

VERSATILE PANEL QUILTS

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Idea evolution:

- **Jelly Roll Race quilt** ... quick to piece, but can have color pooling issues
- **Whisper quilt** ... introduced stagger concept ... later extended to prisms through which an image might be split and viewed
- **Queens Grant "Sunshine Grays"** quilts & pillow shams ... a simulated Jelly Roll Race - tweaked strip placement as I went (4/2015)
- **Designed Pillow Shams** to match the quilts, and made **reduced loft pillow inserts** (to minimize the bulk of bedding to be stored)
- **September 2015** - bought **Kaufman tree panel fabric** & designed couch quilts based on "Whisper" concept of staggered sections
- **Lessons Learned:** I bought panel fabric sufficient for a 3 panel couch quilt, 2 panel loveseat and extra for a wedge quilt and/or pillows. I bought coordinating fabric for the front and for backing. When I started piecing, ***I wasn't happy with the effect of the original fabric I'd planned for the front, but the backing fabric was perfect with the panel fabric.*** So I switched. Sometimes you have to sew a few seams to confirm you like the fabrics together.
- **Loved the quilt, but it didn't fit the room:** I made a 2 panel quilt first, and loved how the quilt came out. But, the quilt was too light for our villa in Hilton Head - it didn't look right in the room. But, my mother wanted something for her couch, and it was perfect for her Great Room. I made a 3 panel quilt and wedge quilt to complete the set, so she has beautiful protection for her sectional couch. And it was quick to piece.

- **Measure twice, cut once.** I did mess up on one cut, and made one strip too wide. I had to trim it down. So - one of my quilts has a slightly different continuity. But with the "prism" effect - you don't notice it.
- **Plan your cuts so that you like what you see** in each "window pane" or "prism panel". I did this with 1/2" fabric strips for the Kaufman tree panel quilts.
- **Be flexible with your design concept.** For the Storybook House quilts, I tried to use same design as for the Kaufman Tree Panel quilts, but quickly realized I wouldn't be happy with where the houses were split apart, plus the repeat was slightly different. I ended up with a non-symmetric design, and called it a "Melody" quilt ... thinking of the widths of the strips as the lengths of a note, and did a non-symmetric stagger.
- **Label your panel strips so that you can assemble them in order.** This can be as simple as 1-2-3-4-5, etc. For my "Melody" quilts (Storybook House panels), I did more complex labeling because the widths and the stagger varied. I actually printed labels out and used clear packing tape to tape them to the panels. But, I'm an engineer and slightly picky. Ok, very picky.
- **Design Walls are wonderful!** If you haven't upgraded your quilting room, consider making one. I made mine from Lowe's 1" thick green insulation board, 4' x 8'. I trimmed it down to about 72" high (to fit underneath a doorway). I covered it in fabric, black on one side, cream on the other. You can stick pins right into it. Great for pinning up quilt pieces as you go, or for photographing your finished quilts. I now have 3 of these.
- The **Putney Jelly Roll concept** gives more **design flexibility with your panels** ... bed quilts or couch quilts.
- **When you sew long fairly thin pieces with a regular foot, seams will curve.** Using a **walking foot** helps keep seams straighter.
- **Long thin strips** also means it's harder to keep your quilt square as you go. Plan for it.
- **Reversible bindings** are great for preserving a beautiful front and back for your quilts ... and they are great fabric savers in a pinch.

