easy to pick up sts along the edges of the heel flap when knitting the gusset. The heel flap determines the depth of the instep. Typically, the heel flap is approximately square (knitted as long as it is wide), but if you have a high instep, you may wish to work additional rows to make your heel flap slightly longer.

**Next row (RS)** Work 15 (18, 21) sts from Needles 1 and 2; turn work.

**Next row (WS)** Sl 1, work 20 (26, 32) sts from Needles 1 and 3 in patt as est (Entwined Cable and 3x2 Rib). Slip rem sts from Needle 3 onto Needle 2 for instep—21 (27, 33) heel flap sts and 20 (24, 28) instep sts.

Cont working heel flap as foll:

**Row 1 (RS)** Sl 1, work in est patt to end.

**Row 2 (WS)** Sl 1, work in est patt to end.

Rep Rows 1 and 2 until there are 10 (12, 14) sl sts along each side of the heel flap—20 (24, 28) rows.

### Turn heel

**Row 1 (RS)** K13 (16, 19), ssk, k1. Turn work.

**Row 2** Sl 1, p6, p2tog, p1, turn.

**Row 3** Sl 1, k to 1 st before gap, ssk, k1, turn.

**Row 4** Sl 1, p to 1 st before gap, p2tog, p1, turn.

### SIZE 8" ONLY:

Rep Rows 3 and 4 until all sts from the heel flap have been worked—17 sts rem.

### SIZE 7, 9" ONLY:

Rep Rows 3 and 4 until 1 st remains unworked on each side.

**Next Row (RS)** Sl 1, knit to 1 st before gap, ssk, turn.

**Next Row (WS)** Sl 1, p to 1 st before gap, p2tog, turn—13 (\_\_, 19) sts rem.

### Gusset

*Note:* If you added length to the heel flap, pick up 1 st for each extra slipped stitch along edge of flap. Knit 7 (9, 10) heel sts onto one needle; knit rem 6 (8, 9) heel sts onto another needle. With second needle, pick up and knit 10 (12, 14) sts along right side of heel. To avoid leaving a hole, you may pick up an



extra st at each top edge of the heel flap. Work across 20 (24, 28) instep sts, cont in est 3x2 Rib (working sts as they appear). With rem needle, pick up and knit 10 (12, 14) sts along left side of heel (to match number of sts picked up along right side of heel), then knit rem heel sts onto this needle (half the heel sts plus the right gusset sts on Needle 1, instep sts on Needle 2, and left gusset sts plus rem heel sts on Needle 3)—53 (65, 75) sts.

**Rnd 1** (dec rnd) Needle 1: knit to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1; Needle 2: work across instep sts in est 3x2 Rib; Needle 3: k1, ssk, knit to end of rnd—2 sts dec'd.

**Rnd 2** Work in est patt (St st on Needles 1 and 3, 3x2 Rib on Needle 2).

Repeat these 2 rnds until 41 (49, 57) sts rem.

**Next rnd** Needle 1: knit; Needle 2: work across instep sts in est 3x2 Rib; Needle 3: k1, ssk, knit to end of rnd—1 st dec'd; 40 (48, 56) sts rem.

### Foot

Cont in est patt (knit on Needles 1 and 3, 3x2 Rib on Needle 2) until the foot measures about 1¾ (2, 2¼)"

(4.5 [5, 5.5] cm) shorter than desired length. Break MC and join CC. With CC, knit 1 rnd.

### Toe

**Rnd 1** (dec rnd) Needle 1: work to 3 sts from end, k2tog, k1; Needle 2: k1, ssk, work to last 3 sts in est patt, k2tog, k1; Needle 3: k1, ssk, knit to end—4 sts dec'd.

**Rnd 2** Work in est patt (St st on Needles 1 and 3, 3x2 Rib on Needle 2).

Rep Rnds 1 and 2 until 20 sts rem (10 heel sts and 10 instep sts). Work heel sts onto one needle. Graft sts.

### FINISHING

Weave in ends. Wash and block as desired.

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When not spending time with her family and pets, writing software, or teaching knitting, **DEBBIE O'NEILL** obsesses over all things knitting, reading, gardening, and cooking. Find her on Instagram @nuttycreationsdesigns.

