

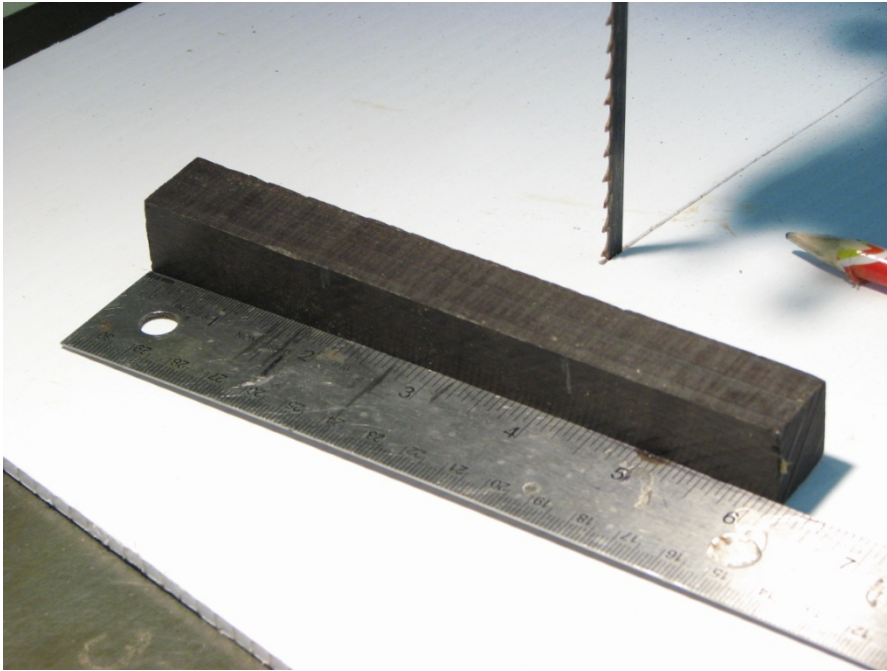
## Step-by-step three piece lid and finial (Robin Costelle)

Hi all. Just thought I would share my way of creating a three piece finial. This really adds interest to vessels and boxes by providing a visual highlight and enabling the artist to duplicate the vessel form in the topper. You must save a small piece (or two or 3) of the vessel wood -or just try another contrasting piece. Here's a little tutorial I threw together to maybe help out anyone that might just want to try their hand at one. I hope you get something out of it.

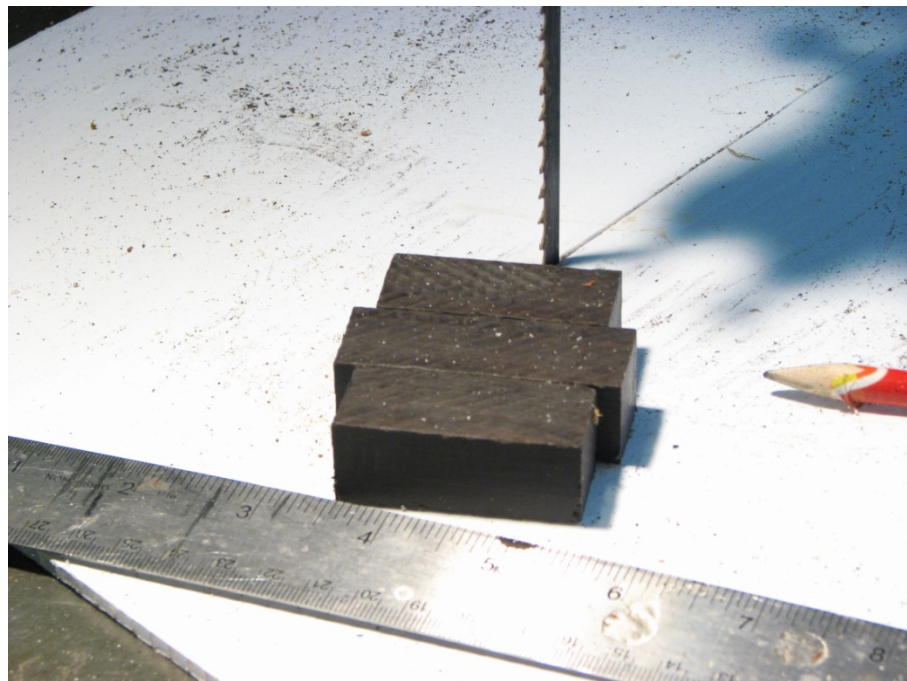
If you look closely at my woods you'll see that my accent piece is cracked and my base didn't come out exactly as planned, but hopefully you can at least see the overall game plan. Now this is just how I do things today. Tomorrow it may change, but I've been doing it like this for a few years now with little variance. Feel free, of course, to modify the techniques anyway you see fit. It will probably work better.

