



quilting

THE QUILT

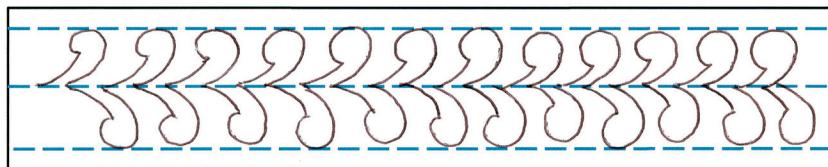
BY Dawn Cavanaugh.

Mix and Match Border Designs

A quilt border serves the same purpose as a picture frame—it keeps the viewer’s attention focused on what’s happening inside it.

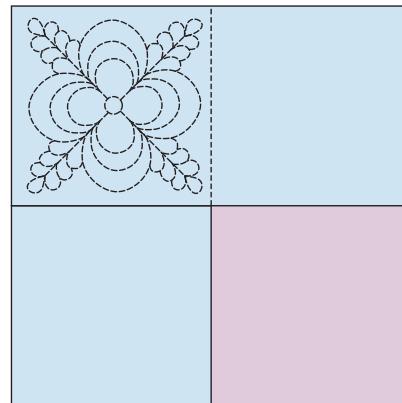
When you look for a suitable border design for a quilt, it’s all too easy to choose one simply because you have a stencil that happens to be the right size. While you might become very proficient at quilting that design over and over, you will not expand your quilting horizons or make each of your quilts unique.

Here’s a technique that will help you increase your border design repertoire with virtually little or no marking. I like to think of this as “mixing and matching” because all the designs are based on a common principle—an imaginary line down the center of the border that allows the designs to bounce from one side to the other. All it takes is a simple tweak in the design shape or repetition to make something completely new and different. It’s also easy to become skilled at quilting these designs because they rely on repetition.



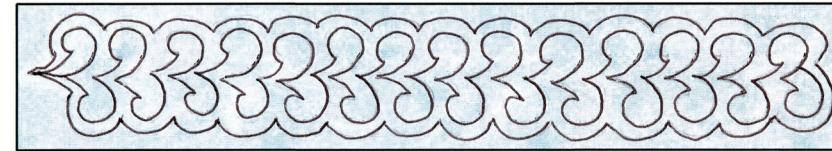
Example A

You might choose to mark a reference line down the center of your border simply to guide your design placement. However, try not to worry about hitting the line every time with a particular part of your design unless symmetry is critical to you. Part of the fun of quilting is actually getting a project done, and this technique allows a little breathing room in design execution. While I’m comfortable eyeballing my design placement using the edge of my longarm’s hopping foot as a guide, you may also feel more in control if you mark secondary target lines near the top and bottom edges of your border to show where you’d like the outside edge of each design to stop (*Example A*).



Example B

While it’s certainly possible to make these designs turn a corner, try creating a faux corner block in your border instead. Stitch a line out from each interior quilt corner seam straight through the border to the outside edge (*Example B*). This creates the illusion that you’ve stitched “in the ditch” around

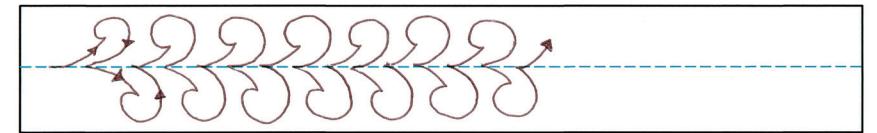


Example C

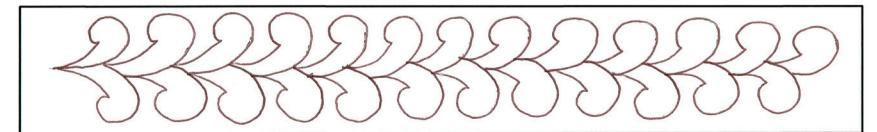
a separate corner block. Put a coordinating design in that block and your quilting doesn’t have to make the turn. You can carry your mix-and-match border design right to the edges of the faux block, or even float your design inside the new border perimeter.

If your border is on the wide side, or if you’re not quite comfortable with the consistency of your shapes, use echo quilting to your advantage. It can make your border design instantly grow in size to fill the space while retaining its scale and proportion (*Example C*). You can also use this technique to help make your curves look rounder and more graceful and your points sharper, since the eye tends to focus on the outside edges of the designs first.

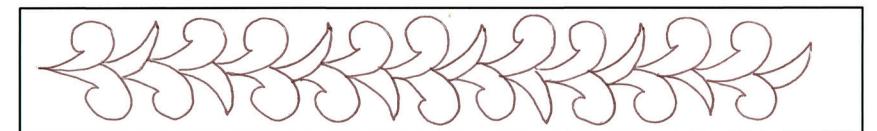
Let’s start with the simple “comma” shape you saw in *Example A* and look at the stitching path shown by the arrows in *Drawing 1*. Notice that each comma does come down to touch the imaginary center reference line, creating a nice, open quilting design that floats along your border. But you’ll need



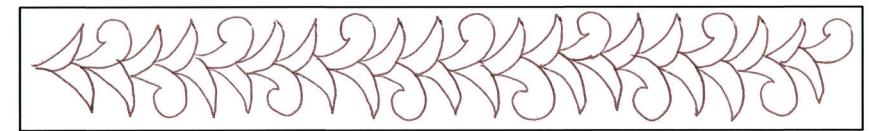
Drawing 1



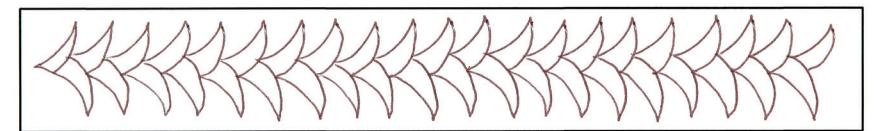
Drawing 2



Drawing 3



Drawing 4



Drawing 5

to focus hard as you try to form each shape and, if you must stop your rhythm each time to try and hit that center line, your quilting lines may not be as smooth as you’d like.

