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Aran Knitting, Expanded Edition



Synopsis

The definitive guide to designing and knitting in the Irish Aran tradition, this highly sought after book returns to print after a decade's absence in a revised and expanded version. The author of many knitting classics, Alice Starmore is internationally renowned as a knitwear designer and an expert on knitting technique. In this guide, she presents a fascinating history of Aran knitting and an analysis of the traditional style, in addition to a complete workshop in technique, pattern, and design. "Highly recommended" by Library Journal, this volume offers step-by-step instructions, photographs, and drawings. It provides complete directions and charted patterns for the original edition's fourteen designs — many of them reknit in contemporary yarns — plus a new design. Patterns include the St. Brigid, one of the author's most popular hand-knitted designs, which represents a step forward from Aran knitting into the realm of Celtic design. Brilliant color photographs depict all of the finished caps, sweaters, and shawls. Sixty easy-to-read charted patterns guide readers through the design process and encourage the development of unique patterns. Beginners and experienced knitters alike will cherish this comprehensive guide to a beloved craft.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An acclaimed textile designer, author, artist, and photographer, Alice Starmore is a native of Scotland's Isle of Lewis. Starmore has taught and lectured extensively throughout Britain, Europe, and the United States. She has written 16 books and countless magazine articles, and her classic Book of Fair Isle Knitting is the work that introduced Americans to the popular traditional technique.⁴

Questions with Alice Starmore: An Exclusive Dover Interview Alice Starmore has a fascinating tale to tell. We spoke to the author of the #1 crafts bestseller Alice Starmore's Book of Fair Isle Knitting about her knitting background, professional start, and more. Clearly, knitting is a deeply ingrained facet of the culture of Scotland's Outer Hebrides. Did your mother teach you to knit? My mother taught me to knit when I was very young. She was a dressmaker as well as a knitter and our house was a place of constant creativity. I was also born at a time when most women knitted as a matter of course, and I had three aunts who had been fisher girls in their youth and were experts at making traditional fishermen's gansies. I understand that your first language is Gaelic. Do you still speak it? Yes I still speak Gaelic. The Isle of Lewis, where I live, is in the Outer Hebrides - the heartland of Gaelic and the only place where you will hear the language in everyday use. How did you get your start professionally? I designed a small collection of knitwear in 1975 and successfully sold it in London boutiques. It was featured in a national newspaper and from that small beginning my knitting career evolved in ways that were quite unimaginable to me when I began. Your books are known and loved around the world, and you've adapted design elements from the textile arts of many countries into your repertoire. Are you still discovering "new" aspects of knitting and fabric arts from other cultures? I am interested in everything. I find inspiration in all aspects of the world around me. There is enough inspiration in the natural world on my doorstep to last many lifetimes. I am also inspired by art, culture, history, science and music. My own culture features widely in my design work but I have always been interested in other cultures and in other places. My main problem is that I cannot possibly live long enough to produce work from the amount of ideas that come into my head.

Ah, the original! Commands breath-taking prices on and other sites. Knitters everywhere cheered when they heard this precious volume would be reprinted. Not just re-printed, republished in a new edition. Many if not most of the sweaters were re-photographed- and once again, the photos are gorgeous. The beginning part on the history of Aran knitting has a retrospective that may, or may not, add to your knitting experience. The one additional project is a decidedly non-Aran cardigan with set-in sleeves and waist shaping. It is lovely and I may make it for myself. That's not to say the book is perfect. What I didn't like about it (why I gave it 4 in place of 5) stars: 1) the new introduction is a bit too smug for me. Not only that, the author lays claim to an anchor cable pattern- and criticizes others for using it. Yet I found the same cable pattern in a much older (predating the first edition of Aran Knitting) stitch dictionary. 2) the format is smaller than the original, so the charts are smaller too. The binding makes me afraid to lay it flat enough to enlarge the charts. The hard-bound

book with sewn pages can lie flat enough to scan or photocopy.3) the most beautiful sweater, the new one, comes in the most limited sizes. The largest size would fit my size 4 daughter. Most knitters will look, sigh, and knit elsewhere. Summary: if you are a knitter, you need this book on your shelf.

