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Welcome all to the **November** Newsletter. Given how busy I have become, I am now only issuing newsletters every second month, so this will be the last one for 2021!

I want to take this time to thank you all so much for the fabulous support you have shown me in this, my first year as a full-time venture. 2021 has been an extremely challenging year for us all. It has brought about a fundamental change to Australian culture - the back-slapping, friend-hugging, open approach to life has been forced to change. But with that, has come a shift to valuing friends and family more than ever, and enjoying simple pleasures.

Making things of beauty from the heart for those we care about has become ever more important. I am absolutely in awe of the talent you have displayed. So much so, that I have added many of your works to my **Project Gallery**. I encourage you all to take a look here: <https://merlinmosaica.com/project-gallery/> If you have a piece you would like me to include, please send a good quality photo to me at alison@merlinmosaica.com.au. Please do include the name, size, date completed, and the products from my store that you have used.

I have spoken with many of you this past year, and have been continually heartened at how lovely and supportive you all are! I enjoy my client interactions - it's the best part of my job (apart from dealing with the absolutely delicious glass and colours that I work with that is!).

Christmas is a-coming!

Like it or not, the jolly man in the red suit will soon be here. Traditionally, Christmas has been a Christian holy day. However, I have always seen it as a time to celebrate family, and friends (the family we choose, after all). As more and more of us recognise that not all are practising Christians, I think this time of year is still a great way to reflect on the fact that we are **all human, and all connected**. I must admit to being ridiculously excited about being able to spend a few days with my son and my partners son and grandchildren - all coming together!

I've pulled together some lovely little **mosaic kits**, (<https://merlinmosaica.com/product/mosaic-kit-files/>) that I will be taking down for the grand-daughters. These are all based around crystal tiles that require no cutting, and include everything you will need to make a completed piece - including gloves, a mask, and instructions. It's all about the process - let it be fun, but do try and practice safety! The substrates are MDF, but very sturdy. You get to choose from a heart, gecko (lizard), frog, bird or some bunting flags. A great thing to do with your children or grandchildren over the holidays.

Another great thing to do with your family or for your garden, is to make a **sun-catcher** (<https://merlinmosaica.com/product-category/gifts/gift-ideas/suncatcher-gift/>). My sun-catcher range is designed in such a way that you can make a piece that is really unique to you... You can buy the acrylic shapes (all with a top and bottom hanging hole) in a circle or heart shape (in four different sizes), some wire, a hook and a swivel. Add some stained glass (from your own stash, or pick up a mini-pack), some swish beads (again, use

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have"

- Maya Angelou





something you have - some old jewellery, raid grandma's button box, or purchase one of my chunky funky tail kits), and add a weight at the bottom, and voila - something special for your garden! For that ultra-luxe look, why not add one of more of my **chroma prisms** (<https://merlinmosaica.com/product-category/range/chroma-range/>). These are laser-honed chandelier drops that catch the light, and send it spinning around the garden, and come in many different shapes and styles!

Also for the garden, I have a great range of acrylic shapes: Christmas shapes, and leaves, koru (Māori inspired designs), hearts, dragonflies, seahorses and more. I have a number of standard sizes (20cm - 40cm), but if you want something larger (or smaller) - just send me your requirements, and I can get a quote out to you. Also, if you have a particular shape you would like to use, I am more than happy to discuss your requirements. I will need a very clear black and white image to work from though.

Many of you will have seen the review by Peter Twining (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwP1eT1ojoE>) on the **Litokol Translucent Epoxy grout**, and the amazing pieces done by Beverley Bird (Mosaic Aura) & Janelle Knight using it. I have been fortunate to have built a relationship with the Australian Distributor, and can offer 1 kg tubs for you to use. It is easy to use, made from over 50% recycled materials, has an enviable safety rating (it is one of the safest epoxy grouts available), and is the perfect solution to that age old dilemma "**What grout colour should I use?**" This quality is best achieved using glass, but even with ceramics, it still has a lovely frosted glass appearance. I have sold all of the 1kg tubs, but managed to secure the last available 2.5kg tubs. The next shipment is due in from Italy in the New Year (possibly late-January), and I have a large consignment of the grout coming in that. It is a very easy product to use.

I also am stocking the white, pale grey and graphite coloured epoxy grout from the same manufacturer. These have the added advantage of being able to be used as an adhesive as well. I have in stock a glitter additive for use with them (inside only), and a glow-in-the-dark additive. I am currently trialling some colour additives for use with them - stay tuned in the New Year.

Tracking Notifications

I still get quite a lot of emails or texts asking where your parcels are. When I finish packing your order, you do get an email advising that is complete. This email includes the Australia Post tracking number. Please check in your junk mail folder before contacting me. Adding my email address into your address book should stop my emails going to junk. Even if you have missed it, you can still track your parcel by logging into the **My Account** area on the website. Under the orders tab, you will see all orders and a tracking number if they have been shipped. You can use his to see where your parcel is with Aussie Post. Don't forget, this is a busy time for them, and deliveries may be somewhat slow. In some locations, it is much quicker to select the Express Post option (for an extra \$5).

New Directions

As you know, I am wading through this new (to me) retail venture single-handedly. I have been constrained somewhat by physical space, and time.

Over the Christmas period, I will be consolidating my operations into my garage. No more trundling up and down stairs between the study and the garage. I have some new shelving due in this month, and have been clearing the decks in preparation for this move. It should make life a whole heap easier for me, with the flow-on effect that I can get your product out more quickly!

I am also working towards a new range of glass tile for you in the New Year. I have stock already here, but have to spend some time on preparing it for sale. I am very excited about this new venture, and think you will be too.

In line with that, I am divesting myself of many products that are available on other sites. I really want to stay true to my "**Absolutely Australian, Definitely Different**" motto. I am a very proud Aussie, and love to promote Australian Products and businesses wherever I can. Prep Multi-Use Adhesive, Save a Tube and the majority of my amazing glass are proudly Australian owned, and designed.

My stained glass range never ceases to amaze me. The beauty of this stuff is just incredible! My **Mirrored Glass** range is something special. I personally select the stained glass colours I want to have mirrored, and it is done in-house at my suppliers warehouse. The result is a product that is ideal for exterior use - the colours won't fade, the surface stands up well to grouting, and the silvered film applied is top quality. **As with all mirror, a neutral cure adhesive should be used** - Prep Multi-use Adhesive, No Days Mosaic film, Soudal Crystal Fix-all and the Litokol Epoxy Grout/Adhesive all tick that box! My glass supplier is constantly developing new products to add to the range - the latest this year was the stunning Legacy range - I can't speak of this luminous glass too highly - the colours just GLOW. My supplier is also the major Australian distributor of many well-known, respected brands of art and fusible glass, and more are being released from his stable in the New Year.

Product Reviews

I would really love it if you could review actual product on the **product listing pages**. On the actual listing, there are two tabs - **Description** (open by default) and **Review**. If you click on the Review tab, you can leave a product review - enter the number of stars, and write a bit about how you enjoyed using the product, and earn 50 points along the way - too easy!

Also, if you can, please give me a shout out on **Mosaics Australia**, or one of the other more general Mosaic Facebook pages, that would be a terrific boost too.

Till next time, stay safe, and have a wonderful Christmas. See you in the New Year ...

