

USER REPORT

Woodcut Bowl Gouge with Replaceable Tip

by Brendan Stemp

My new Woodcut 13mm Bowl Gouge with replaceable tip has become my 'go to' tool.

I think most woodturners have a 'go to' tool — it's the one you reach for rather than any other of the same size and style you might have. It's your favourite, sometimes for reasons that you might not readily explain.

Woodcut manufacture a range of bowl and spindle gouges that have replaceable tips. This means that only a short section of the shaft, 50mm in the case of my 13mm gouge, has the bowl or spindle gouge profile. The rest of the shaft is a solid round section of steel rather than having a flute running a significant distance along it.

Rigid Shaft

The solid shaft gives a more positive feel to the gouge and it chatters or vibrates less when, for example, the tool is hanging a long way over the toolrest. For me this is a distinct advantage, because on any job I prefer to use the smallest tool that I can get away with. Where before I might have had to use a 19mm gouge, now I can turn with a 13mm gouge.

Even when the tool isn't hanging over the toolrest a long way, the Woodcut gouge still feels better to use. Due to the rigidity of the shaft, any irregularities in the timber being turned have less impact on the operator and I feel that I have more control over the timber.

Replaceable Tip

The tips are easily replaced. The shaft has a spigot which slots into a hole of the same size in the back of the tip. Locktite or any cyanoacrylate glue is used to hold the tip in place.

To remove the old tip, apply heat to the join to break down the glue, allowing the tip to slide free.

New tips are only a fraction of the cost of a new tool and simply glue onto the existing shaft. You can continue to use the same handle, avoiding the effort involved in changing the handle from a worn out tool to a new gouge.

The replaceable tip is a great idea but the cutting edge still needs to do its job. For example, if inferior steel is used for the bit, a lot more time will be spent sharpening. With the Woodcut gouge I was impressed by the fact that I was sharpening it significantly **less** than the other bowl gouges I own.

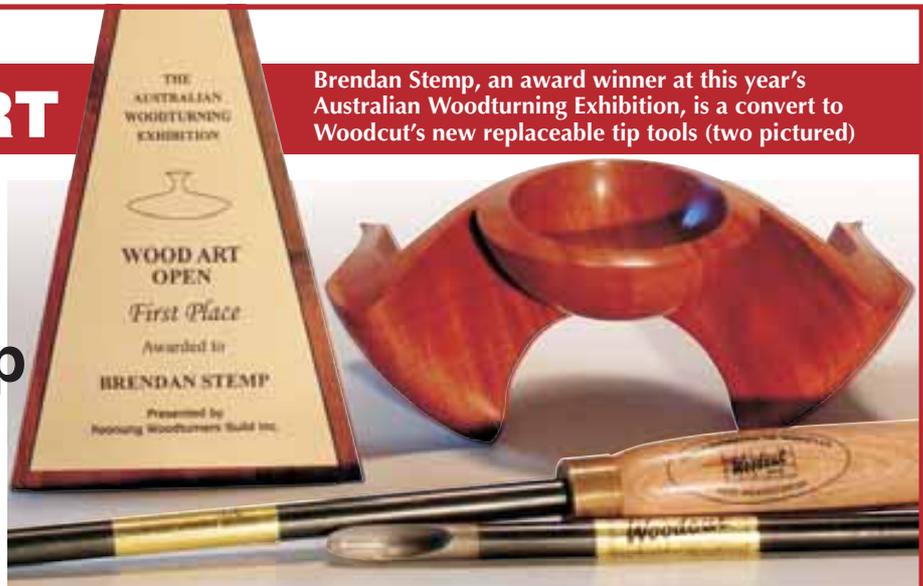
Woodcut claim their tips have a longer than average life and in my experience I would agree with this. It's worth noting that much of my work with the gouge has been done on Red Gum, a reasonably hard timber.

Another claim Woodcut makes is that the tool maintains constant leverage. This makes sense in that the length of the shaft is not being ground away over time as one sharpens the tool.

The replaceable tip gouges can be bought handled or unhandled with the usual price difference between the two. Woodcut claims that the initial cost of the complete tool is lower than comparable non-replaceable tip gouges though I haven't researched other brands to confirm this.

My gouge came with a handle which is generous in length

Brendan Stemp, an award winner at this year's Australian Woodturning Exhibition, is a convert to Woodcut's new replaceable tip tools (two pictured)



but narrower than I would like. In future I will probably purchase the unhandled versions and turn up my own handles, but this is just a personal preference.

I have seen many new ideas in turning tools which turned out to be gimmicks, but this is certainly not one. As the need arises I will be buying more of these 'go to' tools.

The Woodcut replaceable tip tools come in 10mm, 13mm, 16mm and 19mm for bowl gouges; 10mm, 13mm and 19mm for spindle gouges. Prices are \$60-95 for the unhandled models, \$80-105 for the handled. Replacement tips cost \$27-42.

The full range of Woodcut woodturning tools is available from Carroll's Woodcraft Supplies, 66 Murradoc Road, Drysdale VIC 3222, Ph: 03 5251 3874, Fax: 03 5251 3864, www.cws.au.com.

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