

## Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck Product Review by Kurt Hertzog

The most recent addition to the woodturning chuck market comes from the Easy Wood Tools Company. Most widely known for their families of carbide cutter woodturning tools, they also produce faceplates and smocks for the woodturning community. The Easy Chuck is the first product from Easy Wood Tools in the woodturning chuck arena.

From first appearances, the Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck body looks very similar to the mid sized body chucks available from many other manufacturers located throughout the world. The EWT chuck is packaged nicely in a sturdy high gloss black box adorned with the EWT logos and colors. It looks a bit different as soon as you remove the chuck from the box. The chuck has a different colored ring that runs around the back. In addition to the chuck, the box contains the instruction manual, T-handle chuck wrench, a handled ball end key wrench, and a bag with a spindle washer, replacement springs and grub screws.



Figure 1 - The Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck package contents.



Figure 2 - Included are the T handle chuck wrench, jaw key, and spindle washer along with replacement parts.



Figure 3 – Here are five of the currently available six different jaw sets spanning clamping capability from 1/2" to over 4".

There are accessory jaw sets of different sizes, lettered from A to E, in addition to the stock set provided with the chuck. Called Easy Dovetail and Easy Reach along with the Easy Stepped Dovetail Jaws, they are similar in dimension to the standard and the deep jaws we've become accustomed to from the other chuck manufacturers. The dovetail jaws equipped on the chuck as delivered will clamp down on a range from about 1 ¼" to 2 ½" providing plenty of clamp range. For those with special needs or different ranges, the optional A to E jaw sets are available to span clamping from 4 ½" down to less than 1/2".

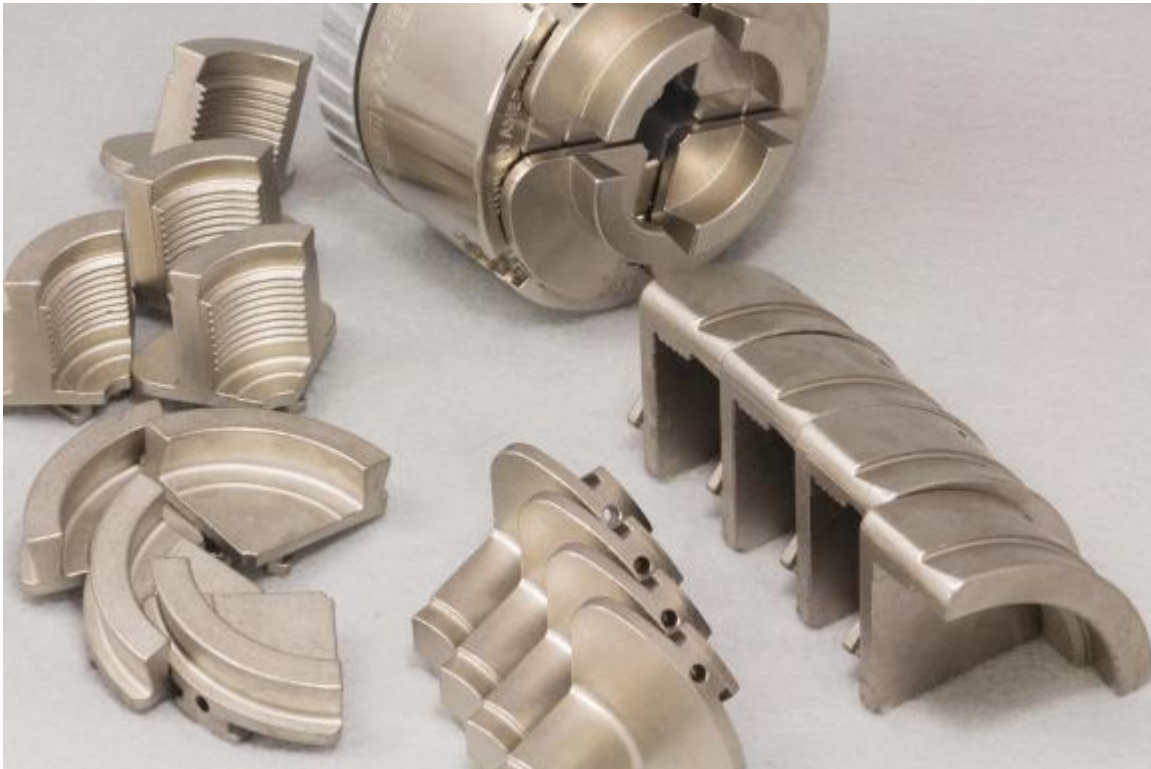


Figure 4 - The currently available jaw sets shown, except for the "E" Easy Stepped Dovetail Jaw set. These provide the standard depth and deep, called Easy Reach, ranging from clamp down grips ranging from less than 1/2" to greater than 4 1/2".

The Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck has a couple of very unique features. There are several patents pending on some of these features. One of the biggest differences between the EWT Easy Chuck and the traditional woodturning chucks with interchangeable jaws is the method of attachment. Gone are the holes in the jaws to lock the jaws properly in place to the chuck mechanism with screws.



Figure 5 - No screw holes in the face of the jaws to fasten the jaws to the chuck. Only a small access hole on the back of each of the jaws.



Figure 6 - The provided access hole allows the jaw key to be inserted. The jaw key, a handled ball end 1/8" hex driver doubles duty as the grub screw adjustment tool

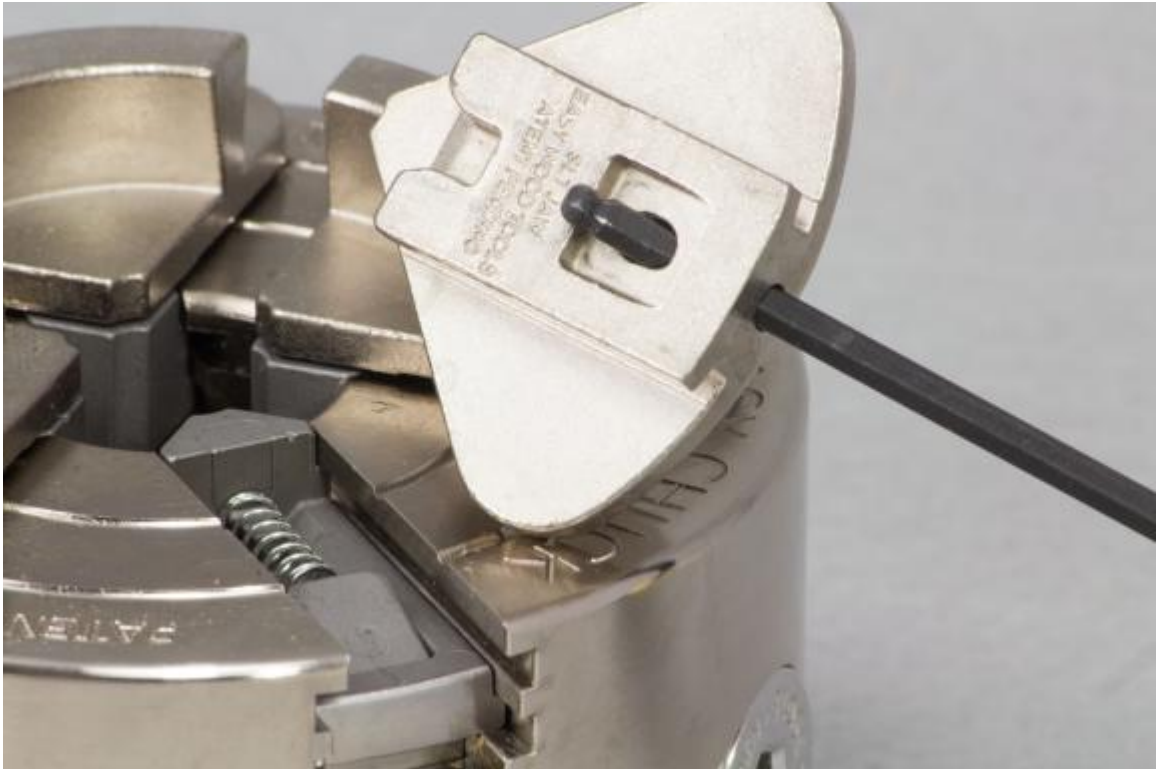


Figure 7 - As the jaw key is pushed into the hole, it protrudes into the jaw locking pocket.



