

Connecting People with the Joy of Quilting Quilter's Paradise

By Dawn Berry

Quilter's Paradise is exactly what its name promises - it is literally a haven for quilters with rows of brilliant fabric, interesting patterns and a variety of notions.

Owners Mark Tiedeman and Sue Mezera, a husband and



wife duo, started Quilter's Paradise in 2005. Three years ago, they moved from 1,200 square feet into a 5,000 square foot office space in Escondido. They use every inch of it; however, just because they capitalize on the amount of room available to them, you do not feel overwhelmed by too many items. There is no clutter, but rather an order to the layout and design of the room. This may have something to do with the fact that both Mark and Sue are engineers by trade...or it could just be they have a knack for choosing what to sell in their store. From the colorful racks of material to the quilts displayed along the high warehouse ceilings, you'll definitely want to take your time strolling through and perusing its selections.

The store specializes in offering high-quality quilting fabrics, professional longarm



quilting services, laser-cut kits, acrylic plastic templates and rulers, classroom education, and selling longarm accessories such as the Grip-Lite™ side clamps and LeaderMate™ Quilt Mounting System.

One could say that Quilter's Paradise resulted from a passion for quilting, a desire to start a company together, and a lot of business smarts and marketing savvy. The couple continues to expand their company using a unique combination of each other's skills. They joke that Sue is more right brain, whereas Mark is more left brain.

"Sue really has an eye for the right stuff when it comes to colors, textures and designs," Mark said. "She just sees possibilities. I'm still just an engineer."

The engineering part has come into play tenfold allowing Mark and Sue to invent several quilting solutions that they sell in their store, as well as locations throughout the US. Remember the Grip-Lite™ side clamps and LeaderMate™ Quilt Mounting System referred to earlier? Well, Mark and Sue invented them, and are currently patenting the designs. And those laser-cut kits and acrylic plastic templates and rulers? They make those in their shop and package them too!

Innovations such as the CutRite™ Nine Patch Ruler

and pattern kits have paid off for the couple. Many quilting stores sell the same patterns as Quilter's Paradise, but Quilter's Paradise sells them as pre-cut kits which gives them an advantage.

"We sell more patterns than any other store because we laser cut them and package them as kits," Mark said. "We've sold hundreds and hundreds of kits."

In addition to the store, Quilter's Paradise focuses on promoting quilting education by making classrooms available free of charge for Palomar College courses. They also sponsor a charity event called Cash for Stash where you get free dollars to use at Quilter's Paradise for turning in your old



fabric scraps (which are subsequently donated to make charity quilts for worthy causes). And of course, there are always the quilting shows and quilting runs that they participate in.

San Diego's Row Quilt Run is scheduled for Nov. 1-8, 2009 and features ten quilt shops from El Cajon to Valley Center and Vista and everywhere in between. Each shop gives away a free row pattern that makes part of a quilt. You have to hit all the quilt shops to get all the patterns.

"The runs are fun," Mark said. "It gives everyone a chance to get out there and see what's happening at the different quilt shops. Each shop has its own personality."

Quilter's Paradise is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., with the exception of Thursdays when it is open until 9 p.m. It is also open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 760-738-9677 or go online to www.quiltersparadisesc.com.



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