



In the Loop™

Getting to Know Your Fibres

Often, knitters avidly discuss why we knit; less frequently the “ what ” question focuses on the specific fibres we choose to transform yarns into knitting. In these discussions, the “ what ” question seems to focus on the knitting project.

If nothing else, the cashmere conundrum indicates that knitters may want, if not need, to know more about the various natural fibres: the origin, lore and the processing techniques which convert raw fibre into spun yarn. So *Knitting Notes* features a series of *Fibre Facts* – begun, out of necessity, with cashmere two issues ago, when an extra edition of *In The Loop* focused on the recall of six yarns, all distributed by Knitting Fever, Inc., and all supposedly spun with a content of cashmere and so necessary to understanding many of the issues spun into that debate.

The *Fibre Facts* series continues in this issue with an exploration of vicuña, a New World, natural fibre – more rare and more luxurious than cashmere. Future issues will, randomly, treat first

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Dawn's Digest

A Very Smooth, Comfortable Needle

In my knitting frenzy this holiday season, I experimented with the straight needles in the shop's *Needle Niche*™. Along the way, I fell in love with the **Bryson Rosewoods**.

Since needles are part of our permanent collections, finding a comfortable needle is important. These Rosewoods are lightweight and so very smooth such that the yarn does not “drag”; despite the needles being naturally dark, stitches, even in dark colorways, remain visible.



Bryson Rosewoods.

The Bryson Rosewood needles are currently available in 10 inch straights from sizes 4 to 17.

Happy Knitting!

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Winter Classes Begin January 14

The Winter series of classes and workshops at The Knit With begins the week of January 14, 2007.

New this series is the class Introduction to Lace Knitting, the project for which is a garter stitch stole, *Romantic Moments*, designed by Evelyn C. Clarke and focuses on building skills of reading charted instructions and knitted knitting.

Returning favorites are the linked, single session workshops: Knitter's Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support. Participants in BLS learn how to recognize and fix common knitting errors without the need for raveling; ALS builds on the BLS skills by treating techniques for altering finished knitting: increasing and decreasing lengths, expanding the width of knitted pieces and joining completed and new knitting to create garments which fit.

A complete listing of all classes and workshops offered in the Winter Series (descriptions, session times, etc.) appears in this issue after Page 3.

Editors' Note:

Communicating Shop Policies

Every business has policies.

Policies originate primarily from two sources: governmental control – which permeates our society, reaching even to the level of affecting interactions between consumers and the yarn shop such as prohibiting the photocopying of patterns which are available for sale and dictating what occurs upon the expiration of gift certificates – and the occasional clash of unexpressed expectations, in other words, experience.

As consumers, we would like all stores to have the single policy of “ the customer is right, always and in all situations. ” As adults, we know that our dealings can not be as simple as “ give me what I want merely because I want it ” – that any given picture is often broader, bigger and more complicated than the image appearing on the surface.

When The Knit With first considered publishing its shop policies (See, www.theknitwith.com/disclosures), some elements in the yarn market advised against the business practice of informing consumers as to what a shop's policies are and how the policies are implemented – advice with which The Knit With obviously did not agree 3 years ago.

The Knit With believes that we are in a relationship with our customers, a relationship which requires communication about the what's and sometimes the why's of the shop's operation. When policies are fairly developed – to balance the needs of both the

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The Readers Write

On Wool Allergies

I have severe air borne allergies. It took years to finally figure out I sneezed when wearing a wool sweater due to dust and dust mites in the sweater, usually after summer storage. The solution for me is to simply throw the sweater into the dryer for a few minutes. I'm not sure if it's just the air fluffing, or if the heat makes any difference, but it works like a charm. **Juli Sullivan**, East Falls.

The Readers Write

Have a comment on, or a suggestion for, an article?
Readers' letters are welcome at:
theknitwithyarnshop@msn.com

Shop Talk:

Understanding Shop Credits

Credit slips from The Knit With are redeemable by, and issued in original form only to, the person to whom the credit is due; in the event of loss, credit slips can not be duplicated as the shop does not maintain records of credits issued.

All credit slips are honored against any purchase of merchandise or services at any time with the sole exception of the storewide sale on Superbowl Sunday; redemption is requested to occur within 150 days from the date of issue.

Shop Policies

- Fairly Developed
- Fully Disclosed

Because shop credits reflect a prior sale, redemption of credit slips may affect a redemption purchase's eligibility for a *Hanks 'n Thanks* reward which applies only to new purchases.