Figure 8 - It presses the locking dog down against the spring load allowing the jaw to be released by sliding it slightly outward.



Figure 9 - With the jaw released from the locking dog, the jaw release tool can be removed and the jaw easily slide out of the chuck body.



Figure 10 - With the jaw removed, you can see the locking dog returned to the locking position under spring load.



Figure 11 - To install a jaw, it is simply slid into the channel and pushed forward.



Figure 12 - The locking dog cams out of the way against the spring until the jaw is inserted far enough and the locking dog snaps into place. The jaw is locked in place and ready for use.

This totally different method of securing the jaws to the body mechanism speeds up the time for jaw change by orders of magnitudes. In the past, the proper T handle needed to be located, the counter sunk screws loosened and removed, the desired jaw properly located, and the screws replaced. Not a daunting task but time consuming and more than a few times the screws were dropped into the morass of debris on the floor. What took minutes to do now takes seconds with nothing to lose and not even a twist of the wrist required. And no jaw numbering is required on any of the EWT jaws!

My testing of many different jaw changes, while not in a hurry to beat the clock, allowed me to change jaw sets with the chuck mounted on the lathe usually in less than 15 seconds. Perhaps with some practice, I could do even better. The key to quick and safe change is to listen for the “snap” when the mechanism locks in place. It is easily heard and I got into the practice of giving a little tug back to check although it was always properly secured in place.



**Figure 13 - The Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck comes equipped with a 1"-8 threading. It also has two grub screws to tighten for safety. Two replacement grub screws are included with the chuck along with a spindle washer.**





Figure 14 - While other adapters may be coming, currently the only available adapter from EWT is 1 1/4" - 8 to 1" - 8.



Figure 15 - The adapter is provided with spindle washers for both ends along with its own grub screws for fastening to the 1 1/4" thread.



Figure 16 - The adapter has both machined flats and a breaker bar pocket should things become too tight and need some “coaxing” to be loosened. Shouldn’t be required too often if you use the spindle washers and avoid horrific catches that tend to tighten things up.



Figure 17 - The ball end hex key used as a jaw release tool does double duty to tighten the grub screws.

If the quick jaw change was all the Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck had that was new, it would be pretty unique but there is more. That gray ring on the back of the chuck adds another unique feature to the EWT Easy Chuck. It is a quick adjusting feature.

