



I just returned from another two weeks at William Holland School of Lapidary Arts (nice to be retired). This included a week of opals and one of intarsia. I knew little or nothing about either. Both instructors were very knowledgeable and patient with all the students. These sessions were some of the best that I've had this summer.

Opals: We learned about the many different types of opals and their origins, treating and stabilizing the stone, cutting and shaping them, and determining their market value. The class started with rough stones and ended with



opals ready to mount. A major portion of the class focused on polishing techniques and maintenance/cleaning of the equipment that we used.

My idea of what an opal is has changed drastically. I want to take "Opals 2" and learn how to carve them.

Intarsia: We took big stones and made little pieces that we glue together to make a picture or design. You don't have to be an artist for this class! The process for creating a piece of intarsia included the following:



- Find a small figure or shape in a slab to be the main feature and contrasting and complimentary colored rock to border and highlight the piece.
- Use trim saws to cut our material.
- Square and smooth the sides using a grinder designed to ensure 90-degree angle sides.
- Super glue the pieces together.
- Smooth the back side with a genie, and use epoxy to attach the back.
- Using the genie, grind a slight curvature to the surface
- Finish polishing the piece like a cabochon.



I'm looking forward to next year to take more classes. If you have the time, I recommend taking back-to-back classes and enjoy the learning.

I named a few of my intarsia creations.....



Bad Hair Day



Not My Fault



How many Faces?