



LONGTIME QUILTER TURNED THRIVING YOUTUBER

YouTube star Laura Coia makes it Sew Very Easy! Her instructional videos have inspired thousands to start sewing. With a catalogue of 800+ videos, 389,000 subscribers and more than 43 million views, Laura is a big deal in the online quilting world! Join Sew ON Magazine as we sit down to chat with this friendly sew-lebrity!

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Where were you raised and where do you live now?

I was raised in a large family in Niagara Falls. As the eldest girl, I was responsible for helping my mother with the younger children. My mother sewed for all of us, and I grew to love the sound of her machine. I started sewing around age 6 and never stopped.

I met my husband in 3rd grade and we married after high school. We just celebrated our 38th anniversary and are proud parents to 3 grown children and 4 young grandkids. We still live in Niagara Falls!

When did you start sewing? Who were your mentors?

I began sewing with my Mom and then was introduced to quilting at age 16 by ladies at our church. My first block was a cathedral window for a church charity quilt. Everything seemed easy after that!

As a teenager I worked at a clothing boutique and later did alterations and assisted tailors in a menswear store. I learned to use industrial machines and even sewed wallets for Fairy Leather.

How do you describe your sewing/quilting style?

I don't try to have a specific quilting style. I tend to use just 3-5 fabrics in each project. I usually choose fabrics with high contrast and often use bright jewel tones. I guess I like each fabric to stand out.

Whose style do you admire?

I try not to follow other quilters and industry personalities too closely. I don't want to be influenced by the work that other people are doing. I would be devastated if anyone ever thought I'd copied their work. However, I have always admired the late Nancy Zieman and Eleanor Burns. I like how they present just the right information to "take the mystery out" of quilting.

How and when did you get started on YouTube?

I published my first YouTube video in April 2014. My husband and his brother had been working on their own fishing-related channel for a couple of years at that point and my son encouraged me to start something for quilters. I was sewing for hours a day anyways, so it just made sense!

I filmed my first video and got tired of waiting for my son's editing assistance, so I bought some software and figured it out myself. He didn't believe that I'd done it when he saw the first tutorial!

I've added more equipment over the years, but I still do all the sewing and production work myself in my sewing studio. My husband helps with the accounting paperwork, but I do all the rest. Just in case you were wondering, my channel's viewership and subscriber count has long surpassed my husband's. (SMILEY)

Where do you find inspiration?

I am inspired by fabric most often. Usually, I'll see a new fabric collection from a fabric sales rep or at a trade show and have an idea for a quilt. I will work with scraps in my sewing room to perfect the quilt block – sometimes redesigning a block slightly or coming up with an easier construction method. Then, when the fabric arrives, I get to work sewing the quilt and filming.

Sometimes I feature a favourite sewing notion that I've used for years in my sewing room and other times, I'm inspired by something that's new on the market. Occasionally, I share a little tool that I've come up with myself! I typically plan my projects at least a year in advance.

What is your teaching philosophy?

I like to think about my videos as a chat with a friend instead of a formal presentation to a viewer. I pretend that I'm showing my latest project to a friend and sharing the tricks I've figured out to perfect the technique.

What has surprised you on your journey to 387K subscribers and 800+ videos?

The biggest surprise has been the growth of my channel. I had no idea so many people would be interested in my tutorials. Being recognized in public for the first time was a shock. My elderly mother never took my work seriously until someone approached us at Walmart! SMILEY

What is your favourite part of your work? What task do you dread?

I love teaching and sharing ideas with my subscribers. As I was getting started, my son told me "Mom, quilting is a dying art. You see things differently than anyone else. You need to document it." I'm so happy if I can help a quilter learn something new and get excited about sewing.

Laura stitching a binding on the boat!



My greatest pleasure comes from reading viewer comments. I don't have time anymore to respond to each one personally, but I always read them. In fact, comments from viewers are a great source of inspiration for future videos. If someone asks a question, I can be sure that other viewers are wondering the same thing too.

I dread making silly mistakes that need to be corrected. You name it...I've done it. Quoted incorrect measurements, recorded without the microphone on, even deleted an entire video when trying to upload it! I also hate the sound of my own voice so re-watching and editing can be tiresome.

What part of your job would surprise people?

Most viewers have no idea how long it takes to create a video. They don't realize that I work 40-60 hours a week to produce a video each Tuesday and Thursday.

I don't prepare a written script for videos, but I lay awake for hours the night before filming rehearsing exactly what I'll say on camera. Sometimes I give up on sleep and just head into the sewing room to work.

What equipment or tools could you not live without?

I love sewing machines. I owned three by the time I was 18 and now have a collection of 17 machines. All but one still run. I got my first sewing machine in 6th grade from a neighbour. I "earned" it by washing her windows. I've always loved the sound of machines running and am fascinated that each one has a unique "voice".

As far as the YouTube channel goes, I have a camera, microphone, lights, editing software and other necessities. I try not to make things too complicated.

What is coming up next for you?

I am excited to start some new themed videos in 2022. The monthly features will include Fun with Precuts, Bag of the Month, and Nifty Notions.

With any luck, we will return to quilt shows this year! I'm looking forward to attending Quilt Canada and speaking to quilters about my new book, Sew Very Easy Patternless Sewing.

In your first book, you shared written quilt patterns for your most loved video tutorials. Tell us about your forthcoming book.

My second book will teach sewists basic techniques, adding zippers, binding, and drawstrings. Then they can stitch up beautiful bags, accessories and home décor. With no pattern pieces to transfer, it's easy to measure, cut and sew.

LAURA COIA TRUNK SHOW

Join us in the spring for a special trunk show and visit with Niagara-native Laura Coia. She will tell us about her lifelong sewing journey and the story of how she became a YouTube Sew-lebrity!

Date: Saturday March 5,
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Fee: \$14.95

