

Cornucopia Placemats and Napkins

ANITA THOMPSON



Photos by Joe Coca

HANDWOVEN®

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JOECOCA

STRUCTURE

8-shaft overshot on opposites, inlaid 8-shaft overshot on opposites, and plain weave.

EQUIPMENT

8-shaft loom, 19" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 2 shuttles; 4 bobbins; 2 small netting or stick shuttles for inlay on napkins; temple (recommended); tapestry needles for hemstitching and working in inlaid overshot ends.

YARNS

Warp: 10/2 mercerized pearl cotton (4,200 yd/lb; UKI), Wine Tone #73, 2,594 yd; Dark Sierra #99,

578 yd; Moss Green #62, 510 yd.

Plain weave and tabby weft:

10/2 mercerized pearl cotton, Wine Tone #73, 2,908 yd; Dark Sierra #99, 304 yd; Moss Green #62, 264 yd. **Pattern weft:** 5/2 mercerized pearl cotton, Beige #43, 1,196 yd.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Matching sewing thread.

WARP LENGTH

433 ends 8½ yd long, following the warp color order in Figure 1 (allows 13" for take-up, 29" for loom waste).

SETTS

Warp: 24 epi (2/dent in a 12-dent reed). **Weft:** 48 ppi (24 ppi pattern/24 ppi tabby) in pattern areas; 24 ppi in plain-weave areas.

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 18½".

Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 260" total: 96" placemats (4 placemats each 24" long); 96" lining for 4 placemats; 68" napkins (4 inlaid napkins each 17" long).

Finished size after washing: 4 lined placemats 14½" × 19½"; 4 inlaid napkins, hemstitched on 4 sides, 14¾" × 14¾".

I am fascinated by the multitude of designs that can be produced with 8-shaft overshot on opposites. (See Madelyn van der Hoogt's book, in Resources, for a great explanation of this structure.) The design in these placemats and napkins is loosely based on a 1770 German manuscript by a weaver named George Matthias Statler. I took a portion of the pattern and used it as a profile draft, making adjustments for float length. Many more pattern variations could be made using different tie-ups with the same threading and treadling.

I am also interested in color interactions within this structure. Most often, the overshot warp and tabby weft are a single color, with any color variations occurring in the pattern weft. For a change, I used three different colors in the warp and tabby weft and made the pattern weft a single color.

The placemats are woven with overshot patterning throughout and lined with plain-weave fabric woven on the same warp, for a thick mat that protects as well as decorates the table. The napkins are woven on the same warp, but the overshot pattern is inlaid only at the corners. The napkin hemstitching was inspired by a Weavers of Western Mass guild presentation given by Lisa Green. Her clear instructions made it look easy, and once you get going it really is. The same technique can be found in Virginia West's *Finishing Touches for the Handweaver* (see Resources).

I was happy with the finished pieces, and I look forward to playing with more drafts, tie-ups, and colors, excited by all this wonderful weave structure has in store.

RESOURCES

van der Hoogt, Madelyn. "8-shaft Overshot on Opposites." *The Complete Book of Drafting for Handweavers*. Coupeville, Washington: Shuttle Craft Books, 1993, pp. 45–49.

West, Virginia M. "Hemstitching on Four Sides." *Finishing Touches for the Handweaver*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1988, pp. 22–23.

1 Wind 433 warp threads 8½ yd long, following the color sequence in the warp color order, Figure 1. Use your preferred method to warp the loom, and thread following the draft in Figure 3. Sley 2 per dent in a 12-dent reed, centering for a weaving width of 18". (Because the selvages will be inside hems and seams, floating selvages are not necessary.)

2 Wind bobbins with each of the 3 tabby weft colors and 1 with the Beige pattern weft. Spread the warp with scrap yarn. **To weave the placemats:** Follow the placemat treadling order in the draft, Figure 3. Weave a ½" seam allowance in plain weave using the Wine Tone weft and ending on an even tabby pick (2-4-6-8). Weave a pattern shot followed by the odd tabby. Continue weaving, alternating even-odd tabby shots with the pattern, and changing tabby colors as indicated by columns 9 and 10 on the draft. The pattern threads are woven as Beige throughout. (Make sure to beat the overshot so that the pattern is square. Using a temple will counteract draw-in and help maintain an even beat of 24 ppi). End each placemat with a ½" seam allowance. Weave 2 picks in a contrasting color between placemats for a cutting line. Continue until 4 placemats are woven. You may remove the placemats from the loom at this point and re-tie the warp, or continue on with the napkins.

3 Napkins: Wind 2 small netting shuttles, stick shuttles, or butterflies with about 5 yd of Beige pattern weft for the inlaid overshot squares. Following the napkin treadling order in Figure 3, weave 46 picks of plain weave in Wine Tone. Weave the next tabby pick in Dark Sierra. Open the first pattern shed, and bring the pattern shuttle up through the warp and into the shed before the first Dark Sierra warp end, leaving a 10" tail in the back; take the shuttle through the shed and back down to the back at the end of the second Dark Sierra group. (Do not go across the entire width of the napkin.) With a second pattern shuttle, repeat the inlay on the other corner. Follow with a Dark Sierra tabby shot from selvage to selvage. Following the

color order for tabby shown in columns 9 and 10 of the draft, weave the inlaid overshot pattern followed by alternating tabby until the lower corner squares are complete. Leave a 10" tail in the back at the end of each square. Weave the body of the napkin, following the plain weave color order and making sure the center (outlined by the Moss Green stripes) forms an even square. Weave the remaining two inlaid pattern squares, and finish by weaving 46 picks of plain weave in Wine Tone. Weave in 2 picks of contrasting color for a cutting line. Continue Steps 4 through 6 until 4 napkins are woven.

4 Lining fabric: Using Wine Tone as weft, weave 96" in plain weave for the placemat lining, inserting 2 picks in a contrasting color every 24".

5 Remove the fabric from the loom. Zigzag stitch the raw edges on either side of the cutting lines and cut apart. Using a needle large enough to accommodate the 5/2 cotton, tuck the pattern thread tails into the back of the pattern design. Trim all tails of weft. Make a row of ladder hemstitching along the sides of the napkins that encircles 3 weft picks and joins the hemstitched rows at the top and bottom of the napkins (see Resources).

6 Handwash with mild detergent in hot water. Air dry, then hard-press with the iron on cotton setting.

FINISHING

1 Trim about ¾" from each selvage of the placemats and lining for a width of 15½", which allows ½" seam allowance, and zigzag the cut edges. Back each placemat with a length of coordinating plain-weave fabric. Place the overshot fabric and the lining right sides together and machine straight stitch ½" from the cut edges, leaving a 6" opening for turning. Trim the corners diagonally, turn the placemat right side out, and press the seams. Handstitch the opening closed, and press again, moving the iron across the fabric in the same direction as the pattern floats.

hems in twice, aligning the last fold so that it abuts the hemstitching, and press. Open out the hems at the corners and miter the corners following Virginia West's instructions. Blindstitch the hems by hand.