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CHURCHMOUSE YARNS & TEAS

MAKE READY

PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS AT HOME



Clockwise from top left: Rowan Chunky Cashmere, Merino Aria, and Soft Bouclé

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A NOTE FROM KIT

Hello, Churchmouse friends and family! Here it is, November 2020, and an autumn unlike any other. In the spring, we put the shop at 118 Madrone Lane on hold for the health and safety of our team and guests. OK, we thought, we can do our bit for a few weeks—no problem! And here we are, seven months later, our dear brick-and-mortar shop shuttered for good, doing our best to carry the Churchmouse spirit into the world in a new way.

Of the many decisions we've made, three have been hardest: Choosing not to reopen the shop; putting our publishing efforts on hold (except for a few new adaptations and free patterns); and suspending our little 16-page printed newsletter, which we've sent home to you four or five times a year since 2003.

We have been practically luddites in our love of the paper and ink experience. But we're discovering the gifts of an online-only newsletter—we have plenty of space to unleash our creativity and photos will have that yummy, back-lit

lifelike quality that makes you want to touch the screen.

So, our love of the tactile pleasures of the printed word notwithstanding, we really are excited to introduce our virtual Churchmouse Yarns & Teas newsletter. We hope you'll enjoy hearing from us in this new way. It's really just our little old-fashioned newsletter in a different package—with news and ideas and inspiration and stories.

So, let's toast to the new beginnings that endings allow.

Cheers to silver linings!

Kit
Kit Hutchin

P.S. We'll be unveiling some holiday content before Thanksgiving. It just seems helpful this year to start projects a bit sooner and give our valiant postal service a head start delivering care packages to loved ones we can't visit. Let the giving begin!



CREATING CONNECTION

We've done a lot of missing this year. We miss seeing our friends and family in person and up close. We miss hugs and kisses and holding hands. We miss sharing dances and dinners and parties and game nights.

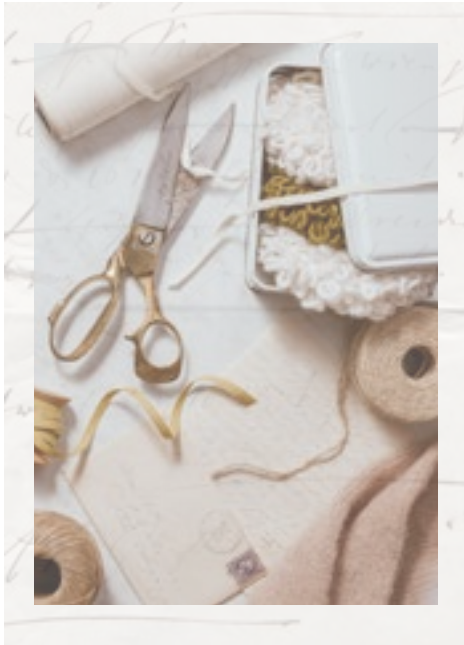
But this physical distance has also shown just how close we actually are to each other. Because we can't be in the same space, we've connected through so many other meaningful ways. Long phone calls, virtual knitalongs and tea parties, handwritten letters, care packages—even quick, emoji-filled texts bring us together!

We're not really sure what the holidays will be like yet. (2020 has certainly kept us on our toes!) What is certain is that we won't miss out on the good cheer, good company, and good will the season always inspires.

'Tis the season of giving—whether it's giving thanks or giving gifts to loved ones! And so this year, let's keep each other in our thoughts more than ever. If you're knitting or crocheting a gift for a friend, really keep them in mind as you work. Let the gift giving process become a creative collaboration!

Reach out to your intended recipient, make sure you each have a cup of tea, and find out what they love (the 'Good Choices Checklist' could help here, see page 8). You might find out something new about your closest friends! Send them updates as you knit—what a way to keep in touch all season long. (Plus, if you get your giftee involved in the making, they're certain to love and wear your gift.)





GOOD CHOICES CHECKLIST

The time we spend making for another—holding them in our hearts, thinking of their likes and tastes and needs—is always well spent. But to be sure the outcome matches your wishes, we’ve created a checklist to help you figure out what you need to know when knitting a gift.

