

Every woodworker strives to create something unique. I am at that stage in the hobby where I wanted to expand my expertise. I have been fascinated with mixing mediums such as metal and wood to form a shape. I have been quite taken with the process that an artist, David J. Marks, developed several years ago called guilding and patination. I was exposed to David's work though the DIY Channel on my satellite TV where he had a show for several years and knew that I wanted to learn that technique.



David Marks and Me

I got my chance when I signed up for a five day school in August. The school incorporated turning vessels on a lathe and then guilding and patinating them. The school was held in David's studio/workshop in Santa Rosa. The school was the most intense I've ever taken with most days lasting more than 12 hours with a short break for lunch.



An example of a Patinated Bowl

Ebony/Mahogany/Poplar vessel in preparation for guilding and patination.

David showed us how to incorporate natural shapes and cutouts when guilding. He showed us how to impress lichen, fabric mesh and cotton cheese cloth in our designs to achieve unique patterns. He emphasizes the Notan method which is a balance of natural forces, read Ying/Yang theory. We picked Japanese Maple leaves and pressed them onto our sample

I hadn't been near a lathe for more than twenty years, but with David's tutoring, I became comfortable with my turning in short order. The class, eight students and two shop apprentices each created three vessels and two test boards during the class. The students came from as far away as England and St. Paul MN.

I created a small turned box, a green Walnut vase and an



David's Patinated Vessel

boards. We then covered the leaves with gilding and colored the metal with chemicals after lifting the leaves to create a pattern. The results were quite striking. We also learned that there are no mistakes in this process, just design opportunities. I had several “design opportunities” during my turning. The final results were beyond my expectations although I didn’t have the time to complete the gilding and patination of the vessels. I’ll do that back in my shop.

The patination process involves application of mild acids in a cold process to color and etch the guided surface of the pieces. This was the most dazzling part of the process. One of the applied chemicals colored a silver gilded piece gold then crimson then aqua and finally ocean blue. You can stop the process at any point to achieve the color results you want. The results were beyond impressive. You can see some results of David’s work in this article.



Turned Wall Hanging

I highly recommend his classes ranging from two days to a week in length. A schedule and more information on his work and the patination process can be found at his website: [www.DJMarks.com](http://www.DJMarks.com). Visit the site and prepare to be impressed with his work. More examples of his technique are found on Youtube.com just enter David Marks in the search feature of the website.