

Simply Socks Yarn Co.

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What's in this issue?

Page 1.... New Year, New Yarn

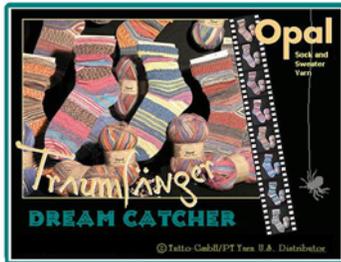
Page 2.... Interview with Buffy Taylor of Shelridge Farms

Pages 3&4... Interview cont.

Page 5.... 2005s 10 Best Picks for FREE Sock Patterns

New Year, New Yarn @ SSYC

The new year brings lots of new goodies at Simply Socks Yarn Company. Just in, Opal's newest collection, **Dreamcatcher**. This fun self-patterning collection is now available in the US in 8 colors.



Also now available again is Opal's **Rainforest Collection**. This popular line of sock yarn includes our most popular sock yarn, **Tiger**.



And if you can wait until spring, you can expect an entire line of the popular **Petticoat** style of Opal sock yarn to be added to the one Petticoat yarn currently available.

More Fleece Artist merino colors were recently added to Simply Socks Yarn Company. Renaissance, Melon, Autumn, and Rose Garden are now available along with several dozen other hand painted Fleece Artist colorways.

And to top off our new offerings, we will receive our latest shipment from Interlacements Yarns at the end of January. Interlacements' hand dyed Toasty Toes collection is great for warm, DK weight merino wool socks.

Where'd That Yarn GO ?

Simply Socks Yarn Company only posts on the website the yarns we actually have in stock. What's this mean for you? It means that if you see yarn you like, it can be in your home in just a few days. It also means that, once in awhile, SSYC runs out of yarn and takes it off the website. In most cases, you will notice it back on the site in a week, unless it's no longer available in the US. If you ever have questions about the availability of yarn, just e-mail service@simplysockyarn.com.



Buffy Taylor

Shelridge Farms Yarn

Buffy Taylor shares your love of delicious fiber and knitting. She shares this passion with knitters through her fiber company, Shelridge Farms Yarn. Simply Socks Yarn Company has carried her line of 9 heathered wool/nylon blend Soft Touch Ultra yarn since opening last June. And now, Buffy reveals her insights and love of fiber with us, in this interview.

SSYC: What inspired you to create Shelridge Farms yarn?

BT (Buffy Taylor): I have always been an avid knitter, and also have a B.Sc. degree in agriculture, majoring in Animal Science.

About 15 years ago, we started a small sheep flock, which has gradually grown over the years. I wanted a breed that had good wool characteristics, and finally settled on Polypay. When I checked more closely on the returns that I could receive for selling my fleeces wholesale, I decided that I would try to marry my two passions of knitting and working with livestock. I started out small, with just a DK line, and have gradually expanded over the years. Although I still keep sheep (we breed about 50 ewes per year, and raise about 110 lambs), I now buy raw wool from a number of different sources to supplement my own. I get the yarn spun in a few different mills in the U.S. and Canada, but I do all of the other operations including dyeing, skein winding, kit assembly, etc.

SSYC: What do you like most about your job/business? What gives you the most satisfaction?

BT: I would probably say the variation. I enjoy working with the sheep, but I also enjoy working with the customers. The business gives me a chance to travel, and meet new people. Knitters are a great group, and without that contact, the rest may not be quite so enjoyable.

SSYC: Who do you most often knit garments for, yourself or others?

BT: Other than the small amount of knitting that I do for my kids or grandson, virtually all of my knitting is in test-knitting the various patterns that my small group of designers and I develop for my yarn. Between us, we probably develop 5-10 new designs each year, and I try to test knit them all.



SSYC: Many knitters fantasize about taking their obsession a few steps further and making a career out of fiber. What kind of day-to-day activity does your career entail?

