

Tessellating Hearts

by Jeri Auty



As I made my first Tessellating Pinwheel block I became intrigued with how you can take square blocks of color and change the blocks into interlocking spinning pinwheels. Depending on the color, value, and placement of the fabrics, you can create patterns where the pinwheels either stand out from or blend in with their neighbors. The heart shape of this quilt wasn't planned—it simply emerged as I played with the arrangement of the blocks on my design wall. For more detailed information on making quilts, see the AQS Quiltmaking Essentials at www.AmericanQuilter.com.

Choosing fabrics

I chose light, medium, and dark cool blues, and a range of warm reds including two fabrics that contained both blue and red. The white-on-red print is mostly red. The red-on-white print is mostly white.

For the prints, I chose fabrics with lots of texture and movement in their design. The tone-on-tone fabrics tend to blend in and become part of the background texture.

Assembling the layout

Using the squares layout diagram as a starting point, lay out a grid of 11 x 13 squares on a design wall, floor, or bed. Cut additional 6½" x 6½" squares to replace any squares that seem out of place.

FABRIC & CUTTING REQUIREMENTS

Skill level: Intermediate

Quilt size: 65" x 73¾"

Finished block size: 4⅜" x 4⅜"

- Requirements are based on 40" fabric width.
- Strips are cut selvage to selvage unless otherwise noted.

White tone-on-tone –
½ yard

• 8 A

Assorted red-on-white
prints – ½ yard

• 9 A

Assorted white-on-red
prints – ⅔ yard

• 13 A

Assorted red tone-on-
tone prints – ⅔ yard

• 18 A

Red tone-on-tone print –
½ yard

• border #1, 7 strips 1" x 40"

Assorted red & blue
prints – ½ yard

• 7 A

Assorted light blue
prints – 1⅓ yards

• 1 strip 3¾" x 39¾"

• 1 strip 3¾" x 30½"

• 21 A

Medium blue tone-on-
tone print – ½ yard

• 10 A

Assorted medium blue
prints – 1 yard

• 1 strip 3¾" x 33¾"

• 24 A

Assorted dark blue
prints – 1⅓ yards

• 1 strip 3¾" x 78½"

• 1 strip 3¾" x 73"

• 1 strip 3¾" x 48½"

• 17 A

Dark blue tone-on-
tone – 2⅓ yards

• border #2 top/bottom, 2 strips 6¼" x 67½" **

• border #2 sides, 2 strips 6¼" x 64¾" **

• 16 A

Binding – ⅝ yard

• 8 strips 2¼" x 40" for 288" of continuous binding

Backing – 4⅞ yards

• 2 panels 37" x 82"

Sleeve (optional) – ⅝ yard

• 2 pieces 9" x 32½"

Batting

• 73" x 82"

* These strips must be pieced.

** These strips are cut parallel to the selvage. An extra 2" has been added to allow for adjustments.

SUPPLIES: Template plastic; fine-grit sandpaper or sandpaper dots; fabric marking pencil; sharp fabric scissors

ROTARY CUTTING

Rotary dimensions include seam allowances.

A

A – 6½" x 6½"

Make sure you are happy with the layout before continuing.

Using an accurate $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance, join the squares into rows, pressing seam allowances for adjacent rows in opposite directions. Measure as you sew—each sewn square should be 6" wide and each row should measure 66 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long from raw edge to raw edge. If your measurements are different, adjust seam allowances as necessary.

