



Ann Kingstone's first design for Twist Collective, is a [Sylvana](#), a beautiful lace beret with a warm inner layer. She talks about her inspiration and design process in this cross post from her own [blog](#).

Yesterday my hat design, [Sylvana](#), was published in the Twist Collective winter edition. As the hat is based on a rather unique concept I thought you might like to read about how I created this innovative design.

In my experience fine lace knitting is generally the preserve of summer garments and evening wear, whereas for the winter edition of Twist I wanted to create an everyday application for fine lace knitting suitable for wearing in winter. These considerations led to the Big Idea – layers!



Any of you with experience of designing for magazines will know that they send out 'mood boards' to designers to help inspire us and in order to help create a thematic feel for the magazine. So it is with Twist, and in early summer I received the mood boards for the current edition. Lots of hats, snowy forests, and sparkly ice-skating scenes. I particularly liked a very Victorian ice-skating scene featuring a lady in a full-length grey coat with a very soft and fluffy plum-coloured stole. It was a desire to re-create the colour balance of this scene that inspired the idea of lace overlaying a contrasting underlayer. The mauve version of the hat pictured in the magazine most closely does this.



A lot of design work is a problem-solving exercise, marrying an aesthetic ideal to a practical application. Alas, a hat only provides a very small area for a lace pattern, so I needed a relatively small lace motif. I also knew I wanted it to be a leafy motif to be evocative of festive evergreens. Hunting through my library I decided the motif from the [Myrtle Leaf Stole](#) was most suitable. However, it needed adapting to a decreasing circular pattern, and I needed a solution for the centre of the crown where the stitch count could no longer support the full number of leaves that appear in the earlier portions of the hat. Lots of pen and paper play, and swatching ensued.



The last problem to be resolved was the hat band. Initially this was going to be a lace edging in the DK yarn used for the underhat, but I didn't like the look of my first prototype with this type of band. Eventually I realised the lace pattern was visually fighting with the lace in the main body and that the band would be less aesthetically intrusive if knitted in the same colour as the overlace. But laceweight yarn is too fine to create a snugly fitting traditional ribbed band unless it is formed of hundreds of stitches on tiny, tiny needles! Solution; double the laceweight!

Thus [Sylvana](#) was born. It is my proudest achievement yet as a designer, and I am very happy to at last (the wait has been excruciating!) present it to you. :0)