“Amish Color Play”
Block of the Month, September 2014

By Wynn Martin & Jeanne LaMoore

As discussed at recent meetings, Jeanne and I have planned out a 9-month calendar of blocks, which will include a mixture of technique, seasonal, and easy to sew blocks. All of our blocks this year will be 12 ½” (12” finished) so you might choose to keep a block for yourself and create a sample quilt at year-end.

This first block may look simple but there are three techniques worth practicing: color selection, precision matching and choice of quilt style.

**Color Selection**: Each block will have just 3 colors. The background will be solid black. The second color is grass green, which can be solid or tone on tone. The final color will be a bold, deep tone which each contributor can choose. For example, think about royal blue, ruby red or cheddar yellow. These are not bright, neon colors but deep saturated tones in solid color, not tone on tone.

**Quilt style**: Our style this month is “Amish Modern.” The Amish influence is easy to see with the use of a solid black background, a simple block style and the use of dark jewel-tone colors. The “modern” influence is the use of the offset design placement of the block and the addition of the triangle at the lower right corner. With modern we have added that spirit of “anything goes” to the block design.

**Precision-matching** is always part of the process as we sew the blocks together. To simplify the process, we will work with 2 ½” fabric strips to create the block, with the exception of the triangle, which will be cut from a larger square.

**Cutting instructions:**
1. Black fabric: Cut 2 ½” strips of solid black to the following lengths:
   - 12 1/2” (1)
   - 10 ½” (1)
   - 8 ½” (3)
   - 6 ½” (1)
   - 2 ½” x 2 ½” (4)
2. Green fabric: cut (3) blocks of 2 ½ x 2 ½” plus one block of 4 5/8”
3. Jewel-tone solid (your color choice): Cut (3) blocks of 2 ½” x 2 ½”

**Sewing directions:**
1. Begin by creating the nine-patch block center, using four black, three green and two of your third color (blue is shown in the example). Create strips of three blocks and then sew the three rows together, being careful to match the seams.
2. Attach the 6 ½” black strip to the right edge of the 9-patch.
3. Attach a 8 ½” black strip to the bottom edge of the 9-patch.
4. Attach a 8 ½” black strip to the left edge of the 9-patch.
5. Attach a 2 ½” square of your jewel-tone color to the remaining 8 ½” strip. We used a blue square in the example. Sew this section to the top edge of your block, being careful to match the seams so that the blue squares are perfectly aligned.
6. Attach a 10 2/3” strip of black fabric to the left hand edge of the block.
7. Attach the 12 ½” strip of black fabric to the top edge of the block.
8. Take the remaining 4 5/8” block of green fabric and place it against the lower right corner of the larger block with right side together. Use a pencil to draw a seamline on the green fabric as shown. The seam will run diagonally across the green block, being careful to match against the bottom right corner of the 9-patch and also be 4 ½” in from the bottom right corner of the block on each side.
9. After sewing the diagonal seam, cut away the excess fabric and press the final triangle in place.
10. Trim the entire block as necessary to create a finished 12 ½” block.

I’ve combined several blocks together to show how the finished quilt might look. This quilt uses 16 blocks, arranged in a fashion that matches each triangle corner against its companions. If the triangles don’t match perfectly, you can choose to add a separator strip between the blocks. It’s an easy solution when working with blocks created by several contributors. Other block arrangements could also be chosen.

**BOM basics:**

Each person may enter up to three blocks each month. Please include your name on your block(s)! Many of us just use a mailing label. If you have nice scraps left over, consider including them with your block (pinned on or in a baggie) for the winner to use in a border or other finishing touches. If you cannot bring the blocks to the quilt meeting, you can mail them to the MQ office. Please allow adequate time for them to arrive before the Saturday drawing.

Address to: Block of the Month, Minnesota Quilters, Inc., 1203 Fifth St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414

We will hold two drawings each month; the first on Thursday night and the second at Saturday’s meeting. To help us celebrate more winners, we will draw two names if we have over 24 blocks (3 if we have 36+, 4 if we have 48+). If the winner(s) are not present, the blocks will either be mailed or left at the MQ office for the winner to pick up. We will call to notify winners.