



Phil Irons

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Born in Australia, Phil was brought up with wood in the family, his father was a woodworker and antique restorer.

Phil's introduction to woodturning came at the age of 13 when his father acquired a cast iron child's treadle lathe, made in the USA in the 1870s.



He took it up as a serious hobby in his late 20s and after a six year spell in the travel industry he took the decision in 1994 to make it his profession.

His knowledge and appreciation of English timbers was initially gained from working as a tree surgeon/forester for several years.

He has won numerous awards in national competitions and is regularly invited to teach and demonstrate his techniques nationally and at an international level, including, France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Norway, South Africa and the USA. Phil is the author of several magazine articles and a best selling project book "Woodturning, Two in One" that has been translated into nine languages.



He is best known for his coloured vessels and hollow forms with their clear, beautiful shapes and flowing lines, always striving for the perfect form. He uses wood salvaged from tree surgeons and firewood merchants. This wood often has no other commercial value other than as firewood. His reason for colouring wood is to enhance the hidden figure in white woods usually crotch wood or ripple, sycamore, silver birch, ash, maple, and the like. Taking something very bland and using bright contemporary colours to make the figure "pop" so that the beautiful figure can be seen from a distance rather than just close up.



Demonstrations

Creating Hollow Forms

I will show my techniques for holding, shaping and hollowing as well as talking about shape, proportion and form and how to see good shapes.

I use potters as an example. All too often we are frightened by beauty of the wood we use and let that beauty dictate the shape of the object we are making. Potters don't have that complication, clay doesn't have amazing grain, spectacular colour, quilting or burr it's just a grey blob. I want to show you how to create great shapes by thinking like a potter.

I'll talk about the boring but essential subject of sharpening and why I'm an advocate of using the Tru-Grind sharpening jig. I'll show you how to stand at the lathe, how to hold the tool and why I use as few tools as possible as well as my technique for hollowing to achieve an even wall thickness and a whole heap more info and anecdotes.



Surface Decoration and Colouring

I will show you how and why I use contemporary coloured stains and dyes to emphasise the hidden figure in white woods, many of which we would overlook as being boring and featureless. How the addition of simple carved

decoration or surface texture can transform a piece as well as enhance its tactile qualities. I also use carving to show the contrast between the natural colour of the timber and the colour enhanced areas.

In this session the main emphasis will be on the quality of finish and how easy it is to achieve it. I will also talk about the importance and use of different types of finish.



Threaded Lids

This session will be about how I turn my hollow forms into lidded vessels, elevating them from purely decorative objects into functional art.

In the last year or so I have started making funeral urns which for obvious reasons need a secure lid. So with the addition of a threaded ring inserted into the neck and the corresponding threaded lid my hollow forms become a piece of art that no one but the owner needs to know contains ashes.

I will show my method of making these closures, how I chase the threads and what the best timbers are for these items, also a way of being able to make the lids from the same wood as the vessel.