Handled bowl

Frederick C. Hill shows how to create a handled bowl

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDERICK C. HILL

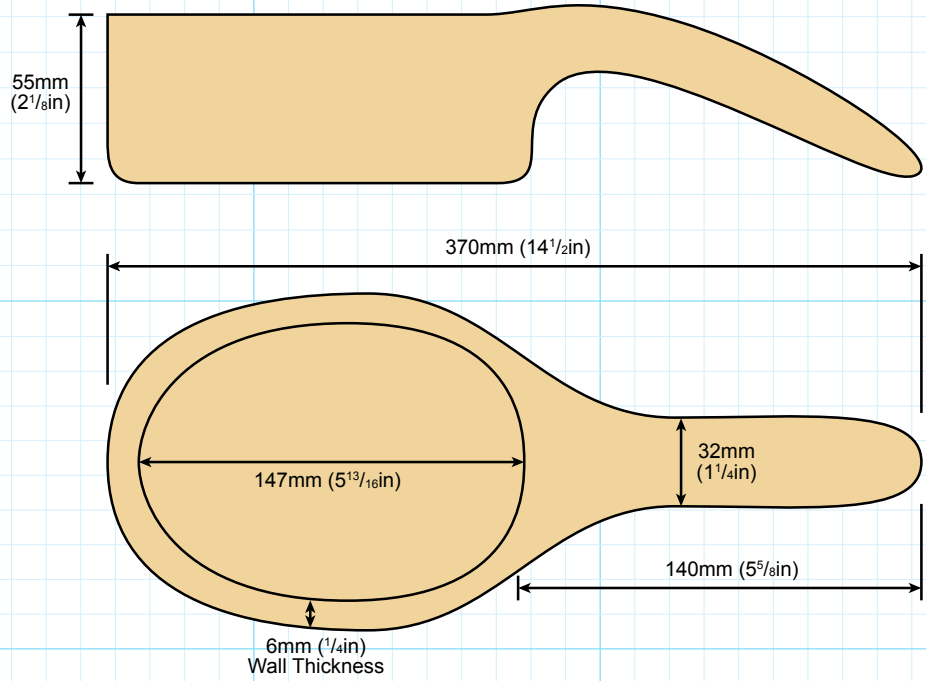
A handle is often useful on a bowl. Not only does it look interesting, it adds a functionality to the bowl. And, it makes the bowl stand out in a crowd. There are many variants of handled bowls, but this one is an interesting take on the theme. There are various ways of putting one on a bowl but turning and carving assures that the handle is an integral part of the design, not an add-on.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE]
- Bowl gouge
- French-curve scraper
- Chuck
- Revolving tailstock centre
- Bandsaw
- Belt sander/bobbing sander
- Drill
- Tailstock drill chuck
- 3 & 13mm drill bit

MATERIALS

- Red oak (*Quercus rubra*) 375mm long x 63mm thick
- Abrasives down to 320 grit
- Finish of your choice



WARNING! BE SURE TO KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHER OBJECTS OUT OF THE PATH OF THE REVOLVING HANDLE!

1 Carefully transfer the handled bowl pattern on to a thin piece of plywood. Find and mark the centre of the main round bowl section and screw the template to the timber blank with a thin screw. Then draw around the outside shape of the pattern.

2 Now remove the pattern and cut the outline of the bowl blank on a bandsaw. Save the waste piece for later when you will use it to stabilise the bowl when you cut the waste piece off and shape the handle.

3 Mark the approximate curve of the handle to allow you to cut the bottom relief of the handle.

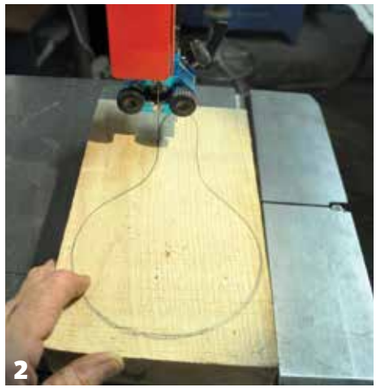
4 In order to cut the relief of the handle, place the bowl blank on the scrap piece from one side and use that piece to support the bowl blank while safely making the cut to remove the waste on the handle.

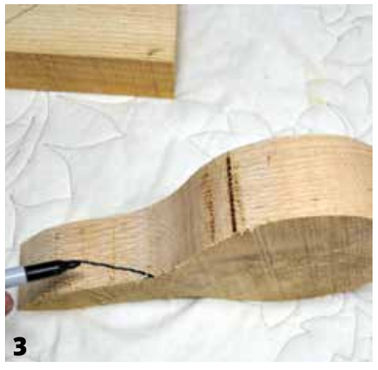
5 After sanding the lower side of the bowl blank flat so it will hold glue, attach a waste block to the back. I use 100 x 100mm scraps of 19mm plywood for this which can be held perfectly in my chuck jaws.

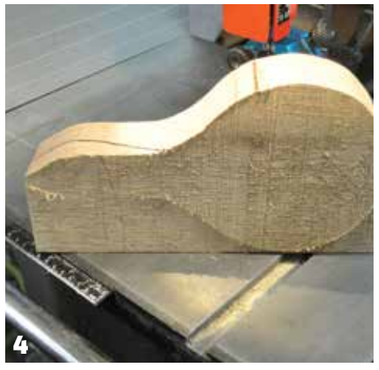
6 Spread adhesive on the waste block and then attach it to the bowl blank by rotating it to spread the glue. Check the waste block and the bowl blank and ensure that you have spread the glue completely. Place the waste block in a four-jaw chuck of adequate size.

