

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

November 2013

GOLDEN NEEDLE AWARDS

(Check
out this
winning
design,
pg. 46)

+ Ask an Expert: Your Best Business Partners

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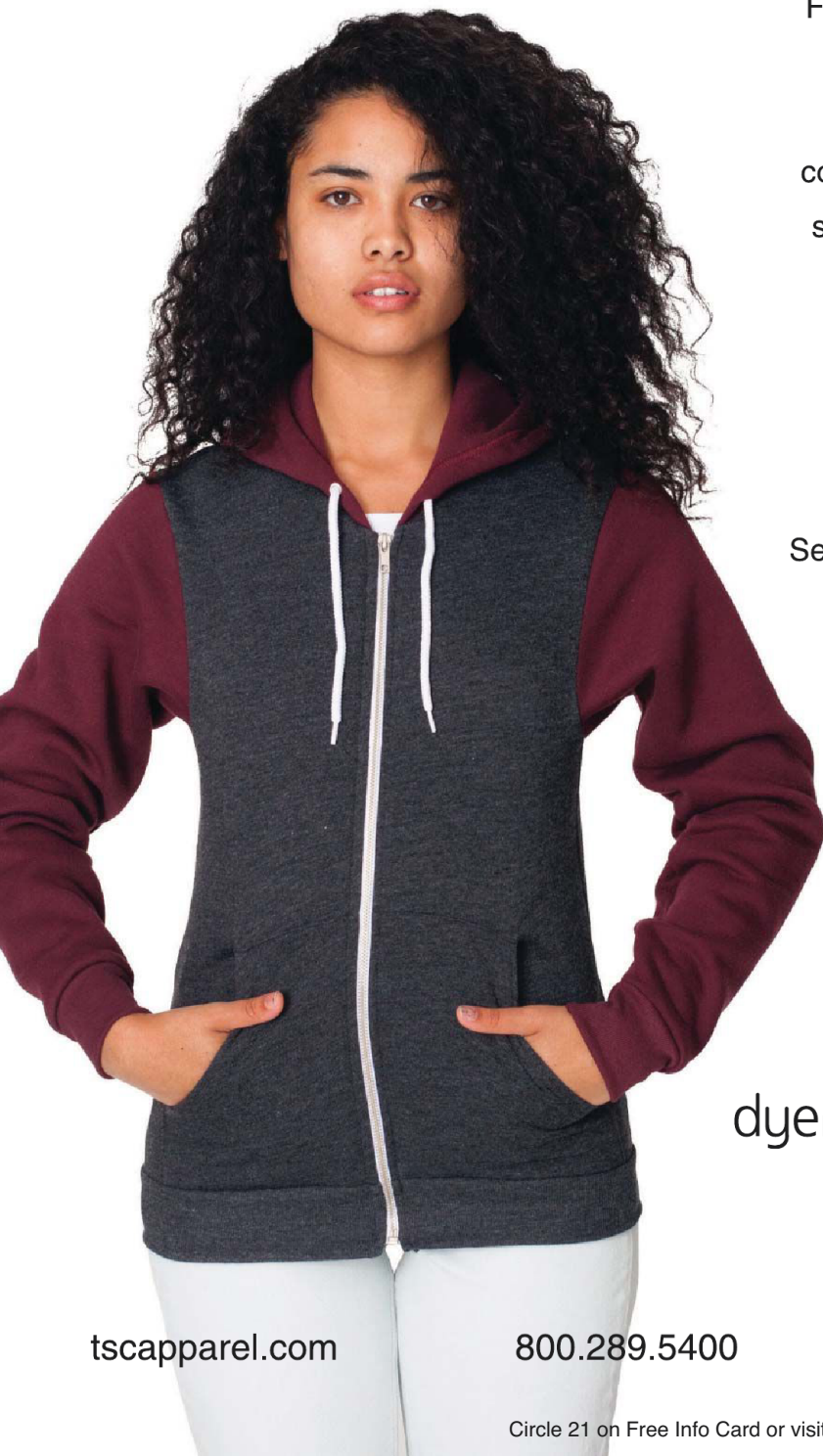
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Check out what's new in

FLEECE

There's a lot of cool new trends in fleece this fall and TSC has them all.



Fleece has come a long way, from a fashion staple to a fashion statement. New colors like bright neons, retro tie dyes and vintage cross-dyed combinations give an exciting new look to standard styles from Gildan and more. Performance fabrics meet fleece in fitness-ready hoods from Dodger. Trendy twists on fleece fashions from brands like American Apparel, Tultex and L.A.Ts are making fleece as fresh as ever.

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NOVEMBER 2013

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FEATURES

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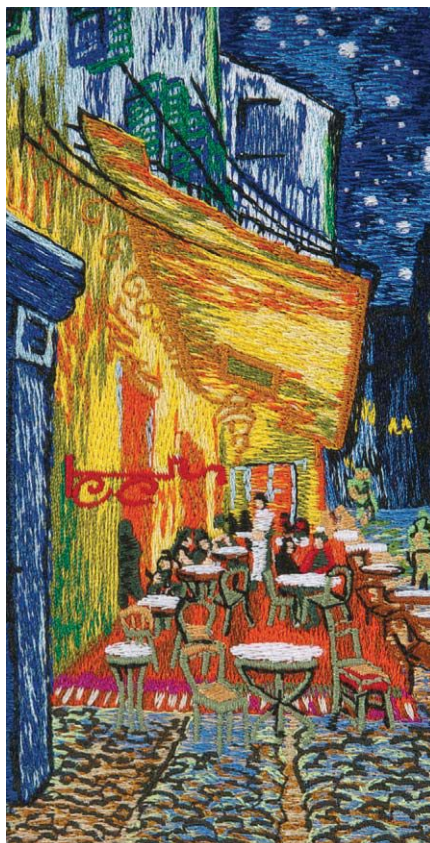
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About the Cover
Design: Hillary Haught
Photography: Mark Pricskett
Stitches Golden Needle Awards,
Editors' Pick for Embroidery
Winner: "Photo Girl," Steve Freeman,
Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

asi/58475

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Version 2.0 is 2.more

Check out our enhanced websites, now with all *new* images

The screenshot shows the ALPHA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Products, Marketing Tools, My Account, Help Center, About Us, and Specials. Below this, a search bar is present with the text "Search here for style #, brand, etc." and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar, there's a "Customer Service" section with the phone number (800)523-4585 and operating hours (Monday - Friday 8:00am - 8:00pm ET). Further right, there's a login section with fields for "Login:" and "Password:", and links for "Forgot Username?", "Forgot Password?", "Open an Account", and "Remember Me".

The main content area displays a product page for a Hanes t-shirt. On the left, there's a list of "20 Available Colors" with corresponding color swatches: LIGHT BLUE (S-3XL), DENIM BLUE (S-3XL), DEEP ROYAL (S-3XL), NAVY (S-3XL), PURPLE (S-3XL), PALE PINK (S-3XL), DEEP RED (S-3XL), MAROON (S-3XL), ORANGE (S-3XL), and YELLOW (S-3XL). In the center, there's a large image of a man wearing a blue t-shirt. To the right of the image, the product details are listed: "5280 Hanes 5.2 oz. ComfortSoft® Cotton T-Shirt". Below this, there are tabs for "CPSIA", "Overview", and "Specs". The "Overview" tab is selected, showing a list of features: 100% preshrunk ComfortSoft® cotton, Double-needle coverseamed neck, Taped shoulder-to-shoulder, Tag-free neck label, and Ash is 99% cotton, 1% polyester; Light Steel is 90% cotton, 10% polyester. Below the features, the sizes are listed as "S - 4XL" and the catalog page is "131". There are also links for "Companions: 5480(Youth)" and "Email this Page". At the bottom of the product page, there are buttons for "View in Gallery", "Add a Logo", "Compare Similar", and "Save to Favorites".



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In this issue's "Expert Weigh-In" in our "Inter-act" department, we chat with **AMIT**

GUPTA, CEO of MONAG Apparel (*asi/72010*), about his company, current supplier challenges and what T-shirt styles are hot for the ladies now. "Tees with graceful drapes combined with tights are in fashion," he says. "Dolman tees with draped sleeves fall gracefully over the wearer's torso for a flattering appearance and are very popular. The standard fitted tee is being replaced with trendy raglans and V-necks, which adds to the wearer's individual style."



In this issue's "Expert Weigh-In," we asked the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board to weigh in on a reader question: "What's a cost- and time-effective way for me to network with other local business owners?" **HOWARD POTTER**, CEO of Yorkville, NY-based A&P Master Images (*asi/702505*), recommends co-branding with clients. "Include with their order a free item they weren't expecting with their logo and yours, so they can give it to their clients for free," says Potter, who also recommends promoting your customers or networking partner on your website or Facebook, and have them do the same for you.



In this issue's "Ask an Expert," **ERICH CAMPBELL**, digitizer/e-commerce manager at Albuquerque, NM-based Black Duck Inc., offers a new shop owner a short list of potential partners – both individuals and businesses – that will help the new business grow. For one, creatives, like graphic designers, digitizers and Web designers. "This group's availability is particularly important," he writes. "If you need art alterations or fixes on a digitized file, slow response time can kill a time-sensitive job before it leaves the design phase. Look for good interviewers who take into account the application of your design and your customer's needs." Check out the four other types of partners you need to succeed in the decorated-apparel industry.

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The RIP software included with the DTG M series direct to garment printers is now approximately 30% faster, further increasing the shop's productivity. The new application can queue an entire days jobs, leaving the artist free to do other things while an operator simply advances from one job to the next.



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All About the Art



The late, great Alexander McQueen is one of my favorites when it comes to what's hot in wearable art, textile manipulation and apparel that dazzles. Consider his kaleidoscopic, floral stained glass-print men's skinny suits, or his architectural white embroidery on a structured, black Elizabethan-inspired mini dress (you can see these garments of rare beauty and more pinned on *Stitches*' Pinterest page). I love to browse Pinterest because it's a great site for finding inspirational embroideries and garments in literally 15 seconds – and I re-pin what I find to our boards so you get a collection of curated looks in even less time.

The November issue is special because we reveal the winners of the *Stitches* Golden Needle Awards for excellence in embroidery art and digitizing. We're always amazed by the entries. Every entry receives thoughtful scrutiny from *Stitches*' Editorial Advisory Board members; our digitizer Board members sew out and rate each digitizing entry. When we arrive at our winners' circle, you can be assured that we've got the best of the best.

Every year, we choose a stand-out design to take home the *Stitches*' Editors Pick for embroidery. This year, we chose

Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*) Managing Partner Steve Freeman and his team's 168,011-stitch "Photo Girl" design – a 15-color textured and dimensional piece of wearable art. "We really wanted to push the creative limits," Freeman says. "So, for instance, instead of doing traditional hair, we used fill and column stitches to give the hair a very futuristic, almost sci-fi appearance." Plus, to create a vivid, life-like expression, Freeman used blending and other digitizing techniques for extra dimensionality.

Our embroidery judges lavished praise on Freeman's "Photo Girl" (on this month's cover). Geri Finio of Studio 187 said: "One of my favorites! The colors and texture are wonderful." And from Andy Shuman of Rockland Embroidery (*asi/734150*): "The incredible technique and thread color selection stood out with this design."

So, we're thrilled to present all of our embroidery and digitizing winners in our cover story, "And the Winners Are ..." starting on page 44, with a focus on specific techniques and tools that our winners used in their designs.

Enjoy the issue!

Nicole M. Rollender

asi/88984

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Left: "Madison" jersey in Kiss Cut® Appliqué (Purple/Columbia).
"Hornets" visor in CAD-CUT® Thermo-FILM® (Purple).

Right: "Hornets" jersey in SimStitch® with tail (Purple/Vegas gold).

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVES



Get Your Stitch Report

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo provides tips for getting the media to take an interest in your business in the latest edition of “The Stitch Report,” a video series that highlights trends, tips and strategies for the embroidery industry. View it on Stitches.com.



Podcast: How to Close the Deal

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo discusses tips for following up successfully after an initial consultation with a prospect. Listen in at Stitches.com.

Dirty Jobs

Clothing serves an essential function – to protect us from the elements. And nowhere is that put to the test more than with the workers who have dirty jobs. *Stitches*’ sister magazine *Wearables* returns with another installment of its “Dirty Jobs” series, inspired by the seminal Discovery Channel show of the same name. Check it out on Stitches.com.

SOCIAL FEEDS



Facebook.com/stitchesmag

Facebook Fans React We posted:

What's the first thing on your to-do list this morning?

YOU ANSWERED ANNIE KAY TURNBELL FREDRITZ

After my doctor's appointment, I'm making burlap tote bags.

LAURELLEE ROETHEL

I'm decorating 20 flex-fit hats for a motorcycle group, eight handkerchiefs for a wedding and 50 screen-printed T-shirts for an event this weekend.

JANE SWANZY Napoleon Hill, if he were still alive.

JERRI KIME DYKE 25 puff hats! Then digitizing, orders, etc.

SPARKLE PLENTY DESIGNS

Swarovski time! We're creating new body bling.

VARSITY SPORTS APPAREL

Twenty-five caps and 25 jackets for a football coaching staff, custom all-over sublimation tees for a designer in Connecticut, digitizing chenille pieces and working the phones!

BONNIE LANDSBERGER

I'm cleaning the office to make room for a single-head. Cleaning has never been so much fun!



