



April 2020

Merlin Mosaica Newsletter

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Welcome

This is our first newsletter. Hopefully we will get to these on a monthly basis.

- ◆ **Keep updated on new products, specials on offer, and changes to the website.**
- ◆ **Read about special projects.**
- ◆ **Follow along on a Project as it unfolds...**

Our Ethos :

– “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations”

Our Logo Tag says it all really – For Something a Little Different. This is very much the Ethos behind what we want to do, and where we want this venture to go.

We have made a considered decision not to supply porcelain or ceramic tiles, sheets of stained glass (lovely though it is) or the more standard types of glass files available elsewhere in Australia. We have no desire to take business from other sellers, but seek to add to the range available. The majority of our manufactured products will be made from recycled glass. Our natural products will be sourced ethically, and cruelty free.

This is not (at present) a full-time venture, and storage space is also at a premium, so we are trying to stock a reasonable cross section of the products we have chosen to offer. Depending on popularity, and funds, the range will be expanded (COVID-19 notwithstanding).

Merlin Mosaica on facebook :

We are on facebook as Merlin Mosaica. Did you also know we have a facebook community page? **Merlin Mosaica Customers** is a space where you can show off your work, and talk about the products, ask questions, seek advice, or just vent. As long as you play nice! Come along and join us!

“Let me, O let me bathe my soul in colours; let me swallow the sunset and drink the rainbow.”

– Khalil Gibran

Discounts :

Merlin Mosaica is pleased to offer a 10% one-time discount to clients who sign up for this Newsletter. The discount is available on all items excluding special items, such as Kyanite Fans, Malachite Ore, Willow Coral, Melted Millefiori, and Artworks. It excludes postage and handling.





Special Offers :

From time to time, we may offer a Special discount on selected products. These will be advertised in the Newsletter and on the Merlin Mosaica Customers Page.

Merlo and Me :

My name is Alison. By day I am an IT Project Manager, surrounded by spreadsheets, schedules, bits of cable and wire, and a whole heap of interesting people. I work in a large educational facility in Canberra, our nation's fair capital.

Canberra has a fairly vibrant arts community, in a wonderful bushland setting, full of iconic Australian flora and fauna. In this time of COVID-19, I am working from home. I have a study set up, and a nice bright 27-inch screen, and have lots of online meetings.

My real self is an artist – fascinated by colour, texture and form. I have always painted and drawn – I love detailed pencil work, but my paintings are freer, as the symphony of colour takes over my senses. I do love music, animals, nature and glass (I have collected quite a few enchanting pieces throughout my life).

My preferred media for painting is acrylic and encaustic. My favourite colours are turquoise, sea greens & blues – the colours of the ocean; and magenta.

I am a mother of one, a reasonable cook, and I used to sing quite a lot (these days limited to the shower).

In past lives, I have bred Arabian horses, established many gardens (native, cottage and formal), and have shared my life with countless dogs and cats.



For the past 25 years or so, I have had a number of Burmese – all brown. The last of these was my boy Merlin – Merlo the magnificent! Merlo lived to the grand old age of 17 – a toothless wonder, who nevertheless ruled the house – and the other cat, the dogs and the people that inhabited it. I loved him dearly, and miss him always. I still have another cat in my life – Hank, my partner's cat. Hank is a red Burmese, who was a nutty understudy to Merlo – and now sleeps beside me (and snores) as I work.

Mosaics - The Beginning :

I first looked at mosaics as a mode of expression around 2005. I did one piece at a ½ day workshop, loved it, and always intended to continue.... But never did.

Over the past few years, I have been through a bit of a hiatus in an artistic sense, and I have experienced a few personal upheavals. The latter half of 2019 found me unemployed, with a mortgage. Not the best place to be as a widow in her 60s.

I re-engaged with mosaics, looked at a few YouTube videos, and went for it!

A new love was born – one which combined my love of colour, texture, form **and** glass. My first piece was a Rainbow Planter – made from a mix of ceramic, glass and mirror tiles, smalti, and glass beads. It's a happy piece, and lives by my front door. Various pieces followed. I absolutely love unpacking new purchases, and delight in the fantastic colours!