STYLE	
	What’s the intended recipient’s personal style?
	Will they like this?
	Will they actually wear it?
	What colors do they choose for themselves?
NUTS & BOLTS	
	Do you know what size to knit?
	Does your recipient run hot or cold?
	Have they ever said, “It’s itchy!”?
	Do they lose things a lot?
	Do they have the time and inclination to take care of this hand-knit piece?
	How much time will this take to knit (see p9)? Do I <i>have</i> the time?
	How much will it cost?
FOR THE KNITTER	
	Is this person ‘knitworthy’?
	Will I enjoy knitting this?
	Can I knit and give this without expectations, no strings attached?

We're often asked, "How much time will this project take?" Of course, it depends on how quickly you knit and how much knitting time you have. But here's our favorite method for a ballpark estimate of the time a project might take. It may seem a little silly, but when we're knitting design prototypes and samples, it keeps us honest!

Remember, your loved one wouldn't want you to worry over their gift. They love you too much for that kind of stress! Of course, if you do get stuck or stressed, don't fear. Knitting help and encouragement is as close as your phone or device. You can reach a helpful Mouse by emailing us at contact@churchmouseyarns.com or calling us at (206) 780-2686. 🌿



HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

STEP 1.

Estimated Time per Square Inch

Square inches in swatch _____

Minutes it took to knit swatch _____

Divide sq" by swatch min _____

= min per sq" [A] _____

STEP 2.

Estimated Square Inches in Project

Using pattern dimensions and/or schematic, calculate square inches of each piece using outermost dimensions (a conservative estimate).

Back _____ sq" +

Front(s) _____ (x 2 = _____ sq") +

Sleeves _____ x 2 = _____ sq" +

Collar, bands, etc _____ sq" =

Total sq" _____ [B]

STEP 3.

Estimated Knitting Hours in Project

Multiply total square inches by minutes per square inch.

[A] _____ x [B] _____

= _____ total min

Divide by 60 for knitting hrs _____

Add 1-6 hours for finishing and blocking for total hrs. Just a ballpark, but helpful!

Churchmouse Classics
'Quintessential Cardigan'

FALL SOFTLY

This fall we continue to cocoon in comfort. Our favorite shapes are relaxed and easy. Our favorite yarns are cozy and soft. And our go-to colors are softly, softly, natural and classic. Easy does it.





Churchmouse Classics 'Quadrangle Wrap'.

ROOM TO RELAX

For some of us, our worlds have gotten smaller. For others, work days are all too hectic and long. Either way, when we snuggle up at home, we want to slip into layers that are cozy and unconstrained. But as the holidays tiptoe towards us, we long to climb into something a little more special than sweats. And when we're able to venture out for fresh air or a careful visit, we'll pop on accessories that feel special, pretty, and polished.



From top left: Quick Faux Fur Cowl (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Simple Tee'; 'Everyday Pullover'; 'Quadrangle Wrap'

Simple Stockinette Wrap
(free Churchmouse pattern)



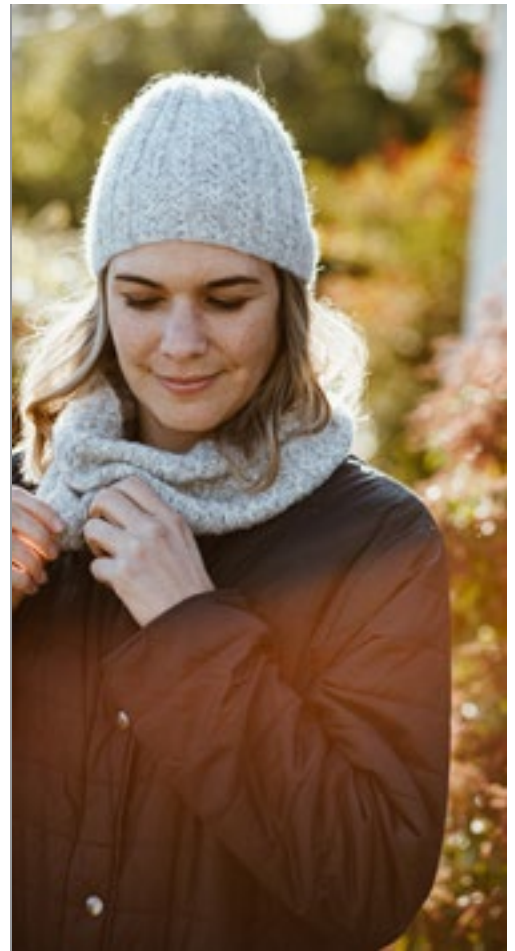


Churchmouse Classics 'Studio Beret'; Reversible Knitting Mitts (free Churchmouse pattern)

