



# Raymond Crawford

Listening To His Own Artistic Voice

BY JUNE RUSSELL-CHAMBERLIN

*“What I know, is that I don’t know nothing,”* states artist and designer Raymond M. Crawford. “You never know what is going to sell. There are no guarantees; it is completely unpredictable.

“You throw caution to the wind,” he adds. “But that’s how I live my life anyway.”

Raymond Crawford designs are in nearly every needlepoint shop across the country. Among stitchers, his is a household name. But this talented artist’s success hasn’t come overnight. As he explained, finding the “sweet spot” has taken more than a decade, a streak of practicality and no small dose of courage.

Raymond can’t recall a time when he didn’t want to draw and has spent his life pursuing art. Drawing as a child evolved into a short stint teaching, then a long career creating window displays for Neiman Marcus in Dallas, two stores in the Chicago area and a Barney’s New York also in Chicago.

Twenty years later, sick of the corporate structure and tired of pleasing other people instead of himself, he left the retail world to do what he’d always dreamed of: being his own boss and listening to his own artistic voice. It wasn’t easy.

“The first three-quarters of the past 13 years were extremely difficult, and I did have my doubts,” Raymond said. “But at one point you just grow up, I guess, and you learn. Wisdom comes with age. Let it go and do what you love to do. If people like it, then you expand on it.”

“It’s normal”, he explains, “for any artist to question whether he or she is doing the right thing. But you have to go with your gut and have a passion for what you’re doing,” he added. “It’s also a matter of letting go — turning off the noise, ignoring what people expect you do to and following your own instincts.”

“It takes quite a bit of courage,” he added.

“Creating designs people relate to isn’t easy either, or guaranteed”, Raymond said. He draws inspiration from all over: bookstores, libraries, the Internet,

TV, newspapers and other sources. He watches trends in society and the marketplace, as well as in furniture, fashion and advertising. “I do what everyone else does — but you have to know what you’re looking for,” Raymond explained.

“If I find a theme that seems pretty special, then I go in that direction,” he said. “But if it’s not a big seller, then you have to put aside your ego and go with what they like. Some retailers today are struggling because they haven’t learned that.”

“I like the theme I’m doing now, a retro Christmas theme from the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s, that whole Christmas in Connecticut style,” Raymond said. “To me that brings back memories of being with aunts and uncles, before cell phones. It was also a fun time for advertising and graphics.”


“The response”, he said, has been huge. “People tell me it reminds them

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of their childhood,” Raymond said. “So when they tell me that, I know I’m going in the right direction.”

Following his passion has led Raymond back to his childhood home in Dallas, Texas. There he spends about 40 hours a week creating new designs in his home studio. Raymond said he feels he’s come full circle.

Looking back, he has had doubts about following his own voice, but not regrets. “In general terms, if you work at whatever you do with passion, then you’ll do it well and succeed and everything else falls into place,” he said. “It’s just a matter of finding that sweet spot.”

Raymond Crawford has found his. 



## Materials

One each unless otherwise noted:

Metallic Ribbon Floss, 001, gold

Neon Rays, N02, N22, N25

Kreinik #8 Braid, 002HL

Vineyard Silk, C-007, C-183

Petite Very Velvet, V613

Shimmer Blend Ribbon Floss, 023 (2)

DMC Pearl Cotton #5, 890, 905,  
986, 255

Kreinik #12 Braid, 002HL (3)

Splendor, S976, S1005 (2)

Stones available through  
<[www.aussiethreadsandfibers.com](http://www.aussiethreadsandfibers.com)>, or call 813-767-5278.

# Noel

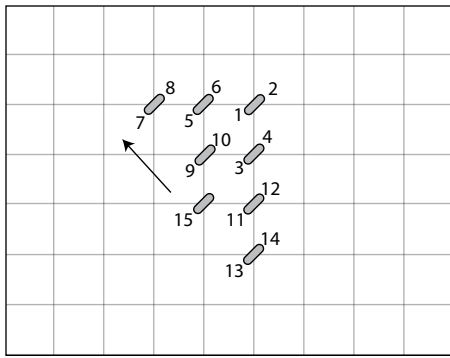
Canvas by Raymond M. Crawford  
Stitch Guide by Anne Thornton

*N*OE**L**, canvas #HO365, is another gorgeous creation from Raymond Crawford. The model was stitched incorporating emerald and ruby man-made jewels, but you may stitch them using a glitzy fiber if you prefer. This guide will give you both options.

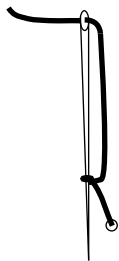
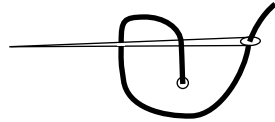
There are just a handful of different stitches used on this canvas, but the

final product is most pleasing. The piece received rave reviews at the first show in which it was exhibited, so thread your needle and get to work. You will be happy with the result.

