

Three tier silver cake stand

BY JULIA RAI

Enjoy an elegant afternoon tea with delicious cakes displayed in three layers.

This 1:12 scale three tier cake stand provides a timeless centrepiece for a tea party on a summer afternoon. Silver metal clay is a good choice for this contemporary design. The tapered central post runs through the top two tiers, which have different sized holes to place the tiers on the post. The construction requires an intermediate level of skill.

MATERIALS

- 25g silver metal clay
- Silver clay paste
- Teflon
- Roller
- Playing cards
- Circle stencil with multiple sizes
- Pin tool
- Flat piece of acrylic sheet such as a CD case
- Sanding sponges
- Wet and dry sanding paper, 600 grit
- Assorted sized drill bits
- Craft knife
- Paintbrush
- Polishing tools
- Liver of Sulphur (optional)

1. Put aside 5g of clay for later (step 8). Place a stack of 10 playing cards on each side of an oiled Teflon sheet. Take half the remaining clay and roll it out. Remove two cards at a time from each side and turn the clay as you

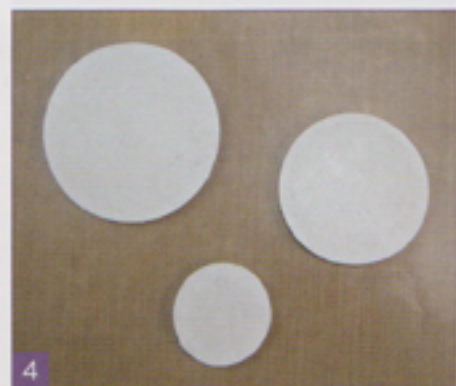
roll to maintain the shape. Roll down to four cards thick.

2. Place the circle stencil over the clay, resting on the playing cards so you do not squash the clay. Dip the pin tool in oil and cut out a circle, 35mm in diameter. Make sure the pin tool is completely upright and makes contact with the edge of the stencil as you cut so the edges are clean and straight.

3. Put the cut circle to one side on its Teflon, making sure it is completely flat. Combine the leftover clay with the remaining half of clay and roll this into a smooth ball in your hands. Now roll this out to four cards thick as before and cut another circle 28mm in diameter. Put this aside with the larger circle.

4. Roll the remaining clay into a smooth ball and roll out again down to four cards thick. Cut the final circle 19mm in diameter and put this with the other two circles. Do not use heat to dry these circles as this can cause them to warp and will make the tiers crooked. They need to be completely flat.

5. Roll the remaining clay into a sausage. Use the flat acrylic sheet to roll the sausage into a slim, tapered rod about 90mm long. Do not use oil on the acrylic sheet or work surface; you need some friction to make this work. Taper the rod slightly by pressing more on one end of the acrylic sheet as you roll. ➡



6. Allow the rod to dry without heat, as this can cause it to warp. Rest the length of the rod against something straight while it dries. The rod needs to be completely straight for the design to work. During the drying process, occasionally roll it with the acrylic sheet to ensure even drying, until it is completely rigid.

7. When the circles are dry, brush a small amount of thin paste onto one side and use your finger to pat a subtle, stippled texture into the paste. Do this on one surface of each circle, dry and then repeat on the other side of the circles. When they are completely dry, refine the edges using a sanding sponge.

8. From the 5g of clay left, roll about 2g into a smooth ball. This ball will form the handle of the cake stand so it needs to be in proportion. Form four more equal sized balls for the feet of the cake stand. When the ball

handle is dry, drill a small hole about 2mm deep and stipple the ball.

9. Add stippling to the rod and dry. Trim to 50mm long using a craft knife. Sand the bottom at the fattest end so it's flat and the rod stands at a 90° angle. Mark the centre of the largest circle using the stencil guides. Drill a dip in the centre with a drill the same diameter as the rod end.

10. Mark the rod at 15mm intervals where the top two tiers will sit. Mark the centre of the other circles and drill a small pilot hole in each circle. Drill a larger hole in the middle circle and slide onto the rod, widening the hole gradually until it stops at the lower 15mm mark. Repeat this with the top tier.

11. Stick on the feet, check it's all level, reinforce the joins, stipple and dry. Paste the rod into the dip of the largest circle and dry. Stick the middle tier in place, also making sure it's level and dry. Stick the final circle in place, level and dry. Widen the hole in the ball if necessary. Add paste and stick onto the rod and dry.

12. Stand the piece upright on a bed of fibre blanket on a kiln shelf. Add a piece of fibre blanket between each tier to help support it. Don't pack this in tight; make sure it is just touching each surface. Fire at 800°C for 30 minutes in the kiln or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Polish the cake stand using a brass brush and/or tumble polish.



TIPS

Use the finest pin tool you can find when using stencils so you get a clean cut. You can make your own using a needle embedded into a rod of polymer clay and baked.

The tapered rod is initially rolled considerably longer than what you finally need so that you can choose the straightest, best tapered part when you trim it down.

This requires kiln firing as the final piece is too large for successful torch firing.

RESOURCES

Silver metal clay: metalclay.co.uk

EXTRA PROJECTS

The design could be adapted to include period details such as elaborate feet, scrollwork on the tiers or embellished uprights and a fancy handle. Circles have been used here but you could make the tiers any shape you like. More or fewer tiers would also suit different periods.

