

# A tale *of two studios*

See SewBaby creator  
Ann Brodsky's personal and business  
sewing spaces



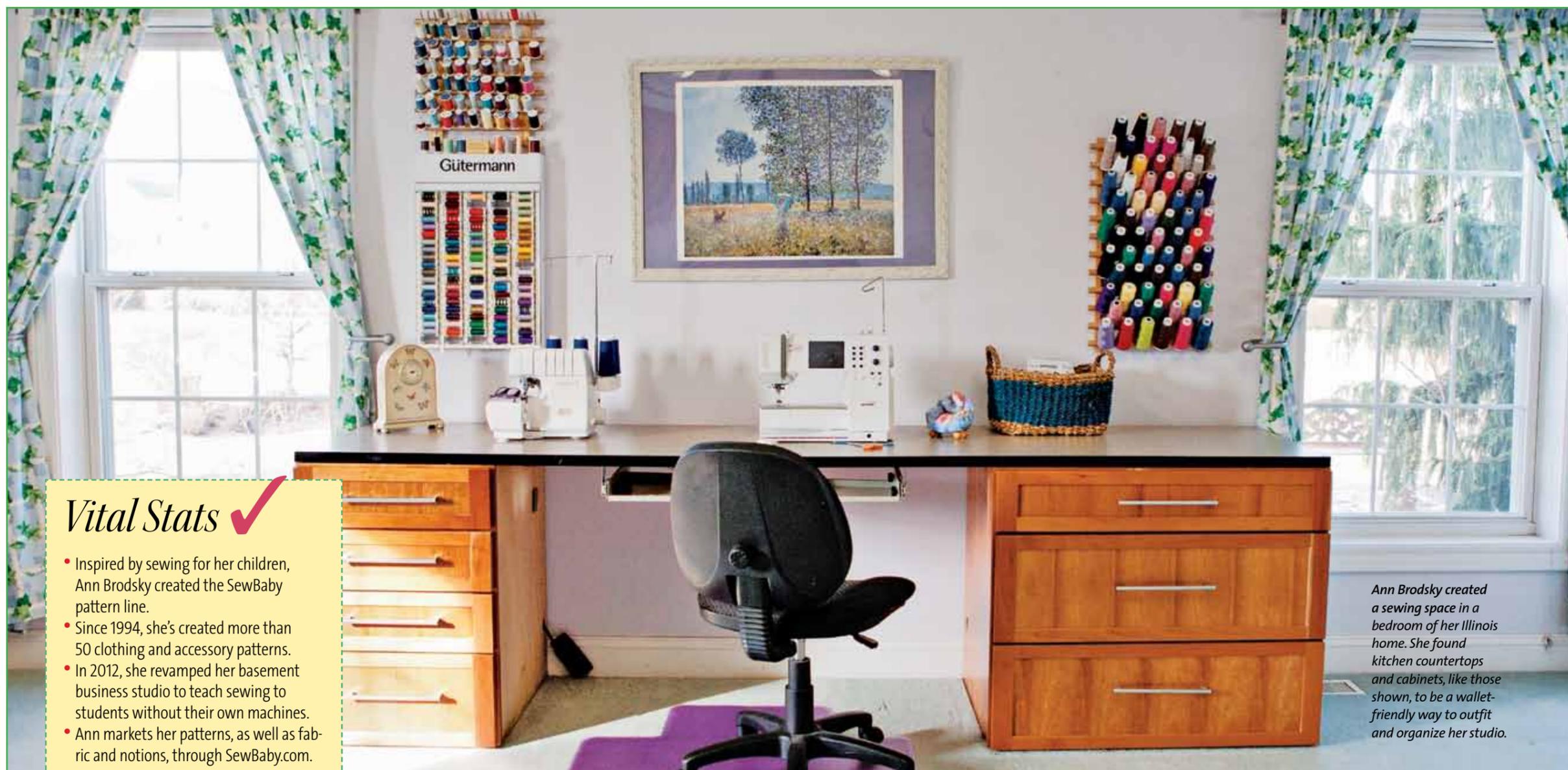
Child-friendly hues keep the studio bright.