ASI_Stitches

@EMBROIDME

Congrats to EmbroidMe! We were featured in *USA Today*'s Franchising Today section. Attached is a scan <http://fb.me/Q1pOrO45>

@ALTERNATIVEAPP

Picking pants for every occasion gets tiring, so we made the wear-anywhere Varnish Pant <http://shout.it/kXJ7> pic.twitter.com/NOr4sAEPkI

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Using a Heat Press and VersaCAMM in Multicolor Applications <http://is.gd/iXFSJ>

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Nearly 1,100 industry professionals have obtained their ASI certification. Congrats to all of our members! <http://bit.ly/18uSjEX>

@JONATHANCROWL

I can't explain my negativity toward khakis. Probably I'm being unreasonable. It's just, who decided khakis were the THE smart casual pant.

@ASI_RESEARCH

Upcoming ASI research: Among those with an ad specialty in the last 12 months, no metro has more desk/office accessories than Houston, 27%

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Make the most of your screen-reclaiming efforts by following the tips presented here. <http://t.co/26SHOHg6Vn>

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How Not to Stay on Top <http://nytimes/153BFN1>

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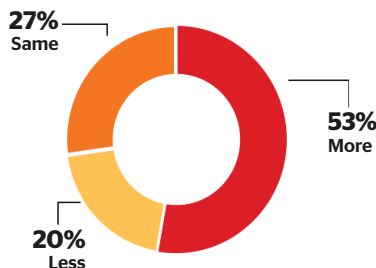
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"It's not as if a crash sneaks up on you in the dead of the night," writes [@tatoday](http://tatoday.com/mktw.net/19vahlA)

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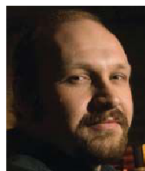
On ASICentral.com, we recently asked industry professionals:

Are you working more hours, less hours or the same amount of hours this year compared to last?



BLOG EXCERPT

On Links and Needles Cultivate Your Unusual Mind



Today I received one of the best compliments I can imagine – “Has anyone ever mentioned that you have an unusual mind?” I’m sure that some people might wonder why I consider that to be a compliment, certainly, but as it was in the context of a hearty expression of admiration for a drawing I’d shared online (I’ve become fond of ambigrams as a short drawing exercise when I don’t have time for a more detailed sketch, and have been sharing my flippable word art to the delight of my industry friends whose birthdays have given rise to ambigrams of their names) I didn’t have to guess. Even without context, though, I can’t think of a better vote of confidence for a creative worker to garner.

Scan this code to read the entire blog entry by Erich Campbell, digitizer and e-commerce manager at Black Duck Inc



Pinterest

Check out the following designs that we pinned on Stitches' Pinterest page – from the *Screen-Printed Designs* and *Cool Embroidery Designs* Boards.

From the Board: Screen-Printed Designs



From Black & Denim, this cotton tee was printed with vintage-inspired military design and made with 100% American raw materials.



This photograph of the band Citizen Cope was taken by Danny Clinch and made into a water-based discharge print by Golden Goods USA (asi/57695; circle 152 on Free Info Card).



By CustomInk (circle 153 on Free Info Card), this design celebrates the recent 100th birthday of the T-shirt.



This cool screen-printed tee is by St. Louis Print Co. (asi/700623; circle 155 on Free Info Card).

From the Board: Cool Embroidery Designs



This patchwork pillow made of natural, undyed linen was designed by a group of South African women; it's part of the Living Life line from Jacaranda Living (circle 151 on Free Info Card).



This monogrammed iPad sleeve is available from Lisa Deen of Tincy's Corner on Etsy.com.



This design is made of a three-ply embroidery thread called Fire Fighter, made of Nomex branded fibers from Dupont, available from Madeira USA (circle 154 on Free Info Card).



This fitness jacket from Holloway Sportswear (asi/61430; circle 156 on Free Info Card) was embroidered by A & P Master Images.

Visit Stitches' Pinterest page – and all of our great boards – at Pinterest.com/stitchesmag.

INTERACT

Letters

Our readers are speaking out! Here, we've included excerpts from letters sent to Stitches magazine. Keep writing ... we want to know what you're up to!

Giving Back

I'm the mother of Robin Mouton, who made two of the squares in the *Stitches* Hopeful Hearts quilt featured in your August issue. The quilt is beautiful! Robin has a 22-year-old son with Down's syndrome who swims in the Special Olympics. In addition to her volunteer work of many years, she's the wife of a Marine officer. She has done some beautiful works in cross stitch, which is her first real love as far as stitchery goes. Now she has her business – she's quite a busy, industrious person.

Patricia Cogar

Kudos to Stitches!

I now live in a rural area of Mississippi and I have my items in a boutique that sells them for me. I do more than

just embroidery; I also have a heat press for rhinestones and more. Because I live in the country, I rely greatly on outside resources to keep up to date, and your magazine plays a great part in that. I've so enjoyed your magazine over the years and get so many informative things from it. For those of us who live in remote areas, it helps so much!

Beverly Lamm

We Do It All

We're located in the historic village of Wellington in north central Ohio, approximately 30 miles southwest of Cleveland, and we're a full-service, family-owned and -operated custom embroidery shop. My husband Michael and I expanded the operation this past June,

adding all new equipment. We've both trained on state-of-the-art SWF embroidery machines and Senhui laser engravers. We have four types of machines to perform various operations, such as sequin embroidery, cording and 3-D lettering, and a bridge machine capable of decorating long items such as table linens and quilts.

Nancy Krupar

Wellington Thread Works

Growing, Growing

We opened in January 2001 and we now employ three full-time employees. We've also expanded from a home-based embroidery business to a downtown store front with much success!

Megan Miller

Blue Mountain Creations

“My passion is embroidery, and my mission is to provide businesses with embroidered logos to give them a better business presence.”

Lydia Young,

Just 4 YOU Embroidery

Long Distance

Our business is owned by my sister and is based in Palm Bay, FL. I live in West Salem, OH, but we're able to function well as a small business doing a variety of projects, thanks to UPS and FedEx.

Frances Crouch

Bright Beginnings

VOILA!

The Best Piece I Ever Embroidered



“I created this piece from a century-old zinc etching called ‘La Calavera Catrina,’ by the great Mexican illustrator Jose Guadalupe Posada. I spent about two months on sketching the art, working weekends and during leisure time, and then about a week on the digitizing during lunch breaks and a Saturday. The best part of this piece is the handling of the separated running stitches – I drew each one by free hand and avoided a large number of trims and locks, creating an efficient file for the machinery. Thus, most of the thin black lines on the hat brim and the clouds behind the shoulders have the same thickness.”

Submitted by Mario Olivas Moreno, digitizer at Penn Emblem Mexico in Santa Ana, Sonora, Mexico; [molivas@pennemblem.com](mailto:moliv@pennemblem.com)

TALK TO US!

Tell us what challenges you're facing in your shop. React to a story you've just read in *Stitches* or on our Facebook page. E-mail us a shot of the latest and greatest embroidery design you've just run. We can't wait to hear from you, so send letters to the editor to nrollender@asicentral.com.

Expert Weigh-In



Amit Gupta, CEO of MONAG Apparel (asi/72010; circle 157 on Free Info Card) in Farmington, NY, talks about the company's products and services, current supplier challenges and the number-one goal for his company over the next year.

I have extensive experience in the apparel marketplace.

That's 15 years of experience in the apparel industry combined with 20 years in a supply chain. And, MONAG Apparel has been an industry supplier for more than 13 years.

We've got everyone covered at MONAG, from pets to grandparents.

We offer premium-quality blank apparel for infants, toddlers, youth, adults and pets. Starting from basic tees, we carry stylish dresses, ruffle tees, trendy

jackets and fashionable tees. We provide a large selection of blank clothing for adults, kids and infants in a variety of colors and different fabrics that are great for printing, embroidery and sublimation.

Trends in tees are popular this season.

Tees with graceful drapes combined with tights are in fashion. Dolman tees with draped sleeves fall gracefully over the wearer's torso for a flattering appearance and are very popular. The standard fitted tee is being

replaced with trendy raglans and V-necks, which adds to the wearer's individual style.

Customer service can pose a significant challenge for suppliers.

The majority of suppliers all have similar challenges. As a supplier, you want to meet your customers' demands, so you always have to balance demand and supply. That can be difficult.

Keeping our offerings competitive is still the name of the game.

We'll continue to maintain the quality of our products at competitive prices.

Outside of MONAG, I'm interested in technology and jazz.

I'm very interested in high-tech gadgets and automation because I have passion for electronics. And modern jazz.

It's hard to picture life without this company.

It's always tough for me to imagine what else I'd be doing if not this. It would probably be related to software.

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INTERACT

Problem Solved

Q *I don't have a lot of time to network with other local business owners and prospects, but I know I should be doing this to grow my business. Any ideas for the best way to network on a time budget?*



Deborah Jones, MyEmbroideryMentor.com: I network with other businesses through my local Chamber of Commerce, which offers "B2B Breakfasts" and "Business After Hours" events. Both of these networking opportunities are scheduled during non-business hours for most companies. When you have a specific time and place to meet with other business owners, the structure makes it easier to make the connection. The Chamber also uses embroidery, so this should be networking priority number one.



Howard Potter, A&P Master Images (asi/702505) :
1. Promote your customer or networking partner either on your

website or on your Facebook page and have them do the same for you.

2. Make sales flyers and promote your customers on them.

3. Co-brand with clients. Include with their order a free item they weren't expecting with their logo and yours, so they can give it to their clients for free.



Geri Finio, Studio 187: Cold-calling when you have some time is helpful. My most valuable sources of B2B networking have been social media and e-mails. Informally checking in with local business owners feels more like checking in with friends. After a while, these relationships naturally form into friendships and helping each other out just becomes a natural habit.



Jane Swanzy, Swan Marketing LLC (asi/700627): You don't need to go to a specific networking event to network. If you go to church every Sunday, introduce yourself to one new person each week. If you go to the shooting range each week for your skeet league, visit with people from other teams, because they're usually business owners themselves. Just look around at where you go on a regular basis and you'll see lots of networking opportunities that cost you very little time.

PROBLEM SOLVED

Have a problem you need solved? Send your question for the Stitches Editorial Advisory Board to nrollender@asicentral.com.

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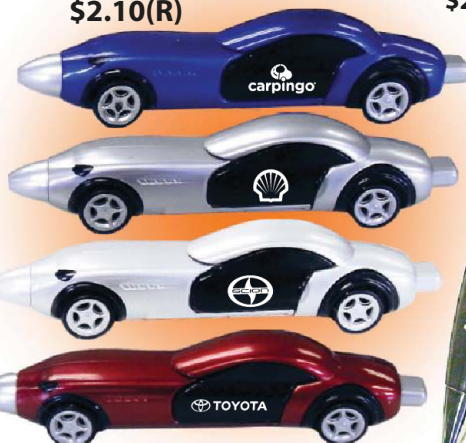
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INTERACT

Phil Stitch Answers



Got a question for Phil?

If you can't find what you're looking for in the 2013 Sourcing Guide, write to: *Stitches*, Attn: Phil Stitch, 4800 Street Rd., Trevoze, PA 19053. Or fax your question to (215) 953-3107. For the quickest response, e-mail askphil@asicentral.com. For RN inquiries, visit

www.stitches.com for the RN Database link.

Although I try my best, I can't always answer every request, so please continue your search on your own. Remember, if you contact the companies I mention, tell them you heard about them here!

PS: If you become an ASI Decorator Member with ESP, you'll have access to every item in the wearables and promotional products industry from 3,000+ reputable suppliers. Just call (800) 546-1388 to get started!

I'm looking for stadium seats that allow for embroidery. Any ideas? - Georgia

A strange request, but I'm your guy! Whether you're heckling the pitcher or chowing down on a ballpark frank, you'll be watching the game in style with the stadium seat I found for you. The foldable stadium seat, item ST60, from SanMar (asi/84863); (800) 426-6399; www.sanmar.com; allows

for embroidery and also has pockets for your game day needs. It not only folds up, but it also includes adjustable straps and an easy-carry handle. It comes in four different colors, too!

Help, Phil! I have a new "all natural" company and I'm looking for dark brown or chocolate-colored bamboo or hemp T-shirts. I can find ladies' tees in brown but no men's. Can you help? - Krissi

This one is a no-brainer. I found you a handsome cocoa-colored bamboo men's crewneck tee, item 1003-BJY, from Akwa (asi/33280); (888) 289-2592; www.akwa.com. Your client will swoon over the soft texture and the bamboo fabric is moisture-wicking and antibacterial. If you're looking for other all natural apparel products, try American Apparel (asi/35297); (213) 488-0226; www.americanapparel.net/wholesaleresources.

Phil, I'm looking for a waterproof jacket with fleece lining. My client says it's similar to a North Face neoprene jacket but lighter. - Barb

Your best bet is Scoreboard Sports (asi/88747); (866) 801-7704; www.scoreboardsports.net. Its full-zip poly/fleece hoody, item 476405, is Dri-Fit, comes in black, and has a kangaroo pocket with mesh lining.

Phil, I have a customer looking for a Hawaiian shirt in green. - Michele

Aloha! Our industry is bubbling over with Hawaiian shirts, so you're in luck! There are tons of green Hawaiian shirt options at Apparelstar Inc. (asi/36539); (866) 204-4042; www.apparelstarimports.com. If that doesn't float your boat, Edwards Garment Co. (asi/51752); (800) 253-9885; www.edwardsgarment.com; also sells Hawaiian shirts, green mixed with some other bright island-inspired hues.

