



Pierced and Colored Eggs

Patricia Spero and Gabor Lacko

The two of us started making decorated eggs about two years ago. We were interested in the Russian Imperial Easter Eggs, which Fabergé made for Tsar Alexander III, and decided to use them as the basis for our designs. Because the Russian eggs are lavishly decorated in a style too elaborate for wooden eggs, we simplified the effect and used only piercing and coloring.

Turning the egg

First, turn a cylinder of a relatively straight-grained wood, mounting the

wood between centers of your lathe. You can use sycamore, maple, or anything similar. The egg for this article was made of boxwood and is 4" long by 2½" diameter.

Sketch onto the cylinder the shape of the egg (Photo 1). Draw this egg shape slightly elongated (by about ¼"), because when you cut the egg in half, it will be shorter by the thickness of the parting tool as well as slightly shorter from the cut you will make for joining the two halves. Leave enough timber at either end to form spigots, making sure the diameter of the

spigots will fit your chuck (Photo 2). With a thin parting tool, make a slight cut to indicate where the spigots will be and also where you will cut the egg in half (Photo 3). Transfer the cylinder into a chuck.

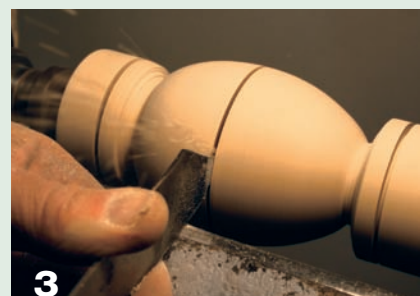
If you are using a chuck with a larger-diameter body than the one in these photos, you will want to increase the length of the spigots in order to allow enough clearance for parting the end of the egg from the cylinder. For increased holding power for hollowing endgrain wood, turn a shoulder on your cylinder that will rest on the jaws of the chuck. ►



1 Sketch onto the cylinder an elongated shape of an egg.



2 Turn the egg shape and leave spigots on each end to mount into a chuck. If your chuck has a large body, you will want to use the entire length of the spigots.



3 Use a parting tool to make a slight cut, indicating where the egg will be parted in half.



4
With the cylinder mounted in the chuck, part off the first spigot.



5
Part off the wood from the second spigot.



6
Part the egg in half.



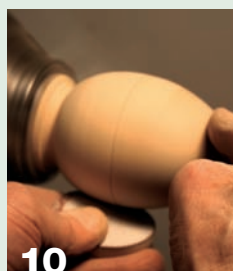
7
Hollow out the first half-egg.



8
Check the thickness of the wall using a caliper. Make sure the thickness is uniform throughout the egg.



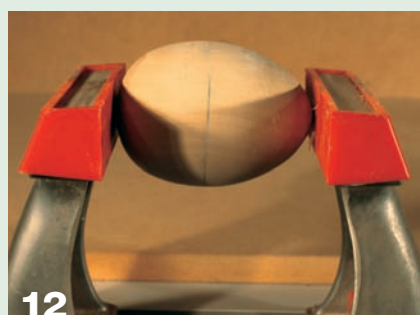
9
Using calipers, check the thickness of the bottom of the egg. Make sure to account for the thickness of the spigot.



10
With one half still in the chuck, fit the second half to it, holding it in place with one hand. Sand the body of the egg where the two halves meet.



11
Paint the inside of the egg. Any form of paint can be used, but in this photo, an airbrush is shown.



12
Glue the two halves of the egg together.

Cutting and hollowing the egg

With the cylinder mounted in the chuck, part off the excess wood on each end to form shorter spigots (*Photos 4, 5*). Now that the spigots are of a length to turn the ends of the egg easily, it is time to finish parting the egg into two halves (*Photo 6*). The half-egg left in the chuck is ready for hollowing (*Photo 7*). At this stage, it is critical that the half-egg runs true, otherwise the wall thickness will not be even.

