

Galley ... errr ... Gallery



Our Tools - Part I

The Mad Woodturner

Woodturners use tools. We're stuck with tools to form the wood we have spinning before us. We can't just jam our fingers in there and form those beads, coves and graceful lines we all crave so much. The blood from doing that would ruin the finish anyway. Yes, it seems that we are doing exactly that sometimes as we're so in tune with our tools but we need these tools to do our forming for us. This is going to be a set of articles discussing the handtools that we, as woodturners, use. Along the way I'll present the various types of tools, some of their uses, and then detail some specific tools that you might have not used or even heard about. I'll be presenting some of this with my own, decidedly personal, comments on tool usage as well. I can't even begin to cover all topics relating to woodturning tools here. Learn and explore these tools on your own. Experience is your best teacher as always.

New woodturners are often faced with a difficult decision, among many others, concerning what tool to use. Do I pick up a scraper? A chisel? What's that parting tool for? How do you best use it? When should I use a roughing gouge (if I even have one) instead of another tool? What advantage does a tool made from HSS (High Speed Steel) have over one made from some other type of metal? Why can't I get a good cut from a bowl gouge straight from the package I just bought?

The questions about our tools don't stop even when you're an experienced woodturner. New tools and new metals are constantly being developed for woodturning. The questions that those experienced woodturners ask are no more or less important but they are often different. How is this tool going to make it easier, faster, cleaner for my work? Is this metal going to last longer? Can I use it for multiple purposes? Can I add a handle or extension to it in order to reach further into the piece?

The key point to keep in mind throughout these articles is to stay safe and think about what you're doing yourself. Just because I say that I prefer to do something a certain way doesn't mean that it will be the right choice for you.

If you want the quick version of this article then just read the next line and you'll have enough information to make yourself fully versed in woodturning tools. You'll also instantly be a master woodturner too.

All you need is a skew!

For those of you that didn't want to take the fast-track to woodturning superstardom and are continuing to read, you are planning to take the long road. But at least it'll be interesting. Here we go...

Part II continues in the next issue