



West Bay Area Woodturners



Chris Pytlik Demonstration

Sunday, March 13th, 2011
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Los Altos Multi-Purpose

97 Hillview Ave.
Los Altos, CA

WBAW Members: \$30

Non-members: \$40



Hollowing and Bleaching:

Chris spent the morning creating a hollow form and a natural edge bowl, and the afternoon explaining and demonstrating his coloring techniques. It's important to select wood that is fairly open-grained and porous, and also light-colored wood. Poplar, liquidambar, birch, alder are some that will work well.

Chris uses Hood Finishes two-part bleach to lighten the pieces prior to adding color, as otherwise, the colors will be modified by the wood color. For example, red dye added to a tan piece of wood turns a brownish color. He only bleaches the outside of the piece, as the inside of a hollow form doesn't show.

Coloring:

He uses TransTint dyes from Woodcraft, but he said that aniline dyes are also good, as is Sherwin Williams dye stain concentrate (sure fast dye). It's important to get something that is colorfast. Chris explained the difference between dyes and pigments: pigments sit on top of the wood, while dyes penetrate, because they have smaller molecules.

The dyes need to be thinned with something, as they are concentrated. Chris used to thin the dye with denatured alcohol, but found the pieces would often crack, as the alcohol has a high water content. He has now switched to thinning the dyes with acetone.

Chris just estimates the right amount of dye to get the color he wants, then he checks it by dropping a bit on a white paper towel.

Chris applies the dye with pipettes from the inside – he squirts it around the inside of the piece and it bleeds through to the outside. The dye will bleed through much better on the end grain, as it's like sending the dye through open straws. To get the dye on the side grain, you can drip it down the outside of the piece using a small brush, as it won't come through from the inside. Chris puts several daubs of dye near the top opening of the piece, and lets it run down.

For natural edge bowls, he uses a brush to paint concentrated darker color on the bark, then squirts a lighter color on the inside and outside near the bark, so some of that color runs down into the piece.

Finishing:

The pieces need to overnight, or one hour with a fan on them. Chris then uses sanding sealer to seal the endgrain, then up to ten coats of lacquer finish, sanding with 320 after 5 coats. He uses nitrogenous lacquer, thinned with a reducer, but any good lacquer and its recommended thinner will do. He applies it with a gravity-fed Finex spray gun. Each coat needs to dry for a couple of hours, so he does about 3 coats per day. After the last coat, he lets it stand overnight, then wet sands with 600 grit sandpaper, then lets it cure for 5 days. The final step is to buff it with Menzerna compounds for plastic (coarse and fine) which he gets from www.stewmac.com.