

Jim Hodson – Jan. 9, 2016

## “Adding Stone to Your Turnings”

**How** to add sliced stone to a bowl, platter, or other turned wood piece.

**Why?** To add “wow” to the visual surface of the wood; to create a turning piece and show stones you’ve collected on trips or have fond memories of. It’s easier if you collect stream worn stones of, “olive to walnut” sizes. You can usually slice 2 to 5 surfaces from rocks of this conservative size keeping the slices about 1/8” thick. I modified an old tile saw with a sliding table and a 10” diamond blade. An aluminum strip was screwed 1/8” from the backside of blade. Another thin piece of flat aluminum sheet was screwed on the flat surface of the table where you hold the stone to be cut to close the gap the blade rotates through to close down the normal gap between the blade and the table. When cutting the stone there is little frictional torque on the finger held stone so cutting to close tolerances is quite safe. Save the large whole stone slices and all the broken, chipped pieces as these will be used later to fill gaps in the finished stone inlay.

### Turning the Wood:

1. I glue 3/4” high quality plywood waste blocks to my precut, dry wood blanks with Gorilla glue.
2. A 6” one way face plate is secured to the plywood with 12 14x1” hex headed screws whether the blank is 10” or 20” in diameter.
3. A tail stock is used at all times in the rough-to-finish turning of the wood blanks to final shape and surface smoothness. I use a vacuum chuck, if you don’t use a vacuum chuck then merely prepare a tenon for your jawed chuck.
4. In hollowing your bowl or removing the wood from the top side of a platter cut to the finished thickness to the depth of your stone inlay ring while keeping the center mass (thickness) of the blank intact. Now cut the inlay recess with a sharp parting tool delineating the outside and inside perimeter of the recess. Cut to 1/16” +/- depth, then, remove the wood in the recess between these lines keeping the bottom of the inlay surface flat, not curved to the shape of the finished bowl/platter. Now, as you continue to remove the center mass of wood remaining you’ll find the outside of the turning will go out-of-round and a consistent inlay recess could not be cut, thus the reason for preparing the inlay recess early in the final turning.
5. Continue to remove the remaining wood from the blank to finish shape. Sand all surfaces to your final desired smoothness. Do not sand the bottom of the inlay recess and don’t damage the edges of the recess.
6. Apply the finish you prefer and after the first finish coat has dried paint the bottom and sides of our stone recess with India Ink. Continue with your final finish coats over the entire turning.
7. Place the finished piece on a cake turner so you can easily move the completely sanded and finished bowl/platter as you glue the stone slices into the recess.
8. Use the largest stone slices first, modify each piece if needed to fit the inlay recess, place extra thick CA glue to the recess surface after you have trial fitted the sliced stone. Be conservative and use less glue than is needed so you do not have “squeeze out” of excessive glue past the stone piece perimeter. Excess glue is a “pain in the tush” to clean up and will ruin your finished wood surface.
9. After the entire recess is covered with large stones, come back with tweezers and use your broken, small waste pieces to semi-fill the irregular gaps between all the larger stones.

- Be conservative with your CA glue and use a fine glue bottle tip to set these small pieces. Now, let all the CA glue set-up, do not use a catalyst as it will ruin your wood finish too.
10. Now, to fill in the spaces of exposed India Ink surface between all the stones in the inlay recess. I use sand from weight bags you place in your pickup beds to increase traction during the winter. This sand is irregular in size, multicolored, and only needs to be washed and dried to eliminate any dirt that comes in the original sack container. Beach sand from ocean or river is too consistent in size and color for my taste?
  11. FamoWood Glaze Coat Polymer 50:50 mix in ½ teaspoon amounts thoroughly mixed and carefully placed with a fine tip adhesive applicator. You can cover all non-stone Ink covered remaining gaps neatly with this applicator and have 1 to 2 hours working time.
  12. Immediately sprinkle your cleaned sand over the entire stone inlay area, agitate by mildly shaking the bowl/platter so all coated recesses receive sand. Let it stand for a day or two. Come back, shake off the excess sand, compressed air blow more excess off, use a sharp fine X-acto knife to cut/scrape any excess sand from the stone surfaces to clean them up.
  13. I use rattle-can Deft, so now I carefully spray my final finish coat over the entire bowl/platter. This "pops" stone colors and finishes the project.
  14. Simple, easy, cheap to place, and fun to do!!