

Special Occasion Embroidery

Machine embroidery has been many things at many times, but when people first hear of it, the first word that comes to mind isn't always glamorous. Crafty, handmade, homemade, maybe even kitschy, not always glamorous. Of course, that's just because upon first viewing it's not always apparent how magical it can be. Taking your craft from cute to chic is a few simple tricks away, and you won't believe the sort of elegant creations you can make. So, just what should you be thinking about?

Statements with Color

Let's start with the basics of color before you even hoop up that project and start it stitching. Color can have a huge impact on the overall look of a design, and picking the right color palette can be the difference between subtly chic and overly garish. Luckily, there are lots of ways you can find beautiful color palette ideas.



Steps To Complete



Color Palettes

One of our favorite tricks is find a photo with a color scheme you love, and use it to create a palette

Tone on Tone



Another easy trick to make any design classy is to help it become a little more seamlessly integrated into whatever you're adding it to. As tempting as it may be to pick the brightest colors possible to show off your favorite design, sometimes the classiest way to show it off is with tone on tone coloring. That doesn't necessarily mean all one color, but tones that are all visually harmonious and similar to the color you're stitching on are always guaranteed to look good!

White on White



While we're talking tone on tone and classy occasions, weddings really need to be mentioned, and there's nothing more subtle but dazzlingly classy than white on white for that magical day. Embroidery is a dimensional art in a way that almost nothing else is, and letting those stitches shine as a beautiful baroque sheen on that special gown is a daring but understated way to add stitches to your big day without them overpowering your big look.

Metallics

Another simple but classy look? Try metallics. They can be a bit temperamental to stitch with sometimes, but their magic is undeniable when they shimmer on fabric. Don't combine too many in one design unless they're all of similar tone, just let the glimmer of the thread bring your design to life in a way no other thread can.



Clothing with Class

So, we've covered what kinds of threads and colors go well with glamorous looks, but what about the garment itself? Well, the key to adding class to these kinds of projects is a combination of elegant motifs and unexpected elements. For example...



Elegant & Unexpected Placement

Placement can make a big impact on your project; let your chosen design become a statement instead of just a sticker. While it seems obvious to place every design in the front and center of your project, try some more unexpected areas. Collars on jackets, the [sides of sleeves](#), the back pockets on jeans. Maybe put a design high up on your shoulder or cascade it down the side edge of your shirt. That unexpected detail will instantly elevate the design to something fresh and new.



Runway Inspiration

If you're unsure of where to start with these unusual placement ideas, the runway is always a great place for inspiration. Learn from the masters! Sometimes getting the look of couture items is easier than you'd think.

Chic Motifs



While the unexpected can be good for your placement choices, sometimes the tried and true is the best place to go for your subject matter. While dragons and ninjas can certainly be classy in the right hands, save yourself some trouble and go with motifs that have been revered in art for centuries. This often means natural motifs, like flowers, vines, leaves, feathers... anything nature made. Anything with an edge of nature usually comes off classy no matter how you use it. Another safe motif is gems and jewels. Anything already associated with high class, such as jewelry, is a safe bet as a good motif.

Stitched Accents



Stitched accents, or things that represent other ways to otherwise accessorize a garment, are also a fun way to dress up a project. There are lots of designs with a [draped “charm”](#) look to them that look great down sleeves or hanging off collars. There’s even a [“charm” pack](#) you can use to [drape your own designs](#)! Other ideas are trompe l’oeil type designs, like [ribbons](#) or [buckle](#) accents you can stitch directly onto your project for a fun faux effect.

Cutwork

You can't mention classy without bringing in lace! Freestanding lace itself can be tough to add to clothes (though not impossible). However, [cutwork](#) is the best of both worlds. Combining the elegance of baroque stitching with the open lacy effect of lace, cutwork instantly transforms garments into something chic and alluring, with that sudden peek or flash through to the layer underneath. You can [learn how to use it here](#).



Accessorizing with Freestanding Lace

So, there are clearly lots of ways you can stitch on garments to give them a classier edge. But what about making some classy accessories all on your own? That's where the magic of freestanding lace comes in. You can literally make your own glamorous accessories!

