

## Greek Key

DESIGNED AND MADE BY PAM ROCCO

A long time ago, Pam Rocco of Santa Cruz, California, took a drawing class where she learned how to make thumbnail sketches. “The aim was to try out many different ideas quickly to help me spot the best one,” she said. “I don’t usually sketch my ideas before I sew, but it occurred to me that, before attempting a full-sized quilt, I could make a smaller, simpler version, like a thumbnail, to try out my idea in fabric. If it didn’t turn out, I wouldn’t waste much time or material.”

### MATERIALS AND CUTTING

Requirements are based on 40" fabric width. Strips are cut crosswise and pieced. Read entire assembly instructions before cutting fabric. Pattern has been simplified for ease of construction.

QUILT SIZE: 40" x 54"

MATERIALS	YDS.	CUTTING
Light/Medium Blues	1½	1 A, 1 B, 1 C, 1 D, strips
Dark Blues	1¼	2 A, 1 B, 1 C, 1 D, strips
Binding	½	6 binding strips 2¼" x 40"
Backing	2¾	2 horizontal panels 30" x 44"
Batting		44" x 58"

**TECHNIQUES USED:** machine piecing, improvisational piecing, machine quilting



*Greek Key* is one of those “thumbnail” quilt designs, an enlarged courthouse steps variation of the classic log cabin block. The placement of dark and light fabrics in a monochromatic palette creates the swirling design, and improvisational cutting and piecing techniques add to its organic qualities.

Because of the improvisational nature of *Greek Key*, in this pattern we give you approximate measurements as guidelines, but we encourage you to take Rocco’s thumbnail sketch approach when you make your own version. Don’t spend too much time worrying about exact dimensions; rather, take this as an opportunity to work more intuitively and improvisationally. At 40" x 54", Rocco’s *Greek Key* is a wall hanging, but you could easily make yours larger – just add strips until your quilt is a size that pleases you.

You can read Rocco’s full column, “Words to Quilt By,” in the October/November 2015 issue of *Quilters Newsletter*. *Greek Key* was machine quilted by Linda Barbin of Hollister, California. ▶

**ASSEMBLY**

**1** Read all instructions before cutting fabric. Study the quilt photo and quilt assembly diagram, noting the fabric placement and improvisational piecing. The cutting dimensions given are approximate and slightly oversized to allow room for improvisational cutting and piecing; trim patches and strips as desired. Wash, starch and press fabrics. Cut the patches listed in the materials and cutting box and shown in the rotary cutting diagrams. Wait to cut strips.


**2** Referring to the quilt assembly diagram, join 3 A's as shown in the center of the quilt top. Join the dark blue B to the left side of the unit and the light blue B to the right side. Trim if desired; you may want to turn your cutting mat over to reduce the tendency to follow a straight line. In the same manner, join C's to the top and bottom of the unit then join D's to the sides, paying attention to color placement, to make the center unit.

**3** When cutting strips for the following sets of borders (labeled E through L), you may want to cut a gentle freehand line by turning your wrist slightly back and forth as you cut away from yourself. Again, note that the cutting dimensions given on the quilt assembly diagram are approximate and assume that you will be trimming the quilt top to some extent after adding each set of borders; you may choose to measure the sides to which you'll be joining borders and cut your strips to match those measurements.

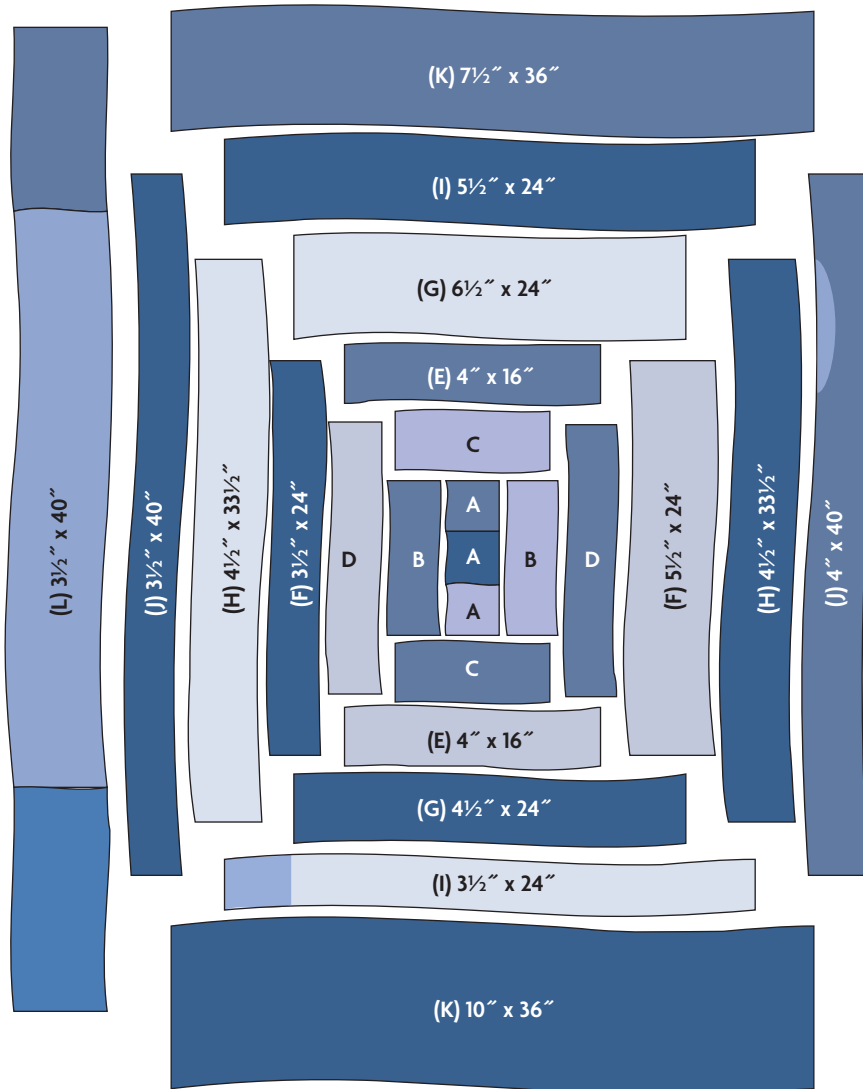
Referring to the quilt assembly diagram, cut a dark blue strip and a light blue strip for the (E) borders. Join the light blue strip to the bottom of the center unit, bringing the raw edges together just before they arrive at the presser foot; you may want

to use a walking foot in your machine. Trim any fabric from the strip that extends beyond the end of the unit. In the same manner, join the dark blue strip to the top of the unit.

In the same fashion, continue joining borders (F) through (L) using freehand cutting and improvisational piecing techniques and trimming the quilt top as desired after each addition. Square the quilt top after adding the final border (L).

**4** Mark baptist fans quilting motifs as seen in the quilt photo or mark as desired. Layer the backing, batting and quilt top. Baste. Quilt the marked motifs or quilt as desired. Bind the quilt to finish. 

Dimensions indicate approximate cut sizes, not finished sizes.



**QUILT ASSEMBLY**

**ROTARY CUTTING**

Measurements include 1/4" seam allowances. Align arrows with lengthwise or crosswise grain of fabric.

