

K2tog (Knit Two Together)

A continent apart, knitting business binds sisters together.

by Laura Rintala

It began as a conversation on the West Coast. One sister asks the other, "If you could do anything for a living, what would you do?" This particular conversation leaned toward doing something that would inspire health and creativity for women. "Our initial conversation was a dreamy kind," says Susan Wolcott, owner of the Y2Knit yarn store, "but, a couple of weeks later, I called Jill and said, 'Let's do it!'"

What came of the conversation between Susan and her sister, designer Jill Wolcott, was the idea for knitting retreats. Susan and Jill both learned to knit as children, but picked it

up again more recently in the '90s. For Jill, who had studied fashion design and was designing non-knit fashion, knitting became another element for her to work into her repertoire. For Susan, knitting was a creative outlet that kept her grounded while she finished graduate school and worked a full-time job. Knitting had deeply impacted both of their lives, and they wanted to share that with other women.

Not looking for just a weekend of knitting instruction, their vision was to create an oasis of support, inspiration and creative growth through knitting. That initial dialogue took place in April 2001, and the first retreat was planned, scheduled and came to fruition just six months later in October.

Y2Knit retreats are four- to five-day events for knitting instruction and relaxation, held in retreat houses or at Bed and Breakfast facilities around the country, where good food, a massage therapist and plenty of knitterly advice and companionship are available.

A World Apart

So how do the sisters manage to run the retreats while living on separate coasts?

"Email," says Jill, who lives in San Francisco. "This couldn't have happened 10 or 15 years ago."

Susan, in Funkstown, Md., goes on to say, "If we were sharing an office, this probably would have ended a long time ago. When we get together the energy is very intense. If we were in the same office, we'd always be planning and never executing." Susan explains that they get together for idea sessions, "then go off to our coasts and work."

Jill says that the two have a regularly scheduled phone call once a week to discuss issues, and then they email every day.

Fully Vested

The retreats are not all Jill and Susan are conspiring on. In 2003, Susan plunged deeper into the soft-crafts sector and opened the Y2Knit retail store. "I was spending a lot of time on [the



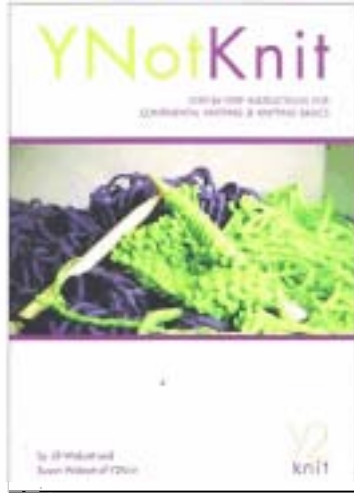
Jill (left) and Susan Wolcott of Y2Knit

retreats] while working a full-time job. I needed to make some changes in my life, including where I lived and how I lived. The store came as an inspiration. It seemed the logical extension of what we were already doing (the retreats, patterns and selling yarn online)."

Y2Knit, in Funkstown, Md., is a small yarn store that features patterns, classes, workshops and, of course, plenty of carefully chosen yarns.

Jill and Susan are continually designing and creating knitting patterns as well, and each month their Web site, www.y2knit.com, features one of their free patterns.

Jill and Susan have also just put the finishing touches on their first book, *YNotKnit* (released April 2006).



***YNotKnit* is now available from Y2Knit. For more information on ordering, call 301-766-4543 or visit www.y2knit.com.**

YNotKnit is a fully illustrated how-to book for continental knitting. Jill says continental knitting is more ergonomic and easier on your hands and arms. It also requires less movement, so it's a better method for knitting in cramped spaces, such as coach class on a fully loaded transcontinental plane flight.

The book sports **90** of Jill's illustrations that show the relationship of the needles to each other as well as how the yarn and hands work in conjunction with the needles, something other knitting guides don't cover for continental knitting. Jill and Susan also have another book in the works.

For more information about Y2Knit retreats, call **301-766-4543** or visit www.y2knit.com. **SNA**