As I was sourcing mosaic product, I noticed a sameness about many of the products available in Australia – I wanted more. I had a vision for a piece (which I still haven't done – but will) that I wanted some matte tiles in a specific shade for. Matte tiles proved nigh on impossible to get in Australia, and the colour I was after – forget it! So, I fossicked around, and found exactly what I was after in America. Obviously, given our exchange rate and geographical isolation, they were quite expensive – but I did have my pretties!!



I had the brainwave that perhaps other Australian artists might be looking for different things too. So, the idea for a small business started percolating.

I must give thanks to my wonderful partner who, as I spend time setting this up, has selflessly taken on all the cleaning (he is far better at it than I), the bulk of the washing, dog walking and other routine mundanity. As such, he is very much a part of this business.

Also, my fabulous son, who has reviewed my website, and come up with some very valuable suggestions on ways to improve it. You are amazing - thank you!

Stock Levels and our Range :

We do not carry large amounts of stock, as the items we have available are generally intended to enhance and lift your projects. That said, should something be unavailable, I will restock as quickly as possible. Some items I may not be able to re-stock, but will advise if this is the case.

If there is a particular product you would like me to source for you, give me as many details as possible, and photos (if you can) and I will try to find it for you. Anything you want – just ask. I can't promise to be successful, as many suppliers, particularly of natural products, do not ship to Australia, or the costs may be prohibitive.

Stock Costs :

Australia is a wonderful country, albeit at the bottom of the world. That marvellous isolation has led to some wonderfully unique flora and fauna, an enviable track record when it comes to animal and plant purity, and expensive shipping costs! We are also subject to exorbitant exchange rates, which combine to mean that we pay a premium for imported goods.

We have sought out wholesale arrangements with overseas suppliers, and are constantly looking at ways to reduce shipping costs, and minimise import duties (legally of course).

However, as we are not purchasing or shipping large lots, percentage-wise our shipping costs add considerably to the landed cost of our stock. Again, this is another reason why we want to maintain a different product range.

We are not about competing with the larger suppliers, who are able to leverage their considerable buying power. Of course, they will be more likely to concentrate on the volume market.

Product Showcase - Merlin Mixes :

One of the products that prompted the formation of Merlin Mosaica was Artisan Matte tiles. These lovely tiles come from Spain. They are recycled glass with a lovely velvety matte finish - almost suede like. I love touching them. The colours are stunning. I

also couldn't resist the Eco Accent range of tiles. These too are recycled glass, but are super glossy, with 60 colours in the range. Both products exhibit a beautiful depth of colour, and have no pitting on the surface.

As the stock is sold by the pound in, and we are selling in grams, we have some left over of every colour. So we've created a range of mixes - **Merlin Mixes**. These are combinations of Artisan Matte, and Eco Accent, with some other little lovelies thrown in, made up into 100 gram packs. We can't say that we will be able to re-stock exactly the same mix, but will try.

These are a great way to try both ranges... \$6.50 for 100 grams.





Percy the Peacock :

My first follow along project. I can't promise that he will be a success, but I certainly hope so! This will show you a little bit about how I work. We may not do it all the same, but this works for me.

I will build up Percy's body using Pal Tiya to give him some dimension.



Step 1 - Colour Palette

The colours in Merlin Mix #4 made me think of a peacock. All those lovely turquoise and teals, with a hint of purple.



Step 2 - Concept Planning

I wanted to incorporate as many of our products as possible. Elytra (feathers!!) abalone, peacock ore, handmade glass.



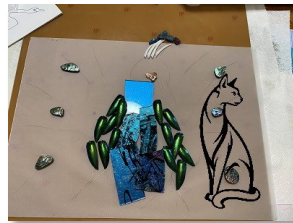
Step 3 - Substrate

Percy needed something a bit special. I had this piece of circuit board backing hanging about, and thought the copper a perfect foil for the peacock colours.



Step 4 - Rough-out Drawing

A rough sketch on tracing paper. The feathers of his tail, and his comb will extend above this one sheet.



Step 5 - Tesserae Selection

I overlaid various pieces on parts of the drawing. Handmade glass for the body, elytra for the tail base, abalone cabochons for the tail feather eyes. Tusk shells and peacock ore for his crest or comb.



Step 6 - The Eye

Percy deserves a special element for his eye. I just happened to have the perfect coloured millefiori in my stash.

Stay tuned for the next newsletter, to see how Percy progresses.....

Stay Safe - Ali! xx

