

Lifestyles: Engaging projects for your crafty side

In the worst economic downturn since Herbert Hoover, DIY consciousness is pure gold. The three books reviewed here will help you save money by doing it yourself in three areas that can be huge money pits: your wedding, your house and your creative dreams.

Esther K. Smith has been called the queen of paper crafts. This Queen Esther has earned her crown with gorgeous work in two previous titles, *How to Make Books and Magic Books & Paper Toys*, and through decades of yummy letterpress creations as co-founder of Purgatory Pie Press. Her new book, **The Paper Bride**, focuses on do-it-yourself paper goodies for any stage of a wedding, from save-the-date cards to anniversary albums. The projects do not require any special equipment, “only a clean kitchen table with a pair of sharp scissors and a few simple tools.” Neither do they require expertise. Anyone remotely handy with paper can find something doable and spectacular within, whether a pop-up map, a paper boutonniere, hand-written place cards or a funky table runner made of pages from a bridal magazine. Some designs are trickier, like programs and booklets that call for needle and thread, but they needn’t dissuade readers from attempting less ambitious goals. And the lovely thing is that at each step of each project, opportunities abound for personalization: wording, writing, typesetting, images and more. The point is to create a unique, hands-on something for a unique, hands-on occasion.

Finding beauty in the everyday

In **House of Havoc**, syndicated At Home columnist Marni Jameson dishes out hard-won how-tos for the best kind of home improvement: living more beautifully with others. The potential for havoc increases with the number of humans and animals we live with, but Jameson’s blend of humor and helpfulness can handle anything. As if her own credentials aren’t enough, she enlists expert aid on specific quandaries: a certified kitchen coach for making meal prep more efficient; a professional organizer to tame drawers of disaster; a DIY specialist for a cabinetry makeover; and a home magazine editor to demonstrate the staggering usefulness of a glue gun. Jameson’s strategies address five crucial categories: “time, stuff, space, meals and

housekeeping," all viewed through the lens of accommodating and adapting to the quirks and realities of living with other people. For an example, see Mantra #4: "Honor the acts of daily living. If it's a habit, make it beautiful." Jameson brings home the fact that while there is an art to interior design, "there's also an art to living."

Craft a new career

For folks who create unique things with a view to getting paid, this book should prove quite useful. **The Handmade Marketplace**, by Kari Chapin, is a charming, easy-to-use guide to getting your stuff "out there," written by a crafter for crafters. This guide is organized into three sections. Part one is devoted to finding out what you want—goal clarification, business basics and branding yourself—and part two details how to get it: marketing how-tos, community resources, websites and blogs, advertising and publicity. Part three gets down to the details of selling, whether at craft fairs, online or in brick-and-mortar stores, or through other less obvious (and more creative) venues. Chapin also brings in experts she calls the Creative Collective: experienced artisans, artists and business people who comment on topics throughout the book. The appeal of handmade goods of all kinds is growing; just look at the phenomenal success of sites like Etsy.com, the biggest online presence for buying and selling handmade creations of all sorts. **The Handmade Marketplace** will be helpful for makers at any stage, from just-thinking-about-it to ready-to-quit-my-day-job. In this thriving market, says the author, there is "room for everyone."

Joanna Bricetto would love to make a paper flower but cannot find a clean kitchen table.

<http://www.bookpage.com/reviews.php?id=10002154>