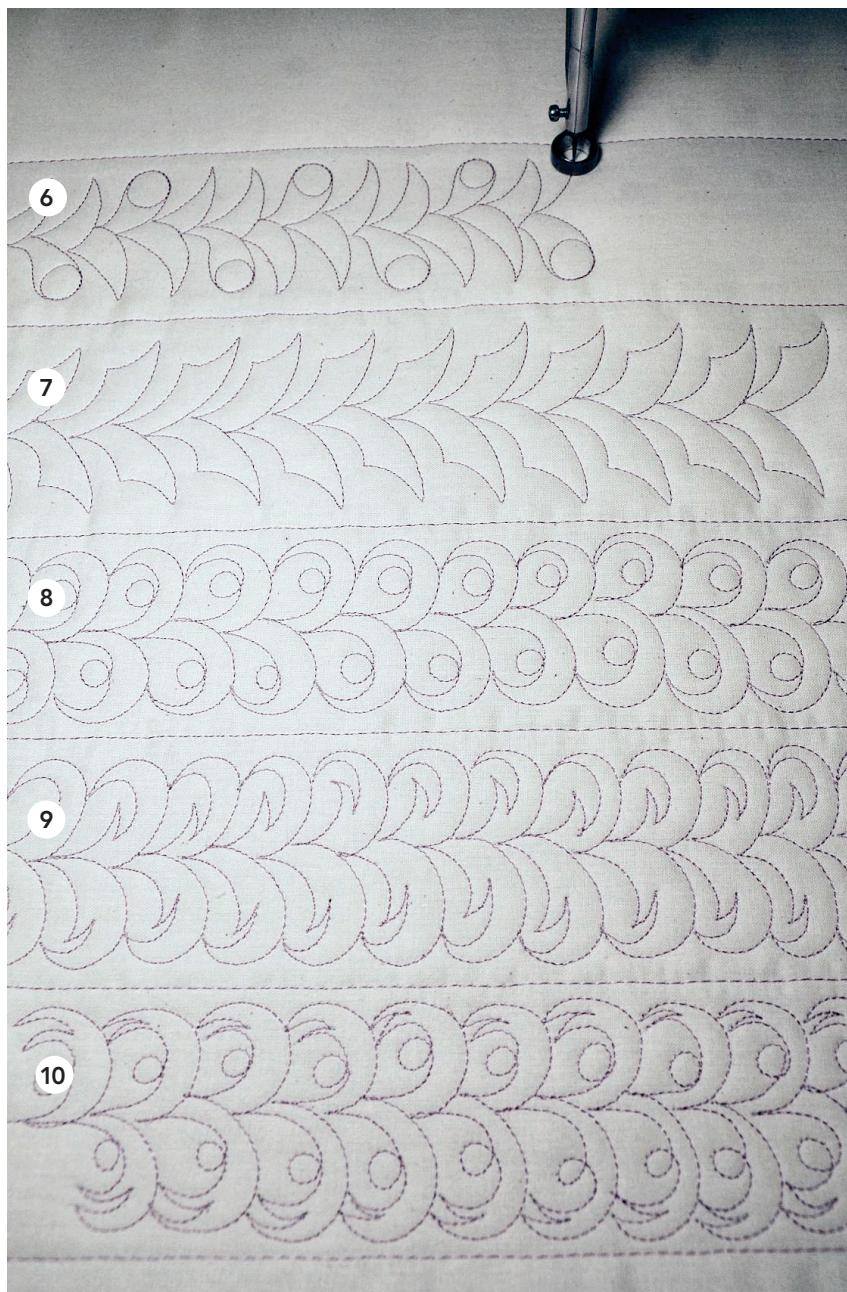
Now examine *Drawing 2*. I’ve eliminated the center reference line from my drawing to make the design more clear. It’s the same comma shape, but now the next comma rides on the back of the

previous one. That slight change makes this design more three-dimensional since each new comma shape looks like it's tucked behind the previous one. It's also more forgiving—even if you get a little out of control, you can quickly regain momentum without grabbing a seam ripper!

Next comes the fun of mix and match border quilting. Look what happens to the design in *Drawing 3* if I throw in a single “bamboo shoot” as every third shape. I end up with an alternating design that neatly mixes two shapes for more interest. Tweak it again (*Drawing 4*), this time making two bamboo shoots, followed by a comma shape in every third spot. Morph it one more time by making every single shape a bamboo shoot this time as you see in *Drawing 5*. Amazing!

Let your own imagination take over, and see what mix-and-match borders you can create.

Make every third shape a teardrop and loop instead of a comma (*Example 6*), flatten out the bamboo shoot at the tip (*Example 7*), make a loop and hook shape (*Example 8*), or even an echoed hook shape (*Example 9*). Try making a hook and loop shape, AND echoing it on the way back (*Example 10*). Have fun playing with ideas to find designs that work for you. ✨



Examples 6-10



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