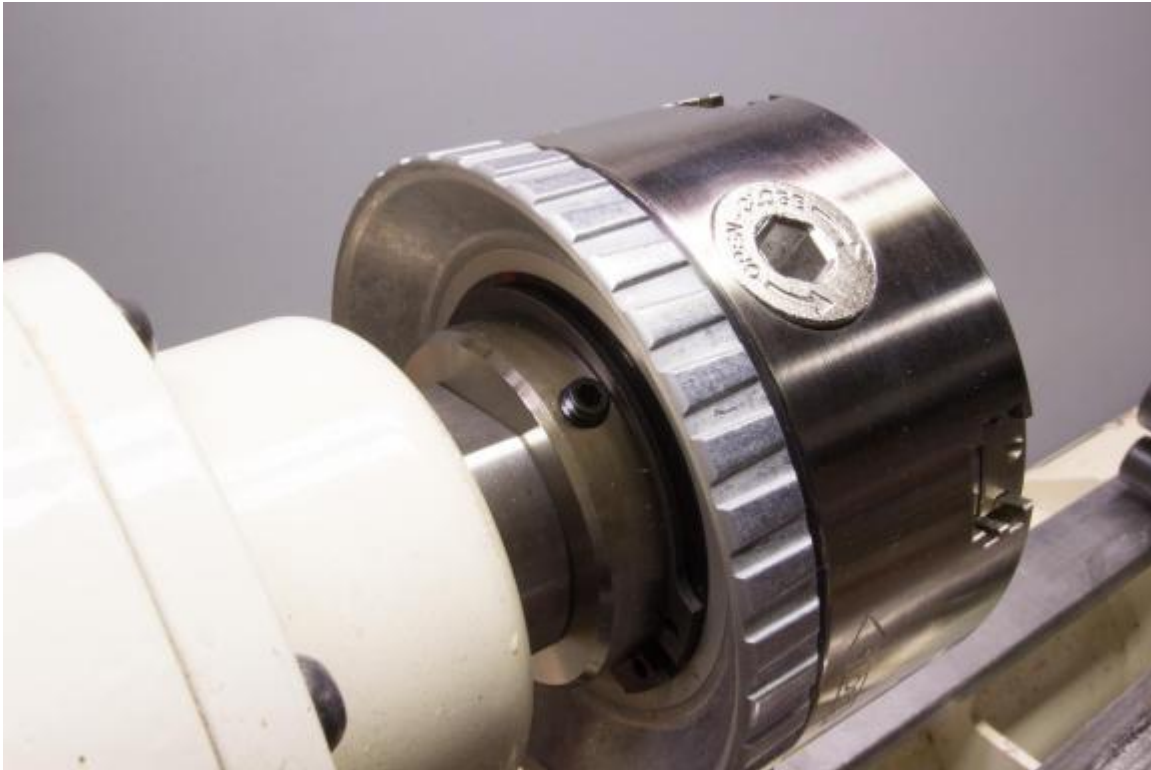


Figure 18 - That grey ring on the back of the chuck is really the quick adjust.

The quick adjust allows you to rapidly close or open the jaws as needed. I found that locking the spindle gave me the freedom to place the work and hold with one hand while the other hand could quickly snug the jaws up using the quick adjust ring. The quick adjust ring wasn't intended to provide sufficient clamp load on the jaws for turning so the T handle chuck wrench should always be used. It is far speedier and more convenient to get the jaws closed around the work and then tightened than to monkey around with moving the jaws any distance with the wrench alone.

The back side of the quick adjust ring is angled so that there is always plenty of room for the hex key to access and tighten the grub screws regardless of how close your chuck pulls up to the headstock.

