

Silver News

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Silver Wins as the Metal of Choice for Sports Trophies



Many trophies made of silver, like the Vince Lombardi Trophy seen here, are awarded for sports achievement.

NFL

With the Miami Heat winning the National Basketball Association championship, yet another silver trophy is being awarded for sports achievement.

The Larry O'Brien NBA Championship Trophy is made from 14.5 pounds of sterling silver and vermeil with a 24 karat gold overlay that looks like a basketball entering a net. Manufactured by Tiffany & Co., it is valued at US\$13,500 and the winning team keeps it for one year. Recently, the Los Angeles Kings won the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup, the century-old championship symbol of professional hockey which is produced from nearly 35 pounds of silver.

Throughout history, even during athletic competition in ancient Rome and Greece, silver trophies were common and they became the trophies of choice in America in the 18th and 19th centuries to honor the outstanding performances in horse racing, boating and early auto racing.

Among the most famous examples is the ornate sterling silver America's Cup, which for 125 years was displayed at the New York Yacht Club, the home of the champions of the yachting world. Now under the stewardship of California's Golden Gate Yacht Club, the America's Cup will be awarded to the winner of the famed international yachting competition in San Francisco in July 2013.

And, next February, the Vince Lombardi Trophy, the silver embodiment of American football greatness, will be given to the winner of the National Football League's Super Bowl, the title now held by the New York Giants. In auto racing, basketball, English football and many other sports around the world are trophies made of sterling silver, emblematic of the best in the field.

There are other examples, including the Borg-Warner Trophy, given to the winner of the Indianapolis 500, and Major League Baseball's Commissioner's Trophy, awarded to baseball's World Series champion: Consider the awards given at the oldest tennis tournament in the world. The ladies' and gentlemen's singles competitors who outperform their opponents over the course of two weeks on the lawns of Wimbledon are awarded the first prize — an 18.5 inch engraved silver cup for the gentleman, and an 18.5 inch engraved silver tray, called the Venus Rosewater Dish, for the lady. The winners of the French Open men's and women's singles tennis championships were recently awarded the Coupe des Mousquetaires and the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen trophies respectively, both made of silver.

An Interview with Michael Barlerin, Director of the Silver Institute's Silver Promotion Service

With the continuing growth of silver jewelry sales, we asked Michael Barlerin, Director of the Silver Promotion Service (SPS), a marketing initiative established by the Silver Institute, to discuss SPS's programs and projects. For 15 years he was Chief Executive Officer of the World Gold Council, Americas, where he helped lead the group's programs to stimulate demand for gold. Mr. Barlerin was also employed for seven years by the Dallas-based Zale Corporation, where he held several positions including Senior Vice President, Marketing. Following are excerpts from this discussion.

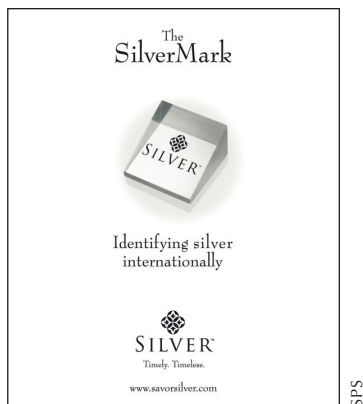
SN - What is the Silver Promotion Service?

Mr. Barlerin - In 2008, the Silver Institute launched the Silver Promotion Service, with the primary objective of enhancing the image of silver jewelry both within the industry and in the consumer marketplace and, by so doing, stimulating demand.

SN - What are some of SPS's current initiatives?

Mr. Barlerin - The 2012 SPS Plan is comprised of 10 individual but integrated programs. Lead programs within the plan include Business-to-Business messaging, trade show participation, international outreach, opportunistic programs, and research.

The SPS program operates under the banner 'Savor Silver,' a name we chose because it serves as a call to action for both trade and consumer. The cornerstone of the Savor Silver program is our website www.savorsilver.com, which showcases new silver jewelry designs, SPS events such as the recent silver fashion show in Vegas, and media coverage of the program's participants. The current core participant categories are our 'SilverMark Partners,' our 'International Designers of Distinction,' and the 'Designers of Distinction from Mexico.' It is from these talented designers and manufacturers that we select silver jewelry to appear in special events, public relations activities and consumer communications.



This SilverMark Advertisement Appeared in the 2012 *Silver Jewelry Suppliers Directory*

As an example, the September issue of *Traditional Home* will again honor five 'Classic Women' for the charitable contributions they have made in their respective communities. The five women will be wearing silver jewelry provided by Savor Silver participants. The SPS advertisement in the issue paying tribute to the honorees will carry the SilverMark and our new consumer tag line 'Silver. Timely. Timeless'.

Another important communications initiative is our monthly electronic newsletter, *Silver Jewelry News*, distributed by *National Jeweler*, which goes to approximately 38,000 retail subscribers. We furnish materials and press releases and work with the National

Jeweler editorial team on interviews of our participants. We use the monthly newsletter to communicate the current SPS B2B messaging about the consumer's strong desire for silver jewelry, its gross margin performance, and its female self-purchase role. We always highlight the SilverMark.

