



Block size: 6" finished.

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There is no time like the present to get these little gems up here on the blog – the response in two days has been overwhelming, and I am listening!

This is a BLOCK TUTORIAL. Instructions for a full quilt may come later, but it will take me a long time to build the number of blocks I need, and I'm trying to get this out here before I fly off to Oregon on Monday.

The Sugar Bowl block is related to the Jacob's Ladder block, with a few slight differences.

Jacob's ladder has 5 4-patches, with the dark chain of the 4 patches going UP through the ladder formed by the 4 half-square triangle units.

In the Sugar Bowl block, 2 of those corner 4-patches are replaced with solid squares, the light half of the triangle units point toward the center (opposite of Jacob's Ladder) and the darks in the 4-patches go sideways across the block, not up the ladder.

It's a subtle difference obtained with fabric value, and rotation of units, and it makes for an interesting change.



Antique quilt top circa 1910 from my collection.

Why is this block called Sugar Bowl? I have no idea. Sometimes it is even called "Broken Sugar Bowl" but I think it all depends on which way you look at it. If the block were on point, perhaps the shape of the two light areas resemble cut glass.

All I know is that I am intrigued by the shapes that appear when only 2 fabrics are used per block, and the light triangles join light squares and make this wonderful shape.

In this antique example, all of the blocks are turned the same direction creating interesting secondary designs.

I thought this block would be a fun foray into my treasured recycled shirt fabrics. Let's get to it!



I used my Stripology Ruler to quickly cut strips in 2 widths: You will need some 1 1/2" cuts and some 2 1/2" cuts.



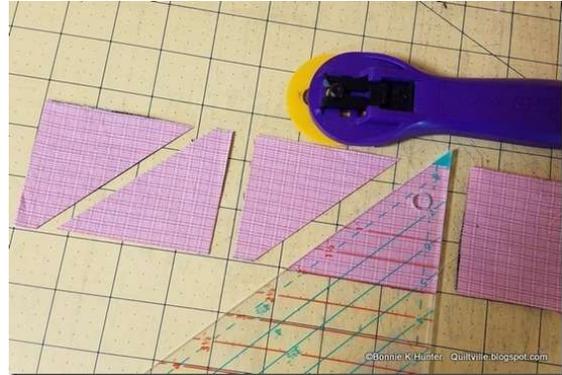
From 2 fabrics – a dark and a light!



From both dark and light fabrics cut:
 1 1/2" x 10" rectangles: 1 from each fabric.
 2 1/2" x 7" rectangles: 1 from each fabric
 2 1/2" squares: 2 from LIGHT fabric

These are the MINIMUM length of rectangles that you can use to get the pieces you need for each block.

As I started cutting, I cut these sets and set them aside, preparing to kit up my blocks further as time allowed. Cutting things to this size first kept my cutting table cleaner and more organized and I could put the fabrics that I'd already used away.



Cutting 4 triangle pairs.

Place the two 2 1/2" x 7" rectangles with right sides together. Using the 2" (finished) line on the Essential Triangle Tool, cut 4 pairs of matched triangles ready to sew. Refer to the videos tab at the top of the blog to see the demonstration on how to use this ruler if you are unfamiliar with it.

If you are not using this method, you can use any method you desire that gives you 4 half square triangles measuring 2 1/2" unfinished and finishing at 2" in the block.

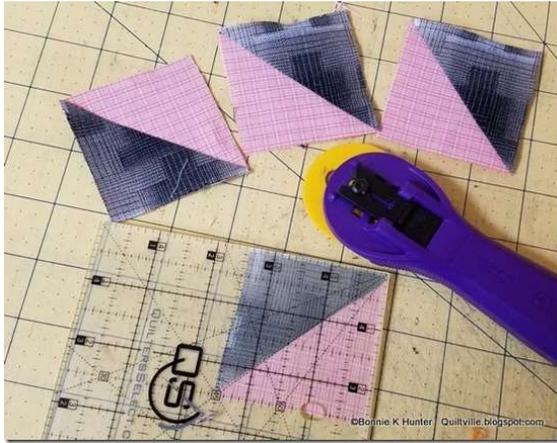
If you use another method, the fabric cutting I gave previously will need to be altered to fit your method.



Chain sewing triangles!

I tend to sew these with the blunt end going under the needle first, but each machine has its own personality and some machines with wider

feed dogs may work better if you send the pointy end first.



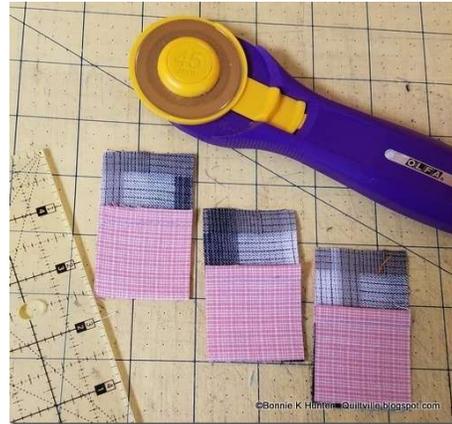
Press, remove dog ears and measure!