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<p>Women's Splendor Mock 1/4 Zip UW1395</p>  <p>\$43.00 6 Colors </p>	<p>Men's Team Performance Polo 1233723</p>  <p>\$31.50 18 Colors </p>	<p>Women's Coach's Polo 1232837</p>  <p>\$31.50 13 Colors </p>	<p>Men's Tech 1/4 Zip T-Shirt 1242220</p>  <p>\$25.00 10 Colors </p>
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By Christopher Ruvo

Ash City Releases 2014 Collection

Ash City (*asi/37143*) recently debuted a 2014 collection that features more than 100 new styles. Combining on-trend design elements with innovative performance and technology, the fresh collection strives to offer something for everyone, from fashion-forward wrinkle-resistant wovens and snag-battling polos to stylish, urban-inspired outerwear enhanced by performance elements like UTK warm.logik, a heat-reflective technology that provides

added warmth. “The new 2014 collection by Ash City effectively covers multiple price points to meet specific industry markets, while accommodating different industry needs,” says Elson Yeung, product line manager. “The executive and on-trend looks are achieved by our retail-inspired North End Sport and North End Sport Blue lines, while North End and Extreme focus on elevating the day-to-day look with functional elements and practicality.”

**Fast Response
Required:**

61%

Percentage of B2B marketers who rate webinars as the most effective content-marketing tactic.

**Source: Content Marketing Institute*

HanesBrands to Acquire Maidenform

North Carolina-based supplier HanesBrands (*asi/59528*) agreed to acquire underwear maker Maidenform Brands for nearly \$548 million, the companies have announced. The deal, expected to close this quarter, has been approved by boards from both firms.

“This business is a natural fit into our core business and meets all of our acquisition criteria,” says Richard Noll, chairman and CEO of HanesBrands. “We don’t have nearly as strong of a business in shapewear, so we think our ability to tap into their expertise and expand it across our portfolio of brands makes a lot of sense.”

In addition to Maidenform wear, the agreement will provide HanesBrands with several new brands to offer, including Flexees and Self Expressions. Maidenform, according to reports, had been considering its strategic options and decided a deal with HanesBrands would allow for the

most growth potential. Presently, Maidenform sources its products from third parties, but will now be able to leverage the company-owned manufacturing resources of HanesBrands.

Ad Specialty Sales Soar; Confidence Rises

Ad specialty/wearables industry distributors increased their revenues by 5.1% in the second quarter, a total year-over-year gain of \$247 million, according to a report from the Advertising Specialty Institute. Also during Q2, the *Counselor* Confidence Index (CCI) – a measure of distributor health and optimism – rose sharply to 109.6, up seven points from the first-quarter reading.

“Well, certainly over the last three to four years, things have continually gotten better,” says Mitch Mounger, CEO of Bellevue, WA-based Sunrise Identity (*asi/339206*), which recorded 10% growth in the past quarter. “If I had a Sunrise confidence meter, I’d

put the number up as high as it’s ever been.”

Roland Receives Awards for Eco Ink

Roland DGA Corp.’s (*asi/18201*) new eco-solvent ink, Eco-Sol MAX 2, won the European Digital Press (EDP) award in the Best New Generation Solvent Ink Technology category at the EDP Association’s ceremony held at FESPA 2013.

Eco-Sol MAX 2 is the latest generation of Roland’s award-winning eco-solvent ink. It’s compatible with an extensive range of print media on the market, including Roland DGA’s own line. The ink is also nickel-free.

The EDP judges selected Eco-Sol MAX 2 as the winner because of its ease of use, the reduction of harmful substances in its formulation and its outstanding print quality.

SanMar, Tri-Mountain Debut 2014 Catalogs

SanMar (*asi/84863*) and Tri-Mountain (*asi/92125*),

both industry-leading apparel suppliers, have launched 2014 catalogs that are packed with new offerings. Outfitted with the industry’s most extensive collection of tall sizes, SanMar’s 2014 Apparel, Bags & Caps features 250 new items, including Core Soft Shell jackets from Port Authority at a budget-friendly price, more patterned woven shirts from Red House, polos and caps from Nike Golf, polos and jackets from OGIO, and jackets from Eddie Bauer.

At Tri-Mountain, the 2014 catalog features new styles across five product lines, including the award-winning Tri-Mountain Performance and Lilac Bloom by Jennifer Tsai’s women’s collection. Says Marketing Associate John Perez: “New styles feature sleek shirts, cardigans and jackets designed for her professional wardrobe. There are innovative cooling polos, temperature regulating fleece, and premium apparel in our Peak Performers value line.”

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asi/56842

Law to Better Protect Bangladesh Apparel Workers



April 24, 2013. Rana Plaza, a factory building in Bangladesh that housed more than 3,000 apparel workers, collapsed while some were working.

After a building collapse and factory fire caused the deaths of more than 1,200 Bangladeshi garment manufacturing workers within the last year, the Asian nation's government took action, passing a labor law that bolsters worker rights by allowing them to form unions and providing other protections.

Creating a central fund to improve the living standards of workers, the legislation includes provisions that require 5% of annual profits to be deposited in employee welfare funds. It also mandates that union members will not be transferred to another factory of the same owner following labor unrest.

While some labor rights activists criticized the law for being hastily enacted and failing to address several key concerns, everyone from Bangladeshi officials to Western apparel industry executives called the legislation an important step toward improving conditions in a country whose garment sector exports \$21 billion annually, mostly to the European Union

and United States. "The Bangladesh government has finally woken up," says David Bebon, CEO of DBEBZ Apparel, which manufactures garments in Bangladesh. "This isn't a Band-Aid measure; this is something that's going to lead to real, substantive change."

The implications of the rights-enhancing law may extend well beyond workers themselves. Bebon opines that standard factories could be compelled to close while wages will rise. The government, labor groups and factory owners are already in talks about increasing the minimum wage from the current \$38 a month. Meanwhile, factories that are significantly safer – but more expensive to outfit and maintain – may become more the norm, Bebon says. Ultimately, such factors could increase the cost of producing apparel in Bangladesh, which could lead to higher apparel prices. "When you introduce better structures, better conditions and better pay – there's a cost for that and we're going to have to pay it," Bebon says.

An Embroidered Quran

A Syrian businessman with a serious talent for stitchwork has used his skillful hands to embroider the entire text of the Quran. Mohammad Mahir Hadri's creation is the only known version of Islam's holy book to be done entirely in embroidery. Containing 426 pages and weighing 440 pounds, the one-of-a-kind Quran was exhibited in Dubai recently, attracting much attention and acclaim.

The embroidered Quran isn't Hadri's only impressive stitch art rooted in religion. He has created everything from 2-meter long frames displaying chapters of the Quran to booklets containing selections of the Prophet Mohammad's sayings. "I'm really grateful to Almighty Allah for bestowing this talent on me," Hadri told *www.gulfnews.com*.

Gone Mobile:

Mobile Web browsing accounted for 30% of all Web traffic in 2012 and is expected to account for 50% by 2014. Conclusion: Get your company site mobile-ready.

*Source: Nucleus Research

Embroidered Heart Beats

Karina Thompson's heart beats in stitches – literally.

After recording her heartbeat during a mile-and-a-half run, the British textile artist translated the data into stitch patterns, embroidering the beats onto 109 yards of Falcon Grey Hainsworth cloth.

One of the United Kingdom's longest pieces of embroidery, the impressive work is also composed of embroidered depictions of the four chambers of Thompson's heart. The impressive work was exhibited in late summer at the Salts Mill art gallery in Bradford, U.K as part of a larger exhibit called Cloth & Memory (2).

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asi/56842

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SALES

Helping Celtics Be 'Boston Strong'

Just 11 days after terrorist bombs killed three people and injured 264 others at the Boston Marathon, Bean-town's most successful professional sports franchise – the Boston Celtics – were set to play their first home playoff game of the 2012/13 season. For the emotionally charged event, Celtics executives wanted to provide a memorable gameday giveaway to attending fans – something that would stir pride and inspire hope in the wake of the senseless tragedy.

To pull off something special, the basketball executives turned to Grossman Marketing Group (*asi/215205*). They weren't disappointed. In mere days, Grossman delivered more than 18,000 white T-shirts that were screen printed with the

stirring phrase "Boston Strong" and the branding of corporate sponsor Arbella Insurance in Celtics PMS green. The "O" in Strong contained the phrasing Boston Stands As One. "The client was pleased with the result," says Ben Grossman, co-president of Somerville, MA-based Grossman Marketing Group. "Most importantly, the fans were thrilled to receive these goods at a time when Boston needed something to pick up its spirit."

Given just a few days to make the big order a decorated reality, Grossman had to be on top of its game. "The key to the project was having clear lines of communication with the client, which enabled us to line up everything we needed to have the available blank stock ready to print at the

Days after the Boston Marathon bombing, Grossman Marketing Group (*asi/215205*) created these shirts for a fan giveaway by the Boston Celtics.

flip of a switch," Grossman says.

Such efficiency is an essential ingredient for impressing – and keeping – high-end clients like the Celtics, for whom Grossman has also provided rally towels, bobblehead dolls, fan banners and more. "Affordability, high quality and excellent customer service all must come together so clients can execute their marketing initiatives successfully," says Grossman, who was personally heartened to be part of the Celtics' Boston Strong T-shirt project. "The Boston Marathon tragedy was a deeply disturbing event in our region's history. We were honored to assist the Celtics in rewarding their fans."



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Help From Yelp

As a two-man, owner-operated screen-printing shop, Sunday Print Co. doesn't have a big budget for advertising and marketing. And yet, partners Tim Guza and Paul Caruso have generated annual sales growth of 23% and 16% in 2011 and 2012, respectively. The revenue rise occurred despite the fact that Sunday competes in Los Angeles – a market saturated with screen printers. What's the secret to Sunday's success? The guys are great at what they do, they're nice and they've got a

little help from Yelp.

Yelp is an Internet-based local service directory where people can write reviews of businesses. Receiving more than 100 million unique visitors per month, Yelp is a Web destination that consumers are increasingly turning to for information on businesses. Sunday started a Yelp page several years ago. It didn't see much activity at first, but then Guza and Caruso started encouraging satisfied customers to review them.

Soon, much positive feedback populated the page,

earning Sunday a five-star rating. "These guys are awesome," writes one reviewer. "Shirts were done beautifully, and exactly as envisioned. Tim and Paul are absolutely great to work with." After reading similar glowing reviews, an increasing number of consumers with a need for screen-printed apparel started turning to Sunday. "About half of our new inquiries come from people who say they've checked out our Yelp page," Guza says.

Nonetheless, Yelp can be a double-edged sword, giving

customers a highly visible platform on which to lambaste shops. Guza and Caruso's positive profile is the result of focusing with equal intensity on screening stellar prints and client service. They take the time to understand exactly what customers want, answer questions, patiently explain charges and elements of the screen-printing process, and always deliver quality product on time. "Even if our prices are sometimes higher," says Guza, "people still work with us because they want a positive experience."

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needle watch

Needle Patrol

Our friend Slick (an embroidery machine needle) has hidden himself somewhere in this issue. He might be in an editorial photo, graphic or text – he's not in an advertisement. If you find the needle, send us a note that says, "I found the November needle on page XX," along with your name, company, address and phone number (or e-mail address) so we can contact you if you're the winner. Mail or fax it to us at **Stitches, Attn: Needle Patrol**, 4800 Street Rd., Trevoze, PA 19053; fax: (215) 953-3107. Also, tell us a little about your business. No phone calls please; you must respond in writing. Hurry! Responses for the November needle are due by November 29, 2013. From the correct responses, we'll randomly select one winner who'll receive a \$100 gift certificate, courtesy of Madeira USA, Laconia, NH. Please submit only one entry per drawing. We'll announce the winner in the January issue.



Slick's Into Screening

In the August issue, Slick hid on page 34 in "Decorating Solutions" right next to the Wash-It Screen Wash-Out Sink from Workhorse Products. **Sandy Roberts** of Indianapolis-based **Indy Accent Embroidery** was chosen at random from a grand total of 36 responses. As this issue's winner, Sandy will receive Madeira USA's gift certificate. Keep your eyes peeled for the industry's favorite game of hide and seek!



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DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Five Steps

By Tonia Kimbrough

Create a Perfect Patch

It's never been easier to get the exact image you in want in a full-color patch with an upscale, textured look. PennFUTEX, a new imprinting process from Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120), makes it possible at a price that's much lower than traditional embroidery.

1

SUBMIT ARTWORK EXACTLY HOW YOU WANT IT.

PennFUTEX can reproduce any graphic, including photos. Also, it can be CAD cut to any size or shape, even those with interior cutouts.

2

LIST ALL COLOR-MATCHING REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING PANTONE COLORS.

Penn Emblem will color correct and fine-tune art so the match is exact. There's no limit to the number of colors per design.

3

CHOOSE A TEXTURE AND BORDER.

PennFUTEX has a velvety, close nap for a soft hand. PennFUTEX 3D creates a dimensional effect with a unique woven pattern simulating embroidery. Both are lightweight and flexible with a low profile, and either can be created with or without a border.

4

REVIEW AND APPROVE A SAMPLE.

PennFUTEX is made to order in the U.S., so once you give the thumbs up, you get prompt delivery. This also allows for tight turnaround times.

5

SIMPLY PEEL

and stick your PennFUTEX patch onto the garment for a temporary decoration. For permanent results, sew on as an appliqué or apply as a heat transfer.



Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120; circle 172 on Free Info Card) or call (800) 793-7366.



DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Machine & Software Updates

New Tabletop Air Fusion Auto-Open Heat Press

The Hotronix Air Fusion, a unique auto-open, auto swing-away heat press, is now available in a tabletop version. Powered by an air compressor, this heat press has patented Auto Adjust Pressure, which allows for up to four pressure and time settings to be programmed. This makes it easy for an operator to switch between garments of different thickness such as T-shirts and hoodies. In addition, it provides maximum pressure with no effort for high-pressure applications.



HOTRONIX;
CIRCLE 176 ON
FREE INFO CARD
OR CALL (800)
727-8520.

Although the tabletop model doesn't have a pedestal stand with casters like the original Air Fusion, it still has a fully threadable lower platen, making it ideal for shops with fixed tables and shelving. Garments are positioned on the lower platens and can be rotated from front to back and side to side making it easier to put heat-applied graphics in hard-to-reach places.

A two-hand push button operation is a safety feature that eliminates the traditional handle operation, reducing fatigue. Other features include auto on/auto off, an energy-saving sleep mode and a production cycle counter. Users can preprogram unlimited time, temperature and pressure settings for frequently used heat applications.

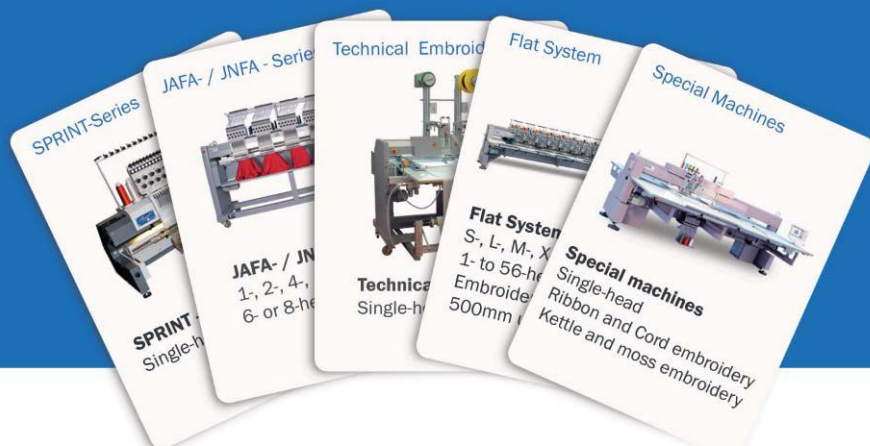
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DTG Releases New Viper2 Direct-to-Garment Printer

DTG Digital introduced the Viper2 Direct-to-Garment printer, which offers an all-new garment platen system called the 4-2-1, allowing prints of up to XXXXL oversized garments, two standard garments or four smaller in one system. An advanced One Pass white and color



DTG DIGITAL; CIRCLE 177 ON FREE INFO CARD OR VISIT WWW.DTGDIGITAL.COM.

option with greater lay down of ink improves efficiency. Plus the patented WIMS has a shorter ink tube length that is constantly pressurized at the print head. Overall color and print consistency have reached a new level because of the pressurization of inks through the entire print path including the print head. And, only weekly machine cleaning is required.

Brother Upgrades Entrepreneur PR655



BROTHER INTERNATIONAL CORP.; CIRCLE 178 ON FREE INFO CARD OR VISIT WWW.BROTHER.COM.

The Entrepreneur PR655-6-needle home embroidery machine features an 8" x 12" maximum embroidery area and an advanced super view (ASV) HD LCD display by Sharp Corp. with more than 16 million color possibilities. An optional Arm D and Clamp Frame can be used for embroidering on shoe tongues, the sides of shoes, backpacks and gloves. In addition, the Entrepreneur PR655 includes: a Droplight embroidery position marker and three additional built-in font styles.

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DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Saving 9



BITO USA; CIRCLE 179 ON FREE INFO CARD.

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The new Proel E-Laser from BITO USA can cut multiple layers of fabric at one time or kiss cut only the top layer, allowing you to control the depth of each cut. This onboard laser cutter mounts directly to your single-head embroidery machine, producing appliqués more than twice as fast as traditional methods.

BITO also announced its partnership with Tohoku Seiki Industries (TSI) of Japan. The two have joined together to purchase Italy-based Proel s.r.l., changing its name to Proel TSI. BITO has been the longtime exclusive U.S. distributor of Proel laser equipment. The new Proel TSI combines advanced European design and durability with state-of-the-art Japanese manufacturing, which will be delivered with the highest customer service standards. For information, visit www.bitousa.com.



GRAPHIC SOLUTIONS GROUP; CIRCLE 180 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 366-1776 TO LEARN MORE.

✓ Product Pick

Need a high-speed solution for your high volume orders? The Challenger III D, offered by Graphic Solutions Group, may be your answer. This automatic textile screen-printing press features Dynamic PrintStroke, providing programmable control over squeegee pressure, print/flood speed, print-stroke length, print-carriage position and more. With its Job Recall storage system, machine settings can be named and saved, making it easy for operators to retrieve job settings for repeat print runs.

The Challenger III D also includes a fast, quiet servo-driven indexer; servo-driven print heads; tool-free calibrated angle adjustments; and a large touch-screen controller. The quick-set print head off-contact is invaluable when printing thick inks or specialty inks like gels and high-density. The Automatic Pallet Preheat Mode with built-in pallet temperature sensor allows operators to preheat pallets to the desired temperature and track those temperatures throughout the production run.

The Challenger III D comes in models ranging from 10 to 18 colors. Visit www.GOGSG.com to learn more.

Quick Tips

1

Simplify shoe decoration with the new Stahls' (asi/88984) Hotronix Shoe Platen. It comes with an attached pad to accommodate a variety of shoe styles.

Watch a YouTube demo on how to decorate footwear with heat-applied graphics called "Tools To Increase Your Return On Investment—The Shoe Platen From Hotronix." Visit www.stahls.com for more information.



STAHL'S ID DIRECT (ASI/88984); CIRCLE 181 ON FREE INFO CARD.

2

Create award-winning color separations for T-shirts. Mitch Different, an industry artist with decades of experience as an art director at high-volume screen-printing shops, recently released a book that will shorten the learning curve of anyone trying to separate art for screen printing onto garments. Entitled *The Art of T-Shirt Color Separation*, this comprehensive book offers a hands-on approach to separating artwork using Adobe Photoshop. Visit <http://mitchdifferent.com> for more information.



MITCH DIFFERENT; CIRCLE 182 ON FREE INFO CARD OR E-MAIL MWDIFFERENT@GMAIL.COM.

3

Go green with Eco-SolMAX and Eco-Sol MAX 2 digital printing inks. Both have received GREEN-GUARD Gold UL 2818

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Look Book

Runway

By Alissa Tallman

Trend Alerts

Winter 2013-2014 collections continue to roll out a stunning number of innovative apparel trends with flair and elegance. For example, miniskirts have become a staunch fashionista favorite and are available in countless colors, fabrics and patterns. Then, look to the blues when it comes to hues: Navy has emerged as a sleek and sophisticated alternative neutral, presenting a subtle, jewel-toned replacement for black. Finally, metal embellishments from pinpoint studs to lavish buckles adorn everything from boots, hats and T-shirts with a rebellious vengeance.



PHOTO: VENTURELLI

Apparel: Miniskirts

Miniskirts are gorgeously feminine, charming and one of this season's hottest apparel trends. Versace unveiled a spectacular range of minis during Milan Fashion Week, including this one-of-a-kind plush leopard print rendition in bright yellow.



PHOTO: VICTOR VIRGILE

Color: Navy

Possessing considerable finesse, navy has garnered heaps of attention this season as a leading apparel color. This romantically regal navy dress from Lanvin was showcased during Paris Fashion Week, emphasizing the simple beauty of this serene hue partnered with a minimalist design.



PHOTO: ISABEL MARANT

Embellishment: Metal

You'll see metal embellishments practically everywhere this season, lending apparel and accessories a youthful appeal with a touch of glitz and glam. Isabel Marant showcased a number of gloriously studded designs during Paris Fashion Week, including this sparkly sweater.

Trends

APPAREL

Miniskirts

The miniskirt is back in vogue, as evidenced in this season's eclectic designs by Anthony Vaccarello, Kenzo and Versace. You'll find this classic piece in every imaginable fabric, including fur, tartan and leather, any of which can be dressed up or down to suit the occasion.

Yvette Corona, customer service representative for American Apparel (*asi/35297*), comments on the miniskirt's remarkable versatility. "You can pair a miniskirt with just about anything, from a simple T-shirt to a blouse," she says. "It's a very adaptable and functional piece for creating a unique casual or dressy look."

Corona also makes mention of the mini as being wonderfully applicable to promotional opportunities. "Miniskirts offer a fun, unconventional approach to the promotional market," she says. "With so many different styles to choose from, from sporty to formal, the miniskirt appeals to a diverse range of organizations." Corona cites high school and college events as well as restaurants, bars and nightclubs as presenting ideal opportunities for implementing this trend.



American Apparel (*asi/35297*; circle 158 on Free Info Card) carries this sassy cheerleader-length thick-knit jersey mini (1303).



Check out Sports One Group (*asi/50240*; circle 160 on Free Info Card) for this reversible, moisture-wicking miniskirt (W1213) featuring a captivating lightning print.



Apparelstar Inc. (*asi/36539*; circle 159 on Free Info Card) distributes this seductive lambskin miniskirt embellished with side laces (AL-L2877).

Look Book

Trends

COLOR

Navy

Demure and understated yet majestic, navy is making an unforgettable appearance in several high-end fashion collections this fall, such as those from Calvin Klein, Louis Vuitton and Lanvin. Gorgeous in solid combos like suits and dresses and just as striking in patterns and prints, this shade of blue invites tons of stylish possibilities.

“Navy is definitely on-trend this season. It’s classic, elegant and never goes out of style,” asserts Monika Rene, customer-service representative at Bishop The Garment Co. (*asi/40585*). She makes note of navy’s neutral properties and commends this aesthetic hue for its easy adaptability: “Besides being a great substitute for black, navy is suitable for so many ages to wear. It acts as a perfect background for almost any type of logo on any product, plus it’s suitable with all types of garments, from wool suits to casual crewneck jersey tees.”

One of the most popular ways navy is integrated into a pattern, Rene says, is via color blocking. “You’ll often see color blocking with orange and turquoise.” Rene also suggests implementing navy as a graphic print against a white background.



SanMar (*asi/84863*; circle 163 on Free Info Card) offers this super-cozy navy women's shrug (L543) crafted with a polyester/ rayon/spandex blend.



This handsome navy cotton polo (CTN-3) is available from Stormtech Performance Apparel LTD (*asi/89864*; circle 161 on Free Info Card).



This iconically styled baseball jacket (845) featuring contrast piping and leather detailing on the sleeves is available from Bishop The Garment Co (*asi/40585*; circle 162 on Free Info Card).

Trends

EMBELLISHMENT

Metal

An impressive array of metal embellishments is adorning everything from sweaters and jackets to tees and handbags. Whether it's studs, sparkly rhinestones or zippers that capture your interest, there's a remarkable variety of bling to choose.

"This is a great trend that's back in the spotlight," says Peter Schlieckmann, product manager for Assertive Creativity LLC (asi/37166).



This tomboyish women's army cap (6563) with metal studs can be found at Mega Cap Inc (asi/70434; circle 164 on Free Info Card).

Take a look at Apparelstar Inc. (asi/36539; circle 159 on Free Info Card) for a large inventory of items adorned with metal embellishments, including this leather purse (BF-PURSE2) featuring a heart motif.



Canadian Spirit (asi/43688; circle 165 on Free Info Card) carries this chic women's studded sports watch (405-S).

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Look Book

Showcase: Athletic Apparel

The fall and winter 2013-2014 season presents exciting new athletic and team apparel designs and significant innovations in fabric technology. No matter what kind of sporting event you're selecting apparel or accessories for, you can expect to find a plethora of creative designs made from superior textiles.

Elson Yeung, product line manager for Ash City USA (*asi/37127*), cites performance as the top focus of today's sporting-garment design. "Performance is the prominent trend in athletic apparel, from inside the garment through to the outside," he says. He explains that designers seek to implement several high-performance materials in a single garment. "Outerwear styles are loaded with performance details. For example, moisture-wicking linings and ventilation systems inside a jacket keep the wearer comfortable. Storm cuffs, snow skirts, neck gaiters and performance linings help retain one's body heat for warmth, and waterproof and water-resistant fabrics on the outside keep the elements out where they belong."

Andrea Engel, vice president of portfolio and supplier management at Broder Bros. Co. (*asi/42090*), mentions that visual accents are on trend. "Key trends continue to be patterns and bright colors, as well as sublimated designs incorporated into sections of a garment."



This convenient color-blocked Puma duffel tote (PMG01013, Cpri) is available from Par One Inc. (*asi/75912*; circle 164 on Free Info Card).

Fersten Worldwide (*asi/53974*; circle 183 on Free Info Card) carries this men's Tech-Dry striped polo (FA5041) that features a shirt collar and hidden placket. It's made of an eco-friendly nylon/lycra blend.



These sporty polarized sunglasses (DASH-52FM) from Eyeking (*asi/51260*; circle 184 on Free Info Card) feature flash mirror lenses that include UV and glare protection.



S & S Activewear (*asi/84358*; circle 166 on Free Info Card) carries this comfy men's fleece pullover (9705).