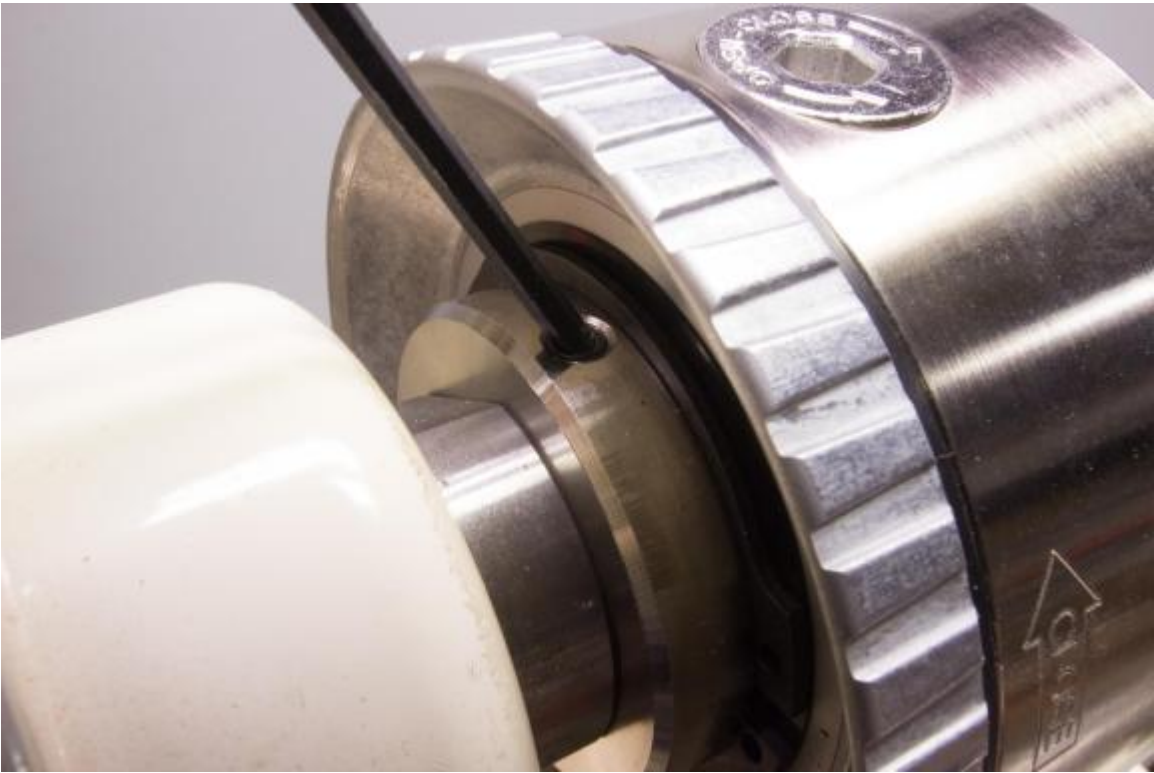


Figure 19 - The relief angle provided on the quick adjustment ring allows for easy access to the grub screws regardless of how close the chuck pulls up to the headstock.



Figure 20 - The quick adjust ring makes large transitions in size a snap. Simply grab the ring and twist the appropriate direction to open or close the jaws quickly. Locking the headstock allows for easy one hand use. Jaws full open to jaws full closed is slightly less than two and a half rotations of the quick adjust ring.



Figure 21 - No screws to worry about when changing jaws. One simple tool slid into the hole and the jaws are easily removed. Fifteen seconds total to do a complete jaws change if you are dogging it.

The Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck has a host of very nice features. The quick change jaws and the quick adjust are two very clever features. They make changing jaws not only quick and painless but also almost fun. The quick adjust feature makes the old balancing act of holding the work, turning the key, not allowing the work to slip, continuing to turn the key, then repositioning so you can tighten securely enough for turning ancient history. Now you can hold the work in place and spin the quick adjust to get there quickly and securely enough to hold the work while you tighten for turning with the chuck key. Far quicker, easier, and convenient.

With the jaw sets currently available, you should have no problem with accommodating the work you would expect to be held in the medium duty woodturning chuck. From the small of about .475" to a large of about 4 5/8" (my measurement, not their specs), you can clamp work with one of the jaw sets available. The EWT Dovetail jaws are indeed dovetailed and you can cut your mounting area appropriately. The Easy Reach is straight walled with the serrations so you can use those with the correct mounting area preparation.

