

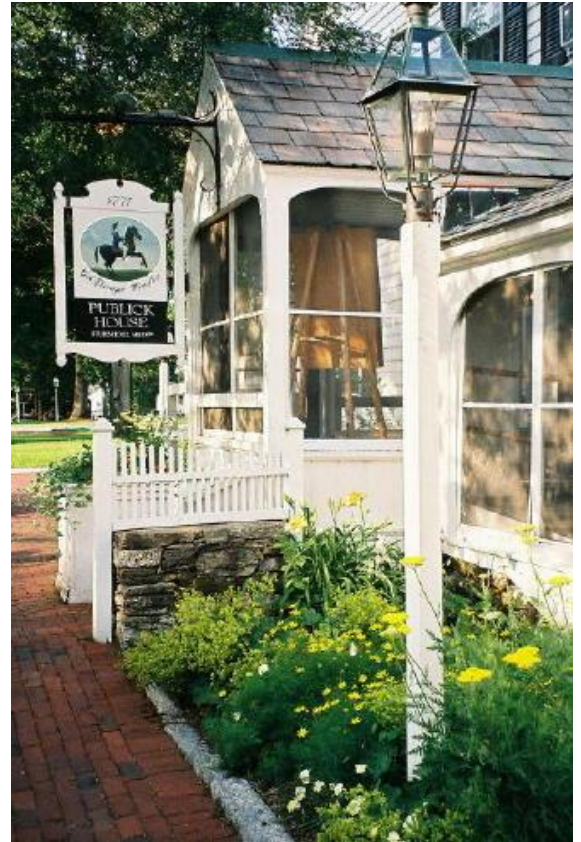
Stitchers Hidzaway!

2006 Sturbridge Fun Report

Jackie du Plessis of It's Fine-ally Finished

Instructor Jackie du Plessis of It's Fine-ally Finished and I were so eager for this retreat to begin we could hardly contain ourselves! We exchanged a lot of email as the day grew closer. The night before the retreat my stitching buddy Deb joined Jackie and me for a yummy meal at the Publick House, where the retreat was held. This was a wonderful facility. The food was absolutely delicious and the classroom was roomy with great decor. The ceiling was very high and perched up near the ceiling were some antiques. There was a lot of natural light in the room and plenty of space for Chris's Collection, Olde Colonial Designs, and Olde Willow Stitchery to set up shop for us. We spent some time getting things organized for the next day and then headed for a good night's sleep.

The next morning, we began to see stitchers here and there, out enjoying the sun mostly and eagerly awaiting the start of the retreat. Shop owners Chris and Pam arrived to get their stash on display and then suddenly it was time for the retreat to begin! I opened the door and they were lined up and ready to go. At this retreat the stitchers were from Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and even Wales! It was a great retreat project and even some designers couldn't resist taking it. Designers Robin of Olde Willow Stitchery and Pam from Olde Colonial Designs took the class, and Chris from Chris's Collection did as well. It was a tough project to resist! Everyone wanted to learn Jackie's finishing techniques in person, and we weren't disappointed. Jackie has excellent written and oral instructions for all her classes. Throughout our class time together I picked up so many little tidbits to help me with many different projects, as I'm sure we all did.



Waiting patiently for the retreat to begin!

As everyone poured into the classroom they picked up out a spot in the classroom and received their Fun Packs filled with goodies from A Whimsical Element, Brightneedle, Brittercup Designs, Calico Crossroads, Cherished Stitches, Chris's Collection, Elizabeth's Designs, It's Fine-ally Finished, Knotted Tree NeedleArt, Lavender Wings, Old Willow Stitchery, Olde Colonial Designs, Rosewood Manor, Stitchy Kitty, Sue Hillis Designs, The Prairie Schooler, The Sweetheart Tree, With My Needle, and Zweigart! It's always fun to go through all the goodies.



Our cool classroom!

