

Project Patience

Michael David Sturlin sets his own pace

BY TINA WOJTKIELO Michael David Sturlin of Scottsdale, Arizona, has fond memories of childhood days spent crocheting, knitting, and beading alongside his grandmother. “She taught me the contentment of working quietly and diligently for long periods of time,” he says. And it’s a skill he’s taken to new levels.

As you may have read in the January 2003 *AJM* (page 15), Sturlin has perfected the art of creating crocheted wire. But throw an 87.43 carat quartz faceted by Bernd Munsteiner into the mix, and Sturlin’s job gets even more challenging.

“The quartz was given to me by my dear friend Alan Revere as a sign of encouragement—a challenge to make something spectacular,” says Sturlin. And a challenge it was.

With the quartz as the central focal point of the “Reflecting Pond Necklace,” Sturlin had to design a chain that could support its weight. He started crocheting 18k red gold wire—75 feet of it to be exact—to create a two-strand chain.

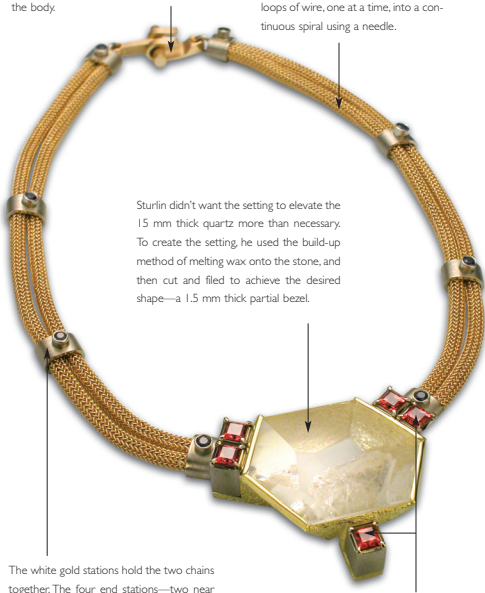
When deciding how to set the quartz, Sturlin was inspired by the incense braziers he’s seen in Chinese temples, which resemble large footed bowls. “I decided to make ‘feet’ on the three sides of the quartz setting to accommodate red spinel accent stones,” says Sturlin. “I then soldered the prong settings onto the feet.”

Sturlin set the quartz using a hammer and punch, tapping the stone to avoid scratching it.

When all was set and done, this necklace took Sturlin about 55 hours to create. But, as his grandmother would say, who’s counting? ♦

A new version of a toggle, this clasp snaps into place. It’s easier to put on than a traditional toggle, which could twist the chain a bit. This modification allows the chain to lie flat against the body.

The crocheted component of this necklace, which consists of 75 feet of 18k red gold wire, took 25 hours to complete. The process entails weaving loops of wire, one at a time, into a continuous spiral using a needle.



Sturlin didn’t want the setting to elevate the 15 mm thick quartz more than necessary. To create the setting, he used the build-up method of melting wax onto the stone, and then cut and filed to achieve the desired shape—a 1.5 mm thick partial bezel.

The white gold stations hold the two chains together. The four end stations—two near the clasp and two near the centerpiece—are soldered on, while the other four act as slides. Each features a blue sapphire set in a tube bezel.

Sturlin had to polish the prong tips on the spinel settings as best as he could before assembly. Once they’re soldered to the quartz setting, it’s difficult to file them.