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## Brooklyn Mitts

OLGA PUTANO

### MATERIALS

**YARN** Brooklyn Tweed *Tones Light* (100% Columbia wool; 225 yd [205 m]/1¼ oz [50 g]); 1 skein each of Overtones Lychee (C1), Overtones Goldfinch (C2), and Overtones Deco (C3).

**NEEDLES** Sizes 3 (3.25 mm) and 5 (3.75 mm): circular (cir) or set of double-pointed (dnp). Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

**NOTIONS** Markers (m); scrap yarn; tapestry needle.

**GAUGE** 18 sts and 54 rnds = 4" (10 cm) in 2-color brioche st with smaller needles, blocked (see Notes).

**FINISHED SIZE** 8 (8¾)" (20.5 [22] cm) hand circumference and 8 (8½)" (20.5 [21.5] cm) length. *Note:* Brioche stitch is very elastic, and each size can accommodate a hand circumference up to 2" (5 cm) larger.

See [farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations](http://farmfiberknits.com/abbreviations) for terms you don't know.

### NOTES

- Mitts are identical and can be worn on either hand.
- The main brioche fabric is worked using smaller needles because of its stretchy nature. The ribbing for the cuff and top is worked on larger needles. Although suggested measurements are given, the mitts can be blocked to your preference for a looser or tighter fit.
- Choose circular or double-pointed needles as you prefer for working small circumferences in the round.
- When counting stitches, each slipped stitch and its companion yarnover counts as one stitch.
- When counting rounds to check gauge, each visible knit stitch in a column represents two rounds: the round in which the stitch was worked as brioche knit stitch, and the following round when it was slipped with its companion yarnover.

### STITCH GUIDE

**Brk:** Brioche knit; knit the st and its yo tog.

**Brp:** Brioche purl; purl the st and its yo tog.

**Brkyobr:** Work [brk, yo, brk] all in the next st and its yo—3 sts made from one knit/yo pair. On the foll rnd, work the 3 sts as sl1yo, p1, sl1yo.

**Sl1yo:** Sl 1 st pwse wyf, then bring yarn over needle to back to create companion yo for sl st.

### MITTS

#### Cuff

With larger needles, C1, and using the Twisted German method, CO 32 (36) sts. Place marker (pm) and join for working in the rnd, being careful not to twist sts.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, p1; rep from \* to end.

Rep 2 more times.

Break C1 and join C2.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, k1; rep from \* to end.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, p1; rep from \* to end.

Rep last rnd until cuff measures 2" (5 cm) from CO.

#### Lower hand and thumb gusset

Change to smaller needles.

**Next rnd** (brioche set-up rnd) With C2, \*sl1yo, p1; rep from \* to end.



Join C3 for working in 2-color brioche.

**Rnd 1** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 2** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end.

**Rnds 3-8** Rep last 2 rnds three more times.

**Rnd 9** With C3, [brk, sl1yo] 8 (9) times, pm, brkyobrck, pm, sl1yo, [brk, sl1yo] 7 (8) times—34 (38) sts; 3 sts between gusset ms.

**Rnd 10** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to m, sl m, sl1yo, p1, sl1yo, sl m, brp, \*\*sl1yo, brp; rep from \*\* to end.

**Rnd 11** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end, sl ms.

**Rnd 12** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end.

**Rnds 13-20** Rep Rnds 11 and 12 four more times.

**Rnd 21** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to m, sl m, brkyobrck, sl1yo, brkyobrck, sl m, sl1yo, \*\*brk, sl1yo; rep from \*\* to end of rnd—38 (42) sts; 7 sts between gusset ms.

**Rnd 22** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to m, sl m, sl1yo, p1, sl1yo, brp, sl1yo, p1, sl1yo, sl m, brp, \*\*sl1yo, brp; rep from \*\* to end.

**Rnd 23** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 24** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end.

**Rnds 25-32** Rep Rnds 13 and 24 four more times.

**Rnd 33** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to m, sl m, brkyobrck, [sl1yo, brk] 2 times, sl1yo, brkyobrck, sl m, sl1yo, \*\*brk, sl1yo; rep from \*\* to end of rnd—42 (46) sts; 11 sts between gusset ms.

