

Turning in the Age of Corona

Episode 17, October 20, 2020

Santa Cruz Woodturners

Photos and Our Future

Since our monthly Show and Tell highlight was snuffed by COVID, we have been regularly sharing our work via photographs...some soaring triumphs, a few humble learning experiences, and some instructive insights. We've shared hundreds of images because we had no other choice, and we're getting better. Some of our pros have been making elite photos for years, as it's an essential part of staying in business.

The first step to making a memorable photograph of a turned work is to turn something beautiful. The second step is to learn how to take a photograph that not only does justice to the piece, but intrigues an audience to learn how to turn, maybe join our club, and maybe buy that piece. Dwain Christensen and Wells Shoemaker are not professional photographers, but they are pretty serious amateurs with more decades behind the lens than beside the lathe. We are collaborating on a monograph intended for turners with cell phone cameras or basic cameras...to make images that pop! We'll do a "Click and Clack" inspired, shared narrative demo illustrated on Zoom in February.

What to do with props you have at home, what to avoid, and how to have fun. Teasers:



Dwain Christensen, textured English walnut bowl



Dwain Christensen, same bowl, different treatment highlighting the texture



Wells Shoemaker, figured maple shallow bowls, nest of two



Raf Strudley—unique shape and delicacy, improbable harmony of sharp lines in the same form as flowing curves. The lighting and contrast to bring it to life



Wells Shoemaker, Juniper knuckle with fantasy invitation, on a black sheepskin for contrast without glare



Larry Dubia, segmented bowl with floating stone. Direct view from above works because the bowl is large enough for starters, but this is also the best way to reveal the remarkable patterns that took so many tedious hours over so many days to create.

Of course, the rock in a pool is the kind of twist that jumps out of Larry's imagination.



John Wells, Redwood as you just don't see it very often.
Contrast and lighting highlight the feathery texture as well as the exceptional artistry.
Well, there is plenty of blackened redwood bark in the county now, but that's another matter.



John Wells, pewter inlay in a magnificent piece of wood, perfect craftsmanship, with a photo that does justice to this respectful convergence. Notice how even in the shaded side, the pewter leaps out.



Another one of Raf's delicacies...with lighting above to create a subtle corona for intrigue without distracting from the pleasing shape, ravishing grain pattern, and the artistic lip.



Maarten Meerman...honey dippers in the alignment of the celestial dipper. Meticulous turning, clever idea, rendered effectively though simplicity. No glare, clutter, or distraction. The ever so subtle reflections make the observer think way beyond the honey!



Craftsman's light. Not all fine bowl photos are made with finished products. This is Roy's left hand, with motion, a serious tool, and a feeling of peaceful creativity because of the lighting.

(See the spray can in the back? That's an oops that might require photo-shop.)



Frank Roest captured this memorable image of a Monterey Pine burl approaching finishing stages on the lathe. The dark background reduces the competition from other objects, and the soft light captures the amazing figure without "burned out" glare.



John Wells...need we say more! But look at the subtle shadows, adding a muted texture to the background without clashing with the stunning multi-axis goblet.

That's it for now. Keep that February 20 date on your calendar. Please continue to send me photos of your work in the meantime. Eventually, our club may need to produce an almanac of our collected works.

Meanwhile, keep your ways slick, your eyes safe, and your heart grateful. We have made it through together this year.

Wells Shoemaker
President, SCW, 2020

