



In today's post, Elizabeth McCarten shares the evolution of her newest Twist design, [Brookline](#). A favorite garment, an old jean jacket, and a teenage daughter all play important roles in the creation of this elegant cardigan. Keep up with her on [her blog](#), from which this post is borrowed.



It started with a trip to the sheep and wool festival at Rhinebeck in October, 2010. [Janie H.](#) and I drove down together and while we were there, Janie discovered Helen Hamann's yarns and designs. She must have tried on every garment in Helen's booth, looking fabulous in all of them as only Janie can, and before the day was out she'd made arrangements for Helen to do a trunk show at her shop in Perth, ON. On our last afternoon in Rhinebeck, when our woolly shopping was wrapped up, Janie and I did a little more shopping in the village. We visited [Haldora](#), where once again, Janie tried on numerous garments and looked smashing in all of them. At a nearby, less pricey shop I bought a mohair blend wrap-style cardigan, knitted at a loose gauge with long ties.

In the end, I only wore that little cardigan once. I found the ties annoying because they forced me to wear the cardigan closed. Nevertheless, I loved everything else about the piece and in the back of my mind thought that sometime I might make myself something similar.

Fast forward to early December when I drove north through the Rideau Lakes to Perth to catch Helen Hamann's trunk show. Her designs weren't really my style, but I loved her alpaca yarns, especially the undyed colours, and I was intrigued by Helen's suggestion that I should try knitting her superfine Luxury yarn at a looser gauge than the ball band suggested. It wasn't until late winter, though, that I got around to thinking that the beautiful grey alpaca I'd purchased would be perfect for a useful little wrap cardigan with buttons instead of ties.



Thus, the Perth Cardi was born. This has been my go-to sweater for the last year. I wear it open with the fronts dangling, I wear it closed, I wear it with blue jeans and with dresses, I wear it layered under a heavier jacket in winter, or as a light coverup on cool summer evenings by Lake Ontario. Then, last summer, I bought some more of Helen's Luxury in a colour labelled "Raspberry Glaze", intending to make a Perth Cardi for Isabel, my then 19-year-old. If I loved the Cardi, shouldn't she? Apparently not. After some discussion and ensuing reflection, I decided to try a variation of the Cardi that would fit into the same number of stitches, and I thought maybe I'd do a higher V-neck, not a wrap. A few inches of knitting later, I realized that the garment I was knitting had a completely different feel. It was a little dressier, a little more fun, and even though Isabel, a computer science major, isn't the 'girly-girl' sort, her new cardigan was going to have ruffles.



The Perth Cardi was transformed into what at the time I called the "Gore Street Cardigan", so named because of the design's early 19th-century feel, just like the street of the same name here in historic Kingston, ON, and appropriate given the deep gores in the cardigan's body. Isabel donned her new cardigan, we pinned up her hair, and despite the high heat and humidity, we managed some photos.





The buttons you see here were some ancient Rowan ones from my button box; the little stars echoed the knot motif perfectly. I had only enough for three pairs, but Isabel is small, so they worked. These were the photos which were sent as part of my submission to Twist.



After the submission was accepted, Kate asked how I would feel about doing the magazine sample in [The Fibre Company's "Road to China Light"](#). Who wouldn't be delighted to work with an alpaca/silk/cashmere/camel blend? The result, before I sent it off for professional photography is here:





In this case, the buttons were salvaged from an old jean jacket originally purchased from a J. Jill in the Washington, DC area when we lived there. Twist decided to re-name the design "Brookline".

Now, finally, I'm getting around to knitting a version for myself in SandnesGarn's Lanett from my stash in a soft, neutral blue-grey.



Here, the top portion of the fabric looks smoother than the bottom due to blocking. I'm a big fan of putting all the stitches of a work-in-progress on a length of yarn and wet-blocking to check for gauge and fit. Since I'm only 5' 1", I've also shortened the raglans on this size 38". (I've previously [blogged about how to do this](#) in connection with my design, [Sandridge](#), in case you're interested.) This was the state the sweater was in two weeks before the Toronto Knit Frolic, the debut of this version of Brookline- don't worry, I [finished it](#) in time!