

Mystic 2002 Fun Report

We had such a wonderful time at our Stitcher's Hideaway in Mystic, CT that I just have to tell you all about it. The weekend was all I had hoped for and more. It was wonderful to meet everyone and stitch together with the same group of people for an entire weekend. Stitchers came from Maine, Massachusetts, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Some came by themselves, some came in small groups, but we all left with new friendships.



The retreat began on Friday at 6:00 p.m. with everyone gathering in the Navigator Room. Lisa Arpin, owner of our featured needlework shop Needle Pulling Thread, had set up a mini-store there with a great selection so we could shop to our heart's content. Everyone received their goodie bags decorated with lighthouses and filled with an assortment of patterns and fun items.



Finally everyone was able to see their gift from Betsy Foster of Elizabeth's Designs (I had been teasing them about it for awhile!). Betsy created a design just for stitchers at the Mystic 2002 Stitcher's Hideaway and Lisa Arpin made up kits for us complete with the linen and specialty threads needed to complete the project. We feasted on some New England treats, apple cider, Vermont cheddar cheese & crackers, pumpkin bread, maple cookies, and chocolates shaped like seashells. Everyone was excited and eager to begin our first class with Sue Stokes of Nutmeg Needle.



H is for Hydrangea

Rhapsody of Hearts

We arrived in the Mariner Room for our class to find gift bags filled with Sue's projects for us -- five kits in all -- and some of Sue's homemade candies. What fun! She designed a doodle cloth to teach us the techniques and stitches we would need to complete three projects: H is for Hydrangea, Rhapsody of Hearts, and Hardanger Hearts. The doodle cloth itself is a beautiful piece worthy of framing.

Sue Stokes is an awesome designer and a very patient, laid-back instructor with an easy sense of humor. It's a good thing because some of us (including me!) were nervous about cutting threads. We began some of our hardanger work that evening, lingered after class, and finally laid down our needles and went to bed quite reluctantly! We were in the mood to stitch and stitch and stitch!!

On Saturday morning we gathered for breakfast in the Navigator Room and then headed off to our first class. We continued learning hardanger variations and several other stitches. By mid-morning we began to see our doodle cloths turning into stitched works of art.



We took a break for lunch and my husband, Chef Michael, set up a lunch buffet including Spanakopita (Greek pies with spinach and feta in filo dough). And he made each of us an almond-flavored sugar cookie pressed in a mold shaped like a big squirrel. Oh, boy! It was YUMMY!

We headed back to class with Sue and there everyone was given an ornament kit from Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads, who reluctantly had to cancel due to illness. Lucky for us, Sue Stokes filled in by offering an additional class, H is for Hydrangea, and that afternoon she taught us the lacy technique needed to complete it. Sue had a great many framed pieces on display and sold her other kits there as well. I think we were all surprised to discover that the lacy technique really wasn't difficult. There was quite a bit of prep work, but then the actual design is quickly woven in. It's really neat!

SOME of us started really getting punchy in the afternoon -- Especially those of us who just couldn't settle down the night before! Two sisters-in-stitches had us laughing with their desire for Southern Comfort and gambling. One stitcher read funny stitching-related poems to us, and another had us roaring when she explained that she could only keep her hotel bathroom light on for 5 minutes at a time. She had been using the heated timer for a light instead of the regular light switch! I don't know if any of us will ever be able to look at one of those lights without thinking about her!

We took a half-hour break and then gathered again in the Navigator Room for a pizza party and dessert buffet. Michael delivered a selection of pizza from Mystic Pizza -- yes, Mystic Pizza is a real place (for those of you who remember Julia Roberts' performance). Afterwards we returned to the Mariner Room for Show and Tell. That was so interesting. We saw many different styles and techniques reflected in the designs and heard some interesting stories about the pieces. Then we had drawings for doorprizes. Some were charts and items donated by Earth Threads, Margaret Lee Designs, Needle Pulling Thread, and Charles Craft; threads from Anchor; and a wonderful needlework book from Kreinik. Other gifts such as a Sudberry House Shaker basket and clock were from Stitcher's Hideaway. Oh - and many boxes of salt water taffy that Michael had snuck in with the other items!!

The rest of the evening was spent stitching and chatting. Sue Stokes was on hand to assist us as we continued to work on our doodle cloths and to answer our questions.



Sue Stokes' Sweet Treats Bag

On Sunday morning we gathered once again for breakfast and then had a one-hour Sweet Treats Bag class with Sue Stokes. Sue left us at that point to head back to house, home, hubby, and kids.



Elegant Rose Bouquet - Jodi Merusi



Jodi with antique purses

Our final class was with Jodi Merusi of Vintage Designs. Jodi brought in her wonderful collection of antique purses. Jodi is known for painstakingly charting the designs on the antique purses and we were given one of her kits -- the Elegant Rose Bouquet B to learn her method of one-over-one stitching. The colors are so beautiful and the design is truly elegant. She also gave us the chart of another purse design that she had just completed. Jodi gave us some history on the purses and also provided us with interesting information on the making of linen.

This, sadly, concluded our time together. One stitcher left with tears in her eyes, and over and over again I heard "I don't want the weekend to end" and "I don't want to go home." It was more than the classes for us. It was a warm, close, bonding experience. Afterwards I found myself missing everyone and wondering how everyone was doing. Many of us have exchanged emails and shared our stitching progress.

What was it like for them? Well, this is what a few of them had to say:

I had a great time learning new stitches and meeting new friends. The teachers had very good techniques for teaching new stitches, from beginners to advanced stitchers. I am looking forward to going to another Stitchers Hideaway Weekend...Encore! Encore!" ~ Liz, Long Island, NY.

Fun, informative classes; great social weekend! ~ Sandy, Meriden, CT

Just wanted to write a quick note to let you know what a great time I had at the Mystic Stitcher's Hideaway Retreat. I thought the schedule was great and offered everyone the opportunity to interact together in an intimate setting. The instructors were great and informative. Having them with us really "brought the designers to us." Again, thanks and hope to see you at another retreat. ~ Deb, Tolland, CT.

Fabulous experience, beautiful kinship; a stitcher's dream. ~ Grace, Orange, NJ.

What can I say!!!! I learned so much and I thought I knew almost everything about counted cross stitch." This weekend was all I thought it would be and more!!!! ~ Betty, Milford, CT

"I wish the weekend never ended! I learned so much and had a fantastic time. I can't wait to go to another one." ~ Sharry, North Berwick, ME

We had a great weekend for stitchers. The food was great, the company was great, the teachers were great, and the stitching kits were great. All we needed was MORE time. Thanks so much for everything. ~ Mimi, Milford, CT

It was a great experience for me. Many there were already experienced in some of the type of stitching we were doing but I had never done anything quite like it. It was definitely a first for me not only in the stitching techniques but a first stitchers weekend that I was able to attend. I can't wait to go to another! Sue was a fabulous instructor; who else would constantly take the time to tell me to keep breathing! Thanks to you and Michael and anyone else who helped for all you did to make this a successful and so totally enjoyable time. It was well worth the trip from Virginia! ~Karen, Williamsburg, VA

Well, I guess you get the picture. I still find myself smiling whenever I think of our weekend together. I can hardly wait for the next Stitcher's Hideaway!!

Sue