



At the bench – An illustrated guide to working with gold and silver

BY GREGG TODD AND GREG GILMAN,

published by MISA/AJM Press, 2002. 116 pages in colour.

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This soft back book is a practical guide intended for practising goldsmiths and is developed from a number of articles by the authors originally published in AJM magazine. It comprises articles and projects on making and repairing jewellery. Its aim is to show how one can save time and boost profits when making or repairing jewellery through good practice. It features over 200 colour photographs that illustrate the various steps and techniques.

The book starts with a chapter on bench preparation and practices which, I was pleased to note, started with a safety section. It contains much sound advice. This chapter includes a ring sizing chart and a carat conversion chart for those who make up their own carat golds, both of which goldsmiths will find useful. The next short chapter is about taking in jewellery repairs and again gives good advice.

The major section of the book on repairs and fabrication follows these chapters. It comprises 19 projects that teach how to do various tasks through a series of step-by-step instructions, amply illustrated by photographs taken at the bench with explanatory commentary. Examples of projects include resizing rings, repairing chain, setting stones, re-tipping prongs and building component parts. It includes detailing of wax patterns for lost wax casting and the 'do's and don'ts' of polishing. This section is the strength of the book and anyone who has read the original articles in AJM magazine will know that these are well done. It is the principal reason for buying this book.

The book finishes with a chapter on bench resources and is a series of 1 page commercial articles/advertisements by leading suppliers on equipment, tools and materials. Readers will find this useful, although not comprehensive.

Some might say "Do we need another goldsmithing book?" There are certainly many others available, but none so up-to-date or reader-friendly. The book is nicely laid out and easy to use, although I do question how it will stand up to regular use at the bench over time. It would benefit from a glossary of terms and some basic information on carat golds, carat standards and

tolerances and melting practice to put the carat conversion table into some context. But these are minor criticisms.

The publicity for this book states that it is "an essential resource for every jeweller's bench". I would agree. I would also add that it should be an essential resource for students learning their craft. It is written by expert goldsmiths who know their craft and who have an ability to communicate their knowledge and skills in an easy-to-understand way. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to use it gainfully. As a scientist and engineer with no training in goldsmithing, I would have confidence to 'have a go' with the aid of this book. Whether the result would be up to professional standard is, of course, another question!

This book covers practical goldsmithing, an area that is not covered in the series of WGC technical handbooks and manuals. For those who work in this craft sector, this book nicely complements the WGC Technical Manual. At \$33.00, it is very reasonably priced and I would commend it to all. It is a welcome addition. The authors are to be congratulated on a job well done and AJM magazine for their foresight to distil the original AJM articles into a useful format.

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**The book can be purchased from MISA, 45 Royal Little Drive, Providence, Rhode Island 02904, USA. Tel: 1-800 444-6572 (US only) or +1 401 274 3840. Fax: +1 401 274 0265. E-mail: mjsa@mjsainc.com. Web site: www.mjsainc.com*