

- ❖ Ferric nitrate is used for etching silver but once it eats through the extremely thin layer of silver plating and meets the base metal the etching stops. Ferric chloride works great on copper, nickel, and brass but will not work on silver. Therefore, you must remove the silver plating in order to etch the metal.
- ❖ If you want to do any soldering or polish to a high shine you will have to remove the silver plating, on both sides. If you are only concerned about etching, then you need to remove the plating on just the side that you will be etching. This can work well for simple spoon bowl rings that are only bent and not soldered. It also works well for pendants or other one-sided pieces of jewelry or projects. Removing the plating has its benefits as you can polish to a high shine. You generally cannot achieve this level of shine with vintage silver-plated flatware as the abrasive polishing compounds will damage the plating. You also have the benefit of being able to fully anneal the silverware since there is no plating to get damaged.
- ❖ You will expose the base metal which you can expect to be copper, brass, white brass, or nickel silver. Allergies are common with nickel silver so that is something you must be aware of. I am finding that silver plated pieces have more than one layer of plating. The top layer is silver. The next layer is nickel silver followed by the base metal. I am certain that this is not the case with all silver-plated silverware so you may find things to be different as you remove silver plating from your silverware pieces.
- ❖ You do have the option of replacing the plating using a silver-plating kit. You will still get tarnish. If you want a tarnish free finish you will want to rhodium plate it.
- ❖ Methods for removing the plating.
  - ❖ Black compound on a rotary tool abrasive buff or buffing machine.
  - ❖ Salt water and electricity method
  - ❖ Sulfuric and nitric acid
- ❖ Etching doesn't have to be limited to flattened spoon bowls. You can etch just about any silver-plated pieces. Older and more worn pieces are excellent candidates for etching as the plating is easier to remove. It's a great way to use up pieces that are in poor condition and not suitable for jewelry. Remember, you can polish to a very high shine once the plating is removed
- ❖ Resist methods. Keep in mind that any area not covered by the resist will get etched.
  - Vinyl transfers (best method as the vinyl isn't affected by the ferric chloride)
  - Sharpie marker
  - StazOn ink and rubber stamps
  - Laser toner designs
  - Spray paint, scratching your design in or using stencils as a mask
- ❖ If you are going to print your designs on a laser printer you must set the printer the darkest setting. If you are using a color printer set the printer to "black only". You must use glossy paper. Do not

use photo paper, just plain glossy paper which can be purchased at an office supply store. You will transfer the pattern onto the metal by placing the metal on a hot plate. Put the design side down on the metal and burnish the back for at least a minute. Let it cool then soak the metal in water and rub off the paper leaving the toner ink design. Follow the rest of the etching instructions as given.

- ❖ We have downloadable design files available for purchase on our website. New designs will be added on a frequent basis. You will have access to PDF, JPG and SVG files. You can print them out or if you have a vinyl cutter you can cut them out.
- ❖ We will be offering our designs already cut in vinyl for your convenience. You will have to weed the designs to your liking. We will also provide matching transfer sheets to go with your purchased vinyl designs.