IN OUR HANDS



As we knit and crochet for the holidays, we've noticed a few themes emerge among our chosen yarns—soothing softness and fascinating texture! A bouclé or faux-fur yarn brings an irresistible fluff to simple wraps and throws. A marshmallowy chunky-weight yarn pumps volume and squish into every stitch pattern. And then there are the classic, go-to woolly wools that are the foundation of every knitter's stash!



Simple Stockinette Wrap (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Fair Winds Beanie & Scarf'; 'Vineyard Cowl & Beanie'

COMFORT COLORS

This season, calm and quiet colors capture our hearts. Natural neutrals: oatmeal, almond milk, oyster, driftwood, fog... Or timeless classics: inky navy, olive, pomegranate, chesnut, amber. This pared-down palette feels reliable and right. Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director of the global Pantone Color

Institute (and, btw, a Bainbridge Island neighbor) says she sees a mindful “stripping back of color to the essentials” that delivers “a message of strength and purposefulness with a sense of optimism.” For now, less is more. 🌿





“

**...a mindful stripping back
of color to the essentials...
delivers a message of
strength and purposefulness
with a sense of optimism.**

Leatrice Eiseman

”

Clockwise from top left: Rowan Soft Bouclé, Merino Aria, Pure Cashmere, Chunky Cashmere, and Soft Bouclé again

LOOPY STITCH

From tiny wreaths on our tree, to garlands on our bannister, to ginormous wreaths on our door, loop stitch abounds in the Churchmouse holidays! Depending on your choice of yarn and color, loop stitch can give off a quirky whimsicality or rustic chic. We've played with both and been equally charmed!





HOLIDAYS AT HOME

Setting up the tree, stringing twinkle lights and garlands, hanging stockings and wreaths, sprinkling tinsel here and there—the preparation is half of the fun of the party! At least, we think so. Maybe that comes from being knitters and crocheters—the process of the craft is just as rewarding as the finished project.

This highly unusual year (what an understatement!) has set us to our holiday making a little early. The gorgeous yarns—shimmering raffia, uber-fluffy wools, so soft cashmeres!—and playful stitches—oh, those loopy loops!—cheer us up a treat. And it's nice to know that our projects will be done by Thanksgiving. We can trim our →



Woolly Loop Pillow Cover (free Churchmouse pattern); 'Picot-Edge Mohair Throw & Afghan' 'Woolly Garland'; Mini Loopy Tree Skirt (free Churchmouse pattern)

homes before the leftover turkey is gone! That leaves the rest of the season for gift knitting, relaxation, and celebration. And goodness, do we deserve a celebration!

We could also use a little self love and forgiveness this year. The hustle and bustle of getting ready for the holidays is exciting and energizing, but it can be stressful, too. On a past Christmas Eve, we sent out a note including these words from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*: “What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be.”

It’s a good reminder to not think of the holidays as a task list. Rather, this season is all about gratitude, love, and peace. Do what you can, celebrate what you’ve done, have fun, and remember that the most important thing is the people around you. 🌿



Churchmouse Classics ‘Crossbody Bags & Clutch’; Wool and the Gang Ra-Ra Raffia.

CROCHETED LUSTER

A touch of tinsel has always brightened our spirits. Now a shining raffia yarn brings that festive gleam to snug, single crochet stitches! Wee shimmering coasters, a glimmering little bag— it's small, easy pieces like this that help us make each moment a celebration.

Crocheted Placemats
& Coasters (free
adaptation to
Churchmouse At
Home 'Crocheted
Baskets')



Rowan Chunky Cashmere

A TOUCH OF CASHMERE

We treat cashmere yarn with a touch of reverence. It's such an exceptional pillar in the world of fiber arts! Whenever we think of treating ourselves to something special, cashmere pops up in our thoughts. But what makes cashmere yarn so special?