Aim for about $\frac{1}{16}$ " wall thickness and maintain this uniformly right down to the bottom of the egg, continuously checking it with a caliper (*Photo 8*). There are a variety of tools to use for hollowing a small endgrain object. Ring tools and hook tools are perfect for this type of job and are used by cutting upward from the center to the edge of the object. A small spindle gouge works well, if used in the same manner, cutting from the middle toward the outside. If you use a bowl gouge, remember that you are cutting endgrain and the cutting direction is opposite of that for side grain-oriented wood. For those adept with a scraper, use a $\frac{3}{8}$ " or smaller round-nose scraper, again moving from the center to the edge.

When hollowing near the spigot, the inside has to be turned first. Finish turning the half-egg by shaping the outside near the bottom with a small skew chisel, a parting tool, or small spindle gouge. Judge the thickness of the bottom of the egg with calipers, but remember to take into account the thickness of the spigot (*Photo 9*). When this is done, repeat the hollowing process with the other half.

You will need to form a lip on both halves where the two halves meet (on the inside of one and on the outside of the other) about $\frac{1}{8}$ " long and about a $\frac{1}{32}$ " thick. Make sure you have a good fit. You can use the tip of a skew chisel for cutting this lip.

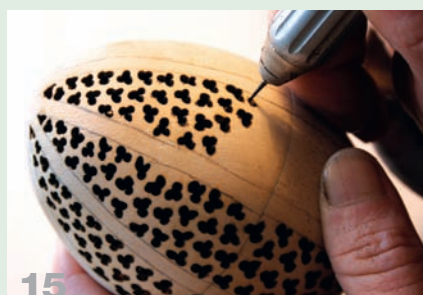
With one half still in the chuck and the other half fitted to it and supported by your hand, sand the two halves together



13 Use four rubber bands to divide the egg into eight sections. Draw along the edges of the rubber bands using a soft pencil.



14 When the rubber bands are removed, the egg will be divided into eight sections.



15 Pierce the walls of the egg with a NKS Presto handpiece or similar dental drill with a fine cutting burr.



16 Graduate the size of the design elements, larger in the center of the egg and progressively smaller toward the ends.



Hold the egg on a thin skewer so that you can easily move it around to blend the colors.

egg, because mixing different shapes could make it look messy. Use a cloverleaf shape like mine or a crescent shape or something you design yourself. Graduate the size of the elements in the design, so that they are larger at the center of the egg and progressively smaller as the space narrows toward the ends of the egg (Photo 16).

Painting the egg

Use an airbrush to paint the egg in order to achieve an even effect. Three colors make a good mix, and use transparent airbrush paints, so that the grain of the wood will show through. We have used turquoise, green, and yellow. Red, orange, and yellow is a good combination as is purple, blue, and turquoise. Hold the egg on a thin skewer (Photo 17) so that you can easily move it around to let the colors blend. When the paint is dry, spray the egg with several coats of glossy varnish. ■

Patricia Spero and Gabor Lacko live in Chigwell, Essex, England. To learn more about Patricia and Gabor's work, visit www.gaborandpatricia.com.



to obtain a nice finish at the joint (Photo 10). Part off the remaining half from the chuck and your egg is ready for the next steps.

Painting the inside

Before the egg is glued together, paint the inside (Photo 11). This ensures that when the egg is pierced, the color will show through rather than bare wood. Now glue it together with slow acting glue and clamp it into position until it is set (Photo 12).

Drawing the design

For this design, the egg needs to be divided into eight sections. The easiest

way to accomplish this is to use four rubber bands, overlapping at each end and leaving eight equal sections along the length of the egg (Photo 13). With a soft pencil, draw along both edges of each band. When you remove the rubber bands you will have defined the areas you want to pierce (Photo 14).

Piercing the egg

Pierce the egg between the elastic band lines using a NKS Presto handpiece or similar dental drill with a very fine cutting burr (Photo 15). Keep to the same cutout design all over the