

**Jewelry**  
**Making**  
DAILY

PRESENTS

# **Vintage Inspired Jewelry:** 3 Free Projects for Making Vintage Jewelry



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BY TAMARA L. HONAMAN



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**OPENWORK DINNER RING**  
*An elegant design executed with Koroit opal*  
BY VICTORIA LANSFORD

EVOKE THE ELEGANCE of another time with these vintage style jewelry making projects. There's one for every level, from easy to challenging.

For a simple start, intersperse curved bars of polished silver with sparkling drops of aventurine and goldstone to make a delicate necklace just right for an Edwardian neckline. Have a miniature corsage available for any occasion when you create a bouquet of silver flowers using wire wrapping and metal clay techniques for a handsome lapel pin. The perfect accessory to a sophisticated soirée is the dinner ring: make an openwork silver mount for a shimmering opal gem, and improve your soldering and stone setting skills at the same time.

Whether you want to envelop yourself in the Belle Epoque or create a keepsake piece with personal mementoes, these lovely projects will show you how to make vintage style jewelry today.

Merle White  
Editorial Director, Interweave Jewelry Group

# Aventurine Necklace

## Sterling silver beaded necklace

BY TAMARA L. HONAMAN



### Skill level



### What you need

- 24-gauge wire
- Wire cutters
- Needle nose and flat nose or chain nose pliers
- Pickle pot
- A bowl filled with an acid neutralizer (baking soda and water)
- A bowl filled with clean water
- Copper tongs
- Solderite block or heat-resistant surface
- Purchased chain (I used 16" curved bar chain)
- 4mm aventurine beads
- 4mm blue goldstone beads
- 4mm goldstone beads

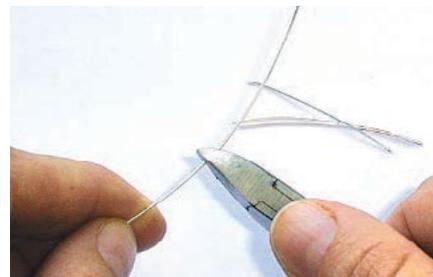
This is a project I am happy to share with you. It starts with a purchased necklace from Rio Grande. I loved the shape of this necklace but knew it lacked something. As their catalog suggested, I added some drop elements to it and voilà! Success. I have sold many using freshwater pearls and love the way it looks with the different colors of aventurine. The possibilities are endless.

**1** Cut the 24-gauge wire into 20 1½" pieces (for the chain I used I only needed 17 but made extra, just in case).

**2** Light the torch.

**3** Using the flat nose or chain nose pliers, hold one piece of the wire vertically in the flame of the torch, not near the torch tip or out at the end of the flame, more towards the end of the center, bluish pointy flame. The end will start to ball up and with the help of gravity form a nice beaded end to the wire.

**4** The wire may turn a blackish color from the heat of the torch. I found this didn't happen with the 24-gauge wire as it balls up quickly and doesn't linger in the flame too long, but as I started to use heavier gauge wire, it did start to turn black. If the wire does turn black, drop it into the pickle pot and let it sit until no black remains. Using the copper tongs (use only copper tongs in the pickle; any other metal will contaminate the pickle and then in turn contaminate



anything else you put into the pickle), remove from the pickle pot and quench in a neutralizer bath and then clean water. Repeat this with all the pieces of cut wire.

**5** Now you are ready to string the necklace. I have found that a bead board with channels works for me. The bead board I use has channels that run straight, but a curved channel would work just as well, as would using a towel. Either helps to keep things from rolling around and to aid in visualizing what the finished piece would look like. Once you start wiring on the head pins you don't want to have to remove them. They will either break or be so twisted they will only be worth saving for melting down some day.

Lay the necklace out straight. Then take all the head pins and string one bead on each.



**6** Arrange the head pins with beads on them in the pattern of colors you want for your finished piece. I place my head pins near the hole they are going to be strung in so I am sure to really get a clear image in my mind. (It also helps me be sure that I have enough head pin/bead combinations.)

