

ARGENTIUM GUILD NEWSLETTER

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ARGENTIUMGUILD.COM

SPECIAL EDITION FOR THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN SILVERSMITHS



DEAR ARGENTIUM GUILD MEMBER

This Argentium Silver Guild Newsletter is distributed to our Members bi-monthly - keeping you up-to-date with all things Argentium. We would love to hear from you, so if you have an Argentium related story to tell, article to feature or photos to share, please contact info@argentiumguild.com.

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section on the Guild website



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WHAT'S NEW?...

MARKETING SUPPORT

Download Argentium
Silver logos and point of
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the Members' Area on the
Guild website.

- Brand User Guide
- Argentium logos
- Flying Unicorn marks
- Display cards
- Care advice booklet
- Handouts
- Swing tags



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THE FINEST SILVER

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FEATURED MEMBERS (February 12)



Sue Lindsey www.raptelegance.com

"I am a self taught wire jewelry artist creating mostly one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces. To me, a successful design creates a conversation between the stone and the wire, giving both the stone and the wire a voice. My designs are a blend of wire wrapping and wire sculpting and are 'lyrical' in character. Argentium has proven to be an excellent wire for my work. It is now the only silver alloy I use. Its freedom from tarnish is what originally attracted me to this metal. However, I learned quickly that its malleability made it ideal for my free-flowing designs."



Chantel McCabe www.chantelmccabe.com

"The most appealing property of Argentium Silver for me is its ability to fuse to itself. This has led to numerous experiments beyond the fused jump ring. I have created beads and pendants using fusing. A staple of my home based jewellery business is stamped jewellery using thick Argentium sheet to add weight and hence a more luxurious feel, plus facilitating double-sided stamping. My preferred gauge for single-sided stamping is 18ga, whilst I prefer 14ga and 16ga for double-sided stamping. My main outlet is the Newman Visitors Centre but my goal is to increase my online presence on Etsy, ArtFire and madeit.com.au."

FEATURED MEMBERS (March 12)



Dave Kaczynski www.khaosdesignsvermont.com

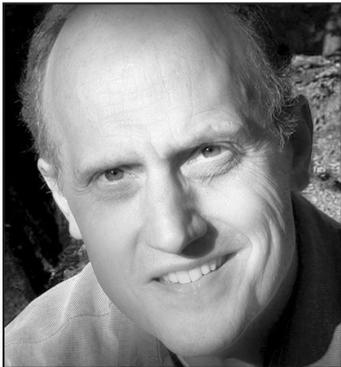
"I have been designing and hand-crafting jewelry in my Vermont studio for the last 12 years. I find design inspirations in classic and contemporary architecture and artforms, coupled with a lifelong kinship with our wild surroundings. Each design is hand wrought from start to finish and never duplicated. Argentium allows me to satisfy important goals: I can create keepsakes that are brilliant in color, more durable, and tarnish resistant, and Argentium's 'responsible silver' guarantee, satisfies my core values and my customers' concerns about the impact of studio practices on the local environment."



Genevieve Flynn www.genevieveflynn.com

"The mysteries of nature's designs have always intrigued me. The beauty of natural botanical lines lends themselves to contemporary form and functionality. As an artist, I take liberties with the natural form while trying to maintain the purity of nature's art. My art falls into two definite styles. While visually different, in concept they are very similar. My botanicals are derived from the simplicity of nature; my contemporary work is derived from the simplicity of form. My intentions are to bring inspiration to each piece, in hopes that every individual can appreciate the true love and compassion that I put into my work."

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TALKING ABOUT ARGENTIUM 960

After years of working with Argentium Silver, David Worcester converted to using Argentium 960.

We asked David to talk about why he decided to make the change to 960 and we would like to thank him for writing the following article, where he shares his experiences and knowledge about Argentium's highest purity silver.

ARGENTIUM 960, A NATURAL CHOICE, BY DAVID WORCESTER

Have you tried the high purity, Argentium 960 alloy?

You should, especially since, at least in the United States, it can be purchased in small, by the ounce lots, and you can see how you like it with little out-of-pocket cost.

