Embroidered Shoulder Tote

pattern by Ellen March
embroidery by Emily Thompson of Life Sew Savory

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Create a faux leather and suede tote bag embroidered with fuzzy, textured Filaine thread. This bag has a vintage vibe yet a high-end finish.

Supply List

- 1 yard of faux leather (fabric A)
- (2) 13"x15" rectangles of faux suede (fabric B)
- 1 yard of cotton lining fabric (fabric C)
- (2) 14"x17" rectangles of Sulky Fuse 'n Stitch
- Sulky Sticky + Stabilizer
- Sulky Poly Deco thread (construction)
- Sulky Filaine thread (embroidery)
- Sulky bobbin thread (embroidery)
- Embroidery designs digitized for heavyweight thread (openwork, redwork or labeled "thick thread")
- Size 100/16 Organ universal needle (embroidery)
- Size 80/12 Organ leather needle (construction)
- 2 yards of 3"-wide woven ribbon
- Premade faux leather piping
- Decorative button (approximately 2"–3" diameter)
- Binder or quilt clips

Prep & Cutting

From fabric A, cut 2 lower bag pieces and one 3" x 4" strip for the button loop.

From fabric B, cut 2 upper bag pieces.

From fabric C and Fuse 'n Stitch, cut 2 bag pieces.

Cut two 15" lengths of faux leather piping.

From fabric C, cut two 3 ½" x 33" rectangles. Stitch two short ends with right sides facing; press the seam open. Press the long edges and raw ends ¼" toward the wrong side; set aside.

Tip:
Make your own faux leather piping by wrapping cotton cording with strips of faux leather. Baste the long strip edge after enclosing the cording.

Embroidery

Chose a design that fills a 4 ½"x12" space (or thereabouts). If needed, combine designs using software or the machine screen to fill the space.

When choosing a design for heavyweight thread, make sure it is digitized for 12wt. If not, you'll need to reduce the density by at least 20% and elongate the stitches in software. Designs marked "brushed," "fur," thick thread," are perfect.

Load the design(s) into the machine.

Hoop a rectangle of Sticky + with the paper side facing up.

Embroidery continued

Score the paper within the inner hoop ring, and then peel away the paper backing to reveal the adhesive.

Decide on the design placement. For the featured tote, the design was embroidered along one bag-front, 2 ½" from the lower edge.

Tip:
Embroider fabric A before cutting out the lower-bag piece to ensure proper design placement. Transfer the lower-bag pattern onto the fabric right side using chalk. Embroider the design. Compare the pattern to the fabric outline; adjust the outline if needed so the design is straight and perfectly aligned with the lower edge.

Position the lower-bag fabric right side up on the hooped stabilizer, centering the desired design placement. Use your hand to smooth the fabric and adhere it to the stabilizer.

Disengage the auto-thread cutter on the machine, if applicable. This ensures the heavyweight thread won't have to pass through tough knots during embroidery.

Embroider the design using Filaine thread, a size 100/16 Organ universal needle and Sulky bobbin thread. Switch thread colors as indicated by the digitizer.

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Embroidery continued

After embroidery is complete, remove the stabilizer from the hoop. Tear away the excess Sticky + beyond the design perimeter.

Outer Bag

Swap the needle for a size 80/12 leather needle. Thread the needle and bobbin with Sulky Poly Deco thread. Install a zipper or piping foot.

Place one faux leather cording length along one lower-bag piece, matching the long raw edge and bag upper edge; clip along the seam allowance.

Outer Bag continued

Stitch the cording to the lower bag. Place one upper-bag piece right side facing the lower bag, with straight edges aligned and the cording sandwiched between. Move the needle two positions to the left. Stitch closer to the cording to secure all three pieces. Trim any extending cording ends even with the bag edges. From the wrong side, press the cording edge downward. Use a piece of cotton scrap fabric as a press cloth, if desired.

Repeat to create the remaining outer-bag piece.

Move the needle back to the center position.

With a moderate iron, fuse the Fuse 'n Stitch bag pieces to each outer-bag piece.

Button Loop Closure

Fold the button loop long edges toward the center. Then fold the rectangle in half lengthwise to conceal the raw edges.

Topstitch both long edges.

Fold the rectangle in half widthwise.

Position the loop ends along the outer bag without embroidery, centering the ends along the bag upper edge; baste within the seam allowance.

Strap Construction

Stitch the raw fabric C strap ends with right sides together; press open to create the lining strap.

Stitch the raw ribbon ends together with right sides together; press open to create the main strap.

With wrong sides facing, pin the lining strap (with pressed long edges) to the main strap (ribbon). Topstitch the strap with the ribbon side facing out.

Tip:
If using narrower ribbon (2" at least), adjust the width of the lining strap, accounting for seam allowances.

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Finishing

Pin-mark each outer bag lower-edge center. Use binder or quilt clips to secure one strap long edge to one outer bag, aligning the pin-mark with the ribbon strap seam. Make sure the ribbon side is facing the outer-bag right side. End at the bag upper edges.

Stitch the strap to the bag using a ¼" seam allowance. Backstitch securely at each upper-edge corner.

Turn the bag right side out. Topstitch each outer-bag upper edge, beginning and ending on either side of the strap.

Hand sew the button to the outer-bag right side (with embroidery). To close the tote, wrap the button loop around the button .

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TAPE PIECES 1 AND 2 ALONG DASHED LINE
AND CUT 2 FROM FABRIC C FOR LINING
AND 2 FROM SULKY FUSE 'N STITCH™

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Embroidered
Shoulder Tote

CUT 2 FROM FABRIC A
FOR FRONT AND BACK BAG
(INCLUDES ½" SEAM ALLOWANCE)

FOLD

1″ SQUARE

SULKY®
CREATE WITH CONFIDENCE

Embroidered
Shoulder Tote

CUT 2 FROM FABRIC B
(INCLUDES ½″ SEAM ALLOWANCE)
FOR FRONT AND BACK BAG

FOLD