

The Handmade Home by Danielle Wilkes



An Interview with one of our very own! Janome Freelance Educator, Danielle Wilkes, grabbed a copy of her friend and co-educator Erin Schlosser's book *Sew Home* and couldn't wait to make something. Hear about the project Danielle made and the machine features that saved her from a near disaster when she decided to sew with knit instead of quilting cotton. There is also a brief interview with Erin about the machine features, feet, and models that made her projects come together without much fuss.

As it just so happens, Erin Schlosser has written a book that is so perfectly timed as I just so happen to be decorating my freshly built house! The projects in this book are fresh, modern, and they are projects I really want to make! When I first saw *Sew Home* by Erin Schlosser, I flipped through the projects and was shocked not just at how many projects are in the book but also at how many I want to make for myself and for my friends. There truly is a project in here for every home!



Right away, I knew I had to make the Floral Bath Mat.

The pattern clearly states that you start with a piece of quilting cotton for the appliqué base. I started with knit because it was what I had. Have you ever appliquéd on knit? This was my first time, and my Janome Skyline S7 was a tremendous help because of the AcuFeed foot! AcuFeed is Janome's dual feed, box-feed system that moves the layers through the machine without incident using the feed dogs AND the upper feed system. In fact, I don't think I had to seam rip one single time, which is so rare for me. After this project (and a recent foray into apparel sewing with knits), I can tell you that I will always have a machine that has AcuFeed because it saved my project!



One of the reasons this project was so fun was because I used a variety of techniques. I used a satin stitch for appliqué while using the pivot function. This was so handy because the needle stays down, but the foot comes up when you stop sewing. Fortunately, it gives you the opportunity to easily adjust your project so that you can continue to guide it smoothly through the machine.



The convertible free-motion foot was another prayer answered in this project. I tend to get a little impatient at times, and I was quickly ready to try some other techniques rather than just satin stitching the whole project. I ended up doing some free motion quilting to raw edge applique my flowers to the knit. Because that foot is height-adjustable, I was able to set it perfectly so that I wasn't dragging on the knit, and because it doesn't hop, my stitches ended up looking pretty amazing for quilting on such a stretchy fabric.

After making this project and feeling so proud, I had to call Erin, fellow Janome educator to tell her what I had done! Catch a little bit of my conversation with Erin regarding her book and the machine features and questions I had for her.

Erin, I had so much fun with the Floral Bath Mat project in your book, and the features on the Skyline S7 made it a breeze. Can someone with an intro-level machine make these projects? Which projects are best suited for a beginner machine model?

Absolutely! Any of these projects can be sewn on a variety of sewing machines! Sometimes features (like auto-foot lift for applique) will make the project go more quickly, but any of these projects could be sewn on an intro level machine!

How would a higher end machine help me? What kind of projects really need a fancy machine?

While all the projects could be sewn on a basic machine, having a higher end machine would be great to add personal touches to the projects! You could add monogramming to the napkins, or do a gorgeous monochromatic embroidered design to make into a Pendant light! Even some long flowing drapes with a medallion embroidered on it would make your space look like a million bucks!

What a great idea. The Skyline S9 has the same sewing features as the S7, but it also has embroidery capability. That might be my next machine! As for my machine, though, AcuFeed might be my favorite machine feature that saved my project from being a disaster when I didn't follow the directions and used knit! What accessories/features/feet were the most helpful when you made all these samples?

Having a walking foot or built-in acufeed foot was very helpful for the window treatments and some of the storage solutions. I also used the blind hem foot, concealed zipper foot, and rolled hem foot quite a bit on the projects.

Great information! Now I better order that concealed zipper foot for future projects in this machine— I think I have the other two. What machine do you use, and why did you choose it to make these projects?

For the projects in this book I used machines from the Janome Skyline series, as well as my super speedy straight stitch machine, the 1600p. I LOVE that machine! There are several projects like the clock and outdoor art that would be even easier to complete by using the Artistic Edge too!

Erin, I agree 100%. The Skylines! I feel like I waited my whole life for that perfect combination of features to appear in a machine in that price point with that level of quality that Janome consistently delivers. And once again, thank you for your time, for writing this book for me and everyone else who has a home that needs some handmade touches.