Outstanding Book for Authentic Aran Sweater Knitting! Yes, I did buy her yarns, both in Bainin and her Hebrides 3-Ply. I hate to say this to any naysayers on her yarn, BUT! Her yarns are exquisite! The Hebrides 3-Ply color choices are beautiful. Many actually change overall colors due to ambient lighting. They hold the cable designs perfectly. I have fallen in love with the yarns and free shipping to US via Royal Mail. I live in Alaska! To get yarns so quickly! I receive the yarns within 2 weeks beautifully wrapped. I am working on two sweaters right now: "Na Craga", her cover sweater in the color she chose- Selkie. The other sweater, knit in Bainin yarn color Culmor, a purple, pattern is "St Kilda", from her book, "In the Hebrides" that is also chock full of stunning designs! I have the original hardbound book of Aran Knitting that was released in the 90s. For me, to have an exact sweater made of her outstanding unique yarns from the Hebrides is a priceless feeling. Her yarns are hand dyed and dried outdoors. Her website goes into the process. Waiting for a particular shade that is out of stock IS worth waiting for. It is another reason I find her yarn so precious. This book is a beautiful educational book that shares so much history and technique. Some reviewers have stated she is smug or full of herself. She might be. BUT.....she IS a legend and history will be kind to her with her body of exceptional work in knitting, needlepoint and more. For anyone who doubts buying her yarn....just try it. I showed my husband swatches of her yarns last night. For a man who has seen me knitting for decades and has been blasÃ© about looking at yarns in the past, this time he took time feeling and looking at the choices. In the past with other yarns, he could care less. His reaction last night confirmed my suspicions. To even a novice, her designs and sweaters ARE exceptional. Buy the book. Order some swatches. Watch the magic from your needles. Enjoy!

After drooling over the original Aran Knitting (and moaning over the price) for years, I now have the New and Expanded Edition happily in my clutches! The patterns are absolutely lovely! About forty pages are dedicated to the history of aran knitting, and the next 50 pages to aran designs that acts almost like a stitch dictionary or design workshop, with thorough explanations and stitch manipulation tips and clear diagrams (very important!). The pattern collection follows: fifteen absolutely breathtaking designs. The patterns are by nature somewhat boxy in shape (but a clever knitter could easily add shaping to nip in the waist, if desired) and suitable for men and women,

some are designed for children. There are also a pair of wraps. The cables themselves appear are complex, but her workshop really demystifies them and makes them less daunting. The pattern section is followed by a six-page "how-to" section on making your own design. This portion was perhaps a bit brief compared with the other sections, but with all of the sweaters incorporating these techniques, it is more of a tool to help us step back and recognize the details that make an aran sweater just that. My only grump about the book is very minor: the sweaters are all knit in the Alice Starmore yarn collection. I'd prefer to see some variation. All in all, I am still holding the book on my lap and keeping it near my chair to peruse to my hearts content. This is the first book in some time to really make my day. I'm not sure if it will ever make my knitting shelf, as it will likely stay next to my chair. Great job, Alice Starmore! And, thank you very much!

Need I say more? This woman has an eye for patterns, for color, for incorporating historical examples into modern clothing that you want to wear. That said, her patterns are not for the faint of heart. Sure, knitting is two basic stitches - knit and purl - and what Alice Starmore can do with those two stitches will leave you with a gorgeous piece of clothing and feeling like a wet rag. Mind you, these patterns are easier than those of her Tudors, in the sense that you're not changing colors every two stitches. But, you are dealing with complex cables in some instances and you're dealing with what is really multiple patterns with their own timing in each garment and on each line. So, have multiple stitch markers and multiple row markers and multiple highlighters and make multiple copies of each pattern - and then have a great time. I love this book.

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