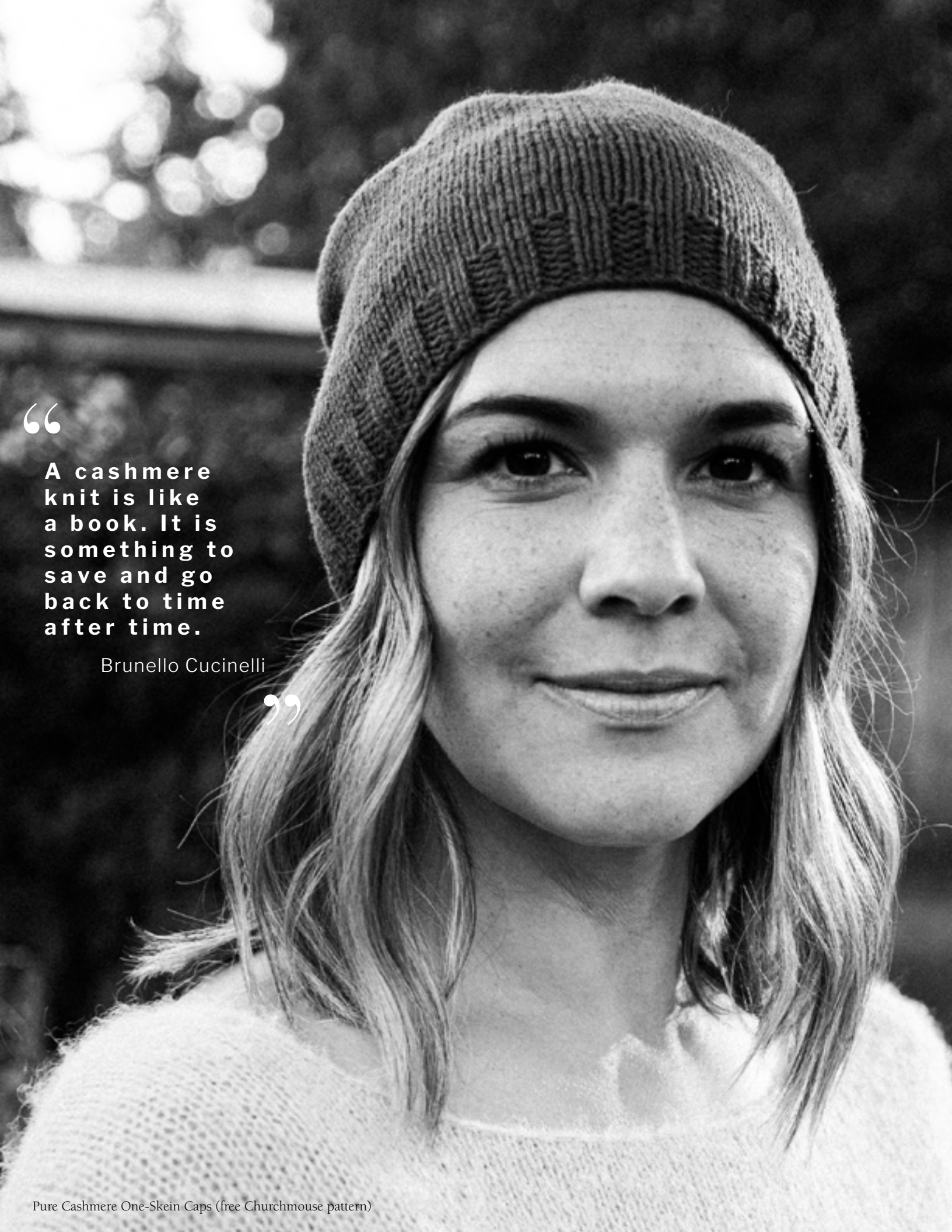
Cashmere fiber—produced by a hardy breed of goat—is finer, stronger, softer, and warmer than most sheep's wool. In fact, it's about three times more insulating. Cashmere goats have a double fleece—a fine undercoat and a coarser outer coat. It's from the downy undercoat, that the prized fibers are combed—and the yield is quite small. Fiber gathered from one goat can be made into a scarf; it may take fiber from three goats to make a sweater quantity.

Once it's spun into a yarn, cashmere creates light, breathable, oh, so soft fabric. In fact, we often think of 'cashmere' as synonymous with 'softness.' You may see a micron measurement associated with a cashmere yarn. This refers to the diameter of the fiber—the lower the number, the finer the fiber, the softer the yarn! Naturally,

cashmere's micron count is very low—typically between 15 and 19 microns. That means it's yummy, buttery, cuddly, next-to-the-skin soft.