Why 960?

Many of Argentium's properties are only of direct interest to the craftsperson. For example, having clean castings, completely free of firestain, is a huge boon to manufacturing, but of no interest to the end purchaser. This quality alone makes it superior to all other silvers, and, though this attribute results in a better product, few end users might understand it or care. This 'bench, but not sales counter' benefit is the case for both 935 and 960 alloys. On the other hand, just as with Argentium's tarnish resistance, a customer can easily see added value in jewelry made in a purer metal.

Argentium 960 nearly halves the non-silver content of sterling. Surpassing Britain's Britannia standard, it is remarkably close to fine silver, yet it has all of the same qualities that make standard Argentium superior to standard sterling - and the other new silvers.

Any problems?

Not now. Let's put old rumors to rest. Argentium Silver is a young alloy, and today's top performing, higher purity mix has emerged from a short but profound evolution. 970 was the alloy I first read of, but it was off market. Then I got my hands on the first version of 960 and though I found it exciting and promising, there were some stubborn and disappointing problems which I couldn't eliminate. Then Argentium International licensed production to Legor Group as a new partner and simultaneously adjusted the recipe to today's spectacular 960. I have nothing but praise for this metal; it is a dream to work with.



David Worcester's tension settings demonstrate how strength and durability is not compromised by the high silver purity in Argentium 960 silver.

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How do Argentium 935 and 960 compare?

Compared to 935, I can see even more of Argentium's whiteness and brightness in the 960 casting grain. For silver work, as a bench jeweler and small manufacturer, I have settled in on this single metal, so can make scant comparison of the two alloys. It does what I ask. I have played with fusing (though not applying this technique to my line), and have found that while the 960 alloy fuses, it seems to have a small working window. Out of curiosity, I then tried some 935 and found the process much easier. So I see a difference there.

The only disadvantage that I have found concerns some aspects of supply. If we need an amount less than Legor's minimum order of sixty ounces, we can buy 960 grain from G&S Metals in the United States - no problem. However, no one produces any mill stock for resale. I have ideas for fabricated pieces that would be easy to produce in 935, but will just stay in my long time casting niche because I want my entire line in 960.



There's an easy solution to getting wire, though. Although Argentium 960 (Pro) is made for casting, (this is the alloy that G&S Metals carries), it draws beautifully into wire and can easily be produced in a small shop.

Cost?

There's not much cost difference to make that .025 increase from 935 to 960. So, showing off your work by adding that little bling of high purity, and highlighting the care that you put into it and all its details, has a very small price tag. As of this writing, the added cost, at single ounce pricing, is less than 3%.

I remember first reading about Argentium Silver, and being just blown away as I read of one advantage after another. Already sold on its many appealing benefits, the clincher was the prospect that I could possibly give it enough spring for my specific needs through hardening, and translate my gold tension settings into cast silver. That was something not possible with other silvers.

At the bottom of Argentium's list of desirable qualities was an option - high purity. Cast Argentium 960 was the less likely candidate for success, so I tested the limits by starting there. It performed as I had hoped, developing enough spring for me to produce the work I most love. Picking up the unique high purity option became the frosting on the cake.

If you haven't tried Argentium 960 yet, now is a good time to consider it. It was a natural choice for me - perhaps it will be for you as well.



David Worcester
davidworcester.com

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YOUR ARGENTIUM - INTERVIEW WITH CYNTHIA EID (PART 2)



Award-winning jeweler, silversmith and educator, Cynthia Eid is a pioneer working in Argentium Silver and a Certified Argentium Instructor. Here is the second part of Cynthia's interview, where she kindly shares her experiences and tips working in Argentium Silver and gives us an insight into her teaching and working processes.

Do you have a favourite piece that you have made in Argentium Silver? What is it that you like about that piece?

I am really pleased with the earrings I just finished. They are microfolded and fold formed, with 18KYG and AS granules along the edges, titled 'Dew Edged'. That is typical for me - my favorite thing is whatever I am doing NOW.

How do you start to design a piece - do you work through sketching, photography and making models or do you have other design processes that you use?

