

# THE PenCrafter

WINTER 1999

ISSUE 2

## Find solutions to your pencrafting questions: right here

Welcome to the second issue of "The Pencrafter" newsletter. Your feedback allows us to focus on your special interests, so tell us what topics you'd like us to cover. We want you to share your personal pencrafting experiences with us.

In our next issue we'll be adding a column called "The Best Tip of the Issue." Teach us all how to lick

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a pesky problem and we'll show our gratitude by publishing your idea in the newsletter. If we publish your tip, you'll receive a \$25 gift certificate!

A new feature premiering in this issue is "What Wood is This?" Many of you would like to know more about the turning properties of the exotic woods used in pencrafting.

Be sure to check out our newest products in the Penn State Industries catalog featuring the very best in quality wood turning equipment, pencrafting kits and accessories. Enjoy!

Please send your feedback to:

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## The Pencrafter's featured project...

# Perfume Applicator Pen

This is a great project for both the beginner and advanced pen crafter. The perfume applicator pen, (PKPERF) can be made with a simple straight cut but also lends itself to more creative designs for truly unique perfume pen contours, like the project pictured to the right.

The grain and characteristics of the particular wood should determine your design. Be sure when mounting the wood blanks on the lathe mandrel that you keep the grain of both pieces aligned before you start to turn. Keep in mind that each end of both turned pieces should be tapered down to the bushing diameter for a smooth transition to the gold caps.

**TIP:** You can style your turning by shortening the length of the kit's lower applicator section. This can be done before turning by shortening your glued blank with a saw, or with Penn State Industries pen blank trimming set, (PKMITRE). When assembling your kit, be sure to shorten the internal wick to match the new length. This shorter version is more petite and expands your creative designs.

A customer making a quantity purchase may desire matching pieces.



Turn these profiles on the Duplicating Attachment (CML-DUP), using Perfume Pen Templates (#TPL04) so you can reproduce these popular designs easily.

While a specific barrel trimmer is not available for this kit, you can use our Universal Pen Blank Squaring Jig, (PKSQUARE). If you intend on retailing your completed perfume applicator pens be sure to supply an instruction card. Simply copy down the user information printed on your kit's instruction sheet. (You could add a printed label to the back of your business card.) Package your completed Perfume Pen, in a clear protective pouch, (PKPOUCHC2).

This kit is a great seller with a good profit margin, offering plenty of opportunity for free-style designs that express your creative flair.

See Page 4 for a Special Offer...  
**A Perfume Pen Kit Sale!**

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**  
*Turning our Ball Bearing Yo-yo Kits!*

## I N S I D E



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**Plus a 24kt Perfume Atomizer Sale!** PAGE 4

## Price to sell, but don't give away the store.

Pricing your turnings and pen crafts does not have to be complicated. Although formulas have been developed that incorporate your material costs and other business expenses, the best rule of thumb when starting out is to compare similar items selling in your particular geographic location.

Where do you do that? Attend local craft shows and fund-raisers or visit retail outlets to determine what the competition is doing. You may not find the exact item, but taking into account the differences in materials and the uniqueness of your turning, you'll be able to assign a value that is comparable. Beyond that, fine tuning your price point is accomplished when you actively sell to the public. Your prospect's reaction will be the ultimate feedback.

To help you further, here are what typical finished pens might sell for within the Philadelphia area\*:

Slimline Pen & Pencil Sets	\$25-\$35
Designer Pen & Pencil Sets	\$35-\$50
Traditional Pen & Pencil Sets	\$35-\$50
Classic Pen & Pencil Sets	\$35-\$50
Keychains & Keychain Pens	\$10-\$15
Perfume Pen	\$15-\$25
Letter Opener/Magnifier Sets	\$35-\$50

Note: Add \$5 to \$10 to the selling price if sold in a gift box. One last bit of advice - don't sell yourself cheap. You've made an investment in equipment and materials as well as expended time and effort in creating a hand-made keepsake. Find the market that appreciates your creative efforts and is willing to compensate you for them.

\*For retail pricing only. Volume wholesale prices to re-sellers are usually 50% less.

*Turning a beautiful pen is the first step. You also need to know...*

# How to market your pens

Those of you who are looking for a second income from your pen crafts are wondering how you should go about marketing your products. There are no easy answers, but research will provide you with a method of selling that is best suited to you and your products. Obvious outlets are: family, friends, co-workers, street fairs, fundraisers, wholesalers, retail stores and even the Internet, but craft shows are by far the most productive.

The best way to begin is by networking. Approach those who have already found markets and are willing to share the information with you. Since your own business will begin locally, join a nearby woodworking club or organization for tips on how and what to sell in

your area. (Find listings in phone books, woodworking & hobby stores or your Internet server like AOL, Compuserve etc.) These friendly associations encourage you to get involved and may

sponsor one or two shows themselves, so you can comfortably get the feel of selling yourself and your crafts.

