

Penn State Industries pen blank drilling centre vice



This pen blank drilling centre vice from Penn State Industries is robustly made and is ideal for pen makers, says **Walter Hall**

I do almost all of my pen blank drilling on the lathe with the blank held in a chuck in the headstock and the drill bit in a tailstock chuck. Before I started using this method, I used a power drill in a stand with the blank held in a machine vice, so when this dedicated pen blank drilling vice arrived for review, my first reaction was to wonder whether this might be a solution to a problem that did not exist.

In use

Having used the pen blank vice I was pleased to find that it does resolve a couple of problems that

used to irritate me when drilling using a drill press or a drill in a stand, namely getting the blank square to the drill bit in both planes, and centring the drill on the blank each time.

The pen blank drilling vice resolves the first issue by having two 'V' grooves machined into the face of its jaws to hold the blank truly vertical, and the second by having a twin thread mechanism that moves both jaws simultaneously, so that once the drill chuck and vice are aligned on centre, they will remain on centre whatever size blank is inserted into the jaws.

Verdict

For those pen makers who have problems getting a true bore using other methods, or for anyone

just setting out who needs a holding device for pen blank drilling, this dedicated vice will be just the thing. It is robustly made and comes with a sacrificial insert to prevent damage to the base as the drill breaks through the end of the blank. The screw mechanism works smoothly and accurately and the machined grooves are true to vertical. Like all holding devices, it should be clamped to the table of the drill press or stand for safety.

SCORE

Versatility: N/A **Ease of use:** 95% **Build quality:** 95%

DETAILS

Price: \$49.95 (£30.31) (All products from USA to UK are subject to shipping and taxes)

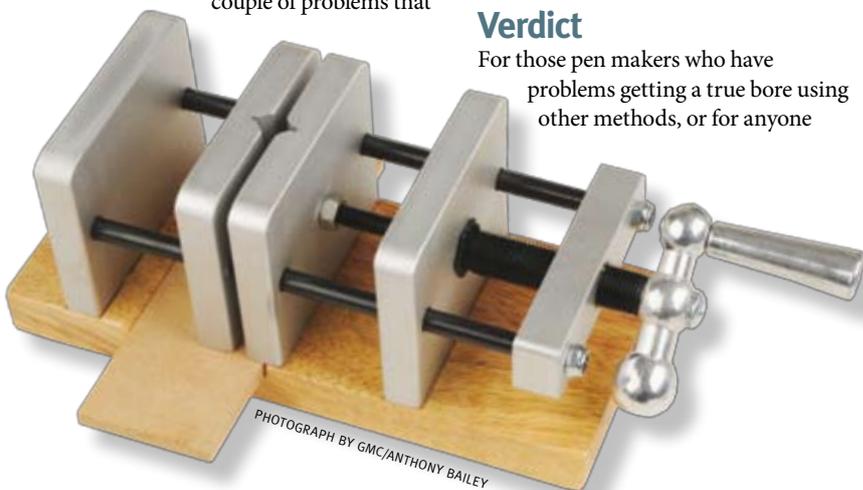
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SECOND OPINION – MARK BAKER

I thought this was a well constructed vice. Like Walter, I use the tailstock drilling method for pen blanks but this item intrigued me. Not only for drilling pens, but also larger square sections and rounds for candlesticks and similar items. The jaws move easily and there is very little play in them which makes for greater accuracy. The hold is very secure and vertical in the grooves, making light work of such projects.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

ABOVE: This vice allows you to drill through the exact centre of your pen blanks. The jaws on the drilling centre move in and out together to ensure precision centre drilling of your blanks