Communicating Shop Policies From Page 1

knitting consumer and the shop – and are fully disclosed, shop policies are not antagonistic to good customer relations.

As anyone can see from The Knit With's website, certain policies have been created, or revised, over time – as experience warrants.

At least once each year, every policy is carefully reviewed; fundamental to each policy, over which the shop has sole control, are two core concerns: does the policy provide value to the customer and can the policy be implemented equally, in all situations and for all customers, without causing the demise of the business so that The Knit With can continue to serve your knitting needs in the future.

To better acquaint you with this shop's policies, we will occasionally publish articles on specific policies such as the article on shop credits appearing in this issue and the articles on merchandise returns, displayed pricing and merchandise holds published in previous issues.

We believe in the full disclosure of policies because it is not just the right thing to do but because full disclosure fosters a better understanding among the partners to the relationship who are this shop and its customers.

Dawn and Jim

Yarn Recall Continues

The recall of six defectively spun and/or improperly labeled yarns – all sourced from Knitting Fever, Inc. – continues, despite Knitting Fever's aggressive assault against the recall.

Announced October 16 by The Knit With, the recall culminates what began as a rumor first heard on July 6 but which had been circulating in the yarn trade since the end of May: laboratory testing shows the Debbie Bliss cashmerinos are not spun with the labeled cashmere content.

Upon confirming some aspects of the rumor, The Knit With immediately removed from sale three cashmerino yarns; later that day, two Noro yarns were also removed from sale because the shop's only support for the accuracy of the claimed cashmere content of the Noro yarns were the distributor's, legally non-binding, assurances of cashmere content.

Beginning in July, extensive scientific testing was performed on all cashmere content yarns stocked by the shop; the yarns were analyzed by as many as three different testing laboratories with almost verbatim results. The final analysis report was received by the shop just 10 days before announcement of the recall.

KFI and Debbie Bliss have challenged both the basis for the recall and The Knit With's testing methodology. Debbie Bliss has requested her friends to publicly state The Knit With never performed any fibre analyses of her yarns. KFI has openly dismissed the recall as a publicity stunt; KFI also claims The Knit With substituted other yarns – produced by other manufacturers and under other labels – for the Debbie Bliss cashmerinos tested.

Other cashmere blend yarns, distributed under other designer by other companies, have been recalled after testing indicates those yarns were not spun with the labeled quantity of cashmere.

PUBLICLY RECALLED YARNS

<u>Yarn</u>	<u>Brand</u>
Cashmerino Aran	Debbie Bliss
Cashmerino Baby	Debbie Bliss
Cashmerino DK	KFI
Amagi	Noro
Cash Iroha	Noro
Lotus	Noro

the knit with

Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 to 6 Wednesdays to 8 Sundays 11 to 5

Events Schedule

Sunday, January 14 – Winter Classes Begin
 Sunday, February 4 – Superbowl Sunday Sale

In the Loop™

A newsletter published electronically four times a year to the family of knitters and crocheters of

the knit with

Delighting Knitters (And Crocheters Too) Since 1970!

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Visit us on the web: www.theknitwith.com

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FIBRE FACTS

VICUÑA

What Is Vicuña

Known to the Inca as “the golden fleece” or “the fibre of the gods,” vicuña was reserved for the Incan god-king and his court; commoners were forbidden, under pain of execution, to possess even raw vicuña fleece. Vicuña remains one of the world’s most rare, valuable, and expensive, natural fibres.

Vicuña fibre is an extremely fine wool, up to 12 inches in length with a mean diameter finer than cashmere and much less than that of the finest sheep’s wool; the overall natural color of the wool is ochre, light cinnamon, or reddish brown, with belly hair being dirty white and the pompon-like ‘mane’ or chest hair being white. Woven or knitted, vicuña produces light weight garments with exceptional insulating properties; it has the best luster of all natural fibres producing a radiant cloth. Vicuña fibre is so delicate that the yarn is usually not dyed.

As in Incan times, legal restrictions have applied to the vicuña and trade in its fibre. Protection measures, begun in the 1960’s by Peru, Chile and Argentina, have raised vicuña numbers to 125,000 from about 6,000 by controlling the poaching begun with the Spanish conquest. Vicuña remain classified as vulnerable animals by The World Conservation Union; only in 2002, the US Department of the Interior re-classified vicuña under THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT from endangered to threatened, legalizing the import, sale and re-export of certifiable vicuña fibre and products after years of outright prohibition.

