

Rustic Forest

by Trish Vernazza

Using my unique combination of mystery, pleasure, and attraction for finding enigmatically beautiful things among the oddities, I like to capture moments of psychological tension between the ordinary.

My Rustic Forest Necklaces are created from eclectic ingredients: the travels of twist and turns in one's life. As I have journeyed into the river of life, my heart has become tangled amongst the vines and many hearts. Like love itself, it is multi-layered and all tangled up.

As a psychotherapist and art therapist in private practice, many people's journeys have touched my psyche and heart. It has allowed me to create my own music notes as I wander through my own personal rustic forest. Many times, I have journeyed with my client in their personal quest to discover their path. I, along with them, have learned to write my own music notes. Thus, I sing to my own song.

I know I am not afraid to tackle the hard parts of my own life. My goal is to overcome obstacles and walk among the beautiful trees in my rustic forest. Hence, I love hammering metal to make it appear soft and fluid. What a clever disguise for hard metal! Working with metal also allows me to rid myself of a lot of stress. I can be very physical as I hammer, cut, saw, and make a big fire flame — I love my torch.

My jewelry combines and welcomes this entire dichotomy. I encourage you to go deep in your own psyche and heart, and not be afraid to walk and create in your own forest. →

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Anvil
- Beads: silver
- Cardstock
- Chains: silver; copper
- Drills & drill press
- Flex shaft
- Flux
- Hammers & wooden mallets
- Jeweler's saw
- Jump rings
- Liver of Sulfur (optional)
- Marker: felt-tipped, thick, black
- Metal block
- Metal files
- Metal stamps
- Pickling solution
- Rolling mill (optional)
- Safety glasses
- Sheet metal: silver; copper
- Soldering surface
- Steel wool or polishing cloth
- Torch
- Tree stumps
- Vise
- Wire: silver, 22-gauge
- Wire cutters





TECHNIQUE

1. Draw hearts, leaf, and music note on cardstock. Cut out, and determine the correct length for the necklaces. Trace each heart onto the silver and copper sheet metal. Trace the leaf on copper sheet metal and the music note on silver sheet metal.
2. To create a pattern on the metal, run it through a rolling mill with a metal, paper, fabric, or sandpaper design.
3. Cut out all items with a jeweler's saw. Stamp designs onto the metal, and pierce them with a drill press. Insert a saw blade into the pierced area, and remove some of the metal for the wire to fit through.
4. Cut out the middle of the music note. Drill holes for jump rings. File edges.
5. Saw, stamp, pierce, and file excess metal to create additions for each piece.
6. Anneal the metal, pickle, dry, and dome the hearts with various sizes of hammers.
7. File edges for a smooth finish.
8. Create copper and silver shapes with fold-forming techniques; line folds, T folds, plunkett folds, and wire scold folds are just a few of the basics. Fold form the leaf in the vise, and hammer on the edge to create the flutter look. Repeat hammering, folding, removing from the vise, opening up the metal with pliers, and hammering extra designs.
9. Create all pieces before soldering them together. Split some of the silver with a saw blade. Continuously heat the silver, file, and twist the metal to create the appearance of the vine.
10. Anneal copper and silver wire, and begin twisting them with pliers. Combine the silver and copper together to make spirals.
11. Clean metal, and place them next to each other. File edges of the hearts to sit neatly next to the folds in the metal. Use hard solder to join, and pickle the metal.
12. Begin the next design by placing spirals on top of the metal. Continue with soldering from medium,

easy, to extra easy, adding spirals, wires, jump rings, and hanging metals.

13. Solder the silver pieces, sharp silver vine, and copper leaf together.
14. Anneal again, and slightly puff out the hearts. Bend, and shape other parts of the metal. Harden other parts with a mallet. Play around heating the copper to create appealing heat colors. Only harden and rinse after this process.
15. Oxidize copper with Liver of Sulfur. Polish with steel wool or a polishing cloth.
16. Add leaf ribbons or leather to complete the necklace, or make a silver chain — create shapes, spirals, and loops with wire. Hammer wire, clean, pickle, solder, and file wire edges to a smooth finish.

TIPS & RESOURCES

- Visit fabric stores for embroidery ribbons and leather to hang pendants from.
- Don't be afraid to darken silver with Liver of Sulfur.
- When not wearing or displaying your artwork, store in air-tight bags to keep the silver from oxidizing.
- For silver with a high shine, polish with a polishing cloth.
- Jewelry-making supplies can be purchased at riogrande.com and hauserandmiller.com.
- For fold-forming techniques, refer to *Introduction to Fold Forming* (Brain Press, 1993) by Charles Lewton-Brain. ❖

Trish Vernazza is an artist, author, art therapist, and licensed marriage family therapist. She has been creating since the age of 5 when she began melting her family's Elvis Presley 45 records in the hot Florida sun to create ashtrays. Trish lives in Oceanside, California, with her husband, Johnny "V" Vernazza, whose blues/rock music inspires her creations. Visit her artistic websites to purchase art items and follow her art life on her websites: visionsofvenus.com and trishv.com. She welcomes emails at info@trishv.com.

