



Wood Turners Worldwide

worldwidewoodturners.org and the art of making shavings

Newsletter

MAY 7, 2025

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 10



Doug Miller



Gonzalo DeLa Cruz

Burl Challenge!

We're celebrating the unmatched beauty of burlwood! Burls large and small make some of the most fascinating and beautiful turnings! Here is what some of our members have brought out of the grain!

Top left: red mallee burl, finished with lacquer; **Center left:** Unknown wood burl colored with red dye. **Center right:** maple burl urns; **Bottom left:** cherry burl; **Below:** red mallee burl, East India redwood base, African blackwood, brass and holly finial.



Howard King



Jon Moore



Joaquin Juatai



Nick Balk



Jayson Cote



Dewey Johnson



Sheila White



Trey Nelson



Jon Moore



Shannon Dunlap

Facing page, top left: Walnut vase with natural void; **Right:** Middle East coffee urn, turned, decorated, carved, painted; **Bottom left:** cherry potpourri dish. **This page, clockwise from top left:** Cherry, walnut, maple mosaic urn. Grout: coffee grounds & glue; Turned and pierced bowl; Mulberry cup and ball game; Cherry chalice.

Laser Engraving for Wood Turners Pt. 5

... Continued from Volume 2, Issue 9

Engraving Non-Wood Materials: Expanding Your Creative Possibilities

While wood is the most common material for laser engraving in woodturning, many other materials can be engraved with stunning results. Exploring acrylic, leather, metals, glass, and stone opens up a wide range of new design possibilities, from personalized keepsakes to artistic embellishments. However, each material behaves differently under a laser and requires specific settings, preparation, and safety considerations to ensure the best outcome.

This section covers popular non-wood materials that work well for engraving, how to prepare them for the best results, and key considerations when working with each type.

Acrylic – Crisp, Frosted Engravings

Acrylic is one of the best non-wood materials for laser engraving, especially when creating designs that require clear, detailed contrast. When engraved, acrylic produces a frosted, etched effect, making it perfect for signs, plaques, display pieces, and decorative inlays for wood turned objects.

Best Acrylic for Engraving: Use cast acrylic (not extruded acrylic) for the cleanest engraving results.

Avoid extruded acrylic, as it does not engrave well and can create inconsistent finishes.

Pro Tips for Engraving Acrylic:

- Use low power and high speed to prevent melting or warping.
- Engrave on the back side of clear acrylic for a smooth, polished look when viewed from the front.
- Clean acrylic after engraving with a mild soap solution and a microfiber cloth to remove residue.

Leather – A Rich, Textured Finish

Natural leather engraves beautifully, creating bold, dark markings that add character and texture to wallets, keychains, belts, and book covers. However, not all leather is safe for laser engraving—some types contain chemical treatments that release harmful fumes when burned.

- **Best Leather for Engraving:** Vegetable-tanned leather provides the best engraving results and is safe to use.
- Avoid chrome-tanned leather, as it contains chromium salts, which produce toxic fumes when burned.

Pro Tips for Engraving Leather:

- Use moderate power settings to prevent overburning or excessive charring.
- Engrave on lighter-colored leather for greater contrast.
- If the leather feels dry after engraving, apply a light leather conditioner to restore suppleness.

Glass & Stone – Etching for a Frosted Look

Laser engraving on glass and stone creates a frosted, sandblasted appearance without cutting into the surface. This technique works well for engraving on wine glasses, tumblers, coasters, and stone plaques.

Best Glass & Stone for Engraving: Tempered and borosilicate glass (e.g., Pyrex) are commonly used for engraving.

Avoid engraving highly polished glass, as it can lead to uneven engraving or chipping.

Pro Tips for Engraving Glass & Stone:

- Apply a thin layer of dish soap or masking tape before engraving to prevent small fractures.
- Use low power and high speed to reduce stress on the material.
- Clean the engraving with a soft brush or compressed air to remove fine dust particles.

Anodized Aluminum & Coated Metals – Precise Marking

Laser engraving on anodized aluminum and coated metals allows for sharp, detailed markings without damaging the underlying metal. These materials are commonly used for custom nameplates, branding on metal inlays, and engraved hardware in woodturning projects.

Best Metal for Engraving: Anodized aluminum, stainless steel with marking spray, and coated brass

work well.

Avoid engraving raw aluminum or bare steel unless using a fiber laser, as CO2 lasers do not effectively engrave uncoated metals.

Pro Tips for Engraving Metal:

- Use a marking spray (like Cermark or Thermark) when engraving uncoated metals to achieve dark, high-contrast results.
- Adjust laser settings to lower power and higher speed to avoid overheating the metal.
- Wipe the surface clean with isopropyl alcohol after engraving to remove any residue.

Fabric & Textiles – Soft but Detailed Engraving

Laser engraving on fabric and textiles allows for intricate patterns, monograms, and designs on materials like denim, canvas, felt, and suede. This technique is popular for custom apparel, decorative bags, and textile-based art projects.

