

Gingerbread Christmas Retreat in Sturbridge, MA with Thea Dueck of Victoria Sampler Fun Report

I just can't tell you how excited I was for this retreat! My wonderful friend Thea Dueck of Victoria Sampler was the instructor and her project for us was her **Gingerbread Retreat Cottage** -- inspired by my own little seasonal cottage! She did a fantastic job of capturing it in gingerbread!

This design is Thea's eighth addition to her very popular Gingerbread Village series--and these retreat attendees were fortunate to have the opportunity to learn how to make this sweet cottage from the designer herself!



Here's the front of the cottage, with my husband Michael at the door greeting the stitchers....



...and here's the back view showing Thea and I dressed as Santas leading a group of stitchers!



And here's what my cottage looks like in the summer. Didn't she do a spectacular job?

There was great anticipation and laughter just outside the classroom door where the stitchers were waiting for the retreat to begin. When I opened the door they practically ran in!



The retreat was held in a very large room at the old historic Publick House Inn in Sturbridge, MA. Bush Mountain Stitchery & Framing had set up a big shop for us right there in the room, there was the Stitcher's Hideaway shop with logo wear and designs, and at each seat was a Fun Pack of wonderful donated items from A Sweet Stitch, Bush Mountain Stitchery & Framing, Dinky Dyes, Kreinik, Morning Glory Needleworks, Prairie Schooler, Samplers & Such, Stitchers Hideaway, Stitchy Kitty, Tempting Tangles, Udder Cream and Victoria Sampler! What excitement!!

We had an hour to settle in, play in our Fun Packs, and shop before our first class with Thea began. We had all been mailed some prework for our retreat project and that helped a lot. Before class we had time to do whatever basting we wanted, mount our fabric, and organize our threads. We were able to do as much cross stitching ahead of time as we wanted, and we even did some kloster blocks as a foundation for our hardanger, which was the main focus of our class time. The hardanger area can be seen on the cottage roof tops.

We came with varying degrees of experience with hardanger, but Thea was more than up to the challenge of helping us through it. Some students brought scrap linen to try out the technique first and concentrated on that in class. Others jumped right in and worked on the linen. A couple stitchers had almost everything done on their cottages except the hardanger when they arrived for the retreat, and so very shortly after the retreat they were able to finish their cottages.





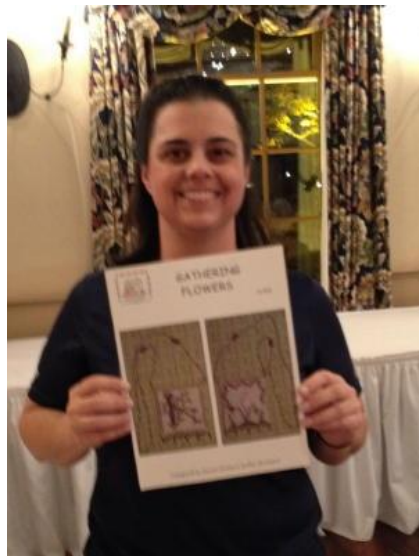
We had a fun-filled Christmas theme for this retreat and enjoyed many Christmas surprises throughout our time together. Some of the door prizes we received were Christmas-related, too! They came from [123Stitch](#), [Amy Bruecken Designs](#), [Brightneedle](#), [Bush Mountain Stitchery & Framing](#), [Morning Glory Needleworks](#), [Praiseworthy Stitches](#), [Rosewood Manor](#), [Samplers and Such](#), [Seraphim Hand Dyed Fabrics by Laurie](#), [Stitchers Hideaway](#), [Weeks Dye Works](#), [With My Needle](#) and Karen Cappello, a friend of [Stitcher's Hideaway](#).



Barb with door prize from Amy Bruecken Designs



Linda with door prize from Samplers and Such



Carmen with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Mary Ann with door prize from With My Needle



Brenda with door prize from 123Stitch



Carolyn with door prize from With My Needle



Deb with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Lisa with door prize from Weeks Dye Works



Victoria with travel companion "Jane Austen" and door prize from Weeks Dye Works



Mary with door prize from Morning Glory Needleworks



Cathi with door prize from Morning Glory Needleworks



Cindy with door prize from 123stitch

Our Christmas theme continued with an optional Christmas stitching exchange!
It was hard to choose from among the gift-wrapped goodies!



Dee



Carolyn



Christina



Doris



Gladys



Kathi



Lenore



Linda



Kathy



Meredith



Taffy



Loretta



Wanda



So just about when we couldn't possibly get more excited, guess who stopped by!! And he had gifts for us all!



