

# Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman



Scott Goodman, owner of Sewing Machine Warehouse & Kneedle.com has been servicing the sewing public since 1976.

## Who Doesn't like a Bargain?

Used machines are part of our embroidery "food chain." Trade-in or resale value helps to justify or underwrite your investment in a new model. A late-model, previously-owned embroidery machine can give great value to embroiderers on a budget, seeking more bang for their buck.

The benefits are obvious:

**The financial benefit of saving money.** These machines cost 30-50% less than their new counterparts.

**The ecological benefit of recycling.**

Secondhand users have smaller carbon footprints and the satisfaction of doing their part in saving our planet.

**Bonuses.** The added benefit of optional enhancements or attachments that might be included in the deal. Sellers of used machines usually include optional gadgets and accouterments, accumulated during their ownership.

Some areas of concern:

### Private Parties

Training from private parties is usually non-existent or dubious. Fee-based training from a knowledgeable dealership raises your cost of ownership and factory warranties are not transferable. A well used and maintained machine can be quite reliable, but its odometer will not reveal how the machine was maintained, stored, or whether the machine has been dropped. Your local authorized dealer knows what to look for.

Insist that the seller "escrow" the machine at a dealership that can verify (for a fee) all is working well. Availability of parts can be challenging (non-existent or expensive) for certain models.

Machines that are barely used or stored improperly can get gummy inside. Synthetic parts may become brittle. The seller may be a family heir, with no actual knowledge of the machine or its history.

Your purchase may not include all of its presser feet, hoops, templates or documentation.

Your local dealer can distinguish the dreams from the nightmares. Because of the relationship created during your transaction, a smart dealer would not/should not resell machines that are unreliable or poor performers. While dealers would like to sell every trade-in, some models are best cannibalized for parts, as some models should never, ever be resold. Repetitive warranty work is costly for your dealer and will diminish your dreams. Your dealer is happiest when you are happy!

### Internet Auction Sites

When I analyze internet auction pricing compared to pricing at local dealerships, machines reconditioned by your local dealer usually sell in the same general price range and will include lessons, support and a warranty. Test driving the machine before you buy is always smart and impossible through the internet. Its feel, sound and your intuition will assure the value of your investment.

Complex embroidery machines should ship well when nestled in their original Styrofoam and corrugated carton. When packed in bubbles, peanuts and crumpled craft paper, all bets are off. The seller will insist that it worked when packed, the parcel shipper will insist that it was not packed correctly and you are left with hassle, inconvenience and maybe a damaged web-auction reputation as a deficient buyer.

## Factory Serviced Models

Premium models are rarely available for resale as “Factory Serviced.” Quality control is higher, dealer support is greater and you, the end user, are more sophisticated. Inexpensive entry-level models sold in bulk to big box stores, internet behemoths and television shopping networks, are returned in bulk for factory refurbishing. Some of these models have never been used, others have been through the mill and have inherent flaws. These models are rarely offered through dealer channels. Purchasing one is like playing Lotto, but with embroidery machines.

## Technology

Just a decade ago (or less) we were offering models that used floppy disks for design transfer. Today, even Compact Flash cards seem archaic. It is virtually impossible to find a computer that will run current embroidery programs and support floppy disks. I am going to go out on the proverbial limb and suggest that WiFi or Bluetooth may, or should be built into the next generation of machines. How about a text from your machine, with emoticons, that notifies you when it is time for a color change, thread break or other status? Are you listening, designers?

## Your Local Dealer

Many of you already have a great relationship with your dealer. At times, Great Scott feels like a trusted beautician, bartender and therapist. If you run across a bargain, share those thoughts with your dealer. You may be advised to jump on it, told what to be wary of, or maybe, offered a better value.

*Something troubling you in your embroidery machine relationship? I will try to “stabilize” the situation and offer a greater understanding that might be mentioned in a future “Best Questions” article. Let’s share. Communicate with me: [GreatScott@kneedle.com](mailto:GreatScott@kneedle.com)*