With your needle nose pliers, bend the wire  $\frac{1}{8}$ " above the bead and wrap the wire around one nose of the pliers, not quite completing a loop. I work in assembly-line fashion so I do this to all of the head pins first; you can do one at a time if you wish.



**7** Take your first wired bead and place the end through the first



hole on the necklace. With the curved bar chain I chose to use, you have to make sure the bars are hanging properly or the bead will wind up on the top of the loop instead of the bottom and then it won't hang properly.

**8** With the chain nose pliers in your nondominant hand, hold the loop you made in the head pin. Using the flat nose or needle nose pliers in your domi-



nant hand, grab the leg of the wire and wrap around the wire holding the bead, going from front to back. Repeat this for at least 2 full revolutions. I prefer to



work right up to the top of the bead and can usually get in 3 wraps.



**9** Trim the wire with the cutters, getting as close to the wrap as possible. Curve any ends in with the chain or needle nose pliers. Run your finger along the edge to make sure there are no sharp edges remaining.

Repeat this for each loop until you have completed the necklace.

Tamara L. Honaman is a former editor of *Lapidary Journal* and a jewelry enthusiast. She works in many media including wire, glass, stone, polymer, and metal clay.



# WIRE WRAPPED METAL CLAY BOUQUET

A floral pin in the style of folded paper

PROJECT BY

PAULA BASTIAN-DE LEON

Opening Photo: JIM LAWSON  
Project Photos: Roberto De Leon

Recently, I tried using metal clay sheet to create some origami flowers. The process was fairly simple and, as I was happy with the result, I started thinking about what other paper manipulating ideas I could apply to metal clay and focused on quilling.

Quilling is an ancient art form that creates design using narrow strips of paper that have been rolled, shaped, and arranged. It's very much like filigree, only with paper in place of metal. I applied a combination of these techniques with modern paper manipulating tools to metal clay to create this floral brooch. I recommend practicing origami and quilling techniques with paper before applying them to metal clay.

## SKILLS YOU NEED

● metal clay basics	● wire wrapping
● measuring	● assembly

## MATERIALS AND TOOLS YOU NEED

### MATERIALS

Silver metal clay: 40 grams  
Silver metal clay sheet 1: 6cm x 6cm  
Silver metal clay paste  
Olive oil  
18-gauge fine silver round wire: 3'  
22-gauge sterling silver round wire: 4'  
Pin back: approx. 1" x 3/16"  
3 Sterling silver crimp tubes: 2mm x 2mm  
Bamboo skewer or manicure stick  
Liver of sulfur  
Distilled water

### TOOLS

**Clay tools:** non-stick or self healing mat, acrylic block or roller, playing cards or graduated measuring slats, round tip paintbrush, rubber tipped clay shaping tool, tissue blade or stainless steel potter's rib

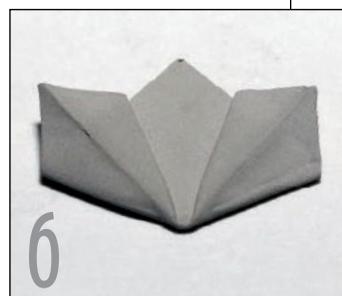
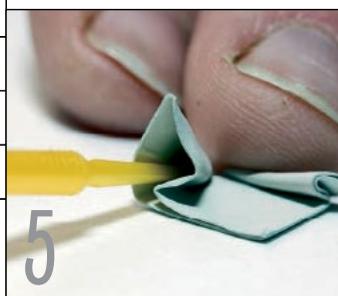
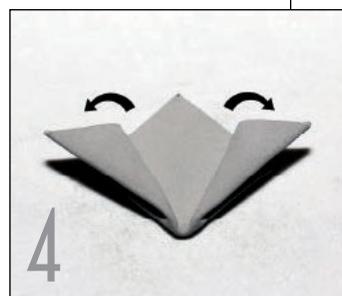
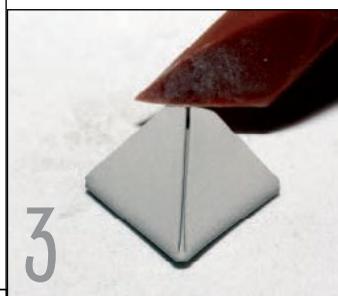
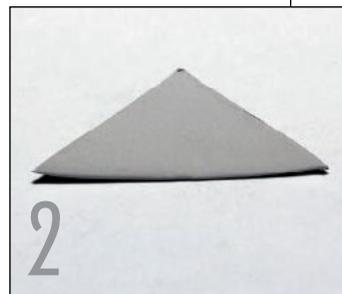
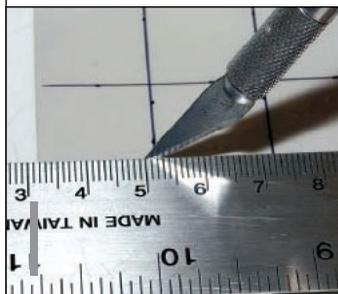
**Hand tools:** craft knife, pen/pencil, ruler, 2-3 floral-shaped paper punches with design measuring approx. 15mm, pin vise/ hand drill and 1/16" bit, dapping block with punch, hammer, flat nose and round nose pliers, flush cutters, small jeweler's file

