Silver Wire Inlay – Basic and Advanced

(Course is NOT available for credit toward the Gunsmithing Technician Certificate)

Since the beginning of firearms, makers have sought to embellish their guns in some manner or other. One of the oldest art forms found on guns is silver wire inlay. Learn the art of silver wire inlay one-on-one with Hugh Toenjes.

**Hugh Toenjes** has 35 years of hand-crafted experience in the gun making field having received instruction from such renown artisans as: J. Bivins, J. Chambers, M. Mandarino, S. Alforno and K. Mulford. Hugh is a member of the ACGG, FEGA, CLA, KRA, NMLRA, ALR forums and the NRA.

Hugh Toenjes

5 Day Silver Wire Inlay Course

(watch the website for updates to the tool/supply list)

1. First day - introductions
   A. Instructor
   B. Students
   C. Examples of silver wire
      a. Historical examples
      b. Contemporary examples
   D. Problems that can occur with improperly inlaid silver wire
      a. Wrong tools
      b. Insufficient depth of cut
      c. No anchoring techniques
   E. Tools needed for this course
      a. Tin snips or strong scissors
b. Needle files
c. Small # drills
d. Pin Vice
e. Small flat nose punch
f. Small wooden mallet
g. Micrometers
h. Needle nose pliers
i. 3 Small wood chisels (flat, semi curved gouge and ¼” radius gouge)
j. Burnishing tool
k. Micro tipped soldering iron
l. Electric iron
m. Terry toweling
n. Soft lead drawing pencil
o. Polymer eraser
p. Onionskin tracing paper

F. Materials needed
   a. Wood worker’s white glue
   b. Tix solder and flux
c. Pure silver sheet
d. Pure silver round wire
e. Practice wood pieces (maple or walnut)

G. The nature of wood
   a. It’s characteristics to transfer nutrients
   b. It’s fibrous composition
   c. The aging effects of wood
   d. How to counter these effects

H. Some characteristics of silver as a metal
   a. It’s metallic element symbol -Ag
   b. Difference between pure silver and sterling
   c. It’s conductibility, heat and electricity
   d. It’s amalgam ability - malleability

I. Questions

2. Second Day
   A. Identification of tools and materials
   B. Knowing the purpose of each tool
   C. Tool preparation and modification
   D. Material preparation
   a. Wood surfaces ready for inlay
   b. Silver wire ribbon preparation
   E. Learning to do a pattern transfer
   a. Design directly on material
   b. Transfer design from sketch to material
   c. Carbon paper method
   d. The composition of a scroll or volute
   e. The “golden mean of proportion”
   f. The “flow” of a design and the elimination of elbows
3. Third Day
   A. Read the five part tutorial on silver wire inlay and be ready to answer questions.
   B. The “stabbing in”
      a. Using the parting chisel begin to cut wood
      b. Use wood glue to replace “chip outs”
      c. Prepare the trimmed silver ribbon to length
      d. Set the silver into the cut
      e. Bevel all joints
      f. Drill holes for anchoring pins
      g. Set the prepped pins
      h. Solder all joints with Tix
      i. Use burnishing tool to straighten silver
      j. Apply glue
      k. Steam the entire inlay and remove excess glue
      l. Let project dry 12 hours
   C. Questions

4. Day Four
   A. Remove excess silver from wood
      a. Dress down the proud silver
      b. Remove tiny flakes
      c. Feather wood surfaces
      d. Apply stain if desired
   B. Questions

5. Day Five
   A. Begin the hand rubbed wood finish process
      a. Apply sealer
      b. Allow sealer to dry with Japan dryers
      c. Start the hand rubbing process with choice of
         1. Tung oil
         2. Linseed oil
         3. Polyurethane
         4. A commercial product
         5. Your own concoction
      d. Final coats of hand rubbed finish with dryers
   B. Final questions