

moda

BAKESHOP

Original Recipe



ABC's Quilt by Jen Duncan

Let me start by saying that I never intended to do quilt tutorials on this fabulous Moda blog that I feel very lucky to be a part of. You get plenty of quilt ideas and patterns and instructions elsewhere (and here, too) from quilters more capable than me. But I have a few TIPS and IDEAS that I wanted to share, so follow along, make a quilt, and maybe add something new to your quilt making idea file.

Ingredients:

From the Basic Grey Sultry line:
One honey bun
One charm pack
1 yard Fandango Grunge
1 yard Fandango Elite
1 yard Citron Swell
1 yard Friar Swell
1 yard Citron Classy

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Instructions:

From the Citron Classy cut 25 six inch blocks. These are what you will set your letters on.

From the Fandango Elite cut 18 1.5" strips in the 45" selvage to selvage direction (commonly known as wof for width of fabric).

From the Friar Swell cut 12 1.5" strips in the 45" wof.

From the Citron Swell cut nine 8-inch blocks. Cut these in half on the diagonal for 18 triangles.

Cut your ABC set. There are many ways to do this. You may already have your own method of choice. You may use the method I described [here](#) on the Happy Birthday banner I posted a few months ago. You could even make things a whole lot easier and just buy a set [here](#).



TIP: I drew a 6" square (the size of my block) on a piece of paper, and then drew intersecting lines through it as shown. This gives you a dead center visual on the block so you aren't left solely dependent on *eyeballing* the center placement for each letter. When you've got a lock on the placement, just lift a corner of the block, gently slide out the paper, and then press your letter down (assuming you've backed it with iron-on fabric adhesive). Of course, this wouldn't work so well if using a dark fabric. The TIP for getting all 26 letters in a square is to put two letters on one block. For these on point blocks the I and J fit well together. On regular set blocks I typically put the Y and Z together.

Once all your letters are pressed on the blocks, stitch them down according to your preference. I just LOVE a good blanket stitch, so that's what I always use now. But for years of course I used a tight zigzag. You can use coordinating or contrasting thread. Depends on the look you're going for.

Next attach the Fandango Elite (pink print) strips on all four sides of each block. Using a clear square quilter's rule, square up the ABC blocks to 7.5" (I'll show pics of these two steps on the next block).

Now assemble the 16 pieced "in-between" blocks. Pick 16 five inch squares from the charm pack. Pick random strips from the honey bun and sew to charms as follows

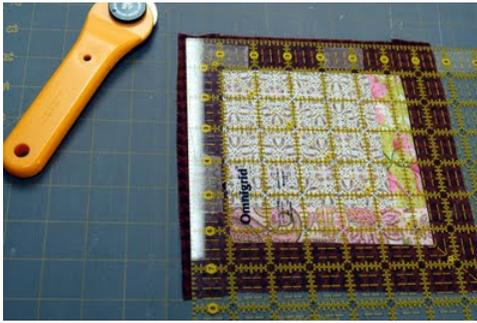


Sew one honey bun strip down one side of a charm square. Trim off flush to edge of square. Fold right side over and then sew a different honey bun strip down the next side. Trim off excess.



Sew the Friar Swell (dark brown) strips around all four edges

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Then square it up to 7.5 inches with the help of a square quilter's ruler

If you do the math, or if you just have a really good eye, you'll see that the blocks and their borders aren't identical in size to each other, even though they are (most importantly) the same 7.5 inches around. I ended up having to cut the 25 letter blocks six inches (before borders) to accommodate the letters I have. The 16 in-between blocks are only 5.5 inches before adding the border, but in the end it all trims out and I think it just adds one more level of interest by being slightly different.



Moving on...

This may be a TIP someone hasn't considered. I wrap a pair of sliding closet doors in inexpensive white fleece. Flannel would work too. This works as my design space. Much cleaner and easier to visualize on than the floor I used for years! I stapled mine on permanently as it's in my own dedicated space but you could make a temporary installation with the use of velcro.



I put all the blocks up on the wall and just take them down one row at a time to sew together. Then just sew each row one to the other. You'll see that two of the green 8 inch triangles were cut in half again, for the four corners.

