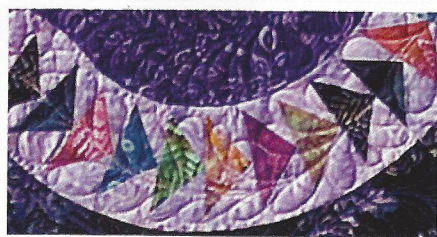


# Stargazing

Maureen Miller's many years of admiration for Judy Niemeyer's designs inspired her to start teaching them herself.

By Elizabeth New



Family-run business Judy Niemeyer Quilting has been a front-runner in teaching techniques since its inception in 1996. Rather than focusing on blocks of the month in her designs, Judy teaches Techniques of the Month (TOM), so that upon completing one design – usually the Glacier Star – students are comfortable tackling any of Judy's other patterns.

Famous for making intricate patterns achievable, Judy's foundation paper-piecing techniques were, until this year, only taught in the USA and Canada. However, a support network for quilters attempting Judy's designs in Australia has sprung up and includes 30 shops spread across the country.

Owner and manager of Palm Beach Quilting Maureen Miller was thrilled when the opportunity arose to become a Judy Niemeyer certified quilt teacher. "I already loved Judy's patterns, so to become a certified shop is a dream come true," Maureen beams. "Owning a relatively new patchwork shop, I couldn't wait to be a part of this new venture in Australia."

Being accepted into Judy's rigorous course was important to Maureen as it was the only way she could stock Judy's

patterns and fabric, let alone teach the techniques. Although excited to add to her repertoire, Maureen had no idea how intense the course, run by wholesaler Victorian Textiles in Melbourne in November 2012, would be. "It was full on," Maureen explains. "We were first given the pattern and 15 metres of fabric, which we had to divide into the requirements for each of the six new techniques we were about to learn."

At least one new technique of Glacier Star was learnt every day of the four-day program, while the evenings consisted of preparing for the next day's schedule. Maureen remembers heading home after the 10 hour days exhausted but buzzing. "After sorting out the household when I got home, it was back to the sewing machine until 1am," she relates. "Luckily for them, my students get to do this over seven months!"

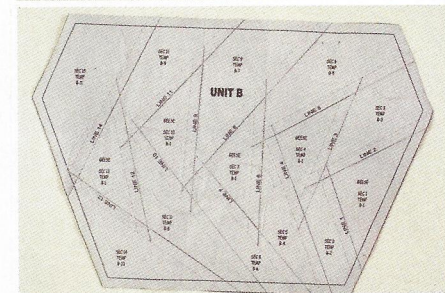
Not only did Judy explain the techniques to the prospective tutors, she also explained how to teach them and presented and detailed her international program and network. Thanks to the informative hands-on course, Maureen learnt handy hints that she shares in her own classes. Having at first found the Feathered Star technique particularly



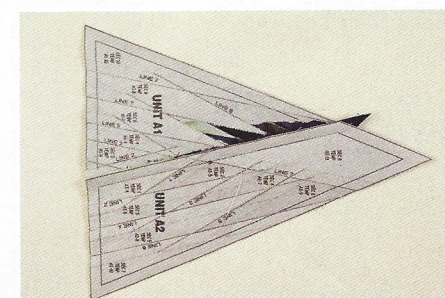








Judy's templates make piecing the border curves easy as the hard part is already done..



Judy's foundation paper-piecing allows less confident patchworkers to achieve intricate designs that other techniques don't allow.



Maureen found the Feathered Star the most difficult block of the Glacier Star, it only took a second try for the technique to fall into place.

difficult, Maureen understood the secrets to the piecing when she made it the second time around. "When you participate in a class, you will be taught all the tricks of the trade, so to speak, which will make life easier," she assures.

A highlight of the course was when Judy praised Maureen's work. "She looked at it so carefully, I was thinking to myself 'Oh no, don't look too close'," Maureen recalls. "Her comment was, 'You have some top-class sewing happening there.'" Thrilled at Judy's compliment, Maureen found her confidence boost immediately. Seeing the effectiveness of Judy's teaching, she incorporates the ideas into her own lessons. "Judy kept telling us to make mistakes so she could teach us how to fix them," Maureen states. "Well, I think everyone in the class made a mistake of some kind so we all learnt a lot!"

At Palm Beach Quilting, Maureen teaches monthly classes on different Judy Niemeyer Quilts, including Glacier Star, Waterfalls and Stepping Stones. Although it's not necessary to be a certified

instructor to teach all Judy's designs, only certified stores are supplied with Glacier Star patterns, fabrics and kits. "Once you complete the Glacier Star quilt," Maureen assures, "you will be able to complete any of Judy's patterns." It's the combination of a variety of techniques, the structured program and the beautiful outcome that make Glacier Star a wonderful entry point into Judy Niemeyer's world and Maureen looks forward to continuing the journey for herself and her students.

"I would just like to mention one warning," Maureen concludes. "Paper-piecing is an addiction."

Although all Maureen's Judy Niemeyer TOM classes are currently full, new courses start as soon as the current ones finish. Contact Palm Beach Quilting on (03) 9775 1601 to book your place, or visit [www.palmbeachquilting.com.au](http://www.palmbeachquilting.com.au) for more information.