Join the rows. The joined rows

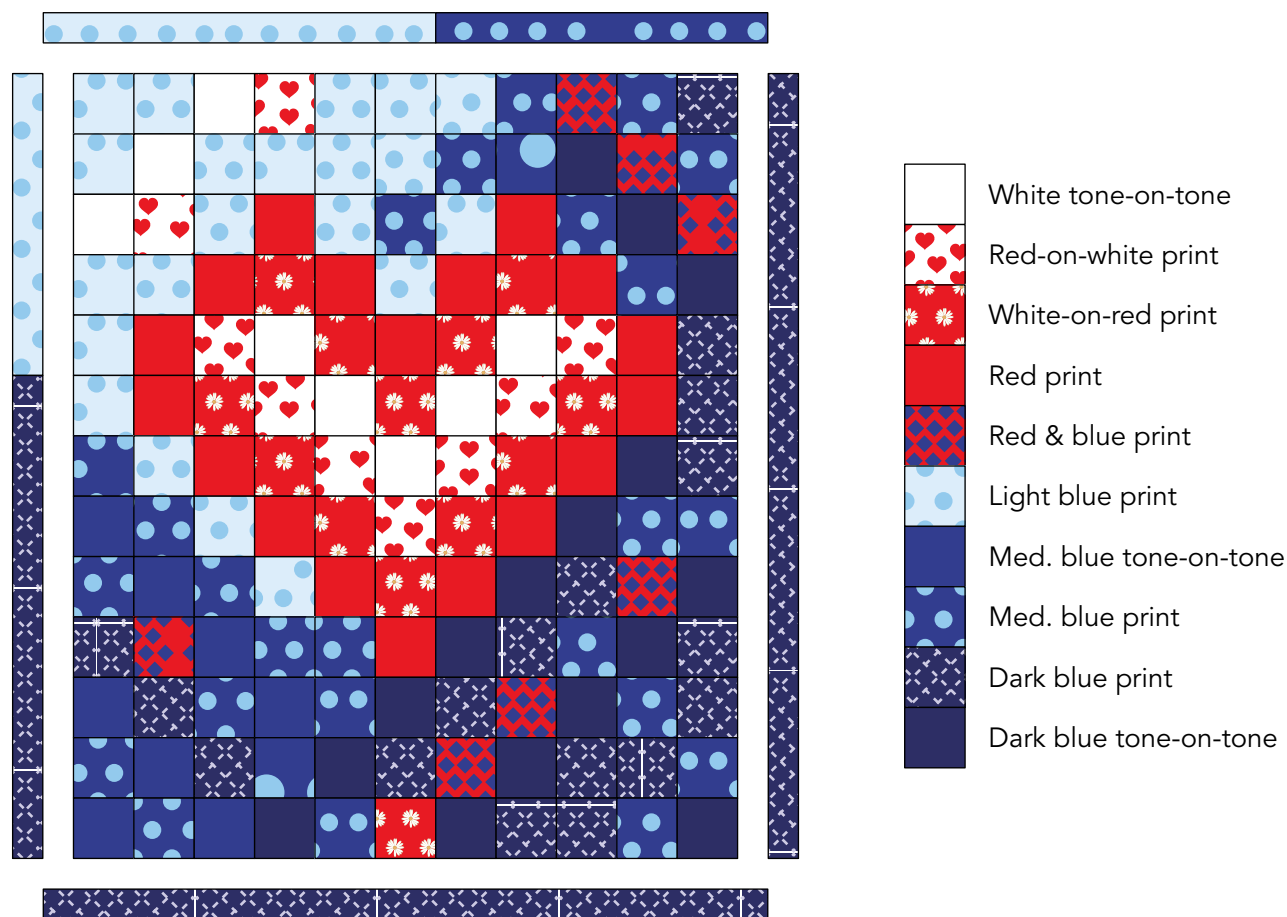
should measure 78 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from top to bottom, raw edge to raw edge.

Join the light blue print 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ " strip and the dark blue print 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ " strip to make one long strip. Sew to the left side of the quilt. Press seam allowances away from the center. Sew the 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 78 $\frac{1}{2}$ " strip to the right side. Join the light blue 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 39 $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips and medium blue 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips. Sew to the top of the quilt. Sew the dark blue 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 73" strip to the bottom.

Marking the quilt top

Trace the pattern on page 79 onto template plastic and carefully cut out all around. Glue small sandpaper dots to the wrong side of the template. This will prevent the template from slipping on the fabric.