Broder Bros. Co. (*asi/42090*; circle 168 on Free Info Card) carries these fleece workout pants (838EFM) made with Dri-Power moisture-wicking fabric, providing superior comfort and easy laundering care.



This attractive seam-sealed insulated jacket (78680) from Ash City USA (*asi/37127*; circle 167 on Free Info Card) features a storm flap, shock cords and a snow skirt to ensure your warmth.



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AND THE WINNERS ARE...

*Superb stitchwork and inspired punching
characterize the winners' creations in
Stitches' sixth-annual Golden Needle Awards
for embroidery and digitizing.*

BY SARA LAVENDUSKI, CHRISTOPHER RUVO AND ANDRAYA VANTREASE

Sara Lavenduski is an editorial intern; Christopher Ruvo is a staff writer; and Andraya Vantrease is a contributing writer.



TALENT. DEDICATION. A LOVE FOR THEIR CRAFT.

The winners of *Stitches*' sixth-annual Golden Needle Awards for excellence in embroidery and digitizing embody all of those things. Our award winners created the stunning corporate and fashion designs featured on the following pages, demonstrating a technical and aesthetic mastery that is sure to inspire and excite.

Selecting the winners from the scores of entries received was no easy task. To help, *Stitches* called on trusted experts. The embroidery awards were judged by members of the magazine's advisory board: Ginny Fineberg, owner of Wildwood Crest, NJ-based Sandpiper Embroidery; Geri Finio, owner of Anne Arundel County, MD's Studio 187; and Andy Shuman, general manager of Top-ton, PA-based Rockland Embroidery (*asi734150*).

When it came time to select the year's most impressive punchers, the *Stitches* team turned to the digitizing veterans on our advisory board: Jay Fishman, president of Beachwood, OH's Wicked Stitch of the East; Bonnie Landsberger, owner of Moonlight Design in Cannon Falls, MN; and Erich Campbell, digitizer and e-commerce manager at Albuquerque, NM-based Black Duck Inc.

Each judge rated the designs on a scale of one to 10, assessing the works on: overall sewing quality, including thread breaks; proper use of underlay; proper punching and registration; use of pathing, trims and color changes; and overall artistic merit, including design elements and aesthetic appeal. All judging was blind.

As these judges saw first hand, the embroidery industry produced a plethora of exciting and creative work over the last year. Turn the page to check out the best in class – to be reaffirmed in the belief that the craft you practice is, when done well, art.

EMBROIDERY AWARDS

Stitches' Editors' Pick

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Vantage Apparel (*asi/93390*)

Winner: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

Design of the Year, Artistic, Corporate

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Madeira USA

Winner: Affinity Express (*asi/33149*)

Design of the Year, Artistic, Fashion

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Madeira USA

Winner: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

Design of the Year, Technical, Corporate

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Callaway, Perry Ellis International (*asi/77715*)

Winner: Dale and Donna Szakats, and Sue Peckman, Initial Impact

Design of the Year, Technical, Fashion

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Outdoor Cap Co. (*asi/75420*)

Winner: Howard and Amanda Potter, A&P Master Images (*asi/702505*)

Best Use of Stock Design

\$250 worth of Alternative's top-selling Basic Chino Twill Cap (H0070C1), sponsored by Alternative Apparel (*asi/34850*)

Winner: Jane Swanzy, Swan Marketing LLC (*asi/700627*)

Best Multimedia Design, Corporate

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Munsingwear, Perry Ellis International (*asi/77715*)

Winner: Timberly Kremer, Rambow Inc. (*asi/304530*)

Best Multimedia Design, Fashion

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by The Bag Factory, The Magnet Group (*asi/68507*)

Winner: Mo Etisham, Quality Punch

Best Single-Color Design

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Sierra Pacific Apparel/Featherlite (*asi/87224*)

Winner: M. Usman, Quality Punch

Home or Fashion Accessories

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Tag Safari, Africa Safari USA (*asi/33176*)

Winner: Andrew Sequeira, Sparkle Plenty Designs (*asi/88442*)

Embroidery and Heat-Printing Decoration

\$250 gift certificate for Stahls' ID Direct heat-transfer materials or custom-cut products, sponsored by Stahls' ID Direct (*asi/88984*)

Winner: Jamie Iverson, Rambow Inc. (*asi/304530*)

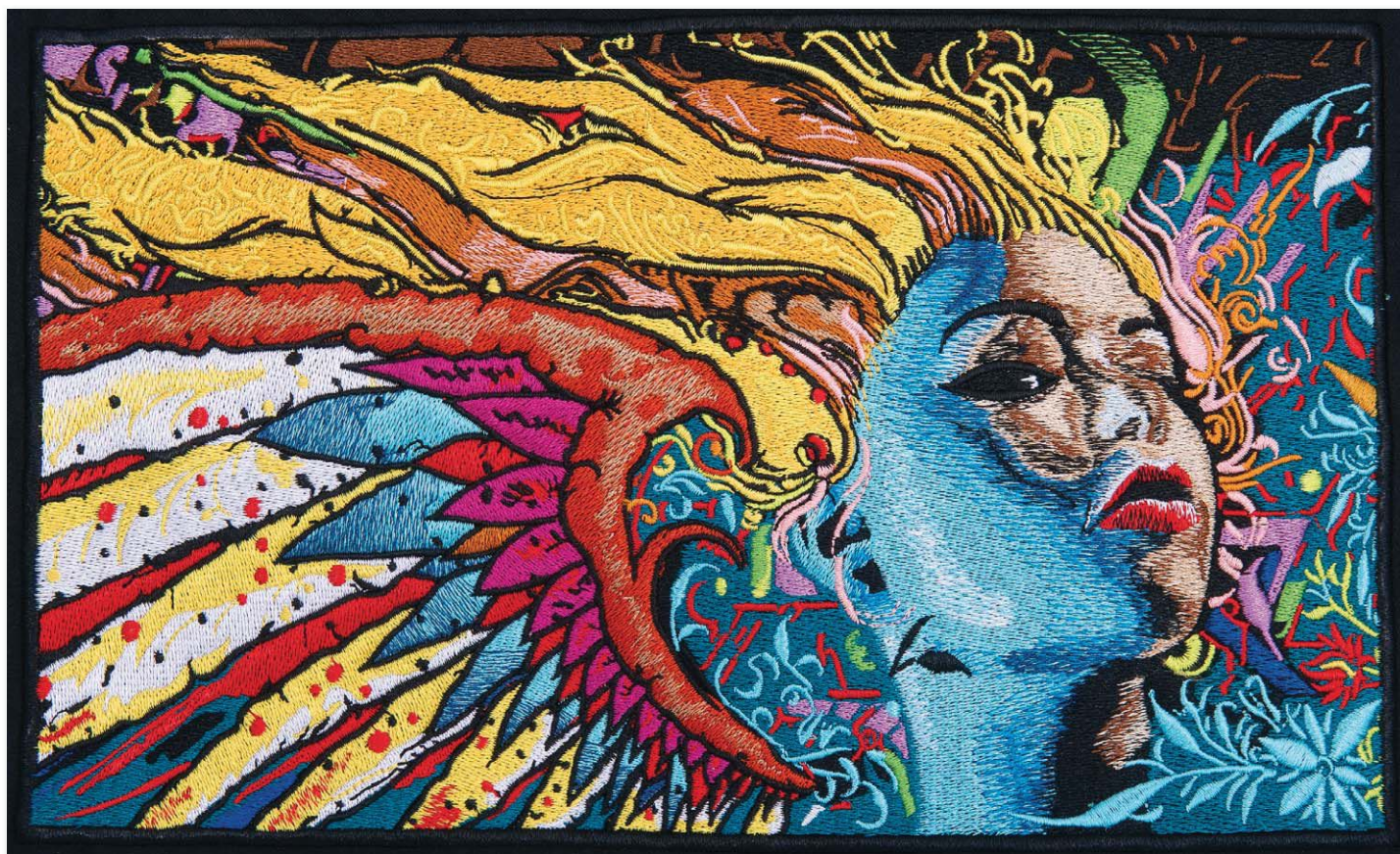


WANT TO TELL US WHAT YOU LIKED ABOUT THE AWARD-WINNING WORKS?

Think the judges got it wrong and want to tell us why? Then speak up on *Stitches*' Facebook page – www.facebook.com/stitchesmag. We'd love to hear your thoughts!

STITCHES EDITORS' PICK

WINNER: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*), Cave Creek, AZ



THIS EVOCATIVE DESIGN CONSISTS OF 15 COLORS AND 168,011 STITCHES.

“Wow.” That, in a word, was the reaction of the Golden Needle Awards judges and *Stitches* editors alike to this ornately detailed piece by the Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*) team. Bursting with color and personality, filled with texture and dimension, “Photo Girl” transcends apparel embellishment and becomes apparel art. “We really wanted to push the creative limits,” says Steve Freeman, managing partner at Qdigitizing.com.

And, did he ever. To create this intricate kaleidoscope of color in thread, Freeman spent 14 hours digitizing with Wilcom software and 10 hours sewing out on a Barudan single-head – the BEVT-Z901CA. Composed of 168,011 stitches, the design includes 15 colors and Madeira polyneon thread. “We wanted to create a visually interesting piece with unique looks,” Freeman says. “So, for instance, instead of doing traditional

hair, we used fill and column stitches to give the hair a very futuristic, almost sci-fi appearance.”

When it came time to sew out, the potential for puckering presented a considerable challenge. “We had to adjust density and stitch lengths to account for puckering,” Freeman says. “It required a few edits, but in the end it came out right.” Getting the girl’s expression to exude a vivid, life-like 3-D quality was another obstacle around which Freeman had to navigate. “It came down to blending and using different techniques to create dimensionality,” he says.

Since the piece was embroidered specifically for the Golden Needle Awards, Freeman is especially pleased to have taken home the Editors’ Pick honor. “It’s exciting and rewarding to be recognized,” he says. – *Christopher Ruvo*

**THE
JUDGES’
TAKES**



**GERI FINIO,
STUDIO 187:**

“One of my favorites! The colors and texture are wonderful.”



**ANDY SHUMAN,
ROCKLAND EMBROIDERY (ASI/734150):**

“The incredible technique and thread color selection stood out with this design. I’d even love to see it morph into the garment in a more abstract fashion, rather than ending in the rectangular shape.”

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, ARTISTIC, CORPORATE

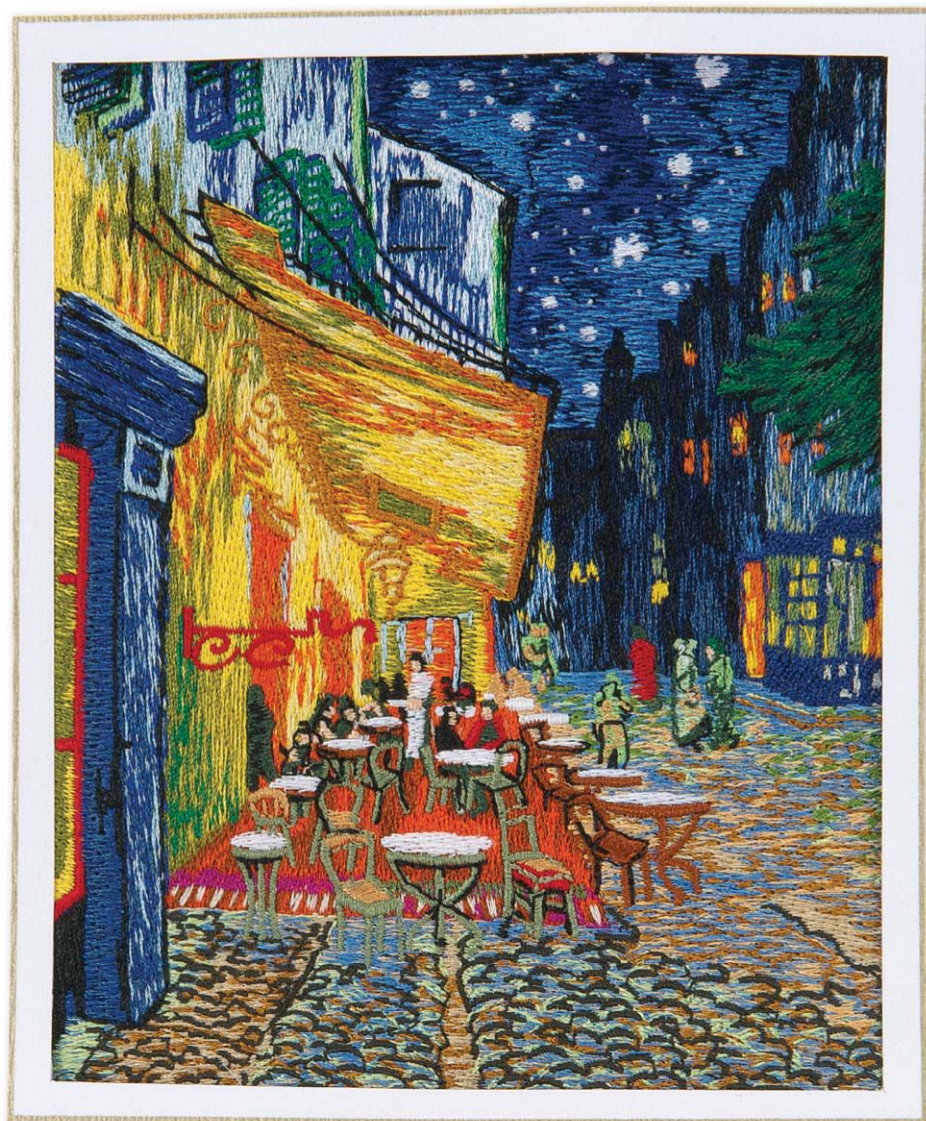
WINNER: Affinity Express (asi/33149)

Every year, Affinity Express (asi/33149) creates an embroidered holiday card for its clients. Often based on famous paintings, the designs on the cards themselves are powerful works of art. That much is evident in this award-winning, color-splashed holiday card called “Café Terrace,” which is inspired by Vincent Van Gogh’s 1888 masterpiece “The Café Terrace on the Place du Forum.” “We look for something that evokes the season,” says Kelly Glass, Affinity’s vice president of marketing. “The colors in Van Gogh’s scene bring to life the cheer of the season. It’s not a holiday image per se, but it’s a beautiful image.”

