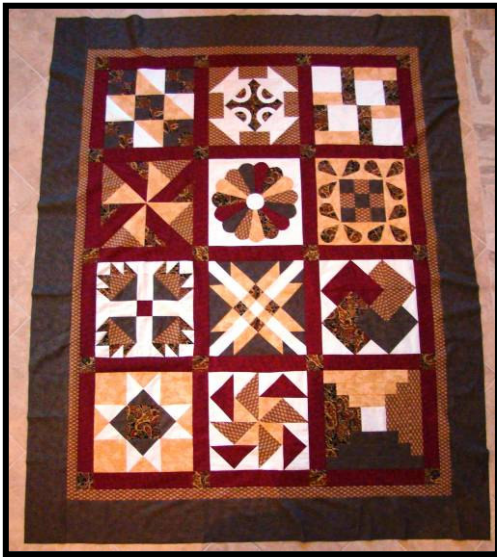


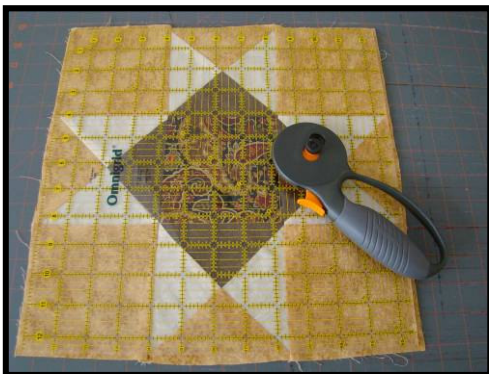
Sampler Quilt Top Construction



Do you believe we have come this far? I am so amazed and proud of all of you who have come along on this journey with me. I know there have been trials and tribulations...aren't there always? But, in the end I hope you enjoyed making all your blocks and learned something along the way.

Well, it's time to put those beautiful blocks together and you are going to need to select a sashing color, which are the red strips in my top; a cornerstone color, which are all of the paisley blocks connecting the sashing together; an inner border, mine is the caramel colored diamond; and then the outer border which in mine is the brown.

The first thing I did was to cut out some options and layout a portion of my quilt. I tried light sashing and dark cornerstones, dark sashing and light cornerstones. To do this without cutting anything, simply lay your blocks on a piece of fabric to see what they look like surrounded by that particular color.



I happen to have a 12 1/2" square cutting guide that was made for cutting down quilt blocks. The idea is that all your blocks should measure 12 1/2" square. Hahaha, yeah right. Mine were all over the place and if yours are correct you are a much better sewer than I am. So, I did my best to cut mine to 12 1/2" square. Keep in mind that if the cut is going into the

pattern at all - don't cut it. So, some of my blocks aren't quite big enough and a couple of them are slightly bigger, but I'll make all those slight adjustments as I attach the sashing. As you can imagine, we need all of the sashing pieces to be equal so the quilt will lay out in a perfect grid pattern.

So, let's cut out our sashing and cornerstones. We'll cut the inner border and outer border in a few minutes.

For a 6 block Sampler Quilt you will need to cut:

17 - 2 1/2" x 12 1/2" strips of sashing

12 - 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" square cornerstones

Once all of your cornerstones and sashing strips are cut out, lay them in their positions. Then, sew them together in the same fashion you would sew together a nine patch block. First sew the cornerstone, sashing, cornerstone, sashing, etc. strip together. Next sew the sashing, block, sashing, block, etc. strip together and continue



until you have the entire 6 block Sampler quilt in 5 long strips. If you followed my lead and created a 12 block quilt, you will of course need more sashing (31 strips) and cornerstones (20 squares), and you will have 9 long strips to sew together.



Take each strip you've created and iron the cornerstone seam allowances towards the sashing.



Iron the blocks towards the sashing in those strips. This way, when the strips are sewn together, there will be less bulk where the seams come together.



You may be able to see in this photo that the seam allowances are ironed in different directions.

Ok, are you ready? Here comes the exciting part. Sew the 5 strips together, pinning very carefully so all the seams line up. Iron the seams down flat and marvel at your beauty!



Now it's time to add the inner and outer borders. These can vary in width depending on your personal preferences. Below I describe what I've done in the past and what I did for the current quilt. Make your own decisions and cut out the strips accordingly.

For the inner border on my first Sampler Quilt, I cut strips 2 ½” wide just like the sashing. It’s OK, but I like the inner border a little smaller on my new Sampler Quilt. This time I cut the strips at 1 ¾” so the finished width is 1 ¼”, a visible difference from the sashing. So, make up your mind what width you would like and then cut two strips to go along the side with three blocks and surrounding sashing at 45”. It should be 45”, however, it’s best to measure the edge of your one quilt top and cut the inner border accordingly. The right way to lay out the borders is to match the length on the sides of your quilt when facing it and then add the top and bottom inner border after the side inner border strips are already attached.

For the outer border, determine the width you would like. I think anything between 4” and 5” is fine, so add your ½” for two ¼” seam allowances and then cut the length of the four strips as determined by the measurements of your quilt top.



Here I have my quilt top laid out on a table and I’ve played around with the fabrics I want to use for the inner and outer border. This is a good time to determine the width of your borders as well. This is when I noticed that I wanted the inner border smaller because the pattern on the fabric was so bold.

I probably shouldn’t have taken this photo on an angle, but the side of the quilt is the top left of the photo and the bottom of the quilt is the bottom right of the photo so you can see where the inner and outer borders start and stop.



To attach the borders, start with the sides of the inner border and sew them in place. Next, add the top and bottom of the inner border. Iron the seam allowances down flat.

Add the sides to the outer border, then the top and bottom and iron those seam allowances down flat. And guess what? You've completed your Sampler Quilt Top! Congratulations!

Next month we'll talk a little bit about how to quilt the top and backing together and how to add the binding. Have fun!

Shari



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