

AstroUpdate — May 2012

Hi and welcome to the Stella Starwoman May AstroUpdate! And a special welcome to our new subscribers. The two April workshops *Secrets of the Major Arcana* and *Speed Dating with the Court Cards* were a great success – thank you to those of you who came along. We're now halfway through the current *Magic & Manifestation Course* (did the Burning & Planting Ritual this week) but I have some very exciting news (plus a good reason why this newsletter is late!)

Magic & Manifestation Book Launch

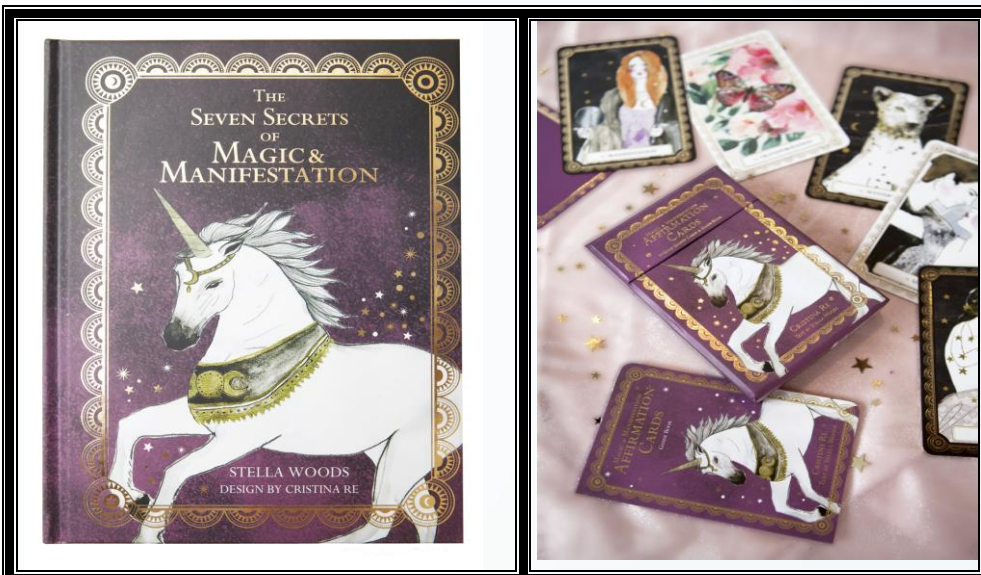


Stella, Lisa & Claire celebrating with champagne at *The Seven Secrets of Magic & Manifestation* book launch
(We all have the moon in Virgo and so does photographer Anne Sced!)

Well, at times I never thought it would happen, but after two years of hard work, I'm very proud to announce that my new book [*The Seven Secrets of Magic & Manifestation*](#) based on the course I've been running for the past four years has finally been launched along with a companion [*Magic & Manifestation Affirmation Deck*](#) featuring the beautiful illustrations from the book. You can order copies of the hardcover book and affirmation cards from my [shopping cart](#) or head into your local book store (both products are distributed by Brumby Books). The book and cards are a joint venture between myself and talented Australian designer Cristina Re (also an AstroUpdate subscriber). Cristina and I both share a love of magic and fantasy and it has been an absolute pleasure working with her and her team. The book and cards are stand alone products – in other words you can buy and use them separately. To read more about these products or to purchase them for yourself, just click on the links below!

Book RRP \$34.95 [BUY NOW](#)

Card Deck - RRP \$29.95 [BUY NOW](#)



Samhain- Gateway to Winter



Samhain, the ancient Celtic fire festival, is celebrated by pagans on May Eve. The word 'pagan' derives from the Latin word 'paganus' meaning 'country dweller'. People living in rural areas continued to worship the cycles of nature long after Christianity was embraced by the cities of the Roman Empire. The word for "country dweller" became synonymous with someone whose spiritual beliefs were based on seasonal energies.

Samhain marks the gateway to winter, and is a magical time of passage between the seasons. The nights are long and dark and the veil between this world and other dimensions is very thin. Divine beings, the spirits of the dead, and mortals are said to be able to move freely between one world and the next. This of course is our Southern Hemisphere Hallowe'en. Samhain is a good time to go within and meditate and then literally and metaphorically get rid of dead wood. A backyard bonfire with friends followed by a feast with warming seasonal food and mulled wine or spiced cider is a great way of doing this. Consider holding a burning ritual to release old energy, old beliefs and old possessions.