Featuring 24 colors, the piece is composed of 64,519 stitches and Madeira polyneon thread. Embroidered with a Barudan machine, the card was brought to life by an Affinity Express team that included digitizer/team leader Firoj Mujawwar, quality checker Pravin Bhosale and sampler Santosh Thakur.

In the Van Gogh painting, the artist captures nuances of light and shadow at night while depicting a starry background. The Affinity team deemed it important to match these key effects of the painting in stitches. “The most difficult aspect was to generate the various types of stitches and achieve the similar gradient without losing the smallest details of the painting in embroidery,” Glass says. To overcome the challenge, the team reviewed the painting with its creative and production mentor, created multiple versions of the stitch file, and generated samples with various stitch patterns and gradients before finalizing the design.

The hard work was time well spent. “The annual holiday greeting was developed to be sent to our clients as a way to demonstrate our creative and technical capabilities,” the team members say in a statement. “The most rewarding part of the project was the extremely positive feedback we received from them.” – CR



THIS EMBROIDERED HOLIDAY CARD IS BASED ON VINCENT VAN GOGH'S PAINTING "THE CAFÉ TERRACE ON THE PLACE DU FORUM."

THE JUDGES' TAKES



FINIO:

“Such exceptional texture and dimension throughout this piece. To match the efforts of the embroidery, a heavier quality cardstock would be beneficial so the recipient could frame it long term.”



GINNY FINEBERG, SANDPIPER EMBROIDERY:

“The detail was great. You know as soon as you look at it that it is Van Gogh’s painting.”

EMBROIDERY

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, ARTISTIC, FASHION

WINNER: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

Embroidered especially for the Golden Needle Awards, the “Warrior Man” is a complex surrealist artwork in thread. Reminiscent of the work of leading 20th century surrealist painters like M.C. Escher and Salvador Dalí, the intricate thread play is full of expert blends and subtle designs that command a considered review to appreciate all the elements. “What I like about this piece is that it’s not what you think,” says Steve Freeman, managing partner at Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*). “After you look at it for a bit, you realize there’s more than meets the eye. The more you look around, the more you see.”

Freeman certainly devoted time to make all the different aspects of the work complement each other. He spent 14 hours digitizing with Wilcom software and nine hours sewing out on a single-head Barudan BEVT-Z901CA. In all, 278,988 stitches bring to life “Warrior Man,” which was woven with Madeira rayon thread. “There were literally hundreds of color changes,” Freeman says. “The overall look is achieved by different layers of stitching and patterns of stitches.”

From a digitizing perspective, Freeman says it was imperative to get the blending right. “We had to strike a balance between too little and too much,” he says. To combat puckering during the stitch out, Freeman subtly orchestrated densities and stitch lengths. “This piece isn’t suited to efficient commercial production, but that wasn’t the intention,” he says. “With this one, we wanted to stretch our wings and be really creative.” – CR



THIS ELABORATE, ABSTRACT DESIGN
TOOK NINE HOURS TO SEW OUT.

**THE
JUDGES’
TAKES**



SHUMAN:

“The use of small designs to create the larger image really stands out as one of the most creative embroidery pieces I’ve seen.”



FINIO:

“Way cool! Would work best for me as a framed piece.”

**WANT TO TELL US WHAT YOU LIKED
ABOUT THE AWARD-WINNING WORKS?**

Think the judges got it wrong and want to tell us why? Then speak up on *Stitches*’ Facebook page – www.facebook.com/stitchesmag. We’d love to hear your thoughts!

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, TECHNICAL, FASHION

WINNER: Howard and Amanda Potter, A&P Master Images (*asi/702505*), Utica, NY

WESTERN FIRE CO. "WENT ABSOLUTELY BANANAS" WHEN THEY SAW THIS DESIGN THAT A&P MASTER IMAGES EXECUTED FOR THE BLAZE BATTLERS, SAYS SHOP OWNER HOWARD POTTER.

**PEOPLE'S
CHOICE
AWARD**

AS VOTED BY ATTENDEES
AT THE ASI SHOW IN
CHICAGO IN JULY

At A&P Master Images (*asi/702505*), shop owners Howard and Amanda Potter pride themselves on offering an array of decorating solutions under one roof. That expertise in multiple mediums was put to good use in the creation of the "Western Fire" design for the Western Fire Co. of Westernville, NY.

Featured on hoodies and T-shirts, the evocative and patriotic embellishment was brought to life through sublimation, laser-cut appliqué, and good, old-fashioned machine embroidery. A&P sublimated the American flag print onto a poly/cotton blend shirt – the PC55 from SanMar (*asi/84863*). For the embroidery elements, the savvy stitchers used a 15-needle Tajima machine. Polyester from Robison-Anton was the thread of choice. When it came to the appliqué, A&P took full advantage

of its Seit Single-Head Laser, which worked in conjunction with the embroidery machine to cut the printed fabric into letter shapes. In all, shop staff set down 5,000 stitches.

The American-themed design was inspired by the patriotism of the firefighters as well as the time of year. "It was around the Fourth of July and we wanted to do something unique," says Howard, noting the most difficult hurdle A&P had to clear was getting the positioning and hooping right time and again.

Still, overcoming the challenge was worth it when the Potters got feedback from the firefighters. "They went absolutely bananas," Howard says. "No one else in our area is doing designs like this. If you can do something that sets you apart, that's how you attract and keep customers." – CR

**THE
JUDGES'
TAKES**

**FINIO:**

"Very nice reverse-appliqué technique with the complimentary fabric, color and overall scaling of lettering. It might be fun to use a glow-in-the-dark thread for the yellow outline."

**SHUMAN:**

"This design stood out as a clear winner due to the very creative use of a mixed-media application to create a very fashionable, yet not overly complex piece."

**PRIZE FOR BEING VOTED
PEOPLE'S CHOICE:**

One year decorator membership from Advertising Specialty Institute

EMBROIDERY**DESIGN OF THE YEAR, TECHNICAL, CORPORATE**

WINNER: Dale and Donna Szakats, and Sue Peckman, Initial Impact, Spring Lake, NJ



INITIAL IMPACT CREATED THIS MIXED-MEDIA PIECE FOR THE 20TH REUNION CELEBRATION OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY'S CLASS OF 1992.

When the Princeton University class of 1992 began planning its 20th reunion celebration, they turned to Initial Impact for help with decorated apparel for the festive event. Dale and Donna Szakats, owners of the embroidery shop, delivered “Tiger Chef” – an intricate full-back design composed of 11 appliqué pieces and about 47,000 stitches. Reading “Tiger Chef 20th Reunion,” the embellishment was stitched onto a short sleeve chef’s coat to keep with the alumni’s theme. “Each class has a theme,” Donna says. “They were the Tiger Chefs.”

In all, Initial Impact created nearly 600 of the decorated coats, which included a left-chest embroidery, too. To bring the full-back design to life, the shop stitched-out on multi-head Tajimas (a six-, four- and two-head) using Robison-Anton rayon thread. Initial Impact also partnered with Apex Embroidery Cutting of Ramsey, MN, for the digitizing and twill-cutting.

The weeks of work were worth it in the end. “We wanted to make something special, and the alumni were really happy,” Donna says. The big payoff for she and Dale came when they attended the reunion event and watched hundreds of Ivy League alums marching in a parade in the Tiger Chef shirts. – *CR*

**THE
JUDGES’
TAKES**

FINEBERG:

“This is absolutely clean, perfectly sewn embroidery. It was very appealing. You can’t help but smile when you look at this chef coat!”

SHUMAN:

“Another winner due to the perfect execution of mixed-media techniques.”

EMBROIDERY**BEST USE OF STOCK DESIGN**

WINNER: Jane Swanzy, Swan Marketing LLC (asi/700627), Houston



JANE SWANZY EMBROIDERED THIS DENIM JACKET WITH STOCK DESIGNS FROM URBAN THREADS.

As Jane Swanzy, owner of Swan Marketing LLC (asi/700627) in Houston, browsed through the stock designs at the Urban Threads online store, a stunning design caught her eye. She decided to use the company’s “Horse and Feathers” design, featuring a horse’s head with windswept mane and decorative Native American-inspired feathers, and five “Flock Together” feathers to create this denim jacket.

The irony? Swanzy can’t approach flesh-and-blood horses. “I’m fascinated by them,” she says, “but unfortunately I’m allergic to them.”

Swanzy used a 15-needle single-head Barudan Elite Pro embroidery machine and six colors of Isacord polyester thread to create the designs, comprised of 59,847 stitches, on a women’s denim jacket from Old Navy. She spent four hours designing the jacket and sewing out.

To achieve the look, she first printed out the designs and pinned them to the jacket in different positions until she got it right. “You just have to play with the placement until it looks and feels like you want it to,” she says. – *Sara Lavenduski*

**THE
JUDGES’
TAKES**

FINIO:

“I like the overall softness of the piece with its nice combination of tone and simplicity. I might have suggested a larger scale to the overall design, or possibly a mirror image of the horse added to fill space.”

SHUMAN:

“The designs were uniquely placed across the entire jacket back. The contrast of simplicity in the horse outline and complexity in the shading of the feathers stood out as well.”

BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN, CORPORATE

WINNER: Timberly Kremer, Rambow Inc. (asi/304530), New London, MN



IT TOOK 29,400 STITCHES AND 15 APPLIQUÉ PIECES TO CREATE THIS CLEAN, EXPERTLY EXECUTED MIXED-MEDIA DESIGN.

Full of movement and brawny, bold color, this mixed-media design was created for Rosemount High School's lacrosse team. "It was a challenging piece and I wanted to give the client exactly what they wanted," says Designer Timberly Kremer, who devoted two days of painstaking work to creating the athletic graphic. "In the end, the client loved the design."

Stitched onto hooded sweatshirts, the eye-catching logo features four colors, 29,400 stitches, and Madeira rayon and Gunold Sulky threads. "My design was based on a screen-printed design we had done for them," Kremer says. "For the hoodies, they wanted a classier, embroidered look. I had to figure out how to make the design work in stitches."

To produce an eye-catching effect with minimal stitch count, Kremer incorporated 15 pieces of appliqué. "The biggest challenge was the layering," she says. "I had to make sure I didn't

cover the wrong things." Assiduously punched on Wilcom's EmbroideryStudio Level 2 Creative Digitizing software, the designs were stitched to life on a Barudan embroidery machine. It took about 1.5 hours to sew the full-front design onto each sweatshirt. "We cut the appliqué on a flatbed laser," Kremer says. "Each piece had to be laid individually."

For Kremer and Rambow Inc. (asi/304530), the experience of executing a lacrosse-themed design with expert acumen was especially valuable. Lacrosse is taking off in Rambow's area, and company is competing for the business of the newly hatched teams. A design like this demonstrates Rambow's ability to deliver the goods, while also giving Kremer the confidence and knowledge to create embroidered graphics that will be a hit with players, coaches and their families. "A lot of planning went into this," Kremer says. "It was fun and interesting." — CR

THE JUDGES' TAKES

**FINEBERG:**

"A very clean, well-digitized, well-executed piece of embroidery."

**FINIO:**

"Love the texture on the lacrosse equipment! The handles get lost in the overall design and could probably be left out before and after the word 'lacrosse' - but that's certainly not a deal-breaker here. Great work!"