We all had about an hour to shop and enjoy coffee and goodies before our first class with Jackie began. There were some great stitched models to see, which, of course, made us want to buy all kinds of stuff!! Jackie had a display of some of her beautiful projects, with some kits for purchase. She also had some cool accessory items. Robin from Olde Willow Stitchery had some of her stitched models along with some kits for sale, and Chris's Collection had a huge assortment of Olde Willow Stitchery threads for us to fondle and purchase. Pam from Olde Colonial Designs had great wood items to display stitching along with many stitched models, accessories, and Pam's own unique kits for sale, several of which I have had the pleasure of stitching myself. You can see many of the projects on her website.



Next, we gathered for our class time together. But first, we had to find out who the stitcher was that traveled the farthest -- and hands down that was Rosemary all the way from Wales! Here's Rosemary going through all the cool stuff she received in a special gift pack just for her. Among the items were some placemats that looked like antique samplers, purchased from Old Sturbridge Village.

Throughout the retreat names were drawn for door prizes donated by A Whimsical Element, Brittercup Designs, Cherished Stitches, Chris's Collection, Earth Threads, Elizabeth's Designs, Finger Work, Glory Bee, It's Fine-ally Finished, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Knotted Tree NeedleArt, Krelinik, M Designs, monsterbubbles, Morning Glory Needleworks, Praiseworthy Stitches, Rosewood Manor, Stitchy Kitty, The Victoria Sampler, and With My Needle. Karen, a very generous stitcher, also donated some fantastic door prizes.

Several door prizes were given out at the start of our retreat, including one from Stitcher's Hideaway that went to Ann: a stuffed frog that sings What a Wonderful World. LOL!! We enjoyed playing the frog from time to time during the retreat.



Sue gives Ann (left) her frog prize!

After a lot of laughter, Jackie was introduced and our class time began. We received our Briar Rose Etui kits, and what a joy they were. Jackie chose the best of materials -- gorgeous silk, hand-dyed silk ribbons, silk fibers, linen, scrimshaw, wool stuffing, carved mother of pearl buttons, a wooden thimble pot, ultra-suede, glass head pins, oh, so many little details went into the creation of this project. Our Briar Rose Etuis are sure to become heirloom pieces that we will treasure.



I love this picture of Jackie. She was giving someone a personal demonstration, which she did throughout the retreat. She is very personable and approachable. Almost all the photos I have of her are of her helping individuals. How wonderful to have an instructor so eager to teach! We all enjoyed her sweet accent, too. Jackie is from South Africa and only this year became an American citizen. She enjoyed celebrating her first Fourth of July as a Citizen.



I enjoyed this classroom photo with some aware of the camera, others with their noses in their stitching, others chatting and laughing, someone in the background taking a stretch. It's so typical of the casual atmosphere at Stitcher's Hideaway retreats. It just makes it so much fun.

Lunch time came and we went to a room connected to our class room for our first meal together. We had a choice of New England Chicken Pot Pie or Caesar Salad with Chicken -- a tough choice to make! Both were great, and we followed it up with Dark Chocolate Mocha Mousse! Did I just make you hungry?!?

After lunch we had time to shop again and then we resumed our class. Jackie had us make our little pin pot with linen and wool stuffing. It is so cute! Afterwards Jackie talked us through some of the project and then we began stitching our Briar Rose Etui. Here Jackie is providing a demonstration for Cyndi.



In this project photo you can see the little pin pot we made next to the Briar Rose Etui.



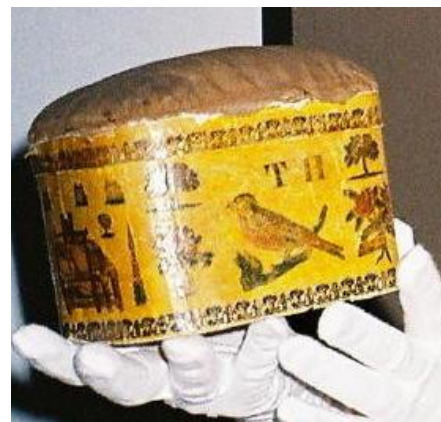
This is what the etui looks like when opened. The little pin pot sits on top of a scrimshaw piece in the middle. The additional scrimshaw pieces were optional and were available for purchase at the retreat. I plan to add a couple antique items inherited from my grandmother inside mine.



Here are six lucky recipients of door prizes donated by Thea Dueck of Victoria Sampler. They each received a beautiful chart with accessory packs!



