

sew social

The today's answer to the sewing circle, stitch lounges are popping up all over! Here's your chance to connect with people who share a common love of sewing.

by Linda Turner Griepentrog



Sewing is fun, but it's even more fun if you're doing it with others who share the same passion. That's the philosophy of sewing lounges that are springing up around the world. Unlike many of today's other social networks—cell phones, blogs, online chats, instant messaging, facebook and Twitter—going to a sewing lounge involves live personal interaction—a refreshing change of pace.

What is a sewing lounge?

A sewing lounge offers support, inspiration and instruction for sewers and would-be sewers. But don't be fooled by the name—they often include other crafts as well. Most lounges offer not only a social space, but also tools and equipment for use or rental. In sewing lounges, you'll find large cutting surfaces, sewing machines, sergers and possibly industrial equipment. There may be a library of books, DVDs and magazines available for inspiration. Very often, there are sewing products for sale, from notions and tools, to limited fabric selections, and perhaps sewing machines.

Lounges are intended to be less formal, and more social, than typical sewing schools, with some outfitted with sofas, tables, chairs, soft lighting and perhaps even a fireplace for a home-y atmosphere. On the other hand, some have a loft or industrial garment-district feeling with extra-high ceilings, big windows and wide-open spaces.

Then, there are those with a café feeling, offering coffee, tea and other beverages to sip while sewing. One thing is for sure, the décor of the space can be as unique as the offerings.

(continued on page 16)



Modern Domestic



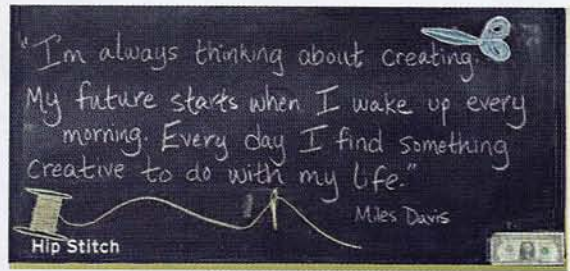
Modern Domestic



Hip Stitch



Hip Stitch



Hip Stitch



Spool of Thread Sewing Lounge



MODERN DOMESTIC
1408 NE Alberta St.
Portland, OR 97211
(503) 808-9910
www.moderndomesticpdx.com



Spool of Thread Sewing Lounge



HIP STITCH
7001 San Antonio NE, suite P
Albuquerque, NM 87109
(505) 821-2739
www.hipstitchabq.com

SPOOL OF THREAD SEWING LOUNGE
101-649 E. 15th St.
Vancouver, BC V5T 2R6
(604) 879-3031
www.spoolofthread.com



Spool of Thread Sewing Lounge



Sassy SEWer



Sassy SEWer

(continued from page 14)

In some, you can book time to work quietly alone; in others you can take structured classes. In some you can attend a lecture by a famous instructor like Sandra Betzina; in others you get practical advice from the person sitting next to you. That being said, most lounges have extensive class offerings taught by qualified instructors. Many focus on sewing classes for beginners or those with intermediate skills; some offer advanced courses in patternmaking, fitting, fashion design, etc. Classes are usually small for optimum learning, and students can request classes or private instruction to meet their interests.

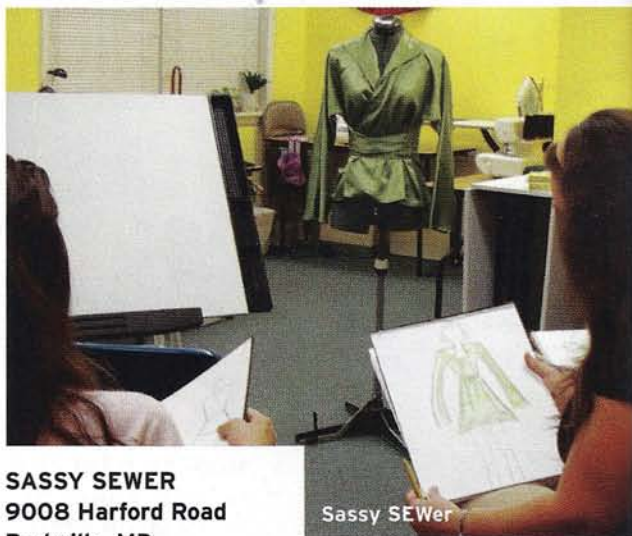
While most lounges focus their efforts on sewing, some take a wider approach to the doing-it-yourself movement and offer classes in fabric printing, knitting/crochet, jewelry making, upholstery and other crafts. Repurposing clothing and refashioning are often on the curriculum as well.

There are some that offer "extra-curricular activities" such as a gallery of student work with the opportunity for sales. Others may offer their facility for private parties (for both kids and adults), trunk shows, "sew-cials" or as a community gathering space.

What's the attraction?

Probably the biggest attraction is the camaraderie of sewing with others who have similar interests—whether it's as a budding designer, a young mom who wants to learn to make kids clothes, or the guy who wants to hem his own jeans. Stitch lounges offer the modern day "sewing circle" where everyone learns from each other.

(continued on page 18)



Sassy SEWer

SASSY SEWER
9008 Harford Road
Parkville, MD
(410) 882-7280
www.sassysewer.com

STITCH LAB
1000 S. 1st St.
Austin, TX 78704
(512) 440-0712
www.glitzkrieg.biz

OUR SEWING ROOM
448 Main St.
Springfield, OR
(541) 225-4857
www.oursewingroom.net



Our Sewing Room



Stitch Lab



Stitch Lab



Our Sewing Room



Our Sewing Room

Community Support

DC Threads Sewing Lounge is a free program held on the second Saturday of every month at the North Michigan Park Recreation Center in northeast Washington, DC. The Lounge provides an opportunity for anyone interested in sewing—from the complete beginner to the seasoned expert—to share sewing tips, learn new techniques, and even work on projects together with sewing machines available on-site. At each session, there's an opportunity to meet others with shared interests, try new projects, or get practical advice on a current project. The Lounge was founded through a partnership with the DC Department of Parks and Recreation and with support from the Greater Washington Fashion Chamber of Commerce, and is also an official American Sewing Guild neighborhood group.