Thea and I had a little smooch for Santa! LOL! Does that make us naughty or nice?!? Hmmmm... I think Santa enjoyed it!!



Lee Ann



Linda



And Santa was on hand to congratulate Christina and David who became engaged earlier that evening!
Yes -- a Stitcher's Hideaway first!!! David popped the question during dinner!

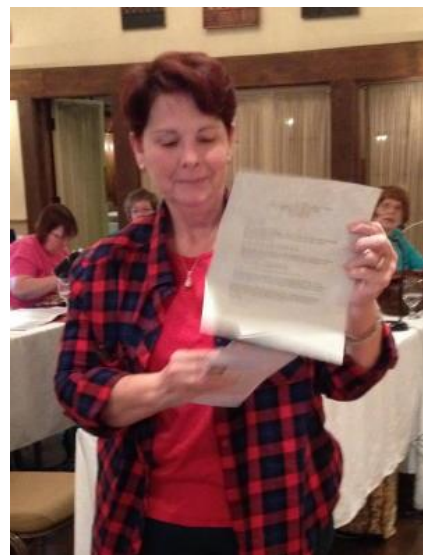
The next morning we could hardly wait for class to begin and to do some more work on our adorable cottages!



Thea gave us a lot of personal attention and made sure that we were confident with the techniques.



Kathi Bird made needle minder magnets with buttons for each of us -- and they were cute as a button!



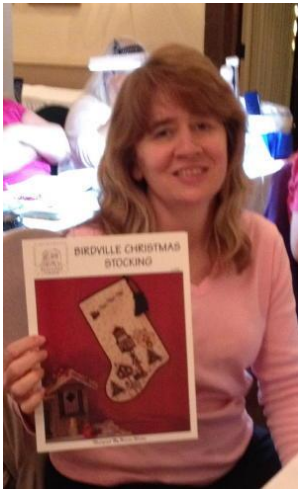
Here's Kathi with an awesome gift certificate from 123stitch!



Even Thea was unable to resist playing in Bush Mountain Stitchery's stash! LOL!
She looks like she got caught with her hand in the cookie jar, doesn't she? Hee-hee-hee!!



Nevermind, Thea....carry on...at ease...lol...
And the door prizes just kept coming and coming!!
It was so much fun to see what each person received and to drool over the many different designs and linens!



Sarah with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Peggy with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Meredith with door prize from Karen Cappello



Julie with door prize from 123Stitch



Taffy with gift certificate from 123stitch



Cheryl with door prize from Karen Cappello



Chris with door prize from With My Needle



Dee with door prize from Stitchers Hideaway



Wanda with door prize from 123Stitch



Christina with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Doris with door prize from Rosewood Manor



Elaine with door prize from Amy Bruecken Designs



Lenore with linen from 123stitch



Janice with door prize from With My Needle



Lee Ann with door prize from Praiseworthy Stitches



Sarah with door prize from 123Stitch



Susan with a door prize from Brightneedle



Linda with door prize from Amy Bruecken Designs



Sarah and Julie



Barb and Cathi



Carmen and Lenore



Lisa and Mary



Linda's progress



Peggy, Elaine, and Cindy



Kathi, Cheryl, and Chris



Hey! Is that Thea sitting in a class seat?!? :)

On our last night together we had some Show 'n Tell that left us very inspired!



Carmen



Janice



Lenore



Lenore



Kathi



Wanda



Julie



Brenda
(note the killer bunny slippers!)



Here's Bruce with a "little" work in progress and a stunning finish.



Loretta









Here's a big thank you to Santa for stopping by and making merry with us!



Jolene with a door prize from Praiseworthy Stitches

I had so much fun at my first Stitcher's Hideaway. I love my tote bag with all the goodies! What a delightful project we got to work on. It was such a THRILL to get my package with my pre-work inside. Thea is a very sweet & encouraging instructor. She took the time to visit every student & compliment & guide us. It was so nice to have the instructional CD to take home. When I can kick all the men out of my house, I will be watching that tape & have my Stitcher's Hideaway Cottage done in no time!

I eagerly looked forward to your lilting voice calling out "It's time for our next feeding!" each & every time. :) The meals were heavenly! Having the dining room right next to our classroom was so perfect!

