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The Bag Making Bible

THE BAG MAKING BIBLE

The complete creative guide to sewing your own bags

Lisa Lam *Foreword by Amy Butler*



Synopsis

The ultimate practical guide to sewing fabulous bags from expert Lisa Lam! Detailed photographs illustrate every technique in this unique book, from choosing fabric to inserting fastenings. Expert tips, trade secrets and inspirational advice result in professional and beautiful results. A capsule wardrobe of eight exclusive designs features easy-to-follow instructions and full-size patterns. Whether you're getting started, improving your technique, or want to design your own, this is the book you'll grab for every bag you make!

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Customer Reviews

Lisa Lam is obviously an extremely talented bag maker, and the bags she shows in this book are proof of that. It's a lovely book, full of inspirational photos, but my problem with the book lies with the instructions for each bag pattern. If you are buying this book for inspiration, then go for it. However I would caution that if you are buying this book for instructions on how to make the bags, it is extremely confusing. I've been sewing for over ten years and know how to read a pattern. I feel that Lisa tried to compress her patterns to fit neatly into each page and did not give enough space to thoroughly explaining each step of the pattern: a) instructions for each step are too brief b) there are

only photos for some steps; on steps without photos she leaves me confusedc) the photos are cropped to show only a small piece of the bag she is working on, so I cannot figure out which way the zipper/fabric/etc is supposed to be facing

I am so tired of being let down by sewing books. Either I don't like the patterns or the supplies needed cost more than the book itself, etc. When I pre-ordered this book I really tried not to get my hopes up too high. I opened the book and thumbed through the patterns but I was so thrilled to see more than just patterns. Lisa Lam organized this book in a great way. There are only 8 actual purse patterns BUT the skills she teaches you really allows you to be creative and create ANY bag you want ANY size with ANY kind of additions (pockets, hardware, zippers, straps, etc.). I LOVE THIS book. I am actually going to return a different purse making book because all that I need (and more) is in Lisa's book. Even if you are a beginner you will love this book and she will walk you through how to sew your own handbag! I hope to find a book that makes making dresses as fun!!!

I had this book on preorder early on, because I was familiar with Lisa Lam's excellent blog about bag sewing--it's one of the few sewing books I've ordered without reading any reviews. I just knew that it would be good, since Lisa's blog is so outstanding. Fortunately, I was not at all disappointed. The book is really two books in one. First, it's an excellent reference book that gives you all the details you need to construct your own bags, from basics like gussets, to more advanced techniques involving hardware. There are tips and tricks interspersed throughout the book, and I really learned a lot on the first read (and I've sew a lot of bags!). The Bag Making Bible is also a project book with eight patterns to sew. The projects range from simple totes to complex projects such as a briefcase-type messenger. While eight projects isn't as many as you often see in sewing books, they're eight high-quality projects, and no filler like is so common in craft books. The photography of the process of bag-making is really helpful as well, especially when it comes to illustrating techniques related to unfamiliar hardware. One of the things that stands out to me, is that the author chose to make her sample projects in a variety of fabrics, rather than the quilting cotton that's so commonly used for all projects in sewing books--this really shows the diversity of looks you can achieve by making your own bags. If I could improve two things about this book, I would change the binding to lay-flat spiral binding and alter the pattern sheets so they can be used without tracing. However, both of those design choices do keep the price of this excellent book lower, so they are small complaints greatly outweighed by the high-quality instruction in the Bag Making Bible.

I was very excited to order this book after finding Lisa's blog with extremely easy to understand tutorials with many photos. The book has condensed to one page what her free tutorial had in 15 pages. Well, I can understand she probably didn't want to waste 15 pages for one subject but one page is not enough for some of these more difficult ideas. I can't figure out some of these from her instructions. Also found it difficult to read as the text is on glossy paper in gray text.

This is a great tutorial-esque/how-to guide but there are a few mini pitfalls that could derail your bag-making journey. I love the U-Handbag blog and shop, Lisa Lam is a wonderful example of DIY done right. I highly anticipated the book based on reviews. And a complete aside, I had it sitting in my cart forever because I couldn't figure out when it was going to get in more copies, it finally cancelled the transaction and I had to buy it through a 3rd Party seller for a higher price - not my idea of a good time but I digress. While many of the concepts in the book are offered for free on her blog what you don't get are the great projects (i.e. patterns). My biggest "pro" mark is for her breadth of knowledge. From pockets to lining to construction she covers all the basics and the next step. However, my biggest "con" is that in some explanations the information is completely lacking and/or poorly edited. My favorite example is how to insert a flush zipper pocket. She describes how to measure the width of the zipper opening as measuring the length of the teeth and then adding 1 cm. What? Another love/hate is the pattern inclusion. I can't decide if I like the compact layout (so you can enlarge/decrease size necessary) or if I hate it because it unfolds into a huge poster of pattern parts and I have to contend with creases. I would still recommend this book as it's far more comprehensive than what you'd typically get but it would've been nice if instructions included were a bit more clarified. Many of the concepts are easy after you've gone through it once but some take a little bit of brain power, willingness to mess up, and some extra yardage.

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