DC THREADS
North Michigan Park
Recreation Center
1333 Emerson St., NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202) 541-3522
www.dcthread.org





Sew Crafty

(continued from page 16)

There are also practical reasons why these lounges are attractive. DIY-ers can rent studio time, use the equipment and see if they like sewing, without a huge monetary commitment to buy these things on their own. There's a chance to try different machine brands as well, perhaps previewing for a future purchase. And, very often, lounges have more space than sewers have in their own residences, particularly for apartment or condo dwellers.

How do they work?

Some lounges charge by individual classes and independent sewing time, others offer punch cards good for a certain amount of time; some offer discounts on pre-paid memberships or the pre-purchase of studio sewing time, and often a credit card is required to check out tools, specialty presser feet, videos, etc. for use on-site. Often the lounge will offer a free class, guest speaker, or an open house venue to learn about upcoming classes and see sample projects. Gift certificates or "bring a friend" options might also be available. At other locales, if you volunteer to help as a class assistant, or in prepping fabrics or samples for classes, you may receive a discount on classes yourself.

Some lounges offer flexible scheduling, open studio and drop-in times, or craft nights, where you can simply get help on whatever project you're working on.

Take a Look...

With stitch lounges popping up seemingly everywhere, we can only tell you about a few, but look for one near you. (Type "sewing lounges" or "sewing classes" into your search engine, followed by your city and state. You may be surprised to see what pops up.) Or, if you're an experienced sewer with a yearning for business, start your own! ✂

SEW CRAFTY
321-B W. 19th St.
Houston, TX 77008
(713) 863-1144
www.sewcraftyhouston.com

CITYCRAFT
5460 W. Lovers Lane,
suite 234
Dallas, TX 75209
(214) 366-4220
www.citycraftonline.com

MAKE WORKSHOP
195 Chrystie St., #402f
New York, NY
www.makeworkshop.com

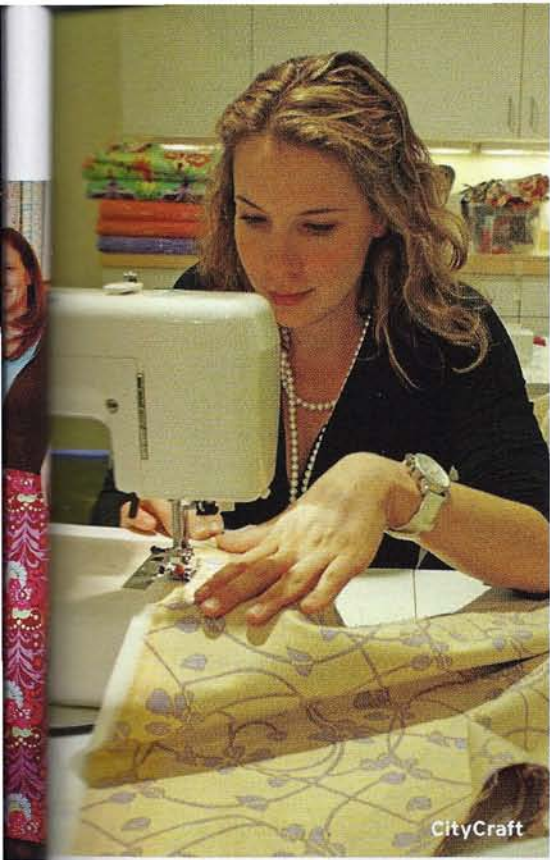
SEAM DIVAS SEWING LOUNGE
3810 Edgewood Drive
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 896-7206
www.seamdivas.com



CityCraft



Sew Crafty



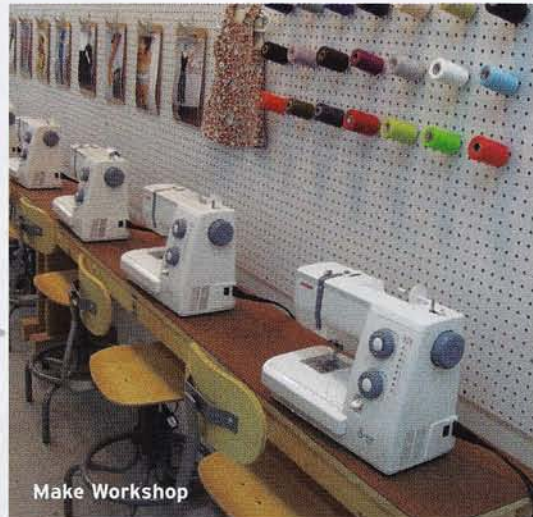
CityCraft



Make Workshop



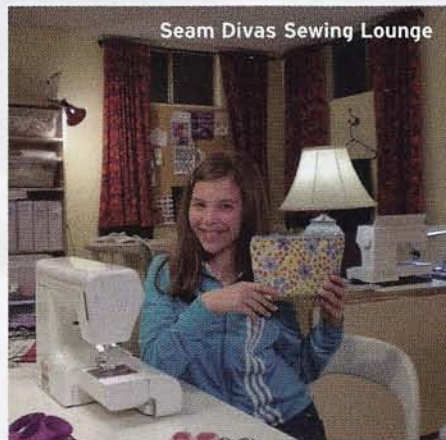
Make Workshop



Make Workshop



Seam Divas Sewing Lounge



Seam Divas Sewing Lounge