

# Silk Tidings

## Greetings from Salt Spring Island

The sun shining on the freshly emerging leaves outside my window is a cherished sight. The changing weather patterns brought us two inches of snow on April 19th. That record breaking event offers the sunshine even more appreciation from the folks on the west coast. We are not spending as much time as usual in the garden this time of year because it has been so cold. But the benefit has been more guilt free time in our studios. We have some nice specials and a project using one of our new products to help you feed your soul.

### Clay/Straw House Update

The winter has been full of preparation for the outside work that will be done as the weather gets warmer. The weather sensitive jobs are plastering the walls and the earthen floor laid in the main sections of the house so there is time for drying before the winter rains set in. The earthen plaster will have natural earth pigments of ochres mixed in for colour. The floor will have many coats of linseed oil applied for strength and stain resistance.

One of the most exciting treats for me has been sitting in the window seat in my studio to be. I dream colour, organization and art. Three large windows on the west wall look over the veggie garden and orchard. I am blessed the two essential parts of what excites my inner being are joined so closely. What more could a girl ask for?

## Silkster's Gallery

We have a new gallery of beautiful work on our website to inspire you. The pieces are high quality, thoughtful and employ a variety of techniques. Enjoy your fellow artists' creativity at [www.treenwaysilks.com](http://www.treenwaysilks.com); visit the Silkster's Gallery under Galleries. Congratulations and thank you all for sharing your art.

**Diana Caleb** of Saanichton, British Columbia, uses silk threads and fibres in her unique mixed media pieces.

**Susan Harvey** from Duncan, British Columbia, used a mixture of various silks to make a warm, natural scarf.

**Susan Kroll** of Sequim, Washington, braided ribbon to create a lovely kumihimo necklace.

**Marion Marzolf** from Ann Arbor, Michigan, dazzled us with her Confetti silk scarves.

**Joan Merrifield** of Janesville, Wisconsin, loves to knit socks and used silk to make a stunning pair.

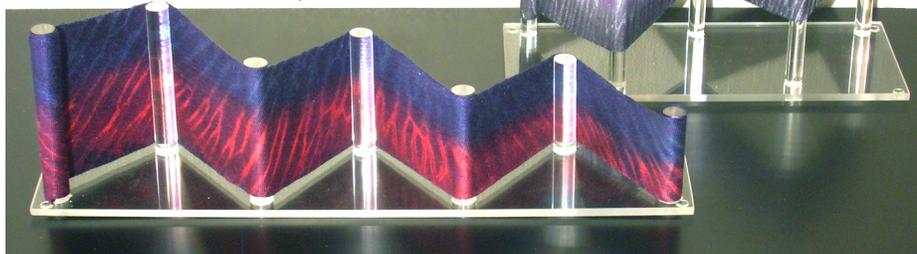
**Melanie Nakashima** from Spicewood, Texas, mixes it up with yarns, ribbons and weave structure for her beautiful scarves.

**Ida Marie Threadkell** of Salt Spring Island created a basket using silk fusion.

**Helen Wilder** of Mosman, New South Wales, Australia, dyes silk threads to weave her nature inspired scarves.

**Barbara Zander** from Seattle, Washington, weaves scrolls with fine threads and striking dye work.

*Scrolls by Barbara Zander*



### Call for Entries

Our next Silkster's Gallery will be in our September/October issue. We encourage all of you to send photos of your work using Treenway silks. It is fun and inspirational for all of us to see what unique work is being produced. We reward you for your time with silk product from Treenway.

See our web site for details of what we require from you to participate in this exciting gallery. We so look forward to your entries. [www.treenwaysilks.com/gallery.html](http://www.treenwaysilks.com/gallery.html)

Treenway Silks is located at 501 Musgrave Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada, V8K 1V5. You can reach us toll free at 1.888.383.SILK (7455) or at 250.653.2345 or by fax at 250.653.2347. Email us at [silk@treenwaysilks.com](mailto:silk@treenwaysilks.com). See our website [www.treenwaysilks.com](http://www.treenwaysilks.com).

