

## Sewing For Ferrets

**Rosemary German helps ferrets and ferret shelters with her knowledge, thoughtfulness and high-quality ferret bedding.**

*By Rebecca Stout*

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© Courtesy of Rosemary German

Rose German founded and operates the Little Feet Ferret Retreat in Massachusetts.

In a small, historical town nestled deep in the gorgeous woodlands of southeastern Massachusetts, listen very carefully. You might hear a unique sound that fits harmoniously between the sounds of rustling leaves and singing wrens. It's the faint, rapid, rhythmic sound of a sewing needle thrusting in and out of fabric and emanating from an added attraction in town — The Little Feet Ferret Retreat. It is a jewel of a place because it is founded and run by a true jewel of a woman in the ferret community, Rosemary German.

Ferrets came into Rose's life one fine day when she visited her son in 1996. He introduced her to his new pet ferret. Although she had once owned raccoons and a skunk in her younger years, she was taken off guard by the vibrant little soul dancing about her feet.

"At first it scared the heck out of me but intrigued me," German said. "To see this critter dance around with its mouth open, never-ending activity and silliness, I wasn't sure what to think. I hadn't ever heard of a ferret. It didn't take long to catch Ferret Fever."

© Courtesy of Rosemary German

The ferrets at Little Feet Ferret Retreat have no other home to call their own.

### A Refuge For The Unwanted

Shortly thereafter, Rose couldn't resist inviting her own little one, Rascal, into her heart and home. Fate it seemed, led Rose to meet a woman who had just opened a ferret shelter in a nearby town. The shelter eventually became overwhelmed with a high number of ferrets, so Rose and her husband graciously invited the more problematic, difficult babies into their home. This is how the LFFR began. Not a shelter, but a refuge for the unadoptable from local shelters, as well as those that she and her husband, Bob, have rescued themselves. A highly skilled seamstress, Rose quickly saw the exorbitant amount of money it takes to run a shelter or even a small sanctuary, so she made use of her talent to help with finances — her own and others as well. Thus, Little Feet Ferret Retreat Bedding was born.

### Ferret Bedding That Travels The World

The small business she created more than seven years ago has proven to be crucial to local ferret groups such as the Massachusetts Ferret Friends (MaFF) and the South Shore Ferret Care shelter. She works endless hours meticulously handcrafting high-quality ferret bedding to donate year-round to fundraisers for shelters, ferret-related causes and such organizations as the American Ferret Association.

© Courtesy of Rosemary German

German's ferret bedding is known to be high quality and now ships around the world.

Her contributions have benefitted ferret causes across the globe. "It has taken many years of bed making to be established and to have earned a name people have heard of in many parts of the world," German said. "Did I mention LFFR ships all over the world? My bedding goes to places I will never get the opportunity to go. I meet so many wonderful people via the Internet and enjoy receiving pictures of the fur kids in the new digs."

MaFF member and assistant director of the South Shore Ferret Care Center Michele Paulhus said, "LFFR is not just the name of her bedding. Her house literally is a retreat for wayward weasels that don't have any other options. It's a place full of love and wonderful care. But she doesn't only give to the ferrets that are lucky enough to end up in her care. Is there a raffle going on? Most likely one, or more, of the raffle prizes will be some of her amazing homemade bedding. She also regularly donates bedding to the local ferret shelters, along with some not-so-local. But she doesn't stop there — she also gives of herself. She shares the information she has learned in her years of being 'owned by ferrets' with others. I can't tell you how many times we [South Shore Ferret Care] have run into something we hadn't experienced before, and called Rose for help."

Truly every stitch that comes out of Rose's pet-free garage studio is created with great love. She is never far from her



ferrets however. "I have a baby monitor and closed-circuit TV in the studio so I can see and hear the fuzzies during my working hours."

© Courtesy of Rosemary German

German's studio is in her garage and is stocked with all the supplies needed to create her high-quality ferret bedding.

#### Help That Knows No Bounds

Diane Wall is the shelter operator of the South Shore Ferret Care and describes German's studio, "Her workshop is a magical place of color and fabric where all sorts of bedding is created. She has even made special beds for my special-needs guys." Wall said that German is a dear friend and mentor, and she describes her as an integral member of the shelter as well. "I check in with Rose at least once a week, she is who I call when a tired sad shelter operator needs someone to talk to and to refocus. She is always there for us and just recently visited the shelter where she hand fed several recent rescues including 'Mickey-D' who was found at a McDonalds in Boston. He is really sad and confused, Rose comforted him and he started improving the next day."

German recently broadened her efforts. Her new project reaches out to supporters of the black-footed ferret. The program aids Travis Livieri and the vaccinating and recovery effort for the black-footed ferret. She is donating 10 percent of all proceeds from her LFFR Bedding sales \$50 and over on a weekly basis, and sending a BFF gift item in each box to the receiver. This project started June 15 and will run until Aug 15, 2008.

In her spare time, and yes there occasionally is that, Rose puts forth great effort and spends a good deal of time on the phone, Internet, and attending events to educate new owners and advise veteran owners. She often aids in rescues. In fact, both she and her husband were involved with bringing many rescues into Massachusetts from the Ohio Rescue of hundreds of ferrets late last year. A far stretch from what she did with her spare time in her younger days. German has a "wild" side, as do many ferret owners. "I used to ride and show horses as a teen. Back in the mid 70s, bracket racing my 68 Firebird 400 at New England Drag way N.H. was a blast, and I did win many amateur races." She has given up her racing stripes. Today, she is an avid camper who enjoys traveling in her RV with her husband ... and their furry buddies.

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Rebecca Stout resides in rural Tennessee with her husband, two sons and beloved pets. Ferrets have been in her heart and life for 30 years. She enjoys writing, photography, animals and being a strong advocate for her autistic son. To visit her website, [click here>>](#)