Luminous Jewel Box Pillow Pair in Silk Patchwork

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When you think of patchwork, you traditionally think of quilting cottons. But there's no rule saying you have to use cotton. In fact, if you're a regular Sew4Home visitor, you know we love to experiment with different fabric substrates. Today, we're adding luxury into the mix with silk dupioni. This type of silk is made from twin cocoons naturally bonded together. The bumps in the fabric, they're really called 'slubs', are the result of this bonding. Dupioni is often woven from two different colors of thread, giving it a shimmering, color-shifting appearance. We chose a jewel-box color blend of Tiffany blue, glittering silver, burnished gold, and rich ebony. Our pillows work together as a pair, and our supply list is structured to allow you to buy the correct amount of fabric to make both.

Silk or cotton - any pillow's beauty is only skin deep, because when it comes to a truly professional finish, what's on the inside makes the outside look and feel the best it can be. Our thanks to Fairfield (the makers of Poly-Fil® and so much more) for providing their amazing Soft Touch pillow forms for our Jewel Box Pillow Pair.
Our silks were chosen from the great selection at Fabric Depot. Silk dupioni is sturdy and substantial; it feels almost like taffeta. It's very easy to sew with and holds a crease well. However, it does not stretch at all so make sure your cuts are straight and true. We provide pattern downloads for our triangles to insure the best patchwork precision.

We also show you very specific assembly diagrams as well as a key for how to cut each triangle color with the proper grain direction. This is extremely important. The beautiful texture of the silk dupioni gives it a very distinct grain; if your triangles are not carefully cut, you'll end up with the grain going every which way, destroying the pretty look.
We have a great tutorial on Sewing with Silk if you are new to working with this fabric type.

If you are new to patchwork, you might also want to check out our Five-Part Quilting Basics Series. It’s designed to help beginning quilters get started. We explain the fundamentals of quilting, including the various tools you’ll need (and may already have), cutting techniques, how to create quilt blocks from basic shapes, piecing tips and techniques, and actual quilt stitching.
This Jewel Box color combination is one of our favorites, but in honor of the upcoming Valentine's Day holiday, below is a sketch of how the pillows might look in warm tones of rose and pink. We used the following colors of silk dupioni from Fabric Depot: **Claret, Fuchsia, Cantaloupe** and **Soft Pink**.

Our pillow set finishes at approximately 18” x 18” and 14” x 28”.

**Sewing Tools You Need**
Sewing Machine and standard presser foot
Quarter Inch Seam foot; optional, but helpful as all seams allowances are \(\frac{1}{4}\)"
Zipper foot

Fabric and Other Supplies

Supplies shown are for a set of TWO pillows and allow enough to account for the precise cutting required to insure the obvious grain/slubs of the silk dupioni are correctly oriented on all the pieces.

- We used \(\frac{1}{2}\) yard each of following colors of Silk Dupioni from the selection at Fabric Depot:
  - Light Turquoise
  - Latte
  - Black
- And \(1\frac{1}{2}\) yards of one additional color of Silk Dupioni for both the front patchwork as well as the back panels, also from the selection at Fabric Depot:
  - Silver Star
- \(1\frac{1}{4}\) yards of 20" wide lightweight fusible interfacing; we used Pellon ShirTailor
- ONE 18" x 18" pillow form; we used a Fairfield Soft Touch 18" x 18" pillow form
- ONE 14" x 28" pillow form; we used a Fairfield Soft Touch 14" x 28" pillow form
- TWO packages of coordinating piping; we used Wrights Maxi Piping in Black
- All purpose thread to match fabric
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Tape measure
- Seam gauge
- Seam ripper
- Straight pins

Getting Started

1. Download and print out the ONE pattern sheet: Triangle Pattern Pieces.
   IMPORTANT: This pattern is ONE 8½" x 11" sheet. You must print the PDF file at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide rule on the page so you can confirm your final printout is to scale.
2. Cut out the two Triangle patterns along the solid lines. Triangle #1 is for the square pillow. Triangle #2 is for the rectangle pillow.
18" x 18" Square Pillow

Using the layout and grain directional drawings above as your key, and Triangle #1 as your pattern, cut the following from the four colors of Silk Dupioni. Label your groups with their letters to insure you can remember which is which so all the grain matches up. A small piece of low-tack tape works well or try the Alphabitties from Fat Quarter Shop.

