



This month our cover features mother Pati Palmer, right, with her daughter Melissa Watson, left. These two are "fashionably famous." They are the first mother and daughter to be licensed with McCall's Pattern Co. at the same time.

Our cover story on pages 4-6 shares the history of how this "industry first" has transpired and what it is like for this mother and daughter to work in the same industry! Pati and Melissa are shown on the cover at the McCall's headquarters.

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FEATURES

- 4** Fashionably famous:
A Pattern Company First – Mother & Daughter Licensees
- 14** Island Bundles: Easy to use & easy to love!
- 15** Be Part Of The Celebration!
September is International Sewing Month
- 18** Brother International Corporation:
Sales Incentive Contest Awards \$10,000 to Top Embroidery Machine Sellers
- 22** MSLO & SMP Worldwide unveil new Martha Stewart
Embroidery Designs
- 26** Millcreek instills Goodwill
- 28** 1,2,3...PUNCH!
- 36** Understanding the number 350
- 40** Sew Fun Cruise 2008 Review

COLUMNS

- 7** Doctor Stitch
by Ray Winslow, Allyn International
- 8** Web Site Success
by Paula Mariedaughter & Jeanne Neath, Quilt Professionals
- 16** Sewing & Embroidery Solutions
by Marie Duncan, VSM Sewing Inc.
- 24** Creative Solutions
by Joi Mahon, Dress Forms Design Studio
- 38** Selling By Design
by Amy Barickman, Indygo Junction, Inc. & The Vintage Workshop

PROJECTS

- 10** Batikwheel Bounty Lap Quilt
- 20** Mudcloth Mini-Tote

MEMBER BENEFITS

- 32** Save an additional 5 percent on your shipping costs

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Fashionably famous

Melissa Watson, left, with her mother Pati Palmer at McCall's Pattern Co.

A Pattern Company First Mother & Daughter Licensees!

It's common to hear of mothers teaching their daughters how to sew. Young children are naturally curious to watch and help as their mothers are busy -- especially when it comes to creating something with fancy fabric, needle and thread.

For one mother and daughter in the industry, time spent sewing together years ago has resulted in wonderful careers and unique fame for both of them today.

The talented two are Pati Palmer and her daughter Melissa Watson of Portland, OR. In a recent interview, Pati and Melissa shared memories of their creative early years and significant steps that have brought them to where they are today.

Many of you have come to know Pati through her popular company, Palmer/Pletsch Publishing which offers everything from books, DVDs, patterns, newsletters, teaching aides, notions and trainings. As her company tagline puts it, Palmer/Pletsch has been.... "teaching sewing for real people since 1973." This icon in the sewing industry has also been dubbed "The Fit Expert,"

because of all the work she has done on the subject of "fit." She's written pattern guide sheets with fit instructions for McCall's Pattern Company, designed fit workshops for both consumers and teachers, and even co-authored a book with Marta Alto on the subject.

Pati said her daughter expressed an interest in all the business commotion at an early age. To encourage her, Pati gave Melissa a box of scrap fabric.

"It was hers to do with as she pleased," said Pati. "I never made her sew, fearing that might turn her off to sewing. She cut head and armholes in fabric to make 'clothes' for her and her friends when they played dress up at five and six years of age. Then she'd sew a seam to make a skirt and if it was too tight when she tried it on, she'd rip out the seam and re-sew it. To this day, she doesn't mind ripping -- and she can tell you why! It relates to art!"

At five years old, Melissa started art classes and her first project was a self portrait in clay. She loved art so much that Pati decided to keep her in the private art school. At

the age of 11, she had her first art show and at age 17, her second.

“She sold many of her sculptures and her paintings,” recalled Pati. “I also had a 4-H sewing and cooking club for four years. Melissa won a blue ribbon at the state fair for her quilt and separate from the club, a grand champion for a painting she did.”

Recalling her budding talent, Melissa said she first learned to sew by hand using a series of books her mom published by Winky Cherry called *My First Sewing Books*.

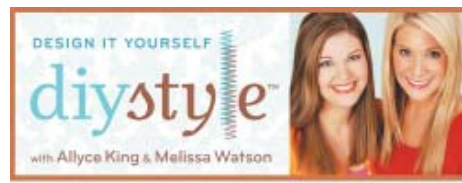
“I was very young at the time and I just never really stopped after that,” said Melissa. “I loved having a sewing space and sewing machines around growing up because it allowed me to be creative and encouraged me to learn. The thing that I enjoyed most about sewing was the creativity that goes into making your own garment. You get to pick your fabric, pick your design and then make it to fit exactly how YOU want it!”

Learning to sew and just being around people in the industry is what really sparked Melissa’s interest. She said when you combine that with her love for fashion, it really makes sewing a great skill for her.

“I have grown up in the industry and my recent jobs have kind of just come together but not without lots of hard work!” said Melissa.

