

The Trail of Orts Tour

SEE PICTURES OF THE TOUR! →

Last summer designers Tracy Horner of Ink Circles and Cathy Habermann of Hands On Design committed to vend at two different retail shows. Celebration of Needlework is a stitching festival held in St. Charles, MO and Stitching at the Beach (PALS) is an annual retreat in Myrtle Beach, SC. It was a bit of a logistical surprise when the two friends later learned the shows were scheduled on back-to-back weekends in October. For Tracy, who lives in Washington State, shipping models and charts home after the first show and reshipping to the second show made little sense. During some after hours networking at the TNNA fall wholesale show in St. Charles, Cathy's offer to help out during the upcoming double header started with an innocent gesture to take a few boxes of Ink Circles charts with her as she drove home to Iowa to avoid having to ship them.

As the pair thought about it more, the box shuffling strategy developed into a full-fledged road trip plan. Like all traveling stitchers, the pair starting looking into a route that would let them visit as many local needlework shops along the way as possible. They found five along the route, and when they contacted the shop owners each was delighted to have them make an appearance. Since the car would be full of models and charts, the shop visits became an opportunity to set up mini trunk shows and meet and greet the local stitchers.

The final plan as it came together spanned one thousand miles in eleven days, covering two festivals and five meet and greets at shops along the route. Envisioning little snips of thread being strewn in their wake, the trip was given the name Trail of Orts Tour. The designers and shop owners began getting the word out with posters, Facebook, and blogs.

Tracy and Cathy called the tour a great success. The shop owners were wonderfully accommodating and

arranged events that resonated with their customers. Whether that meant cookies and punch or door prizes, their techniques brought in stitchers from as far away as a four hour drive.

We asked them to share some things they learned along the trail.

- The internet stitching community is great, but nothing beat getting to see models in person and meeting designers face-to-face. Look for creative ways to get designers, stitchers, and models together.
- Shop owners are eager to try new marketing ideas. They know their customers best, so involve them in plan-

ning the details. Stay flexible.

- Even though the SUV might be loaded with two booth's worth of models and charts, only a limited number can be brought out and set up for a two-hour meet and greet. Make the cut ahead of time, separate out those models and pre-count out charts. Make inventory sheets with quantities and prices – it makes selling and squaring up so much easier.

- Whatever the event you devise, take lots of pictures and share the story on social media. Friends and fans enjoyed following along even if they couldn't meet up in person.

Trail of Orts October 2014

HANDS ON DESIGN
a Habermann company

Ink Circles

Oct. 8 - 11: **Celebration of Needlework**, St. Charles, MO
Sunday, Oct. 12, 11 am - 1 pm: **Stitches, Etc.**, St. Charles, MO
Sunday, Oct. 12, 6 - 8 pm: **Stitches from the Heart**, Evansville, IN
Monday, Oct. 13, 11 am - 1 pm: **Stitchin' Post**, Nashville, TN
Tuesday, Oct. 14, 11 am - 1 pm: **Dixie Darlin**, Pigeon Forge, TN
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 11 am - 1 pm: **The Stitch & Frame Shop**, Rock Hill, SC
Oct. 16 - 19: **PALS Stitching at the Beach**, Myrtle Beach, SC

Check out the Trail Schedule and make plans to meet needlework designers Cathy Habermann and Tracy Horner on their road trip adventure. Stop in at one of these waypoints to say hello and see the travelling trunk shows as they leave a trail of Orts in their wake.

Follow along the Journey:
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/InkCircles
WEBSITES: inkcircles.com
TWITTER: @inkcircles
BLOGS: inkcircles.blogspot.com
www.facebook.com/handsonden
handsondesign.biz
@handsonden
handsonden.blogspot.com

#trailofortstour



The car was packed to the roof! We boxed up models and charts separately so theoretically we only had to remove a few boxes at each shop! It was a cozy ride.

Stitches Etc in St. Charles was our 1st stop. We had lots of stitchers from Celebrations drop in to visit. A few shop owners showed up too!



Lots of photo ops. We are with Cindy Smelcer owner of Dixie Darlins and designer of Foxwood Crossings!



Cake at Dixie Darlins. How cool is that?

Each shop had a different plan. Pat of the Stitches Post had us give a little talk about ourselves. Lots of questions from stitchers!

Needlework Retailer would like to thank Cathy Habermann of Hands On Design and Tracy Horner of Ink Circles for sharing their Trail of Orts Tour with our readers. To share photos of your own Needlework Event, contact Needlework Retailer at 800-561-5380. View more shop photos in Needlework Retailer's Store Photo Gallery at <http://yartree.typepad.com/retailstorephotos>





Stitch & Frame in Rock Hill. We had stitchers drive a long way to come meet us here.



There was lots of one on one visiting with stitchers.



Sunday night stop. Susie opened up for us on Sunday evening at Stitches from the Heart. A fun Shop full of wonderful stitching supplies.



And time for a little fun along the way.



We got very good at working with what space they had for us. Our models mixed in well together and by the end, we could talk about each others' designs! This is in Susie's Shop