



## Where Do Quilters Get Their Inspiration?

Timeless Stitches – Quilt Capital of Kansas

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Where do quilters get their inspirations? That's easy! Everywhere!!!

Possibly the most common source of inspiration is seeing a quilt or a picture of a quilt and deciding you want to make it. That's how I happened to make a Log Cabin Star Quilt. I saw the picture, probably online, because I printed it out and that became my pattern. Using a Log Cabin Ruler designed by Marti Michell I was able to cut out the pieces and then put them together to make a queen-size log cabin eight-pointed star quilt!

Sometimes the inspiration comes from a piece of fabric, an occasion like a birthday, graduation, or wedding. Future Grandmas get INSPIRED. Sometimes they are working under the restriction of how the nursery is to be decorated—what theme, what colors, etc. But it's all fun!

Some events like shop hops and quilt shows are designed to inspire participants. The fifth biennial Kansas City Regional Quilt Festival was held in Overland Park the middle of June. Fourteen area quilt guilds, including our own Maple Leaf Quilters Guild, sponsored and “put on” the festival. There were 96 judged quilts, quilts that were not judged, special quilt exhibits, classes, free demonstrations, opportunity quilts, and vendors. Some of the vendors demonstrated how to use products in their booths. I came back to the shop “totally pumped”!

One of my purchases was an ice-dyed panel approximately 22 inches square. I don't know how it was dyed, but ice chips were used in the process somehow and the results were striking! The ones at the festival were quilted in a mandala pattern, so, of course, that is exactly what I wanted to do. Laura has been taking an online class to learn how to quilt that type of pattern freehand. I have more UFO's than she does, so I figured I should purchase a digitized pattern and get it done sooner rather than later. Would you believe that the pattern designer had a sale on mandala patterns last week?! It was all falling into place.

When quilting that type of pattern most quilters add a layer of wool batting between the thin cotton batting and the quilt top to make the quilting design more prominent. I actually had some wool batting in the shop! I was “cooking with gas”! In two days I quilted four sample pieces, experimenting with thread color and different patterns. On the third day I quilted my ice-dyed panel. And I learned a few more things. The pattern dyed onto the fabric was not precise! Why in the world did I think it would be? After all, the fabric was folded into eighths to repeat the pattern and folds take up space. The shape of the dyed places varied according to which layer they were in. There was no way that what my eye wanted to be the center of the design was going to line up with the center of the quilting design, and similar issues occurred toward the perimeter and throughout the piece. Well, the best laid plans go wherever they want to! I closed my eyes and pushed “start stitching”. Now that the stitches are in place (and I am not about to take them out and make adjustments), it has become a case of “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” All that is left to do on these pieces is to tightly quilt between the outside of the stitched pattern and the edge of the fabric to make the quilting design more prominent. I'm going to use the other quilting machine to do that free-handed and then finish the edge. Am I still “pumped”? You bet! I couldn't stop with just one new idea!!!