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# Victorian Lace Today



## Synopsis

Within this compendium, the very first knitting books have been translated from sketchy, often-inaccurate instructions into richly-colored, exciting patterns for modern-day accessories. This blend of history, mystery, and hands-on technique debunks myths about Victorian life as it inspires beginners and ambitious knitters alike. Included are instructions for Victorian lace as the Victorians never saw it in glorious detail, up-close and on location in and around Cambridge, England. The lace patterns progress from the first, most basic, edgings to the sophistication of "real" lace. Forty patterns are included scarves and shawls, capes, and fichus with comprehensive information on the tools and techniques of lace knitting for beginners and enough challenges to keep experienced or ambitious knitters engaged. Delicate and decorative, historical lace patterns are within the reach of today's knitters in this book of adventurous ideas with a vintage touch.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

...then you'll love this book. Victorian Lace Today has a similar coffee table book type presentation to Meg Swansen's classic A Gathering of Lace. The designs range from what I would consider beginner level to advanced intermediate with the majority falling in the intermediate range. The publisher rates most of the designs as Intermediate with a few falling into the Experienced category and some rated as Easy. In terms of complexity, I see nothing in here like A Gathering of Lace's Mediterranean Lace or Frost Flowers. It appears that all the designs are charted, which is my preferred method but those who like written out directions may not be happy. There are several

designs knit up in Kidsilk Haze and similar yarns, many done in laceweights like Zephyr and some done in sport/dk weight yarns like Fiesta's La Luz. One of the nice features is a yarn comparison chart in the back of the book, offering advice about substitutions and emphasizing that substituting yarns is nothing to fear. I noticed several of the patterns mention the possibility of using a heavier yarn and doing fewer repeats. The general tone of the book seems to offer reassurance that lace isn't all that hard without trying to dumb down the whole process. There's a nice section in the back that encourages you to design your own shawl and offers lessons in designing both centers and edgings. The presentation of the shawls and scarves is both lovely and informative. Images are clear and sharp and the lace is generally spread out in a way that allows you to actually see the design. There is a bit of history offered but not an overwhelming amount. I'd say it's just enough to give you an appreciation of the genesis of the designs and the time and place in which they were originally created. I was going to count the number of designs but got sidetracked somewhere around 30. I know there are at least a dozen designs that jumped immediately to my personal 'must knit' list. I would say a majority of the designs are for rectangular stoles but there are quite a few triangular shawls and a few circular designs. There are a couple of collar/fichu type designs which are sweet but I find it difficult to picture them getting much use and a lovely little cape that seems to fall into the same category although it might work very nicely with evening wear. One thing I like is that there is a wide variety of color in the designs. I like a white shawl as much as the next person but I enjoy seeing gorgeous stoles done up in acid green and raspberry and pumpkin. Of course, color is the easiest thing to change but it's fun to see these lovely designs knit up in sparkling contemporary colors. All in all, I'd highly recommend the book to anyone who loves lace and would like a large selection of beautiful wearable patterns that offer a bit of a challenge but won't take a lifetime to knit.

I've been anticipating this book for a while, and it does not disappoint. Counting all of the variations, there are over 40 designs in the book. About half of them are on US size 7 (4.5 mm) needles in yarns like Kidsilk Haze, less intimidating for those new to lace knitting. For the more experienced lace knitter, the sections in the back of the book have great information about understanding lace patterns and adjusting them to suit, as well as neatly fitting borders around corners. Most of the patterns are rectangular stoles with all-around knitted-on borders. There are a number of scarves that make use of fancy edging patterns on the ends, with a fairly plain center section for fast knitting. There are a few triangular shawls, and a very dramatic full hexagon and circle. The photography is gorgeous. Locations are mostly around Cambridge or in the house and formal gardens at Belton House. The scarves and shawls are mostly in bright colors -- think hot pink, chartreuse, coral,

scarlet. In addition to the artsy "shawl on a bridge railing" sorts of shots, there are plenty of good close-ups for most of the items, allowing you to see detail. So what keeps it from a full 5 stars? First, if you're looking for really intricate lace patterns, this is probably not the book for you. Most of the designs are fairly geometric with short (though easily-memorized!) repeats. The thing that irritated me the most is that there's no comprehensive listing of all of the projects. The main table of contents lists the chapters (largely divided by source of patterns) and each chapter has its own table of contents listing the designs. But there's no way to quickly find something if you can't remember where it was from. I also find the use of the yarn weight classification system a little misleading. That's somewhat made up for by the photograph of all the actual yarns used, though. Those quibbles aside, I'm delighted to have this book and have already started my first project -- after owning it for less than a week. I can foresee making many more.

Unquestionably this is a beautiful book visually. However, it is rife with mistakes! Be sure to look online for corrections and clarifications. I think there are more errors than have been found thus far.

This is a beautifully compiled book. It is not only a pattern book but also would make a nice coffee table book. Each section is preceded by a history and background of the area they are trying to describe. I really love this book, the only reason I did not have it more than 3 stars is that there are some mistakes in the charts for the patterns so you when you read them be careful to make sure they make sense to you. Also some of the yarns they used are difficult to find or EXTREMELY expensive so you may want to substitute. I jumped right in with several patterns and they work out very nicely. What ever you create from this book will truly be a work of art.

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