# New Products

## Silk 55%/Camel 45% White Yarn

The majority of camel hair comes from the two-humped Bactrian variety, which survives in extremely cold climates. Camel hair is comprised of two qualities: relatively coarse outer hair and inner down fibre. Shearing, combing or collecting the hair shed during molting season are the various ways of obtaining the fibre. Fibre length is approximately 1" to 1-1/2" with the best coming from Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. An expensive process of separating the long coarse hair from the down, called dehairing, is necessary before spinning yarn. The longer hair is used in making felt for Mongolian yurts. The camel down keeps the camel warm and yields a lightweight and warm fibre with a nice lustre for our use.

The short fibre acquires length, shape retention, sheen and durability when blended with silk. The yarn is strong, yet cuddly and scrumptious to weave. The cloth has a nice drape and a soft and warm hand that makes delicious unisex scarves and sweater/jacket weight fabric.

Some bleached white silk/camel yarn was sent to us by mistake. It feels as lovely as the traditional coloured camel and we have used it as a scarf warp and crossed it with a number of our other yarns. See the Treenway Treasures section.

The skeins range between 95-100g (approx 3.5 oz) with about 1470 yd/skein.

Regular Price: \$25/100g skein.

**Discounted 25%. Sale price: \$18.75/100g skein.**

## Silky Play Pack

This fun pack provides a great opportunity to adventure into those new items being incorporated into creative textile arts and mixed media.

Each package contains the elements of: texture, colour, layering, freshness, imagination and fun.

Cocoons, rods, hankies, degummed throwsters or cocoon strippings and silk ribbon in dazzling hues inspire the creative spirit to venture out and experiment with something saucy.



These five scarves were all woven with the 30/2 Silk / White Camel as warp sett at 36 epi in a 4 Shaft Twill. The yarns used as wefts are indicated above.

At Treenway we have fun stitching, needle felting, fusing, spinning and trapping with these funky fibres.

### Cocoons

A perfect form for necklaces, earrings, flowers, tassel caps, bird's eggs, flower buds, shells and much more.

### Rods

Can be split, pulled and manipulated for flowers and other shapes or left as they are for a more organic presence in your work.

### Degummed throwsters

The curly character adds texture for things in nature - clouds, leaves, blossoms, moss or creating layers in something more abstract.



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New Products

**Hankies**

Peeled into a thin veil, hankies can trap treasures onto a quilt or window dressing while more layers create 3 dimensional vessels and bags.

**Cocoon Strippings**

Provide a more controlled, flat and firmer texture.

**Ribbon**

Offers elegance to outlines, finishes, stitches, tassels, fringes, jewelry, collage, paper arts and more.

Each pack contains at least 20g of colourful fibre and 5 yards of 7mm ribbon. The price is **\$17.25**.



**Salt Spring Island Series**

**New Colourways**

We have three new colourways with three more on the way in our popular, hand painted tussah sliver Salt Spring Island Series. See Channel Ridge Charleston, Long Harbour Limbo and Ruckle Park Rhumba on our website at: [www.treenwaysilks.com/ssi\\_series.html](http://www.treenwaysilks.com/ssi_series.html).

Keep an eye out for even more colourways coming soon!

Salt Spring Island Series is packaged in two sizes: 25g (approx 0.9oz) and 50g (approx 1.8oz).

25g packages are \$9.70 each or three for \$27.60 (\$9.20 each for three or more).

50g packages are \$18.00 each.

**Channel Ridge Charleston**



**Long Harbour Limbo**



**Ruckle Park Rhumba**



**Silk Workshops**

Karen Selk will be in the Mid-west (Minnesota) in February 2009 on the east coast of the US (NY) in March 2009. We still have room to add another workshop or two to each region which would help defray travel costs. Please contact Karen if your guild would be interested in joining one of these tours. First come, first serve!

