



Designer Profile:
VIKKI STEWART OF SEW USEFUL DESIGNS

1. *When did you first begin your adventure with needle and thread? What prompted it?*

I have always been a creative soul but my love affair with fabrics began eight years ago when I discovered a cloth doll pattern in a UK craft catalogue. Living in England at the time, with a real thirst for some alternative crafts, I promptly sent away for the kit. At the time I didn't even know what a fat quarter was! I discovered that doll-making wasn't popular in the UK, and therefore I sourced patterns on-line and purchased them from the US. When I moved to Australia five years ago, I couldn't believe my luck when I discovered all the patchwork stores, craft publications, and designers here! I had hit the jackpot! The whole craft scene in this amazing country helped me to settle in to a new way of life.

2. *What other crafts do you enjoy and is there a reason that patchwork is your favourite?*

I am an avid doll-maker and joined the Australian Cloth Doll Association a couple of years ago; the members are so incredibly inspiring. I also enjoy decorative painting and attended classes with the fabulous Kerryanne English of Woodberry Designs, until she recently moved interstate. But most of all I love to sew, whether it is by hand or by machine. I can't explain it - I'm just addicted!

3. *What is your most useful crafty tool?*

A needle-threader! I have little patience when it comes to threading needles, and this little gadget has saved me a lot of time and money. I no longer commit my coins to the swear jar!!

4. *What is your favourite crafting technique and why?*

Stitching... It relaxes and soothes me, and I love its portability. It's a very sociable craft - I love that I can interactively 'play' with my four year-old daughter while stitching at the same time.

5. Where do you get your inspiration from?

My inspiration comes from wanting to please the people I love. I enjoy thinking about their likes, their interests, and then design something bespoke so that they know they have been really thought about. It's the thought that counts, right?!

6. What comes first the fabric or the design for you?

The design always comes first and then I go fabric shopping. But on my shopping expeditions I always buy additional fabric for 'future projects' which always seem to remain 'future projects' because I go out again and buy fabric for the next thing I've designed. Hmmm... it would seem I go around in circles!!

7. What do you enjoy doing when you're not crafting?

If I am not crafting, I love to read about it! I am a craft-magazine addict! I also love to read fantasy novels. It is difficult to think of anything I love more than crafting - with the exception of my family!

8. Who is your favourite designer?

I have many favourites including Lynette Anderson of *Lynette Anderson Designs*, Barri Sue Gaudet of *Bareroots* and Kellie Wulfsohn of *Don't Look Now!* There are so many it would be impossible to list them all here.

9. Tell us one random thing about you? (something non-craft related)

I enjoy watching Barbie movies even without children around. In fact, I used to watch them on a daily basis when pregnant with my daughter while my son was at school. Oh dear... should I have admitted to that? <giggle>

10. What is your best Tip?

If you are unsure about a fabric choice, a design element, or anything else that isn't "sitting right" for you... put it down for a day or two. You will see it with new eyes when you pick it up again. I also say - go with your intuition - it's your inner truth.