Zoologically and Geographically, Where Do Vicuña Live

The vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*) is one four South American camels: the wild guanaco (*Lama guanacoe*), the domestic llama (*Lama glama*), and the alpaca (*vicugna pacos*) – all found in the high Andes. The smallest of the world’s six camel species, the vicuña is the most delicate and graceful of the American camelids.

Vicuñas in the wild live primarily on the generally inhospitable, high altitude, semi-arid, grassland plateaux of the central Andes mountains of Southern Peru, northern Chile and parts of Bolivia and Argentina – where drought and sub-zero nights are common. Small groups are comprised of a single territorial male, who vigilantly repels rivals and small predators, and a harem of as many as 15 females and their young. Each group has its own territory, fluctuating upon fodder availability.

How Vicuña Is Harvested

Vicuña fibre is bi-annually harvested by shearing the live animal; using the ancient, Incan method of a “chacu”, individual family groups are corralled into a “u” shaped natural or temporary enclosure and each animal is shorn. With the advent of legal protection, the indigenous peoples have been granted exclusive shearing rights, in fact ownership, to each herd thereby eliminating, both actively and passively, poaching which often involves slaughter.

Production

On average, vicuñas bi-annually produce less than a pound of fibre; by contrast, an alpaca can yield 15 pounds annually. The scarcity, added to the rarity, of vicuña underscores why this wool is more expensive than cashmere.

Winter, 2007 Class Schedule

Classes begin the week of January 14, 2006

Register Early, Register With a Friend

Materials List Provided Upon Registration

Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course

Short on time but want to give “ this knitting thing ” a try ? Try **Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course**. Learn the essentials – how to: cast on, knit, purl, join yarns, measure for gauge, four pattern stitches and bind off. After this workshop, you’ll be able to hold your own with your needles !

Pre-requisites:	A desire to knit.	Instructor:	Dawn Casale
Duration:	Four sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 95.00
Sessions:	Mon 8 PM, Thurs 6 PM; meets weekly beginning 1 / 15	Registration Limits:	Six participants.

Knitting For Mommy (or Daddy) & Me

All the essential techniques from **Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course** directed to kids. Pay full price for the Parent, take 30% off for the child. Child should be at least 8 years old; discount applies up to 14 years old.

Pre-requisites:	A desire to knit.	Instructor:	Dawn Casale
Duration:	Four sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 95.00
Sessions:	Sun 2 PM, meets weekly beginning 1 / 14	Registration Limits:	Six participants.

Knitting Skills Brush-Up Workshop

Buff up the shine on your knitting skills with this brush-up workshop. Regain facility with cast-on, knit, purl, increases, decreases, basic knitting stitches as well as some of the specialized techniques you used to do.

Pre-requisites:	Previous familiarity with knitting	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Three sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 75.00
Sessions:	Wed at 5 PM; meets weekly beginning 1 / 25	Registration Limits:	Eight participants.

Introduction to Accomplished Knitting (Part One)

This class teaches you all the skills used by accomplished knitters: increases, decreases, yarn-overs, following pattern stitches, reading both printed and knitted knitting while making a classic English waistcoat. Ideal next class for graduates of **Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course**.

Pre-requisites:	Ability to perform cast-on, knit and purl.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 145.00
Sessions:	Sun 11 AM, Tues 2 PM, Thurs 11 AM beginning 1/14	Registration Limits:	Eight participants each class.

Introduction to Accomplished Knitting (Part Two)

Accomplished knitters are introduced to the specialized techniques of assembling and finishing garments. Using the pieces of the vest knitted in Part One, participants are guided through joining vertical and horizontal seams using both open and closed stitches, how to flawlessly pick up stitches (without holes) and more.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished Knitting (Part One).	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 185.00
Sessions:	Tues 7 PM beginning 1 / 16	Registration Limits:	Ten participants each class.

S. O. S. (Save Our Stitching)

Open the closets, bring out the bags! Want to get over the hump on a half-completed project? Bring one to this class and get the help needed to finish the job.

Pre-requisites:	An accomplished knitting ability.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Four sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 95.00
Sessions:	Wed at 8 PM; meets weekly beginning 1 / 26	Registration Limits:	Eight participants.

