



Sue & Rhonda 2017 International Quilt Market, Houston TX

Due to the pandemic, I have not seen Sue O'Very-Pruitt in over a year. Luckily I found a pic of us in Sue's International Quilt Market booth from 2017. I have always enjoyed Sue's effervescent personality and dedication to her customers. I adore her delightful designs. In fact, one of her machine embroidery designs, The Sewing Sisterhood, was featured on the cover of SCHMETZ Inspired to Sew #14. That was 2015.

https://issuu.com/schmetzneedles/docs/its-feb15?fr=sNzJiZTE3NTM3

Until this interview written by Rita Farro, I had no idea of Sue's sweeping experience. Sue's creative life has evolved from costuming at Busch Gardens to leather design in China to Inthe-Hoop machine embroidery to designing for home sewing and being a YouTube star. Being successful takes discipline, business acumen, savvy, and creativity. Sue's got it all! Plus Sue found true love in her dear Joey. She's a newlywed! Congratulations to the new couple. We appreciate the peek at Sue's (or as Joey affectionately calls her, Sookie's) awesome wedding dress!

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Rhonda Pierce

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Cover: Sue's EZ Point & Turner

Story by: Rita Farro

https://ritassewfun.blogspot.com/

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Sue OVery-Pruitt



Sewing, Embroidery, & Notion Reviews





Sookie Sews with LAURASTAR.

Sue O'Very-Pruitt

If the sewing industry had its own dictionary, when you looked up the word "multi-tasker," you would see a picture of Sue O'Very-Pruitt. When asked to describe her business, Sue says, I am a BERNINA Ambassador, Aurifil thread designer, Daylight Company Ambassador, LAURASTAR Ambassador, Craftsy Instructor, Oliso partner, published author, notion junkie, sewing and In-the-Hoop pattern designer, teacher, YouTuber, blogger, and artist.

So, how did this energetic young Floridian become such a busy sewing entrepreneur?

Sue started sewing when she was six years old, and by the time she was in high school, she was sewing garments for the women at church. She graduated from college with a degree in fashion design and began her career as a costume designer at Busch Gardens in Tampa, FL. After working for six years as a costume designer (in the theme park and on cruise ships), she started working at a local quilt shop as a store manager, teacher, and salesperson. She discovered she enjoyed teaching. She began her first pattern line in 2004, under the original brand name, **Sealed With A Stitch™**. Her dad, who was a tech teacher, helped produce video instruction along with In-the-Hoop machine embroidery designs on DVDs. Nancy's Notions sold them through their catalog.

In 2005, she landed a job as a designer in the leather industry. She was the Creative Director for a large leather manufacturer, managing a team in the US and in their China factory. In two years, I went to China 22 times. We designed all the cell phone cases for Verizon, small leather goods for Hartmann Luggage, Tumi, Nautica, and several other big names. It was the coolest job but the travel was brutal.





My Double Designer Dress form video from Sookie Sews.

She left China to get back to her home in Florida, becoming a tech designer for VF Imagewear (now Fanatics). She was on the Harley Davidson ladieswear team. It was such fun and I made lifetime friendships with some talented designers, sewists, and many of my coworkers from that job are still some of my closest friends.

After Sue's daughter Heidi was born in 2009, she left the corporate world to be a mom-preneur, a female business owner who is actively balancing the role of mom and the role of entrepreneur. She returned to her true passion, the home sewing industry and re-started her business **Sealed With A Stitch**™.

She began teaching locally and saw a need for In-the-Hoop embroidery designs with clear instruction. She soon became an expert in the field and was invited to write articles for Designs in Machine Embroidery, Creative Machine Embroidery, Sew News, and more. She traveled nationwide teaching, vending at shows, and focused on new ways to push the machine embroidery envelope.

Sue was all about teaching, developing new designs, writing instructions then creating video content to support her merchandise. Nothing delights her more than when her students remark about what a hard worker she is. I was raised by two of the hardest-working people in the world. My Mom was a secretary and then a stay-at-home Mom. She was raised on a dairy farm in upstate NY, so she was by nature a very hard worker, but she never complained. My dad was a schoolteacher, specifically focusing on tech, eventually becoming the lead admin for magnet schools in the Tampa Bay area. Dad took great pride in his work.