Later that afternoon we had a fantastic lecture by Jean Cantino, Lead Interpreter for Textiles at Old Sturbridge Village. She brought in a selection of sewing tools and accessories along with slides. Her lecture was so interesting -- you could have heard a needle drop! We enjoyed meeting Jean and seeing her display. She was very knowledgeable and answered our many questions. In these photos she is showing some huswives from the OSV collection, which were stitched pockets designed to carry stitching accessories.



There were many interesting pieces, including the sewing box above.



Jean shows a small to Mary B.



After our lecture we enjoyed a Barbecue Dinner Buffet on an outdoor terrace. But this was no ordinary barbecue! What a delicious feast! I guess there really isn't anything that is ordinary about the Publick House! Just picture these items: farfalle pasta spinach salad with kalamata olives, pancetta, oven roasted tomatoes and feta cheese. Roast potato and Granny Smith Apple Salad with Rosemary Sage Mayonnaise. Tossed seasonal green, herb vinaigrette, charbroiled NY steak with button mushroom ragout, honey barbecued chicken, spicy barbecued pork spare ribs, buttered corn on the cob, Cajun roasted potatoes, lemonade and ice tea, watermelon, apple crisp and chocolate pecan pie!!



I'm so glad that the weather cooperated with us and that we were able to enjoy a meal outside.

After our barbeque we had more time to shop and relax before gathering again for a surprise I had for everyone! For this retreat I designed Lovely Ladybug. This design was inspired by my friend Leslie. Leslie's mom had little red spots on her skin, and when Leslie was a child, she asked her what they were. Her mom told her they were ladybugs! Many years later, when Leslie's beloved mother passed away, Leslie took great comfort in every ladybug she saw. Her home is filled with ladybug decorations, and I have even nicknamed her "Lady Bug." I designed this to be a business card holder for her, but it can be used to hold little stitching items. There was even some felt with a lady bug design printed on it to use for holding needles!



Here's the back and the front, which snaps closed, and below is a peek at the inside so you can see the cute lining fabric. The generous folks at [Weeks Dye Works](#) donated threads for this project in Ladybug and Hunter.





Each attendee also received my Embrace Your Inner Frog design! The threads for this design were donated by [JAR Designs](#). The names for their threads are great! The green in the frog is stitched in Fiendish Frog Dark and Light, and the lips and hearts are stitched in Lovely Lips Medium! The purple is Laughing Lilacs Dark and the the lightest green is Crunchy Celery Light. LOL!

We had fun with the designs and spent time just chatting and relaxing before heading off for bed. Most of us stayed on the property in the Publick House Country Motor Lodge.

After a very delicious breakfast at the Publick House and a bit of shopping, we jumped right into working on our Briar Rose Etui. Jackie continued with her most excellent instruction. Bit by bit throughout the day we learned the different steps to finish our etuis. Jackie even had a sewing machine there to show us some of the steps.



We laughed out loud when sweet Jackie had some momentary difficulty with her laptop and said in her always ever-so-pleasant voice, "Oh @#(&. Oh @#(&. Oh @#(&." LOL!!

During a break, Laurel took a walk and took time to smell the flowers. Unbeknownst to her, when she leaned into a lily it left blotches of bright orange pollen on her face! When she came into the classroom like that, it caused a good deal of laughter! We advised her that next time she should probably just stick to taking time to smell the roses!



Look at us busy at work!



And here? Well, who knows what on earth was going on, but it appears that I am giving Jackie “the finger!”



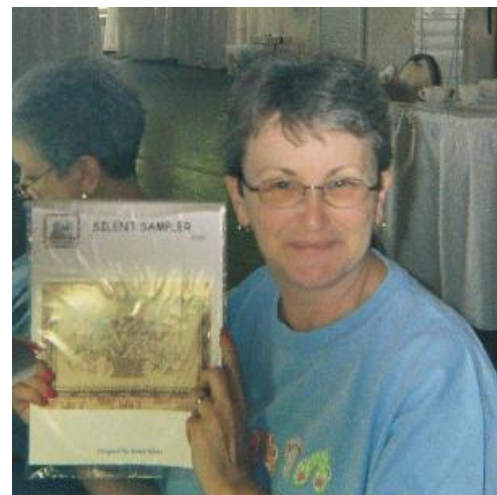
Mary with door prize from Elizabeth’s Designs
Bev received a door prize from A Whimsical



