

**NATURE'S GEMS:** Head to Michelle's website, [www.twoplumsdesign.com](http://www.twoplumsdesign.com) to view her complete range of jewellery and to find out where she will be next.



Michelle Stemm makes silver and metal jewellery from home in Eudlo.

PHOTO: PATRICK WOODS

### Treasures from trash

# Jewellery ideas Stemmm from nature

Working from her Eudlo studio, Michelle Stemm creates wearable art using recycled materials

BY Sarah Rex

Who would have thought bracket fungi was a beautiful thing?

Michelle Stemm certainly thinks so, and has used it as her muse for just one style of the gorgeous jewellery she creates from her Eudlo studio.

Nature plays a big role in Michelle's jewellery design, with many natural wonders serving as inspiration for her work.

"I was kind of changing careers from being an early childhood teacher and I've always been creative and I've always wanted to make jewellery," Michelle said.

"It was my great-great aunt and uncle who got me into silver-smithing. They founded the Buderim gem and fossicking group and they showed me how to do it."

Michelle's love of jewellery-making soon grew into a business, called Two Plums Designs in honour of the plum farm she lives on in Eudlo.

"I get a lot of really nice comments which is really encouraging because it is a nervous moment when you put your art up for people to see," she added.

But it is not just the nature motifs in Michelle's work that has people talking.

"The silver I use is all recycled. It's from a supplier in Sydney that does specifically use recycled metals and that fits really well with my ethos of sustainably on a producing acreage. I was really happy to find them.

"The industrial silver is only part of what they recycle, they also recycle old offcuts and broken jewellery as well," Michelle

explained.

Michelle said Two Plums Design followed a "slow business" model in the way that she is a single artisan making limited edition jewellery by hand.

"It can be long, but it's actually quite manual. I use pretty much traditional methods of forging and fabricating. The forging is a hammer on an anvil. I have a whole range of hammers that I use, so those shapes are just me with my hammer.

"It's all authentic too. Often mistakes can be a way of changing a design, making alterations, and sometimes you have to go with what the metal is going to do. It might be a limitation of the material or a limitation of myself so it's always good learning processes of celebrating my mistakes. With metal, it's reusable so I often keep all my mistakes or reuse the silver.

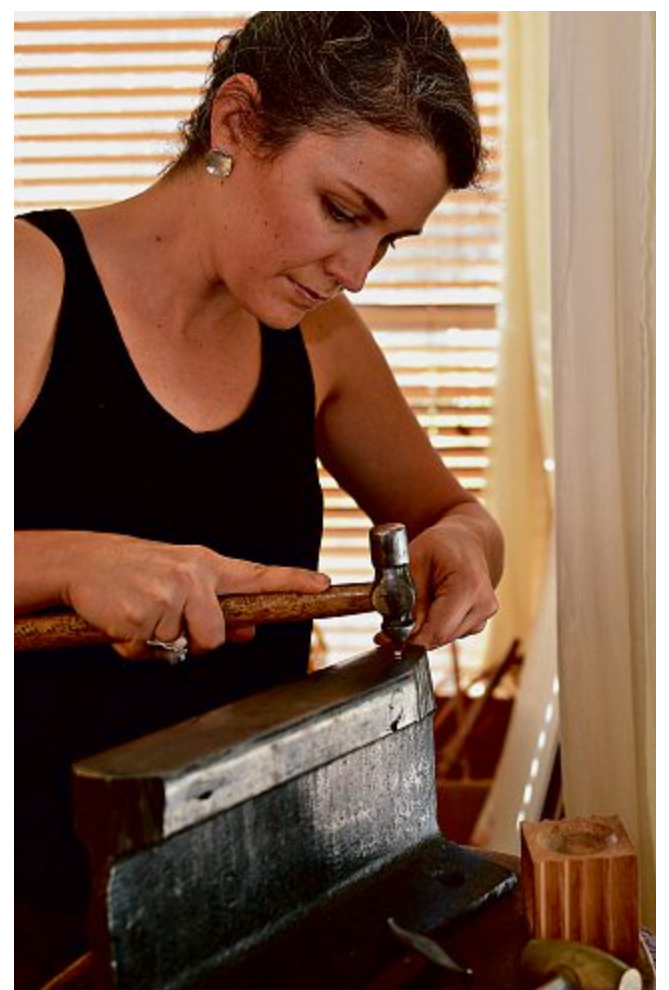
"I also do some commission work so people can come to me with an idea and I can help them make that into a reality."

As if starting her own business was not enough, Michelle is also busy studying.

"I'm studying my Masters at the Queensland College of Art in Griffith Uni. It can be a bit of a juggling act, but with anything handmade, people are starting to understand it takes time and they are willing to wait."

In between making jewellery and studying, Michelle is also gearing up for the Green Heart Fair in Brisbane.

"I'm a member of Brisstyle which is a group of artists based in Brisbane and they are involved with Green Heart Fair so I got involved through that. This is my third year."



Michelle's jewellery is limited edition and made by hand using traditional methods of forging and fabricating.

PHOTO: PATRICK WOODS