I don't actually show any turning. It just takes a bit of spindle practice to create the details and if you need more instruction, there are videos and probably youtube features that can help with that.





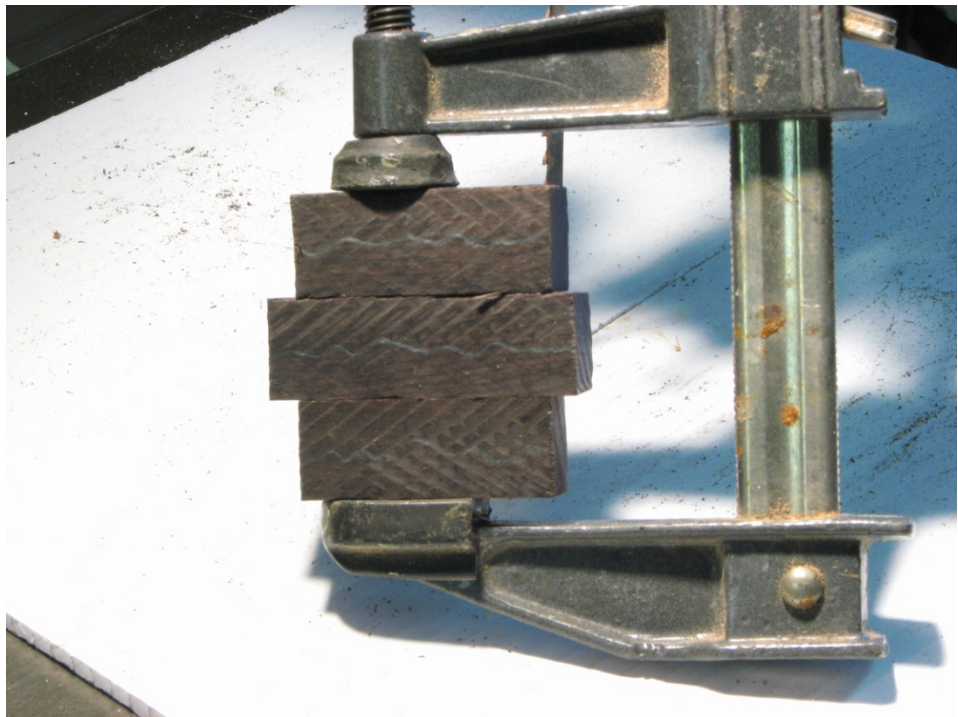
First off, take a standard pen blank –this is African Blackwood, but any wood might work. Any wood that is fine grain and cuts cleanly and holds good details. Typically, exotics and rosewoods are good, as well as holly –which can be dyed any color.



Step two is to cut the pen blank into 3 pieces to form the base. I will typically cut the center section just a bit longer thinking that I can get another millimeter of diameter if I need it.

