



Stress-free Hummingbird expertly pieced and hand quilted by Pauline Humbke (Vancouver, BC) with Superior® Treasure™ hand quilting thread.

TOP QUILTING THREAD DECISIONS

Top quilting threads should be planned earlier in the process; however, once a quilt top or project is nearing completion, we see a clearer vision coming into focus. We don't always know which colours we'll desire or how much thread yardage we'll need until we get this far. Will you sit next to a domestic machine or will you hand quilt? Perhaps this is an opportunity to shop for more threads—admittedly, a necessary part of the process.

If you hire a longarm quilting service you're still involved in the decision-making process. More questions to ponder: budget, free-motion quilting, meander, intense micro-quilting, stitch-in-ditch or straight stitches, for example, repetitive matchstick? Your choices will be based on the project and situation. It's your quilt!

EMBELLISHING THREAD DECISIONS

Embellishment threads are a personal part of the creative process and reflect the heart and soul of a quilter. Thread imparts personality, texture, design elements and function. Choices are endless considering the myriad of thread types available, weights, fibres and how they're applied by hand or machine. Award-winning challenges (wink) and quilts always showcase embellishment threads

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EDUCATION & INSPIRATION

are the focus of my column, thread talks and workshops.
Cindy Scraba www.CindysThreadworks.com

NEEDLES: MACHINE & HAND

A needle is the essential tool that weaves and connects thread to fabric. The stitching outcome (whether intricate or industrial) is influenced by the needle's diameter, design, tip and size of eye. For basic piecing an #80/12 needle size/diameter is common; however, a #70/10 is better when using a finer thread. The versatile topstitch design has a sharper tip and elongated eye. Plus this needle accommodates a wide range of thread thicknesses for multi-purposes. In previous articles, I've discussed the benefits of a titanium-coated needle for economical benefits and overall improved performance. Manufacturers recommend a #90/14 needle for home machines and #18 MR 4.0 for longarm machines when top quilting layers using quilting weight threads.

Hand needles are also essential tools with extra options. One of my previous articles, *Hand Needles—A Primer* (featured in *Canadian Quilter*, spring 2018) covered this topic in detail. The needle length, eye shape and various designs allow for more freedom to create unique made-by-hand stitches.

Hopefully this checklist will become a natural thought process—your choices matter and make a difference. Refer to the list whenever you plan a project, sit down to your machine(s) and especially for thread shopping!

Happy stress-free quilting! 🍁