

## **READY, SET, KNIT**

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Color Work Series: Workshop II

### **The Dreaded Intarsia, part 1**

#### Intarsia...Love it or Hate it!

Many knitters tremble when they hear the word Intarsia, but those of us who love it find that it satisfies a deep-seated need to knit something challenging and very special and then to create order out of chaos during the finishing process. Intarsia is not done when it comes off the needles like most other knitting; there is much neatening to do before the piece is wearable. As in most knitting, it is the finishing that makes the difference between “homemade” and “handmade”; with Intarsia it just takes a bit longer.

Sally Melville in *The Knitting Experience: Book 3*, states that Intarsia knitting “can be the most artistic, the most imaginative, the most impressive knitting that we do”. I wholeheartedly concur! Lucy Neatby, in her video *Intarsia Untangled*, which I highly recommend, describes Intarsia as a very liberating technique because it frees the knitter from the linear demands of regular knitting. With Intarsia, you can create almost any shape you wish while using as many colors as you wish. Intarsia, or Jacquard as it is sometimes called, is like painting with yarn.

Intarsia knitting requires time, attention, concentration and patience. It is not the kind of knitting that you should do for long periods of time. Work on it for an hour or so, neaten up the back, and go on to something else.

Before we go any further with Intarsia, I thought it would be useful to explain the differences between Intarsia and the stranded technique we used for the Bird in Hand Mittens.

#### Intarsia Knitting

Best done on straight needles to help with tangling issues; does not lend itself to circular knitting.

Designs can be vertical, diagonal, or horizontal.

Produces a single thickness fabric; each color block has a different yarn source and no yarn is carried across the back of the work. Ends are worked around each color block to produce a stockinette fabric.

#### Stranded Knitting

Can be done on circular needles or straight needles, but stranding is easiest worked in the round.

Primarily horizontal.

Produces a double thickness fabric due to the fact that the yarn is carried across the back of the work. Strands carried across more than 5 stitches are trapped at intervals to prevent long loops. The back of the fabric has a woven look.

Does not change your gauge.

Many colors can be worked in every row.

Worked with 2 needles in the usual way.

Pulls in the gauge.

Generally limited to 2 colors per row.

Worked with one yarn strand in each hand. Right hand knits in the English manner, left hand works in the Continental way.