**Finishing tools:** fine grit sanding sponge, superfine grit paper, brass brush, paintbrush to apply patina, rotary or vibratory tumbler with stainless steel shot

**Other tools:** kiln, mini hot plate (optional), small microwavable bowl or cup dedicated for liver of sulfur only

### SOURCES

**Tools & Materials:** Most of the tools and materials for this project will be available from well stocked jewelry supply vendors.



## ORIGAMI FLOWER

**{Photo 1}** Measure six 2cm x 2cm squares on metal clay sheet. Cut out squares through packaging with craft knife.

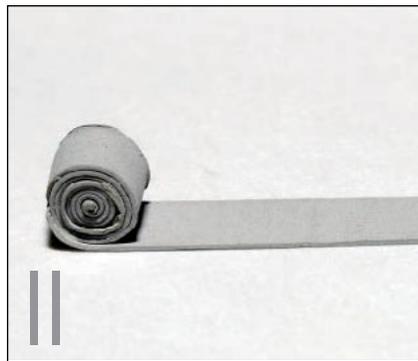
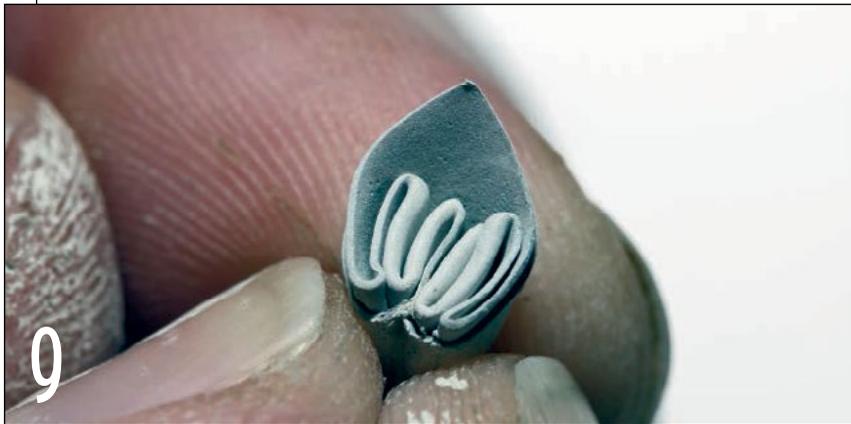
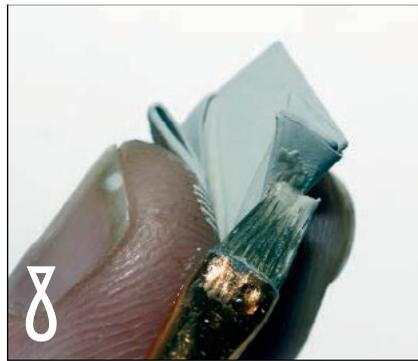
**{Photo 2}** Fold bottom corner to top to create a triangle.

