

June 2008 Cablegram book review by Evanne Vaivadas

**A Fine Fleece**  
**by Lisa Lloyd**

Lisa Lloyd has been a busy designer in the last decade producing a lovely body of work for Harrisville Designs, Wildfibers Magazine, Interweave Knits, and The Green Mountain Spinnery. She has a website of her own, [www.lloydknitting.com](http://www.lloydknitting.com) that features a desirable collection of her patterns for garments and socks.

When I first glanced through her new book recently published by Potter Craft, I was thrilled to see each design photographed in both handspun and commercial yarns, usually side by side, because this is such an unusual approach to pattern presentation. Many knitters are “fiber artists” these days, delving into every aspect of fabric creation and decoration imaginable. Handspinning has become a familiar hobby during the boom in the art and craft of knitting, and this book addresses both passions with grace and insight. It’s clear that there is a distinctly attractive look to the handspun versions of Lisa’s work, and also clear that her designs were created with handspun in mind, though the selected commercial yarns are also complimentary. An enormous amount of spinning and knitting was done in order to provide two examples of every piece, which is quite an impressive accomplishment apart from the design and composition of an informative and interesting book

There is ample information about each sampled sheep breed’s wool characteristics and the chosen spinning technique to encourage interest in the novice, and to stimulate experienced spinners to seek out some different fleeces to spin. The mostly natural colors chosen for the model sweaters and accessories show off attractive and classy warm sportswear that is not at all rustic or coarse, which is a tribute to the discretion and skill of the spinner. I love her two page section on “Technical Spinning Stuff” for its elegant presentation of basic guidelines, and also the comments provided by Clara Parkes in the forward.

Though some of the sweaters seem a bit bulky on the young slender models, this can be attributed to the sizing rather than the design, meaning that attention to personal measurements would be beneficial for the rest of us, especially with those sweaters without waist shaping. I like it that there are many knitting techniques and pattern styles and yarn gauges utilized in the collection, some in the round, some set in sleeves, some saddle shoulders, raglans, collars, yokes, cables, lace, buttons, and ganseys, and much of her work could be worn by either sex. Lisa has included vests, scarves, socks and a hat in this book of 26 patterns,

Each pattern is clearly illustrated with well dimensioned schematic drawings, charts and keys that are big enough to read, and yardage for each size in the basic information. Though the photos are attractive, I would have preferred more attention to clear views of the finished garments and less focus on the firewood or dining table, but that’s my only complaint. Perhaps the photographer intended to tease. However, a trip through finished objects or works in progress on Ravelry will provide additional photos with details to drool over.