Sometimes I may have a slight bit of trimming to do especially with softer fabrics like recycled shirts, but trimming should be MINIMAL at best. Most often it's just the removal of the dog ear.



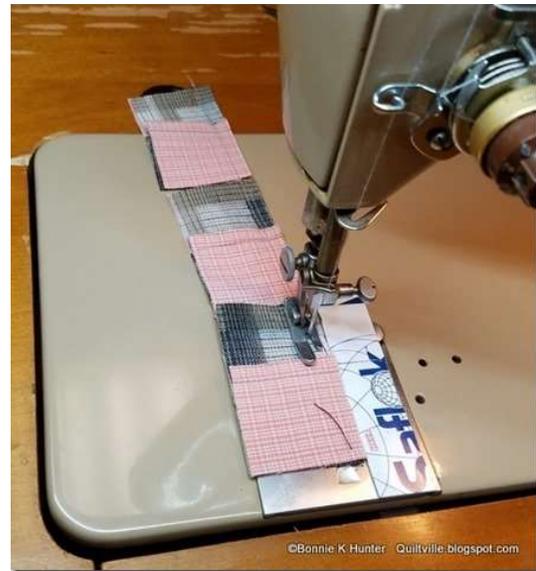
Sewing 4-patch strip set!

Stitch the two 1 1/2" x 10" strips with right sides together. Press to the dark and measure across the strip set to ensure you have reached the needed 2 1/2" measurement across the strip set.

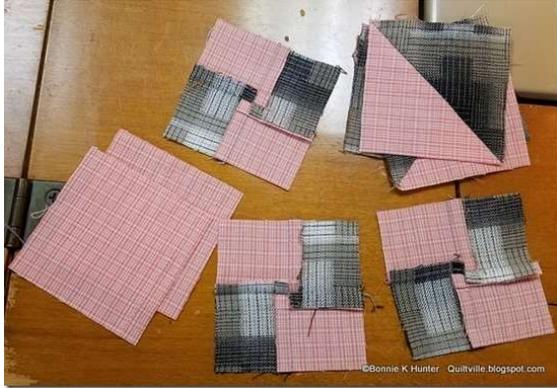


Matched pairs, ready to sew!

Cut the strip set into two 5" lengths, and place them right sides together with seams opposing and nested on the cutting board. Light fabric on dark, dark on light. Cut three 1 1/2" sub-cuts from the set. There is an extra 1" added to the measurement of the strip set for trimming and squaring.

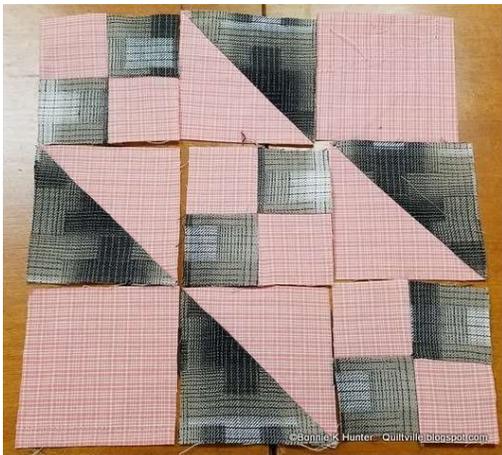


Chain sew the pairs.



Spin those 4-patch seams!

For more info on spinning the seams, refer to my article "Spin the 4-patch Seams!" found under the Tips & Techniques tab at the top of the blog.



Block laid out, ready to web!

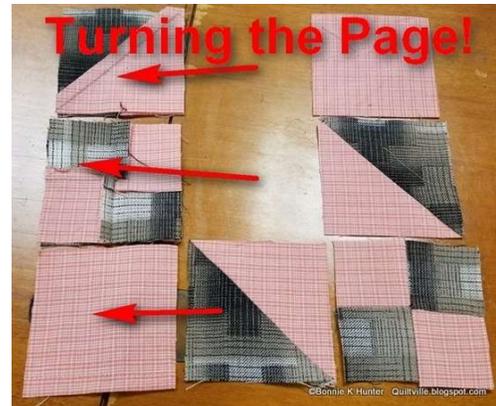
The question I am asked most often is "What do you mean by webbing?" I've talked about it and even shared it by live Quilt-Cam many times but as some are having a hard time grasping, I thought this simple block could be another explanation of how this works.

More info on Webbing, please view the August 2017 Quilt-Cam episodes where I show webbing a whole quilt top.

The whole premise is to build the block (or quilt top) in rows across, leaving each row connected

to the others by the chaining threads that hold the rows together.