Before marking and cutting up your assembled squares, I recommend you make a sample to test your template and the process. To do this, cut 9 squares 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from a variety of fabrics. Join the squares to make a Nine-Patch mea-



Squares layout

suring $18\frac{1}{2}$ " x $18\frac{1}{2}$ ". Cut and add $3\frac{3}{4}$ " wide border strips to all sides. *Editor's note: Photos 1 through 6 show the next steps for marking and cutting tessellating Pinwheels using a sample Nine-Patch quilt. Follow these same steps for the larger TESSELLATING HEARTS quilt.*

Lay the quilt top on a table, right-side up. Starting at the upper-left corner (including the border), place the template with sandpaper dots down and the perpendicular center lines over the seam intersection as shown in photo 1. Draw around the template using your favorite marking tool. I like a soft lead mechanical pencil. Since you will mark the entire quilt before cutting, make sure the lines don't rub off.



Photo 1

Move the template to the right. Place the center lines over the next intersection of blocks and border. The template should butt up against the first set of marks you made as shown in photo 2. Draw

around the template. Don't worry if the lines overlap slightly. When you cut around the markings, you can split the difference as needed. Continue marking across the top and all rows in order (photo 3).



Photo 2



Photo 3

Cutting & turning the blocks

Before you start cutting, plan how you are going to keep the new blocks in order once they are cut and rotated. As I cut and turn the blocks, I pin them to my design board. It is important to pin the new blocks in place so they don't fall off—once they are out of order, it is difficult to get them back in order.

Using sharp scissors, cut out the Pinwheel block in the upper-left corner. *Tip: For this step, cutting with scissors is more accurate*

than using a rotary cutter. As you cut the new pinwheel squares, set aside the leftover single-fabric squares and triangles for use in another project. Turn the block 45° to the left (photo 4). Continue cutting and turning all the blocks. As you work, you will see the pinwheels emerge (photo 5).

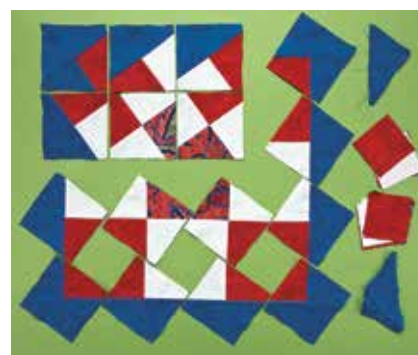


Photo 4



Photo 5

Now that the hard part is done, you can focus on sewing the rather fragile blocks together. For TESSELLATING HEARTS you should have 14 rows of 12 blocks. Join the blocks into rows, being careful not to stretch the edges. Press seam allowances in alternating rows in opposite directions (photo 6). Join

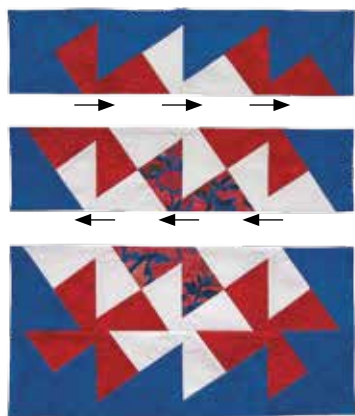


Photo 6

the rows. Press seam allowances all in one direction.

Adding the borders

Join the 1" red tone-on-tone border #1 strips into one long strip. Press the quilt center well.

Measure the vertical length of the quilt through the center and cut 2 border #1 strips to this measurement. Sew them to the sides of the quilt. Press all seam allowances toward the border. Measure the width of the quilt through the center, including the side borders you just added. Cut 2 border #1 strips this length and sew them to the top and bottom of the quilt.

Measure and sew dark blue border #2 strips to the quilt in the same manner.


