

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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Lapidary Journal



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CONGRATULATIONS!

GUILD MEMBERS FEATURED IN LAPIDARY JOURNAL - AUGUST 12 ISSUE

Congratulations to Patricia Tschetter, Cynthia Eid, Roger Halas, Phillip Baldwin, Jenny Reeves and Betsy Porter, who were all featured in the August 2012 issue of Lapidary Journal - Jewelry Artist.

Patricia Tschetter teaches you, step by step, how to make a granulated Argentium Spiculum Pendant and her work is also featured in an article exploring the use of ancient techniques in modern day design. Article 'Argentium Sterling Silver - Silver's Very Own Silver Lining' features Cynthia Eid, Jenny Reeves, Phillip Baldwin and Patricia Tschetter.



This beautifully illustrated journal is packed full of wonderful silversmithing and jewellery making advice. If you would like to subscribe or order back issues of Lapidary Journal - Jewelry Artist, go to www.interweave.com/Magazines

Jenny Reeves gives some good tips for submitting your work to be published in 'Your Argentium' section of this Newsletter (see Pages 3 and 4).

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You can keep in touch with us through Email, Facebook, Twitter and our Blog.



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FEATURED MEMBERS (August 12)



Vicki Pellegrini alegrajewelry.etsy.com

"Diverse surface textures and repetition are commonly used to create a graceful and soothing unity among varying objects. The initial construction of each piece begins with traditional silversmithing techniques using Argentium silver. These techniques consist of forming, soldering and sanding the silver. One of the last steps in manipulating the metal is texture. I use files, stamps, and hammers to create a layered surface. By combining textured materials with more revered mineral stones, I encourage the viewer to reconsider their definition of beauty."



Tara Brannigan kindofstrange.com

"Growing up in the Midwest, I spent a large part of my childhood wandering around in the woods and exploring the world. This desire to seek out and capture the small details of the natural world has stuck with me throughout the years. Much of my work involves the re-use of natural materials, and the attempt to bring new life into that which would otherwise be discarded. These days I live in Seattle where I work for a great casual gaming company during the week and spend my free time making jewelry and other odd bits of adornment!"

FEATURED MEMBERS (September 12)



Joshua Haiman jkhaimandesigns.com

"I come from a background of blacksmithing, so the hammer and the forge are my best friends. My inspirations are ancient Celtic and Nordic design, and I work to give those disciplines a fresh take in my silversmithing. I love that Argentium naturally lends itself to organic contours, vine-like twists and rustic finishes of those traditional styles. I'm also really interested in living and working in a sustainable way, so I set my Argentium pieces exclusively with fair trade and eco-sourced gems."



E'lan Buendia heylanjewelry.etsy.com

"I love that jewelry wearing and gift-giving is an emotional event for individuals! I cherish the opportunity to be involved with such events in people's lives and therefore endeavor to tap into emotions when describing, designing, and creating my pieces... by doing this I believe I am able to provide a wonderful story for the individual whom will ultimately wear the piece! The act of designing jewelry is so important to me, that when I travel, I'm on the look out for items and knowledge that I can use in my pieces. Happily, I am able to add some of the 'mojo' of each location into my jewelry."

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YOUR ARGENTIUM - AN INTERVIEW WITH JENNY REEVES



How did you become interested in jewelry making and silversmithing?

I signed up for a Metal Arts class at City College of San Francisco... one semester and I was hooked!

Where did you learn and develop your silversmithing skills?

I learned a lot of basic skills in three years at CCSF. I then enrolled in the Jeweler Technician and Graduate Jeweler programs at the Revere Academy to develop a strong technical foundation, learn specialized techniques and to get LOTS of practice.

You have a distinctive style that really makes your stunning jewelry stand out from the crowd - how did you develop this style and where do you get your inspiration from?

Well, thanks! I began experimenting with textures in Argentium and 18K gold in 2008. The surfaces that evolved resembled different types of stone and I made these the starting points for different series of work. The textures are organic and ancient-looking - I like to balance these qualities with clean lines and geometric proportions.

Creative textures, geometry and beautifully set gemstones - Jenny Reeves has a unique signature style that showcases her talent. In this interview, Jenny kindly shares some tips and advice and tells us about her background in silversmithing.

Geometry in nature is a big inspiration for me and people respond to these recognizable forms.

How were you introduced to Argentium silver and how has Argentium influenced your designs?

