



- Grout, Grout, Grout
- Nippers
- Courses

**New Shop space**  
**Open for in-house Visits**  
**Courses and Workshops**

Welcome all to the first newsletter for 2022. January was very busy, so the Newsletter had to wait until February!

I trust you all had an enjoyable Christmas, and were able to catch up with those most special to you. My son had a most wonderful visit with us here in Canberra, and it was a lovely time.

## Shop Visits & New Retail Space

I spent my "break" busily moving my shop space from my very cramped study down into my garage. It now has no similarity to a car storage area at all. I have a great new Glass storage set-up, courtesy of my wonderful partner. This has allowed me to hold glass in larger "Hobby Square" sizes. I am using Pizza-style boxes to ship out the product, and have had one breakage. All the rest have travelled quite well.

I have a purpose built packing bench, which makes life so much easier. Scales, tape, paper and boxes all in easy reach! Additional shelving means I no longer have my storage tubs stacked on each other, this reducing the lifting required - so much better for my back!

We still have some adjustments to make, but it is heaps better, and packing is much more efficient. AND ... the evaporative cooler flows through from the lounge room, meaning I have bearable working conditions.

The new space has allowed me to open to the public. I will remain closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, as these will be my prime packing days. But if you live in, or are visiting Canberra, you are more than welcome to arrange a visit between 10am and 5pm Wednesday-Friday, or 10am-2pm on Saturdays. You will need to make an appointment, as I have times when I am not available, and I can't allow double ups, as it is still after all, just a double garage. You will be required to wear a mask. Although I have a QR code, these will no longer be required in the ACT.

*"Creativity is intelligence  
 having fun"*

*- Albert Einstein*





## New Product Releases

I have been developing a product release strategy. My aim for this year is to schedule a major new release approximately quarterly. I will still have minor product releases along the way, but plan on spreading out major new products across the year. This will make it easier for me, and give you time to focus on a product and trial it before having a look at the next thing. These products may run the gamut of tools, substrates, tiles, different glass, adhesives, grouts, and who knows what else? Rest assured, I do have lots of ideas in the pipeline!

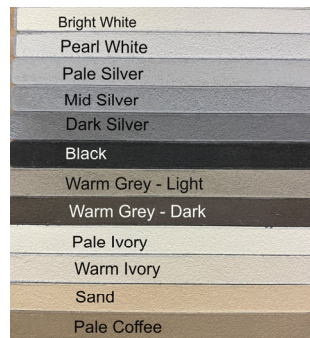
My aim is to provide you with the tools and materials to expand your repertoire. As always, I believe in testing my products before releasing them for you. You will start to see some "R&D" posts occurring in the Merlin Lounge, as I share my tests.

## Litokol StyleGrout Tech

By now, you know that my first major release for 2022 is the amazing **StyleGrout Tech** cementitious grout from Litokol. This grout is certainly the **next level in cementitious grout**.

Why is this product so good?

1. Convenient 3kg bags
2. 3 year shelf life
3. 3 minute slaking time
4. 50 minutes open working time
5. Super quick & easy clean-up
6. Anti-efflorescent
7. Crack resistant
8. Water-repellent
9. Submersible
10. Spans 2cm joints
11. Super smooth (unsanded) but very strong
12. Needs no additives, nor sealants - ever



It ships in a small satchel for \$10 (Australia-wide). I may be able to add small packets of tiles, but that's about it.

I have used it on a piece with small silver beads. I first ran a test using the same beads (Zanzibar) and some iridised ball-chain. Both glued with white Soudal (it's what I happened to have in the bag). I grouted with the StyleGrout Tech in Black, and was able to rub it off the beads and chain with a chux cloth. Not the prettiest piece, but there was no scratching.



However, for absolute strength and longevity outdoors and in birdbaths etc., you can't go past the **Litokol Starlike Epoxy grouts**, including the fabulous translucent grout. So easy to use, and gives a marvellous finish, whilst being very environmentally friendly.