Now, using an 18 or 24 inch long quilter's ruler, trim the edges down to 1/4 inch from points as shown above. Edge the entire quilt in a one inch border of the dark brown (Friar Swell) after 1/4" seams it will be half an inch). Then edge the entire quilt in a 3.5 inch border of the green (Citron Swell).



(Oh look! It's back on the floor. Old habits...) It looks pretty good as is, right? Well, I have an IDEA that will take it up a notch in an easy and whimsical way. Scallops!

Measure the inner (dark brown) border. This one is just about 50 inches so I thought I'd make it easy on myself and draw ten 5" half circles on each edge. The math was the easy part. Finding a five inch circle (at my house) was the hard part. I finally found a single serving cake pan that worked well. :-)



Try not to approach this part with precision (using a cake pan helps!). An imperfect "sketchy" look really works best. Once you've traced the half circles all the way around, you take it to the sewing machine and sew in a contrasting thread. TIP: use a quilting or darning foot with the feed dogs DOWN. It'll go way faster. Here's what one go around looks like



eh... nothin' to write home about. Here's how it looks after sewing three times around



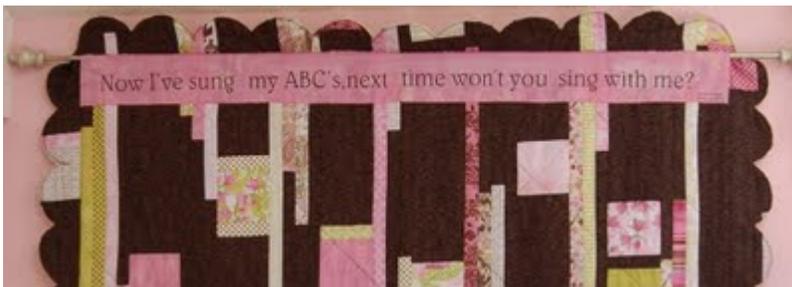
Getting better! Three is actually about all I do on smaller quilts, but these scallops are rather large so I sewed five times around.



You can see that I make a point to sew each line close to each other, but not exactly right on top of each other. Then take your favorite sharp tipped scissors and trim very close to the outermost stitching. Then I wash and dry it to fluff up the raw edge and trim off the resultant loose threads.



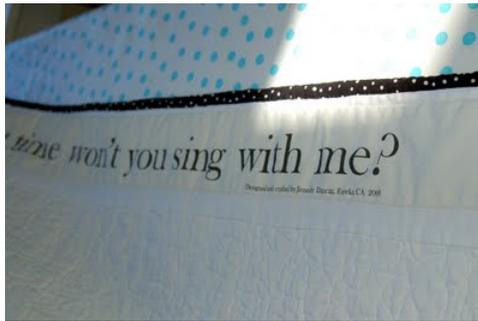
Here is a good close-up of the fabrics used and the finished edge.



One final IDEA I want to share is a way to incorporate your label with a hanging sleeve. Just last year I finally realized the importance of labeling one's quilts, so now I label just about everything I make. On this quilt I figured out the font size I needed for the width of the quilt and printed out the title on iron-on t-shirt transfer paper (buy at any office supply store). I put my name, town and year in a much smaller font at the end of the title.

Wow! You can tell by the glimpse that the back is pretty busy, huh? I threw every leftover bit I had in with two additional yards of brown fabric and worked at piecing it all for a couple of days! Of course it's terribly busy and took a lot of time, but now that I've done it I won't wonder "what if?" anymore. I cropped this tight so you can just look at the labeled hanging sleeve. :-)

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OH. One more way I've done it in the past is to again figure out what size font is appropriate and then print the text on printer fabric. I then pieced the 11 inch (size of paper) runs of text together and applied this onto a larger fabric sleeve.

Yield:

One 55" square ABC quilt.



I hope I've inspired you to make your own ABC quilt, and given you an idea or two that maybe you hadn't thought of before. I think every home with children ought to have at least one of these! It would be a super gift to make, too. I've created a [gallery of ABC quilt ideas](#) on my blog, and still have many ideas I'll be adding as they get made. Have fun with your creativity!

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PS: THANK YOU! to PamKittyMorning for helping me figure out how to upload these pics so that you can click them and see the enlarged versions. whew! Sometimes it just takes someone to say it just the right way. :-) (hint: html)

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