

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 73 (2007)  
**Heft:** [8]

**Artikel:** A modern craft with a long traditions: Quilts  
**Autor:** Brühlmann, Trudi  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-944347>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 02.04.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

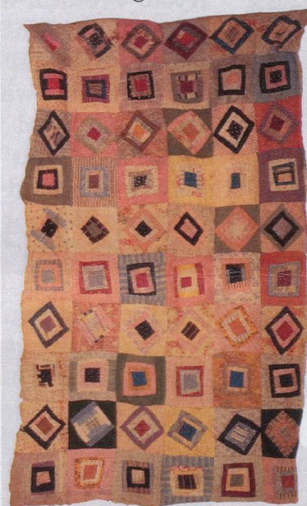
## A modern craft with a long tradition: Quilts

Traditional Amish patchwork was basic. The simple geometric shapes of squares, rectangles and triangles were used. The early style of quilting was designed simply to hold the quilt together and prevent the batting from slipping between the front and back pieces. As time went on, quilt making became more and more sophisticated, and the later quilts are distinguished by their bold compositions in intense colours and large fields of fabric embellished with ornate quilting motifs.

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a few changes had taken place in Amish patchwork. The use of block patchwork and patchwork designs that depicted objects such as baskets, stars and houses were two of these changes. However, the Amish still used scrap fabrics and limited themselves to a narrow range of colours.

In the early 1960s outside influences began to alter life for the Amish quilt makers. Tourism came to many Amish communities. Although people were impressed with the patterns and workmanship, the colours were not always to modern taste, and Amish women were asked to make quilts in fancy fabrics supplied by the tourists. The Amish realized that quilts could provide income, and they began making quilts to order. Some even decided that buying fabric in pretty prints and making quilts speculatively might be a good idea. For the most part, however, in their homes the Amish continue to use the plain quilts of their tradition.

Quilt making is not limited to the United States, nor the Amish community: There are quilting groups all over New Zealand, with fabric shops catering for their needs. The "disease" has spread to the Swiss community, too: I know of a few infected with this bug in the Wellington Club.



Anna Hunger, Taranaki ca 1830

The earliest known Swiss/New Zealand quilt was made by Anna Hunger, in Taranaki, probably around 1830. As the quilt has been altered over the years, it is not known whether Anna originally made it before she came to New Zealand or brought a whole lot of scraps with her, for she certainly would not have been able to purchase these fabrics in New Zealand at that time. However, the backing at least was hand sewn in New Zealand. It was constructed from flour and oatmeal bags

which depict the trademark names of goods produced in New Zealand, as well as cut-down old pyjamas and tablecloths.

tb

## Swiss folk songs the American way

A CD "Amish Lieder/Amish Songs", was released this year by the Bern-based publisher, Zytglogge. It highlights the debt the Swiss owe North American communities for preserving part of their cultural heritage.

Some of the more conservative Amish groups still speak a Swiss-German dialect and have kept alive Swiss folk songs. Singing is the only way the Amish can express themselves musically since they are not allowed to play instruments or listen to recordings.

Every Amish church service begins with an hour of song, and community members also sing while they work. They love to yodel whether they are doing their washing, sewing, peeling vegetables or taking in the corn harvest.

The Amish have kept alive songs in Bernese which are found neither in printed form nor in folk music archives. An example is "My Vatter isch e Chäser gsi", which was probably never written down because it is slightly erotic.

The most prominent number on the CD is the Hasli-bacher song, a 32-verse ballad about the last Amish martyr, sung by an Amish group and a modern version by three Swiss singer-songwriters.

from swissinfo

**iROX** *the Swiss weather station brand !*



**\$69.00**  
incl. delivery!  
(RRP \$79.00)



**\$149.00**  
incl. delivery!  
(RRP \$189.00)

[www.weatherstation.co.nz](http://www.weatherstation.co.nz)

**phone Carlo 09 430 30 67**



**\$200.00**  
incl. Delivery!  
(RRP \$245.00)



**\$495.00**  
incl. Delivery!  
(RRP \$595.00)

[www.telescopes.net.nz](http://www.telescopes.net.nz)