

What's the Difference?

Video notes and extra information for you

1. Domestic

a. Where to Buy

i. Thrift Store

1. Pros

- a. Cheaper
- b. Tend to be older machines, therefore, mechanical and tougher

2. Cons

- a. May not run
- b. Will most likely not have all parts or the user's manual

ii. Local Sewing Center

1. Pros

- a. Service available for machine locally
- b. Usually knowledgeable staff (see con below)
- c. You can try before you buy

2. Cons

- a. Usually the most expensive option
- b. Dealers typically only sell a few brands
- c. Staff knowledge is usually limited to the brands they sell

iii. Box Store (Wal-Mart, Joann's, etc.)

1. Pros

- a. Less expensive New Machine option
- b. Return policy is usually very good

2. Cons

- a. Usually the cheaper "plastic" machine brands
- b. Usually include more stitches than necessary on each machine as a "selling point"

iv. Online

1. eBay, Facebook Marketplace, Craig's List, etc.

a. Pros

i. Price

b. Cons

i. Scams are rampant

ii. No warranty, service options, or after purchase assistance

2. Online Retailers (including Amazon)

a. Pros

i. Price is usually good

ii. New machine in box

iii. Shipment to your door

iv. Usually a good return policy in place

b. Cons

i. How to tell good online retailers from bad

ii. Return shipping may be the buyer's responsibility

iii. Service options can be an issue, especially on electronic machines

b. Mechanical vs. Electronic

i. Mechanical machines can generally be serviced at home

ii. Mechanical machines are less prone to break down or have issues compared to their electronic counterparts (very few circuit boards in a mechanical machine)

iii. Electronic machines have more options, for example, the embroidery machine with its ability to stitch computerized designs from a memory stick.

c. Major Brands (Singer, Brother, Baby-lock, Janome, Juki, etc.)

i. Singer and Brother

1. Plastic parts for the most part
 - ii. Janome and Juki
 1. Low end machines – plastic shell and parts
 2. High end machines – plastic or metal shell and metal parts
 3. Focus on sewing, rather than heirloom stitching users
 4. High end Juki more heavy duty for sewing through layers for bagmaking, canvas, light upholstery, and leatherworking.
 - iii. Baby-lock and Husqvarna
 1. Low end machines – plastic shell and parts
 2. High end machines – plastic shell and metal parts
 3. Focus on embroidery and heirloom sewing, rather than leather, canvas, and heavy duty sewing users.
- d. General Sewing vs. Heavy Duty
- i. General Sewing
 1. Machines that are used for sewing clothing, drapes, household items (placemats, towels, quilts, pillows, etc.)
 - ii. Heavy Duty
 1. Heavy duty machines are used for sewing through layers for bagmaking, canvas, light upholstery, and leatherworking.
- e. Features Included vs. Needed
- i. Beware of the “extra or bonus” stitches included on a domestic machine. They are generally included to raise the price point of the machine.
 - ii. What do you want to sew? Focus on this question and it will help you determine what stitches you need and which ones

are added “fluff.”

2. Combination Domestic/Embroidery

- a. Hoop sizes are on the small side
- b. Built In Designs vs. Memory Stick
 - i. Built in – generally not necessary or used much
 - ii. Memory stick, or the ability to connect to your computer
 - 1. This option on a combo machine can open up limitless possibilities for embroidery designs that you can stitch on projects

3. Specialty

- a. Embroidery
 - i. Memory Stick vs. Direct Connection to PC
 - 1. Both of these are great ways to get designs to your machine
 - ii. Hoop sizes and types vary from machine to machine
 - 1. Hoops are not interchangeable between different embroidery manufacturers. Neither are the file extensions. Be careful to purchase the right hoop that works with your machine and the right design file extension when purchasing embroidery designs.
 - iii. Digitizing software is pricey, but can be worth it
 - 1. This is the process of taking a drawing or graphic and making it into a file that you can “stitch out” with your embroidery machine.
 - 2. If you like to work on your computer for hours at a time, this may be something fun for you.
 - 3. There are also digitizers out there that will “automatically” convert your drawing or writing to an embroidery file for you.
 - 4. Beware, though, digitizing software is NOT cheap.

5. I use Hatch Embroidery. This is an online digitizing company that you can use and they offer different tier levels depending on how involved you want to get in digitizing. I use the lowest level of this software because I generally need it to create wording in different fonts, monograms, etc.
- iv. Limitless designs available for purchase online
 1. Some of the best places to find designs for embroidery online are:
 - a. Embroidery Designs:
<https://www.embroiderydesigns.com/>
 - b. Embroidery Library: <https://emblibrary.com/>
 - c. Designs by Juju:
<https://www.designsbyjuju.com/>
 - d. Urban Threads: <https://urbanthreads.com/>
 - e. Etsy: <https://www.etsy.com/>

b. Serger (Overlocker)

i. Use

1. Knit fabrics (t-shirts, undergarments, maxi-dresses, swim and active wear)
2. Finish seams professionally on woven fabrics

c. Coverstitch

i. Vs. Serger

1. Similar, but not the same machine
2. Coverstitch does double or triple needle stitching in places that a serger cannot go
3. Coverstitch machines do not have a knife to cut the seam allowance fabric away

ii. Combination Serger/Coverstitch

1. Not recommended because the switchover from one type to the other is not the best experience and

therefore can become a barrier to using the machine.

d. Long-arm and Sit-down Quilting Machines

i. Use

1. Quilting the three layers of a traditional quilt sandwich together

ii. Frame vs. Table

1. Table (Sit-down model)(Bernina Q20, Janome Quiltmaker Pro, or HQ Sweet Sixteen)

a. Pros

- i. Less expensive than it's frame equivalent
- ii. Takes up less space
- iii. Can quilt sitting down

b. Cons

- i. Not computerized
- ii. Typically used for quilting in the ditch, limited free motion, and drawn designs
- iii. Have to move the quilt sandwich through the machine
- iv. Time to quilt is longer than the Frame Mounted method

2. Frame Mounted (rails/rollers)(Handi-Quilter, Janome, Q'nique, Baby Lock)

a. Pros

- i. Computerized designs are limitless
- ii. Free-motion is much easier
- iii. Can also be used with Groovy Boards and a stylus
- iv. A quilt can be completely quilted in a day

b. Cons

- i. Price

- ii. Space

- 1. My longarm in the video requires over 16 feet of floorspace)

- iii. Quilting is done standing at the frame

4. Industrial Machines

- a. Straight Stitch Only

- i. General Sewing is done in a straight line only

- 1. No zig-zag, or other “built in” stitches
 - 2. Top foot mechanism “walks” for even feeding

- ii. Cylinder Arm

- 1. Same as above, but arm of bed is very narrow
 - 2. Typically used for sewing bags, hats, shoes, and other objects that require stitching in small spaces