I usually start with a rough sketch, but sometimes, it's just a picture in my mind, or a concept. For the earrings I just finished, I had the idea that I wanted to try fusing granules in the corrugated folds of earrings, I wanted it to be an 'unmatched pair' and I wanted to use both Argentium Silver and gold. The details were worked out as I went along.

For an important piece of hollowware, which will have a large investment of time and money, I sometimes make paper models, if there is a design question or technical problem that I need to figure out. I think that I plan less than I used to - one of the benefits of having worked in silver for over 40 years is being able to see a lot in my mind. It's more fun for me

You are regularly teaching - do you gain inspiration from your students to make a piece or try something new?

One of the things that I love about teaching is the energy and excitement I feel when a student 'gets' a new technique and falls in love with it.

One way that I keep teaching fresh and fun is that I keep changing the demonstrations - different shapes or new experiments. Sometimes, one of these demos leads to a new piece of metalwork. There are also times that a student takes my words or demonstration in a direction that I had not previously thought of and sometimes sparks a new train of thought.

I also learn through preparing for a class, or finding the answer to a student's question. I enjoy the fact that students in a class usually have a wide range of experience. For people who are just learning to form metal, I need to explain very clearly - yet, since these people often make interesting discoveries through naiveté. The professionals in a class purposefully push the normal boundaries, and ask tough questions. Staying 'ahead' of my students keeps me sharp.

to see a piece take shape in metal than for the first time than to re-make what I already made in paper or copper.



'Dew Edged' earrings

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Detail from 'Undulations' bangle

The finishing of Argentium Silver is very important to enable optimum tarnish resistance - please could you explain your finishing procedure for your Argentium pieces?

After the piece is completely finished, it goes into an open Pyrex dish in the oven or toaster oven at 500°F/260°C (about as hot as my ovens get) for about one-and-one-half hours. This hardens the silver, as well as forming germanium oxide, which prevents tarnish. The silver is pickled white to remove any discoloration from the heat. The finish is brightened up again. For most of my work, that means that I lightly use a brass brush with soapy water for a soft sheen. If it is a smooth surface, I go over the surface with a Goddards Long Shine cloth, which contains thiols. The thiols, in addition to the germanium oxide, prevent tarnish.

If you could offer 3 pieces of advice for somebody who has just started to work with Argentium Silver... what would that be?

The biggest learning curve that most people have is understanding the reduced thermal conductivity of Argentium Silver when soldering or fusing.

After giving the whole piece of metal enough heat to dry the flux (only put flux on the seam), focus the heat on one end of the seam. Heat both pieces of metal rather than the solder. Put more heat on the larger piece of metal so that both pieces of metal reach solder-melting temperature at the same time. Once the solder starts to flow, apply the heat in the same way to the adjacent area. Work along the seam, sequentially

applying the heat.

Argentium Silver is fragile when red hot, so you cannot press two parts together while soldering. The metal should fit before joining the two pieces. It is fine to use binding wire or pins to hold the parts together. Argentium Silver holds the heat longer than traditional sterling, so you need to wait longer before it is safe to quench it. I test the temperature of the silver by dripping water onto it.



'Aorientalize'



'Blades of Grass'

Cynthia will be running classes throughout 2012 - details can be found in the Events section of the Argentium Guild website: argentiumguild.com/events

You can find out more about Cynthia on her website: cynthiaeid.com

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COMPETITION WINNERS



David Worcester

Congratulations to David Worcester and Kristina Niedderer.

David has crafted this pendant in Argentium 960 Silver, with a tension-set, blue topaz stone. Kristina's excellent silversmithing skills are demonstrated with these Argentium cups that interlock by positive and negative geometric forms.

The photographs incorporate clever use of lighting, background and composition - all of which come together to beautifully illustrate the pieces.

A big "thank you" you to all of our Guild Members who entered the competition.



'Imprints' by Kristina Niedderer



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If you have an Argentium related story to tell, would like to be a Featured Member, have photos to share, or if you have any events coming up - please contact:

info@argentiumguild.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

FACEBOOK



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