**{Photo 3}** Fold right corner to meet middle corner. Repeat same fold with left corner to make a square.

**{Photo 4}** Fold same points down so their edges line up precisely with outside edge of square.

**{Photo 5}** With soft, blunt tip, gently open one flap just created and press flat. Repeat on other side.

**{Photo 6}** Fold top triangles down toward you, keeping them level with edges of paper.



**{Photo 7}** Using creases made earlier, fold back (inward) triangles on right and left sides.

**{Photos 8}** Apply small amount of metal clay paste to top of newly made triangle edges, fold edges inward to make a petal, and press together for a minute or two until they stay closed.

**{Photo 9}** Make 5 more petal sections, pasting 3 together at a time. Use a hot plate or allow plenty of time for paste to dry thoroughly for easy assembly of flower.

**{Photo 10}** Paste together both sets of 3 to make a flower with 6 petal sections and a hollow center.

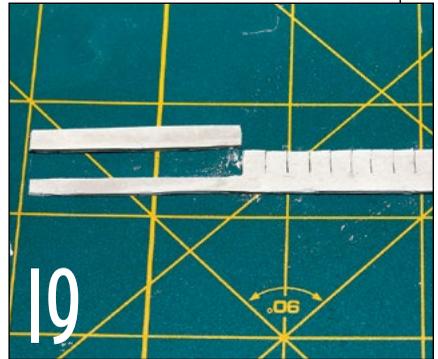
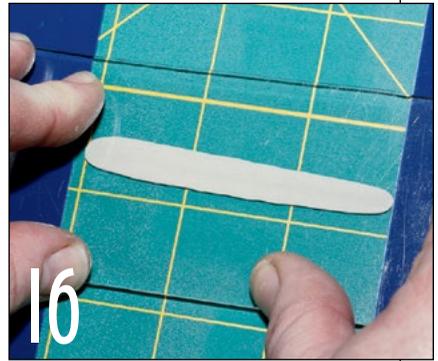
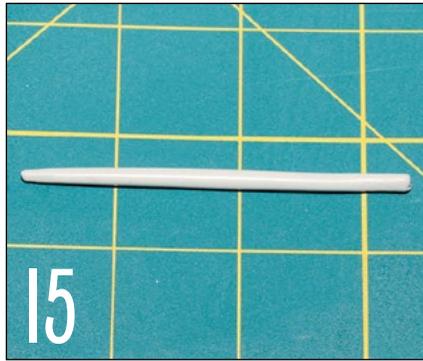
**{Photo 11}** Cut a 4mm x 60mm strip of clay sheet and roll into a spiral.

► Check fit of spiral by temporarily placing it into the open space in the center of the flower. If it is too small, cut more of the sheet into strip and attach it to the end of the spiral with a drop of water as glue. Continue rolling the strip into the spiral until it is large enough to fit into the center of the flower snugly. If the spiral is too large, simply unroll it to the proper size and cut off the excess.

**{Photo 12}** Use a drop of water or paste at very end of spiral to close it. Apply paste to bottom of spiral and inside center of flower. Place spiral in flower center using tweezers or whatever helps to wedge in gently. Dry flower on hot plate.

**{Photo 13}** Measure and cut a 4 1/4" length of fine silver wire. Using flat nose pliers, grab wire about 1/4" down and make a 180° bend. Use pliers to flatten bend as much as possible to create more surface area to fuse with clay. Dip bent end of fine silver wire into jar of paste and swirl around to get good coverage.





**{Photo 14}** Gently insert wire with paste on it into hole in bottom of flower until there is resistance and stop. Immediately set piece on hot plate to dry.

► If the hole is closed or too small for the wire to fit, you may need to use a small needle file to open the hole up a bit. Do not over-enlarge the hole. You want a fairly snug fit, allowing the wire stem to fuse to the inside of the flower. When bone dry, add paste as needed to correct imperfections.

Before firing, finish flower by sanding. Start with fine grit, then use extra fine for a smooth finish.

