

MAKING JEWELRY ON THE LATHE

A Demonstration by
Chas Thornhill

My love of woodturning started innocently enough in early June 2009 in Ketchikan, Alaska. I was standing in an art gallery shoulder-to-shoulder with dozens of passengers crowded around a display of native crafts.

I had probably seen hand-turned bowls at other times in my life. But in that gallery, I saw bowls and platters turned from native Alaskan woods displayed, not as kitchen utensils, but as art. The beautiful lines, rich colors and textures (and exorbitant prices) captivated me. And I uttered the words my wife has come to expect in this type of situation: "I bet I could make that."

When we returned from that cruise, I wasted no time. I dug an old Shopsmith out of mothballs (it was rusting away in a buddy's barn) and cleaned it up. I had never used it as a lathe before, so I had to find all those parts. I recognized that I had no idea what to do, so I looked online for a class and found one scheduled at the Woodcraft store in Addison. It was to be taught by a fellow named John Horn. You might know him. I took his class and discovered in those few Thursday evenings a new and somewhat addictive art form that suited my particular aptitude for creativity, design, and motor skills.

In the two years since (August 2011 will be my 2nd woodturning anniversary) I have covered a lot of ground. Soaking up woodturning and everything that goes into it is my main objective. I pester John constantly with photos of my latest attempts and questions about this or that technique, finish, or tool. To his credit, he's never stopped taking my phone calls.

One day, John showed me some earrings he made on the lathe. I was impressed by the elegance of the simple drop design and the exotic wood. I had to try that myself.

Over the months, I've turned many beads, pendants, medallions and little things I call talismans. I found that wood leftover from turning pens, bowls and other larger items did not necessarily have to go into the trash. They were likely

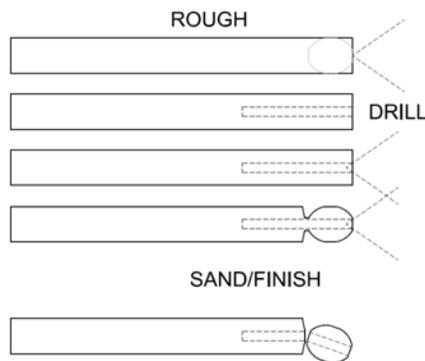
candidates for pendants, earrings, broaches, crosses and lots of other objects that both conserved the wood and improved my turning skills at the same time. I discovered that as long as I was comfortable working small and near the headstock or chuck, I could convert leftovers into great little gifts or (as I found out later) a little extra income.

I will demonstrate for you how I create beads, pendants and if we have time, I'll turn a small cross. Since I am still relatively new to woodturning and don't profess to know the "right way" to do everything, I don't consider this a class. It is simply a demonstration of how I make the pieces and a few tips and tricks for turning them into simple, functional necklaces and earrings.

The Projects

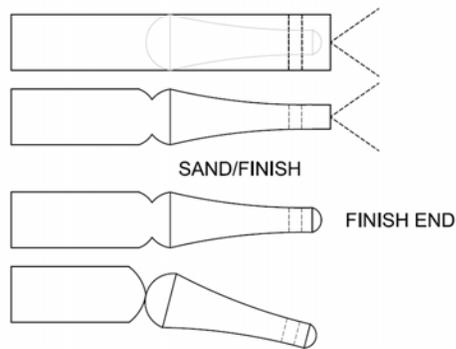
I. Simple Bead:

Special items needed – Jacobs Chuck for Tailstock



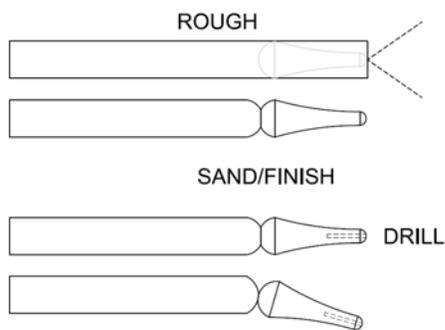
II. Drop Pendant:

