

ARGENTIUM GUILD NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4, MAY 2012
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.

IN THIS EDITION



WHAT'S NEW?...
2mm Flying Unicorn stamps
available from Rio Grande



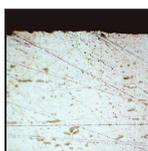
FEATURED MEMBERS
Teresa Cetto, Sonja Reschke,
Elizabeth Wong, Valerie Thomas



BECOME A CERTIFIED
ARGENTIUM INSTRUCTOR
with Jewelry Studies Int'l



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TECH TALK
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Argentium

WHAT'S NEW?...

ARGENTIUM 2MM STAMPS ARE HERE!

We are delighted to announce that Rio Grande is now supplying 2mm size Flying Unicorn stamps to mark your Argentium silver. Just like the existing 1mm and 1.5mm stamps, the 2mm stamps are available as straight and bent shanks. Here are the links...

<http://www.riogrande.com/Product/Argentium-Silver-Quality-Marking-Stamp-Straight-Shank-2mm/112290>

<http://www.riogrande.com/Product/Argentium-Silver-Quality-Marking-Stamp-Bent-Shank-2mm/112291>



KEEP IN TOUCH

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



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FEATURED MEMBERS (April 12)



Teresa Cetto teresacetto.com

Scientific Illustrator turned jeweler...

"My inspiration comes from a fascination with all living creatures and vegetation. I strive to capture the tilt of a mermaid's head as she turns her face to the sun or the twisting character of a grape vine tendril. Fossils, seaglass and beachstones are a valuable source of color, along with traditional gems. All of my designs are fabricated in my studio. I have worked exclusively with silver and gold since 1986 and began using Argentium silver in 2003."



Sonja Reschke

"I began metalsmithing in 2010, wholly out of necessity as I had run out of head pins. As a self taught metalsmith, living in northern BC and with no formal training programs within 800 miles, I relied heavily on reading jewelry books and experimentation to develop my skills. I began working with Argentium silver immediately and its forgiving nature allowed me to develop my own techniques over time, learning from my mistakes and successes (quickly learning not to move the metal while it was red hot). I enjoy working in a variety of techniques from reticulation and fold forming to sandcasting and forging."

FEATURED MEMBERS (May 12)



Elizabeth Wong eimeofinejewelry.com

"For the past 24 years I've been living on the South Pacific island of Moorea, designing and creating original jewelry. My jewelry career began in South California as a bench jeweler and progressed into designing and wax carving. During this time I completed the GIA Jewelry Design course in 1977. Argentium silver is wonderful to work with and being in a tropical climate the tarnish resistant factor is a bonus. I often incorporate other semi-precious stones and found objects with the black pearls. I am fortunate to have found my niche in life on such a beautiful and inspiring island."



Valerie Thomas laguna-blue.com

"Our studio name is Laguna Blue and we often fabricate in a tropical theme. My husband and I started metalsmithing about 12 years ago. I hated using traditional sterling silver because of the tarnish. When I heard about Argentium sterling, I haven't looked back since. Some techniques that we use to create our objects d'art are torch sculpting, fold forming, repoussé, chasing, forging, texturing, and we also successfully enamel on Argentium. I add accents in 22 kt gold, natural stones, fossils, sea glass, pearls and natural coral."

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ARGENTIUM INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

We are delighted to announce that the Argentium Instructor Certification Program will be launched this summer. We would like to say a big “thank you” to Ronda Coryell and Jewelry Studies International for all of the hard work that has gone into setting up the Program. Please find below general information explaining the testing process and the benefits of becoming certified. The following information has kindly been supplied by and is the copyright of Ronda Coryell.



Background

The Argentium Instructor Certification Program is headed by Jewelry Studies International (JSI) - the world's leading authority on jewelry making with Argentium silver and is endorsed by the Argentium Silver Guild.

The Program, directed by Ronda Coryell (founder of JSI and leading Argentium Certified Instructor), has been designed to:

- Test the skill level, competency and proficiency in working with Argentium silver
- Establish international standards
- Ensure the level of knowledge of an instructor

Argentium Instructor Certification Program

The Program is directed to those wanting to become an internationally recognized instructor of Argentium silver. Certification requires quality performance in the areas of fabrication, soldering, fusing, finishing and working with Argentium silver.

Certification benefits

- Advances your career and earning potential
- Increases your credibility with students and schools
- Gives hosting schools and studios a means of knowing that you will have a certain proficiency of skills
- Listed as a Certified Instructor on the Argentium Guild website and a one year free membership
- Argentium Guild website will help promote your classes

2 levels of Argentium Instructor Certification

The 2 levels of certification reflect a career path for the instructor with progressively higher stages of proficiency and assurance of knowledge in the use of Argentium silver. Both levels require a written exam and practical tests.

Level 1

Argentium Certified Instructor Level 1 Test reflects mastery of skills in fabrication, soldering, fusing and finishing with Argentium silver.

Level 2

Argentium Certified Instructor Level 2 Test reflects mastery of advanced fabrication skills and casting in Argentium silver.

Further information

The Argentium Guild website and blog will be updated with information to inform you when the Program is being launched and to give further information about this exciting opportunity for Argentium users.



If you are interested in becoming an Argentium Certified Instructor, please email Ronda Coryell: info@jewelrystudiesinternational.com

ARGENTIUM GUILD NEWSLETTER



YOUR ARGENTIUM - JAN PEYSER TALKS ABOUT HER NEW SHOP



What inspired you to open your own shop?