Toll free: 1.888.383.7455

Email: [silk@treenwaysilks.com](mailto:silk@treenwaysilks.com)

Find more information about workshops online at [www.treenwaysilks.com/workshops.html](http://www.treenwaysilks.com/workshops.html).

**Change in Packaging**

In our last newsletter we announced we were changing the size on most of our fibre packing to reflect your wishes and suggestions.

Our undyed 100% silk and silk blend sliver will change from 100g (3.5 oz) to 50g (1.8 oz) or 25g (0.9 oz) packages.

Our natural funky fibres will be changing from 100g and 50g packages to 25g bags.

All of these fibres are still available in bulk amounts (200g/7oz minimum). (\*\*This applies to retail packaging only.)

Now available in smaller packages:

**Natural Silk Fibres**

A1 Bombyx Sliver	Natural	25g	\$4.95
A1 Tussah Sliver	Natural	50g	\$6.50
Hankies	Natural	25g	\$4.95

**Funky Fibres**

Carrier Rods (Standard)	Natural	25g	\$3.00
	Dyed	10g	\$4.25
Carrier Rods (A1)	Natural	25g	\$3.75
	Dyed	10g	\$4.75
Degummed Throwsters Silk	Natural	25g	\$3.00
	Dyed	10g	\$4.25

Coming soon in smaller packages:

**Natural Silk Fibres**

Tussah Noil	Natural	25g	\$2.25
Multicoloured Silk Fibre Blend		25g	\$4.00

**Funky Fibres**

Natural Silk in Sericin	Natural	25g	\$3.00
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# Specials

## Silk 55%/Yak 45% Fibre

In 100g packages, while supply lasts

Yak is a valued beast of burden living above the snowline in the Himalayan Mountains. It provides meat, milk, hair and hides to the people living there. Its long shaggy coat reaches the ground while its soft undercoat provides it with warmth in extreme cold. At the time of the spring molt the undercoat is combed out. The fibre length varies between 1" and 1-1/2".

Separating the guard hairs from the down is a slow, necessary process to obtain spinning fibre, which is nearly as soft as cashmere. The longer hair is used in rope making, mats, sacks and hut coverings.

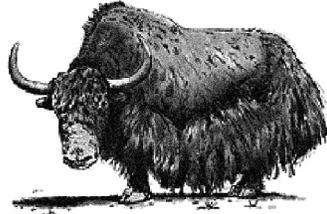
Silk lends substance to the warm, lightweight down. The lovely soft brown/grey colour is reminiscent of a wolf. Its staple length of 2-3" is similar to many of our other blends. It is truly an exotic blend of luxury fibres creating a soft, drapeable yarn just perfect for light weight jacket fabric or gorgeous unisex scarves.

In our effort to change our packaging to smaller sizes, we are offering the 100g package at a 20% discount.

Regular Price: \$32.10/100g.

**Discounted 20%.**

**Sale Price: \$25.70/100g.**



## Silk 55%/Cotton 45% Fibre

In 100g packages, while supply lasts

Cotton is a cellulose fibre derived from the seed of the plant, similar to milk weed fluff. The cotton plant is a tropical and subtropical shrub. After the plant finishes flowering, a seedpod or boll forms. The mature boll opens to let the air further dry the seeds. It is important to harvest at this time before rain. A downy fibre, called lint, surrounds the seeds inside the boll. Separating the lint from the seed was a difficult job made much easier by the invention of the cotton gin, which squeezes and 'saws' the seed from the fibre. The fibre is graded for length, uniformity, colour and fineness. Carding aligns the fibres, removes foreign matter and short fibres before spinning. Higher quality cotton is also combed before spinning, providing a stronger, more uniform, smoother fibre with greater lustre.



Cotton is the most consumed of all the natural fibres because it is comfortable, strong, absorbent, washes easily and has a fair amount of elasticity. Short staple length and depletion of soil nutrients are its weakest properties.