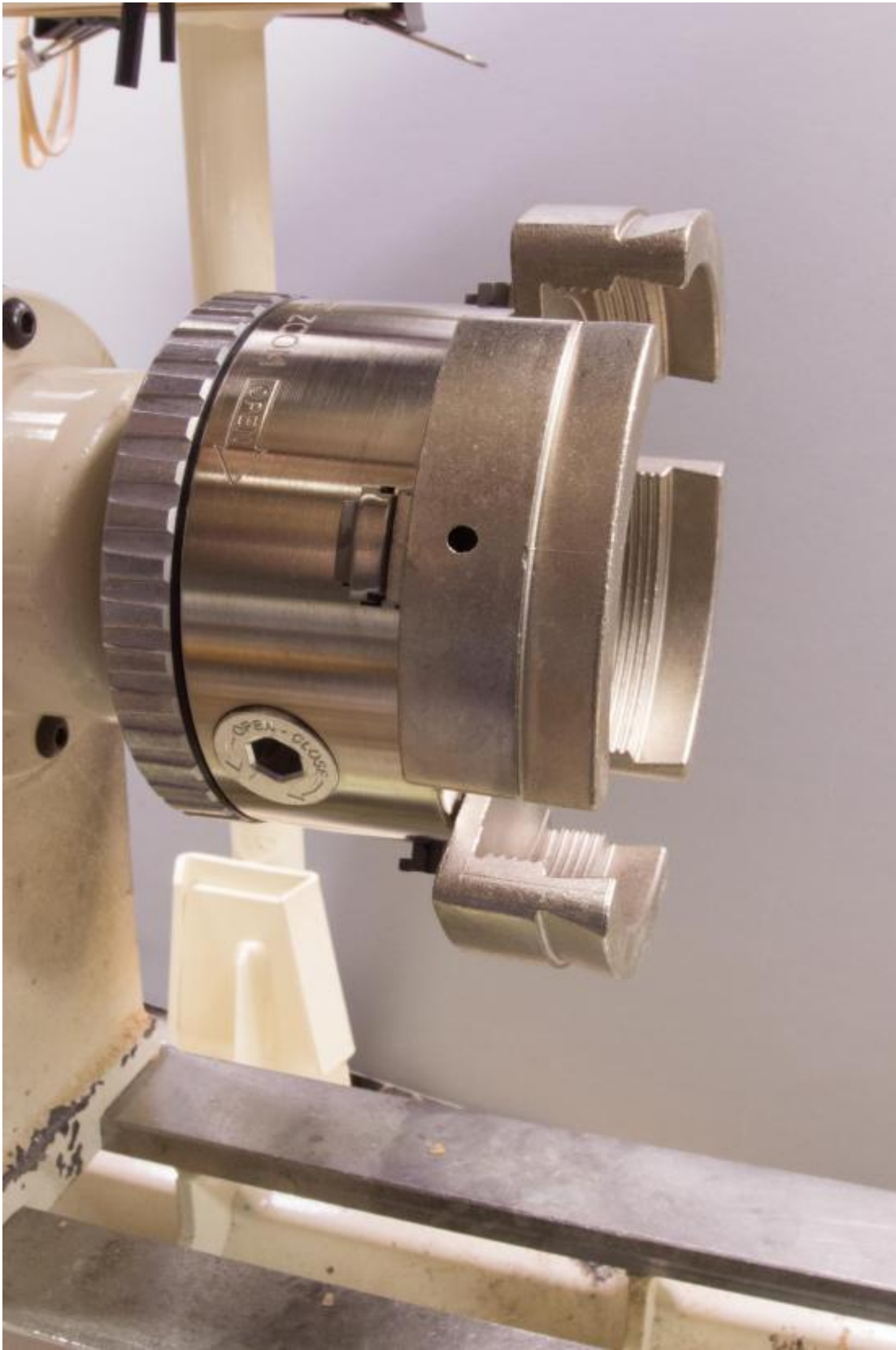


Figure 22 - With the "D" Easy Reach Dovetail Jaws you have dovetails in expansion and contraction along with straight wall serrations for gripping. I measured a usable 4 5/8" inside opening.



Figure 23 - The other extreme in jaws is the "B" Easy Reach Dovetail Jaws. Both internal and external dovetails along with a 1 1/4" jaw length.



Figure 24 - I measured a clamp dimension of right around .475" allowing you to grip things down to the 1/2" size easily. The tall jaws work well for ID expansion holding as well.





Figure 25 - With my tired eyes and easily confused nature, it is very helpful to have things clearly and boldly marked. Little confusion here is there? Nice touches that I appreciate.



Figure 26 - Same here. Little doubt as to which direction to turn the ring is there?