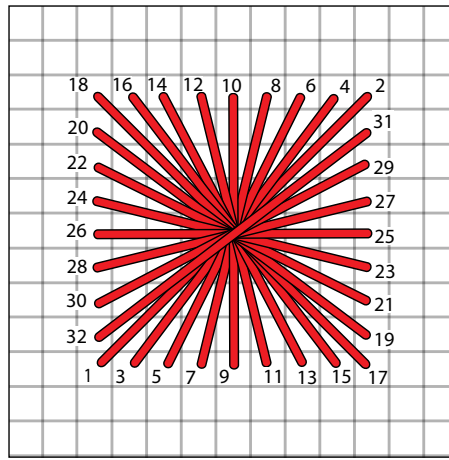
For purposes of this stitch guide, I will refer to the red background behind the NOEL letters and the greenery as “wallpaper”.



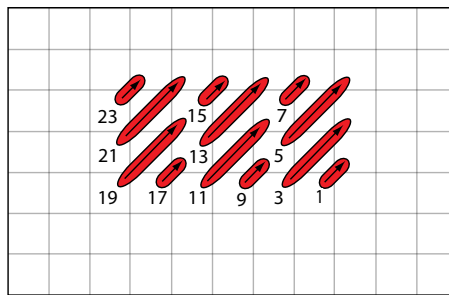
basketweave



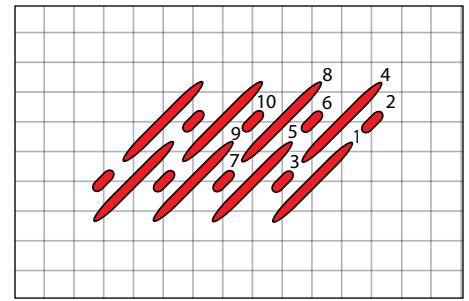
french knot



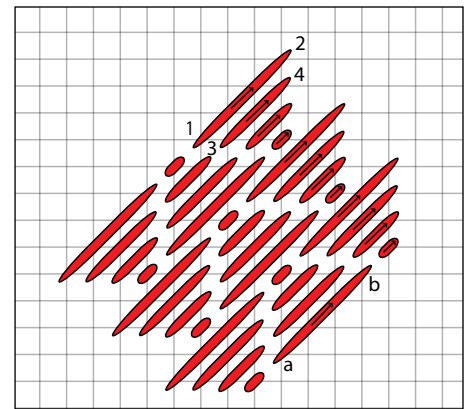
rhodes stitch



cashmere stitch



nobuko stitch



milanese stitch

## NOEL LETTERS

The gray shading around each letter is done in basketweave using 4 strands of Splendor, S976. Note that the gray line across the top of the "L" and the top of the "E" is extended to make a visual separation between the white sections of the two letters that touch. The white part of each letter is stitched in basketweave using Shimmer Blend Ribbon Floss, 023, for a hint of glitz. The dark red shading around the letters is done in basketweave using Petite Very Velvet, V613.

Now for those gorgeous jewels! If you decide to use real (man-made) jewels on your canvas, check with local craft stores, bead shops and the Internet. Some flat crystals and faceted beads are made so they can be attached with thread to ground fabric. Others must be glued. I recommend using thread. In the long run it's much more secure.

Then, using Kreinik 002HL Braid, gold, make french knots around the attached jewel to represent its setting. For the larger jewels, use Kreinik #12 Braid, 002HL, and for the smaller ones use Kreinik #8 Braid, 002HL, for the french

knots. The effect is stunning.

If you don't want to use crystals or faceted beads, you can achieve a similar effect using Kreinik metallics. Place rhodes stitches for the red jewels, both large and small, using Kreinik #16 Ribbon, 003HL. Make rhodes stitches for the green jewels too. Use Kreinik <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> Ribbon, 008HL. Rhodes stitches are slightly raised, just like real jewels would be, and the metallic sparkles when light hits it. Create the settings with the #8 and #12 braid as described above.

## HOLLY BERRIES AND LEAVES

The berries, leaves and shadows are done exclusively in basketweave.

**Red berries:** dark red, Neon Rays, N25, red, Neon Rays, N22, white, Neon Rays, N02

**Leaves:** dark green, DMC pearl cotton #5, 890, med. dk. green, DMC pearl cotton #5, 986, med. green, DMC pearl cotton #5, 905, light green, DMC pearl cotton #5, 255

**Dark red shadows behind leaves and berries:** Petite Very Velvet V613


## RED WALLPAPER

Using Metallic Ribbon Floss, 001, and tent stitch, place all the gold outlines, including the outermost gold border. The wallpaper is divided into three sections, each of which contains identical stitches and threads.

Use Vineyard Silk, C-183, and cashmere stitch to place the dark red outside border of each section. Use Vineyard Silk, C007, and nobuko stitch for the bright red border. You have already completed the gold outline using Metallic Ribbon Floss, 001, and tent stitch. Now tent stitch a thin dark burgundy line inside the gold border using Petite Very Velvet, V613.

Use 4 strands of Splendor, S1005, to fill the middle and largest section of the red wallpaper with milanese stitches.

You are done! Enjoy this lovely holiday piece.

*To view Raymond's entire line of fine needlepoint canvases go to <[www.raymondscrawford.com](http://www.raymondscrawford.com)>. *