While this natural fiber has a beautiful side, its production can have a detrimental effect on the environment. So we look for yarn-makers who continue to improve their sourcing practices. For example, the Scottish cashmere mill with whom Rowan works to create *Pure Cashmere*, sources their fiber from nomadic farmers in the Gobi Desert. They encourage sustainable herding and grazing practices, promote high standards of animal welfare, and work to protect the traditions of these nomadic communities.

Few of us have the resources or live in the climate where a full cashmere garment is practical, so a little touch of cashmere—whether it's a classic cap or a precious cowl—is really special. And, as long as we treat our cashmere hand-knits with care, they'll be long-lived! We can attest to that—many Mice have cashmere pieces we love to wear year after year after year.



“

A cashmere knit is like a book. It is something to save and go back to time after time.

Brunello Cucinelli

”



CASHMERE & FRIENDS

While amazing in its pure form, cashmere is one of those magical fibers that plays well with others. Wool brings bounce and elasticity to cashmere's more delicate fibers. Silk contributes smoothness and sheen to cashmere's matte finish. Cashmere has even been blended with both of these fibers at the same time! Plus, not only does blending bring out the best of each fiber, it helps to make cashmere more accessible for everyday use—even a little bit brings its characteristic halo to the hand. 🌿

CASHMERES IN OUR MIX

LANG

Cashmere Light



A worsted-weight blend of 88% cashmere and 12% nylon, this yarn has a lovely airiness thanks to the loose, chainette construction of its strand—like a small cloud of featherlight fluff!

STRING

Blossom



A smooth, high-twist, half-and-half blend of cashmere and silk, this sport-weight yarn is dense, springy, and a dream to knit with.

SHIBUI

Haven



Emanating soft and cozy, this DK-weight blend of 80% extra fine merino and 20% cashmere produces stunning stitch definition.

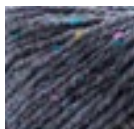
Pebble



A lace-weight blend of 48% recycled silk, 36% fine merino, and 16% cashmere has flecks of fiber for a tweedy look, with a lovely, lightweight softness.

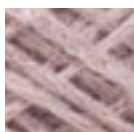
ROWAN

Cashmere Tweed



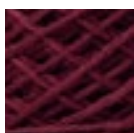
A blend of 80% wool and 20% cashmere, this DK-weight yarn has the warm woolliness of our favorite tweeds, but with a softness that can only be achieved by adding cashmere.

Chunky Cashmere



This 100% cashmere yarn has a chainette-style construction that brings a whole lot of light airiness into the soft fabric, and offers many gauge talents.

Pure Cashmere



A nice, smooth DK-weight yarn, this 100% cashmere yarn is spun in Scotland and known to pill less than many other cashmere yarns.



“If you’re not a tea fan, this story could change your mind.”

TEA FOR ME

By John Koval

If you're not a tea fan, this story could change your mind. If you already love tea, let's see if we can share something you may not know about the world's most popular beverage.

When Kit opened Churchmouse Yarns & Teas back in 2000, I helped out in the store on weekends. I didn't know much about yarn, so I started exploring the tea area. Before this, Kit had her favorite English teas at home, which I ignored in favor of my random tea experiments which I would try once and then also ignore.

I started reading about tea, tasting, and reading about *how* to taste. I quickly learned why, before this, my tea didn't excite me: I wasn't brewing it correctly (fresh water, right temperature, right timing) and some of my "experiments" had been sitting in the cupboard for years.

Who knew tea got stale? Once opened, after six months it's suspect. After a year, it's gone. No wonder the experience with my stash was *meh*.

Here's what else I learned: My green tea was bitter because I brewed it too long and the water was too hot. *Yech*. At 2½ minutes with water at 175 degrees... *ahhhhh*. My black tea was ho-hum because the water wasn't hot enough and I was too impatient. One should pour on a rolling boil and let it steep, covered, for 4½ to 5 minutes. Once I got that down, it was cup after cup after cup—couldn't do that with coffee without turning into a jitterbug.

A word about caffeine: black tea has a quarter of the caffeine of drip coffee. Green tea has half of that, and white tea has half of that. And herbal teas ("tisanes") have, of course, no caffeine at all.