(Continued Other Side)

Introduction to Lace Knitting

Are you ready for the romance of lacework in a really fine yarn? Using Evelyn Clark's *Romantic Moments* stole pattern and one hank of wool, this class introduces the concepts and skills involved in knitting lace. Learn to read charted knitting instructions, practice yarn overs and decreases while knitting a stole – the most simple of the shawl shapes and a great way to see whether lace knitting is for you.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished Knitting	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 125.00
Sessions:	Tues 4 PM, Thurs 8 PM; meets weekly beginning 1 / 16	Registration Limits:	Ten participants.

Cables (Intermediate Knitting - Part Two)

Knitting the amazing array of cable stitches marks the adventuresome knitter. Avoid getting lost in the maze of twists, crosses and turns which distinguish cable knitting by learning line - by - line and charted reading while becoming facile having the yarn make bobbles, braids and bows in your knitting.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished knitting ability.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 155.00
Sessions:	Wed 2 PM beginning 1 / 16	Registration Limits:	Eight participants each class.

Bias Knitting

Give your knitting a new dimension – knit on the bias. Redefine simple stockinette and garter stitches and add visual interest to just about any other stitch. Knitting on the bias has its own little secrets – shared in this workshop.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished knitting ability.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Two sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 65.00
Sessions:	Wed 5 PM beginning 2 / 08.	Registration Limits:	Ten participants.

Top-Down Sweater

Knit a different way – from the top-down and in the round. The raglan for this class introduces you to knitting in the round (say good-bye, purl!) and practices a variety of increasing methods. Choose a cardigan or pullover. Top down knitting has added bonuses: try the garment on as you go and wear it right off the needles.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished knitting ability.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 145.00
Sessions:	Tues 5 PM beginning 1 / 16.	Registration Limits:	Ten participants.

Knitted Evening Purses

Have a Prom, wedding or other formal affair on your horizon? Knit the purse of your dreams: a clutched purse, strapless or shoulder length. Choose a variety of stitch styles and colors.

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished knitting ability.	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Two sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 95.00
Sessions:	Tues 11 AM beginning 1 / 16.	Registration Limits:	Ten participants

Knitters' BLS (Basic Life Support)

Learn the skills to survive the most common knitting emergencies! Adventuresome knitters are presented a complete set of skills to successfully treat: dropped stitches whether in plain or in pattern over few or multiple rows; split incomplete and misdefined stitches; recovering from reading errors and more. This workshop will give you the confidence and skills to put you in charge of your knitting.

Pre-requisites:	An adventuresome (intermediate) knitting ability	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	One session of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 95.00
Sessions:	Tues at 11 AM; meets 1 / 23	Registration Limits:	Six participants.

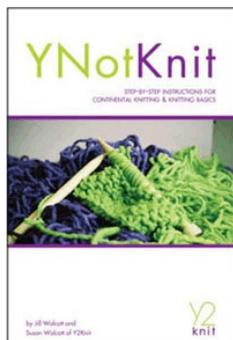
Knitters' ALS (Advanced Life Support)

Learn the skills to revive your knitting from the unexpected and unwanted – without raveling. Set-in sleeves too tight (or too big!), at the underarm, lengths too short, insufficient stitches picked up for edges. Learn a set of master knitter's skills for keeping your knitting flawless.

Pre-requisites:	Knitters' BLS (Basic Life Support).	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	One session of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 125.00
Sessions:	Tues at 11 AM; meets 1 / 30	Registration Limits:	Six participants.

Newly Released Tradebooks Reviewed

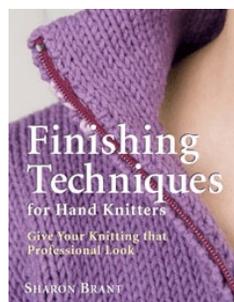
Y Not Knit, Step By Step Instructions For Continental Knitting & Knitting Basics, by Jill and Susan Wolcott, self-published 2006, ISBN: 0-97168-831-1, coilbound at \$ 16. 95. Proponents of “ picking ” (as opposed to the “ throwing ” of



English or American knitting), the Wolcott sisters commit to writing the tips and techniques of their learn-to-knit events – including their trademark witticisms and insights. The detailed, step-by-step, and illustrated, instructions make this title ideal for learners who desire the efficiency and ergonomic simplicity of Continental knitting. Without any doubt, the Wolcott sisters insist the Continental method allowed their knitting to take off and they will encourage you to

share that experience by knitting in the Continental manner.