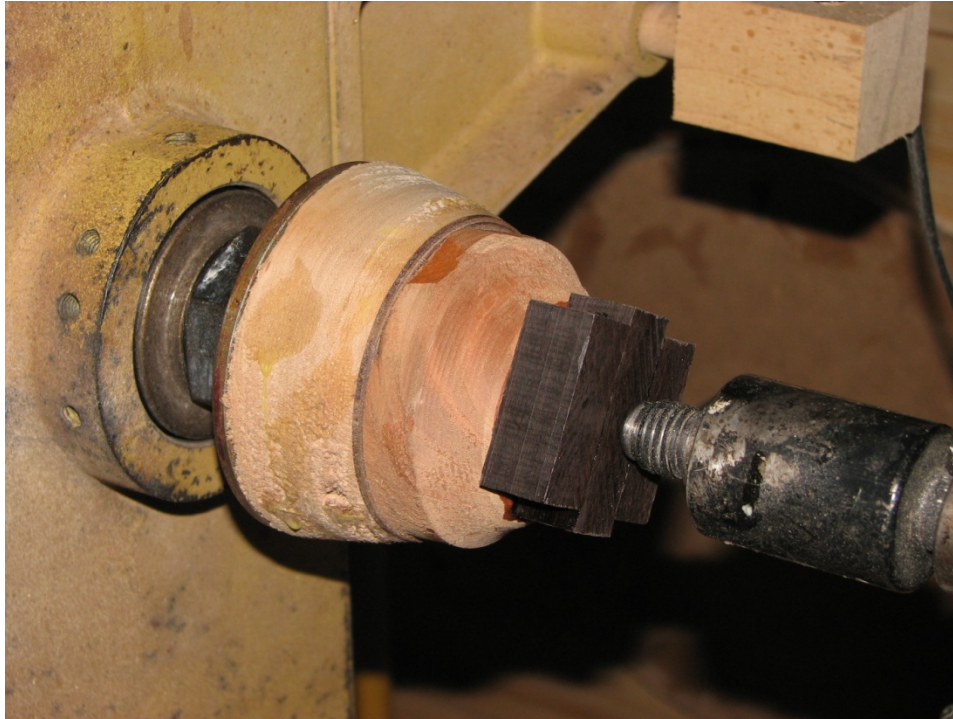


Sand the sides to be glued on a sander. (Watch the fingers!)

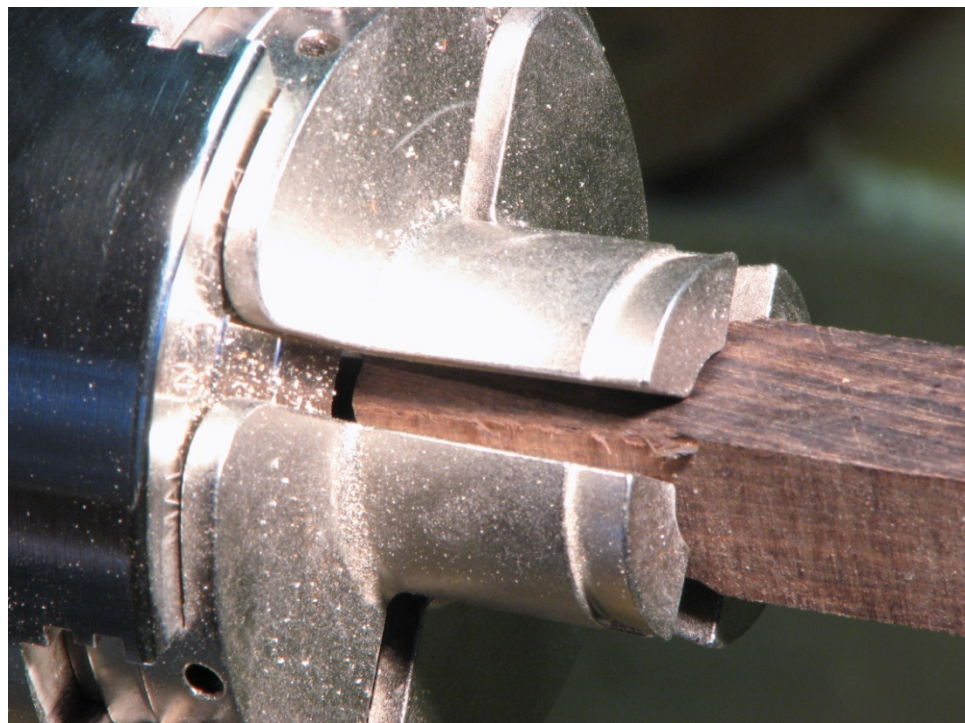


Glue the sections together. Notice the line I've drawn for reference. Try to keep the grain orientation the same for a more even look when glued together and turned. I usually use Titebond glue for this step.

Here I've glued the base to a waste block/faceplate. I've sanded the base and waste block for a smooth fit and good glue joint. Use either CA or Titebond for this.



Now to start the finial while the base is setting up. Put a pen blank in your chuck. I prefer long jaws to hold better but my standard jaws have worked.