Colorful bins organize and beautify.



Ann Brodsky sews, teaches, and designs patterns.



## Vital Stats ✓

- Inspired by sewing for her children, Ann Brodsky created the SewBaby pattern line.
- Since 1994, she's created more than 50 clothing and accessory patterns.
- In 2012, she revamped her basement business studio to teach sewing to students without their own machines.
- Ann markets her patterns, as well as fabric and notions, through SewBaby.com.

Ann Brodsky created a sewing space in a bedroom of her Illinois home. She found kitchen countertops and cabinets, like those shown, to be a wallet-friendly way to outfit and organize her studio.

Ann Brodsky loves to sew and share her passion for it. In 1994, she started her own business, SewBaby, specializing in fabrics and patterns for children's wear. In 2001, she built a house to accommodate SewBaby the business. In 2012, she revamped the business studio to include teaching space. She sews for fun, too, in a small and very organized bedroom studio.

Whether you sew for yourself or teach others to sew, are ready to revamp or set up a sewing space, Ann feels you don't need to spend a ton of money to make an inviting and functional space. "You'll need three sections, one each for sewing, cutting, and pressing. Measure your room, and



Fabric awaits inspiration in Ann's studio.

©The Taunton Press, Inc. Reprinted with permission from *Threads* magazine, no. 167.

# Sew much fabric, sew little time...



Fun framed patterns (above) and wall decals (right) decorate the classroom.

draw a plan so that you know what size furniture you can fit in it. Take into account natural light sources and electrical outlets when you are drawing your plan.”

To save money, she recommends auctions for great buys on business furniture. Desks and file cabinets can hold sewing machines and fabric. You can always repaint out-of-date or scratched furniture. Scour the dollar stores for inexpensive storage bins, as well as frames for wall art.

“Take time to think about your favorite colors, and don’t be afraid to put your

signature paint color on the walls,” Ann says. “This is your creative space, and it should reflect you.”

Last year, Ann and her assistant, Shirley Robbins, redecorated the SewBaby sewing and shipping area in the basement to accommodate a sewing classroom (since many of Ann’s community college students didn’t have their own sewing machines), Ann used raspberry pink, light aqua blue, black, and white, and repeated the colors in the ironing board covers, picture mats, rugs, chairs, and

furniture. The studio is a 700-square-foot room. The rest of the basement houses the SewBaby inventory. There are sewing stations around the room’s perimeter, with two large cutting tables in the center, a pressing station, and shelving units on the side.

She says that one of the studio’s best features is its creative energy, supported by the bright colors, the open space, and the wall décor. Ann has a pattern collection spanning five decades. “I wanted to share these wonderful vintage patterns with my students, so I framed the pattern envelopes and hung them around the room.” The walls feature decorative decals, along with the saying “Creativity is messy, and I am very creative.” Ann says “That about sums up my philosophy.”

*Sarah McFarland is Threads senior editor.*



The business computer sits in a corner of the classroom studio. It’s next to shelves of supplies for students: pattern catalogs to inspire and bins to store sewing notions and projects between classes.



Ann outfitted the classroom space with 4-foot-long folding tables and task chairs from an office supply store. The wheeled, armless task chairs are height adjustable.

**WEB** extra

See more images from the SewBaby workshop studio at [ThreadsMagazine.com](http://ThreadsMagazine.com).

Photos: Joanna Strauss



Shirley Robbins, Ann’s assistant, cuts fabric in the basement studio.



The basement studio also houses SewBaby pattern inventory and Ann’s fabric stock.

## TIP **Pattern storage solution:**

Keep the instructions and tissue in Ziploc bags, stored in boxes labeled by pattern company. Store the pattern envelopes in three-ring binders, sorted by garment type. If a binder gets too full, subdivide the contents, for example, woven versus knit dresses.