Sue wearing a wig standing next to one of her dresses from the Busch Gardens
Christmas show 1996.



Santa Baby Costumes Sue made from Busch Gardens Christmas Show 2000.



Costumes Sue made from Busch Gardens Christmas show 2000.

Influenced by her father's love of all-things-technical, Sue was always an early adopter of new technology. She wrote her instructions, then created DVD's to support her designs and patterns. In 2010, she made two videos: "Doing More with Your FEET" and "Doing More with Your SERGER." Those two videos sold over 20,000 copies.

In 2014, Sue created a Craftsy class, In-the-Hoop Gifts, which has been watched by over 2000 students worldwide. This class features several hours of video instruction and the opportunity to complete five adorable projects.

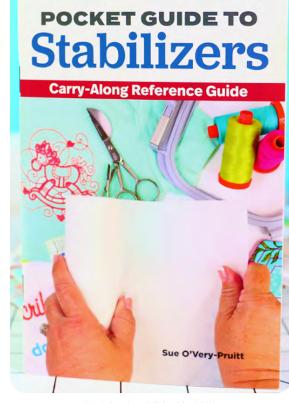
Sue rebranded to Sue O'Very Designs in 2015 and niched down on In-the-Hoop projects since these were what customers seemed to enjoy the most. As of December 2020, she has over 200 In-the-Hoop collections, nearly 100 embroidery design sets, and 40 sewing patterns in her line.

In 2018 Sue partnered with Famore Cutlery and reimaged a notion designed in the 1970s and introduced it at Fall Market that same year. The EZ Point & Turner has so many uses but it is best known for turning things right side out with ease.

Moving her content to the internet was an easy fit for Sue. She created her own website, and it was only a matter of time before she became a prolific YouTuber posting over 200 videos, exceeding one million views with 20,000 subscribers, and growing. Each week I produce 1-2 new instructional videos on sewing, machine embroidery, and notion reviews. Some of my most popular videos are from the notion series, "Does this Notion REALLY Work?" Even though I still do notion review videos, I've changed it up a bit from a simple unboxing to showing how the notions truly fit into my life and exactly how I use them. I still enjoy partnering with a brand, such as







Sue's product covers over the years.

Sue's book published in 2020.

SCHMETZ, because then we can offer a giveaway and viewers love the chance to win a cool notion.

Sue is a natural in front of a camera, and she gets better all the time. Her bubbly personality and energy combined with her excellent knowledge of her subject matter makes you feel like a friend has come into your home and is teaching you how to sew.

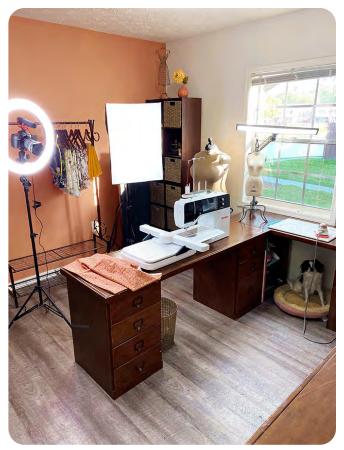
After the lockdown in April 2020, all my events and speaking engagements were canceled. I was nearing the 10k mark on YouTube and decided to have a 10k celebration with 10 basic sewing projects and lots of giveaways for my fans. They loved it and it gave them something to sew for fun with scraps and stuff they already had in their house. I had over 30 wonderful giveaway sponsors and it was great fun. In those 10 videos, I included projects that were ideal for beginner sewers and it really showed me there was a need for easy sewing projects with clear instruction. I've been teaching for 20 years. Unfortunately, YouTube is often a place where beginners are teaching

beginners. My goal with teaching beginner sewers compared to other YouTubers is I want to teach the viewer how to do it RIGHT the first time. So many YouTubers are new themselves and they don't understand some very basic techniques. Most of the time, doing it right will actually save time!

