

LAPIDARY JOURNAL

JEWELRY ARTIST

MAY
2008

ANNUAL

Buyers' Directory

1000s of listings for
supplies, services, sources

Easy Pendant

discover Kentucky agate

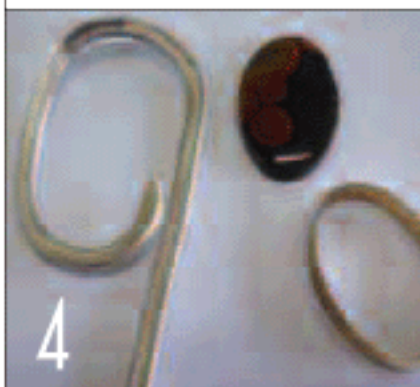
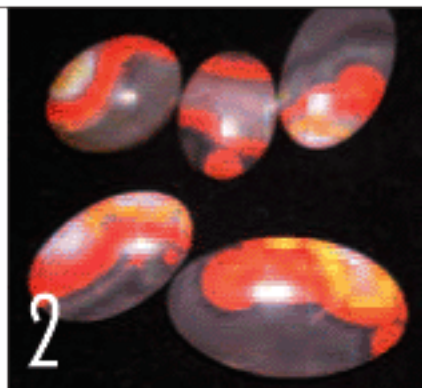
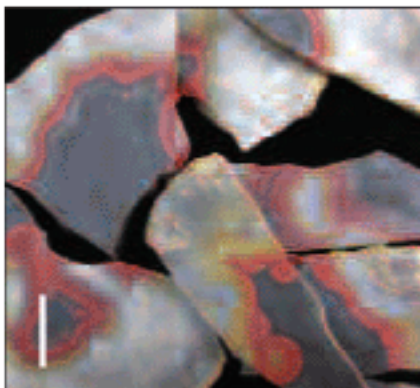
Add Fine Detail

in silver or gold

Tips for Success

custom gems
for buyers and sellers





(Photo 1) Examine rough cuts from original stone.

(Photo 2) Use the stone cutter/grinder to cut and shape pieces into cabochons. I prefer Super Cerium on a felt wheel for polishing.

If you're starting with a finished cabochon, start here.

(Photo 3) Sketch a design for the piece of jewelry.

Select stone. I cut stones for my design, creating several ovals, then chose best stone for design.

(Photo 4) Referring to chosen stone for size, forge square bar stock into an oval for outer frame. Solder join with hard solder.

(Photo 5) Preform 14K bezel around stone. Anneal and pickle. Tack weld joint. Solder with 14K hard solder. File and sand bezel to clean finish.

(Photo 6) Hammer-texture outer frame into more uniform shape. Solder 1 side of jump ring to inside of oval. Solder another jump ring to outer top of oval. Clean up assembly, sand, and polish.

(Photo 7) Make jump rings from 14K 1mm square wire. Cut rings in half and tack to bezel for decorative back support. Solder into position with 14K medium. Solder jump ring to outer top of bezel assembly. Clean finish. Make bail out of tapered silver sheet. Make smaller tapered gold strip to layer on bail. Solder with medium solder. Clean finish. Bend bail into shape, file to refine final shape. Sand and polish. Tack bail to pendant so it swings. Refine height of bezel setting, polish, and set stone. Clean up piece, laser-weld any incomplete joins from back.

If you're cabbing your own stones, start here.

SELECTING YOUR STONE

- I like to use stones with simple line and movement and more than one color and texture.
- The center stone could be other shapes as long as it will fit nicely into the outer rectangular frame.
- For this pendant, I began with the rough. As I cut the stone into pieces, I examined the colors inside. Since generally the most desired colors of Kentucky agate are red and black, I constructed a piece with these colors by isolating the section I wanted from the rough.
- Whether you're cutting your own or selecting a stone that's already cut, a bull's-eye in Kentucky agate, also called Imperial agate, makes a compelling design element and is much sought after by collectors.



JOHN LEEDS has been creating original art for more than 18 years. He has studied the craft of jewelry design in Europe and the U.S. and is influenced by both his studies in Italy and his Irish heritage. See his work at www.leedsjewelry.com.

KENTUCKY AGATE PENDANT

Encircle a striking cab with a hammered silver frame

DEMO BY

JOHN LEEDS

Opening Photo: JIM LAWSON
Project Photos: JOHN LEEDS

You can create this pendant from rough stone to finished jewelry, or you can start with a finished cabochon and do the metalwork yourself. I used very few tools for this project: two hammers, a few pairs of pliers, a rubber wheel, and sandpaper. I also use a laser welder to tack everything in place, but you could just solder everything if you don't have access to a laser welder.



SKILLS YOU NEED

- soldering & torch control
- hammering
- laser welding (optional)
- lapidary (optional)

MATERIALS AND TOOLS YOU NEED

MATERIALS

Kentucky agate (rough, cut, or cabbed)

Silver, 5mm square stock; about 5"

14K bezel wire (28-gauge x 6mm)

14K square wire; 1mm

Hard silver solder

Hard and medium 14K solder

20-gauge silver sheet; 8mm x 20mm

28-gauge 14K sheet; 5mm x approx. 3 1/2"

TOOLS

Torch

Buffer

Anvil

Various pliers

Forging hammer

Raising hammer

Flex shaft with hammer hand piece or bezel pusher

Optional

Diamond saw

Lapidary machine

Laser welder

LASER WELDER OR SOLDER?

The joining can be accomplished without a laser welder; however a laser welder is quicker and you won't need to clean up excess solder.