Finishing Techniques For Hand Knitting: Give Your Knitting That Professional Look by Sharon Brant, published 2006 by Trafalgar Square Publishing, ISBN: 1-57076-336-6, hardbound with dustjacket at \$ 24. 95. Perhaps

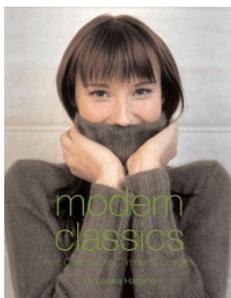


knitting’s most elusive secret is that the assembly and finishing of knitted garments require an entirely different set of skills than those used to create the knitted fabric. A consultant to Rowan Knits, the author shares the tips and techniques which are the backbone of her finishing workshops and which allow anyone to differentiate the garments knitters will proudly, and publicly, wear from those

which are merely folded up and stored at the back of the closet. Brant gets finishing off to a good start by considering how a garment will be assembled and finished *before* the stitches are even cast on.

Modern Classics: Knit Over Twenty Timeless Designs by Louisa Harding published 2006 by Martingale & Company, ISBN: 1-56477-644-1, softbound at \$31. 95. Well poised for the

return of the classic set-in sleeve, Louisa’s newest book is a departure from the boxy whimsy of her popular children’s designs in the *Miss Bea* series. Here, she presents patterns for 24 timeless garments which could be included in every woman’s wardrobe; designs are suitable for all occasions and all knitting skill levels. Louisa, who has been designing and authoring knitting patterns for many years, admits what makes these classic garments modern is the use of newly spun yarns; she relies – perhaps a little too heavily – on yarns from her own brand which, like the Debbie Bliss brand, is a trademark owned by Designer Yarns and is similarly implicated in the cashmere conundrum.



Can I Block Blocking Instructions?

Blocking – sometimes also called dressing or sizing – is an often misunderstood finishing technique primarily for stockinette fabric. Blocking uses both the heat and moisture of steam (but not its pressure) to straighten, smooth and make more uniform completed stockinette knitted fabric.

Glad You Asked

Sporadic answers to knitter’s inquiries

Blocking evens out the tension lines visible in stockinette which are produced when handknitting is performed in multiple short periods of knitting,

allowing the knitting to achieve a more uniform, and therefore true, stitch appearance. (Between knitting sessions, stitches resting on the needle tend to relax and become loose, when knitting is resumed, the newly made stitches are slightly tighter – causing the relaxed stitches to appear larger.)

When performed correctly, blocking does not materially alter the size of the finished garment; it only makes the finished work appear more even. Blocking neither enlarges nor reduces the size of the knitted stitches although it is not unknown for some knitters to use pressure blocking in attempts to stretch or partially shrink garments to wearable sizes.

In days gone by, the blocking technique was referred to as sizing or dressing – the term “ blocking ” being borrowed from milliners who would steam hats to final size using wood blocks to mimic head sizes (with steaming being different than steam-pressing). Blocking makes stockinette stitches more uniform in appearance and dresses up stockinette knitting.

Because blocking flattens knitting, it should not be used on garments with heavily textured stitches such as cables – blocking eliminates all textural differences. Similarly, it should be performed only after a garment is assembled – blocking individual pieces of an unassembled garment is a recipe to assure the pieces will not correctly and uniformly assemble into a garment.

Getting to Know Fibres From Page 1

both animal and vegetable natural fibres and then discuss the synthetic fibres most commonly spun as or blended in yarns.

While The Knit With is primarily a natural fibre shop, not all natural fibres are available to knitters on a regular basis; for example, we have never experienced knitting or wearing sootash – an extremely rare natural fibre with which Marge was familiar from her Newfoundland childhood. Similarly, not all natural fibres are commercially available as knitting yarns – a fact demonstrated by vicuña, which US law has only recently permitted importation and the stocks of which appear to be dedicated to the haute couture segment of the market. Another example of the lack of readily available quality yarn spun from natural fibre is high quality qiviut: much of the commercially available qiviut is spun with inferior grades of guard hair belying this fibre’s reputation for being silky and downy soft.

Each natural fibre is associated with an interesting story. Each fibre also makes for interesting knitting as the yarn spun from each fibre handles differently or dyes or wears in characteristically different ways. We hope you enjoy our exploration into the essential facts about each natural fibre.