Spiced Cider Recipe

- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon whole allspice
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 pinch ground nutmeg
- 1 large orange, quartered with peel
- 1 litre dry apple cider

Pour the cider into a slow cooker or large saucepan. Put all the rest of the ingredients in a cheesecloth (thick paper towels would work just as well) and tie with string. (This means you don't have to strain the liquid when the spiced cider is ready to serve). Slow cook on low for about 4 hours, stirring occasionally. The aroma that fills your home while the mixture is brewing is amazing! When the cider is ready to serve, ladle into mugs (leaving seasonings behind), garnish with orange segments and drink round the bonfire.



Featured Sign - Taurus



From the 21st April to the 21st May, the Sun travels through fixed earth sign Taurus, Taurus is the second sign of the zodiac with keywords “I have” and “I hold”. The zodiac symbol for Taurus is the bull who luxuriates in the lush fields of plenty until aroused! Taureans love sensual and physical pleasure and are caring and affectionate. They are also patient, steadfast and reliable with excellent taste and enjoy financial security and prosperity. Taureans can be very stubborn and take things literally, so proceed slowly and steadily when dealing with one of these individuals. They usually resist change. Their anger can be awesome as it builds up steadily over a long period of time. When Taureans are out of balance they often suffer from sore throats, voice and thyroid problems or a stiff jaw. The Taurus colours are pink, light blue, russet and the warm earthy tones. Taurus also has a strong connection with the arts, particularly music. Many Taureans are excellent singers. With their fine taste and patient hard working qualities, Taureans produce things of beauty that outlive them. With their innate understanding of the physical body and material world, many Taureans work in the financial, food, fitness and health industries. Their greatest lesson is to accept and embrace change and adopt a balanced approach to material life and possessions.

Venus Retrograde



Just as we celebrate the fact that action planet Mars is now finally moving forward again, providing a welcome burst of energy and vitality after the stagnation of the past few months, it's now the turn of love goddess Venus to slow to a standstill and begin her six week retrograde phase. This phenomenon only occurs every 18 months but its effects can be extremely disruptive. Venus will travel backwards from the 16th May to the 28th June moving from 23° Gemini back to 7° Gemini and offering special insight to those born with personal planets in this section of the zodiac, as well as to Geminis born between the 28th May and the 14th June, and Sagittarians born between the 29th November and the 15th December.



The Goddess Venus

Venus is a dual goddess with a light and a dark face. She embodies the paradox of the sacred and the profane; the divine and the temporal; life and death and love and war. As ruler of Libra and the morning star, Venus represents the refined, ideal, heavenly and socially acceptable idea of love and what we consider to be aesthetically pleasing or culturally desirable. As ruler of Taurus and the evening star, Venus represents the sexual, sensual, physical and selfish or instinctual side of love and desire. Venus has been visible as the evening star since mid March – you may have noticed a bright star in the west after sunset.

Venus Retrograde Mythology

The Aztecs knew a great deal about Venus retrograde and attached great significance to her cycle. According to the Aztecs, when Venus was the evening star and stationery retrograde (9th-22nd May in this year's cycle), she came to earth in the form of a man. The man encountered Xochiquetzal, the beautiful goddess of passionate sexual love who seduced him, making him break his vows of purity, and from their union, a sky monster was born. In his shame at allowing his baser instincts to take control, Venus descended to the underworld and was challenged to play a ritual ball game, peylota, also known as "the game of life." He lost the game and was sacrificed by the sun. As Venus died he became invisible, resting in the arms of the sun for eight days and was eventually reborn as the morning star, in female form.

Handling Venus Retrograde

Symbolically, the Venus retrograde period makes us re-evaluate our deepest values. As Venus moves towards conjunction with the sun (16th May - 6th June in this cycle), we are challenged to let go of old ideas of purity and 'right behaviour'. Seduced by our desires, we often feel ashamed and try to hide our actions and thoughts, creating 'sky monsters' in our minds. Going within (to the underworld or unconscious) a battle takes place between our values (Venus) and our essential self (the sun). When our essential self defeats our outmoded values, we are forced to surrender and release them. We can then be reborn with new values and a more honest heart.

Venus retrograde can be extremely challenging, particularly for those in unhappy relationships or who are living a life of duty, rather than pleasure. Imagine a bright torch shining into the deepest recesses of your heart – you can no longer hide your true desires or keep up appearances. When analysing a Venus retrograde transit, look back eight years to see when Venus was retrograde in the same area of your chart (7° -23° Gemini). This area will be vulnerable again.