Silk blended with cotton adds more length, elasticity and shine to the cotton and is more affordable than 100% silk. Yarn made of these combined fibres is a pleasure to weave, with the hand of cloth being soft, smooth and cool, perfect for summer garments and scarves.

This shipment of silk/cotton fibre has some fine neps which will add texture to your project.

We are offering the 100g package at a 25% discount. Regular Price: \$16.75/100g.

**Discounted 25%.**

**Sale Price: \$12.55/100g.**



### NOTE

1. Prices do not include shipping.
2. Specials end August 31st, 2008.
3. Regular 10% Discount: Our normal Bulk Discount for orders of silk yarns and fibres over \$150.00 CDN does not apply to Specials items.

### Remember

All prices are in Canadian funds.

### Web Specials

In addition to our newsletter specials, we have specials on our web site. We notify everyone on our email list each time we post new specials. You can also check our web site periodically. See the Specials button in the drop-down menu or go to [www.treenwaysilks.com/sale.html](http://www.treenwaysilks.com/sale.html).

If you would like to be added to this list, please send us your full name and email address to [info@treenwaysilks.com](mailto:info@treenwaysilks.com). Please add us to your address book to ensure you receive our emails.



# The Dedicated Fibre Fanatic

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*In the last issue of Silk Tidings we passed along a story of smuggled fleeces. We are sure it made many of you smile. We would love to continue this section in the newsletter.*

*We are the faceless friends on the other end of the phone and email. Many of you confess to some pretty great fibre follies and addictions. Your stories are incredible, funny and sometimes serious. We invite and encourage you to share/confess your sagas. It comforts all of us to know there are others out there with the same affliction. All Fibre Fanatics will remain anonymous.*

## The Sisterhood of the Travelling Fabric

*(with apologies to Ann Brashares)*

Everyone needs a playmate. Someone with whom, despite your advanced age, you can be silly and splash in mud puddles. My friend Nancy is my playmate. Has been for years. We call ourselves twin daughters of different mothers and, even though she is 8 days younger than I am, we take turns leading the way to mischief.

Some years ago we set out on a road trip down the West Coast. We left British Columbia with the intention of driving to San Francisco and back in approximately 3 weeks.

Perhaps we should have realized our goal was unattainable for two people who view "retail therapy" as one of the necessities of life. We barely made it to Seattle (two hours from our starting point) the first day. We did better the next day and made it all the way to Oregon. It was our first time there and we fell in love with the state. As our love of all things fibre starts with sewing, when we found Daisy Kingdom in Portland, Oregon, our respective fabric stashes expanded significantly. We then found a "Stretch 'n' Sew" store where we pretty much rolled over, put our paws in the air and decided we could happily spend many days in the immediate area. Seeing Mel Gibson with his son in the restaurant that night was just icing on the cake.

At the "Stretch 'n' Sew" store I found a stunning bolt of navy blue and white rayon challis. There were only 2 metres left on the bolt and I immediately bought them. Nancy was 3 steps behind me and her pain at missing this lovely fabric was clearly visible on her face. She whined and cried and pouted as only someone completely in touch with her inner brat can. I was steadfast. It was my fabric and it would remain my fabric, I didn't care how upset she was that I beat her to it. I was ruthless. Nancy was sneaky. For the rest of the trip, every

time I gazed longingly at my lovely purchases I found the navy and white fabric missing. Pushing Nancy aside with one arm and rifling her stash with my other, I invariably found my fabric and "stole" it back.

Now what you need to know about us, as with many fibre-aholics (fibre preservationists?), is that having the fabric and dreaming about what you will make with it is often better than the reality of actually making something. No disappointment at it not turning out the way you envisioned, only lovely dreams about how great it will be. This can provide years of pleasure.

