Wine Bags with Carabiner Handles

Tall and narrow, but still generous enough to easily hold the tallest of Rieslings and the roundest of Champagne bottles, our fabric wine bags are a fabulous way to turn a gift of wine into two presents in one: a favorite beverage inside beautiful, reusable carrying case. Colorful carabiners are the perfect size and shape for the handles.
We’re here to tell you that small DIY purse handles are very, very hard to find! We almost gave up on this great project because it was impossible to source something that would work well for the handles. They needed to be just 3”, which is much smaller than the average off-the-shelf purse handle. We looked at hoops, plant rings, bracelets, even wooden letters (an upper case D to be exact). Nothing was right until Creative Director, Anne Adams had a brainstorm: carabiners! Easy to find, exactly the right size, inexpensive, and in dozens of cool colors. Plus, they open up then close tight so they can be inserted as the last step in construction. Win-win-win!
We tested the bag’s size on an assortment of wine bottles from tall and thin to short and round. A variety of liquor bottles also slipped in for a perfect fit as did decorative bottles of oil. As you’ll see below, the lining of the bag is secured under an upper facing and hand-tacked to the base. Even if your chilled bottle of bubbly develops condensation on the way to the festivities, the lining will not pull out when the bottle is removed.
The ultra-firm interfacing on the bag is uniquely placed in order to add stability and structure to the front, back, and base panels. However, there’s no interfacing along the sides, so the bag can fold flat for storage when not in use. It stands up on its own with or without a bottle in place, then folds down like a paper bag.
We recommend a mid-to-heavy décor weight fabric for the bag exterior. We used upholstery fabric remnants found at a local shop. Because the bag itself is vertical, it makes a striking presentation if your fabric’s motif is also vertical in format. For the lining, we also recommend a slightly heavier substate than quilting weight cotton for additional stability and ease of cleaning – although quilting cotton is still an option. We used a polyester-blend suiting fabric.
The design of the bag and the recommended fabric come together into a project with some rather thick layers. As an exclusive Janome studio, our machines have both power and precision. We like to switch to the Janome AcuFeed™ Flex built-in fabric feeding system for extra control to move the layers in perfect unison under the presser foot. If you haven’t experience this type of system before, we invite you to stop by a Janome Dealer for a test drive. AcuFeed™ Flex lets you stitch through challenging thicknesses like a hot knife through butter.

**Debbie says:**

"Check out our full tutorial on sewing with thick layers to learn about the best feet and the best practices."

Sew4Home Seamstress Team Member

Even with the handling of the thick layers, construction of these bags is fast and easy. You could make several in a single afternoon. They’re a great item to keep on hand when you need a last minute host/hostess gift. Pop in a bottle, add a simple bow, and you’re out the door in no time.
Our Carabiner Wine Bag finishes at approximately 14” tall x 4” wide x 4” deep, excluding the tabs and carabiner handles.

**Sewing Tools You Need**

- **Sewing machine** and standard presser foot
- **Walking or Even Feed foot**; optional but best for thicker layers – or use your machine’s built-in
fabric feeding system, such as the Janome AcuFeed Flex™ system

Fabric and Other Supplies

- ½ yard of 44"+ wide mid-to-heavy décor weight fabric for the bag exterior
  NOTE: The indicated ½ yard allows you to cut a strong vertical motif, which is what we had on both our sample fabrics. If the motif on your chosen fabric is horizontal or random, you can get away with ⅓ yard. As we always suggest, review the cuts in the Getting Started section below to confirm yardage.
- ½ yard of 44"+ wide suit-weight cotton or poly-blend fabric for the bag lining; we recommend a slightly heavier substrate than quilting weight cotton for additional stability and ease of cleaning - although quilting cotton is still an option
- ½ yard of 20"+ ultra-firm fusible interfacing for the main body of the bag; we used Pellon Pell-tex
- Scraps or ⅛ yard of mid-weight fusible interfacing for the bag handle tabs; we used Pellon Décor Bond
- TWO 3" metal carabiners
- All-purpose thread to match fabric
- See-through ruler
- Measuring tape
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Seam gauge
- Seam ripper
- Straight pins
- Hand sewing needle
Getting Started

1. From the fabric for the exterior, cut the following:
   - TWO 9” wide x 17” high rectangles for the main body of the bag
   - TWO 9” wide x 2½” high strips for the facing
   - TWO 5½” wide x 2½” high rectangles for the carabiner tabs
2. From the fabric for the lining, cut TWO 9” x 16½” rectangles.
3. From the ultra-firm interfacing, cut the following:
   - TWO 4” x 14” rectangles for the front and back of the bag
   - TWO 4” x 2” rectangles for the base of the bag
4. From the mid-weight interfacing, cut TWO 2¼” x 2½ for the carabiner tabs.

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

Fuse the ultra-firm interfacing

1. Find the two 9” x 17” main exterior rectangles and the four pieces of ultra firm interfacing.
2. Center an 4” x 14” panel of interfacing on the wrong side of each fabric panel. It should be centered side to side and sit ½” down from the top raw edge of the fabric panel. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.

3. Center the 4” x 2” interfacing panel just below the larger fused panel with just a crack between the two pieces. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.

Assemble front to back and box the corners

1. Place the front and back fused exterior panels right sides together. All four raw edges of both layers should be flush. Pin along both sides and across the bottom.
2. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch along both sides and across the bottom, pivoting at both bottom corners.

3. To create the finished 4” deep boxed corner, you need to cut out squares one half that size or 2” x 2”. Measure for this cut-out in each corner.
4. Draw in a box in each corner.

5. Cut out the square from each corner. It’s okay that you’re cutting through the seam allowances; they’ll be secured in the corner stitching.
6. Flatten each corner, being very careful to align the side and bottom seams. Pin to secure.

7. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch across each corner. We recommend stitching across two or three times for a super reinforced corner that can handle the weight of a wine bottle.
8. Carefully turn the bag right side out and push the corners out into position.

**NOTE:** If you are brand new to making box corners, we have a full tutorial that shows you both this cut-out method as well as the basic method without a cut-out. [Click to the full tutorial.](#) In addition, we recently did a webinar with our friends at Sulky on the same topic. You can still watch this free webinar from the Sulky site. [Click here for the webinar.](#)

**Create the facing**

1. Find the two 9” x 2½” strips for the facing.
2. Fold back the upper edge of each strip ½” and press well to set a visible crease line.
3. Unfold so the crease line is visible. Place the strips right sides together. Pin along each 2½” end.

4. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch across each end, creating a loop.
5. Press the seam allowances open and flat. Re-fold and press the upper edge along the original crease line.
6. Set aside the facing loop.

**Make and place the carabiner handle tabs**

1. Find the 5½” x 2½” rectangles and the two small pieces of mid-weight interfacing.
2. Position the interfacing on one end of each strip, on the wrong side. The interfacing should sit ½” in from the raw edge of the fabric strip and be centered top to bottom. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
3. Fold the tabs in half, right sides together, and pin in place.
4. Using a \( \frac{1}{2}'' \) seam allowance, stitch across each tab.
5. Turn the tabs right side out. Roll the seam to the center back and press flat.

6. Find the exterior bag and flatten it across the top to find the exact center. Mark this center point along both the front and back panels.
7. Find the center point along one raw side of each tab.

8. Fold each tab in half, hiding the seam inside the fold, and place a tab in position on both the front and back panels of the bag. The right side of the tab is against the right side of the bag, the raw edges of the tab are flush with the top raw edge of the bag, and the center pin points are aligned. Pin each tab in place.
9. Machine baste each tab in place to fully secure.

**Attach the facing**

1. With the tabs basted in place on both the front and back of the exterior bag, find the facing loop.

2. Slip the facing loop over the top of the exterior bag. The facing and the bag are right sides together. Align the side seams of the facing with the side seams of the bag. The raw edge of the facing is flush with the top raw edge of the bag. The folded edge of the facing is hanging down. Pin in place all around the top opening of the bag through all the layers.

3. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch all around the top of the bag. You are going through a lot of layers with this seam, go slowly and carefully to maintain an even seam. Use a [Walking or Even Feed foot](#) or engage your machine’s built-in fabric feeding system, such as the [Janome AcuFeed](#).
Flex™ system. We used our AcuFeed Flex system throughout this project but it is particularly important to have some additional control for this upper seam.

Create the lining

1. The lining is made in the same fashion as the exterior bag.
2. Place the lining layers right sides together and pin along the sides and across the bottom.
3. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch along both sides and across the bottom.
4. Measure and cut 2” x 2” squares from each bottom corner.
5. Flatten each corner and pin across.

6. Stitch across each corner, using a ½” seam allowance. As above, we recommend double stitching for security.
Insert the lining and secure the facing

1. Find the exterior bag, which should be right side with the facing stitched in position.
2. Find the lining, which should be wrong side out.
3. Slip the lining inside the exterior bag so the two are now wrong sides together. Push the lining all the way down into position so the bottom boxed corners align and the upper raw edge of the lining is flush with the facing seam allowance.

4. Grade the facing side of the seam allowance back to \( \frac{1}{4} \)".
5. Baste the lining to the bag side of the seam allowance — yes - you are just stitching the lining to the seam allowance - not through the exterior of the bag. Stitch all the way around the top of the bag, using an approximate ¼” to ⅜” seam allowance. This extra stitching helps keep the lining in position and the interior of the bag smooth. We worked with the lining facing up and so re-thread with thread to best match the lining in the top and to best match the exterior in the bobbin.

6. Press the facing up and away from the main body of the bag.
7. Continue folding the facing all the way around to the inside of the bag, which will cause the carabiner tabs to come up into their final position. Pin the facing in place on the inside of the bag, making sure the depth is even all around.

8. Re-thread the machine with thread to best match the exterior fabric in the top and bobbin. Slightly lengthen the stitch.

9. Topstitch all around the upper edge at a depth of 1¼”. We recommend starting and stopping this topstitching at a side seam to best hide the locking stitches.
10. Thread the hand sewing needle with thread to best match the exterior fabric. Slip your arm inside the bag and hold the facing in position. Carefully hand tack at each corner of the base, stitching through both the exterior and the lining. Hide the hand tacking knots inside the bag. 

**NOTE:** Wine bottles can sweat, which means when the bottle is pulled out from the bag, the moist sides of the bottle can drag the lining along with it. Hand tacking the base of the lining to the base of the exterior helps prevent this.

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**Fold in the sides and attach the carabiners**

1. In order for the wine bag to fold flat when not in use, the sides should be pressed in like a paper bag. Because the ultra-firm interfacing is only adhered to the main front and back panels of the bag, the sides naturally want to fold in. Let them do their thing, then press flat to help set the fold.
2. Find the two carabiners and a pencil.
3. Slip the pencil through the tab to open up the loop.

4. Open the carabiner and slip the open end into the loop. As you insert the carabiner, pull out the pencil.
5. Bring the carabiner all the way through until it comes out the opposite side of the loop and can be snapped closed. The tab will bunch up a little in order to get carabiner all the way through. This is fine.

6. Pull the closed carabiner back inside the loop so the opening mechanism is hidden inside the loop.

7. Repeat to attach the remaining carabiner in the same manner.
Contributors

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