

Embroidery Companion: Classic Designs for Modern Living

Alicia Paulson

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#724361 in Books 2010-08-10 2010-08-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 10.87 x .46 x 8.56l, 1.50 #File Name: 0307462358160 pages | File size: 61.Mb

Alicia Paulson : Embroidery Companion: Classic Designs for Modern Living before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Embroidery Companion: Classic Designs for Modern Living:

56 of 57 people found the following review helpful. An inspired and comprehensive embroidery book By Bookaholic This is a book that will appeal to seasoned embroiderers and new ones alike, but I should state that my embroidery experience is limited to the counted cross-stitch I did twenty years ago as a teenager and some very minimal "needlepoint" as a child. So this is a review from an "advanced beginner." :) The book begins with an introduction to embroidery in general-- and then divides into three sections: Decorative Embroidery projects, Counted Cross Stitch projects, and Crewel projects. Each section contains information on the types of needles, tools and materials required, a history of the type of needlework, and, of course, about 10 inspired and delightful projects, for a total of 30. Each project has two ratings for ease, one for the embroidery itself, and one for the finishing (the sewing or

other preparations needed to make the work complete). The finishing is also described and drawn in helpful detail and assumes only minimal sewing skills on the part of the reader. Quite a few of the projects do require a bit of sewing for completion, but for the most part, the sewing required is simple-- and of course, local embroidery shops can usually recommend someone to do the finishing for you if you can't sew. I should add that at the end, there is also a helpful list of resources in case you don't have a wonderful needlework shop nearby, and a well-written section on how to do the various stitches, which is crucial if you're fairly clueless like myself. The projects range from the very simple to the very complex, but most are in the realm of "easy" to "medium"-- this would be an ideal book for a new embroiderer, but also an inspiring one for someone experienced in needlework, because the projects are amazing. I was relieved to find that she gives details like what size of needles she prefers, since I wouldn't know where to start. The projects are both modern and old-fashioned at the same time-- they look up-to-date, but they have a pretty, old-fashioned sensibility. And they're things that are actually useful and beautiful, not just a bunch of motifs that the embroiderer has to find a use for. There are, of course, cross-stitch samplers and decorative pillows, but you'll also find a tablecloth, a kerchief, hot-water-bottle holders, curtains, an apron, a tote bag, a photo-album cover, pillowcases-- you get the idea. These are things that can be used in everyday life. The photography is gorgeous, the tone is friendly, comforting, and easy to read, and (like her blog) very warm and personal-- you come away feeling like you wish you lived down the street from Alicia and glad that she's sharing her expertise and enthusiasm with you. :) Obviously I can't say enough nice things about this book-- anyone who reads "Posie Gets Cozy" or who enjoyed *Stitched in Time*, or who just wants some good embroidery projects to do, will love this one. It's pretty, practical, helpful, and inspiring.

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Unique and beautiful patterns. By Customer

Although embroidery books have started to pop up again in the past few years, there are still very few books out there with up-to-date patterns and projects for those who like needlework. Alicia Paulson's new book fills that need perfectly--it's one of the best I've seen. Her patterns are modern but with a vintage sensibility, and the projects that utilize each pattern are beautiful and practical: napkins, headbands, pillowcases, a tablecloth, an apron, curtains, a skirt, even a simple quilt. There are sections on embroidery, cross-stitch and crewel, so you can choose which style you prefer (or flirt with each and find out which you prefer, if you're a beginner.) The patterns are also very versatile. A creative stitcher could use parts of a headband pattern to make a bookmark, for instance, or take a motif from a sampler and stitch it onto a shirt. The possibilities are nearly endless. Best of all is Alicia's writing style, which is never cloying, but always warm, heartfelt, friendly and informative. Her love of sewing and creating comes through vividly. I read through the general directions carefully and I think they would be very helpful for a beginner. I'm an experienced needleworker, but I also found some ideas and tips that I hadn't thought of. There is also a source list in the back for supplies and patterns, if you live as I do in an area with no needlework stores. I'm looking forward to tackling my first project from the book--the hard part will be deciding which one to do first!

