

# The Helix Scarf

BY STEPHENIE GAUSTAD

Stephenie was inspired by the rippling skirts of a sea slug early one morning and designed this scarf with short-row wedges.

## Project Notes

**Fiber:** 2 oz. Merino/silk blend.

**Preparation:** Commercially carded sliver.

**Drafting method:** Worsted.

**Spindle:** Tahkli.

**Singles direction spun:** Z.

**Singles twists per inch:** 40–42.

**Singles wraps per inch:** 74.

**Singles yards per pound:** 9,680.

**Number of plies:** 2.

**Plied direction spun:** S.

**Plied twists per inch:** 24.

**Plied wraps per inch:** 52.

**Plied yards per pound:** 4,853.

**Yarn classification:** High-twist fine laceweight.

**Total yardage:** 606.

**Yardage used:** 364.

**Needles:** U.S. size 1.

**Gauge:** 7 sts and 8 rows in garter st with short rows = 1"; 9 sts and 10 rows in garter st = 1".

**Finished size:** 4" x 41" unstretched, 1.2 oz.

### W&T (wrap and turn for short-rows)

**Wrap and turn** the last stitch in each short-row. With working yarn behind needles, slip next st

purlwise to right needle. Bring yarn in front, return sl st to left needle, and turn work. This minimizes holes at the ends of the short-rows. For instance, in the first row, knit 10 stitches, slip the eleventh stitch purlwise onto the right-hand needle, bring the yarn forward and slip the eleventh stitch back onto the left-hand needle. Turn the work and knit 10 stitches back to the edge. You will knit the wrapped stitch when you knit across all 30 stitches in step 4 of the wedge instructions.

**W**hile thumbing through *Knitting New Scarves* by Lynne Barr, I saw a scarf that got its inspiration from seaweed. On only my first cup of tea that morning, I started thinking about a favorite sea creature, the nudibranch or sea slug (an unfortunate name for such a beauty with wildly colored, flaring skirts). Thus the germ for the structure of the Helix Scarf was planted.

At the 2009 *Spin-Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR), I was fortunate enough to sit with someone who won fiber but couldn't take it home, so she graciously shared it with everyone at her table. The fiber was a luscious blend of mauve Merino/silk. At home, I could not resist the stuff and spun it up on the tahkli, with no thought of end use, enjoying the colors and the generosity of people.

I sampled the SOAR gift yarn in the helix structure and was delighted to see how well it performed as a knitted lace yarn with some crispness.

### SPINDLE SPINNING

Spinning on the tahkli requires the fibers to flow freely with a one-handed draft. The Merino/silk blend drafted nicely after some manipulation and predrafting. I wrapped the sliver around my wrist or pulled off pieces into short chunks. The singles were spun draft against twist (point-of-contact). After all the singles were spun, I plied them on a double-drive flyer/bobbin wheel. I plied the yarn, wound the yarn into a skein, and set it with steam. I then rewound the skein onto a bobbin and knitted from the bobbin placed on a lazy kate.

### HELIX SCARF

The Helix Scarf is a garter pattern with short-row ruffles on each side of a central strip.

CO 30 sts.

Row 1: Knit 30 sts.

#### Wedge

Knit 10 sts; W&T.

Knit back to the edge.

Knit 5 sts; W&T.

Knit back to the edge.

Repeat Row 1 and wedge until scarf is the desired length.

Bind off. Work the ends in as invisibly as possible.

Note that you will be inserting wedges on both edges.

Of course, gauge, that monster mediator of hand and drape, is a large factor. After sampling with different needle sizes, I haven't yet found a handspun yarn that doesn't work with this structure.

What about you?

This project began with its roots in a gift. It grew into one project. This tender shoot is passed to you. What will the trunk and leaves be like? ☘

Dyepots litter the front yard; looms, books, and spinning wheels fill the house. Her daughter asks if maybe Mom "has an issue with too much fiber." No. It is just life as Stephenie Gaustad.

### RESOURCES

Barr, Lynne. *Knitting New Scarves*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 2007.

Gaustad, Stephenie. "Tahkli Spindles: Beyond Cotton." *Spin-Off* 34, 2 (Summer 2010), 58–61.

Square, Vicki. *The Knitter's Companion*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 1996.