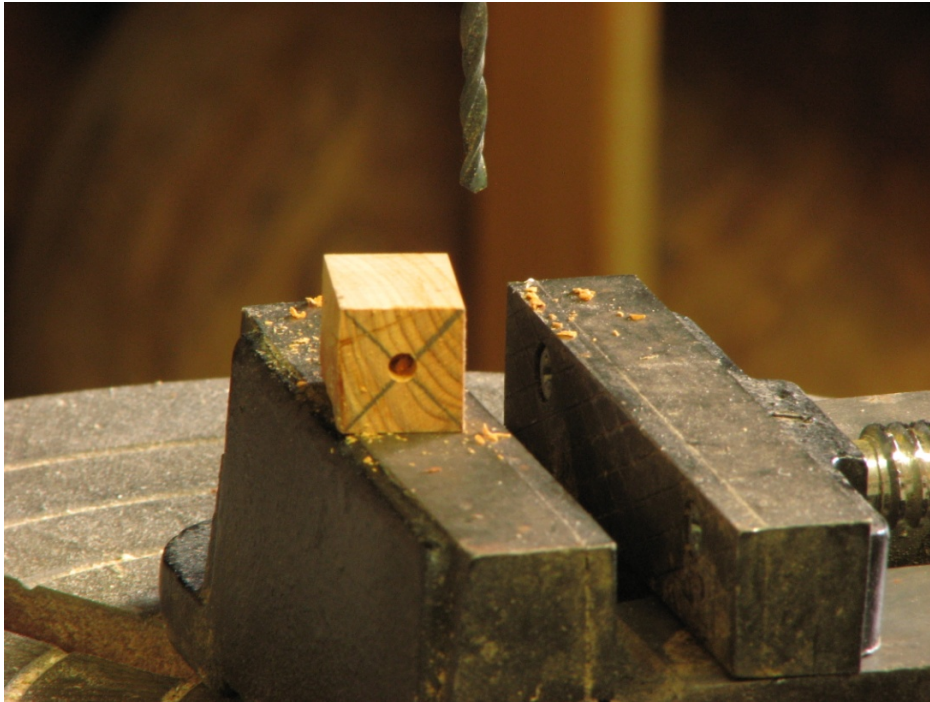




Here I've turned an 1/8" tenon on the end of my pen blank. Make sure you have a very flat surface around the tenon to mate up to the middle section. I also leave tiny grooves in the tenon to help give the glue something to grab.



Drill a 1/8" hole in the accent piece of wood. Not all the way thru –just enough to accept the tenon. Again the surface should be flat to mate up to the bottom finial section perfectly.

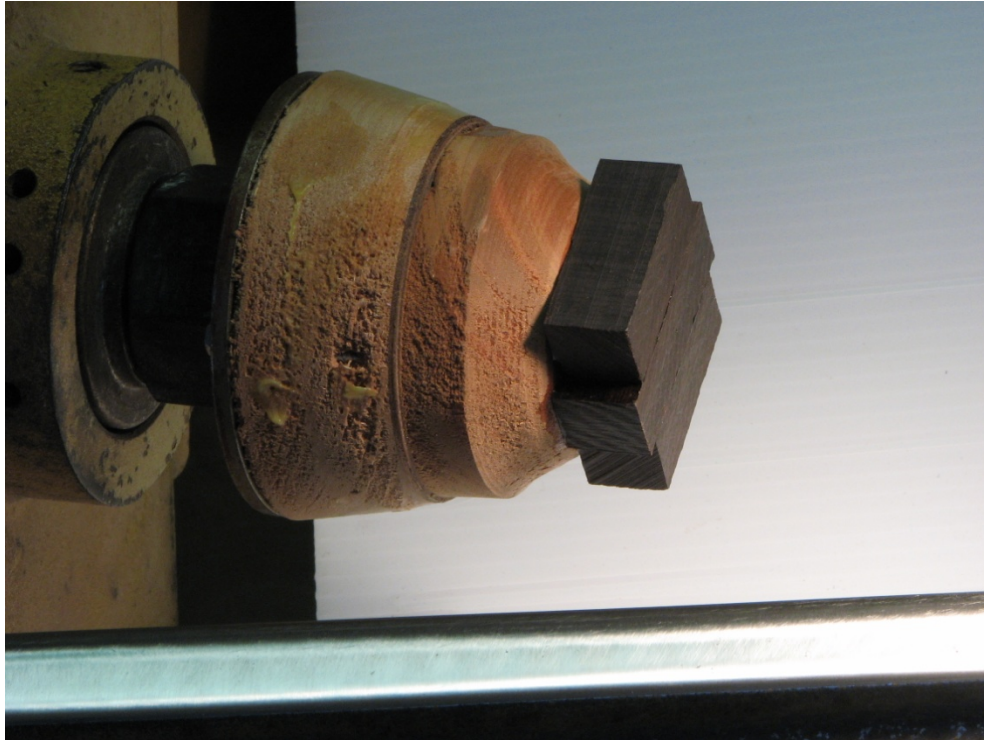


Close up of accent piece. Use a very sharp bit for this. The bit has a tendency to drift with the grain.