Ronda Coryell introduced me to Argentium and the techniques I use evolved from a 'Surfaces' class with Andy Cooperman. In Andy's class we created textures by fusing filings and sheet to a base sheet using traditional sterling silver and bronze. I knew of Argentium's exceptional fusing abilities and began experimenting with these techniques using Argentium and 18K gold - the results were magical. The layered textures I create would be difficult or impossible to create with traditional sterling silver.

How do you juggle promoting your business, teaching and making your jewelry?

Time and priority management are very important!

On your website you have a section dedicated to 'Green Jewelry' - is this an important feature determining the materials that you use in your designs?

Yes, very important. It's the future and it's the right thing to do.

Your jewelry was recently featured in 'Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist' - what advice can you give to others about getting



Connected Pin/Pendant



Geode Rings with Stones

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their work known and published.

Magazines are always looking for stories - think about what your story is and let editors know. Find a venue (magazine, website, blog) where your work fits and introduce yourself. Give a brief description of who you are, what you do and why your work is unique. Provide full contact information and include low-resolution, professional quality jpegs, offer high-resolution images on request and let them know if you're interested in contributing to their publication. If you win an award or do something notable, write a press release (examples/templates available online) and send it to local media and trade publications. They only know what you're doing if you tell them!

Your pieces often incorporate a wonderful, rich patina - please can you describe the process that you use to develop this?

The fused textures provide most of the effect. I use liver of sulfur or selenium toner to oxidize the silver for contrast - I apply it to the silver areas with a paint brush in multiple applications, cleaning with a brass brush between applications until a



Insect Wing Earrings



Plantain Chip Earrings

consistent patina is achieved. I finish with a steel burnisher on gold surfaces and silver edges to create a bright reflection and lots of sparkle.

Your pieces are beautifully photographed and presented - please can you offer advice to other jewelers on how to present their work, to create an impact?

High quality photography is important. If you can afford it, I recommend working with a professional jewelry photographer. An investment in 5-6 shots that can be used for multiple applications (juries, advertising, banners, etc.) will pay for themselves over time. Other options would be to work with a photography student or shoot the work yourself. Study professional images for guidance and shoot close-up on a neutral background. Photoshop can be used to remove hot-spots and shadows and to correct stone color.

I know a few jewelers who take professional-quality images of their own work - just keep in mind that shooting small reflective objects is tricky and that the quality of your images can be the difference of getting into a show or not.

Do you have a favourite piece/ collection that you have made?

I like 'Connected', a pin/pendant I made for an exhibition. I incorporated a wire lattice that suspends the piece in a frame, and it has a clever pin mechanism on the back. It was technically challenging to make and I like the color contrast of the stones.

What has been the highlight of your career as a jeweler?

Being asked to teach at the Revere Academy. The quality of education there is tremendous and I was incredibly honored to join the faculty.



Chrysocolla Seafoam Cuff

You can see more of Jenny's work at: jennyreeves.com

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DIFFERENT HEAT TREATMENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SILVER ALLOYS

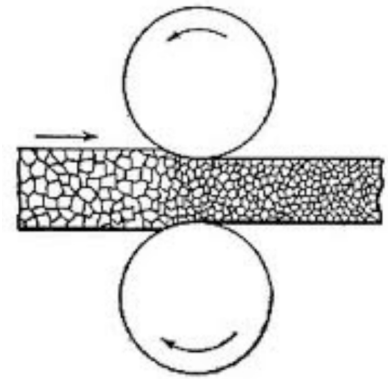
When we work with a silver alloy (forming and shaping it), we increase its hardness. Eventually the silver alloy becomes so hard it will not work any further without cracking. This condition is known as 'fully work hardened' and the metal needs to be heated to make it soft again, so that we can work it further.



By Charles Allenden

There are different forms of heat treatments such as annealing and stress relieving, also overheating the metal can cause grain growth and poor surface quality. What I want to discuss in this article is the way the grain structure of a silver alloy changes through the different stages of working and more importantly how carrying out the correct heat treatment will give you a product suitable for further fabrication.

If we start by thinking about what happens to a sheet of annealed silver alloy when we roll it to reduce its thickness - as the diagram on the right shows, the large grain structure in the original sheet is compressed and reduced, creating a much smaller grain size in the thinner sheet. The thinner the sheet gets, the more its hardness increases. This is because in creating the smaller grain size, there are more internal stresses in the metal that act to prevent further reductions in thickness. So to be able to work the silver alloy further, we need to remove these internal stresses in the metal.



For us there are many different ways to relieve stress...



