

Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman



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

Over the next several issues, Great Scott! will extoll the virtues, features, and benefits of all major brands of embroidery sewing machines.

How do I Love Thee... BERNINA

The name BERNINA evokes a strong connection to Switzerland. Swiss chocolate, cheese with holes, cheese without holes, exquisite timepieces and alpenhorn (Ricola...) I imagine a factory, much like Santa's workshop; populated with elves, gnomes and obsessive-compulsive design engineers, crafting incredibly accurate sewing machines.



This obsession with accuracy is recognizable when examining the BERNINA presser foot system. A foot for every task, each with its ankle or shank attached. These feet anchor firmly in place and seem to have less lateral wiggle than other foot systems. Some of BERNINA's feet are coded.

These coded feet politely communicate with certain models. The sewing machine takes on an appropriate behavior based on the attached presser foot.



BERNINA 880, the latest iteration of their flagship 8 Series is quite LARGE, with a 12" space between

the needle and inside arm. The large concept extends to hoop size; the largest single design element field, measuring in at 260mm x 400mm (about 10 1/4" x 15 3/4"). Threading the 8 Series is elegantly simple. Upper thread is eased into a slender slot, concealed within the sleek housing. As thread enters the threading path, sensors activate an instructional video and the needle threading button glows with anticipation, cueing you with the next step. The bobbin is also large, extending time between bobbin changes. The bobbin case is built in, and automatically presents when opening the bobbin access door. The dual feed system or walking foot is integrated and can be fine-tuned to over or under feed, compensating for difficult textiles. Many specialized feet are optimized to function with the dual feed system.

Embroiderers rave about built-in design scalability; virtually unlimited resizing and stitch recalculation, within the machine. The large-format embroidery hoop sports a large tightening knob that is friendly and accessible for aging hands. The embroidery unit is attached on the left side of the machine, leaving access to the free-arm for unusual embroidery placement on challenging projects.

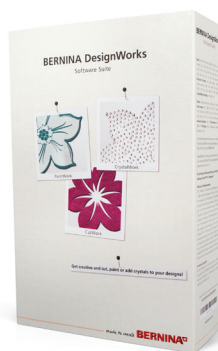
Quilters love BERNINA Stitch Regulation (BSR). BSR uses a unique presser foot holder with interchangeable feet. The foot integrates a laser-like optical sensor that detects fabric movement. Move the fabric and the motor responds, changing speed to maintain a consistent, pre-determined stitch length.



Series 7 BERNINA models are wide-bodies, too. Same high quality construction, without some of the automation. The bobbin is even larger than the 8 Series with capacity to sew, quilt or embroider longer than any other machine.

Series 7 and 8 models feature a display that is located in the middle of the machine, closer to the sewing area, for easy access and actual analog-like knobs for fine-tuning length and width. Buttonhole cutting space and many other stitch options can be tweaked to your heart's content.

BERNINA DesignWorks Software suite is made of three modules: CutWork, PaintWork and CrystalWork. Cutwork extends your creativity by transforming your BERNINA into a die-cut machine. Create beautiful and detailed open work and appliqué in software, transfer the design file to your BERNINA, and cut intricate designs with the included cutwork tool.



The PaintWork tool uses software to create multi-color designs and motifs that can be dyed onto your fabric to create your own unique printed fabrics. Here is how it works: Using design software, you can download, scan or free-hand a design that can be rotated, combined and arrayed. Once your motif file is created in software, a special foot-like attachment that holds a dye pen is affixed. Fabric is placed in the embroidery hoop. The machine accurately moves the fabric under the dye pen which automatically raises and lowers as needed, drawing lines and fills. Like embroidery, the machine will pause for color changes. The pens are available in many colors. The motif and ideas are unlimited.

CrystalWork software is used to create templates for rhinestones. The software will automatically create files from clipart or follow your cues for gem size, color and placement. Template material is placed on parchment cooking paper that is hooped,

a cutting tool (different sizes for different crystals) is placed in the needle holder. Holes are accurately punched in the template. The prepared template is placed in a tray. Rhinestones are swept across, magically populating right side up. Transfer tape is used to lift the finished results for placement onto your project. Multiple templates can be created for gems of different size and color. Beautiful multi-media designs can be created, to consistently overlay crystals on embroidery designs and painted fabrics.

Thinking about upping your embroidery game? Later this year, BERNINA will introduce the E16 professional 16-color embroidery machine. Here is the math: 16 colors x 1,500 stitches per minute, + a slender cylindrical free-arm = amazing, versatile results. The E16 will be a tension free experience as upper thread is metered via Acti-feed and can be manipulated to create luxurious chenille-like embroidery. Caps can be accurately and easily embroidered on a frame with 270° field capability and baby onesies can be embroidered without crying.

BERNINA will soon introduce a long-arm quilting machine in 20" and 24" lengths. Featuring digital numeric tension, an easy threading path, automatic needle threader and the ability to use existing BERNINA feet for creative expression will make this quilting machine a game changer.

BERNINA's best feature is their highly-trained dealer network. New dealers are required to attend three weeks of training on product knowledge, technical skills, software and business operations. Existing dealers are expected to attend the annually-held Bernina University where they receive training on the latest in sewing, quilting, embellishing and embroidery technology.

More product information and a dealer locator can be found at bernina.com.

What have you created on your BERNINA? Send a photo of your creation and I will post it on the Great Scott! Facebook page. Better yet, send Swiss chocolate or cheese with holes to GreatScott@kneedle.com.