

A Novice Finds Quilt Inspiration

Cari Delahanty, *Threads* contributing video producer



I've been thinking of making a quilt for some time. I want one for my bed that fits its specific dimensions, in colors that I love, and patterns that give me a sense of peace and relaxation. I have gotten quilt inspiration from the many colorful quilting books by artist [Kaffe Fassett](#). But recently, I was at my local library and found a postcard promoting *A World of Quilts XLIV*, presented by [Northern Star Quilters' Guild](#). It was scheduled for May 3 and 4, 2025, at the State University of New York at Purchase, so I attended the show and had so much fun. Who knew?

A Quilt Feast

Seeing 300 quilts in one place gives even the novice eye valuable lessons in what constitutes good design, good execution, and, oftentimes, a combination of those —Oh My! I had my favorites. One was *My Garden Party Down Under* made by Joanne Sorrentino and quilted by [K7 Quilting](#) – Louise Klare. Joanne says her quilt was inspired by the pattern *Garden Party Down Under*, designed by [Irene Blanck](#). It took Joanne a year and a half to complete her quilt. It won a first-place blue ribbon and a Best Hand Appliqué award at the show. The quilt is beautiful when viewed as a whole, as each section is artfully designed. Closer inspection reveals amazing stitchwork.

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Conversation Starters

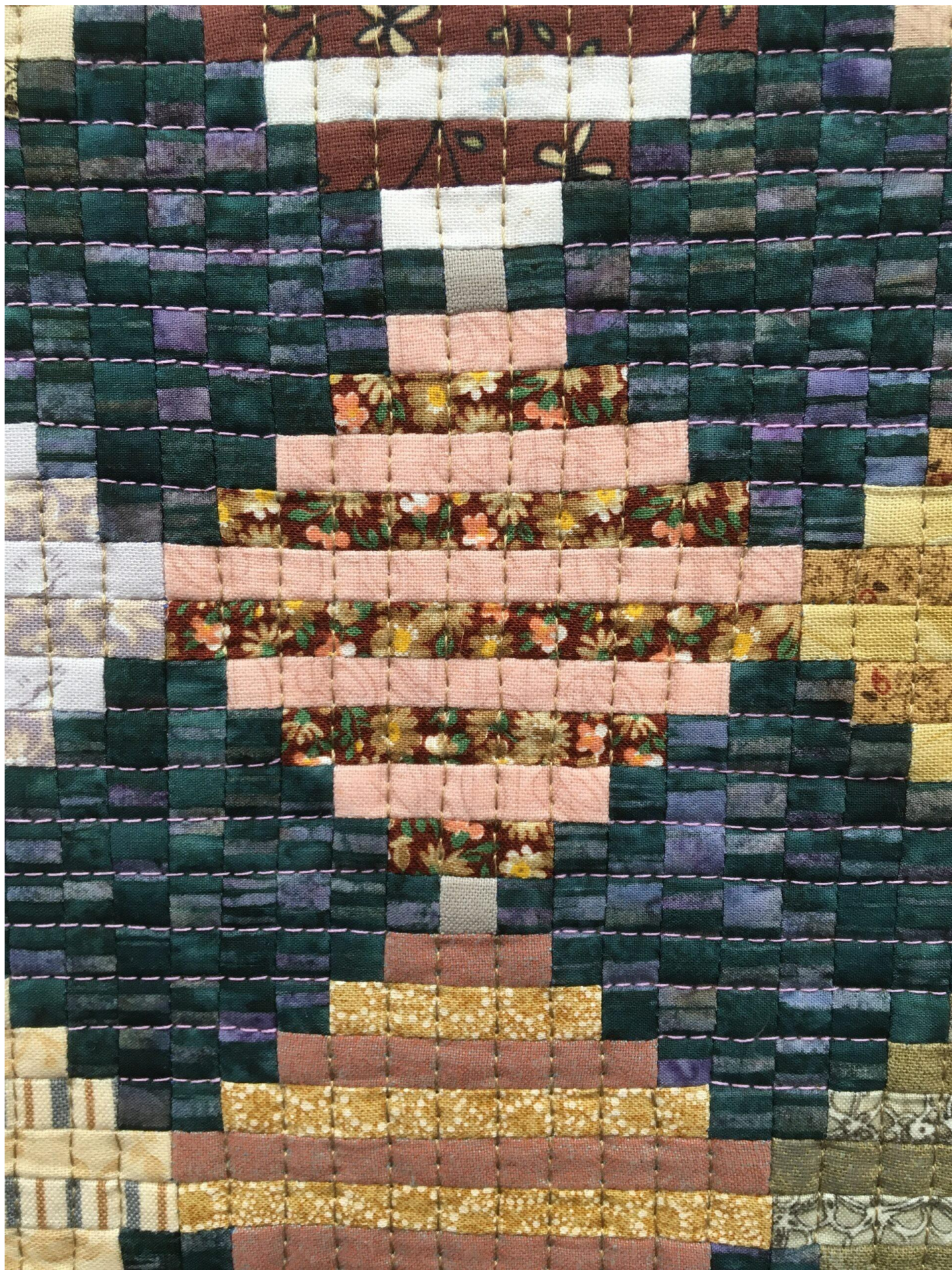
Some quilts in the show prompted speculation and discussion about techniques used in their creation. The quilt that won the category, “Best in Show: Large,” was one of those. Titled *Teetotum*, it was created and quilted by [Kacie Grossman](#). It always seemed to attract a crowd. Onlookers leaned in for better inspection. I joined them and learned two things: It is easy to start a conversation with a total stranger if you are both trying to solve the mystery of a quilt; and there is a type of quilting called matchstick quilting, which looks lovely. (Remember, I’m a novice.) The pattern pieces flowed together as if they were a single piece of cloth. It reminded me of a Marimekko print.