SN - Explain the purpose of the SilverMark.

Mr. Barlerin - The SilverMark is a communication mark used to identify companies selected to participate in our program, which they may use in advertising this branded silver jewelry. The SilverMark graphic design is reminiscent of the British hallmarking system. The SilverMark was recently launched internationally in an ad in the 2012 *Silver Jewelry Suppliers Directory* published by Jewelry News Asia.

“The consensus among retailers, based on our research, is that the growth in silver jewelry sales is a long-term trend. It's not a blip. It's not something that's short term. We've started to refer to it as a 'sea change' for silver jewelry.”

SN - Tell us about your research surveys.

Mr. Barlerin - When we started the Silver Promotion Service, there was a paucity of silver jewelry market research. So, in early 2010 we commissioned Nielsen to field a retailer survey to measure silver jewelry sales growth, gross margin performance, and its increasing importance at retail. There were approximately a dozen core questions and 4 to 5 open-ended questions. It was staggeringly successful research in terms of quantifying silver's 2009 performance that we had only known on an anecdotal basis. We have repeated the survey twice and asked the same questions for year-over-year comparability. We continue to see very significant sales growth, 75- 80 percent over the prior year, very significant increases in percentage of dollars and units of retailer sales contributed by silver, and the very best maintained margin in the industry. In addition to using the results in our trade advertising, we make the research available to everyone in our program so they can use it for their marketing efforts to their core retail consumers.

SN - What future initiatives are planned?

Mr. Barlerin - We are in the final stage of the development of a 10-week course to be offered in the third quarter to students at

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the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Georgia. The course, titled 'The Business Case for Silver,' is intended to generate content for future trade and consumer communications and will also be incorporated into jewelry industry symposiums. There is already a high level of enthusiasm about the course among both SCAD faculty and students, and all of us look forward to the start of the program in September. We also will be headed to England to participate in the International Jewelry London show and to China to formally introduce the SPS program to the delegates of the 11th China International Silver Conference, of which the Silver Institute is a major sponsor. Finally, we will continue to use a wide-range of media platforms to showcase the wonderful work that silver artisans provide.

SN - Is this growing interest in silver jewelry a long-term phenomenon or will it be short lived based on what happens with gold?

Mr. Barlerin - I felt very strongly from day one of the program that we did not want to link silver's sales surge solely to the increased gold price. There are many more variables that are creating silver's sales momentum, and we didn't want the industry to think that if the gold price were to decline that it would impact silver's sales growth. The consensus among retailers, based on our research, is that the growth in silver jewelry sales is a long-term trend. It's not a blip. It's not something that's short term. We've started to refer to it as a 'sea change' for silver jewelry.

New Fillings Hold Promise for Restoring Tooth Enamel While Killing Germs

Bioengineers at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry have created the first cavity-filling composite that not only kills bacteria but restores tooth enamel destroyed by decay. The bactericide uses nanosilver.

When a dentist drills out a decayed tooth, the cavity will still contain residual bacteria, according to Professor Huakun Xu, who led the research. This bacteria is impossible to remove mechanically so nanosilver is imbedded in the primer of the filling material and spread into the cavity to kill germs. "The reason we want to get the antibacterial agents also into primers and adhesives is that these are the first things that cover the internal surfaces of the tooth cavity and flow into tiny dental tubules inside the tooth," Xu said.

The antibacterial agent, with a base of quaternary ammonium and silver nanoparticles, has a high pH that can limit acid production by tooth bacteria. Once prepared, the tooth will be filled with a composite containing calcium phosphate nanoparticles that can regenerate tooth minerals.

Fillings made from the new composite, with antibacterial primer and antibacterial adhesive, should last longer than the usual five to ten years, but additional research is needed to confirm its longevity, according to Professor Xu. "The bottom line is we are continuing to improve these materials and making them stronger in their antibacterial and remineralizing capacities as well as increasing their longevity," Xu said.

Researchers have tested the new products by using biofilms from volunteers' saliva, and they are planning to test their products on animal and human teeth.

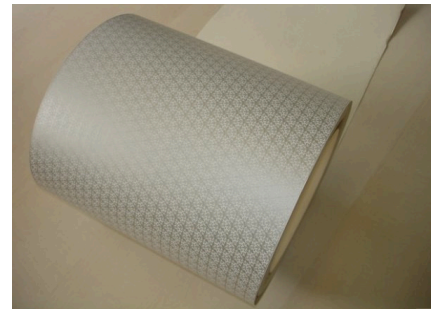
Stealth Wallpaper Uses Silver to Block Wi-Fi Signals

Researchers at the Grenoble Institute of Technology and the Centre Technique du Papier have developed a 'stealth wallpaper' with imbedded silver particles that keeps snoopers and hackers from accessing a Wi-Fi network from outside. The wallpaper will be available next year from the Finnish firm Ahlstrom, which acquired the license.

