



Shark Tooth Bowl

by James Duxbury

“Water flowing up hill,” “A house fire in Rome,” “Nude on the balcony.” Where do artists get these names? I don’t get it. Maybe you have to turn the piece over? I can turn almost anything on a lathe but naming the piece boggles my mind. Or maybe I am catching on.

After seeing so many fierce shark attacks in the news lately I thought this might be a great name for this bowl. Shark Tooth Bowl. Be careful!

This scary little bowl started with a fairly green piece of wood right off the top of the firewood pile. Just no end to the expense I go to for quality material. I have done many demonstrations and workshops and know if this bowl will work for an interesting workshop it will have to be turned on club mini lathes. This means the log must be about 7” (18cm) diameter and no more than 8” (20cm) long. Square off both ends, find the center, and mount on the lathe between centers (Photo 1).



Photo 1

You never know what could fly off a bark-covered log. It could be animal, vegetable, or mineral, so wear a good face shield. Also, if the log is spalted or partially rotten it is probably a good idea to use a good respirator. Adjust the tool rest and turn the piece by hand a few revolutions to be sure everything is clear and turning freely. Set the speed to around 500 RPM, and turn the lathe on. Turn the piece cylindrical down to good clear wood. Find the center of the piece and mark a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) on both sides of that center. Continue these two lines around the piece. Using a pair of dividers which have been set to $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) adjust the tool rest to the drive center height, turn the lathe on, and deepen these two lines, one at a time. Now step off from these lines, one line at a time, cutting $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) wide grooves outward to the end of the piece. These lines will be the bottom of the teeth (Photo 2).



Photo 2

Start a cut with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) spindle gouge, about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) from each line and cut straight in at about 45 degrees. Keep opening this cut up until the top is $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) wide and about $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) deep. Being an 8" (20cm) long piece, you should end up with 14 spaces. Optional: at this point I wire burned the bottom of each groove. Sand all surfaces to 320 grit.

The next step is to locate the top and bottom of the bowl. Look at the piece and determine how it would best be oriented. Then mark the center on both sides. These centers will be the top opening and the bottom of the bowl, similar to turning a natural edge piece. Defects can be in the bottom extremities and the top center as they will be turned away. Complete the work on this new axis with a chisel and mallet, by removing a section about 1" (25mm) in diameter on both sides for the centers to seat when the piece is turned 90 degrees (Photo 3). A 1" (25mm) spade bit and a drill motor will also work for this operation.

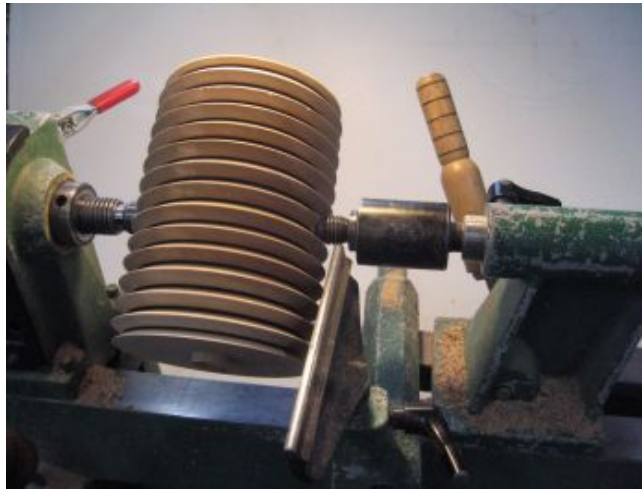


Photo 3

Mount the piece as shown in Photo 3 and with a 3/8" (10mm) bowl gouge, turn the bottom of the bowl, leaving a tenon about 3/8" (10mm) long by 2 1/4" (57mm) diameter (Photo 4). Make the last cuts very lightly with a newly sharpened gouge to minimize chipping the edges of the teeth. Sand all surfaces.



Photo 4

Turn the piece around and with the aid of the tailstock for centering, mount it in a chuck. Turn out a small area of the top surface, dimple center, and drill about a 1/4" (6mm) hole to the desired depth of the bowl. (Photo 5).



Photo 5

Again using a 3/8" bowl gouge, turn out the inside of the bowl (Photo 6).



Photo 6

For safety turn the lathe off and sand the inside of the bowl by hand. *Note: Small chips in the ends of the teeth can be reshaped a little with small rasps and sanded to perfection (Photo 7).*



Photo 7

Remove the piece from the lathe. The next step is to remove the tenon and finish the bottom of the bowl. One of my favorite ways of doing this is with a 3" (76mm) diameter disc 1 ½" (38mm) long with a short tenon turned on one end for the chuck and a thick piece of a mouse pad glued to the other end (Photo 8).



Photo 8

A thick pad over the chuck will also work but you stand a chance of scratching the piece if not done perfectly. Either way mount the piece with the aid of the tailstock and turn the tenon down to a small nub about ½" diameter (Photo 9).



Photo 9

Detail the bottom and sand this surface. Remove the piece, trim off the nub, final sand, and finish as desired. For this bowl I used about six coats of spray lacquer (Photo 10).



Photo 10

Can you see the shark? Just no end to the fun.