### QUILL A DAISY

► It is not important to be precise. The goal is to make a tool that will hold the

clay so it can be rolled without being heavily marred. The advantage of using a bamboo skewer is that it is flexible and therefore grabs the end of the clay. However, you must let the clay dry thoroughly before attempting to remove the stick or you will lose the inner spiral of the flower.

**{Photo 15}** With 5 grams of metal clay, roll out a snake about 3" long on acrylic block.

**{Photo 16}** Using playing cards or graduated slats, maintain a 4 card thickness and flatten "snake" with acrylic block or roller.

**{Photo 17}** Even out edges by cutting off rounded ends to create a relatively even strip of clay. I choose to eyeball rather than measure for this step.

**{Photo 18}** 1" in from left, begin cutting slits at top of strip of clay. They should be no more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  deep from top and relatively evenly spaced.

**{Photo 19}** Cut away top  $\frac{2}{3}$  of strip from 1" section without slits. This will become center flower spiral.

**{Photo 20}** Lift edge of strip. Slide into bamboo skewer. Let clay rest on work surface as you roll it clockwise. Continue to roll until there is 1 complete row of petals. Cut off excess petals and use paste to create a join. Put on hot plate until bone dry. Carefully remove bamboo stick. Repeat to make total of 3.

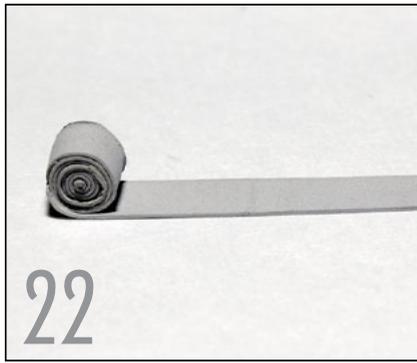
### QUILLING TOOL

Make a quilling tool using either a bamboo skewer or a manicure stick. Use a craft knife to cut a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep slit on the flat, round end of the skewer. Cut another slit about 1mm over from first one; as knife is at  $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep mark, try to whittle out section between cuts.





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**{Photo 21}** To make pistil, roll out very small (2-3 grams) snake of clay on acrylic block and flatten or roll out into strip about 2 cards thick, 5mm-6mm wide, and 40mm long.

**{Photo 22}** Roll strip up into a spiral cylinder. Add a drop of water to keep closed and set aside to dry. Make 3.

### BASE AND STEM

**{Photo 23}** Use distilled water to dampen bottom side of quilled daisies and flower pistils with a paintbrush.

**{Photo 24}** Using about 3-4 grams of clay, make a small ball and push it into dampened bottom of flower piece. Smooth seam with a moderately wet paintbrush.

Cut six 4 1/4" lengths of fine silver wire. Follow stem instructions. When bone dry, smooth and refine all pieces using a fine grit sanding sponge. Place on kiln shelf for firing.

**{Photo 25}** Prepare paper punches by using a toothbrush to apply a few drops of olive oil to them. Roll 10 grams of clay into a ball. Use acrylic block to press down on ball creating disk shape 3-4 cards thick.

**{Photo 26}** Slide disk into punch just as you would a piece of paper.

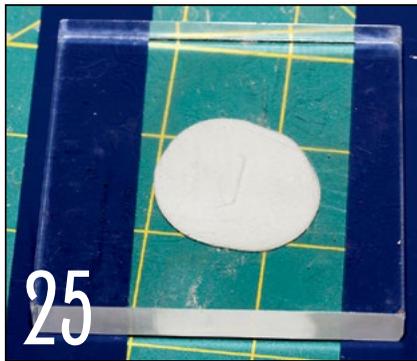
► Occasionally, I have had to pry the punch open a little bit in order to fit the clay in. This hasn't been a problem because most punches are metal inside a plastic housing.



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## VARY TEXTURE OR COLOR

Using texture sheets on silver, bronze, and copper metal clay gives an opportunity to modify the project as well as add color to the flowers.



**{Photo 27}** Punch out shape and remove excess clay. After drying, drill a hole in center of each piece. Refine as needed and place on kiln shelf for firing.

