

May 2008 Cablegram book review by Karen Jo Gustafson

Cables Untangled
by Melissa Leapman

Melissa Leapman's latest book, *Cables Untangled*, makes a good introduction to cables but still offers something to the experienced cable knitter.

The first section of the book covers cabling techniques with very clear technical drawings to illustrate the stitches. Besides basic cables, traveling and axis cables are explained and illustrated. This section goes on to discuss knitting from a chart, with a large section on the chart symbols Melissa uses, designing with cables, and other techniques used in the patterns. Helpful insets and sidebars expand on some of the information in each section.

The pattern section starts with basic patterns for a hat scarf and sweater for the cabling novice. The simple sweater would be a good first sweater project. After that comes a chapter of pillows and afghans, followed by one of six women's garments, then a Gift Items chapter with two men's sweaters, a child's sweater, a blankie, a handbag, and another scarf. All of the garments and many of the other projects are constructed in pieces and seamed to finish.

Many of these patterns contain the interesting design details for which Melissa is known. The cables on a woman's Sleeveless V-neck continue up the side of the neckline and around the armholes, finishing the edges and extending the vertical line. The little bag uses a cable that travels diagonally across the front and back. The Blankie knits up in triangles that are then joined. A Reversible Scarf crosses basic 3x3 cables on both front and back for a reversible pattern. The cover sampler afghan includes her techniques for increasing and decreasing to allow for the change of gauge when a cabled pattern is done as a freestanding motif; a technique that will be further explored in her next book on Celtic Knot cables.

One of the features I appreciate is Melissa's inclusion of yarn gauge, category, weight, and yardage for her patterns. She also has an appendix section with advice on substituting yarns. These details greatly increase the lifespan and usability of a book.

The last section is a cable stitch dictionary of more than 100 stitches with Cabled Ribs, Cabled Panels, and Allover Patterns included. The photographs are clear and both charted and written instructions are included. Though I own a lot of stitch dictionaries, a quick survey revealed quite a few I don't remember seeing in my other resources. If you want a nice stitch guide for cables, this one is worth the purchase of the book.