The door prizes were fantastic! I particularly delighted in the Bush Mountain boutique that was available, right there in the classroom. My family has enjoyed the treats we got from them & from Santa. What fun THAT was! Seeing Santa in October! I made new friends, including yourself, Thea, & Laurie from Seraphim Hand Dyed Fabrics. I was truly inspired by the Show & Tell. The ornament exchange pieces were gorgeous! I will need to sharpen my finishing skills so that I might participate in the next one. I am eager to attend another Stitcher's Hideaway soon. :)

All in all, after stepping through the doorway into our classroom, I honestly felt as though I entered a world separate from reality. It certainly felt like all of us stitchers WERE hidden away. Thank you Sue, Thea, Maeann, Gary, Carolyn, Laurie, & the staff at The Publick House. It was an experience that I will re-live again & again, with delightful memories during the day. Not to mention, sweet dreams of Gingerbread desserts & a Cottage, for many nights to come.

All my best!
Jolene

Congratulations on another wonderful retreat. This was my fifth Stitcher's Hideaway Fall Retreat and my second with Thea Dueck. All I can say is that they just keep on getting better each time! Your enthusiasm and attention to planning result in a wonderful stitching experience. I always feel refreshed after spending time with fellow stitchers, sharing in the class experience, the show-and-tell, and, of course, the shopping! The door prizes and other surprises throughout the two days are always great fun.

Thea's design for the Gingerbread Retreat Cottage is awesome and I'm close to finishing the stitching already. I even bought a few more of the Gingerbread series to work on over the winter. I may actually become somewhat less nervous about Hardanger.

This is the first time I attended a retreat at the Publick House and the venue did not disappoint. What a great place to spend a few days in the Fall. The classroom was terrific - plenty of light and room to spread out.

The shopping boutique was amazing. Maeann and Gary Bush and their assistants were so helpful - and they brought so much from designers I had not seen before. My credit card was smoking by the time I checked out my purchases.

Thank you once again for organizing the retreat and bringing Thea in to teach.

Linda Mosch



Linda with a door prize from Rosewood Manor

This was my second Stitcher's Hideaway retreat and I'm hooked to attend as many of these retreats as possible! Sue puts in so much work, organization, attention to details and it does pay off for us! The setting is wonderful, Bush Mountain Stitchery sets up in the back of the room, the attendees are absolutely wonderful - I've made new friends and got to be with friends I met at my first retreat in July. It was an absolute thrill and honor to be in Thea Dueck's class! She is such a wonderful teacher and is very patient, encouraging and inspiring. I'm glad I wasn't the only class member to be new at Hardanger but then Thea needed to switch gears and teach to all different levels, which she did beautifully! I learned so much about this technique and I now have the confidence to move forward. I made my first cut ever and pulled out my first thread ever during the class! What a great feeling of accomplishment as I had a lot of anxiety going into the class. But, I worked



at my own pace and that felt great. Now to finish the projects!

Lenore D.



Mary with door prize from Amy Bruecken Designs

Lenore with door prize from Bush Mountain Stitchery

How do I thank you for two fabulous days in Sturbridge, MA? It was such a thrill to have a class with Thea - and that was just the highlight of the experience!

Your organization was amazing. The door prizes were so generous - thank you so much! The food selections were delicious - even the shopping with Bush Mountain was awesome!

I was really in awe as I watched you running the event and coordinating everything. You have so much wonderful energy and enthusiasm. You made it fun and exciting for everyone.

It was a privilege to meet you and participate in a Stitches Hideaway!

Hugs and Happy Stitching,

Mary O.

Thank you Sue for a great retreat! ~ Sarah

Sue- another great retreat- I thoroughly enjoyed it! And thank you Thea for your beautiful designs and your willingness to teach us all! ~ Mary C

Thanks Sue for another great retreat. Loved every minute of it. ~ Mary Ann

Thanks, Sue, for another great retreat! And thank you to Thea Dueck from The Victoria Sampler, for a great project and class! ~ Loretta

Thank you so much for the awesome Sudberry box! Thanks again for organizing such awesome retreats and spoiling us with all the wonderful goodies! ~ Linda M.

The retreat was wonderful, and you are too. I met many nice stitchers from across the country (and Thea from that other country). Thank you. Thanks, also, for the door prize – the Sudberry House box. Hope to see you next year or in 2017.

~ Dee

Had a great time. Thanks so much to both of you. ~ Janice

I had a great time at the retreat. My best memory of the retreat was getting engaged there! I intend to come to more of your retreats as I can. ~ Christina

Big thank you to Sue and Thea! Great time!! ~ Julie



Until next time, Thea and Sue send their love!

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