**{Photo 28}** Fire all pieces in kiln at 1650° F for 2 hours. Carefully bend out petals of 3 quilled daisy flowers with flat nose pliers. Burnish fired pieces in tumbler filled with steel shot. Shape petal sets with dapping block as desired. Next, slide 2 petals onto stem of quilled pistil followed by a 2mm x 2mm crimp bead.

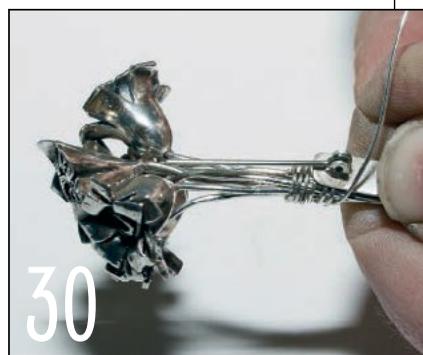
**{Photo 29}** Push crimp bead up stem so it will hold petals in place when compressed. Repeat with remaining pieces.

**{Photo 30}** Arrange 7 flowers into a bouquet. With 22ga sterling wire, begin wrapping stems of bouquet starting just under flowers. Wrap wire very tightly several times around stems before placing pin back finding directly onto wraps.

**{Photo 31}** Continue wrapping wire around stems and pin back, moving downward to secure finding into position. When it feels secure and you are happy with way it looks, cut wire and tuck end into back of piece.

**{Photo 32}** Trim stems at varying lengths. Use round nose pliers to create a simple loop at end of each wire. Apply liver of sulfur to entire piece, then burnish once again in tumbler.

**PAULA BASTIAN-DE LEON** is a metalsmith student in San Antonio, Texas. Her work has been published in *Step by Step Wire Jewelry* magazine as well as the 2009 *PMC Guild Annual*.



# OPENWORK DINNER RING

An elegant design executed with Koroit opal

PROJECT BY

VICTORIA LANSFORD

Opening Photo: JIM LAWSON  
Project Photos: VICTORIA LANSFORD

Spectacular rings can be elegantly bold and glamorous while still being exceptionally light and airy; even the name “dinner ring” suggests sophisticated evenings in past eras of opulence. A few basic architectural principles make the structure of this ring extremely wearable, while creating many design options. Starting out with a round or oval shape for the top of the ring and the stone makes learning the construction simpler before moving on to more complex ideas.



## SKILLS YOU NEED

- torch control
- fabrication skills
- bezel making

## MATERIALS AND TOOLS YOU NEED

### MATERIALS

16-gauge sterling silver square wire: about 6"

18-gauge sterling silver square wire: about 18"

Round or oval Koroit opal cabochon 7-8mm in diameter or 6mm x 10mm

Fine silver or 22K gold bezel wire for cab

24-gauge sterling silver sheet – slightly larger than cab

Solder; hard, medium, and easy silver or hard gold solder if using gold bezel wire

### Optional

Hard paste silver solder

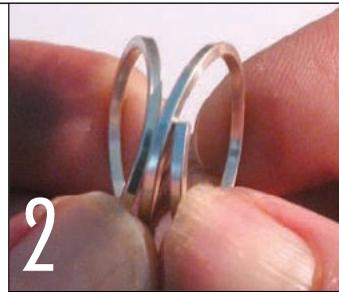
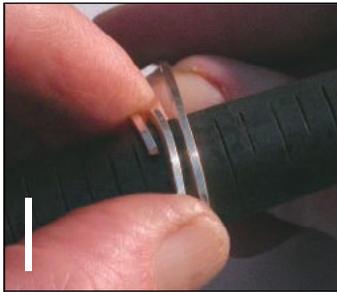
### TOOLS

**Soldering:** air acetylene torch; German charcoal block; paste flux; tweezers; pickle

**Hand tools:** Joyce Chen scissors; round and flat pliers;

fine chain nose pliers; flat and half round needle files; jewelers' saw; 2/0 saw blades

**Finishing:** flex shaft; knife edge silicon wheels in coarse, medium, and high shine grits; mini muslin polishing buff; mini brass brush wheel; screw top mandrels; Zam or blue rouge; bezel pusher; agate burnisher (optional)



## DESIGN OPTIONS

- The shank can also be soldered across the cage ring instead of outside it. Instead of filing grooves in the shank, file grooves in the cage ring where it will make contact with the shank.
- The spokes can be wavy as well as curved.
- A shelf bezel will accommodate a stone that needs light from underneath, such as a faceted stone. Stones with deep pavilions work well with this type of ring.



