

Sewing Machines for Quilters-

By Pat Ferguson * Quilter/Teacher

There are many machines on the market designed specifically for quilters. Find a reliable brand that you like and visit a well established sewing machine dealer to help you find the perfect match for your style of sewing. When you go to quilting classes, watch what machines and brands the students have. Ask them questions- they will be happy to share their likes and dislikes.

What features to look for:

- *needle up/down button
- *needle that adjusts from side to side in tiny increments
- *ability to adjust the stitch length in from tiny to large basting
- *thread cutter
- *ability to drop the feed dogs
- *1/4" foot with small lip or guide on the side
- *walking foot
- *good size bed with more hand space or an extension table
- *some decorative quilting stitches- feather, blanket, etc.
- *blind hem stitch for machine appliqué
- *some electronics including auto tension adjust
- *anything else you might like for your other sewing needs

**** Always purchase your machine from a sewing machine dealer-**

You will have an honored warranty, available classes and someone to talk to if you have problems. You will also have the ability to "trade up". You will not get these benefits from the internet, private sellers, or chain stores.

**** A great way to get more bang for your buck-**

Many customers upgrade their machines. Sewing machine dealers may have an expensive model that has been traded in, affording you a great deal on a model that would be much more expensive if purchased brand new. The dealers usually give some kind of a limited warranty with these machines.

**** Bring a batting sandwich with you** when you are machine shopping. Actually sit down and play with the machine to see if you like the feel of it.

**** Bring a strip or square of your 100% cotton fabric** and sew on it to see if you like the way the machine pieces- you can't get a feel for the stitching and tension on that stiff fabric from the sewing machine store.

****Compile a list of questions that you have and features that you are looking for.**

Don't forget to bring it with you- in the excitement of shopping and information overload, you may forget what you actually came for. You don't need a machine that does everything- remember, you can always trade up later.

****If you want to purchase a second, light weight machine to bring to classes,** consider the same brand machine that will have the same feet and same bobbins as your current machine. Assembling a quilt on two different machines can cause variations in sewing and seam allowances.

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