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Yarn Profile: Debbie Bliss Cashmerino Aran

First Impressions

When I knit things for myself, I want them to last a lifetime. But when I knit swatches for reviews, my ultimate goal is to destroy them.

Perhaps that's why I have yet to review Debbie Bliss Cashmerino, one

of my all-time favorite yarns. The notion of harming anything made from Cashmerino seems sacrilegious. Yet the longer I avoid this review, the more I do you a disservice. So here we go.

Cashmerino is the anchor yarn in the [Debbie Bliss yarn line](#).

It comes in several weights, from Baby to Aran, Chunky, Superchunky, and—new this year—Astrakhan, a loopy variant for those seeking novelty-like texture. For this review I focused on Cashmerino Aran, which comes in 30 saturated, pastel-laden hues.

The first thing you'll notice about this yarn is how smooth and soft it is. It's as if they puréed the Merino wool,

Yarn name

Cashmerino Aran

Manufacturer

Debbie Bliss

Fiber content

55% merino wool

33% microfiber

12% cashmere

Gauge

18 sts and 24 rows

per 4 inch square

on US 8 (5mm)

needles

Average retail

price

\$7.95

Where to buy

online

[Webs](#)

microfiber, and cashmere, strained the liquid through a superfine sieve, and then magically transformed it back into yarn.

Knitting Up

Cashmerino Aran is made up of four fine plies that produce an exceptionally smooth knitted surface with remarkable stitch definition. Use it for cables or other stitchwork and you can almost hear the yarn purr. But even simple stockinette is a pleasure.

The plump, succulent fibers flowed eagerly between my hands and my blunt-tipped Addi Turbo needles, which they clutched with dough-like elasticity. The yarn formed even, steady stitches and was pretty forgiving of inconsistencies, making this an excellent yarn for beginners.

I was able to knit by touch alone without any problems—not once did the yarn snag on my needles.

Blocking / Washing

As long as you use lukewarm water, a mild soap (such as [Eucalan](#) or [Kookaburra](#)), and a washing machine with a gentle cycle that you really, really trust, this yarn is machine-washable. The key phrase here is "you really, really trust." But by virtue of making it machine washable, Debbie Bliss has created the dream material in which to create her infamously gorgeous baby garments.

With each wash, my swatches got fuzzier. The crisp stitch

Weight/yardage per skein

50 g. / 100 yards

Country of origin

Italy

Manufacturer's suggested wash method

Gentle machine wash, wool cycle at 30 degrees C. Dry flat away from heat. Use low iron if necessary. (If you're unsure of your machine settings, we recommend handwash in lukewarm water and lay flat to dry.)

Review date

6/8/06

definition gave way to soft surface halo of loose fibers. You could still see the shimmer of the stitches (perhaps the Merino?) beneath the halo, but a halo was there. Despite the blurring, the foundation of microfiber kept everything snug and solid.

My swatches relaxed significantly in the wash, especially width-wise. Tugging the swatches back into their original shape and blotting them dry did the trick. I measured and re-measured and re-measured again and finally decided that they'd stretched by less than 1/4 stitch per inch, resulting in an 18 stitches per 4-inch gauge as listed on the ball band.

Wearing

Alas, here we come to the not-so-good news. Merino and cashmere are both delicate fibers with a short staple length, which makes them prone to pills and thinning over time.

Bliss wisely added microfiber (a superfine variety of polyester) for strength, durability, and resiliency. But Cashmerino fabric *will* pill over time. It's a sad fact of life.

For that reason, I'd advise very delicate handwashings instead of using a machine—even if it does have a gentle cycle. And I'd also advise you to invest in [a good fabric shaver](#) to remove those pills when they start showing up.

The tradeoff? A delightful knitting experience, and incredible softness. No, it's not pure qiviut or angora or cashmere—but

Color used in
review

603

Wholesale
distributor

[Knitting Fever](#)

for a wool blend, I have yet to find anything softer.

Conclusion

I've met people who adore Cashmerino with almost religious fervor. And I've met people who felt so betrayed by Cashmerino that they'll never use it again. And then there's me, someone who knows the yarn's potential shortcomings but loves it anyway.

My compromise is to save Cashmerino for those very special projects I know won't get much wear. A baby ensemble, for example, where softness and beauty really count. Or a special scarf for me, since I care primarily about warmth and softness.

Have you already worked with Cashmerino and have a story of your own? If so, I encourage you to [share your own story](#)—whether good, bad, or somewhere in between—in our forums. And if you haven't worked with Cashmerino yet, I strongly urge you to seek it out in your local yarn store and decide for yourself.

▶ [Talk about this yarn in our forums](#)

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