Quilting and finishing

Layer the backing, batting, and quilt top. Baste the layers together. My quilt was quilted in an all-over heart design with red thread. I selected red because it blended into the body of the quilt but gave texture to the dark blue borders.

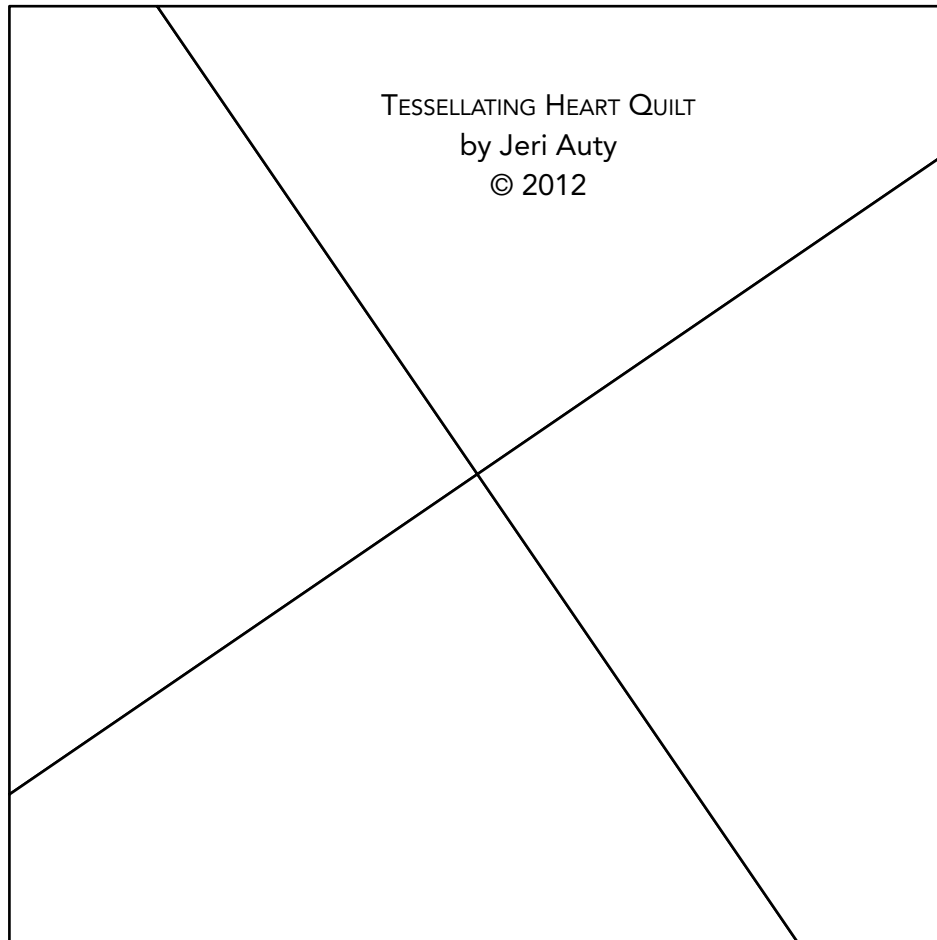
Sew the binding strips together to make 288" of continuous binding. Finish the edges of your quilt with double-fold binding. To display your quilt, make a sleeve and sew it to the back of the quilt.



Changing the block size

The Tessellating Pinwheel block can be scaled up or down to accommodate any size square. To do this, before making the template, enlarge or reduce the pattern so the lengths of the crossed center lines are the same as the dimension of the finished solid-fabric square. After the squares are sewn together, add a border of strips cut $\frac{1}{2}$ the size of the cut square plus $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Remember the finished size of the Tessellating Pinwheel section of the quilt will be about 25% smaller than the original sewn squares. 

TESSELLATING HEARTS, 65" x 73 $\frac{3}{4}$ ",
designed and sewn by Jeri Auty,
quilted by Diane Cowell



This template measures $4\frac{7}{8}$ " x $4\frac{7}{8}$ ".

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