

KATHY ADAMS



Quilting is a part of every aspect of Kathy Adams' life. Here she shares her experiences as a quilter in both business and pleasure.

Story by Rebecca Ware

Kathy Adams has come a long way since her first quilt. "I saw an article in a lifestyle magazine entitled 'Make a quilt in a weekend,'" she says. "It was a Log-Cabin design and I thought that it looked pretty easy but I did everything wrong!" Like many first-time quilters, Kathy made a few mistakes including using scissors to cut the strips, choosing cheap polyester fabrics and not measuring anything correctly. The quilt, which was supposed to be an easy weekend task, ended up taking a little longer, and

Kathy admits that the end result was less than pretty. But judging by her recent quilting creations, the experience didn't deter her from the world of quilting for long. "At a guess, I would have made about 20 large bed quilts and probably about 50 smaller quilted items such as bags, wall-hangings, runners and the like," she lists.

It was an inspiring teacher that re-sparked the stitching bug in Kathy. "I was blown away by the friendliness of the teacher, the shop owner, and the other students," she recalls fondly. "The teacher was Deirdre Abel and







she was so kind and encouraging, and it was this initial taste of the generosity and sharing of the quilting world that had me completely hooked," she says. After this wonderful impression, Kathy has expanded both her technical skills and her variation in styles and says she is now well and truly addicted to patchwork.

Despite such progress, those simple quilts that ignited her love of quilting still hold a special place in her heart. "I still love traditional block designs like Log Cabins," she says. "The main difference now would be that fabric choice is my number one concern." The effect of colours and patterns, along with the quality of materials is central to her projects. "I also love making contemporary and art quilts, so my design choices are quite varied," she adds.

Living in Toowoomba has proved essential in getting Kathy's creative juices flowing. "Quilting is very popular here, and there are several quilting clubs in the region," she explains. At the moment, she calls the Queensland Quilters, the Guild of NSW, and Toowoomba Quilters Club home and it is through these groups that she has made many wonderful patchwork friends. "It's great fun to share in the enjoyment of quilting through participating in quilt shows, fundraising, and social activities," she says happily.

Living in a community so involved in the patchwork industry and having the support of her family has allowed Kathy to turn her love of quilting into a business. "My long-arm quilting business, KoolKat Quilting, started five years ago," she recalls.

When Kathy and her husband sold their screen printing business she decided it would be a good idea to keep busy but still work at home. "I had seen ads for the long-arm machines in quilting magazines and it seemed like a wonderful idea," she explains. From there, word-of-mouth among her stitching friends helped Kathy get her business off the ground and now it's unstoppable. KoolKat Quilting takes up a lot of her time but this avid patchworker still makes sure there is enough time for her own projects. "My time spent on the long-arm and embroidery machines is usually about 35 hours a week, and for my own sewing and quilting, it varies from about five to 10 hours, usually on weekends," she recounts.

While she spends a lot of time on the sewing machine working on both her own designs and other quilter's creations, she says time with her family has not been sacrificed. "I get tremendous support from my family who are interested in what I do, and help out when they can," she explains. At the moment it is she and her husband who live at home, plus one other family member who isn't too happy with her chosen creative occupation. "We have one very spoiled Burmese cat," she laughs. "He is the one who gets most upset if I work a longer day than usual as he's not allowed in the sewing room because he sheds fur on everything!"

For Kathy, one thing that is a must each year is escaping the sewing room to go on quilter's retreats. "When I get the chance, I love to go to a quilter's retreat or participate in a weekend workshop," she says. "To me, these days away are the answer to a busy stitcher's prayers!" Getting out of the workroom is not only a time to relax, but it can also inspire new, interesting designs for future projects. "My quilts are designed from scratch now, and I often use my own photographs or quirky cartoon-like drawings," she explains. "Although it's harder to be original than it is to copy, I feel that creatively I am coming into a really rewarding place." For inspiration, Kathy usually turns to classic designs such as the Art Nouveau period and other forms of craft such as stained glass.

Every aspect of her life is now integrated into quilting and with her designs only getting better with time, this lover of stitching couldn't be happier. "My husband encourages me to make time for designing my own quilts," she acknowledges. "Not every project will be a success, but every one is a learning process." Her motto is just to keep at it and in the end she always creates pieces she can truly be proud of. As for the future, you can bet there will be many more projects to come. "I can't think of many aspects of my life that won't involve patchwork and quilting," she confesses. "I am well and truly hooked, and there are so many quilts still to make, quilt people to meet, and quilt places to go."

Kathy Adams provides a long-arm quilting service through her business, KoolKat Quilting and she can be contacted on (07) 4696 8746 or via email koolkatquilting@optusnet.com.au 🐾