After that, contact national associations and read publications that list and rate upcoming regional craft shows and fairs. These are also a good source of practical advice on how to extend the markets for your pen crafts. While attending some of the larger shows, speak with the exhibitors themselves - they have a wealth of experience and information to share.

Following is a list of resources that you can use to help you with your research and marketing efforts.

**American Association of Woodturners**  
667 Harriet Ave.  
Shoreview, MN 55126  
(612) 484-1724

**American Craft Association**  
21 S. Elkins Corner Road  
Highland, NY 12528  
(914) 355-2400

**Festival Network Online**  
(www.festivalnet.com)  
P.O. Box 18839  
Ashville, NC 28814  
(800) 200-3737

**The Crafts Report (Magazine)**  
700 Orange St.  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
(www.craftsreport.com)  
(302) 656-2209

**Palmhouse Publishing**  
Sunshine Artists (Magazine)  
2600 Temple Dr.  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
(407) 539-1399

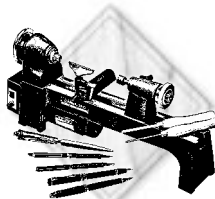
**Niche Magazine, Inc.**  
3000 Chestnut Ave. #304  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
(410) 889-3093

**Art Fair Sourcetools (Marketing Systems)**  
2003 N.E. 11th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97212-4027  
(800) 358-2045

**Woodshop News (Magazine)**  
35 Pratt St.  
Essex, CT 06426  
(860) 767-8227

**Mountain Lakes (Wholesale Service)**  
(www.miny.org)  
P.O. Box 387  
Lake Placid, NY 12946  
(800) 743-4544

**Wholesalecrafts.com (Wholesale Service)**  
(www.wholesalecrafts.com)  
7792 Olentangy River Rd. Ste G  
Columbus, OH 43235  
(888) 4CRAFT1





# Buff it 'til it shines with the polish from "Down Under"

Shellawax Cream is distributed exclusively by PSI Woodworking in the United States and has made its American debut in our catalog. This well established premium finishing product is manufactured in Australia and will put a phenomenal shine on your turnings.

Shellawax Cream is a superior friction polish that doubles as a buffing compound.

Many find it easier to apply than liquid or stick formulations. Because it doesn't run or drip like liquids, it is also very economical to use. The ingredients in the blend include

white shellac and a number of highly refined waxes including carnuba and bees waxes. The cream is absorbed into the pores of the wood and is ideal for turnings as well as other types of wood products.

Shellawax Cream is designed to be a total finish, but as with all polishes, the final product will only be as good as the sanded surface you produce before applying the polish.

(Porous wood may require a sealer or additional applications.) Because of the creamy formulation, the product in it's jar is labeled flammable and toxic. Once dry however, the finish is completely safe.

"I wholeheartedly recommend Shellawax Cream as **by far the best finish I have ever used** on all items from pens to lidded boxes and large bowls, etc."  
**Victor George Wood (Vic Wood)**  
 Award Winning Australian Master Woodworker

## What Wood Is This?



### **COCOBOLO** - *Dalbergia retusa*

Do you want to make a striking pen? Try "Cocobolo" wood blanks.

Cocobolo has a rich grain pattern with colors ranging from black to orange. It's a dense, oily wood, grown in dry upland regions of Central America from Mexico to Panama. Arid growing conditions and high oil content produce a very stable wood. Oil and wood dust from Cocobolo can cause allergic reactions in some people, which is why it is important to address dust collection and safety procedures. Reactions can be as mild as a minor skin irritation or severe enough to cause respiratory difficulties. Be sure to use a dust mask, and when you have finished turning cocobolo, be sure to wash all exposed areas of skin.

The tight grain and high oil content demand sharp cutting tools and

patience when sanding using successive grits of sandpaper. Using Penn State Industries turner's 'power wool'



"Yes Sir, we know a lot about tropical woods here."

(PKPOWOOL) will aid in achieving that glass finish which cocobolo is known

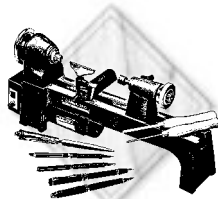
for. Cocobolo tends to bleed its sap over time and to avoid tarnishing your gold plated parts seal the Cocobolo wood with gloss sealer, (PKFRICT3).

In an effort to encourage pencrafters to try exotic woods, Penn State Industries offers a variety of blanks and carving stock. Cocobolo is available as super blanks (SB7-01), quick blanks (PK-X01), jumbo blanks (WX01-1), turning stock (WX01-2 & WX01-3), and bowl blanks (WX01-4),

Cocobolo presents itself as a high quality exotic wood and items turned from it are excellent sellers.