I am currently trialling some pigments for use in the epoxy grouts.

## QEP Nippers

Yes, the nippers are back! We are currently working with QEP to stock a range of spares for these nippers. As they come from the factory, they have a tendency to loosen off a bit. To counter that, I am shipping them after applying Loctite 234 to the central screw mechanism. I would like to apply a spring washer, but am currently unable to source the ones I want. Once adjusted, these are the best nippers - so great for small hands, and weakening joints, whilst still having the intuitive action of most wheeled nippers.

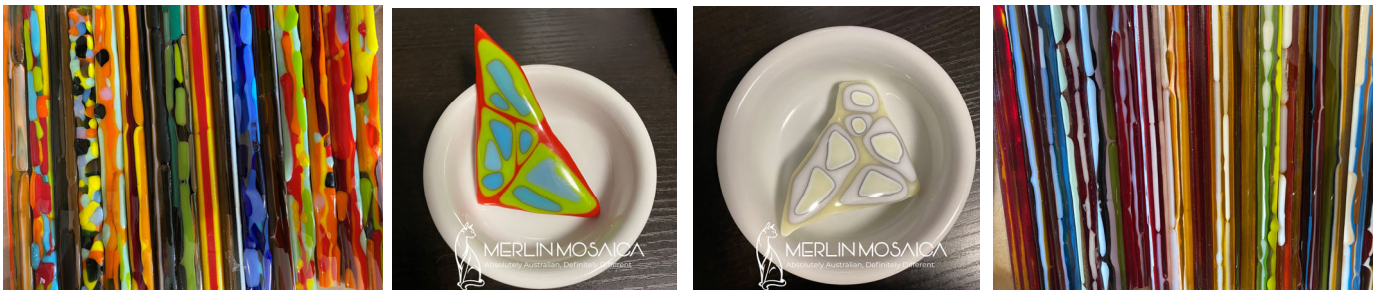
## Changing Product Range

I am divesting myself of many products I stock 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 and Save a Tube are proudly Australian owned, and designed. Much of my amazing glass is manufactured for an Australian company, to their exacting requirements and quality control. Unlike common window glass, which is perfectly smooth and flawless, art glass seeks visual character through aesthetic "imperfection". These characteristics mimic the hand-made sheet glass of centuries past. They present in the form of textural waves and striations, random seeds (air bubbles) and a variety of natural effects. Art glass achieves its personality through these peculiarities, and no two sheets are ever identical.

There will be some wonderful new textures of glass coming soon, and I have been having discussions with my supplier regarding a potential new product which will add another form of glass to your mosaic arsenal.

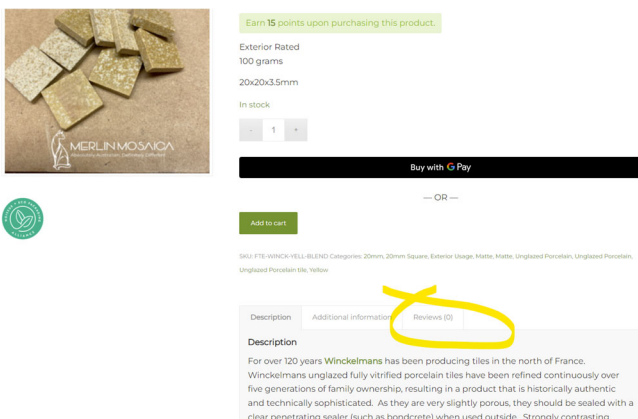


I have received some more stunning hand-fused glass sticks from America. These will be identifiable as either COE 90 or COE96. You can cut them and use them, or you can fuse them to form rounded pieces. Glass tends to seek a magical 6mm shape, so they will stand proud of your 3-4mm glass and tile. They fit in beautifully with my Australian-made "Merli" range of dots, eyes, puddlz and slices. Did you know that the slices can be cut to suit your needs?

## Product Reviews

I would really love it if you could review actual product on the **product listing pages**. On the actual product listings, 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,

*Ali*

