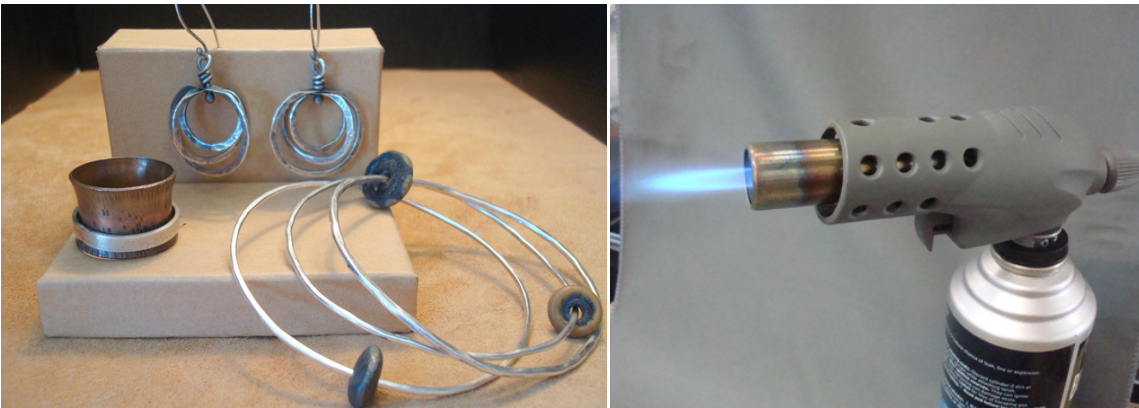




1202-5

On Location with Kim St. Jean

Soldering with a hand held propane torch



Soldering with a hand held propane torch.

This is a very beginner friendly torch. I use it in all of my classes to acquaint my students with the flame. This torch has a built in striker, and is small and easy to use. Because it is propane instead of butane, you get a much hotter flame and can use it in bigger and longer projects. It will draw a bead on 14g. sterling silver with little effort. Those of you that have tried this with a butane torch know what I'm talking about.

To purchase this torch, you will need to do some hunting. Bernzomatic discontinued the model that I use, but there is another brand. It is called the Ultra Blue Propane Torch (www.ultrabluetech.com.) It is generally carried by ACE Hardware, but some of my students have found it on Amazon. It runs about \$45.00. The beauty of this torch is that when the can empties, you simply screw on another can. No gauges and no hoses!

Assembling the torch:

Remove the piece from the blister pack.

Screw the head onto the aerosol can.

Tighten the black collar on the head down to the canister.

Turning on this torch:

Unlock the safety on the underside of the nozzle (once unlocked, it stays unlocked until manually locked again)

Turn the knob ¼ inch, counter clock wise or until you hear a hiss.

Click the igniter switch.

Adjust your flame accordingly with the same knob you turned it on with. If you are soldering jump rings, you will want your flame to be small and low. If you are annealing metal, you will turn the volume high to a big bushy flame.

Remember, the hottest spot of the flame is at the edge of the blue cone. Closer to the nozzle is not hotter!

Trouble shooting:

If the tank is cold you may need to click the igniter switch more than once to prime the tank.

You may not have it turned up enough, turn the knob counter clock wise a little more and try again.

As your canister empties, you may need to turn the igniter switch more than ¼ turn.

Soldering sterling silver:

You must use a silver solder. Solder comes in sheet, wire and paste. In this video I am using paste solder, it has the flux built in.

Make sure your joint is closed completely.

Apply your solder to the joint.

Begin slowly heating the entire ring. Silver is a conductor of heat, it must be pre heated before the spot being joined will retain enough heat for the solder to flow.

Continuously move the flame to prevent overheating.

Focus on the spot to be joined until the solder turns a shimmering liquid silver color.

Remove the heat and let it cool.

There will be fire scale on the silver that will need to be removed using a chemical process or sanding.

This is definitely not a thorough explanation of soldering sterling silver, just a quick down and dirty to accompany what you are watching.

If you have any questions about the torch or the soldering process please feel free to e-mail me at kim@kimstjean.com or visit my website at www.kimstjean.com. I have a fan page on face book as well, ***Kim St. Jean***, so join up with me there! I just finished my first book, scheduled to be out in February 2011 , it's titled Mixed Metal Mania; Solder, Rivet, Hammer and Wire Exceptional Jewelry. It is full of useful tips on tools, techniques and procedures as well as 30 awesome projects.