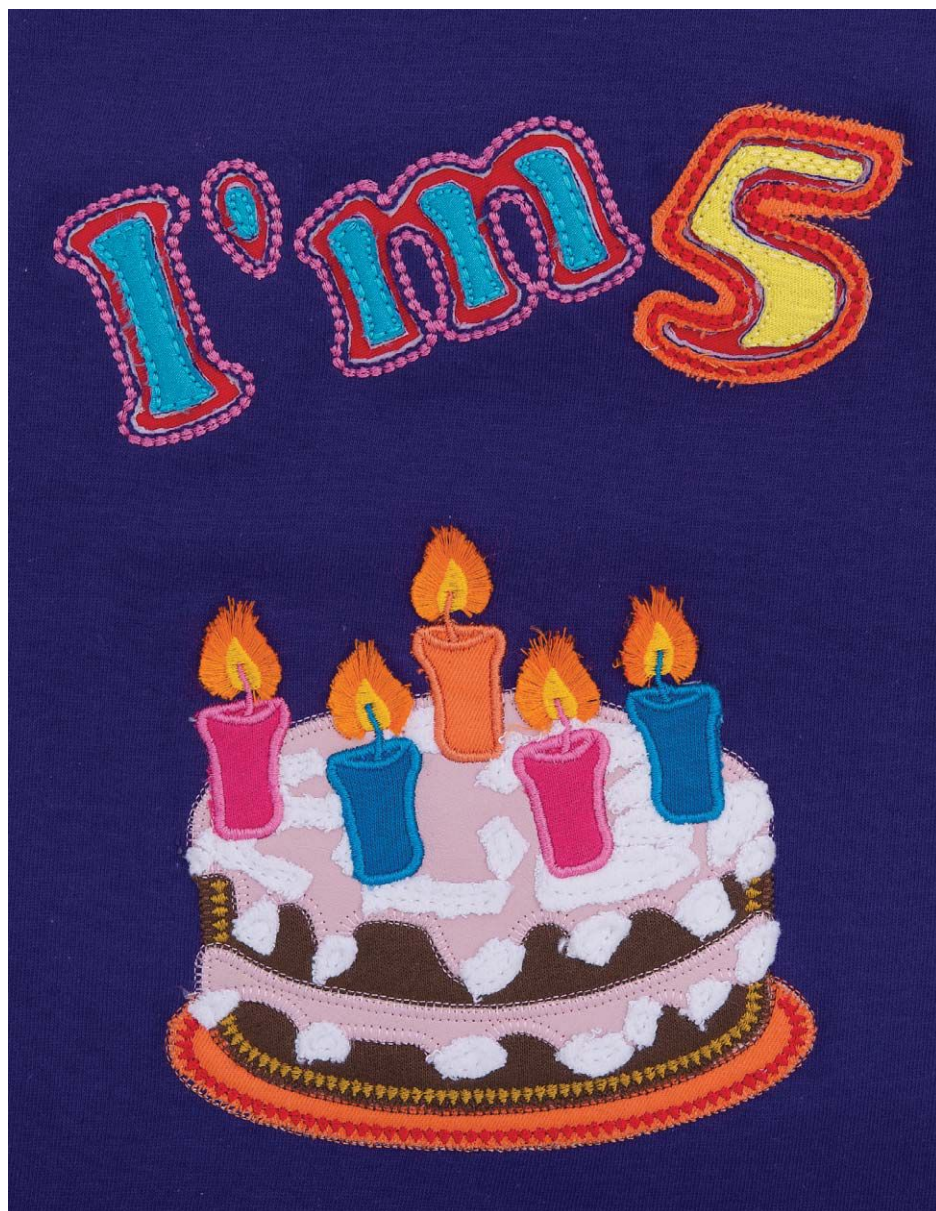
BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN, FASHION

WINNER: Mo Etisham, Quality Punch, Torrance, CA

The amount of detail and manual work involved in creating this design means it's neither for a rush order nor a large one. "It's not a fast production run," says Karen Habe, co-owner of Quality Punch in Torrance, CA. "You can only make a few pieces at a time. It took us about two to three hours for appliqué cutting and five hours to complete."

The piece includes about 20,000 stitches of Madeira polyester thread and was digitized by Mo Etisham on Wilcom software in one hour. Then it was sewn out on a Tajima embroidery machine. "This is a very unusual design because everything is appliquéd," Habe says. "Most designs have one or two; 'I'm 5' has seven different ones." Each appliqué piece was first cut by hand. Then, the machine had to stop each time another piece of appliqué was to be placed on the shirt. The appliqués then had to be finished manually in different places, including the text and the candle flames.

"Putting it all together was tough," Habe says. "We had to find the right design, digitize it well, pick the different fabrics, and apply good appliqué borders and good registration. Mo is extremely artistic and loves to try out new things. He came up with different appliqué techniques to make it look award-winning. We're all thrilled with the result." — SL



MO ETISHAM OF QUALITY PUNCH DIGITIZED THIS DESIGN THAT FEATURES SEVEN PIECES OF APPLIQUÉ AND APPROXIMATELY 20,000 STITCHES.

THE JUDGES' TAKES



FINEBERG:

"I liked the variety of stitches, the colors were chosen well, and the fringe detail added a nice surprise to the piece."



FINIO:

"This shirt can be recycled or reused into a pillow as a colorful memento. The excellent use of creative stitches mixed with colorful appliqué makes this an adorable wearable for a special occasion."

EMBROIDERY**BEST SINGLE-COLOR DESIGN****WINNER:** M. Usman, Quality Punch, Torrance, CA

QUALITY PUNCH'S M. USMAN DIGITIZED THIS DESIGN FOR A CLIENT IN GERMANY; IT INCLUDES 6500 STITCHES OF MADEIRA POLYESTER THREAD.

This left-chest embroidery design in black, set against a white polo, proves that decorators need not sacrifice detail on a project that takes up a small surface area. But that doesn't mean it's easy to execute. Karen Habe, co-owner of Quality Punch in Torrance, CA, says one-color designs pose their own technical challenges.

"If they're not digitized correctly, the design looks messy and causes thread breaks on the machine," she explains.

The art for this design came from Quality Punch customers Elke and Thomas Grall, of Stickerei-Grall in Germany. Digitizer M. Usman worked with the design in Wilcom, with mostly run stitches on some satin. The finished piece features 6,500 stitches of Madeira polyester thread and was sewn out in about eight minutes, with six trims, on a Tajima embroidery machine. — *SL*

**THE
JUDGES'
TAKES**

**FINEBERG:**

"A very clean, one-color design."

FINIO:

"The scale and detail is fine in this black and white embroidery presentation. This is a great example of making something wearable that doesn't scream 'branding'."

EMBROIDERY**HOME OR FASHION ACCESSORIES****WINNER:** Andrew Sequeira, Sparkle Plenty Designs (*asi/88442*)

ANDREW SEQUEIRA OF SPARKLE PLENTY DESIGNS (*asi/88442*) EMBELLISHED THIS HOME DÉCOR PILLOW WITH SPARKLING SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS.

The multi-faceted Swarovski crystals on this bright turquoise pillow made "Free Bird" a stand-out entry for the judges. "My wife and co-owner Lee suggested a bird and cage design," says creator Andrew Sequeira, co-owner of Sparkle Plenty Designs (*asi/88442*). "We decorate mostly apparel, so this time we decided to do something in home décor."

The Sequeiras browsed online for an image, which they modified and then drafted out. Then they went to several stores before finding the perfect pillow.

Before applying the crystals, Sequeira did a heat test on a small portion of the fabric.

After the design was applied, the heat-press operator put the stuffing back inside the pillow. "If you don't know anyone with seamstress skills," Sequeira says, "look for a zipper case. This one also has piping, which takes a lot of skill and experience." — *SL*

**THE
JUDGES'
TAKES**

SHUMAN:

"A very clean design that's executed to perfection. The rhinestones form perfectly straight lines and there's very precise detail."

FINIO:

"It's very current with the trendy colors and style we're seeing in magazines. Excellent completion of binding and cropped corner details. Quality workmanship throughout."

EMBROIDERY

EMBROIDERY AND HEAT-PRINTING DECORATION

WINNER: Jamie Iverson, Rambow Inc. (asi/304530), New London, MN

When the judges examined this piece, one feature impressed them immediately: the astonishing level of detail. Jamie Iverson, art director at Rambow Inc. (asi/304530) in New London, MN, included 19 pieces of appliqué, and 56,849 zig-zag, satin and fill stitches to create the design on a Carhartt workwear sweatshirt.

Iverson used Wilcom e1.5 software to digitize, and included seven thread colors, four appliqué colors, and 24 color changes. It was stitched on a Barudan 12-head embroidery machine, while the appliqué was cut on a Universal Laser System flatbed laser.

Usually, the team at Rambow keeps designs under 25,000 stitches; they broke tradition with this piece. “We’ve done appliqué for years, but it still took some thought as to how to break down the design into a workable number of appliqué colors and pieces,” Iverson says. “The multiple parts and cuts for the truck were very complex to get right.”

Because the design had been used previously at Rambow in a screen-printing order, “one of our other designers had created nice clean vector art,” Iverson says. “It’s nice to start with good artwork. And then when you see the finished garment come off the embroidery machine, it makes all the effort well worth it. This design has it all.” – SL



JAMIE IVERSON OF RAMBOW INC. (ASI/304530) USED 19 PIECES OF APPLIQUÉ TO CREATE THIS DESIGN ON A CARHARTT WORKWEAR SWEATSHIRT.

THE JUDGES' TAKES



FINEBERG:

“Very clean appliqué. A good example of a detailed design done cleanly – and a credit to our industry.”



SHUMAN:

“A perfect example of how tackle twill or appliqué can apply to corporate logos to create a retail appeal. The quality of the stitching is incredible.”

DIGITIZING AWARDS

Stitches' Editors' Pick

Melco's DesignShop Pro Plus is a powerful embroidery digitizing software used all over the world by thousands of users and companies like Dakota Collectibles, the world's largest supplier of stock embroidery designs. Intuitive and robust, DesignShop will decrease digitizing time and increase the quality of stitching customers will love. Visit www.melco.com for more information.

Winner: Flora Moreno, Cora Kromer and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

Design of the Year, Artistic, Corporate

Free two-year subscription to Embroidery i2 (www.embroideryi2.com), a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW, sponsored by Pulse Microsystems Ltd. Winner has an option to buy Embroidery i2 for 50% of the prevailing retail price in the U.S./country of award-winning company at the end of the subscription. (Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW programs are not included.)

Winner: Affinity Express (*asi/33149*)

Design of the Year, Artistic, Fashion

Free two-year subscription to Embroidery i2 (www.embroideryi2.com), a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW, sponsored by Pulse Microsystems Ltd. Winner has an option to buy Embroidery i2 for 50% of the prevailing retail price in the U.S./country of award-winning company at the end of the subscription. (Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW programs are not included.)

Winner: Bonnie Domeny, Threadlove Embroidery

Design of the Year, Technical, Corporate

Free two-year subscription to Embroidery i2 (www.embroideryi2.com), a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW, sponsored by Pulse Microsystems Ltd. Winner has an option to buy Embroidery i2 for 50% of the prevailing retail price in the U.S./country of award-winning company at the end of the subscription. (Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW programs aren't included.)

Winner: Jamie Iverson, Rambow Inc. (*asi/304530*)

Digitizing, Design of the Year, Technical, Fashion

Free two-year subscription to Embroidery i2 (www.embroideryi2.com), a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW, sponsored by Pulse Microsystems Ltd. Winner has an option to buy Embroidery i2 for 50% of the prevailing retail price in the U.S./country of award-winning company at the end of the subscription. (Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW programs aren't included.)

Winner: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)

Best Multimedia Design

Free two-year subscription to Embroidery i2 (www.embroideryi2.com), a plug-in for Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW, sponsored by Pulse Microsystems Ltd. Winner has an option to buy Embroidery i2 for 50% of the prevailing retail price in the U.S./country of award-winning company at the end of the subscription. (Adobe Illustrator/CorelDRAW programs aren't included.)

Winner: Gary Holcomb, California Embroidery

Best Single-Color Design

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Hilton Apparel Group (*asi/60930*)

Winner: M. Usman, Quality Punch

Best Home or Fashion Accessories Design

\$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Pro Towels Etc. (*asi/79750*)

Winner: Peggy Severt, Pegboard Crafts

DIGITIZING

STITCHES' EDITORS' PICK

WINNER: Flora Moreno, Cora Kromer and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*)



"MAN'S FACE" SHOWCASED THE LEVEL OF TALENT IN THE INDUSTRY AND AT QDIGITIZING.COM (*ASI/700501*).

Each year, the artists and digitizers at QDigitizing.com (*asi/700501*) in Cave Creek, AZ, hold a design contest and send the winning designs to *Stitches* Golden Needle Awards. "Man's Face," a complex design with multiple dimensions, originated as a graphic piece that the team thought would make for a tough challenge and an impressive piece, if they could pull it off.

"We like the complexity of the image and the Escher-esque quality of the art where the design can be several things at once depending on how you look at it," says Steve Freeman, managing partner at Qdigitizing.com. "The design is unique in that the man's white moustache looks like the back of another man – trying to capture that using stitches is tricky."

After almost 16 hours and five digitizing changes, the quality control team gave it the thumbs up. The 97,000-stitch sew-out was done on a single head Barudan BEVT-901CA and took an additional four hours, mostly due to its 23 thread colors and 72 color changes. "We wanted to create a masterpiece that we could be proud of and perhaps teach the industry more about digitizing in a unique way," Freeman says.

– Andraya Vantrease

DIGITIZING

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, ARTISTIC, CORPORATE

WINNER: Affinity Express (*asi/33149*)

AFFINITY EXPRESS
(*asi/33149*)
TEAM MEMBERS
EMBROIDERED
VINCENT VAN
GOGH'S "THE CAFÉ
TERRACE ON THE
PLACE DU FORUM"
TO CREATE A
GREETING CARD FOR
CLIENTS.



Using a Barudan single-head for the design and test run, the Affinity Express (*asi/33149*) team, consisting of digitizer, Firoj Mujawwar, quality checker, Pravin Bhosale, and sampler, Santosh Thakur, recreated Vincent Van Gogh's "The Café Terrace on the Place du Forum" as a holiday card – 300 cards to be exact.

"The annual holiday greeting was developed to be sent to our clients as a way to demonstrate our creative and technical capabilities," says Kelly Glass, vice president of marketing for Affinity Express. "The most rewarding part of the project was the extremely positive feedback we received from them."

