

Toe Dipped into Test Knitting

As readers of this blog know, I've knit for a lot of purposes - for me, for family, for gifts, for charity, for my own designs and also for store samples. But until now, I'd never done formally *test knitting*.

Test knitters take the words (and sometimes images) as printed and try them out - give the pattern a whirl to see if it makes sense. As a designer, I know how easy it is to make a mistake in a row of knitted directions, or manage to screw up a way of phrasing something. The test knitter is supposed to catch these problems.

A test knitter is different from a tech editor, who is looking for more than whether the pattern works - that person usually will be putting the pattern into a defined template of abbreviations and customs for however it will be published, as well as checking the math for all the different sizes of the pattern (crucial for sweaters in a multitude of sizes). It's also different from knitting a sample, I learned through this process, because there is no requirement (at least in this case) that the actual item be finished in exactly the way that the pattern requires, as long as the actual directions are tried out for accuracy.

Deadlines are very important - most often, you may only have a couple of weeks to complete the item needed - and to be fair to any designer, I wouldn't agree to something that I couldn't finish in the indicated time.

I've now finished the item that was requested for test knit, and the designer was smart to ask me to knit one of the variations (probably different than the one she knit) to see how it went. I ran into a minor issue that was related to my variation, so I noted the problem, how it could be resolved (two ways), and picked one for the item that wouldn't change anything else and moved on. At the end, after trying out the indicated bind off to make sure it worked, I substituted one that I liked better and finished the item.

Test knitting isn't done for the pay - I'll probably get a free copy of the pattern when published, sometimes there is a little more provided. Rather than a profession, I see it as a contribution to the wider knitting community (because it totally is a bummer to run into a defective pattern). If you're interested in the test knitting world, there are groups on Ravelry that you can check out and see if test knitting might be your thing.

Here's a small bit of the test knit that won't give anything away -- I'll post more when the final pattern gets published:

Revknits

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