

5. Beginning with the designs on either side of the centre in Row 1, arrange the sets of shapes and fuse them to the background with a hot, dry iron before moving out to the next set of shapes. When Row 1 has been completed, begin at the centre and add Row 2 in the same manner.

6. Add the sets of shapes in Row 3 directly below Row 1 and the sets of shapes in Row 4 directly below Row 2.

Stitch the appliqué

1. Finish the edge of each appliqué shape by machine or hand stitching a row of blanket, zigzag or any preferred stitch.

2. Michele machine stitched the edges of her appliqué. She suggests that if your machine does not have a blanket stitch, try adjusting the width and length of the blind hemstitch to achieve a mock blanket stitch.

3. Work the machine stitching using an open-toed appliqué/embroidery presser foot on your sewing machine. This improves stitch accuracy by providing an uninterrupted view of the edge of the appliqué shape.

4. Place machine-embroidery thread in the top of the machine and a neutral-coloured thread on the bobbin. Use a size 10 sharp needle in the machine.

5. Test the threads and tension on a piece of scrap fabric to ensure the tension is correct and no bobbin thread is visible on the front of the work. If you can see any of the bobbin thread, turn the tension down. For example, if normal tension is 4 you may need to turn the tension down to 3 or less.

6. If your machine has the needle down feature, engage this for appliqué – it is most useful for turning corners.

7. To anchor the stitching, if your machine has a tie-off stitch, test this first to ensure it does not unravel. The new Pfaff Quilt Expression 4.0 has a wonderful stitch that ties a knot at the beginning and end of a row of stitching. It also cuts the thread. Alternatively, there are a number of other ways to fasten the threads at the beginning and end of the stitching: pull the threads to the back of the work and tie off by hand, stitch a few straight stitches before commencing blanket stitch or turn the width of the blanket stitch to zero and stitch a few stitches before turning up the width.

8. Adjust the width and length of the blanket stitch to suit the design and size of shapes you are working on, preferably keeping a consistent stitch size throughout the design. Michele adjusts her default width and length to 1.5 for most of her work.

Finish the quilt

1. Cut the length of backing fabric in half, remove the selvages and join the pieces to make a backing for the quilt with one vertical join.

2. Following the instructions for Preparing the Quilt Sandwich in Basics on page 119, pin or baste the quilt top, batting and backing together.

3. Michele machine-quilted her quilt. She free-motion quilted around each appliqué shape and echo-quilted across the panels, avoiding the appliqué shapes. She used a stencil outline of the appliquéd flower to mark a quilting design at the centre of some of the larger background spaces. After the flower shapes were quilted she echo-quilted around them.

Bind the quilt

1. Following the instructions for Binding the Quilt in Basics on page 119, prepare two lengths of binding from the black and white 2¼in strips.

2. Leaving a 4in tail of black binding, begin stitching the binding to the top edge of the quilt approximately 2in along from the centre seam on the white side of the quilt. Continue around the quilt mitring at the corners, stopping approximately 2in from the centre bottom seam. Leave another 4in tail.

3. Join the white binding to the black side of the quilt in the same manner, beginning approximately 2in from the centre bottom seam.

4. Join the strips of black and white binding at the centres with straight seams, trim the excess and join the binding to the centre top and bottom of the quilt.

5. Trim any excess backing and batting. Fold binding to the back of the quilt and hand stitch in place.

Add the final embellishments

1. Michele hand stitched sequined braid around the inner edge of the binding.

2. A heat-set tool was used to fuse six small Swarovski crystals at the centre of each flower. ©

To purchase a copy of Michele's book, William Morris in Appliqué, ask at your local quilt shop or contact the publisher, Country Bumpkin. Visit Michele's website: www.michelehill.com.au