Because of the nuances of light and shadow in this painting, the team realized the most difficult aspect was generating the various types of stitches and achieving a similar gradient without losing the smallest details when embroidering the 64,519-stitch design. Mujawwar began digitizing at the top left of the painting's blue sky and worked through the entire design instead of separating sections. "We reviewed the painting with our creative and production mentor, created multiple versions of the stitch file and generated samples with various stitch patterns and gradients," Glass says.

After stitching out the first sample, the team realized there were several necessary changes they had to make. Mujawwar made minor revisions in the details of the starry background and enhanced the colors to demonstrate the vibrant color schemes. The team used Madeira polyneon threads for the holiday card, which featured 24 colors and 60 thread changes on a multi-head embroidery machine for full production. – *AV*

**THE
JUDGE'S
TAKE**



**JAY FISHMAN,
WICKED STITCH OF THE EAST:**

"The layer of colors on this is very nice; it creates a depth not seen in normal embroideries."

DIGITIZING

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, ARTISTIC, FASHION

WINNER: Bonnie Domeny, Thread Love Embroidery, Sacramento, CA



BONNIE DOMENY'S "DRAGON SKIRT" WAS A PERSONAL DESIGN THAT TURNED FANTASY INTO REALITY.

More than 20 hours of technical planning, plotting and digitizing went into "Dragon Skirt" by Bonnie Domeny, owner of Sacramento, CA-based Thread Love Embroidery. After all, Domeny's goal was a bit of an oxymoron – a realistic dragon. "I wanted it to have movement and depth, like it could come to life at any moment," she says.

Using Pulse DG/ML software to digitize, Domeny focused on the area where the green flame ran into the purple dragon because this particular area forced her to break one of the golden rules of sewing: stitch from the center toward the sides to avoid possible gaps and puckering. Domeny explains that she compensated with adequate underlay and careful attention to stitch direction.

Admittedly, she was pleasantly surprised to finish the design with 13 thread colors and only 13 thread changes, especially considering the stitch count and size: 70,500 stitches measuring 6.69" x 10.16."

Says Domeny: "The completed design turned out better than I had hoped, and anyone who sees it wants to take a closer look." – *AV*

**THE
JUDGE'S
TAKE**



**BONNIE LANDSBERGER,
MOONLIGHT DESIGN:**

"Great work for denim and creative placement on leg; nice digitizing job. One suggestion: It could have benefited with a little more underlay in a few areas."

BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN

WINNER: Gary Holcomb, California Embroidery, Fresno, CA



GARY HOLCOMB PUT A MODERN TWIST ON AN OLD FAVORITE WITH "HOT ROD FISHING."

"Hot Rod Fishing" had been hanging in Fresno, CA-based California Embroidery's showroom since the owner, Gary Holcomb, embroidered it for a customer three years ago. For this year's awards, Holcomb thought he'd bring it to life again by adding dye-sublimated appliqué for extra detail and pop.

"Apex Embroidery already had the layouts for Hot Rod's appliqué since they did the original, so I sublimated it and they laser-cut the pieces for me," Holcomb says. "When I received the appliqué pieces, I quickly realized that they had shrunk in the heat process, so I tweaked the digitizing and the first sew-out fit perfectly." In addition to the four hours it took to

digitize the original design, Holcomb spent three hours with sublimation, digitizing changes and embroidering the new and improved ocean scene.

The customer, a group of sport fishers out of California, ordered the design on 12 shirts, and provided a generic design for Holcomb to work with; however, Holcomb did his research before turning to his Wilcom software and Tajima machine. "I studied the boat, the lettering and the fish, and decided how it should look in thread," he said.

With the three areas of appliqué – the sky, the ocean and the banner – now sublimated, the design jumps out more so than ever, which was exactly Holcomb's goal. – *AV*

THE JUDGE'S TAKE



FISHMAN:

"The digitizer did an excellent job with minimal stitches to create the effects, and the small fish was beautifully done. It created a 3-D effect without the use of puff."



WANT TO TELL US WHAT YOU LIKED ABOUT THE AWARD-WINNING WORKS?

Think the judges got it wrong and want to tell us why? Then speak up on *Stitches'* Facebook page – www.facebook.com/stitchesmag. We'd love to hear your thoughts!

DIGITIZING

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, TECHNICAL, FASHION

WINNER: Steve Freeman and staff, Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*), Cave Creek, AZ



AN EXTREMELY TALENTED STAFF COLLABORATED TO ACHIEVE THIS WINNING "WARRIOR MAN" DESIGN.

The design team at Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*) knows practice makes perfect. So when they decided to take on "Warrior Man," Steve Freeman, managing partner, and his team, prepared for a long, detailed process. After choosing art that was visually pleasing and equally as challenging, the senior digitizers discussed ways to approach the design.

Freeman and his team do all of their digitizing work in-house, where they have eight single-head Barudan machines, as well as a Toyota and a Melco Amaya. Complex pieces like "Warrior Man" estimate an eight-hour stitch and sample time; however, the hours can add up, as the team always starts again from scratch when they find a flaw.

"Once a first pass is complete, the files are reviewed for obvious flaws, edited and then sewn out," Freeman says. "This design, like many, went through no less than half a dozen major edits and numerous minor edits. We have a QA team who can be brutal in evaluating designs, and if a design is flawed it'll get kicked back to either the primary digitizer or editor, who work closely together."

From a digitizing perspective, Freeman says it was imperative to get the blending right. "We had to strike a balance between too little and too much," he says. To combat puckering during the stitch out, Freeman subtly orchestrated densities and stitch lengths. "This piece isn't suited to efficient commercial production, but that wasn't the intention," he says. "With this one, we wanted to stretch our wings and be really creative."

"Warrior Man" sports 86,347 stitches on the back of a woven cotton shirt, and leaves much to the imagination while meeting the team's goal of creating beautiful embroidery. — AV



FISHMAN:

"The complexity of the design captures your attention, and the user-defined fills in the design are creative. There were no gaps, which was very well done considering the overall stitch count."



ERICH CAMPBELL, BLACK DUCK INC.:

"The contrast of the formal-looking heraldic elements with the laughing man makes for a fun design. This is a great use of single color, where the engraving-like rendering brings to mind heraldic images from antique bookplates."

DIGITIZING

BEST SINGLE-COLOR DESIGN

WINNER: M. Usman, Quality Punch, Torrance, CA



"LAUGHING STONE" IS ONE DESIGN FILLED WITH SERIOUS TALENT.

It's not easy to duplicate facial expressions in embroidery, let alone accomplishing it with only one thread color. M. Usman, digitizer at Torrance, CA-based Quality Punch, created this piece for a client in Germany, and amazingly, it took him only one hour to digitize.

"The design didn't look as neat as we would have liked the first time around, so we did one more sew-out and that was the winner," says Karen Habe, co-owner. "It resembled the art very closely and was easy and fast to run on the machine due to the very low stitch count, few trim stops and no color changes."

The biggest challenge of the design was creating the facial expression and keeping up with the details of the crown, flowers, and other aspects of the art – and all the while, deciding what to keep and what to eliminate. "Single-color designs like these can be a bit tough especially if it's in Red-work, or run stitching," she says. "If not done correctly, the design looks messy and causes thread breaks on the machine. Correct run stitch length – we recommend 2.5mm – and correct retracing of points are very essential."

At 6,500 stitches of black thread, this design is simple, yet very clean. Plus, it's efficient for anyone with a single-head machine, like the Tajima Usman used. — AV

DIGITIZING

DESIGN OF THE YEAR, TECHNICAL, CORPORATE

WINNER: Jamie Iverson, Rambow Inc. (*asi/304530*), New London, MN



SCTCC AUTOMOTIVE WAS CREATED WITH A COMBINATION OF APPLIQUÉ AND EMBROIDERED TRIM AND DETAIL.

Jamie Iverson, owner of Rambow Inc. (*asi/304530*) in New London, MN, is a sucker for a classic hot rod, so when he had the opportunity to create one for a customer, it helped that he knew what the final product should look like.

Since Iverson used a great deal of appliqué, the challenge was to hide the fabric edges with at least 3mm of stitching. "This required some black satin stitching in different areas in order to sew down the appliqué, and I was glad we found a cream appliqué that worked for the white-wall tires," he says. "I originally planned to use a fill stitch, but the appliqué looks much better."

The high-contrast style made this design fun for Iverson to digitize and design. "It's one of those designs where you feel like you're painting with stitches," he says. "It's fun to do something a little more abstract instead of the basic fill and outline style of design."

Iverson always stitches test samples on his Barudan single-head then uses a Barudan 12-head for final production. Iverson says that SCTCC Automotive didn't need many tweaks during the testing phase, and the finished design features two colors of appliqué and three thread colors, totaling 32,764 stitches. — AV

THE JUDGE'S TAKE



CAMPBELL: "The clean, precise and well-executed lines in the piece with the spot-on tone and style make this piece a stunner. This kind of sharp rendering has a charm that can't be denied."

DIGITIZING

BEST HOME OR FASHION ACCESSORIES DESIGN

WINNER: Peggy Severt, Pegboard Crafts, Coldwater, OH

Although she focuses on creating designs for close friends, Peggy Severt, owner of Pegboard Crafts in Coldwater, OH, has had much success turning these practical, personal items into popular sellers on her online store. "The Terri" purse, an over-the-shoulder, cross-body satchel with three pockets and an adjustable strap, has a total of 17,467 stitches, three thread colors and more than five individual hoopings.

"This project required both digitizing and sewing knowledge," Severt says. "I thought about how to sew this purse together using regular methods and adapt them to what can be accomplished in the hoop. The last hoop was the largest, with 8,295 stitches."

Severt designs and embroiders her work using a Brother single-head PR600, and since she tests everything herself, she is used to her pieces transforming several times before she's satisfied with the end result. "I realized I had to have more space between the top edge of the purse and the flap and needed to make a slightly smaller flap that wouldn't be too thick for some home machines," she says. "The second version came after I carried the purse a few times and kept trying to slide my iPhone in a pocket that didn't exist. I added the outside pocket and adjustable straps for the final revision." — AV



SEVERT NAMED "THE TERRI" AFTER A FRIEND WHO INSPIRED HER TO CREATE THE PURSE.

THE JUDGE'S TAKE



LANDSBERGER: "Nice choice of stitches to tack down the zipper."

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Audience Development

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LOOKING FORWARD

In the next issue, you'll get advice on how to think about your 2014 marketing plan. See you next issue!

Q *I've been embroidering at home as a side business and now I'm starting a full-fledged apparel-decoration shop. I know embroidery, but I'm going to need a lot of outside help to provide customers with goods and services beyond stitching. Who are the most important people and companies I'll need to partner with to take my business to the next level?*

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etors I've talked to
have had trouble
taking on too much them-
selves, so I'm happy to see
you ready and willing to build
a 'team' to help you get your
business underway. We'll
examine groups of potential
partners – both individuals and
businesses – and the qualities
you should look for in each.

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passes graphic designers,
digitizers and Web designers.
If you don't have these talents
in-house, you'll need creatives
to handle art preparation and
digitizing for your custom cli-
ents, as well as asset creation for
your online presence. Though
every type of partner should be
responsive, this group's avail-
ability is particularly important.
If you need art alterations or
fixes on a digitized file, slow
response time can kill a time-
sensitive job before it leaves the
design phase. Look for good
interviewers who take into
account the application of your
design and your customer's
needs. Don't confuse inexpen-
sive work here with value; bal-
ance price concerns with your
need for quality and smooth
production.

**2. Decoration Supply Ven-
dors.** These companies provide
threads, inks, backings, needles,
and hopefully, information. In
this category, focus on cus-

tomers service, ease of ordering
and knowledge about product
application. As someone with
embroidery experience, you
won't need much coaching on
the basics, but when it comes to
new combinations of materi-
als, or processes with which
you aren't familiar, having a
knowledgeable vendor to help
you pick the right product and
guide you through its use is
invaluable. Additionally, if you
venture into heat printing, find
suppliers that create custom
transfers for the media you
won't be creating in-house. If
you only create cut vinyl decora-
tion, seek quality suppliers of
rhinestone, full-color print/cut,
and sublimation transfers to get
the most versatility from your
heat press.

3. Wearables Suppliers. It's
hard to decorate apparel if you
can't get the right garments.
Look for responsive customer
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and shipping, and a balanced
range of quality garment offer-
ings from this group. Coming
closely after the quality of their
garments and the reliability of
their supply chain is the quality
and availability of their market-
ing tools. The best will be able
to offer you everything from
custom website creation and
customizable product videos,
to custom flyer builders, all
through easy to use Web-based
interfaces. Where product

quality is equal, pick the ven-
dor with the better tools. It'll
save you time and effort when
producing marketing materials
and mock-ups.

**4. Promotional Products
Suppliers and Contract
Decorators.** No matter how
many processes you bring in-
house, you likely won't create
everything your customers
need, especially when it comes
to promotional products and
accessories. You'll need highly-
rated suppliers of promotional

in a wide variety from for-pay
groups that hold trade shows
and have extensive benefits, to
promotional product sourcing
powerhouses, to online groups
of individuals bound by their
common love of the industry,
each providing a measure of
technical and sometimes moral
support. As a new decorator, I
can't think of better relation-
ships to cultivate than those
with helpful industry veterans,
and these groups are a great
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curse from your customers like
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write reliably. Once again, hav-
ing a knowledgeable, respon-
sive rep is key in this category.
Even when an order fits your
capabilities, you might need
help producing jobs outsized
for your capacity. You'll also
want a contract decorator in
your corner. When it comes
time to contract, look for up-
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rate with your own.

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