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Practical Advice for Magical Projects By Erik Buljan

This book has been on my wishlist, and I'm so glad I finally got it! Nothing Alicia does disappoints, but this goes so far beyond what I even expected. She provides detailed explanations for every project, but in such a way that feels like inspiration rather than recipe. For example, there is a baby-sized quilt with adorable farm animals. Although I don't personally have a need for a baby quilt gift at the moment (phooey! :) she wrote the instructions in such a way that I can use her idea for the snowman embroidery blanket I'm already making, and it would be easily modified into a pillow, which would be awesome, too. The book is divided into three parts: Decorative Embroidery, Counted Cross Stitch, and Crewelwork. She goes over the types of threads and needles to use for each, but what I love about her books is that she takes it beyond "craft guide" when she flat out tells you things like, "I use a #5 crewel needle". It really makes you feel like you're learning from a very talented girlfriend, rather than simply reading a compendium of facts and information. Every section contains projects for beginner to advanced, and her diagrams and detailed stitch directions are extremely helpful. I've been practicing the stitches in the appendix, as I'm fairly new to the medium, and there are plenty of stitches I'd never done before (including padded satin stitch, fly stitch, and woven circle stitch) and I was able to easily figure them out using only her written directions and diagrams. I do wish that her blanket stitch directions included how to start and end it (it can be so tricky sometimes!!) but that's information easily found online, so that's a pretty picky point. Most importantly, the book is full of projects that Alicia brings her aesthetic to, which means that every single item is something I want to make! Many have a folk art inspiration, and some are worked onto gingham (with its natural grid) so even if you're nervous to transfer a pattern, there's plenty to get started with here.

For Alicia Paulson, embroidery is so much more than simply pulling needle and thread through cloth. It's a way to let loose the imagination, elevate everyday materials by decorating them with fanciful designs, and perhaps most of all, to enjoy the quiet reflection resulting from embroidery's unique textures, vibrant colors, and gentle rhythms. If Alicia's first book, *Stitched in Time*, could be considered a valentine to the craft of sewing, then *Embroidery Companion* is Alicia's full-on love letter to embroidery. This is the craft that captured her imagination as a child, helped her through the most difficult times in her adult life, and continues to stay closest to her heart. In *Embroidery Companion*, she shares stitch patterns and instructions for 30 beautiful projects, featuring three different kinds of embroidery: Decorative

embroidery Counted cross-stitch Crewelwork Inspired by vintage motifs and the folk-art traditions of various cultures, Alicias embroidered embellishments frequently draw from the archives of historical resources to bring a homemade modern touch to tablescapes, household items, and wearables. Alicia also shares all shes learned through helpful glossaries, discussions of essential tools, clear instructions, and projects for crafters of every experience level. Embroidery is an easy-to-learn and easy-to-love craft that spans generations and touches many lives. Whether youre attempting your first project, or youre anxious to challenge yourself with a new technique, Embroidery Companion will be your guide to inspire and instruct for years to come.

"Readers of Alicia Paulson's blog Posie Gets Cozy know she's got a magic way with a needle and thread, making creations so lovely you want to marry them. Until that's legal, you can make your own life a bit cozier by picking up a copy of Embroidery Companion: Classic Designs for Modern Living." --BUST About the Author ALICIA PAULSON learned to stitch as a child, but developed a passion for embroidery while recovering from a bad accident in 1998. She spends her days in her home studio sewing, crocheting, embroidering, and designing a small, ever-changing collection of original crafts and patterns called Posie: Rosy Little Things, and writes about them at her blog, Posie Gets Cozy. She is the author of Stitched in Time: Memory-Keeping Projects to Sew and Share from the Creator of Posie Gets Cozy (Potter Craft, 2008). Born and raised outside Chicago, she now lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband, two-time Nurse of the Year Andy Paulson, R.N.; two comfort-obsessed cats; and the lovely, long-suffering Cardigan Welsh corgi, Clover Meadow Paulson. Find them all at www.AliciaPaulson.com.