The wallpaper is covered by silver conductive ink, in interlocking snowflake patterns, which blocks Wi-Fi signals from reaching outside the walls. The wallpaper can be covered by any other wallpaper, thus hiding it. The developers suggest that it could be used on floors and ceilings to prevent leaking through these surfaces to hackers on other floors.

The design can be 'tuned' to block Wi-Fi signals in the usual 2.5 and 5.8 MHz bands but allow mobile phone frequencies to pass through if desired.

Previous stealth wallpapers have been produced using copper instead of silver, but the costs were about \$25 a square foot. The new wallpaper will cost about the same as a "classic, mid-range" wallpaper, according to the developers. For an executive summary of the report, [click here](#).



This wallpaper imbedded with silver prevents hackers from eavesdropping on Wi-Fi signals.

Chinese Silver Market Report Slated for October

The Silver Institute has commissioned a new report on the Chinese silver market which will focus on that country's growing importance in the global silver industry and on identifying emerging trends that may impact the broader market over the next several years.

The report will be produced for the Silver Institute by Thomson Reuters GFMS to be released in October.

Twenty years ago, China accounted for 3 percent of global silver demand and 5 percent of supply. In 2011, these figures climbed to 16 percent and 14 percent, respectively, making China the world's second largest consumer and third biggest producer of silver, according to *World Silver Survey 2012*. In 2007, for example, the country switched from being a net exporter to a growing net importer of silver bullion. Many experts suggest that Chinese silver demand will continue to grow over the rest of this decade.

Silver Futures Trading Opens in China

The Shanghai Futures Exchange (SHFE) began trading silver futures in early May -- the first silver contracts of their type offered in China -- a move that will make trading the white metal more liquid.

With the opening of the SHFE silver futures trading, more than US\$21 billion in silver contracts changed hands in May, more than 15 times the amount traded two years ago, according to exchange statistics. Lot sizes were set at 15 kilograms and lot prices are allowed to fluctuate up to 5 percent daily. Prices are quoted in Yuan, and margin requirements are 7 percent. Unlike some other metals futures, trading is closed at night.

On opening day, May 10, trading volume was 300,000 lots, the second most active contract after copper.

Although China is a large producer and consumer of silver, it has not had an active trading market until this move. Before these silver futures contracts were offered, investors and traders used Shanghai Gold Exchange Ag (T+D) contracts to engage in certain silver transactions. Alternatively, they could buy paper silver from commercial banks.

Silver Nanoparticles from Pomegranates?

Scientists often seek processes that replace toxic chemicals with those that are more environmentally friendly. Now, researchers at AN College and Patna University in India are testing how well pomegranate skins can take the place of chemical reducing agents in producing silver nanoparticles. As a bonus, early results indicate that the chemical reaction can be performed at room temperature instead of the usually-required, high-heat conditions.

The team of botanists believe that the biological make-up of pomegranates can substitute for conventional chemical reagents used to extract silver nanoparticles from silver nitrate. The generated particles are about 5 nanometers in diameter, and scientists are continuing to work with the fruit to understand exactly how the chemical reaction is taking place. Nanoparticles are used in a range of applications including biotechnology, catalysis, optics and electronics.

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www.silverinstitute.org

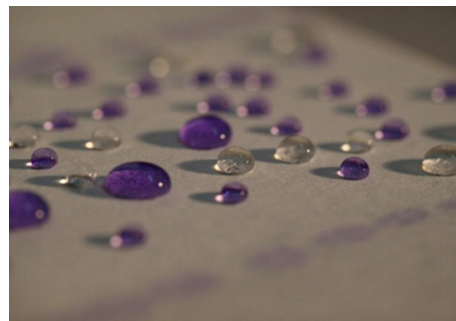
Say Goodbye to Refrigerator Magnets

Italian researchers may have found a replacement for refrigerator magnets in their new magnetic paper, but they didn't stop there. By adding various substances they can make the paper waterproof, fluorescent, and, with the addition of silver, it becomes antibacterial too.

The Genoa-based Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia team, led by Roberto Cingolani, have devised a way to bond cellulose fibers in ordinary paper with nanoparticles of several metals and substances, which results in new properties. They can produce paper that is waterproof, magnetic, antibacterial and even fluorescent, according to their report in a recent print edition of the *Journal of Materials Chemistry*.

While each trait can be added to paper individually, they can also be added all together, the team noted. For example, paper that is waterproof and antibacterial could find use as bank notes or bills. Fluorescent paper could find its way to posters. Magnetic, fluorescent and antibacterial paper could be used for kitchen or bathroom signage.

An important benefit, the team notes, is that because the paper as a whole is not being coated, it retains all of its usual properties, allowing it to be written upon by pens and pencils or printed upon by machines. In addition, the process can be applied to existing paper, giving new properties to magazines, books or other documents.



ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI TECNOLOGIA

A new technique can make paper waterproof, magnetic, antibacterial and even fluorescent -- all at the same time.

Upcoming Events

The 11th China International Silver Conference Slated for October in Xiamen

The 11th China International Silver Conference (CISC) will take place from October 16-18, 2012 in Xiamen at the [Hotel Nikko](#). More information on the Conference will be available shortly.

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