

Russell G. Brown

“Care and Feeding” Instructions

These bowls and vases are designed and built to be durable and to last for a long, long time. A small amount of care, however, will go a long way toward keeping these pieces as nice as possible for as long as possible.

Bowls

These bowls are designed to be functional, as well as decorative.

Bowls are safe for use with food, to a limited extent: these bowls are finished with two coats of a tung oil sealer, followed by two coats of “salad bowl finish.” The latter is a varnish which is formulated to be food-safe, and is FDA approved for use on bowls such as these. The bowls can be used for dry foods, such as chips, nuts, candies, etc. They can also be used for salad or cold vegetables. Caution should be exercised in putting hot foods in these bowls, and use for anything with significant liquid component is **not** recommended. Soup, rice, and hot pasta are examples of foods which should not be served in these bowls.

When one is finished serving food in one of these bowls, the bowl should be handwashed with a damp cloth, then hand-dried or allowed to air-dry. The bowl should **never** be left to soak, or put through the dishwasher. Also, being made of wood, these bowls are **not** microwave- or oven-safe.

Because the salad bowl finish is a varnish, it forms a tight enough seal that the bowls should experience little “drying out” over time. However, many woods are prone to darken considerably with exposure to bright sunlight or interior light with significant ultraviolet content. To preserve the “as new” colors of your bowl as long as possible, treat it periodically with a UV-protectant such as Armor-All. This will also serve to preserve the gloss of the finish. If the bowl is being used with food, only Armor-All the outside surface. If the inside surface seems to be drying out, in this case, apply a light coating of mineral or tung oil. A light coating of spray- or paste-wax on a periodic basis will also help to preserve the finish.

Vases

Vases come in two flavours. **Bud vases** have a glass tube inserted in them, which can be filled with water, allowing the vases to be used with cut flowers. The glass tube can be cleaned *in situ* using a small bottle brush. **Hollow-form vases** are intended primarily for decoration. They can be used with dried or silk flowers, but should **never** be filled with water. Care should be taken not to unbalance a hollow-form vase by using it with flowers which are too tall or heavy. The stability of one of these vases can be improved somewhat by filling the bottom 1” to 3” with gravel, sand, or BBs or lead shot. For care of the finish on all vases, see the finish instructions in the previous paragraph.

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Segmented Woodturner

Russell Brown got his first woodturning lathe in early 1995, shortly after moving to Albuquerque, New Mexico. His interest quickly gravitated toward the construction and turning of segmented bowls, vases, and other forms. His background and previous professional employment required him to develop design and geometric reasoning skills that make segmented work a natural specialty for him. His best successes to date have been with the open bowl shape, but he is slowly coming up to speed on vase forms. Russell has been selling his work at craft fairs and in art galleries since late 1996, and has been turning full-time since August of 1999. From September of 1997 until December of 1999, he was the president of the New Mexico Woodturners, a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners.

Other pertinent facts about the artist: He was born in 1966 in Tullahoma, Tennessee, and spent his first 18 years there. He got a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and computer science from Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee, where his main outside activity was the building and lighting of theatrical sets. He then spent 6 years in Ithaca, NY, getting a Ph. D. in computer science from Cornell University, building houses with Habitat for Humanity, and learning to play 5-string clawhammer banjo. From November of 1994 until July of 1999, Russell was employed as a robotics researcher in the Intelligent Systems and Robotics Center at Sandia National Laboratories. In July of 2000, Russell moved to Ontario, to be near his lovely and brilliant editor girlfriend, Elizabeth. He currently resides in Picton, Ontario. Russell also likes to make puns, a product which universally receives worse consumer feedback than his woodwork.

For those with access to the Web, Russell has samples of his work depicted on his page at <http://www.swcp.com/~rgbrown>.

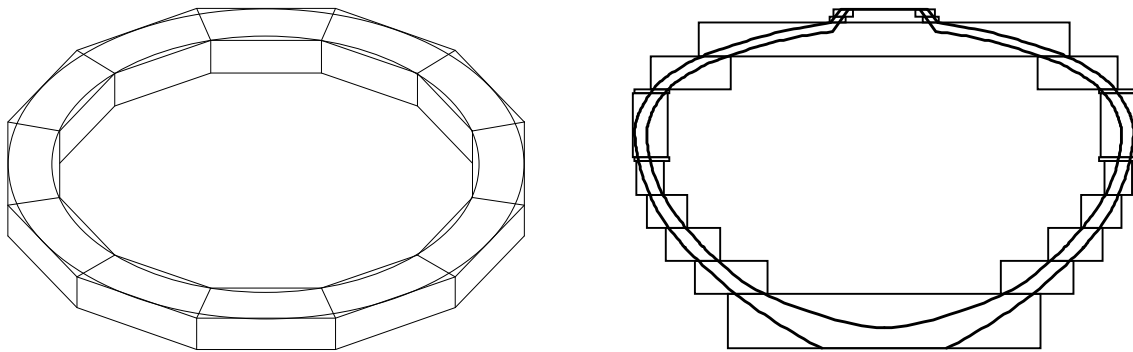
Artist's Statement

“My primary fascination is with the process of designing and constructing interesting geometric designs in clever ways – using clever techniques to achieve difficult- or perhaps even impossible-looking designs with relative ease. At the same time, I insist that each piece be well-made, pleasing to the eye, and make good use of the natural appearance of the individual woods used in the piece. I do not generally turn my pieces to a delicate thinness; I prefer that they feel durable and functional.”

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Segmented, Turned, Wooden Vessels

I make my wooden vessels using a process known as “segmented woodturning,” so-called because the vessels are built up out of a series of segmented rings, then turned on a wood lathe. A simple segmented ring consists of trapezoidal pieces of hardwood, cut so that 8, 10, 12, or more pieces form a closed, regular polygonal ring (see left-hand figure). These rings are glued together, then trued up and glued together atop a solid hardwood base to form a rough blank (the finer lines on the right-hand figure) containing between a few dozen and several hundred individual pieces of wood, depending on the size and complexity of the piece. The blank is then turned to a final shape (bold lines on right-hand figure), sanded, and finished with a tung oil sealer and a food-safe varnish.



The pattern pieces on the larger vessels are made by combining woods of different species in interesting ways, through as many as three recut and glue operations. All colors seen in these vessels are the natural colors of the woods used to make them.

For efficiency's (and therefore economy's) sake, these vessels are usually made in sets of 3 to 30 with similar patterns, but each piece has its own unique shape, as well as the individual character lent by the fingerprint-unique grain patterns of the specific pieces of wood used.