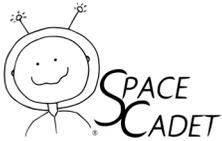




Six Tips to Get the **Most** Out of **Yarn Shows**

By Stephanie Alford for SpaceCadet, spacecadetyarn.com



One of the best things about being part of SpaceCadet is all the shows we get to go to. There is nothing like getting to meet our customers in person, put a face to a name, and help them put together some awesome color combination with our yarns!

But while I know that yarn shows and festivals are a ton of fun, I also know that they can be overwhelming and exhausting. So I've put together a little list of my top tips for getting the very best out of the next show you go to.

Tip #1: First, GO!!!

This one is crazy, right? I mean, of course you *go*! But it's surprising the number of knitters and crocheters I meet at trunk shows or other events who tell me they've never been to a yarn festival. And I totally get it – there are crowds and parking issues, and maybe a distance to drive (or... heh heh... maybe some self-control issues...?) – but the experience is totally worth it. This is your opportunity to not only take classes and meet other like-minded folks, but also to spot new design and color trends, and to “meet” in person the yarns you would otherwise be able to see only online.

So take this opportunity to explore every booth and snuggle all that lovely yarn. At SpaceCadet, some of our most delicious yarns just don't sell online. It makes me crazy that our customers can't tell how incredibly soft that extra cashmere makes Aurora (at 20% cashmere, it is amazingly softer than yarns with just 10%!). They can't see how subtle and beautiful Lucina's sparkles are through a computer monitor. And though I've managed to capture the sheen of Maia in photographs, how can that also show its incredible softness and drape? As wonderful as these yarns are, their best qualities come alive only when you see them in person. If you're looking online, you're getting only half the story. So come to the show and meet in person the yarns you've

been curious about – it's a completely different experience!

Tip #2: Head to your Favourite Vendors' Booths First

Though it may seem easiest to just wander around the festival and look at the booths as you come to them, there's a real advantage to checking out the show map and head to the your favourite vendors' booths first. We often debut fantastic new yarns and products at our shows, and they can sell out fast. We often dye an amazing Show Exclusive Colourway in quantities that we hope is plenty – but shows are so unpredictable that it's always worth getting to our booth early so you're not disappointed.

So take five minutes when you first arrive at a festival to sit down with the show map and quickly work out which booths you really want to see, and head for those first. Or, even better, look at the map online before you even get there – it makes the anticipation that much more fun and, I promise, you'll be so glad when you snag the sell-out yarn of the show before anyone else even sees it!



Tip #3: Start at the Back of the Show

Ok, you've been waiting for the show to start, the doors have opened at last, and there, right in front of you, is a sea of amazing yarny goodness so beautiful that you want to dive into the first big pile you see. Resist that urge! Because right behind you is a sea of other knitters and crocheters who want to do the exact same thing, and those first booths are going to get crazy crowded really fast. But at the other end of the show – far away from the doors and all the other festival-goers – are a bunch of booths that are completely empty. And having been a vendor in one of those booths, I can tell you that the other end of the show stays fairly quiet and empty for quite a while before the crowd finally makes it down there. That means that if you head there first, you can have 30 minutes of peaceful shopping (and first dibs on the best stuff!) before those booths get crowded.

Work your way from the back of the show to the front and you'll still get to see everything, but you won't be fighting the crowds every single step of the way. And you'll get a whole different experience of the show!

Tip #4: Get the Class Schedule to Know When to Shop

Every show I've ever done has had times when the booth is a crush of people and other times when it's completely quiet, and the two usually correspond to the class times.

When all the classes are going on, the market floor is usually quiet – and a real pleasure to shop – but the minute classes let out (and they all seem to let out at the same time), it's suddenly so crowded that you can't even get into some booths. Take that time to go and find some lunch, or just knit and chill with some new friends you made in class. Then, if there's a time when the classes start up again but you haven't got one booked, that's the time to head to the market. You'll be able to shop in peace, to really look at what's on offer, and chat to the dyers and vendors you've been wanting to meet. Shopping during class times rather than when they're out is the difference between a festival that is fun and relaxed and one that is needlessly stressful, so check that schedule and then swim against the tide!



Tip #5: Search Out the Show's Hidden Events

Many shows have more than just classes and a market – giveaways, designer talks, and fashion shows all add to the fun. You don't want to miss any of those – and some of them are last minute additions – so make sure you check not only the show's programme, but also your favourite vendors' websites and mailing lists.

For instance, at a past festival, we hosted book signings by designer Alasdair Post-Quinn, Craftsy instructor and author of *Extreme Double-Knitting*. It was a collaboration directly between SpaceCadet and his publisher, Coop Press, so it wasn't in the festival programme and you'd have known about it only through our blog or mailing list. Yarn shows are full of wonderful surprises and to make sure you don't miss the best stuff, check out the special events on both the show's and the vendors' websites.

Tip #6: The Last Hour or Two are the Best for Chatting

Even the busiest shows get quiet in the last couple of hours of the day. And even though you'll want to come earlier to make sure you get your favourite items before they sell out, those last couple of hours are the perfect opportunity to spend some time chatting with your favourite vendors. If you have questions about a

design, if you've got an idea for a colourway, or want to show off your latest project, we can really give you our undivided attention once it slows down at the end of the day.

So come early to grab the hottest new yarns and colourways, then go find a nice relaxing spot to knit for a bit (or grab yourself well-deserved mid-afternoon snack), before coming back to chat with the vendors in those last few quiet hours. It's the best time, I promise you!



BONUS TIP: Remember that We've Come to Meet YOU!

This is probably the most important tip for making most of your festival or show. Crazy as it sounds (to me, at least), we've had long-time customers email after a show to say they were right there in front of our booth, but they never came up to say hello because they didn't want to "bother" us. And that makes me so sad, because the very best part of going to a show is getting to meet our customers face to face!

We're there to talk to you, so please do come and say hi to us. If you've got questions about our yarn, ask us (it's one of our favourite subjects!). Or show us the pattern you want to make and let us help you choose a yarn. Now, you'll get our best attention if you follow some of my earlier suggestions and visit the booth when things are a little quieter (such as when the show first opens or during class times). But no matter when you come and see us, just remember that we're there to meet you, so please do come and say hi!

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