

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JERRY SAMBROOK



# 20 minutes with Jerry Sambrook



**Jerry Sambrook** turns a variety of items ranging from pens to hollow forms. **Tegan Foley** finds out more about him here

**Can you explain briefly the type of work you carry out at present?**

I am currently in collaboration with Binh Pho on some pen designs. And I find myself doing a bit of hollowing both for relaxation and to make me

push my awareness limits of the tool in my hand.

**What is your favourite timber to turn?**  
I would have to say I love the appearance of the oaks (*Quercus*), but I really do not have one favourite.

**What are your current likes and dislikes within the sphere of turning?**  
I like that there are more people interested in more than just bowl turning, and how some people are pushing spindle turning to extremes with offcentre and multi-axis turning. I also see what I consider over-embellishment, and I see too many

people using embellishment to hide poor turning and poor form.

**What direction to you see your work taking in the future?**  
I just want to be the best woodturner I can, and hopefully not limit myself to one form of turning.

**If you could only offer one bit of advice to someone starting out turning, what would it be and why?**  
I think people should start with spindle turning first then



ABOVE: Platter in hard maple (*Acer saccharum*)

BELOW: 'Golf Club' pen

graduate to other forms. A good spindle turner can easily graduate to face and end grain turning, while the same is not typically true in reverse. Also, practice basics often, until you do not have to think about the cuts themselves, but how the form needs to be done. I also think that people should concentrate on one type of form for approximately six months then move on to another form, i.e. bowls for six months, then boxes.

**What music and which book are you currently into?**

I listen to a lot of Gary Moore and at this moment I am reading Ted Bell's *Hawke* series of books and Nick Arnall's *Contemporary Woodturning*.

**Tell us about the piece you are currently working on.**

I am working on a larger hollow form made from a 405mm diameter cherry (*Prunus serotina*) burl that started as an almost perfect sphere around the tree. I am taking my time with it.

**Which turners do you most admire, and why?**

The one turner I admire the most is a local person named Al Czellecz. He is a very understated and talented turner, whom I want to thank for getting me involved in turning. Kirk DeHeer is also up there. He really does so much for the turning community, and he is



also a great turner with a great teaching/demonstrating style. I also admire Al Stirt, Barbara Dill, and Mark Sfirri for how they have pushed envelopes, but in ways that still 100% represent good turning form.

**What do you think the best single developing in turning has been?**

Symposiums. We get to exchange ideas easily, and see people we would not normally get to see turn, never mind the chance to meet them and sometimes become friends with them.

**What do you see yourself doing in five years' time?**

Hopefully on the verge of retiring from my job so I can turn more without so much fear of burning out. Other than that, just trying to be a good turner, and a good teacher.

**What do you see as the biggest thing that has hindered the**

**development of woodturning in general?**

The ego some people have that are established, and the demand of some of the new turners that they be shown everything, rather than just enough to let them figure things out. This is a very prevalent issue amongst the pen turning community.

**What is your biggest regret?**

Burning out from turning back in the mid '90s and staying away from the lathe for almost 12 years.

**What are your other interests besides turning?**

Believe it or not, I actually like what I do for a living. But I also love dogs, especially Buddy, my English foxhound, and the late Sampson, who loved to be in the shop with me. And I used to shoot in long range competitions, which I am getting back into.

**What three things in your workshop could you not do without?**

My lathe, a Vicmarc chuck or easy chuck, and a 10mm bowl gouge with a swept-back grind. ●

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ABOVE: Jerry turning at the lathe

LEFT: Hollow form in claro walnut (*Juglans hindsii*)