The “Best in Show: Small” category quilt was a masterpiece in stitching. Titled *50 Shades of Sepia*, it was made and quilted by Diana Sharkey, who says, “I wanted to channel Colin King, stylist from *Architectural Digest* magazine etc. My starting point was the dark batik stripe fabric.”





There was *Tilly's Compass* made by Katherine Heller and quilted by Louise Klare. Katherine says,



“The design and fabrics for this quilt were inspired by a quilt that my mother’s Aunt Tilly made in the late 1800s. Tilly was the wife of a ship’s captain.” The quilt that inspired Katherine was made with silk cigar ribbons that were sewn together by hand with embroidery stitches.

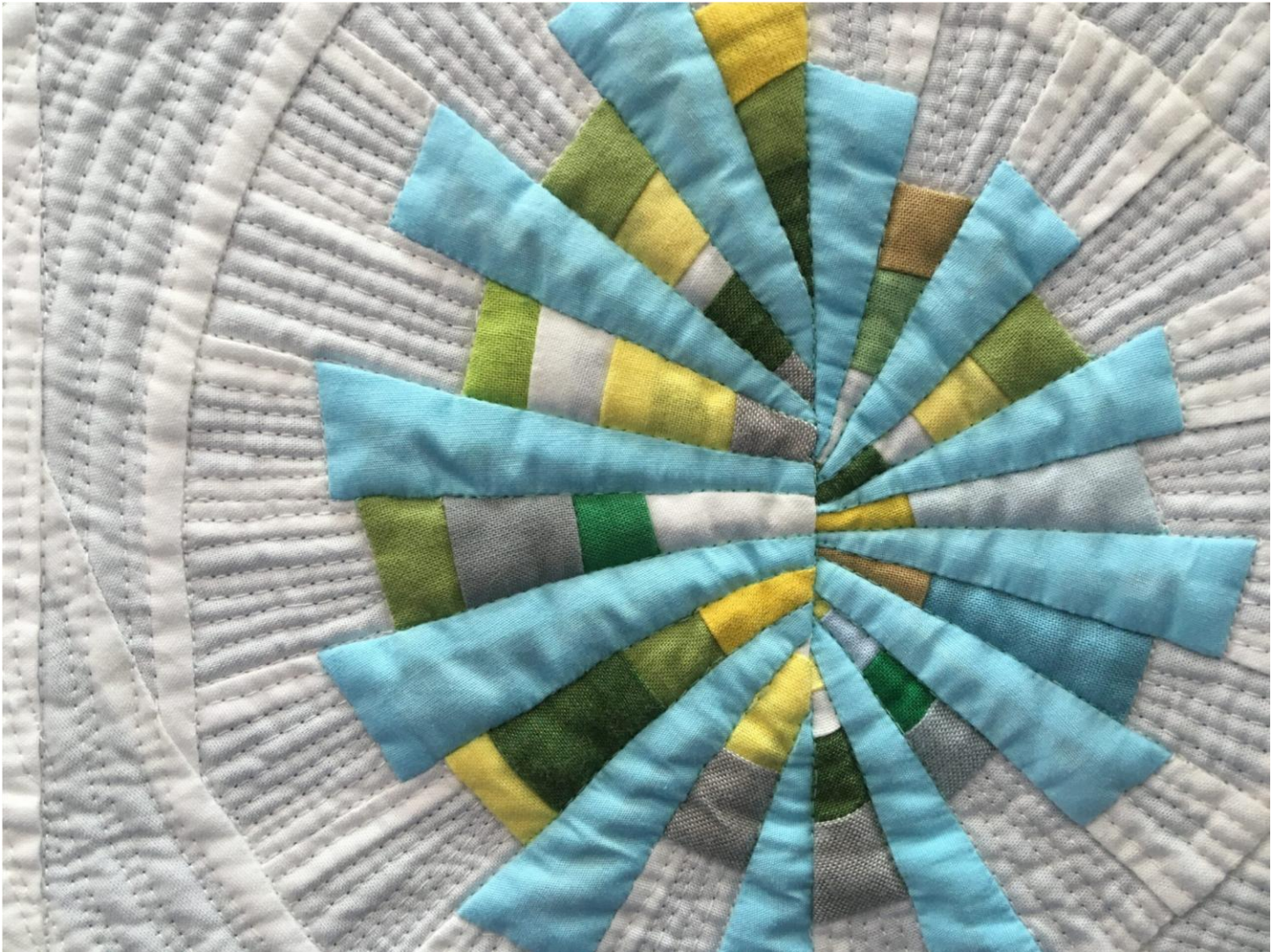
Tilly's Compass was made with more traditional fabrics. The thing about this massive work of art is that, if you follow this compass, it will indeed take you to exotic places.

