

Sewing Simple

Get inspired with designer, artist, and author Heather Ross



THE CAREFREE ATTITUDE AND STYLE OF HEATHER ROSS can be seen in her textile designs for Free Spirit and Japanese distributor Kokka, her beautiful garments, and her new book, *Weekend Sewing* (STC Craft, 2009). Heather draws from her childhood in rural Vermont, her travels, and her family to create fabric and projects that, to many, evoke the feeling of home. For more information on Heather's work, visit HeatherRossDesigns.com.



Above: Heather's book, *Weekend Sewing* from STC Craft. Left: Designs from Heather's *Far Far Away* fabric collection.



Heather photographed these flowers during her trip to Switzerland.

SewStylish: When did you first start sewing?

Heather Ross: I have been sewing since I was tiny, and I still sew for the same reasons I did then. I am lucky to have a job that allows me to continue to focus on the things that most of us leave behind as we grow up.

SS: What is your favorite thing about sewing?

HR: Knowing that every time I sit down at the machine I become a better seamstress.

SS: What does your ideal sewing weekend look like?

HR: Rainy weekends are best for sewing, with a drizzly early morning trip to the Farmer's Market, followed by a trip to Patchwork in Soho for the latest fabrics and inspirational craft books. Then, a long lazy lunch with my husband, sewing into the evening—and having cheese for dinner.

SS: What's the strangest thing that has ever given you a design idea?

HR: The color of the belly on a fire-bellied newt is the most perfect orange, and it inspired the entire Mendocino collection for Free Spirit fabrics. A vintage silk jersey two-piece Halston dress inspired the Silk Jersey Set project in *Weekend Sewing*. I originally bought the dress for a Halloween costume—I dressed as Blair from *The Facts of Life*.

SS: Where did you come up with your whimsical *Far Far Away* motifs?

HR: This new fabric line was largely inspired by my recent visit to Switzerland. My husband TC and I stayed at the fairy-tale hotel Badrutts Palace in St. Moritz. By day, we hiked through the Engadin Valley, through lush meadows, dense forests, and up mountainsides to cold, clear lakes. It's easy to imagine the forests in Switzerland being home to unicorns and other magical beasts and beings, and the ruins of castles that I could see clinging to rocky peaks were proof positive that princesses once reigned there as well.

SS: Do you have any advice for readers just starting to explore sewing and design?

HR: Yes. Always make a muslin first. Testing a pattern first means you solve your problems and tackle fit issues before you cut into the real fabric; it's so important. I once thought that only inexperienced sewers made muslins, but now I know that the more experienced the sewer, the less apt they are to skip this very important step.