

14 Fun Projects You Can Make

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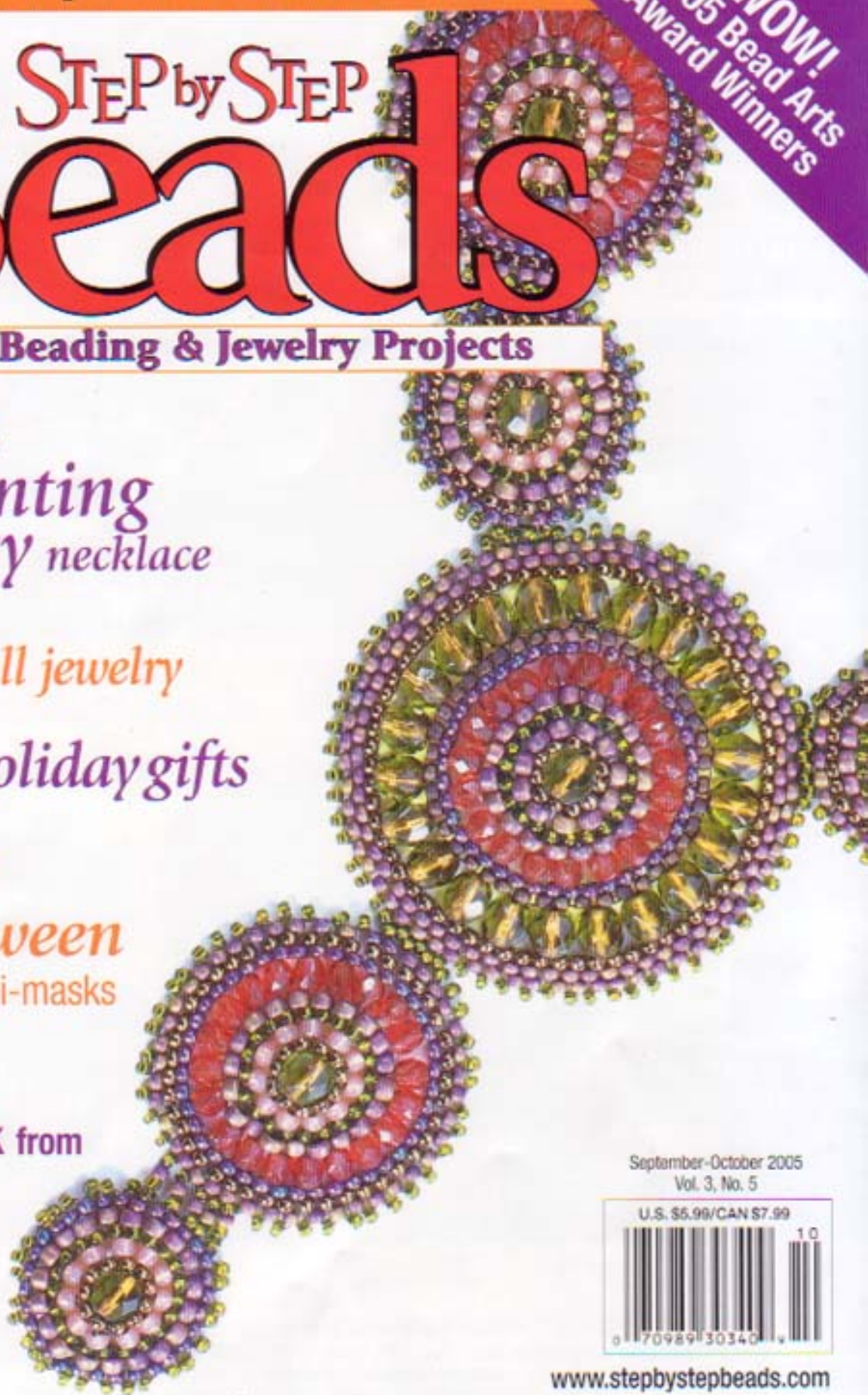
create this
enchanting
and *easy* necklace

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happy
Halloween
polymer mini-masks

plus
lampwork from
another
planet!



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patina 101

BY LORA HART

Patinas are one of the simplest ways to change and enhance the look of any metal element included in your beaded jewelry designs. Store-bought findings can also be customized with a dip in home-brewed patina. The two most common formulas developed for use with either sterling or fine silver (PMC[®]) are *liver-of-sulfur* (LOS), which creates an array of vibrant colors, and *hydrochloric acid*, commercially sold as Midas[®] Black Max[™], Griffith Silver Black[™], and Vigor[®], which produces a black, antiqued surface.

SAFETY FIRST!

Use common sense safety precautions when using any chemical solution. Work in a well-ventilated area, wear eye protection, use tweezers or dental floss to hold the piece for dipping, and keep clear, clean water nearby in case of splashes. You can also use a thin brush to paint the patina in target areas.



BEFORE

Because fire and polishing compounds can affect the process, adding patina should be the last step when finishing metal. Make sure your piece has been soldered and cleaned of any dirt or grease, with alcohol or ammonia, before you begin. Wear latex gloves to ensure that no body oils prevent the patina from adhering to the metal, or be sure to handle only the edges.



fresh from the kiln



cleaned, tumbled, and ready to patina

LIVER-OF-SULFUR

The dry, dark-green nuggets of liver-of-sulfur are light and air sensitive and their effectiveness will deteriorate with prolonged exposure. Store LOS in a dark, airtight container (like a brown bottle or black 35mm film container) and only make up as much solution as you will use in one session.

Developing from gold to brown to rose, violet, blue, and finally black, results appear more quickly when both the metal and solution have been heated. Dissolve a baby pea-size piece of LOS in a cup of warm (never boiling) tap water and dip back and forth between the light yellow mixture and cool water until you reach the desired color. Dip one last time in very cold water to stop the progression. If you're coloring many pieces at one time, prolong the LOS's workability by placing it on a heating pad or coffee warmer. If it starts to look cloudy, it has lost its zip — toss it and start another batch.



gold

rose

blue

HYDROCHLORIC ACID

This liquid solution should be used at room temperature. Pour about an inch into a dedicated, lidded, plastic dipping container. Use full strength for a deep black color, or dilute to achieve a lighter shade of gray. Add water, little by little, and test the result with a piece of scrap silver before dipping your masterpiece.



When you're finished, neutralize the acid-coated item with a short soak in a mixture of boiling water and baking soda.

After use, dispose of the LOC or hydrochloric acid by pouring them down the sink while letting the cold tap water run for a few minutes.



HA with highlights removed

AFTER

If desired, remove the patina from the high areas with a polishing pad like Pro-Polish pads (the best in my opinion), and throw in a tumbler for a final, high shine. Let the patina mellow naturally with wear, or coat lightly with a sealant like Krylon® Crystal Clear Acrylic Coating from the art store or Futura® floor wax. *Be aware that these treatments may slightly darken the appearance of the patina.*



Resources

Hydrochloric acid: Midas® Black Max™, Griffith Silver Black™, Vigor®; Pro-Polish polishing pads: Whole Lotta Whimsy, www.wholelottawhimsy.com; Protective glasses, liver-of-sulfur, jewelry tools, and supplies: Rio Grande®, www.riogrande.com.



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