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## ***Boutique Knits: 20+ Must Have Accessories*** Laura Irwin

Make knockout, trendsetting accessories that stand out from the crowd with ***Boutique Knits*** (Interweave, \$21.95), a stylish new knitting book by Laura Irwin, the designer behind the hand-knit ready-to-wear line Precious, which is sold in fashion boutiques like Seaplane in Portland, Oregon. Now fans of Laura's designs—including her signature felted hats and stylish bags—can make them on their own with this collection of 20 modern patterns. This is the book for knitters who love showing their personal style with the “it” handbag, funky scarf, or the hat that makes heads turn.

Patterns cover a variety of knitting techniques in varying degrees, including felting, intarsia, Fair Isle, lacework, and cables. What sets this book—and Irwin's designs—apart is her use of common crafting materials and techniques in uncommon ways. What kind of uncommon techniques? Turning knitting on its side and working in a new direction. Using ribbing to turn a few unshaped geometric pieces into a curvy, clingy vest, and moving the bind-off to the front and center. Mixing felted and unfelted knits, not just for decoration but as structural elements. Knitting in pleats to create volume and dramatic decreases.

Irwin also incorporates into her projects non-knitting tools such as pliers, hammers, and a sewing machine. Many of the patterns employ unique adornment and embellishment: buckles and bolts borrowed from leatherwork close an intricately cabled belt, a chain handle finishes a felted bag with circle pockets, leather lacing dresses up a knitted bag, and grommets finish a half-felted handbag. Vintage lace, beads, ribbon, and fabric-covered buttons also appear.

*The Portland Tribune* in Oregon wrote about Irwin's design aesthetic in a profile published in May 2007:

*“In many ways, Laura Irwin, the woman behind the label Precious, epitomizes the Portland fashion designer. . . . Irwin has a strong aesthetic and formidable craftsmanship. Irwin's knits are unconventional. . . she introduces elements that are rarely paired with knits – chains, buckles and other hardware. The end product is a compelling hybrid, both homespun and high fashion.”*

Irwin says that she hopes the designs will surprise knitters and inspire them to improvise on their own:

***Boutique Knits*** is meant to outfit women with an eye on fashion in a collection of stylish and curiously assembled accessories and layers. I picture the knitter who will be drawn to these projects: She insists on seeing her fashion sensibilities reflected in her handmade projects. She pays attention to the little details on all of her favorite pieces in her wardrobe. She is brilliant and quirky. She's got even better ideas than she knows. She is a designer or artist, although she may not know it yet,” says Irwin.

**BOUTIQUE KNITS: 20 + MUST HAVE ACCESSORIES**  
Laura Irwin

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8 ½ x 9 • paperbound • 144 pages • 70 photographs • 20 illustrations  
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**About the author:** For the last five years **Laura Irwin** has designed the hand-knit ready-to-wear line Precious, which is sold at Seaplane, an independent designer boutique in Portland, Oregon. In addition to her ongoing apprenticeship at Pinkham Millinery, she also teaches knitting classes at Lint, a local yarn store in Portland. She has been a guest on *Knitting Daily TV* on PBS and on HGTV's *That's Clever*, demonstrating her felted hats and bags. She has also had projects in *Knitscene* and *Interweave Knits*, and her "Formal Boot Bag" was featured on the cover of *Bag Style* by Pam Allena and Ann Budd. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

**Join the knit-along at [www.BoutiqueKnitsBook.com](http://www.BoutiqueKnitsBook.com)**  
**Follow Laura's blog at: <http://preciousknit.blogspot.com>**

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Linda Ligon founded the company in the 1970s when she began publishing *Handwoven* and *Spin-Off* magazines. Since then, the company has grown to employ more than 100 people throughout the country, with corporate headquarters located in Loveland, Colorado and other offices in New York, New York, Malvern, Pennsylvania, Santa Fe, New Mexico, San Diego, California and Stow, Massachusetts. For more information on Interweave, visit [www.interweave.com](http://www.interweave.com) or call (970) 669-7672.

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