**Rnd 34** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to m, sl m, sl1yo, p1, [sl1yo, brp] 3 times, sl1yo, p1, sl1yo, sl m, brp, \*\*sl1yo, brp; rep from \*\* to end.

**Rnd 35** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 36** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end. Break C3 and join C1.

**Rnd 37** With C1, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 38** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end.

**Rnds 39-44** Rep Rnds 37 and 38 three more times—piece measures about 5¼" (13.5 cm) from CO.

#### SIZE 8¾" (22 CM) ONLY

**Rnd 45** With C1, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to m, sl m, brkyobrck, [sl1yo, brk] 4 times, sl1yo, brkyobrck, sl m, sl1yo, \*\*brk, sl1yo; rep from \*\* to end of rnd—50 sts; 15 sts between gusset ms.

**Rnd 46** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to m, sl m, sl1yo, p1, [sl1yo, brp] 5 times, sl1yo, p1, sl1yo, sl m, brp, \*\*sl1yo, brp; rep from \*\* to end.

**Rnd 47** With C1, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 48** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end of rnd—piece measures 5½" (14 cm) from CO.

#### Upper hand

Work both sizes as foll:

**Rnd 1** With C1, [brk, sl1yo] 8 (9) times, remove m, brk, place next 9 (13) sts on scrap yarn holder for thumb, taking care to keep each yo with its companion st, use the backward-loop method to CO 3 sts across thumb gap, brk, remove m, sl1yo, [brk, sl1yo] 7 (8) times—36 (40) sts.

**Rnd 2** With C2, [sl1yo, brp] 8 (9) times, sl1yo, work new CO sts as [p1, sl1yo, p1], then [sl1yo, brp] 8 (9) times.

**Rnd 3** With C1, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 4** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end. Break C1 and join C3.

**Rnd 5** With C3, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 6** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end. Rep Rnds 5 and 6 fourteen (sixteen) more times—piece measures 7¾ (8¼)" (19.5 [21] cm) from CO.

#### Top ribbing

Break C3 and cont with C2 only.

**Next rnd** \*Brk, p1; rep from \* to end.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, p1; rep from \* to end.

Change to larger needles.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, p1; rep from \* to end.

Rep last rnd once more—piece measures 8 (8½)" (20.5 [21.5] cm) from CO.

BO all sts in rib patt.

### Thumb

With smaller needle, C2, RS facing, and starting about 12" (30.5 cm) from end of yarn, use the yarn tail to pick up and knit 1 st in corner of thumb gap, 3 sts from base of sts cast on for hand, and 1 st in other corner of gap—5 sts; the strand attached to the ball of yarn should be at the beg of these sts with RS facing.

Return 9 (13) held thumb sts to smaller needles.

Join C1 with RS facing to start of picked-up sts, pm, and join for working in the rnd so rnd begins with the new sts—14 (18) sts.

**Rnd 1** With C1, work 5 picked-up sts as [k1, sl1yo] 2 times, k1, then work held sts in est patt as sl1yo, [brk, sl1yo] 4 (6) times.

**Rnd 2** With C2, \*sl1yo, brp; rep from \* to end.

**Rnd 3** With C1, \*brk, sl1yo; rep from \* to end.

**Rnds 4-8** Work Rnds 2 and 3 two more times, then work Rnd 2 once more.

Break C1 and cont with C2 only.

**Next rnd** \*Brk, p1; rep from \* to end.

**Next rnd** \*K1tbl, p1; rep from \* to end.

BO all sts in rib patt.

### FINISHING

Weave in ends. Wet-block to desired size and dry.

**OLGA PUTANO** is a Ukrainian-American knitting designer residing in Pennsylvania. Olga is known for her gorgeous colorwork sweaters and is the author of the book *Only Yoking* (David & Charles, 2023). Learning and applying new-to-her knitting techniques is exciting to Olga, and one of her favorite things about the craft is that there is always something fun to discover. She is also a wife, the mother of four, and a homesteader. Find Olga on Instagram @olgaputanodesigns.

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