



the art of silversmithing in the WORKSHOP OF W J SANDERS



**Profiling two artisans
whose talents help keep
history intact**



Cherie Ireland engraving the Gold Logie



Candela Riveros decorating a sterling silver shield using the technique of chasing

The three techniques of hand decorating metal – repoussé, chasing and engraving – are traditional methods which have been employed at W J Sanders for the over 100 years it has been in business. **Repoussé** is a metalworking technique in which a malleable metal is ornamented or shaped by hammering on the reverse side. **Chasing**, also known as embossing, is the opposite to repoussé; work on the metal is done from the outside. The two techniques are used in conjunction to create a finished piece. Embossing is used by W J Sanders to create some of Australia's most beautiful and unique trophies. **Engraving** is another important aspect of the business. Many important and historic trophies have been vandalised by unsightly engraving while records of previous winners have faded due to the lack of permanence of computer engraving.



Model of Lindy's Spirit of St Louis was in a poor state requiring the removal of rust from the metal parts as well needing new hubs and the re-engraving of the original insignias before being painted in colours to match the original

Candela Riveros and the art of embossing

Candela Riveros learnt silversmithing (chasing, hand engraving and jewellery making) at the only institution in South America that offers a silversmithing course, Escuelas Técnicas Raggio in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is a technical high school that combines vocational and general education. Candela entered the school at the age of 12, graduating with a diploma six years later.

Elaborating on the processes she uses, Candela explains: 'The techniques I use depend on what kind of piece I'm going to work on. If it's a hollow piece like a cup, I'll fill it with chaser's pitch first. When I work on flatware, such as dishes or plates, the piece is placed on a pitch-bed. This will prevent the piece getting smashed as I work.

'Second, I add a thin layer of watercolour to the surface and transfer the design (previously made on paper) using carbon paper.

'Third, comes the chasing itself, using my chaser's hammer and self-made chisels. I change its shape by

repeatedly "stamping" the chisel on it. There is no metal loss at all.

'After the first stage of marking the lines, I'll proceed to modelling the shapes and surfaces in the design. Each of these stages is completed using different kinds of chisels.'

After the modelling is completed, textures will be added for visual effects. This is also done with chisels.

'The main objective of textures is to increase the contrast in the patterns, leaving some smooth areas, and others with a different rough or grainy appearance. Such areas will take on a darker colour because they cannot be properly polished, and therefore will oxidize with time. This also makes a chased piece more aesthetically pleasant and therefore more valuable.

'Then comes the polishing process, which must be done with extreme care because, as it is an abrasive process, it is possible to eliminate much detail of the chasing.'

About engraving with Cherie Ireland

Cherie Ireland was introduced to engraving at a young age. Her father, Garry Evans, was

To be properly restored, the NSW fire helmet needed to be taken apart



Damaged sterling silver chalice required a delicate touch to fix the dents and straighten the damaged base and stem before being silver plated and polished



apprenticed to Angus & Coote. After a long career there, he successfully set up his own engraving business in Dee Why and taught his daughter the art. Cherie later set up her own engraving business in the old Gowings building in Sydney where she built up a prestigious list of customers such as jewellers Percy Marks, Angus & Coote and Hardy Brothers.

Even when raising her own family, Cherie kept up her skills by continuing to work for the Royal Agricultural Society. Following each Easter show their many historic trophies were beautifully engraved with winners' names.

After joining W J Sanders one of Cherie's first challenges was to feature

engrave the Peter Brock Memorial Trophy. Brock had died in a car accident only weeks before the scheduled Bathurst race and the organisers required a significant trophy to be made in record time for unveiling before the race.

Working with sterling silver means that a mistake can be very costly. Fortunately, the engraving on this trophy – completed late into the night – was beautifully, as well as skilfully, executed. This has since become one of the most photographed trophies outside of the Melbourne Cup, putting Cherie's engraving on display at Bathurst every October.

Feature engraving is now a significant part of Cherie's work. Her



Left: The spelter figure of a horseman required the arms and legs to be recreated. This was done by initially carving the missing body parts in wax and then casting the pieces in metal. The final step required the completed piece to be patinated to the original colour before given a final clean and wax

Below: Sterling silver centrepiece made by Henry Steiner, c. 1870, decorated with Australian flora and indigenous motifs required extensive restoration. Original pieces were removed, serving as templates for casts to be made of the missing fronds. The replacements were then soldered onto the body as was a replacement hand-carved boomerang





A neglected cruet set had to be taken apart and chemically cleaned with the damaged hinge fixed before being silver plated and polished

commissions include engraving the Royal Coat of Arms on the sterling silver Queen's Cup as well as engraving the names on the trophies of the various horse racing events staged throughout Australia.

As well as new work, Cherie is involved in working on early silver pieces. 'The silversmithing skills of

the company meant that as part of the restoration process of historic trophies and chalices, it enables me to replace bad engraving and also re-engage over any faded engraving,' observes Cherie. 'This engraving can then be silver or gold plated over, thus making the restoration complete.'



An early Ericsson telephone restored to its original state was completely taken apart, chemically cleaned and re-plated before being re-assembled

The Lakes International Cup, originally made in 1934, was replicated by W J Sanders in 2010. It was rebuilt with an electro silver-plated bowl and interior electroplated with a 22-carat gold wash, set on a plinth matching the original base



One Gallon Rum Ration Trophy made in sterling silver came in with 32 dents which were removed before being cleaned and machine hand polished