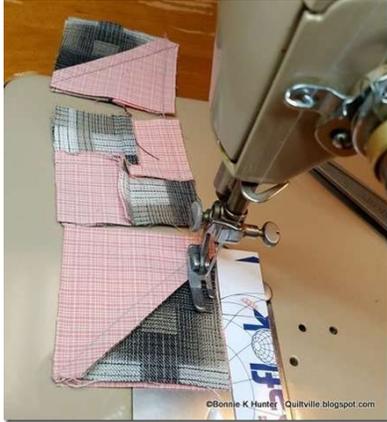
This is especially helpful with asymmetrical blocks where triangles can easily go awry if we pick up things in the WRONG order, forcing us to turn things around before sewing, and then having to cut things apart, lay them back out again, and continue on.



"Turn the page, don't close the book!"

If you have heard me say this before, this is exactly what it means. we tend to read from left to right. So many out of habit will take the farthest upper left piece and put it right sides together with the second unit in the top row. But think about it. If you do it that way, how do you have to move it to your machine to put the seam on the far left of that pair? You'd have to turn it all the way around to sew. And from this point on you are building your block upside down and backwards. You'd be forced to cut your chain apart to lay things back out again because you can't continue chaining on with pieces in that order.

If you bring the far left units over on top of the middle units you are indeed "CLOSING THE BOOK." Don't close the book!



Instead, following the arrows above, take the middle units and put them right sides together with the units in the first column. Now it is easy to pick those pairs up in order and sew them into a chain.

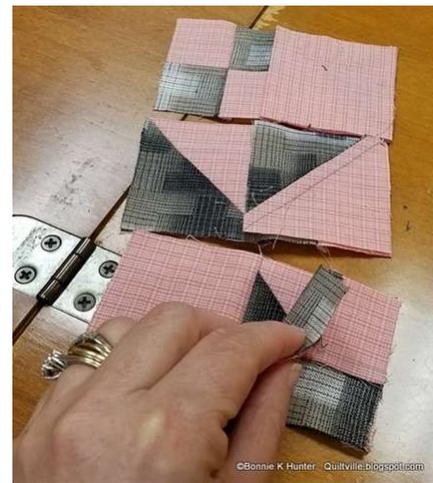


“Turning the Page” to add the next column!



Units still chained on the left...ready to add column 3.

RESIST cutting your chains apart at this point! The chaining threads do two important jobs. They keep you in order so you don't go flipping things around and get lost, and they also keep seams from popping open before the block is completely sewn together. If you must clip chaining threads, do it AFTER the block is assembled.



All the way down!

You can pin these in place, or just pick up one unit at a time to add it to your chained block as it goes through the machine.



Press units in each row in the direction of the red arrows.

Join rows to complete each block. There is no need to trim the chaining threads.

Press the last two seams that complete the block in the direction of the blue arrows.

This is not your normal 9 patch way of pressing but I need this to happen:

Adding the last units to all 3 rows.

Pressing Matters:

Sometimes we can say “press everything to the dark.”

Sometimes we say “Press it like a 9 patch”

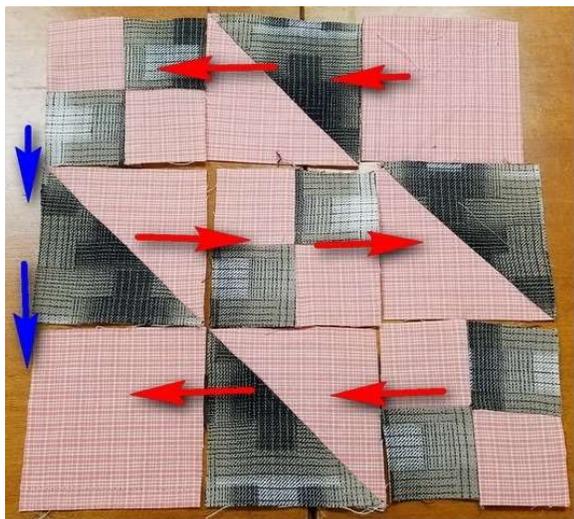
Sometimes it all depends on how you intend to use the block in the quilt, what it will be positioned next to, and how you will rotate it.

Sometimes – it’s a crap shoot!

And in this case if I want to set them pointing all the same direction like the antique quilt that inspired my foray into this project, I need to do this:



Back side of two blocks, side by side.
See the opposing seams?



Side block moved to the top – still nesting! YES!

And pardon my messy backsides – shirting fabrics can be thready, and these are just a bit.

Blocks should measure 6 1/2" unfinished and finish at 6" in your quilt.



You can arrange blocks this way!



Or how about this way?



But I really like what this is doing!

No matter what you do with your blocks, I hope you enjoy the process!

Quilt on, everyone!

Bonnie

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