BT: Since my business consists of both the sheep and the yarn components, my daily work varies with the season. For most of the year, I have minimal barn chores – probably about 30 minutes per day. The rest of my day, usually 8-10 hours per day and 5-6 days per week, consist of the various operations involved in the wool business. A lot of time is spent in the manufacturing process, including skein winding, dyeing, washing, labeling, kit assembly. I work closely with a small number of designers, and am usually test knitting 1-2 garments at any one time – this is usually after supper, but when there is a push on I sometimes work at this during the day. I also operate the wholesale business which, when I am at home, consists of processing orders.



Buffy & sheep

While this is my normal routine, there are a few special times of the year when the work is quite different. The first is the lambing season, which at our place usually takes place between mid March, and the end of April. This is a very hectic time, and it is not unusual to be in the barn for 15+ hours per day, with occasional all-night sessions. I will sometimes get breaks in between lambings to fill orders or do some knitting, but the needs of the ewes take priority during this critical time.

The other special times are when I am preparing for a show, and away at shows. I do about 6-8 shows per year in the U.S., and 2-4 in Canada. These usually take about 4-5 days per show in travel and attendance. Most are within driving distance, and I can usually talk my husband into taking vacation time to help me out. But I do 1-2 shows per year where I ship in advance, and fly to the show.

So never a dull moment, but a varied schedule. I am lucky that my husband can assist with some of the farm work (harvesting hay, cleaning out the barn, repairs and maintenance, etc.), and he also does most of the accounting/business management functions.



SSYC: How did you learn to knit?

I learned to knit as a child from my mother, but I have picked up much along the way from others, particularly the designers that I work with such as Lucy Neatby, Maureen Mason-Jamieson and Elizabeth Fallone.

SSYC: What are some of your favorite non-fiber related pastimes?

BT: I enjoy the outdoors, and working on the farm, particularly the sheep part of it. I am Canadian, so hockey is a passion – we have season's tickets to our local Major Junior team. I enjoy my family, and now that I am a grandmother, I enjoy spending time with my grandson. I also like traveling, and we usually try to mix a little vacation with business whenever we are away at shows.

SSYC: We all have our favorite sock yarns. If you had to choose one color from you line to knit with for an entire year, which would you choose?

BT: I love multi-colours, but if I had to choose one, it would probably be Cajun Spice from our Heather line. I like the variety of different colours that are in the Cajun Spice, that all seem to come out in different light conditions.



Cajun Spice

SSYC: Why do you think that knitting has seen such a huge increase in devotees in the past 5 years?

BT: That is a good question. I think that there has been a great increase in designers developing patterns that are more contemporary and fun to knit and wear. I think that this attracts the younger people to knit, and once started, create more of a demand for even more patterns that suit them. I certainly agree that there has been an increase however, and you see a younger average age at knitting shows than even five years ago. That is really encouraging.

SSYC: Thanks Buffy! We hope the New Year brings great things from Shelridge Farm. Sock knitters, check out the free sock pattern using Shelridge Farm yarn in the Winter edition of Knitty Magazine at: <http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/PATTpomatomus.html>.



10 Free Sock Patterns from 2005!!!

This past year brought sock knitters lots of free resources on the internet. Below are 10 of 2005s popular free sock patterns.

Falling Leaves, from Knitty

<http://knitty.com/ISSUEfall05/PATTfallingleaves.html>

Pomatomus, from Knitty

<http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/PATTpomatomus.html>

Jaywalker, from MAGknits

<http://magknits.com/Sept05/patterns/jaywalker.htm>

Thuja, from Knitty

<http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/PATTthuja.html>

Eyelet Weave, from Knitnet

<http://www.knitnet.com/sampler/current/toc.htm>
(scroll down to October issue, then page 19)

Fancy Silk Sock, from Knitting Vintage Socks

<http://knitting.about.com/library/weekly/aa091905.htm?nl=1>

Summer Sock Collection, from Spun Magazine

<http://www.spunmag.com/article/050605socks>

Spring Garden Socks, from Cascade Yarns

http://www.cascadeyarns.com/patterns_Free.asp

For Better or for Worse, Cable Top Socks, from Menknit Magazine

<http://www.menknit.net/mag.html>

Fleece Artist Ankle Socks, Simply Socks Yarn Company Blog

http://simplysockyarn.typepad.com/simply_socks_yarn_co/2005/09/ssyc_fall_news.html



Jaywalker Sock