

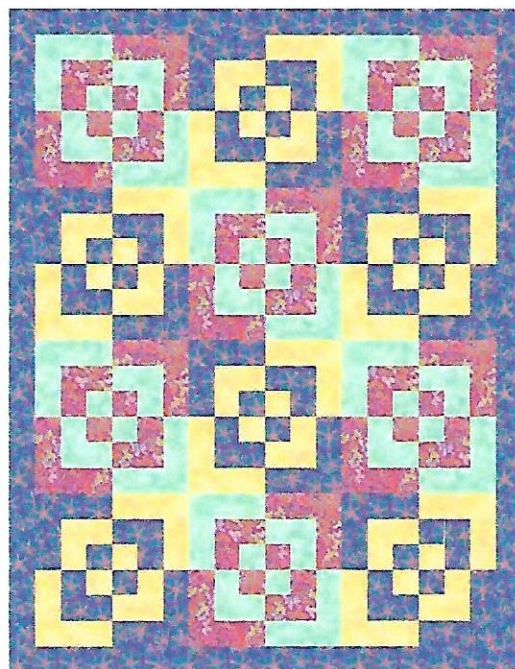


Pattern of the Month - April 2013

by Evelyn George

"Oriental Box Puzzle"

There are several methods for making this popular block, which has many different names. The technique offered here is similar to the one used for "Disappearing Nine-patch," where simple pieced blocks are cut up and rearranged to form a new design. You could use precut 2 1/2" strips plus 5" squares, but it is also fat-quarter friendly. (The advantage of using FQ's is that the strips can be cut with lengthwise grain rather than crosswise, so they will be less stretchy and therefore more stable.) For this version, choose an equal number of light and dark fat quarters. Each pair of fat quarters makes 2 blocks.



Choose one light and one dark fat quarter which look good together. Stack together on cutting board, lining up selvages vertically to your left. Cutting through both layers, trim off selvages, and trim other 3 sides squarely if needed. Keeping layers together, continue cutting as follows.

First, cut one 5" wide vertical strip off left hand edge. From one end of this strip cut a 5" square. From remainder of 5" strip, cut two 2 1/2" x 9" rectangles.

From rest of stack, cut four 2 1/2" strips and cut them into lengths shown on diagram. (There will be some scraps left over. They can be used for another block or project.)

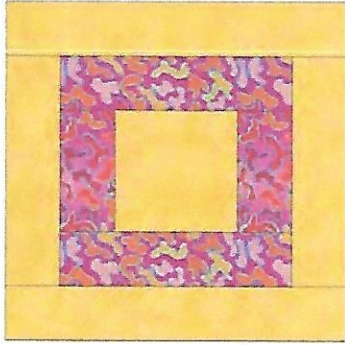
(1 light and 1 dark FQ, layered and cut together)↓

Pieces needed for two blocks:

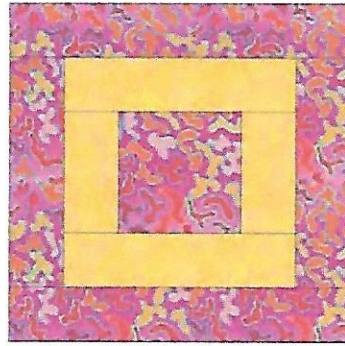
- 1 light and 1 dark 5" square
- 2 each light and dark 2 1/2" x 5" rectangles
- 4 each light and dark 2 1/2" x 9" rectangles
- 2 each light and dark 2 1/2" x 13" rectangles

scrap	scrap	scrap	scrap			
2 1/2" x 9"	2 1/2" x 9"	2 1/2" x 9"	2 1/2" x 9"	2 1/2" x 13"	2 1/2" x 13"	scrap
5" x 5"		2 1/2" x 5"	2 1/2" x 5"	scrap	scrap	

Arrange the pieces as shown below, and stitch together to make two Oriental Box blocks with opposite colorations, one mostly light and one mostly dark. Add strips from center outward, pressing seams toward the darker fabric.

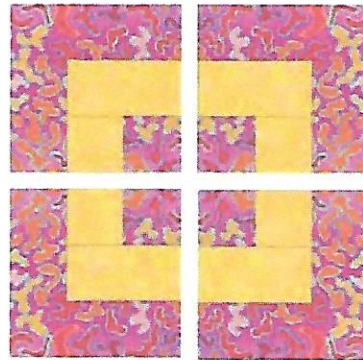
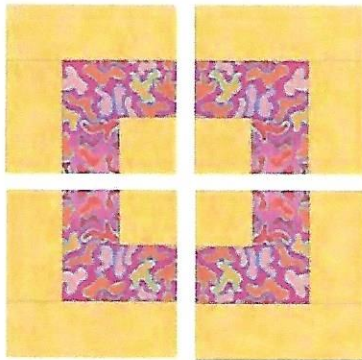


Oriental Box (light)

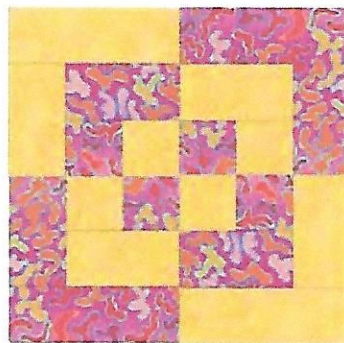
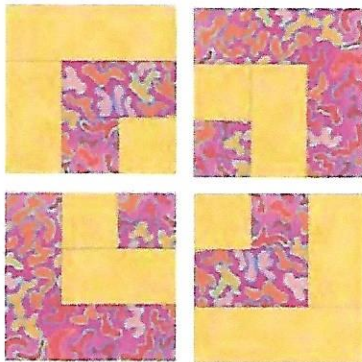


Oriental Box (dark)

Measure (or fold) and cut each Oriental Box block horizontally and vertically through the center, to make 4 equal pieces.



Now, trade two pieces from each block with each other, and rotate them as shown; stitch together to make two identical Oriental Puzzle blocks. (If making lots of blocks in different color combinations, you could combine assorted quarters randomly --just use any 2 light and 2 dark ones per block).



Oriental Puzzle

Other arrangements are also possible, by rotating the quarters into different designs. Play with them until you have one you like, then sew the 4 quarters of the blocks together. The finished block size is about 12" square. Make as many blocks as you like, for the size quilt you'd like to make. For the most interesting look, use several light and dark combinations, or make it as scrappy as you like!