The shelf bezel can sit flush with the inner ring of the ring top or extend down inside the cage like the one pictured.

**{Photo 1}** Around a ring mandrel slightly higher up than the desired ring size, wrap 16ga square wire twice in a coil.

**{Photo 2}** Pull 2 halves of coil into a V, taking care not to twist wire. Ensure both halves are round and same size.

**{Photo 3}** Use Joy Chen scissors to miter ends of wire.

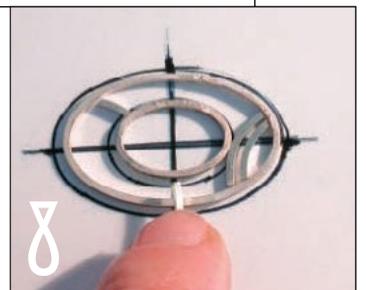
**{Photo 4}** Adjust V to correct size so mitered ends lie flush against either side of center, making shank appear continuous.

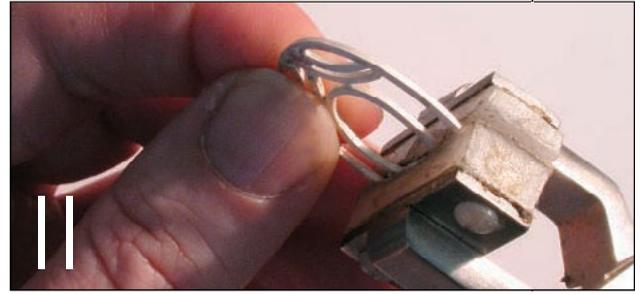
**{Photo 5}** Solder ends to middle of shank with hard solder. Quench, pickle, and dry. Lightly hammer on ring mandrel until perfectly round.

**{Photo 6}** Make bezel cup for stone using 24ga sheet as a base, leaving a 1.5mm ledge around cup when cutting it out. File edge of sheet smooth.

## SOLDERING TIPS

- On the ring top, the square wires will be filed flush, so it's better to use too much solder than to risk having pits or sunken seams on the top of the ring.
- Take time and care to flow solder completely around the bezel and square wire. It will make a big difference in how finished the piece will look when polished.
- When making the wheel spokes, placing and soldering 3 pieces of wire is much easier than keeping 6 pieces evenly spaced under the flame.
- If soldering the cage to the ring top gets frustrating, try tack-soldering 1 spoke to the ring top with wire or paste solder and then adjusting the other spokes as necessary.
- When soldering a small piece using a screen over a brick, cut the screen in half or fourths. This way, it will steal away less heat from the pieces you're soldering.





Remaining construction uses 18ga square wire.

**{Photo 7}** Make tight ring to encircle bezel cup. Solder closed. Ensure it fits snugly and is correct shape by trying ring on over bezel cup: there should be no space between them. Set aside.

Make a larger round or oval ring. This will determine length and width of ring top.

**{Photo 8}** Create squiggles, curves, spirals, or other shapes to fit between inner and outer rings. Lay these pieces over cross hairs to keep pieces in line. Miter ends of wires so they fit against inner and outer rings with no gaps.

**{Photo 9}** With hard paste solder, tack-solder inner and outer rings together with one of inner shapes.

**{Photo 10}** Fit in other shapes and solder together with hard paste or wire solder.

**{Photo 11}** Curve top slightly with pliers or by hitting into a wooden dapping block. Outer ring should still lie flat when placed on a flat surface.

Insert bezel cup through ring top from back. The ledge of sheet will prevent it from pushing all the way through.

**{Photo 12}** Solder bezel to inside ring from top with hard solder.

Make a wire ring no larger in diameter than width of bezel cup and solder closed.

