Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers some readers' questions

Knocking down ridges

Question: I was using some Wenge blanks, turned down, sanded, and coated with CA as a finish. You can see the ridges in the glue, which I guess is somewhat expected. What do you recommend to knock the ridges down? Dry sanding with regular sandpaper, or wet or dry sanding with Micromesh, or wet sanding with Zona??

My method for CA application is light coats of thin CA wiped on axially end to end incrementally, indexing the headstock by hand at end of each wipe

Answer: I'm not sure how you applied your CA finish but I'm pretty sure I know if you have radial ridges in your finished blanks. I'm guessing you used medium or thick CA to try to hurry things along and applied it with the lathe running. Very conducive to creating ridges. The big problem now is that you need to sand the ridges away and flush with the lower coating without cutting through the existing good part of the finish. I don't have a magic solution for you to fix things. Any sanding you do, regardless of the abrasive media you choose, will likely damage the undercoatings to some degree. I'd like to suggest you try a different method of applying your CA finish. You can sand away your current finish completely or just try this method on your next endeavour. Use only thin CA and apply many, many thin coats to build your desired finish thickness. Do not apply the CA with the lathe running and in a radial manner. I suggest you keep the lathe turned off and apply your CA in an axial wiping motion while incrementally indexing the headstock manually at the end of each wipe. By applying very thin coats you'll have no incentive for wicking of CA into your bushing and mandrel. The builds will go very quickly. Fold your application paper towel into quarters, applying a few drops of CA to the corner, and do your axial wiping process through the finish of one complete revolution. At that point, pick a clean corner of your application towel to apply your next bit of CA and repeat. When all four corners have been used, discard that bit of toweling and get a new piece to repeat the process. You can put on 20-plus coats in under five minutes, because the CA will dry almost immediately. Keep going until you are happy with the build depth and look. In this method, there are no ridges created, no sanding other than the initial prep for finish, no mixing of chemicals, and no voodoo. Just simple application of thin coats of any brand of thin CA you wish to use. The only improvement might be some judicial Micro-Mesh use, starting halfway through the pack and finer. I know this method is heresy for those professing that you must use their specified brand of CA, their brand of the paper towel, and mixing your CA with a certain number of drops of boiled linseed oil. Trust me. I've used this technique for 20 years and have found no better way. For more indepth information on applying CA finishes to pens and larger turnings, visit *Woodturning* 298, November 2016, for a five-page spread called 10 Tips for a Better CA Finish.

CA finishes aren't just for smaller spindle type turnings. Proper technique will allow you to apply a CA finish to larger turnings too

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

Choosing a chuck

Question: When I bought my lathe, it came with a faceplate that I have been using all along. As my skills are growing, I want to get rid of mounting everything with a faceplate and screws. My next purchase is a chuck and I'd like some advice. Which brand, which size, what accessories, etc? Recommendations please?

Answer: While the faceplate is a great workholding device, it does present some limitations so expanding your workholding capabilities is a natural growth in turning. Without knowing you, your budget, your exact location, and most importantly what you wish to turn, I can't recommend anything to answer your questions specifically but I can give you some guidelines and considerations.

On brand... Buy a quality chuck, avoiding the bargain-basement versions since a quality chuck should last you for your turning lifetime and be serviceable for the next owner. The size will be dependent on your lathe size, but mostly on what you intend to turn. Accept that a single chuck size usually won't service 14in bowls and very small, delicate ornament finials well, so over time you may want more than one size in addition to different jaw sets. Most manufacturers offer two or three different families of chucks to address size needs and limitations. Decide on the size of turnings for your interest and buy the model of chuck that best suits that size. Nearly all manufacturers offer a wide array of jaws for their chucks so you'll be able to start with one set and add as needed to better hold other things you'll undoubtably branch into. If you have turning mates in your club, try out the various makes and sizes of chucks either on their lathes or borrow the chuck if it will fit yours. There is no better way to decide if you like a chuck than to use it and more than once if possible.

The shape of the jaws, the type and functioning of the key, the direction of key rotation, and the jaws available are all things you'll either like or not once you've spent some time using them. Do not feel the pressure to buy new. There is little to go wrong with a quality chuck. Other than messing up the scrolls or stripping the jaw mounting screw threads, there is little that the previous owner can have done that is more than cosmetically detrimental. Check all of those out by changing jaws and using the chuck to tighten and loosen your grip on work.

Bargain pricing can sometimes be had from fellow club members as they migrate to different brands, sizes, or thin their equipment holdings. However, do strive for a chuck that has the proper threading for your lathe, trying to avoid adapters. Thread adapters are available but space the chuck away from the headstock usually increasing run-out error. You may wish to review some or all of the 13-part Workholding Aids and Chucking series that ran from *Woodturning* 238-250 for more materials on chucks, jaws, and a wide array of workholding methods that you might employ now or in the future.

Chucks are available from a variety of manufacturers for a variety of sizes of workholding. Various body sizes and jaws will let you accommodate almost anything

Looking for inspiration

Question: I try to create new designs when I turn but struggle with finding ideas. Everything seems to have been done. What can I do to find new ideas to expand my horizons?

Perusing the instant gallery at any of the woodturning symposia should provide plenty of inspiration and ideas for you to pursue

While it often seems that everything has already been done, I can assure you there is a huge reservoir of ideas available. If you are a member of a turning club, you can see a variety of ideas on display there during the 'show and tell'. *Woodturning* magazine, the *AAW Journal*, and other print and digital publications can give you a worldwide perspective. Attending woodturning or woodworking symposia and viewing their instant galleries should fuel your new horizons for quite a while. The web should give you a host of avenues to pursue. Don't feel that everything to be created is in the past. There are still wonderful bowls, just one example, being created every day even after the millions of bowls have been turned. If you feel you are stuck in a creation rut, explore afterturning decoration on any sort of turnings you create. Painting, piercing, pyrography, and other artistic additions can give you a lifetime of variations to create. Much like painting, music, or any other creative medium, they haven't run out of truly unique results building with the same basic elements.

Adding some afterturning decoration whether a bit of colour from painting or pyrography and dyes can expand your creations

Send your questions to Kurt's email: kurt@kurthertzog.com