Here are some possible manifestations.

- An instinctive understanding of events and interactions.
- War on the senses, on attitudes to love and on old, dead values.
- Conscious or unconscious retreat.
- Infidelity, jealousy and hatred - the dark side of passionate and romantic love.
- A cold, hard look at relationships of all kinds, often leading to break ups but also to reconciliation and to new, more honest expressions of love.
- Understanding what is needed to maintain personal integrity.
- A time of failure, resignation or accident.
- Feeling as though the world has been turned upside down.
- Awareness of hidden needs or desires can create emotional turmoil.



The best way to prepare for the Venus retrograde cycle is to be honest about any shortcomings in your relationships, or any area of life where you are living a lie. Take action to sort out the problem rather than waiting for it to surface and take you by surprise. As Venus rules aesthetics, beauty, fashion and interior design, May and June are perfect months for a physical makeover or home decorating spree. And as Venus is also the planet of money, you may find your finances take a downward turn as the dark goddess heads into the underworld!

May New Moon & Solar Eclipse



During a solar eclipse, the life giving sun that lights our world joins briefly with the dark and mysterious moon as the moon blocks out the light of the sun. In this moment of darkness, yin and yang energies combine afresh, beginning another cycle in the spiral of personal development.

Over the past 18 months we have witnessed a series of eclipses in Gemini and Sagittarius as the moon's nodal axis traverses these areas of the zodiac. On the 21st May at the new moon we have one final solar eclipse in Gemini with the sun and moon making a square aspect to Neptune. The Gemini-Sagittarius polarity asks us to create a vision for a better future and then work out how to make this happen. Both signs have a mental focus – Sagittarius is a right brain sign with the themes of wisdom, vision and intuition, while Gemini is more left brain and excels in the world of detailed analysis and communication and sharing of ideas. The square to Neptune symbolises the clash between reaching for an ideal and identifying what is actually possible.

Solar eclipses signify beginnings and usually manifest as events in the outer world. Although the energies will be most prominent for a week on either side of the eclipse, the influence on events will continue over the next few months, until the next solar eclipse in November.

When an eclipse falls on your birthday, you can count on an eventful and often surprising year ahead. However, you do not have to be a Gemini to feel its effects. If you have any planets or chart point close to 0° Gemini, your experience of the eclipse will be intensified.



May Moon Calendar

Launch projects at the New Moon, bring them to completion in the period from just before the Full Moon to the Third Quarter phase and wind them down and reflect on developments in the week before the next New Moon. The period between the New Moon and the Full Moon is the waxing moon (moon getting bigger and fuller). The period between the Full Moon and the New Moon is the waning moon (moon getting smaller and thinner).

You can use this moon table to select the most favourable days to slow or increase hair regrowth. Full instructions can be found in my Lunar Hair Care guidelines at www.stellastarwoman.com/files/LunarHairCare.pdf but to get you started I've marked the best dates for waxing/shaving to slow regrowth in yellow and the best dates to cut hair for thicker, lusher growth in green. If you're serious about Lunar Hair Care - order your own Moon Calendar from the Stella Starwoman Store then you'll know exactly what time of day the moon changes from one zodiac sign to the next meaning you can fine-tune your activities with confidence.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Moon Phase</u>
1 st	Leo	Fire	Full Moon 6 th
1 st -3 rd	Virgo	Earth	
3 rd -5 th	Libra	Air	
5 th -7 th	Scorpio	Water	
7 th -9 th	Sagittarius	Fire	
9 th -11 th	Capricorn	Earth	Third Quarter
11 th -13 th	Aquarius	Air	
13 th -16 th	Pisces	Water	
16 th -18 th	Aries	Fire	
18 th -21 st	Taurus	Earth	
21 st -23 rd	Gemini	Air	New Moon 21 st Solar Eclipse
23 rd -26 th	Cancer	Water	
26 th -28 th	Leo	Fire	First Quarter
28 th -30 th	Virgo	Earth	
30 th -31 st	Libra	Air	

Thanks for being part of AstroUpdate. If there's something you'd like to see featured, or have something you think would interest others, please contact me at stellaw@ozemail.com.au

PS – Don't forget to check out your May Monthly Stars at www.stellastarwoman.com to see what's coming up for you this month.

Happy Stargazing

Stella Woods

www.stellastarwoman.com