If truth be told, I believe having my own shop has been a subliminal dream since childhood! As a child of the 60's, who consistently found ways to express herself through numerous, artistic venues, my Mom and I enjoyed shopping on Saturdays as a quite pleasant diversion and way to spend time together, especially when I was a teenager. I was enchanted by the bright lights and energy of the shops and other people out enjoying themselves!

Those are some of my happiest memories, so when I retired early from teaching English (twenty-one years) to pursue a dream of creating my designs as precious metal jewelry, I learned the basics of silversmithing, created some jewelry, and went on the road doing art shows for two years, where I discovered my designs delighted passersby and customers alike.

Was it difficult to find premises?

I had been off the road for 10 months putting together my ecommerce website, selling here and there, and wondering what my next step should be, but I did not set out to find a shop, as I assumed

all would be too expensive to rent. Soon, however, I knew it was time to take the next step, somehow, somewhere. On a rare Saturday outing with my husband, we ended up on the highway to Michigan, which is our neighboring state, and stopped in a charming town to walk around. Ever on the lookout for an opportunity, a tiny sign at the bottom of a window presented itself as "Shop for Rent," and the rest, as they say, is history! Remarkably, the price was right, even though it's a heavily populated vacation spot. I could tell it was an incredible opportunity and sensed I'd better grab it. With a bit of my retirement savings, I transformed an old, 1870's shop, set it up, and remain confident my returns will be lucrative. If I had made an assumption about the cost and not opened my mouth to ask, my dream would not have come true.

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"A tiny sign at the bottom of a window presented itself as "Shop for Rent," and the rest, as they say, is history!"



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Have you had to carry out a lot of renovations before moving in?

Oh yes! As previously mentioned, it is an old building, and the store had an oddly placed water pipe right in the middle of the space from floor to ceiling, along with much worn and tired, early American woodwork, and I love contemporary design! It took one month and one expert, local handyman to assist me in converting it.

How will you be advertising your shop?

Since I am proceeding in my venture solo, I have become an extrovert of sorts, in order to make what I want happen! I walked into other shops, restaurants, businesses and introduced myself, so word of mouth is critically important, I placed ads in the local newspapers, I wrote a paragraph for the Visitors Bureau website, I had a large sign with my logo and name placed above the shop on the outside as well as a small sign protruding from the doorway, I mentioned it on my own website. I've also contacted the local movie theatre, just up the street, to see if they put advertisements on screen, and I continue to search for other ways to advertise with a small budget.

What advice can you give to others who are thinking of opening a shop of their own?

Many years ago, someone said to me about a different kind of opportunity, "If you keep yourself scared of taking the plunge, you will not blossom." I think the same logic applies for taking the plunge into shop ownership. I would add you must act responsibly in financial matters in all the decisions you make as you proceed, and be

willing to institute changes along the way as you learn the ropes of running your own shop. As well, it's healthy and beneficial to like meeting and speaking with people! I also used all local businesses (handyman, printer, carpet shop, etc.) to help me create this shop.

How would you describe your jewellery?

It is lyrical and sculptural. I draw my designs first, transfer them to Argentium silver sheets, cut, refine, file, hand-engage, texture, emboss, stylistically hammer and, most importantly, hand-sculpt curves and curls with a nylon mallet on wood and metal stakes and intricately form various parts of the more complex pieces with different jewelry pliers. My unique designs become engaging jewelry that celebrates nature, birds in flight, life beneath the sea, and more.

How will you be displaying your pieces in your shop?

I use simple, slim, black tables, horizontal, glass cases, and velvet display stands and busts. Jewelry is placed inside and on top of the cases, as well as to the sides, and there is absolutely no clutter.

If you are in the area, you can visit Jan's shop at the following address:

'Jan Peyser Jewelry, LLC'
201 Center Street,
South Haven,
Michigan 49090
USA

See more of Jan's work at:
janpeyserjewelry.com



Fish brooch



Celestial earrings

ARGENTIUM GUILD NEWSLETTER



TECH TALK - THE BENEFITS OF FIRESTAIN-FREE ARGENTIUM

The problem with firestain

Looking at this traditional sterling silver watch (right), you can understand why sterling silver products are often silver or rhodium plated! The dark coloured stain can be stubborn to remove - the reason for this being that the firestain can penetrate deep into the surface of the silver. The micrograph image below clearly shows the depth of penetration - this means extra filing, sanding and polishing, together with added time and hard work. Larger manufacturers even use harsh chemicals to strip the surface.

In addition to the aesthetic and labour intensive disadvantages, if firestain isn't removed it can cause further problems, e.g. solder joints can be weakened.

Traditional sterling silver watch
(silver plated)



Layer of fine silver
plate over firestain

Firestain revealed
where silver plate
has worn away



What causes firestain?

When sterling silver is heated in the presence of air/oxygen, the copper in the alloy oxidises. The copper oxide that is formed is a dark, purple-grey colour and because silver is permeable to oxygen, this is the reason why the firestain oxide can penetrate deep into the surface.

Early research to prevent firestain

When Peter Johns invented Argentium silver, firestain was the initial property that he focused upon. It was clear to see, from his early trials, that germanium was the answer to preventing the formation of firestain in sterling silver.



How does Argentium silver prevent firestain?

Germanium loves oxygen! Germanium in Argentium silver oxidises preferentially to the copper - this protects the surface from developing the copper oxide firestain. Germanium oxide is transparent and will 'self-heal' if the Argentium silver surface is abraded.

So when you are heating your Argentium silver for annealing, fusing, soldering and casting, you no longer have to worry about that age-old problem of firestain. Happy making!

QUICK TIP

Ever thought of making up your own homemade, natural pickling solution? ...In this video clip, Ronda Coryell shows you how:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G3lDtA-YPs>

KEEP IN TOUCH

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.