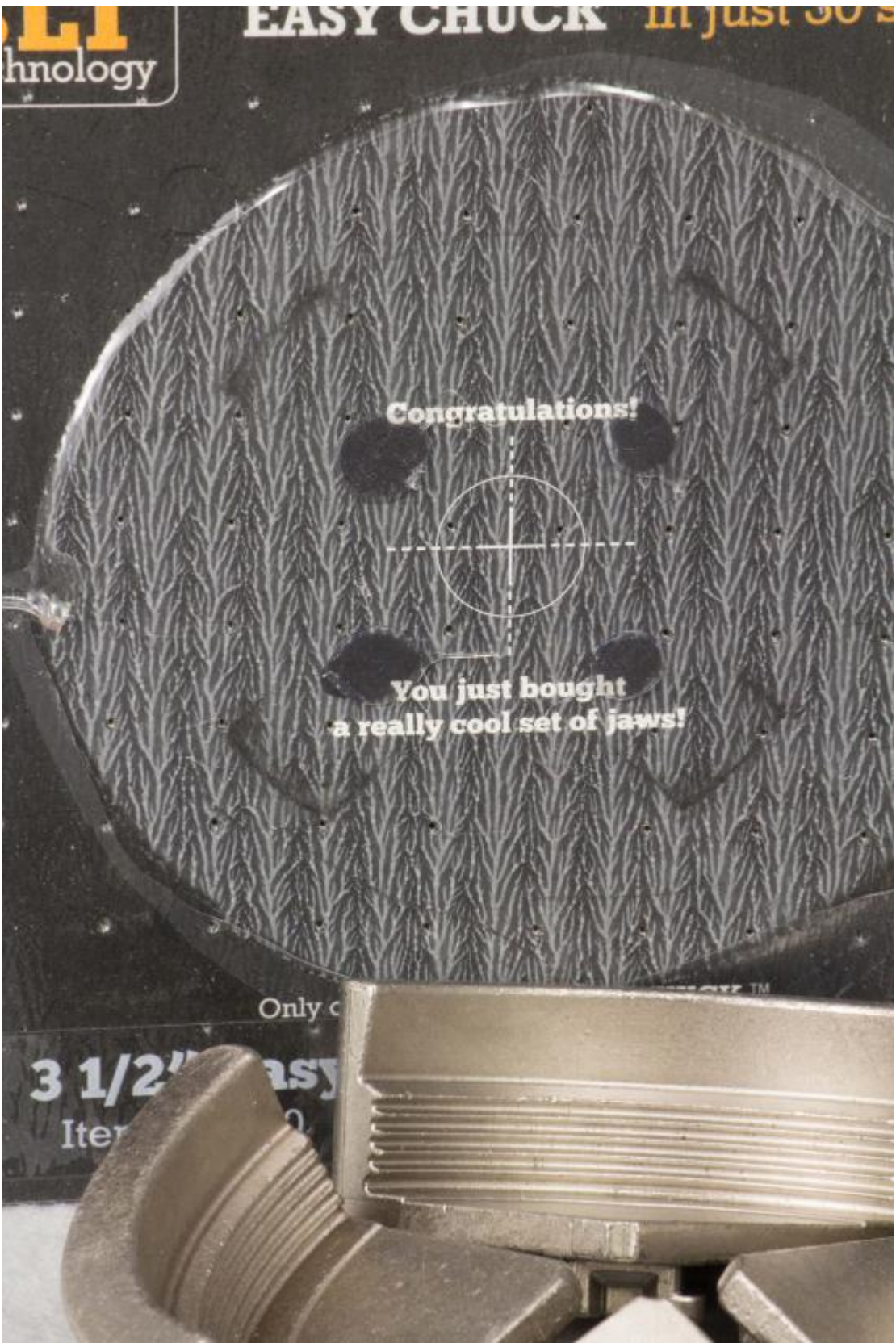


Figure 27 – A refreshing bit of light heartedness is revealed when you open the shrink-wrapped packaging for the jaw sets.



Figure 28 - A thoughtful touch... Threading the adapter for 3/8" - 16. The same thread as most of the bottle stopper threads.

## Conclusions

I currently have more woodturning chucks than I am willing to admit. I have them from just about every manufacturer ranging from the modest priced to the very high end. Each had a virtue that appealed to me at the time. The reason for many of the same type is for convenience. When you don't want to fuss about finding the jaws needed to change, you settle for having a chuck and leaving those jaws on the body. When you need many different sizes ranging from the small 1/2" clamping to the deep jaw 5" opening, you can get quite an investment in chucks and jaws. With a chuck that you can literally change the jaws in seconds and have access to the same array of clamping capabilities, why wouldn't you consider it? Have one, have all of the jaws, and quickly and painlessly change as needed. Now you need only one chuck rather than several of them.



Figure 29 - The Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck in action. It is a joy to use and has actually made changing jaws something to look forward to :-}

I found the Easy Wood Tools Easy Chuck to be of the highest quality. The fit, finish, and function were all above reproach. I found the jaw changing a joy and the quick adjust so convenient that I don't know how I'll be content going back to my existing stable of chucks. As with the other EWT products, the manufacturing processes and materials are top shelf. I find this, like the other EWT products, well thought out, well designed, and well executed. From the quality of the packaging and the printing to the bit of humor hidden under the jaws in the packaging, I find the EWT experience positive in every way. The simple things that might now be important to you, at least now, like threading the inside of the spindle size adapter to take the thread for a bottle stopper show me the amount of thought that has gone into the product. Without any hesitation, I give it two thumbs up in every aspect from functionality, quality, and user experience. Get one, use it, and I'm certain you'll be happy with it. The folks at Easy Wood Tools have a 100% satisfaction guarantee.

You can find out more about this and other Easy Wood Tools products at your local retailer or by visiting their website at: <http://easywoodtools.com/>