Kerri with door prize from Kreinik



Element



Margaret with Rosewood Manor door prize

What a pleasant time we had -- going from shopping to meals to stitching and back again, peppered with door prizes and fun. Jackie went over all the finishing details and responded to our every question. It was such a nice relaxing day together. We had time to work on stitching the flowers on the outside of our etui and many

of us experimented with the direction we worked our variegated floss within the colorful flowers. The results were really cool -- especially one that came out looking plaid!

After another incredible dinner together, we had Show and Tell. This is always so much fun to see! There are so many different techniques and designs that are represented when we each bring in some of our work to show off.



Cynthia the Sweet shows Sue the Crazy one of her masterpieces



Rosemary shows us a WIP (Work in Progress).



Deborah shows us her beautiful stitching.



Bev showed us her work.



Some of Jackie's other teaching pieces.

Oh, I have my eye on one of Jackie's other teaching pieces!! I must have it!!! I'll just have to get her back to teach at another retreat!!!

Well, as usual, it was sad to see the retreat come to an end that evening. There were many hugs and goodbyes and see-you-next-times. And they weren't kidding, either! A bunch of them have already signed up for future retreats!

And now, read on for more photos and comments from the attendees....

Sue



Sali with door prize from Earth Threads

"Just a brief note to let you know how much I enjoyed the Stitcher's Hideaway retreat in Sturbridge. Jackie's class was great, the food was yummy, and everyone was very friendly. It was a very relaxing weekend! Thanks for all of your efforts to make the weekend such a success!" ~ Patty



Ann with a door prize from With My Needle.

"Sue - thanks again for setting up another wonderful weekend!" ~ Ann Marie

"Thank you for a wonderful retreat. The company, food, stash enhancement and project were all excellent. I'd come to Stitcher's Hideaway every year if it wasn't so far away - can't you do one nearer to me!!!?? Love, Rosemary (from Wales!)" (Rosemary, why certainly! LOL!! ~ Sue)



“Sue, I just wanted to let you know what a super time I had at the Sturbridge retreat. I loved the project, and Jackie’s teaching, and the Publick House, and all the fun events. It was so terrific getting to meet so many nice people who all have the same stitching bug. Speaking of bugs, your ladybug design is adorable and I am enjoying my frog nightshirt a lot. I have sent the thank-you notes to the donors of the door prizes I won, but I also wanted to thank you so much for organizing a wonderful retreat. I know its tons of work, and you did a super job.” ~ Barbara G.



“Thank you for the great weekend in Sturbridge! The class with Jackie was the perfect choice as was the Publick House – nice rooms, good food, wonderful door prizes and fun kits. I was lucky to win the Sudbury pin cushion. Thank you very much! I am looking forward to my next Stitcher’s Hideaway.” ~ Mary M.

*“Thanks for another fun weekend. Your hard work for our fun and relaxation is sincerely appreciated. ~ Peggy”
(And thank YOU, Peggy, for the cool frog button! ~ Sue)*

*“I just wanted to let you know I finished your Lady Bug case! It was a fun and easy piece and I am currently using it for my business cards! I had fun in Sturbridge and hope to return next year. Thanks for all you do in putting these retreats together! I appreciate your hard work and attention to detail. Thanks again. ~ Margaret
(Margaret, I was so excited to see the picture of your Lady Bug case! I loved how you used a detached button hole and another lady bug button to close yours! ~ Sue)*

“Thank you so much for a wonderful weekend!! This was my first retreat, but definitely not my last. The weekend was so much fun, and the food was great. Everyone was so wonderful. The "mini mart" was a nice little touch, and oh, all of the surprises!! The lecture was a nice touch. Sturbridge is a wonderful venue for an event like this, since there is so much needlework history in that area of New England. The village is not to be missed. I am eagerly working on my Briar Rose, and hope to have it finished by the next retreat!! Thanks again. Regards, Barb N.”



