

No-hollowing technique for hollow ball-and-finial

by Larry Hasiak

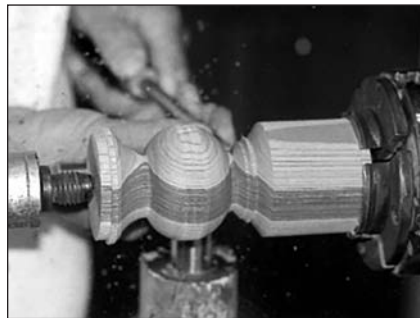
One distant Christmas past I made some one-piece solid-wood tree ornaments. They were so heavy they wouldn't stay on the slender tree branchlets. To make them lighter I found an easy way to hollow the balls. I turned the rough shape of a Christmas ball, cut it in half, scooped out the two halves, and glued them back together.

The blank

Start with a blank 2-1/2 to 3" (6-7cm) square by about 6" (15cm) long. You can use almost any kind of wood — I've been enjoying colored woods laid up in holiday themes.

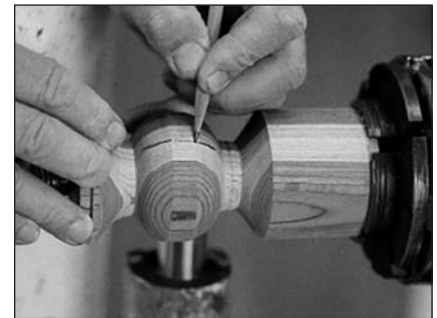
Mount the blank between centers, make a cylinder and cut a chucking tenon on one end. Now mount the blank in your scroll chuck, bringing up the tailstock for additional support.

Next, cut a tenon on the tailstock end, so that later you can remount that portion



1. Round the ball after making a second chucking tenon on the tailstock end.

of the parted blank for hollowing. The tailstock end will become the top of the ornament, so turn a rough ball shape (1) closer to the



2. Reference line across the high point will help reassemble the ball later.

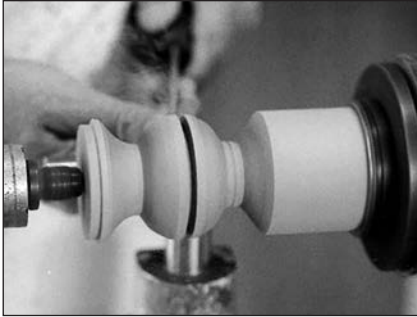
tailstock than to the chuck. Stop the lathe. Draw a line across the ball at the high point (2), to give you a reference for regluing later.



Part, hollow and glue — Colorwood ball was parted along the central burn line so the halves could be hollowed like two small bowls, then it was glued back together. Integral finial was turned last.



PROJECT: No-hollowing ball & finial



3. Part the ball using a narrow tool.

Part to hollow

Part the ball in two with a narrow parting tool (3). If the parting tool goes in at an angle, it will create two cones, which will fit together much easier than straight edges. Pull the tailstock out of the way and hollow the half of the ball still mounted on the lathe (4), leaving the walls about 1/8" (3mm) thick. You could use a round-nose steel or carbide scraper, or a small bowl gouge. Next mount the other half, which will become the top of the ball, and hollow it the same way.

Rejoin the halves

To glue the two halves together, put a bead of medium-thick instant (CA) glue on the edge of the ball in the headstock. Slowly turn the ball with one hand, so the glue does not drip off. Put the other half in place, lining up the marks drawn earlier. Hold the halves together while you bring up the tailstock and use it as a clamp.

Once the glue has set, you can remove the waste and rough



4. Hollow half of the ball, as if it was a wee bowl. Then mount and hollow the other half.

out the finial (5), using a skew, spindle gouge or a scraper. At the same time, true up the hollow ball, being careful not to turn through the walls.

Emphasize the defect

You will now see a very disturbing cut-and-glue line in the middle of the ball. Here is where you use the old rule: "Don't try to hide a defect — emphasize it." Use a very sharp pointed tool to cut a couple of very shallow grooves on either side of the cut, and the cut itself. Next, hold a thin stainless steel wire on each groove until friction burns the wood (6). You will now have three dark rings around the ball and the cut line has disappeared.

Shape the finial

The finial is completed next. It might have lots of beads and coves or it may be very simple, as mine are. Finally, remove the excess wood at the top of the ball.

Sand the ball very carefully, as it is now pretty fragile. At



5. Turn the finial after regluing the half-balls back together.

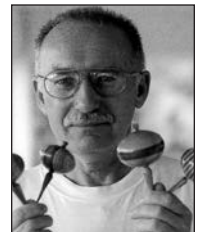


6. Disguise the join with lines burned by a stainless steel wire.

this point you may apply your favorite finish while the ornament is still on the lathe, or remove it for finishing.

The final step is to drill a very small hole and insert the smallest brass screw eye you can find.

Larry Hasiak lives in Tarpon Springs, FL and has served two terms on the AAW Board of Directors. An earlier version of this article appears in American Woodturner for Winter 2000.





Fancy ornaments with glued-on sides

by Steve Mellott

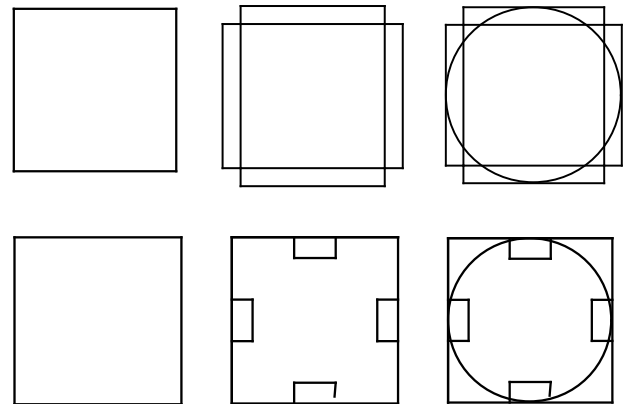
If you start with a square spindle, glue different-colored wood sides to it and then turn it round, the resulting object will show the different wood colors. The wood sides can be simple, as sketched at right, or they can be complex inlays.

Instead of gluing sides to the square spindle, you can recess shapes into it, bottom sketch. If you turn it round, this resulting object will also show the different wood colors.

A good size for the core spindle is 1-5/8" (4cm) square. If you have a jointer and planer, use them to square up the blank, and for safety sake be sure to make it at least 12" (30cm) long.

When you cut the blank into ornament bodies, give each an extra 2" (5cm) for the turning process. Mark the end centers as precisely as possible.

Make the laminated sides about 1/4" (6mm) thick, the same length as the ornament body, and nearly as wide. Use wood glue, not CA.



Mount the glued assembly between centers and turn round, without removing any unnecessary wood. Cut a tenon on the waste end of the blank, rechuck, bore 5/8" (2cm) for hollowing, and form the ball.

You can turn the top finial and bottom icicle from the same or contrasting wood. The blank should be 6" (15cm) long and 1" (2.5cm) square.

Steve Mellott lives in McDonough, GA, and is a frequent demonstrator at local clubs.

