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Merlin Mosaica Newsletter

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Sorry for the delay - it's been a rather busy month.

Further improvements to the website, a loyalty program, and lots more products.

In addition to tiles and tesserae, we've launched some adhesives, tools and jewellery findings.

Shipping is starting to cause a real hassle. Shipments have slowed quite a lot - please be patient.

Web-Site:

You may have noticed some changes to the website. I hope you find them an improvement! Someone told me that it was too hard to find product, and I must admit that as the product range is continually growing that will only get harder still.

With that in mind, I removed the links on the Home page - and that now is just a narrative about the business and our ethos. If you're new, please read it, it explains why we do what we do! There's also a bit of a bio about me, and Merlin.

The site now has a number of drop-down menus under each main page heading. The "Engine Room" of the site is the [Shop Menu](#). Click on that from any page and there are a number of options: New in Store, Exterior Usage, Glass Tiles, Beads, Nature's Bounty, Ali's Treasure Box, Tools & Accessories, Artworks and Coming Soon.

There's also a "[Shop by Size and Shape](#)" as well, to make it easier to find items for that special spot in your work.

Loyalty Program and Membership:

I have puzzled over membership for some time. Even though I mention it on the home page, and in my blog, and on the members page, and there is an option at checkout, not everyone is taking it up. It is more of benefit to you than I, as it means that you can manage your personal details yourself, check back on previous orders, and create wish lists, which as a fairly heavy internet shopper, I find invaluable.

So, I have also introduced a **loyalty program** strictly for members, so that you earn points for signing up, further points for writing a (hopefully positive) review, and then points for every dollar you spend. At the moment I have an offer whereby members earn double loyalty points on the [Handmade Glass](#) range which is being discontinued. I found that, whilst pretty, it doesn't live up to my standards.

"Colour is the power which directly influences the soul"

— Wassily Kandinsky "





Reviews:

Reviews are really important to a business, and this one is no different. It lets us know that we are doing something right, what needs to improve, and it lets potential customers know that this is a good place to do business. So [please, leave a review](#).

To leave a review, go to the **Review and Feedback** menu. You can:

- **Submit a Review:** Let us and others know what you enjoyed about your Merlin Mosaica experience. I check to reviews prior to posting them on the web-site.
- **Read what others have said:** Have a look at what people are saying about us.
- **Post suggestions for improvement:** This is really beneficial - if there's something you think we could do better, let us know. If there's a product or product type you'd like us to investigate for you - reach out to us, and we'll try to help. Would you like a particular class on something - tell us! Want a change on the web-site - let us know.

Postage:

As sales pick up, so our Australia Post (AP) charges have decreased. This is reflected in a drop in our postage rates. We are still charging a handling fee to re-coup our packing costs, because we try to run as lean a margin as possible.

Even though AP are not guaranteeing next-day delivery, the [Express Post](#) option still gets your packages to you more quickly, so if you've impatient (like me), I recommend it.

Now that I have more stock, we can add in product samples to your orders. We've also introduced new packaging labels - the labels show if a product is rated for exterior or interior use.

More Tesserae:

The list of products on offer is continuing to grow. Whilst the bulk of my products are unique within the Australian market, and I will continue to search out items which appeal to me and are different, I **will** stock some more standard items, if I can get them **at a competitive price**. I do this for two reasons: It means that you can complete your purchase on the one site, and it also provides me with some additional profits with which I can purchase and offer more unusual stock, for which I maintain a lower profit margin (due to the higher base cost).

We have some wonderful new shell products in-store, and our **Mirror and Metal** range has grown with the inclusion of some [art-deco](#) gold tiles (Majestic, Ripponlea and Richmond), and our [Spa Bubble](#) tiles (in Silver, Gold and Steel).

The first of our glass triangles have arrived—in Westringia (mauve) and Monbulk (raspberry).

Monbulk - our wonderful raspberry coloured tiles are here, and the [Chunky Gloss](#) rounds sold out almost immediately.