**{Photo 13}** Make wheel spokes that radiate out from ring. Each spoke should extend beyond cage ring twice as much as from

center of top to outer ring – approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Solder with plenty of hard paste solder.

**{Photo 14}** Curve spokes with flat pliers away from cage ring so tips form same shape as ring top.

Saw out spokes from inside of ring unless you wish to keep this area as part of your design.

**{Photo 15}** Check fit of cage with top. Spokes should make contact with bottom of outer ring of ring top and should sit flush with outer edge of square wire. If spokes are too long, trim with Joyce Chen scissors. File tips of spokes flat.

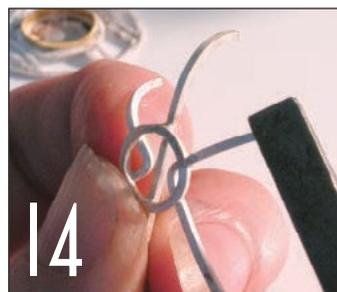
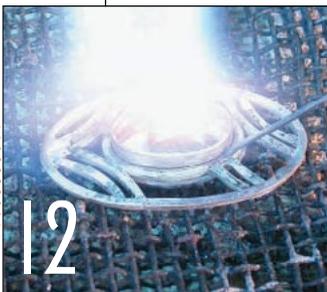
Clean up inside of cage and back of ring top with coarse, medium, and high shine silicone wheels on flex shaft. After soldering, it can be difficult to clean up inside.

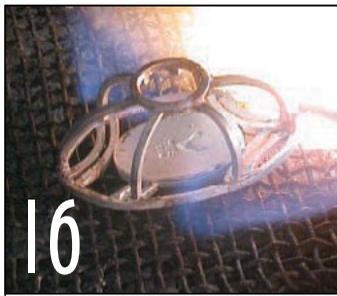
## FABRICATION TIPS

- One trick for making a shape symmetrical is to draw around it with a marker and then flip the ring around to verify if it still fits within the drawn shape.



- What makes the cage strong is that the spokes curve at a right angle before meeting the ring top. If they make contact with the top at an angle less than 90°, the cage will collapse when you solder it to the top. It works like straight walls supporting a ceiling dome.
- The coiled ring shank is very flexible and forgiving where size is concerned. By cutting off the wire  $\frac{1}{2}$ " past where it meets the beginning of the coil, you can adjust the final ring by several sizes before final soldering.
- If you use a shelf bezel, you can get some flex shaft wheels down inside the cage for easier final clean up.





**{Photo 16}** Pick solder cage to back of ring top with medium solder. Concentrate heat on top of ring – currently at bottom of soldering setup – or solder will creep up spokes instead of joining the two sections.

**{Photo 17}** Adjust V of shank so it fits on either side of cage ring, taking care to keep shank round. File grooves in top of shank where it contacts with 2 cage spokes.

Solder shank to cage with easy paste solder by holding with crosslock tweezers at mitered joint. For a smooth, unpitted joint, you may need to use extra paste solder. Wire solder works as well but may require a different soldering setup.



Clean up excess solder on outside and file or grind top and all joints flush. Follow with medium and high shine silicone wheels.

**{Photo 18}** Set stone with bezel pusher, followed by an agate burnisher. Clean up bezel setting with silicone wheels and give a final all-over polish with Zam or blue rouge.

**VICTORIA LANSFORD** creates one-of-a-kind art objects that recall the mystery and splendor of the ancient world. Her DVD, *Metal Techniques of Bronze Age Masters: Russian Filigree*, was released in 2006. Her award-winning work has been featured in national magazines, on HGTV, and is available in art galleries throughout the U.S. To see her work, visit [www.victorialansford.com](http://www.victorialansford.com).



### FINISHING TIPS

- The easiest way to hold the ring while stone setting is to place it in a rubber jaw, swivel vice – with the jaws just far enough apart to accommodate the shank.
- A brass brush wheel can fit between the hard to reach areas of the openwork, and give an almost high polish to areas that might otherwise stay white. Use it before the muslin buff.



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