A few months after we got back from the road trip we again found ourselves in a fabric shop. This time Nancy was more fleet-of-foot and bought the red and purple paisley, again in a rayon challis, to which I was drawn. While red and purple may sound garish, trust me, it was beautiful and I've never seen a paisley I didn't like. My whinging and mewling fell on deaf ears so, just as Nancy had done earlier, I was forced to resort to sleight-of-hand. I actually made it home without her realizing I had lightened her load, and, laughing hysterically, went to put the paisley with my other prized fabric, the blue and white from Portland. Gasp! Disbelief! Fury! Paroxysms of laughter! The blue and white wasn't to be found. When had she snuck in and stolen that?

This arguably poor behaviour on our parts went on for at least 10 years with varying amounts of time between the respective thefts and the ensuing discovery. Finally we agreed that neither of us actually had a plan to make something and that we were simply storing the fabric. We decided it was time to come clean and just swap. It was the sensible, grown up, thing to do.

I figure I can feel smug for a while yet—until she discovers that, in fact, I have both pieces at my house.

*(Ed note: We would have included images of the two pieces of fabric, except the writer discovered that she no longer has possession of either one!)*

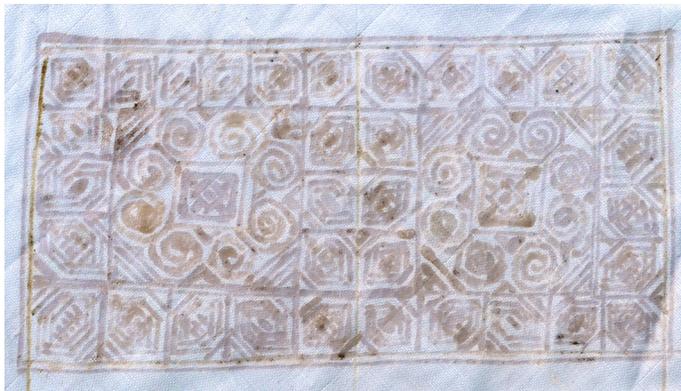
# Asian Journal

## Vietnam

*In the last Asian Journal we visited villages working with indigo and hemp in Sapa.*

### Batik

We left the helpful and peaceful “hemp” household to continue our slick walk in the drizzle, crossing two creeks to the next village, noted for its batik work. The walls of the main room of the batik artist’s house were lined with photos and memorabilia of family ancestors. The batik room was small and smoky with one bare light bulb and no windows. It was situated off the main room. The tiny room had a collection of four generations of women working on new years clothes. The grandmother and daughter with babe on her back were stitching. The mother of about 50 years was doing the batik work. A little wood fire was smoking in the middle of the room to keep the wax melted and to provide some warmth in the room so everyone’s fingers could perform their delicate tasks.

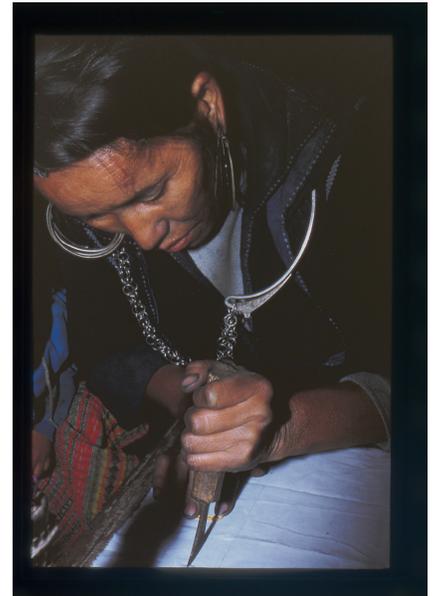
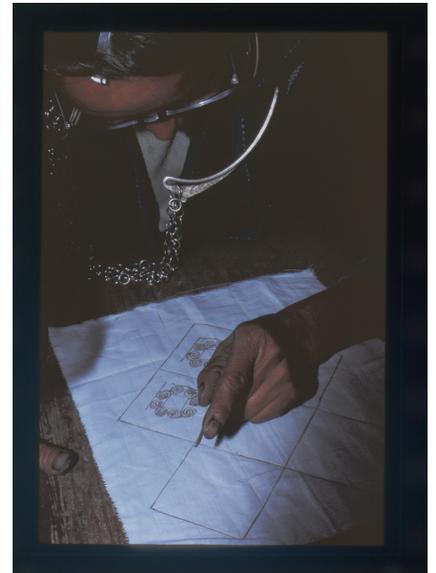


