

Let's Play Sampler Spree 3

It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see. Henry David Thoreau



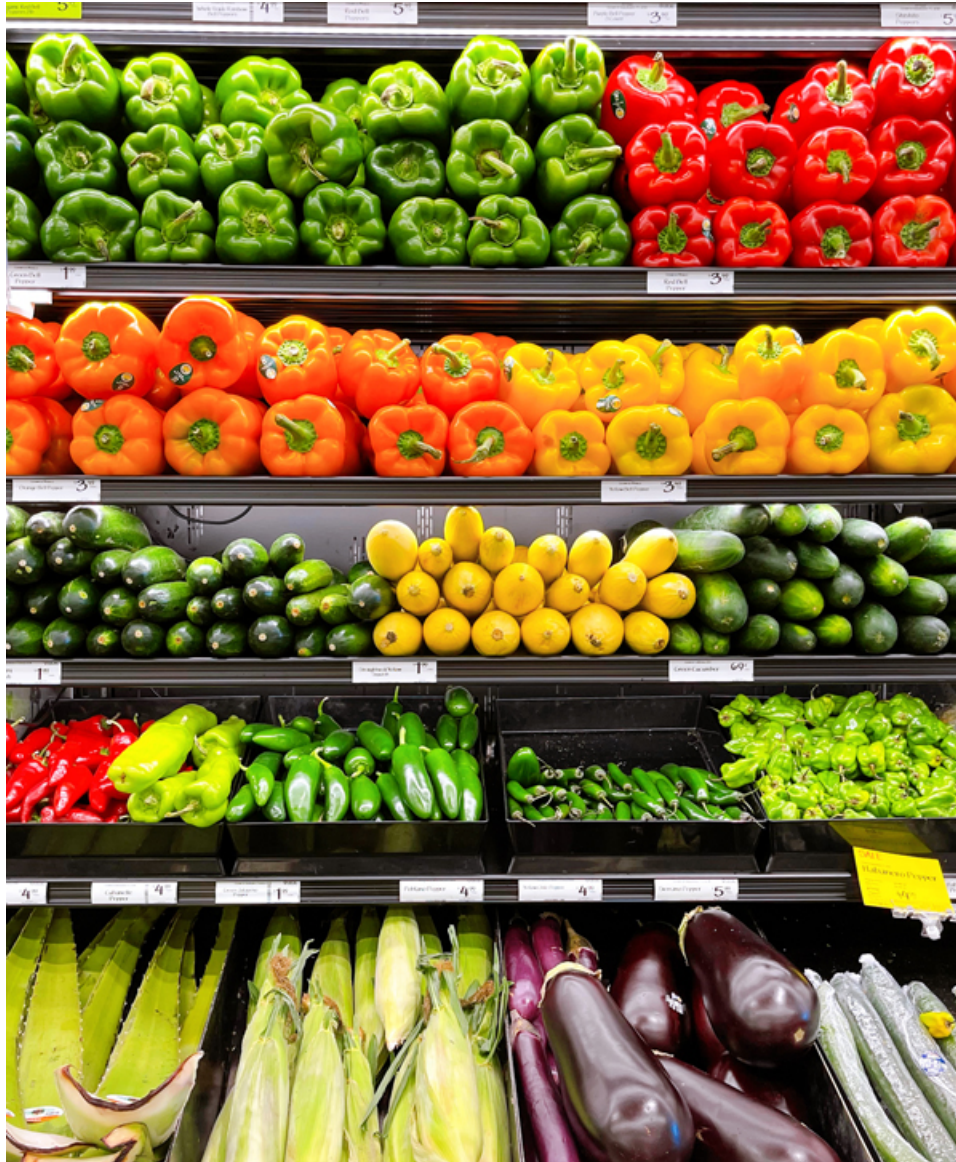
More about this in a moment.

One of the things I love about the blocks in Sampler Spree is the variety of colors used, and the unexpected color combinations. The same can be written about the quilts Susan makes. From quilts that have the vibrancy of brightly colorful umbrellas on a beach to those that invite you to curl up with a cup of tea, she has a way with color that is distinctive. So I was curious where she gets ideas for her color palettes.

The answer was a simple one. Everywhere.

Page 61! Tell me about the tips on this page.

I shop the produce department at my local grocery store like a quilt shop.



Fruits and vegetables are the best for mixing colors. There's a big variety of color, and it's a new way of looking at color combinations. For example, if you go buy one shade of every orange and grapefruit in the produce section, you'll have the prettiest citrus-colored quilt on the planet.



The same goes for apples, pears, and cherries.



It's also a healthy way to grocery shop for your sewing room. Just pile it all in a bowl and off to the sewing room you go to start pulling fabrics that have the colors. And don't worry if people think you're weird taking pictures of the produce.

The grocery store?

The grocery store! It is some of the best inspiration out there. The money that goes into packaging for products is insane, and we are the ones that benefit from that attention to marketing. Tea bag companies have it hands down for the colors they put on packages.



If you're a tea-drinker like me, it's a win-win. I get to try a new tea, and I save the boxes because they are so perfect for color ideas for scrap quilts.

Ice cream! I spent an entire summer making quilts that coordinated with the ice cream boxes from my local grocery store, their store brand. I bought the ice cream, and put that in another container for freezing when I got home. I carefully washed out the box, and went straight to my sewing room to start playing with fabrics and blocks that fit the theme of that box.



I also challenged myself by making rules. I couldn't repeat any of the blocks in any of the "ice cream quilts", and I had to try one new technique in each quilt. And I couldn't reuse any of the fabric in any of the quilts. By the end of the summer, I'd bought thirteen boxes of ice cream, and made thirteen quilts. I'd also eaten a lot of ice cream cones.



Ice cream quilts - I love that. Are there other places or sources to share?

Garden centers! I take a picture of it as a whole, then zoom-in on the color areas I love, and crop them together! Then I go back and get my list of plants and supplies! Hahaha. Most of the time it's just fertilizer! It's a weird place for inspiration but the colors are awesome.

I also do panoramic shots at the beach to get the colors on a sandy background. It sounds weird but there are certain colors that are so pretty with tan, colors you would never have thought about mixing with it.

And any coffee table book that is island- or beach-related is another go-to source for unexpected colors that play perfectly together.



Beaches. Brightly colored umbrellas on the beach. Genius.

About my Sampler Spree book - I cut off the spine and had it spiral-bound at an office-supply store. I find it this so much easier to use when I'm cutting, and when I'm assembling the block.



This can be done at FedEx Office and Staples, and I'm guessing other places do too. At FedEx, this costs about \$5.00. If you want to add a clear protective cover to the front, that's extra.

Before you take your book in, call the location to confirm that they will cut the spine off. There are places that won't do that, saying that the "glue in the spine gums up the cutter." As a result, I use a rotary cutter with a sharp blade, and I cut it off. It takes a couple of "cuts" to get all the way through, but then it's done.

That's it for this week. Next week... we're going shopping with Susan.

Don't worry, you don't need to get gussied-up.

Have a terrific Wednesday.

If you missed any of the earlier posts with Susan:

- *Let's Play Sampler Spree 2*
- [Let's Play Sampler Spree 1](#)
- *Let's Make A Sampler*

Most images by Susan Ache.