We also have some [hexagon](#) tiles available - in raspberry at the moment, and in 3 sizes: 10, 15 and 23 mm. They also come in either Gloss or Matte. Apart from the triangles, all the tiles in this range are 5mm thick, made of recycled glass, and very lovely. We'll be expanding this range over the coming months to increase the colours and finishes.

Adhesives and Jewellery Findings:

I am extremely proud to announce that we are the Australian distributor of the No Days range of heat-activated mosaic adhesive film. This is on its way, but deliveries are really being slowed due to COVID-19. There are three products in the range:

- **No Days Adhesive Film:** This is a colourless film which comes with a release liner - a layer of silicone-coated paper. This film is absolutely wonderful for jewellery making, using with crash glass, or any flat surface really. To use, you cut the film to the size and shape of your substrate, lay your tesserae down, and when you have completed your design, simply pop you piece in the oven at 80° C for roughly 20 mins (NOTE: this can vary depending on substrate) or use a heat-gun or griddle. Once at temperature, the film liquefies, and you can move your tesserae into position with tweezers or other tools. As it cools, it solidifies and your piece is ready to grout. If you want to change it, you just re-apply heat to re-activate.
- **No Days Groutless Adhesive:** This works in exactly the same way as the mosaic film, but is thicker, and the tesserae sink down into the adhesive, which oozes up, forming a grout in the interstices. Use a double layer for thicker tesserae. This product comes in Black, Pewter and Clear,
- **No Days Adhesive Mesh:** This wonderful mesh is coated with the Heat Sensitive Adhesive film. Place your mesh on top of the release liner. Place your tesserae, and when ready heat as above. Cool trim, and apply to your desired substrate. Has the advantages of sticky mesh without being sticky!



Product Showcase: Merlin Miniatures:

In order to increase the variety of product available to you, we have decided to offer some miniature ceramic pieces. Many of these come from my own bower birding, but I will continue to source unusual pieces on my travels... I have some wonderfully tiny and intricate pieces that would work so well in assemblage and other quirky pieces. I think they are a wonderful counterpoint to our range of pre-loved jewellery that is up on the website.



Monthly Challenge :

I thought it would be a fun thing to have a monthly challenge on the Community page. For this initial one, I decided to see what everyone could do without cutting any tile. I must admit, I found it more challenging that I had thought it would be!

Classes:

I ran my first class this month. I have to say, it was a lot of fun! Initially, I was just planning a one-on-one session, but a lovely customer who lives locally, indicated she would love to join in too. So, Leanne, Kerry Ann and I made pavers. I wanted the class to be a single-session one, and that can be difficult given the time required for adhesives to dry, and then to allow for grout. However, I used some No Days Adhesive from my personal stash, and it worked very well. There were absolutely no fumes, and the pavers came out really well!

I'll be offering topics such as:

- **Introduction to Mosaics:** we discuss tools, safety, components of a mosaic, basic concepts. Participants take home a paver, ready to clean, seal and place in the garden. A single session course of 6 hours.
- **Mosaic Jewellery:** make micro mosaic jewellery, or use special inclusions to make something out of the box. A single day course. Participants will be able to take home 2 items (pendant or earrings). Bring your own special pieces to include if you want.
- **Crash Glass Mosaics:** different effects can be had by using this wonderful material. A single day course. Participants will be encouraged to bring an image (an original art piece, or image) to use as the basis of their work.
- **Mosaic as an Art:** Discussions around the use of artistic concepts in mosaics and a different way to approach Mosaics. Participants will be encouraged to pre-select a design or image that they would like to work with and we will discuss the design concepts and colour choices before embarking on the practical creation. This will be a multi-session course over a few weekends. More information to come.

Watch out for my course schedule, coming soon. Use the review function to contact me for something you would like me to consider.

Percy the Peacock :

Poor Percy has suffered this month. I had a wait until I got some resin. Now that I have that, I have to clean the copper substrate, and resin. That is not something that I am looking forward to, so Percy has been having a rest. So has my Zulu torso. It's been a busy time for me away from the business too, so something had to give.

Till next time..

stay safe,

Ali.