Special items needed – None (Optional – Angle block for drilling hole)



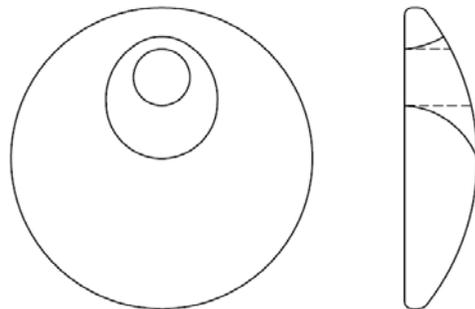
III. Earring:

Special items needed – Pin Vise with 1mm Drill Bit



IV. Medallion Pendant:

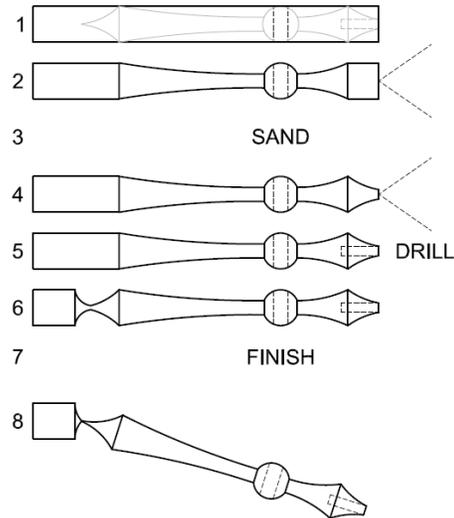
Special items needed – Turning Tape, Jacobs Chuck



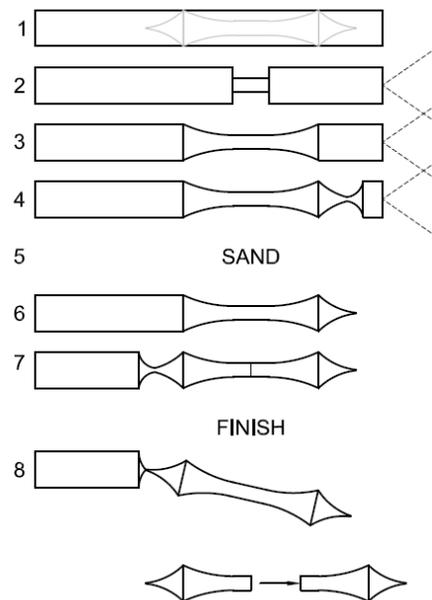
V. (If time permits) Cross:

Special Items Needed – Thin Parting Tool, Pin Vise with 1mm Drill Bit, Razor Saw (Optional – Angle block for drilling hole)

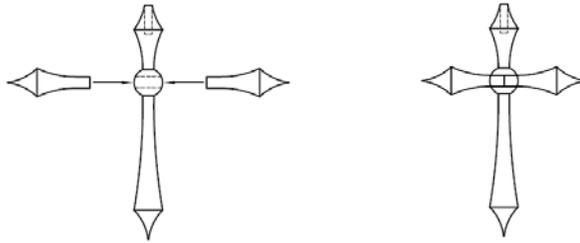
a. Body



b. Arms



c. Assembly



VI. Resources:

a. Turning Tape

- i. <http://www.woodcraft.com/family/2000390/2000390.aspx>
- ii. <http://www.rockler.com/product.cfm?page=25157>
- iii. http://www.woodturnerscatalog.com/store/Adhesives_Fastening_Double_Face_Tape_double_face_tape?Args

b. Razor Saw -

<http://www.hobbylinc.com/htm/tes/tes8946.htm>

c. Pin Vise with Drill Bits

<http://shop.hobbylobby.com/store/item.aspx?ItemId=174665>

VII. Live Demonstrations & Online Refresher Videos:

- a. <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/chas-thornhill-woodturning-and-fine-art> or go to www.ustream.tv and search for “Chas Thornhill”
- b. <http://www.youtube.com/user/chas6444>