#### To Contact Penn State Industries

**Toll Free:** 1-800-377-7297  
**Fax:** 215-676-7603  
**Web:** www.pennstateind.com  
**Mail:** Penn State Industries  
 2850 Comly Road  
 Philadelphia, PA 19154



# Q&A

Do you have a question? Please write or email us at Penn State Industries.

**Question: How can I prevent the wood blank from cracking at the end when I drill through it?**

**Answer:** The turning properties of wood stock varies between species. Blank blow out and burning can be remedied by using a slower drill speed. Also, use short down strokes and long pauses during drilling to keep the drill bit and blank cool. Placing a scrap block of wood under the blank will absorb pressure when the drill bit clears the blank. An alternative solution is to cut the blank much longer than the brass tube - if cracking occurs, the damaged area can simply be trimmed off.

**Question: When I start turning my blanks the gouge causes them to stop spinning on the mandrel. What should I do?**

**Answer:** First sharpen your chisel and try again. If that doesn't work, very carefully tighten the lock nut on the end of the mandrel a bit more. Reduce the speed of your lathe and make your first shaving by moving the gouge from the center of the blank toward the edge. Make ever wider shavings until the blank is completely rounded. Increase the revolutions of the spindle and continue turning.

**Question: How can I get rid of the swirl marks on my pen blanks.**

**Answer:** Sanding barrels with the lathe turned on will result in minute scratches across the grain. Between grits, stop the lathe and sand with the grain to eliminate these. After using the finest grit, you can flip cloth backed sandpaper and burnish the spinning barrel.

**Question: I mix & match my pen supplies from various vendors. In some cases I can't get your bushings on my mandrel. What should I do?**

**Answer:** The PSI mandrel shaft measures .243" in diameter and the bushings have a .245" diameter hole. The diameter of mandrels and bushings from other suppliers may be different. Solutions? **1)** Take advantage of our half price mandrel upgrade policy if you use another company's mandrel. **2)** Decrease the diameter of your mandrel shaft by sanding to fit our bushing. **3)** Increase the diameter of the hole in our bushings to fit your mandrel shaft. **4)** Call our customer service department for more help - in many cases we can modify the ID of our bushings to adapt to other mandrels.

**Question: When I turn the wood blank down thin, the wood breaks away from the brass tube. Help!**

**Answer:** This occurs when the glue inside the wood blank has not properly adhered to the brass tube. Fully coat the brass tube before inserting it into the wooden pen blank. Make sure the glue has completely bonded, or use a thicker glue like epoxy, (PKGLUE2) or polyurethane glue, (TITEBOND).

**Question: I use the PSI duplicating attachment. If I'm turning straight-cut "Slimline" pens, do I need the center bushing?**

**Answer:** No you don't, and eliminating the center bushing is a great idea. Pens can be turned faster and the probability

of "tearout" occurring at the center edges of the blanks is reduced.

**Question: I haven't turned plastic, (acrylic) blanks yet. Is it any different from turning wood?**

**Answer:** Turning plastic is completely different. The cutting tools must be sharper, the speed of the lathe should be reduced and the finishing steps are

more precise. However, we believe the elegance of the completed product is well worth the extra effort. (We'll devote a column to acrylics in a future issue of "The Penrafter.")



"Down to our last tree? That's OK, I'll place Super Blanks on our next order!"

## The Woodworkers Showroom. See a pen crafting demo or even make your own pen!

- Carba-Tec & Jet mini lathes
- Pen crafting Project Kits
- Duplicating Attachments
- Exotic Hard-to-Find Woods
- Tools and Supplies
- Machines, router bits & more!

**THE Woodworker's Showroom & HOBBY CENTER**

Home of MLCS and Penn State Catalogs

In suburban Philadelphia. 2381 Philmont Ave, Huntingdon Valley, PA • (215) 938-5067

### SHOWROOM HOURS:

Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri.  
8:30 AM to 5:00 PM  
Thursday  
8:30 AM to 7:00 PM  
Saturday  
8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

From PA Turnpike: Exit 28- Take US1 south about 4 miles. Right on Red Lion Rd. Go about 3 miles to Philmont Ave. Make left, and go about 1/2 mile- Showroom is on left.

From I-95: Exit Woodhaven Rd. to the end-make right onto Byberry Rd. Go approx. 2 miles to Philmont Ave. Make left, go approx. 2 miles- Showroom is on left.

## NEWSLETTER SPECIAL!

24 KARAT GOLD

# Perfume Pen Kits

OFFER EXPIRES 7/1/99

Includes: 5/16" drill bit, bushings, and ten 24 kt gold perfume kits

STARTER SET  
Save \$13.50 • Value \$37.50

**\$23<sup>95</sup>**

ORDER ITEM #NLPERF-SS

**SAVE!** Purchase in quantities of 20 or more PERFUME PEN KITS  
SPECIAL PRICE • Reg. \$2.50 ea

**\$1<sup>80</sup>** EACH

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