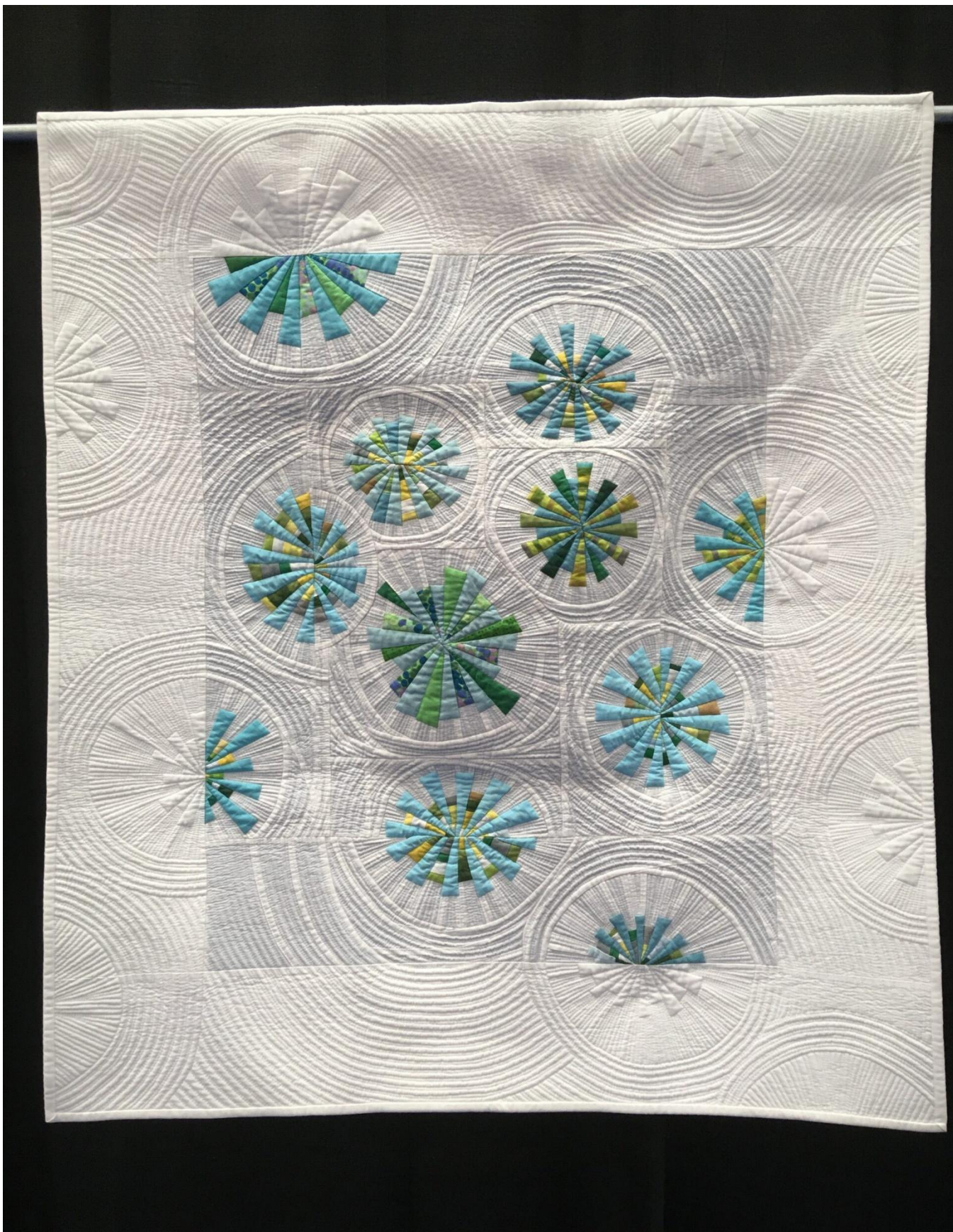




Featuring Marge Tucker's Work

The show exhibited works of international award-winning [quilt artist Marge Tucker](#), known for her improvisational works. In [Burst](#), a dark blue fabric below the quilt's top layer has a deliberate purpose. It is seen more, or it is seen less, depending on the thickness of the fabric that overlays it. It is a clever device that adds color and shading to this beautifully nuanced piece.





Marge Tucker's Burst quilt, See more of her work at MargeTuckerQuilts.com and [@margetuckerquilts](https://www.instagram.com/margetuckerquilts). Photo: published with permission from Marge Tucker.

Quilt Enlightenment

As I wandered through the show, I joined discussions about quilt for-sale pricing. The consensus, at least in my little area of the show, was that quilts are underpriced. I wondered why that was. Have we lost the value we place on handmade items? Perhaps it was just an undervaluing of the market. Perhaps this is considered “women’s work” and less valuable. It’s certainly worth something to be mindful of.

I also heard a scorching discussion of folding versus rolling quilts for storage. You definitely want to roll them. At least that is what I gleaned.





What an educational outing. I left the show without a clear idea of what a quilt for my bed should look like. If anything, the options expanded. But I did end up with the deep belief that I will be making a quilt very soon—even if it doesn't end up on my bed.

Editor's note: For more information about the Northern Star Quilters Guild, [click here](#).

Author Cari Delahanty has worked in video and audio production for over 20 years. During that time, she has developed an interest in the same topics discussed in those productions: sewing, gardening, and building. Thanks to all she has learned, she's created several lovely garments, a growing garden, and a walk-in garage door.

Photos: Cari Delahanty.

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