



Quilts Up Close ...

Dancing With The Gauchos

© Kathy Kansier, Ozark, Missouri



(Left) Best of Show. This quilt was adapted from a 14th century Italian painting. It has raw edge appliqué, threadwork and micro stippling. The quilt maker has only been making quilts for the past three years. (Above) Best Use of Color. The maker of this quilt was 8 months pregnant at the time of the festival and she now has a baby boy. Her mother is also an award winning quilt maker.

In November 2007, I had the privilege of traveling to Brazil to judge and teach at a quilt festival. I met quilt makers from all over Brazil and saw wonderful quilts. Recently I have been writing a series of articles for TAS on edge treatments for quilts. I plan to continue with these articles but I wanted to do a special article about quilt making in Brazil for this issue.

When I received the request to judge and teach at the *Festival Brasileiro de Quilt e Patchwork em Gramado*, my husband, David was a bit concerned about letting me travel alone to Brazil. We knew there were travel alerts for Americans in Brazil, especially in the large cities, so he decided to go with me on the trip. I was glad that he did and it is a trip we will always remember. We boarded a plane for Sao Paulo, Brazil on the same day that I finished teaching for a full week at the 2007 Houston Quilt Festival. I was hoping to catch up on my sleep during the long flight but my feet were burning from the cramped leg space. The airport in Sao Paulo was hectic with the longest lines I've ever seen at an airport. Very few people spoke English and if it hadn't been for David, I might still be wandering around that airport trying to find my suitcases and the next plane. We breezed through customs and boarded another plane to Porte Alegre in Southeast Brazil. From there, we were met by a driver who took us for a 3 hour ride up the mountains to the city of Gramado.

Gramado is a charming and picturesque little town in the southern region of Brazil. It was settled by European immigrants and has a mixture of Swiss, Germans and Italians as well as Brazilians. The town is known for its Swiss chocolates, Brazilian coffee, resorts, restaurants, a glass factory and giant hydrangea bushes that grow wild along the sides of the road and in the mountains. There is a beautiful waterfall and one of Brazil's largest canyons near Gramado. The Brazilian cowboys who tend cattle in the area are called Gauchos. Each year the city of Gramado hosts a Brazilian film festival and a quilt festival.

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(above) Viewers Choice was the hit of the show. (right) This appliqué quilt was designed and made by the lady who made all the arrangements for me to teach and judge at the festival. It was juried into the 2008 AQS show in Paducah.



Some of the students in Kathy's class including an 8 year old girl who kept up with the class and added a sunken treasure chest to her scene.



Mr. & Mrs. Netto are the organizers of this festival. They live in Gramado and also own a quilt shop.

For the past ten years, over 10,000 quilters have come to this quilt festival from all areas of Brazil and other South American countries. They return each year to see each other, to learn new quilt making techniques, to shop and to see the quilts in the show. We spent five days at this festival. I judged the quilts that were entered into the show, taught two all day classes on appliqué and gave a lecture.

On the last evening of the festival, we attended a banquet where local gauchos cooked meat on large spits and served a variety of Brazilian dishes. The tables were then removed and the gauchos entertained us with guitars and accordions and dances in which they stomped their gaucho boots to German sounding polkas. Yes ... I got up and danced with the gauchos and all the other quilters. It was the end of perfect week and one we all hated to see end. I had met so many wonderful quilt makers at this festival and I'm sure we will all look back at the festival with fond memories. While the quilts brought us together, it is the friendships we developed that will bind us together for a long time. I've included some photos of the trip and quilts for you to enjoy. 🍷

Editors Note: we will be posting Kathy's article on the TAS website so you can see the photos in color.

Kathy Kansier is a quilt maker, judge and AQS Certified Appraiser and she writes regular articles for our newsletter. Kathy specializes in appliqué, edge treatments and embellished quilts. Her services are available for guilds and shows and her web site is: www.kathykansier.com