“It has always been a goal of mine to work in the fashion industry, and I believe my education in business has been my motivator.”

Melissa’s career in the industry is pretty new and taking off in a few different directions. She is one of the two designers for the DIY Style pattern line for McCall’s Pattern Company, and she is a host on the DIYStyle vodcast which is a mini-series teaching people sewing techniques, sewing projects, and design tips.



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Melissa shows the new designs that she and Allyce have created.

Melissa’s work with DIYStyle is part of a partnership with another well-known young author, sewer and designer, Allyce King. The two young women met in Las Vegas during a VDTA/SDTA Convention where they were attending as panelist speakers for a seminar on how the sewing industry needs to focus on targeting the younger teen market.

“Once we met we had this charisma,” said Melissa. “I think we knew we would love to work together. So Allyce came and stayed in Portland over the summer and we really solidified some ideas of what we wanted to do. We filmed the first season of a vodcast and also constructed some design idea concepts.”

As the ideas continued to mesh and DIYStyle gained more momentum, Melissa and Allyce took another big step and presented their pattern ideas to McCall’s in September of 2007.

Melissa recalled, “They loved the idea of having DIYStyle patterns and our concepts for the designs. We came up with unique ways to do our guidesheets so the instructions would be really easy and fun to follow. We have as few words as possible and big illustrations so you can follow along easily. We also include an introduction to the pattern as well as sewing tips and design ideas throughout. Our patterns are meant to be simpler, and in each one, we share ways in which the elements can be

Fashionably Famous continues on page 6.



Allyce, left, and Melissa, right, with their DIYStyle patterns.

Fashionably Famous

Continued from page 5.

interchanged to create a one-of-a-kind, unique design.”

Commenting on Melissa and Allyce’s talent and success, Pati shared, “I can’t tell you how excited I feel and how proud I am of these girls for their enthusiasm and hard work. I watched them sew sample garments, make their presentation boards, and plan their idea lines. It seemed like forever since they went to New York and made their presentation to now when the patterns came out. When I opened the catalog and saw the first six pages devoted to them, I was blown away! McCall’s did an amazing job in the design and layout of the pattern presentation.

It is so young and fresh! The girls contributed their ideas well.”

Pati is no stranger herself at the McCall’s headquarters. After all she is McCall’s longest lasting licensee and she is still going strong with several patterns in the top 10 as well as number one over the last year. Reflecting on her career, Pati said she and Susan Pletsch signed with Vogue in 1975, doing two fit patterns.

She remembered, “In 1980 we moved to McCall’s and our first pattern was the 8-hour Blazer which was featured in *Family Circle Magazine* and sold a million copies in the first year! Luck! It was the year John Malloy wrote *Dress for Success* and told women to wear blazers in order to climb the corporate ladder. Susan left the business in 1985, but we still share royalties on our fit pattern.”

Today, Pati smiles as she looks back on the over 100 designs she’s done for McCall’s throughout the past 28 years. She credits her success to her good education, her first job experiences, and her many years of hard work. She said her personality has also aided in helping her achieve her goals, stating, “I am a pretty visionary person and fairly gutsy. My wheels are always turning with creative ideas. Plus, it helps that I am very persistent.”

What has been fun for Pati and Melissa is that they are the first mother/daughter team to be signed with McCall’s at the same time. Commenting on the unique fame that they share, Melissa said, “I think it’s really great! I never knew Mom’s job was so fun when I watched her doing it growing up, but I now can really appreciate her work. It’s just really exciting. My whole life, everyone has told me my mom and I are so much alike. This is just another way that I am following in her footsteps. I can only hope to be as successful as she has been with McCall’s and in her career.”



Melissa and Pati check out McCall’s summer catalog that features the DIYStyle patterns.

What’s neat for McCall’s is that they can target two different audiences by working with this mother and daughter. Pati’s pattern lines are geared toward those 35 years and up, or as she describes them: “older women who don’t want to look old, so they dress with a bit of flare.” Her patterns also appeal to those who need help getting a good fit.

Melissa’s category, on the other hand, is the 20 something market; those professional, trendy and chic.

“We also design quick and fairly easy things to sew so young professionals will be able to find time and continue to sew our patterns,” she added.

So you may wonder ... is it more challenging or more fun for this classic but fashion forward

mother to be so involved in the exact same industry as her hip, sophisticated, next generation and “bit alternative” daughter?

Their answer is nothing but positive! Pati and Melissa agree that their common interest and current common fame have done nothing but positive things for their relationship.



Pati and Melissa in the fabric library, looking at buttons.

They said, “We talk about what we love all the time!” Melissa added, “It really helps that Mom knows the industry and the design process. I am always asking for her help and advice. She is actually my mentor. It has always been fun hanging with my mom because we have always had things in common, and this has brought us even closer.” 🐾

For a closer look at Melissa and Allyce’s work, visit www.diystyle.net, and to see what new products Pati offers, visit www.palmerpletsch.com.