1. Light Turquoise:
   A: Cut TWO triangles
   B: Cut THREE triangles

2. Latte:
   C: Cut ONE triangle
   D: Cut TWO triangles

3. Black:
   G: Cut TWO triangles
   H: Cut THREE triangles

4. Silver Star:
   E: Cut ONE triangles
   F: Cut FOUR triangles
   ONE 11” wide x 18½” high (horizontal grain) rectangle for the back underlap
   ONE 15” wide x 18½” high (horizontal grain) rectangle for the back overlap

5. From the lightweight interfacing, cut the following:
   ONE 18½” x 18½” square
   ONE 15” x 18½” rectangle
   ONE 11” x 18½” rectangle

14" x 28" Rectangle Pillow

Using the layout and grain directional drawings above as your key, and Triangle #2 as your pattern, cut the following from the four colors of Silk Dupioni. Label your groups with their letters to insure you can remember which is which so all the grain matches up. A small piece of low-tack tape works well or try the Alphabitties from Fat Quarter Shop.
1. Light Turquoise:
   J: Cut FIVE triangles

2. Black:
   K: Cut FIVE triangles

3. Silver Star:
   L: Cut TEN triangles
   ONE 16½" wide x 14½" high (horizontal grain) rectangle for the back underlap
   ONE 20" wide x 14½" high (horizontal grain) rectangle for the back overlap

4. Latte:
   Cut TWO 1½" x 28½" strips (horizontal grain) for the top and bottom accents

5. From the lightweight interfacing, cut the following:
   ONE 14½" x 28½" square
   ONE 16½" x 14½" rectangle
   ONE 20" x 14½" rectangle

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

18" x 18" Square Pillow

Pillow top
1. Layout your three rows of triangles in order, matching the key above.
   Row 1: A/E, G/C, A/G
   Row 2: H/D, F/B, H/F
   Row 3: F/B, H/D, F/B

2. Pin each triangle pair right sides together along their long inner edges.
3. Using a ¼" seam allowance, stitch together each pair to create a square. As recommended above, we’re using our Janome Quarter Inch Seam foot for all construction.

4. Finger press the seam allowance towards the darker triangle.

   NOTE: As mentioned above, if you are new to quilting, you may want to check out our five-part series on Quilting Basics, in particular Part 4A, which deals with the basics of sewing triangles.

5. When all nine squares are complete, use a ¼” seam allowance to stitch the squares together into three rows of three.
6. As above, follow the diagram above to make sure each square is correctly oriented.

7. As with all piecing, remember to press your seam allowances in opposite directions row to row so the points of the triangles will line up nicely on the front.

8. Again, if you are new to quilting techniques such as this, take a look at our Five-Part quilting Basics Series, which details this and many other helpful tips and tricks.

9. To complete the pillow top, sew the three rows together. Use a ¼” seam allowance and carefully match up all the seam lines.
10. We stitched together the two bottom rows, then added the top row last.

11. Press flat from the back.

12. Flip over and press again from the front.
13. Find the 18” x 18” piece of lightweight fusible interfacing. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse it to the back of the completed pillow top. This interfacing layer helps keeps all the patchwork seams flat, giving the pillow top a nice, smooth finish. It also helps trap all the loose threads. Silk dupioni has a tendency to ravel; by using the interfacing you can stop the fraying without having the finish each and every little seam.

Pillow back

1. Find the two pillow back rectangles and the matching pieces of fusible interfacing.
2. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of each back panel.
3. On the fused overlap panel (15” x 18½”), along the inside 18½” edge, make a 3¼” hem. To do this. Fold back the raw edge ¼” and press.
4. Then fold back an additional 3" and press again.

5. Stitch in place, running your seam ¼" from the inside folded edge.

6. On the underlap (11" wide x 18½" high) make a double-turn ¼" hem along the inside 18½" edge. To do this fold back
the raw edge ¼" and press, then turn back an additional ¼" and press again. Topstitch in place, staying close to the folded edge.

7. Overlap the two panels (remember the panel with the wider hem goes on top) until they measure 18½" in width as well as height.

8. Across the very top and the very bottom, make a small seam just across the overlap. Stitch as close to the raw edges as possible. These short seams simply anchor the two pieces together, allowing you to work with the back as one piece rather than two when finishing the front-to-back seam.