Yoga



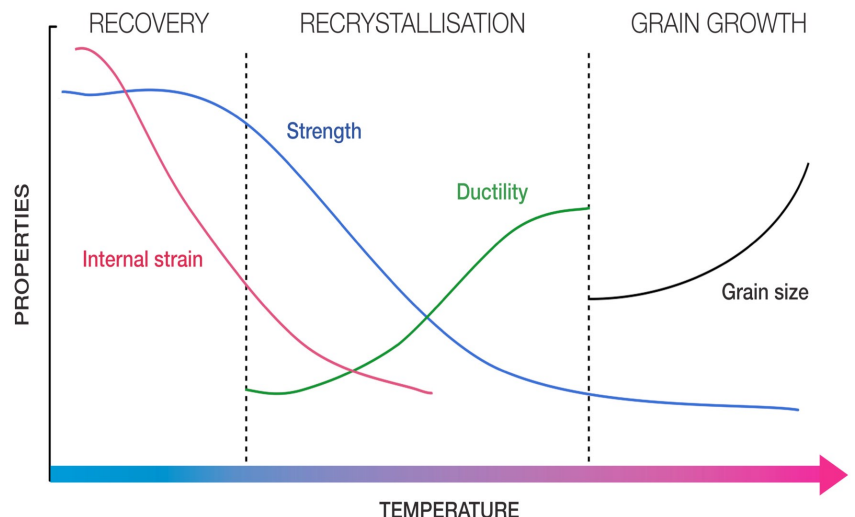
A good Malt Whisky



A sauna

For our silver alloy, the sauna is the best analogy. We remove the internal stresses by putting in energy in the form of heat. However, just as too much time in the sauna can cause problems for us, we have to be careful as too much heat can create problems with a silver alloy.

This is illustrated in the diagram on the right.





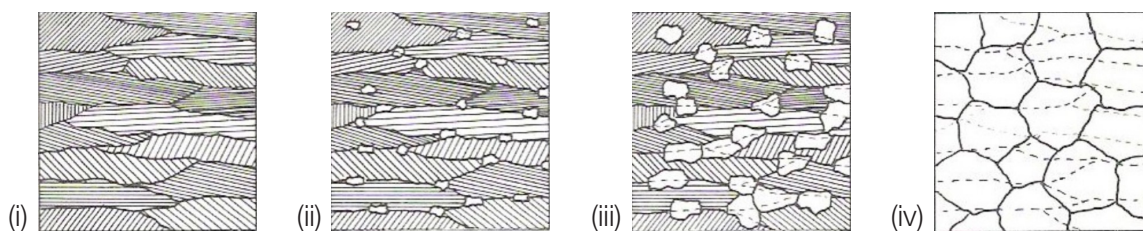
The heat treatment of any silver alloy can be broken down into three stages...

1) Recovery

This takes place at lower temperatures and reduces the internal strain present in the metal. This can be a specific heat treatment known as a stress relief, which is designed to remove local strains that might cause distortion or lead to stress corrosion cracking. Importantly it causes recrystallisation of the silver alloy and consequently does not lead to a reduction in strength (i.e. hardness) created by the previous cold work (rolling).

2) Recrystallisation

This is the most important stage and is more normally termed annealing. The energy introduced into the metal by the annealing heat treatment enables the small grains to combine to give larger grains, which can then be subjected to further cold working. The annealing heat treatment and recrystallisation of the silver alloy also produces a reduction in strength (i.e. the hardness is reduced) and an increase in the ductility of the metal. The stages in recrystallisation and grain growth are shown in the diagrams below...



This shows how the small, elongated, rolled grains (i), when heated form nuclei at the grain boundaries (ii), which then start to grow (iii), and form a new grain structure (iv), which does not show any of the directionality of the crystals that they replace. (Diagram from R.A. Higgins, *Properties of Engineering Materials*, Fig. 5.27.)

3) Grain Growth

Finally, if the silver alloy is annealed for too long, or at too high a temperature, then this will result in a relatively coarse grain structure as the newly formed crystals shown in (iv) above continue to grow by absorbing each other.

Hopefully what I have shown is how important the correct annealing heat treatment is to ensure that you produce a quality finished silver alloy item. If you over-heat or heat for too long, the excessive grain growth that you will create will mean that when you try to work the piece again, there is the possibility of the surface opening up and cracking.

Also the low temperature stress relief is a useful heat treatment to understand. It is particularly beneficial if carried out before brazing (soldering) operations, as it prevents pieces being joined from distorting as they reach the temperature at which the brazing alloy (solder) begins to flow.

DID YOU KNOW?

Annealed Argentium silver has greater ductility/malleability than traditional sterling silver - Ronda Coryell demonstrates this in the following video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VJZTAZUIMU>

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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.