

away from him moved along the sides. The one I wanted was not too smart, I guess. He cornered her and was able to lift her by the horns, while I caught her under the belly. So—we got her on to the barrel. He held her & I combed. We decided to name her “Radda”. I combed the bleating, struggling Radda for at least another ½ hour. Finally we had all had enough. I had a small handful of cashmere.

We gave up and left the pen. Nora was by then in the shop, selling skin products. I showed her my results, and then she held up a bag of cashmere that had been combed from one of the larger male goats. I had a handful—she held up a bagful at least 6 times as much. Oh well, I was happy with what I had and with the experience.

Now what should I do? I had ended up with about 28 gms (1 oz.) of fibre (after all that). I had heard that wool was good for storing pearls. I thought—if wool is good, maybe cashmere is better.

I hand carded the fibre of the 2 goats separately on fine carders and rolled it into punis. I spun the fibre from the 2 goats separately. I used a ratio of 12:1 spinning Z and ended up with singles measuring about 37 wraps per inch. I then plied the singles together, one ply being Greve, the other Radda. The plied wraps per inch were about 18.

After washing in mild soap and warm water, I had 87.5 metres of yarn, weighing about ¾ oz.

To knit the pearl bag, I chose a stitch called “Moire” (Mon Tricot Knitting Dictionary, Paris France, page 60). The bag was knit on 2.5 mm needles; a square was knit, then the bottom and one side were sewed



together. A “string” was crocheted and beads added at the ends, to form the closure for the bag. After the bag was finished, a pocket was knit inside, to hold my pearl ring and earrings.

In total, I used only 35 metres of this wonderful yarn, so I still have about 52 metres. Oh joy—another pearl bag—a gift for someone dear.

(You can visit with the goats and Nora Kravis at www.chianticashmere.com or contact Nora via e-mail to info@chianticashmere.com)

Bio: Mara leads an interesting life, being married to a Latvian diplomat. They both grew up in Canada, but went back to their roots after Latvia regained its independence. They have served in Washington, DC; Riga, Latvia; London, England; Ottawa, Ontario; Rome, Italy and have now moved back to Ontario. Mara returned from Rome each summer to work on the OHS Spinning Certificate Course which she has now completed.

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