

There was a moment two weeks ago that inspired me to write this post. I was chatting with a woman I am acquainted with in that spinner's kind of way, who I have seen around for a number of years, whose face is familiar to me but whose name I have never learned, but no reason to stand on such formality. This is the 21st century. I KNOW her. Sort of. I know the wheel she spins on at least, and that she favors Romney, most likely because that is what she has in her little flock. And that she likes Cambodian food. She is older than I am, but not so much older that she didn't hesitate, after some knocking around some conversational chesnuts like the weather and how comfortable we found this New Hampshire Sheep Festival compared to "other" festivals . . . to confide in me that she was wondering where all these upstart spinners had come from. "Like who, for example, is this Amy King?"

Imagine my reaction, through which I kept my best poker face, to this rumination. Only a spinner myself for about 5 years, and a middling one at that, I suspect she would start at my own spinning provenance. Assumptions about the association between age and years at the treadle aside, Amy is a rock star in my world. I am lucky to own some of her fiber, I am on a first name basis with her (heck, I know HER name), and I am currently following her personal advice for spinning for a sweater (which is: "just do it").

Here's the rub: among the spinners I have met, I get a sense from some of them of a protective, even proprietary ownership of spinning, and an almost canonical impulse there that demands that a spinner "with opinions" needs to offer a pedigree of academically approved tutors, if not numbers of SOARs attended, then at least an ability to invoke Alden Amos or to quote a relevant point from one of Maggie Casey's long list of *Spin Off* articles. There is an almost generational quality to it, and in some ways, a reluctant one too, to admit that there are afoot in the world a fresh crop of "young" spinners embracing the craft for reasons all their own, and that maybe they (that is, we) have a new batch of teachers who have blogged and taught locally (and nationally) for years before surfacing in the paper publishing world more accessible to spinners such as my friend at the sheep festival.



Interweave Press has published at least three instructional books in the last year about spinning: Maggie Casey's *Start Spinning*, Judith MacKenzie McCuin's *The Intentional Spinner*, and now [Spin Control](#) by Amy King. Each of them are terrific, each promote the craft with good if interchangeable photographs on technique, and each speak to their own audience. At 35, Amy is among the younger generation of spinners and teachers like Abby Franquemont who have developed an ardent following on-line and are now transitioning to more traditional publishing outlets (Abby's book *Respect the Spindle* is due later this year). Amy's articles have appeared in knittyspin, and her viability as a teacher may feel underground to the wider spinning community, but if you are reading this, you probably need no further introduction. She has become esteemed in the blog community for her good humor, her pioneering online shop [Spunky Eclectic](#) and associated fiber

club, has exhibited around New England sheep and fiber shows for a number of years, and now owns a destination brick and mortar shop in Mid Maine.

In *Spin Control*, Amy speaks to a reader who has grasped the basics of drafting, maybe even taken a class or two, and wants to develop a sense of control over their product. In friendly gal pal language, Amy walks the apprentice spinner through basics they might have missed, and advocates the "just do it" approach to the yarn making: use different whorls, pull apart your fiber, ply a little bit, and knit a swatch. And she asks this question: Do you like what you see? It's a beginner's book for certain, but also a book of basics for intermediate spinners with an interest in core spinning and other novelties. Every piece of advice is to encourage an understanding of your wheel and your hands as tools that can be adjusted for predictable and personal results, and celebrates the spinner's own taste in their craft. While there are preferences for certain qualities in a yarn for the demands of a particular project, Amy never lays down any rules but instead trusts her readers to decide for themselves. If that makes Amy an upstart, then hooray for upstarts I say.

The gates to the spinning kingdom may be guarded by the well-meaning, but any spinner will recognize the keys to the kingdom in this book, and should consider it worth handing over along with that first gift of fiber to their new spinning friends.