The batik designs of this Hmong group are geometric. The white hemp cloth to receive the wax resist is first folded and creased with a sharp tool. The cloth is un-



folded and the wax artist uses a piece of straw as her measuring tape along the crease. She uses it to mark out a grid to do her designs. She prefers to use beeswax when making the design as it lasts through the dying better than paraffin.

The wax is melted in a little metal dish balanced in the fire. She inserts the janting tool, used to apply the wax, into the dish. The janting tool looks similar to a smoking pipe with a funnel. The copper “bowl” holds the liquid wax. The artist works quickly and precisely to apply the wax design freehand. She makes up each pattern as she works with people talking, asking her questions and kids running around her.



Each piece is dipped in indigo numerous times to obtain a dark blue background while the white pattern is safely protected under the beeswax.

After the required amount of indigo dipping, the wax is removed by boiling the cloth. Stitching is applied to small pieces of red cloth that are appliquéd onto the batik design. Most of the batik cloth we saw was used in making baby carriers.

### Bac Ha Sunday Market

We left Sapa early Sunday morning for the three hour drive to attend the Bac Ha Sunday market. The mist lifted as we drove allowing the full impact of the vastness and beauty of the terraced Sapa valley. It was a

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lovely parting treat.

The brilliant Bac Ha market is dominated by the Flowery Hmong. The women wear full skirts with bright layers of cloth decorated with rows of sequins and ric rac. Their head gear is varied and colourful. The market trades in rice and corn wine, water buffalo, pigs, chickens, cloth and embellishments, as well as everyday household items.



We stationed ourselves at the rice and corn wine vendors for an hour of entertainment, watching the feisty women haggle and barter over the last drop poured from plastic jerry cans.

Our next vantage point was in the midst of the women sorting, measuring and discussing the ribbons of embellishments for their skirts. We moved on to household goods to observe the purchase of gaudy rubber boots and kitchen utensils. Before everything wrapped up we watched the auctioning of the water buffalo. The colourful clothing and enthusiastic bartering made this the most energetic market we have ever attended. The Hmong were so consumed with vending and buying they didn't seem to notice us, just how we like it.

After foraging for something to eat we ventured to the edge of town to catch the procession of vivid women leading their laden horses home. We headed for the train station to catch our overnight train back to Hanoi.

### Van Phuc Silk Village and Mr. Trieu Van Mao

We finished this journey with a visit with Trieu Van Mao, a master weaver, in Van Phuc Silk Village. Mao was born in 1937 into a traditional silk weaving family. He has dedicated himself to the reproduction of silk weaving and design, especially of the royalty during the time

of the dynasties.

To accomplish his mission, he restored a traditional hand loom to work out the designs which could be used on a mechanical loom. He visited older people in the village to get fragments of cloth to work from and worked with a painter to reconstruct the designs. He recreated 21 traditional designs including butterfly and rose, dragon and phoenix, two cranes and many more.



His journey has not been easy or smooth. He worked in earnest after the war in 1975 and the family took up its traditional vocation of weaving again. They joined a co-operative and produced thousands of metres of silk for the domestic market and export to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The collapse of the Soviet Union hit the Van Phuc silk weaving industry hard. The Vietnamese government stepped in with financial help to encourage development of this economy.

Mao's family is back in business with 10 looms and six weavers. It is always so heart warming to be introduced to people with such vision and dedication to art and the making of cloth.

Our journey through northern Vietnam ended with a lovely dinner at one of our favourite restaurants followed by gelato.