In September 2020 Sue introduced her book, **Pocket Guide to Stabilizers**. With over 50 pages packed with tricks, tips, and even a quick reference chart to selecting the right stabilizer for the right fabric every time.

In early 2021, Sue is launching another new book called **Pocket Guide to Notions**. In this one-of-a-kind reference guide, Sue covers hundreds of notions, some, you might have never heard of before. She features specialty notions created by independent designers like herself. The idea of a notion is that the tool makes







Sue's sewing studio and set.

a particular technique easier to achieve. Because of this, the beginner and seasoned sewist will enjoy using it in their sewing room. The book is organized in sewing categories, such as quilting, sewing, hand embroidery, machine embroidery, and more. Stay tuned, it's going to be amazing!

On October 10, 2020, Sue married her best friend, Joey. She says, I found my human. Joey's nickname for Sue is Sookie Bee and she calls him Bear. I love my nickname; it suits me so well. Sometimes he'll call me Bee, other times Sookie, and my hands down favorite is when he calls me both, Sookie Bee. Even our karaoke friends smile when shouting out Sookie as I walk towards the stage to sing.

While making her wedding dress, her passion for garment sewing was reignited. All these great memories of sewing flooded her head and the idea of teaching those tricks she's learned and developed over the past 20+ years was exciting. The closer she

was working with her husband Joey, aka Bear, on the business, she felt this was the perfect time to rebrand from Sue O'Very Designs to Sookie Sews. Sue says the bee in the logo has two meanings, one, Sookie Bee (her nickname) and second, to pay homage to the time-old term, Sewing Bee, a group who gather socially to sew with one another. Sue even refers to her fans as Sewing Bees and they especially love it mostly because of the special meaning behind it. My focus has primarily been machine embroidery for the past 10 years but now I'm enjoying creating beginner sewing content and sprinkle in machine embroidery and notion reviews. My exact tagline is, I provide expert guidance for Sewing, Machine Embroidery, and Notion Reviews. Joey works with Sue part time, doing graphics and video production. With the company's new direction, Sue plans to focus on increased influence on YouTube and a new line of garment patterns to give beginners the confidence to sew.





Sue, Joey, and Kiwi, their Japanese Chin, on the beach getting married.

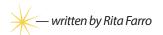
Producing one or two videos each week, you might wonder where she gets all her ideas for new content. The truth is, that has NEVER BEEN Sue's problem. As a matter of fact, she keeps a list of video ideas in a journal, and she always has over 100 topics to choose from! She has a very engaged Facebook Fan club, and she often asks them for input and feedback.

The Sookie Sews video studio is right in their dining and living rooms. They have two cameras, several tripods, and multiple lights. They plan and script the videos, often working from an outline. Once filming is complete, they set up the video in editing software and layer in graphics, music, and B-Roll (that is the extra video you see when Sue is talking, basically not her face).

When asked what advice she would give to other sewing entrepreneurs, Sue says, When you work for yourself you've got to be laser-focused, determined to stay on task, block out distractions,

and have the end goal in sight. There is no one over your shoulder telling you to do your work, so you must be your own enforcer. I'm fortunate to have an incredibly supportive husband and finally a true life partner who gets me. I also surround myself (online of course) with fellow designers and small business owners who understand the struggles and love supporting one another. I also have a wonderful handful of mentors who I will reach out to when I need a bump in the right direction.

The advice my father gave me when I went off to college is still in my head: Do what you love because for the next 50 years you've got to wake up and do it every day.





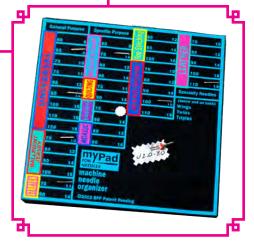




My hands-down favorite needle is the Topstitch 80/12. It works beautifully for machine embroidery, especially through vinyls and cork material which I use often. I also store my needles in the Grabbit® myPad™ to keep track of used ones.

Sue O'Very-Pruitt









Grabbit® Magnetic Pincushion from SCHMETZ video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oS1k3CyoNDs

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