RIGHT: Barb with door prize from Glory Bee



“Good food, good company and a weekend to stitch; who could ask for more?! I so enjoyed Jackie’s class. She is such a delightful person and generous with her finishing secrets. Once again, I recognize and appreciate the time you put in and everything you do to make such a wonderful time for us. I look forward to attending future Hideaways. My daughter-in-law had a boy (finally) – Trent James, on the 13th. Enjoy your summer!” ~ Fondly, Mary B.

Mikki with door prize from Knotted Tree NeedleArts



AND HERE’S A MESSAGE FROM JACKIE: Thank you to every one of you ladies at Sturbridge for the wonderful - super - grand - time. I had a blast sharing my design and finishing techniques with you all.

Thank you to - Peggy and Margaret quietly in the back stitching away. Patty having to stitch another Sweet Strawberry - too funny!. Ann, I hope Atlanta is not too hot - Can't wait to see you in 2007. Sali and Deb - It was so good to see you again. Robin, thank you for the threads. Melissa, have you oiled your sewing machine yet?- you did a wonderful job with your Bee pieces, thank you for sharing. Suellen, please remember to think of me when you shop for shoes in Florida. Allyson the speed stitcher - or should I say flying needle - I am so jealous! Laura and Barbara, hope your next trip to France will be equally grand. Mikki and Mary, big hugs to you both - you are sweet treats!!! Rosemary, hope those budgies were happy to see you - thank you for traveling so far to stitch with us. Barbara G and Deborah B, hope you had fun, I did - hope we did not scare your hubby, Deb. Nancy, I am keeping my fingers crossed - hope to see you soon with the other Nancy. Hope she is doing better. October 2007 - Buffalo, Ann Marie if you can't take a day from work - I know Debby, Mary and I can make a plan to get you fired - only joking. I am looking forward to spending more time with you three. Linda, Cynthia and Beverley - the middle three - it was so great to see how you enable one another - great to see the stitched projects, I loved your hardanger Cynthia. Chris, Pam, Sue and Deb - my four in the back - Thank you for everything - the shopping, the retreat, dinner and great conversations. Kerri and Laurel, let's see many more finished pieces. You are great friends and I had so much fun with you both. Laurel - smell the roses!!! Not lilies. Cyndi - thank you for your kind and sweet heart - I feel so lucky to have had this time to spend with you all. Enjoy your project, it is your treasure to show and use. I treasure our time shared and feel so grateful for the opportunity to share this and stitch together. I am honored that you are stitching The Briar Rose Etui - thank you for attending my retreat. Have a good summer. Please stay in touch. ~ Fondly, Jackie



Deb with door prize from Finger Works

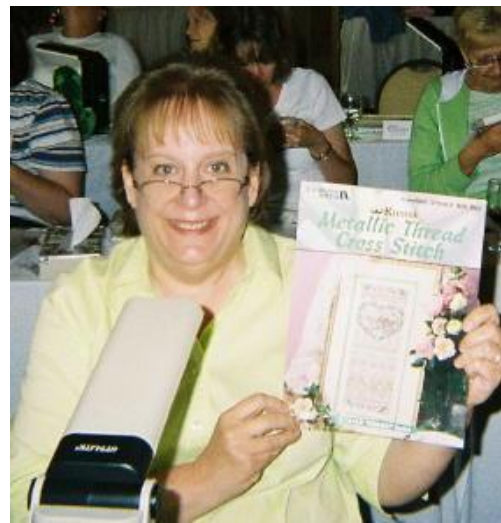
"I just wanted to write you and say "thank you" for a great weekend. It was top-notch!! I couldn't have asked for a greater time. Jackie was an absolute doll. I enjoyed learning from her, as well as enjoying her sense of humor. The door prizes and goody bags were just fantastic. I can't believe how generous the designers and manufacturers are to the retreat. The Publick House was a beautiful setting for the retreat and the food was most delicious. The lecture on sewing accessories was great. I thoroughly enjoyed it. And, of course, the shopping was to die for. I know I spent more than my budget allowed, but who could resist. You are one terrific hostess! Thanks again for a great weekend. I'm looking forward to next year! ~ Cynthia"



Laura with her door prize!



Sue models the Hop into Bed nightshirts!



Nancy with door prize from Kreinik





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