



**Chris Olsen reports on the best sewing machines now on sale. Feb. 19, 2009.**

## Project Runway sewing machines

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Call it the Project Runway phenomenon. Interest in sewing is on the rise and more young people are taking up the hobby.

The show Project Runway features stressed-out fashion designers desperate to stay in the competition. It has helped spark new interest in sewing

-- and sewing machines.

"It allows people to imagine themselves to be designers to do sewing on their own to be creative," says Kevin Price of the Sewing and Embroidery Warehouse.

Consumer Report's latest sewing machine tests included one from Brother called the Project Runway. In all, Pat Slaven tested 18 machines. With one that goes for well over \$5,000, you thread the needle with a push of a button.

Slaven checked how well each of the machines sews a variety of fabric -- from lightweight, gauzy material to thick denim jeans -- a particularly tough task that some couldn't handle.

Slaven tested two types of sewing machines.

"On the mechanical machine, I have to select the stitch, select the length, select the width," explains Slaven.

The electronic machines automatically select the settings for whatever stitch you choose.

Among those, the Brother Project Runway machine earned high scores.

At \$400, it was named a Consumer Report's best buy.

"This machine has 40 preprogrammed stitches. It includes basic utility stitches, straight stitch, zigzags, buttonholes, and then it has some decorative stitches," says Slaven.

"The learning curve is now much smaller than it used to be. because the electronic machines will in fact do certain things for you like trim the threads, they'll help you thread the needle , they make it easy to change the stitches," conclude Price.

In Canada, it's simply known as the Innovis 40: it's the same Brother brand machine, just no Project Runway name. And the good news here it's \$400 dollars too -- \$400 Canadian -- a saving of 20 per cent.

*With a report by CTV British Columbia's Chris Olsen.*