Necklaces



The options are almost endless for lace. Let's start with a really obvious one... necklaces! More often than not your easiest necklace option with the limitations of hoop sizes is a choker, and there are lots to choose from, from this [elegant gothic motif](#) to other [steampunk](#) and [dark beauties](#). There are larger more extravagant versions like the [necklace included in the Evenfall collection](#), or a more [simple and chic lace necklace for everyday wear](#) like this one. It's a simple way to dress up almost any outfit with something you made yourself!



Earrings

Earrings too are easy to make, but here it's more flexible. Basically any small piece of lace could be an earring, from this [lace feather](#) to a [freestanding lace key](#) we dressed up. All you need is an earring hook and some jump rings and you're good!



Cuffs & Bracelets

Nearly all necklaces can also be bracelets and cuffs! Just wrap it around the wrist instead, on many wrists all you'll need is a small closure on the back.



Hair Accessories

Lace also makes excellent accents for a great hairstyle! Big flourishes like this one make a [bold statement on a headband](#), but you could go a little smaller with [lace pieces used on a fascinator](#), or even just taking small lace pieces and adding them to barrettes.

Costume Accessories



If you're looking for glam outside of the everyday, lace is the perfect accent to your big and bold costuming project. This [steampunk mask](#) would certainly be the perfect glamorous accessory to a steampunk masquerade or any decent Halloween party. There are also [lace top hats](#) and other steampunk accents perfect for that whimsical but classy finishing touch to your outfit.

Extra Touches

So you've picked out your colors, you've got your unexpected placement, you've stitched your pretty lace. Surely things can't get any more fabulous? Well, there's always one more little flourish you can add.

Fabric Paint



One example is fabric paint! Whether you're actually dying your project like in this [ombre vest tutorial](#), or going to the simpler route with fabric spray paint like this [chic black and white top](#), paint is an easy way to add a big statement with just a splash. See how we used it on this [nautical tote](#), or how easy it can be applied to [transform a plain scarf](#).

Dyeing Lace



You know all those fabulous lace necklaces, bracelets, earrings, charms and accessories you can stitch up? Well, did you know you can also dye them? That's right. All you need to do is stitch your lace in 30 to 50 weight 100% cotton thread. Then regular fabric dye will work on the lace just like it would on cotton fabric. You can get amazing effects like this subtle ombre we got on this butterfly. You can [learn how to dye lace as part of the Evenfall tutorial here!](#)

Glittering Lace



Feeling super brave about being extra glam? You can dazzle lace up with glitter! Yeah, there's no way around this one, it's going to be a little messy, and you'll get glitter on everything, but it does look pretty darn cool. You'll need fine grain glitter (the Martha Stewart stuff works pretty nice) and spray adhesive. You spray your lace, coat it with glitter, and rub it into the lace until it stop shedding quite so much. A glam option for the fearless!



Charms and Chains

One of our favorite ways of dressing up lace is adding charms and chains. We'd done this to necklaces, earrings, anything! Go crazy at the craft store with chains and jewels, and be sure to pick up a pair of jewelry pliers and a clipper.

Heat Set Crystals



Another easy way to add glam? Well, with more sparkle, of course. You can buy these things in stores called heat-set crystals. They're little crystals with a dab of glue on the back that activates when you heat it up. A heat crystal gun is best for this, but in a pinch we've used an iron. It's the perfect way to add that extra bit of sparkle to your lace or sewing projects.

Going Above and Beyond



Still, the possibilities don't end there. All these techniques can be combined and used to go above and beyond if you really feel like going all-out in your quest for the most dazzling embroidery project ever.

The [Evenfall Lace collection](#) is an example of what you can do when you go all out on crazy ideas. Though the series was designed with simple accessory pieces, we combined them into this pair of magical lace shoes with a little extra ingenuity. There were even more crazy ideas, including lace chandeliers and even wings! [Check out the whole tutorial](#) to see just what you can do with some creativity.



Indeed, whether you're looking for casual glam or some ideas to make some special occasion look truly spectacular, there's no limit to what you can do with some well-placed and planned embroidery. Glam it up!