

SOAPING NEWS

Soaping News from all over the world

FEATURED THIS WEEK:

INTERVIEW WITH AMY WARDEN (SOAP CHALLENGE CLUB MANAGER)

<https://soapchallengeclub.com/>



SOAP CHALLENGE CLUB MANAGER AMY WARDEN

By Eva Gómez

Our guest today is Amy Warden, founder and host of the Soap Challenge Club. She created the Soap Challenge Club for soapmakers to learn new techniques, hone their skills, meet other soapmakers and win amazing prizes.

The first monthly challenge started in 2013 with the peacock swirl. Since then it is open to any soapmaker who wishes to join.



Amy, you are a pioneer in the soaping world. How did you start making soap?

I was looking online for ideas for handmade gifts I could make for my friends for Christmas in 2002. I found [Kathy Miller's website](#) on how to make soap, so I tried it. I stirred that first batch with a spoon until I was sure it had to have reached trace (only since it had been well over 30 minutes), and poured it into the mold. When I dumped it out of the mold the next day, it crumbled like sand! I went back to Kathy's site and read the troubleshooting information and discovered that it probably hadn't reached trace after all. I put it back in my stainless steel pot and put it in the oven to melt it all down, then put it back in the mold. The next day it came out perfectly and I've been hooked ever since!

You are very well known internationally because of the soap challenges. How did you start organising them?

In March 2012, I started doing some [weekly soap challenges](#)

on my Great Cakes Soapworks blog to engage with other soapmakers. I had been following Australian blogger Darren Rowse of [ProBlogger.com](#) for quite a while at that time to learn how to be a successful blogger. The idea for the challenges came from the [photography challenges](#) I had seen on Darren's photography blog (that are still happening to this day!). It was while I was on Spring Break with my girls at my parent's house in 2013 when I came up with the idea to create a monthly Soap Challenge Club similar to what it is now.

From how many countries do the participants come from?

It varies from month to month, but anywhere from 18-30.

How do you plan the challenges? How do you decide which challenge will come first?

Sometimes I only have a certain number of ideas, so it's whatever I have at the time. Members will send me ideas, and sometimes I will see designs that I would like to try. I like to do a variety of techniques and throw in a themed challenge every

once in a while.

How do you look for soap collaborators/teachers?

If someone has created a technique, or has been working on perfecting a technique, I will ask them if they would like to teach. It helps if I know they have experience creating videos, but I've also coached some teachers to create their first videos for the Club! Some will come to me with their technique that they would like to share with the Club.

I have seen some pictures of you making puzzles in your blog. What do you do in your spare time?

Yes, puzzles have been a nice distraction lately! I love to do crafty things as well, but I don't always make time for them. My mom taught me how to use a sewing machine when I was growing up, and I've taught myself to knit and crochet. I enjoy spending time with my family, so it's a good thing they are all home right now! We like to play games and watch movies together.



Which challenge is the one you have liked the most?

I honestly love the pipe divider swirl! It creates such beautiful designs!

Your soaps are always so amazing. Is there a technique that you feel you haven't mastered quite yet?

There are probably several that I haven't „mastered“ as I couldn't recreate them consistently. The teardrop would be one! Rimmed soap was also a huge challenge for me. I'm also not an expert at piping soap!

A lot of our readers are hesitant to enter into the Soap Challenges because they feel that they are „not good enough“ yet. What would you tell them?

The Challenge Club is one of the best ways to improve your skills quickly. It's more about learning than it is about competing. You

have the support of everyone in the private Facebook group and and there's something special about creating the same technique together with hundreds of soapmakers from all over the world! You learn how the soap batter behaves in so many different conditions - whether you trying to keep it fluid, or make it set up quickly.

What are some of the benefits of participating in the Soap Challenge?

The main benefit is the learning aspect - from learning about soapmaking and controlling trace to learning how to present your soap and to use technology and social media to promote your soap. You get to meet other soapmakers from around the world, and it's also just a lot of fun! The prizes for those who win are just an added bonus.

You are fighting right now against breast cancer. Yet, you

always seem so positive and optimistic. What gives you the strength for this battle?

It's my faith. I know God is good and He has already been so close to me through this battle. I have felt His peace and love for me and the prayers of so many who are lifting me up and giving me strength.

If you could wish for something in 2020, what would that be?

My greatest wish right now is that the coronavirus will be stopped, even as we've been reminded of how fragile life is. I think we've all been made aware of what's truly important to us through this time of quarantine, and I hope and pray that we don't forget these lessons!

Amy, we wish you all the best in your fight. Stay strong and healthy, and hopefully we'll see many more soap challenges organised by you.