So what do we drink here at Churchmouse when we're surrounded by more than 70 varieties of tea every day? That depends on who you ask.

If you're feeling adventurous yourself but don't know where to start, consider the four seasons of Churchmouse Teas created for us by Smith Teamaker.

FOUR SEASONS OF CHURCHMOUSE TEA

I learned a lot from master teamaker Steve Smith. Kit and I visited his Portland facility and he showed us how to taste 25 types at once: sip, swirl, and spit into a Chinese urn (we never got the hang of spitting). Listening to him describe the nuances of each variety and the history of each plantation was thrilling.

WINTER

When Steve suggested that he could create an exclusive blend for us, he sent us two black blends to try. We tasted one, were amazed, and called to say, “Stop blending!” **Churchmouse Winter** was born. A perfectly balanced blend of Assam, Yunnan, and Ceylon with, as Kit wrote on the label, “a wistful memory of summer fruit.” A big hit to this day!



SUMMER

For **Churchmouse Summer**, Steve created an exquisite herbal blend. Light, lemony notes of fragrant hyssop, verbena, and lemon myrtle mingle with Egyptian chamomile and Oregon spearmint. Masterful! This caffeine-free concoction is calming served hot and refreshing when iced. We drink this all day long. And all year long.

SPRING

For **Churchmouse Spring** Steve suggested, naturally, a green tea blend. He used a superior Chinese full-leaf tea and added very light, lemony flavors with a hint of jasmine. It has us thinking fresh starts, new endeavors. Follow instructions. If it's bitter, start again. If it tastes like Nectar of the Gods, you found the secret!.



AUTUMN

And this brings us to **Churchmouse Autumn**. Kit asked Steve what he would do if he wanted a blend that could take a splash or even a splash of whole milk. He designed an Assam, Yunnan, and Keemun creation that did just that. Whereas milk in Churchmouse Winter can overpower subtle fruit hints, it will gather all the various notes in Churchmouse Autumn into one glorious chord.

So here are four very decent choices for beginners and aficionados alike. The holidays are coming. Steve Smith's mantle has passed to Ravi, another brilliant tea master. Could another Churchmouse blend be in the works down in Portland? Stay tuned. All will be revealed soon. 🌿

SMALL BATCHES

Erika Bellah created this authentic scone recipe for us a few years ago. It's been a favorite ever since! Dense and short, these scones pair perfectly with a strong cuppa. We bake small batches so they're always fresh.



TOASTED OATMEAL SCONES

1½ cups rolled oats

¼ cup whole milk

¼ cup heavy cream

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

1½ cups all purpose flour

⅓ cup sugar

1 tsp baking powder

10 tbsp salted butter, cold, cut into ¼ inch cubes

Optional: ¼ cup of your favorite marmalade or jam

Spread oats evenly onto baking sheet and toast at 375° until lightly golden and fragrant (8-10 minutes). Cool.

Preheat oven to 450°.

Whisk together milk, cream, egg, and vanilla. In a separate bowl, combine flour, sugar, and baking powder.

Cut butter into flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in the oats, then the liquid mixture until just combined. With floured hands, gently knead until dough forms a cohesive mass; you may need to add a little flour if it's too sticky, but don't overwork it.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface, and pat into a 7" round about 1" thick. Cut into 12 wedges and place each on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Optional: With your thumb, make a small indentation in the middle of each scone, being careful not to break the sides. Fill with 1 tsp of good marmalade or jam.

Bake at 450° until golden, 12-14 minutes. Serve warm with butter or stiffly whipped heavy cream. ❁



SITE SPECIFICS

Our marvelous team works every day to make the churchmouseyarns.com experience as smooth and helpful as possible. To that end, we'd love to introduce you to several useful features on our website (if you haven't discovered them already!).

[OUR STORY](#)

The tale of how Churchmouse came to be.

[UPDATES](#)

Up-to-date Churchmouse news, including holiday shipping estimates.

FINDERS

Use these little tools to search for just the right [yarn](#), [tea](#), or [needles](#)!

[MOUSE POINTS](#)

Our rewards program! Every purchase brings you points. Sign up. Refer a friend.

[USEFUL TECHNIQUES](#)

Tried and true techniques that you'll find in *Churchmouse Classics* patterns.

[FAQS](#)

A collection of our most frequently asked questions, sorted by category.

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