9. Set the back aside.

**Special pillow corners**

1. For the square pillow, we used a special finishing technique to provide extra-tight, extra square corners. This technique can be used on any pillow that has a simple corner. We did not use it on the rectangle pillow because of the how accent bands meet the triangles in each corner. The additional cutting required for this finishing technique would have messed up the horizontal lines of the accent.

2. Find the pillow top. Place it wrong side up and flat on your work surface.

3. Using a clear ruler, draw in a ¼" seam allowance (the seam allowance we are using for this project; you would use whatever seam allowance your project calls for) around all four sides of the pillow top.

4. At each corner, measure ½" in and then 3" in along both the horizontal edge and vertical edge.

5. Draw a diagonal line from the ½" mark along the top to the 3" mark along the side. Then repeat, to draw a second line from the 3" mark along the top to the ½" mark along the side. Your seam line will now follow these inner, slightly diagonal lines, creating a gently sloped corner, but one that still has an inner 90° pivot point.

6. You can trim away the excess fabric now or when your front-to-back seam is finished. We trimmed after drawing in the new lines, which was helpful since our edges will be piped.
Piping

1. Find the piping. Flip the pillow top right side up.
2. Starting in the middle of one side, pin the piping to the right side of the pillow front, aligning the raw edge of the piping with the raw edge of the fabric.
3. At the corners, follow the new diagonal lines. Simply flip up the back to check that your piping is matching the drawn lines.
4. Machine baste the piping in place. To do this, you can use a zipper foot or your machine’s Standard foot. Start stitching about ½” in from the raw end of the piping (to facilitate a clean finish). Stitch all the way around. When you are back to about 1” from the starting point, stop and lock your stitch.
5. Remove the project from the machine.
6. Lay the piping against the fabric so it is flat and smooth. If need be, cut away the excess piping, leaving about a 1” tail.
7. With a seam ripper, peel back the fabric to expose the cording underneath.
8. Trim the end of cording tail so it exactly meets the end of the sewn-down cording.
9. Fold under the end of the loose fabric to create a clean edge. Lift up that little bit piping you left free at the beginning and wrap the folded end under and around, overlapping about ½".

10. Machine baste the ends in place, matching your previous basting seam line.
NOTE: If you are new to working with piping, we have a great step-by-step tutorial on both making and attaching piping, including how to create the clean finish described above.

Assemble the layers

1. Find your front panel, with the piping stitched in place, and the back panels (which are tacked together top and bottom as one piece).
2. Place the finished front panel on your work surface right side facing up. Since this is a square, double check to make sure your pillow top is correctly oriented.
3. Place your back panel on top, right side facing down. The overlap should be vertically oriented. Your piping is sandwiched in between the layers.
4. Carefully align all the raw edges and pin in place all around.
5. Using a ¼" seam allowance stitch around all four sides. Go slowly and make sure your layers stay flat. It's easiest to stitch with the pillow top facing up so you can simply follow along the drawn seam line.
6. Make sure to follow the slight diagonal lines of the new custom corners.
7. As always, stop with the needle in the down position, and pivot at the exact corner point.
8. As mentioned above, the silk dupioni loves to ravel. We recommend finishing your seam with a zig zag or your favorite finishing stitch. We have a great series on Machine Sewn Seam Finishes.
9. When your seam and finishing are complete. Turn the pillow cover right side out through the back overlap opening. Push out the piping all around. Use a long, blunt-end tool, such as a knitting needle or chopstick, to smooth out the
corners.
10. Insert your pillow form through the envelope opening and fluff it out into the corners.

**14'' x 28'' Square Pillow**

1. This pillow is assembled in much the same manner as the square pillow.

2. Assemble your squares and rows in the same manner. Layout your two rows of triangles in order, matching the key above. The accent strips go top and bottom.
   Row 1: J/L, K/L, J/L, K/L
   Row 2: L/K, L/J, L/K, L/J

3. Remember to carefully match up all those seams for the prettiest look to your pillow top.

4. Use ¼'' seam allowances throughout.
5. When finished with your two rows of triangle-squares, add a 1½" accent strip to both the top and bottom.

6. Press flat from the back and front as above.

7. Apply interfacing as above to both the pillow top and the two back panels.
8. Apply and machine baste the piping in place.

9. At the corners of this pillow, you will make a more traditional curve around the corner. Stitch into the corner, then stop with your needle in the down position.

10. Curve the piping around the square of the corner. You can clip into the insertion tape of the piping slightly to help it curve.

11. Finish in the same manner as the square pillow.
Contributors

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Pillows & Cushions

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