

Silver Wire Inlay Basics

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Silver wire inlay is a method of dressing up a wood turned piece. It adds a bit of flair to hollow forms, boxes, bowls, and even bottle stoppers. It is enjoyable to do and will give your turnings a unique embellishment.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

- Small Chasing Hammer
- * Flush cut wire pliers
- Handmade Inlaying Tools
- Pin Vise
- Number Drills (twist)
- Patterns
- Sandpaper of various grits
- Sanding Sealer

MATERIALS (Wire Inlay):

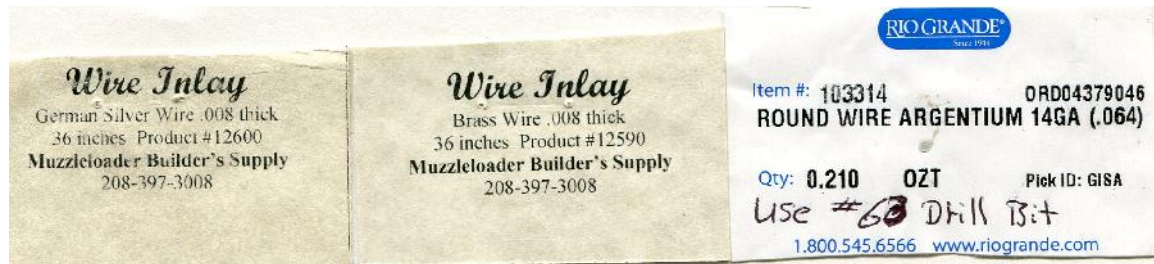
- * Nickel (German) Silver .008 thickness (darker woods)
- * Brass .008 can also be used (light woods)
- * Round wire Argentium (silver) 14ga

WOOD:

Inlay looks and works well on Maple, Ash, Walnut, Oak, and other similar woods. Hardwoods like the Rosewood family are difficult because of the oil content and the physical properties of the woods.

SUPPLIERS:

- * Rio Grande Jewelry Supply; Tools & Metal.....www.riogrande.com
- Muzzleloader Builders Supply; .008 Silver and Brass.....
www.muzzleloaderbuilderssupply.com



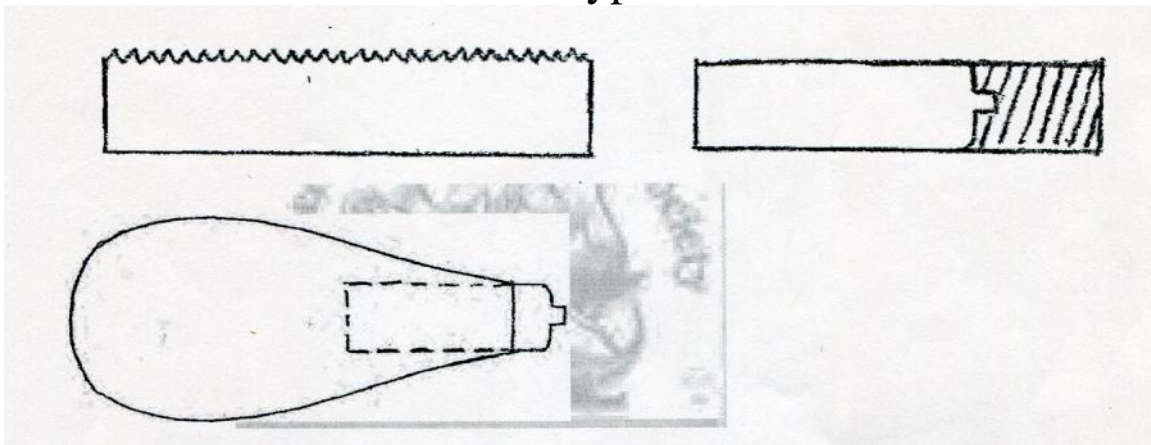
Chisels:

The chisels that are used for the inlaying are of two types. Type 1 are made from used hacksaw blades. Hacksaw blades are hardened and this gives a nice lasting edge that sharpens and hones well.

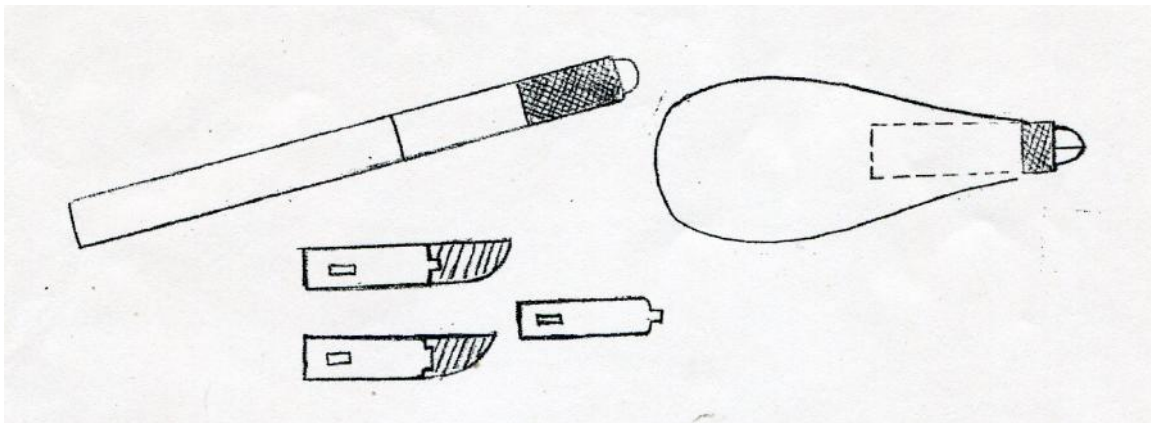
Type 2 which I favor is using the cut off end of an Exacto knife tool. I reshape the blades, cut the tool off and glue into a handmade handle. The handles I use were turned on the wood lathe and are patterned off of standard carving tool handles.

Which ever you prefer, grind the tip and sharpen like a knife edge. Make up a series of tools of different sizes. My most popular widths used are 2mm and 3mm. Once sharpened properly they only require frequent honing. Sharp tools are a MUST.

Hacksaw Type Chisel



Exacto Knife Chisel



Patterns:

Even though you may not be a drawing artist, clip art web sites found on your computer can give one some very nice patterns to work with. Most of the patterns I work with are scroll based patterns. Some I draw by hand, some I use clip art. If you are going to hand draw your scroll patterns, use a circle template and draw in your scroll as shown below. Feel free to use your imagination on designing your scrolls. Make sure they will be able to connect to form a repetitive pattern.



When transferring your patterns to your work, I use a wax free graphite transfer paper. You do not want to use any type of transfer paper that contains silicones or wax's. These papers will cause problems later when you apply finishes to your wood.

Silver Inlay:

From your silver spool, cut off an adequate amount of silver for your job. Hold that length with your fingers or a flat head pliers and draw the silver through some 170 grit abrasive paper. This will leave some fine ridges in the metal to help secure it in the wood.

When you cut into your wood, you are parting it, no wood is removed. Once your silver is chased into the wood, I brush it with a light coat of sanding sealer(shellac). This swells the wood and seals the silver in place.

When cutting across grain, sometimes it is necessary to score lines with a sharp knife so the wood does not crush. Then use your chisel as normal to finish the grooves.

Scrolls always look better with pins at the termination point. These pins are round silver wire. I use 14 gauge and pre drill the holes with a number 63 twist drill held in a pin vise.

Good Luck in your endeavors.