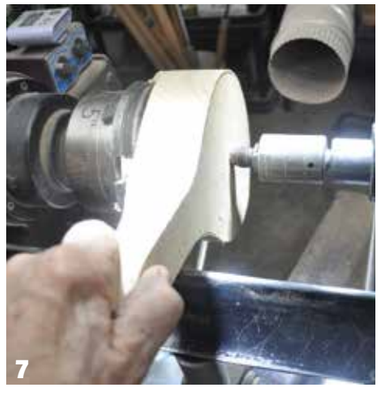
7 Attach the bowl blank to the waste block and bring up the tailstock to hold it in place. Here is where the centre hole from the screw comes into play. You use it to centre the piece on the waste block before putting pressure on the piece with the revolving tailstock centre. Rotate the bowl blank to ensure that the glue has spread and there are no voids.

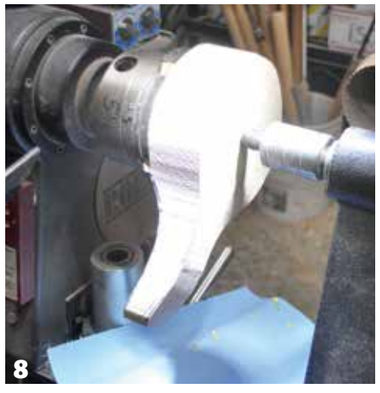
8 Bring up the tailstock and apply light pressure to the bowl blank. It is a good idea to put a piece of paper under the piece on the bed of the lathe in order to catch any glue drips. Allow to dry for at least 30 minutes before taking it off the lathe. Set it aside for a day or more to be sure the glue is dry before turning the piece. Place the bowl blank back in the four-jaw chuck and tighten it carefully to ensure that it stays in place. Now bring up the revolving tailstock centre with its revolving nose piece, in this case a ring-type end, to spread pressure over a wider area and prevent a point penetrating too far, and secure the blank to the lathe. Manoeuvre the tool rest to the headstock side of the work and align it with the handle. Hand-turn the piece to be sure that it clears the toolrest. This is critical since you now have the long handle to deal with and it is all too easy to forget it as it spins round and is hard to see. Likewise, it is also easy to move things, including body parts into the rotating handle.

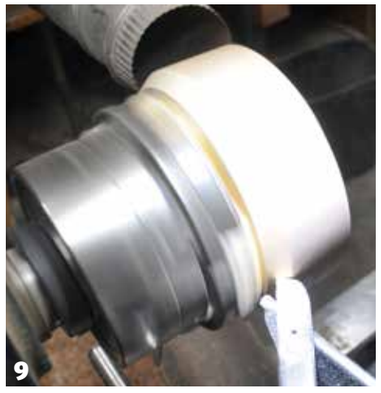












9 Before turning check once again the security of the work in the chuck one last time and, only when totally happy, start turning the base of the bowl as much as you can. Remember, keep all body parts behind the toolrest and never move the toolrest while the work is spinning. The wood is turned at a lowish speed – about 800rpm or so. You can, if you want for extra security, keep the revolving tailstock in place. Since there is very little wood to shape at this stage I used a 16mm double-ended negative rake scraper for this as it gives me a good finish on the piece and works very well shaping on the underside. A bowl gouge followed by a scraper would work well for this project too. Start shaping the base and out into the handle. I don't go out very far on the handle. As you turn the handle there is more air than wood, so you need to maintain downward pressure of the tool on the rest to ensure stability on the hit and miss cut.

10 To know how deep to hollow out the bowl, use the stock thickness measurement and subtract about 13mm from that. Now fit a tailstock drill stock and fit a 13mm drill bit in it. Mark the depth to drill with a marker or tape and drill the hole to depth. If you use the 13mm measurement for the bottom, this gives you room to make adjustments in the shape as you hollow it. I normally leave these bowls with a 6-10mm finished wall thickness.

11 & 12 Carefully hollow out the bowl using a combination of a bowl gouge and scraper. Check the bowl depth and wall thickness with callipers and, once you are happy with the shape of the bowl itself, stop the lathe and sand the inside of the bowl carefully while it still on the lathe, but stationary. Do not sand the outside at this point.

13 Now cut the bowl from the waste block with a bandsaw. Set up the high fence on the saw to the appropriate depth and cut the waste block free from the bowl. I used the matching offcut removed earlier to cradle and stabilise the bowl during the cut. If you don't have access to a bandsaw, use an old-fashioned hand saw to do this job or belt sand off the ply.

14 The bottom of the bowl can be finished now. You can do this in either of two ways. The easiest is to use a belt sander to take off any remnants of the waste block and then carefully sand the bottom with a random-orbit sander. At this time, I generally round the edges of the bottom with the sander. Alternatively, reverse chuck the bowl on the lathe and use a friction drive or jam chuck method between centres and turn the bottom to the shape you wish it to have, leaving a small stub of timber under the revolving centre to carve off and sand off the lathe.

15 & 16 Using a combination of the belt sander, bobbin, random-orbit and hand sanding refine the bowl handle shape as required. Once sanded, the bowl is now ready for a finish. Remove any dust and then apply a food-safe finish of your choice. Don't forget to sign the work. ●