Below is the first two sections glued together. I use CA glue for this.



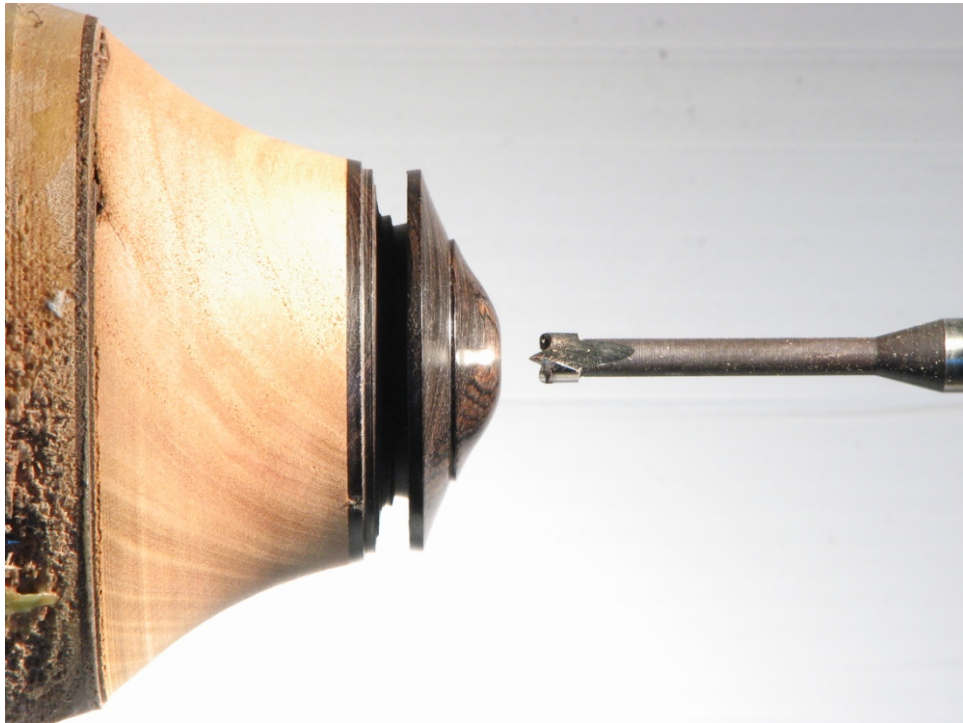
Ok, back to the base. Now we can finish the base while the glue on the finial pieces sets up.



Turn the base round and just slightly larger than your finished diameter. Here, I've cut the waste block back in a nice sweeping arch-just because it felt so good to keep the cut going.



Here's the turned and finished base. I've also drilled a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " hole to accept the finial. Below is another shot. The diameter should be cut to size as well.





With the base completed, we can move back to the finial. Here we turn the middle accent piece and drill another 1/8" hole to accept the upper piece. I usually finish this section and then move on to the lower section.



Below is the first two sections completed. Notice the crack in the accent wood. Remember-this is just for practice (and it's amazing how much practice I need).





Here is the turned and finished top section. Notice the tenon to be inserted into the accent wood. Below is the sections glued together (CA glue) and aligned with the live center. This is an easy way for me to get good alignment.



Ok. Now to glue the whole thing together. First off, you probably noticed that I had to modify my base somewhat. I didn't get enough undercut before parting off the bottom of the finial so I had to take a little off the top of the base for a good fit. No biggie, and I'll think harder about this next time. If it doesn't look right in your test fit don't glue it up. Take the time to cut a new base. You want your finial to flow from your form and thru to the top of the finial. If you try to cut corners, you may not be satisfied with your results and that will probably just piss you off in the long run.



Here I've decided to stay the course -- basically because this finial will not be used on a piece and I don't have the time to start over on a tutorial.

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Now everything is glued together and once again, we align the finial with the live center on my tailstock.



To finish the base, I put the whole thing in a long narrow vacuum chuck. A vacuum chuck of this diameter doesn't have much holding force, but it's enough for some light cuts and sanding. I usually turn a couple of rings on the underside to show it was turned and maybe to sign it.





Here is the finished product. Even if you don't use these techniques for a finial, there are a few steps you can use for other projects. Hopefully you got something from it. Good luck on your own project and most of all –Have Fun!

-Robin Costelle