Best Fabrics for Engraving: Cotton, felt, microfiber, and denim work well with laser engraving.

Avoid synthetic fabrics like polyester, nylon, and PVC-based vinyl, as they can melt or release toxic fumes.

Pro Tips for Engraving Fabric:

- Use low power settings to prevent burning

through the fabric.

- Test a small area before engraving to see how the fabric reacts.
- Apply masking tape over the engraving area to reduce scorching.

Final Thoughts on Engraving Non-Wood Materials

Exploring non-wood materials expands the creative potential of laser engraving, allowing for versatile designs on a variety of surfaces. Whether engraving glassware, leather accessories, acrylic inlays, or metal branding plates, understanding the best materials and proper settings ensures clean, precise, and professional results.

When working with non-wood materials:

- Always check the safety of the material before engraving—some materials release toxic fumes.
- Test settings on a scrap piece to find the best speed and power combination.
- Use proper ventilation to remove fine particulates and smoke from the engraving process.

With the right approach, engraving non-wood materials can add a whole new dimension to woodturning projects, making them even more unique and valuable.

To be continued in Volume 2, Issue 11 ...



Bob Moffett



Jeff Walters

Left: Walnut platter; **Above:** elm bowl.

Kirk Kapp demonstrated his technique for making this three corner lidded box during our weekly meeting April 16th.

You can watch the entire meeting, or just the demonstration segment, on our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@worldwidewoodturners1>.



World Wide Woodturners meets every via Zoom Wednesday at 7:00 PM EST. Meetings feature demonstrations, tips and tricks, member's gallery, and more! Free woodturning demonstrations weekly! Go to worldwidewoodturners.org and click "Go to meeting!"



Dale Slaughter



Bill Louch

Above, left: Maple bowl dyed with RIT Sea Blue dye; **Right:** Live Edge Kentucky coffee tree bowl. **Facing page, left:** Pinoocchio; **Right:** Pine bowl, turned, scoured and colored.



Photo insert for urn lid by Brenda Thornton

This is a coin case, used to put a pet picture in and glued in the top of an urn. You can get these coin cases at Hobby Lobby.



Al Dawson



Ray Apodaca

Your art belongs in our newsletter! Email hi-res images to editor@worldwidewoodturners.org. Include a brief description and make sure you identify yourself!

Wood Turners Worldwide

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 Joaquin Juatai - Editor

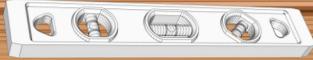
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Instructors

Dean Grimes	Jeff Walters
Kade Bolger	Brent Sobotka
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Tim Hatch	Dan Smith
Paul Hannaby	Dave Rhodes
Martin Clarkson	Sue Jilek
Gary Hales	Jim Duxbury
Matt Harber	Rita Duxury
Joaquin Juatai	

September 17-20 2026
Wisconsin Rapids Wisconsin

Tuition Cost \$160

Includes all training &
Evening Meal

Hotel Accomodations are now available.

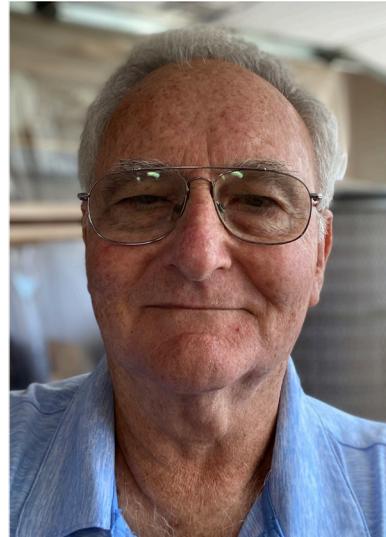


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More details to come!!!

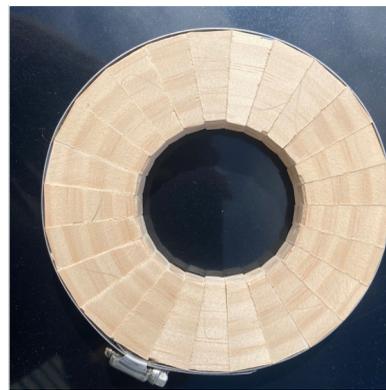


Wedgie sled with David Rhodes



This will be an off-lathe session providing the attendee the opportunity to leave the session with a set of wedges, specification document on making a wedgie sled, and an understanding on how to use wedges and wedgie sled to make a segmented bowl.

During the session, a laser engraver will generate a set of wedges for each member of the session. While the engraver is cutting the wedgies, a video will be shown, showing:



- The creation of a wedgie sled.
- Use of the wedgie sled & wedges

After the video, the newly created wedges will be passed out to attendees, along with the

specification on making the wedgie sled.



Attendees will need to bring a 12" x 12" x 1/8" plywood sheet to be used in the laser engraver to make their wedges.