

Handles and Feet (and Spouts)

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Without really intending to, my mother challenged me to try something new by asking me to turn a teapot for one of her friends. My immediate reaction was, “I cannot do that.” However, the idea took root in my subconscious and after a few months I thought “hey you could turn and hollow a piece and leave an area for the spout all around the piece and carve off excess all around the piece leaving a spout and then attach a handle,” so that’s what I did. It took a lot of work to carve off all that excess and I thought, “well I won’t do that again.”

Unfortunately, that teapot thing was still rattling around in that empty area between my ears and after a few more months I woke up in the middle of the night thinking, “hey what if you turned it on multiple axes you would not have to do all that carving.” A few nights later I woke up thinking “hey if you can do a spout by turning on multiple axes you could do a handle at the same time.” So thinking I had a solution, I set out to turn a teapot with an integral spout and a handle.” Little did I know, the brain twisting had just begun. Figuring out ways to hold the piece on the differing axes and the proper sequence of turning took a lot of head scratching. Keeping the teapot symmetrical is also challenging since this approach requires the turning of two opposite but identical faces. After some miscues, I finally completed a teapot. Being a glutton for punishment, I thought a footed teapot might look really nice. So I added feet. Much to my chagrin, adding a handle and feet to a spout brought me full circle and I am still doing a lot of carving.

To do a teapot or anything with an integral handle or handles requires some pre-planning in order to retain the various mounting points. It’s very easy to turn off a mounting point as you turn the various faces.

I generally start with a rectangular cuboid (I had to look up the term for a rectangular blank). In the following example, I glued up three pieces of wood leaving the center section longer for the spout to reduce waste.

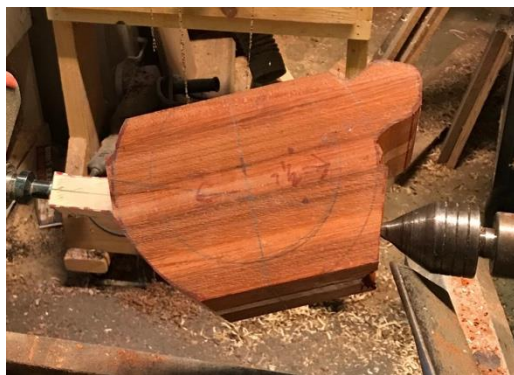


I then used a compass to help lay out the piece and locate the spout and or handle and to locate the various mounting points. I used a square to draw a center line all the way around the blank so that the top, bottom, and side mounting points are on the same axis. The top and bottom points are centered on the blank. I generally locate the two side points above the center line so that I can shape the lower part of the piece without turning off the handle or spout. I also size the piece so that I can leave a recess in the bottom for mounting in my four jaw chuck. The recess is also important if you want to add feet. You can use a tenon for mounting and carving the feet, however, a recess helps to reduce the amount of carving that you have to do. When doing a teapot, I also locate where I need to turn a tenon for holding the teapot for drilling and turning the spout.

After laying out the teapot, I use a bandsaw to trim off some of the excess areas.



I then mount the teapot between centers and turn the mounting tenon for drilling and turning the spout.



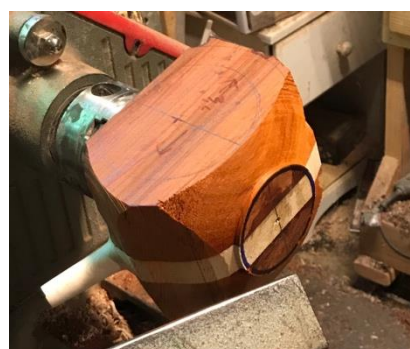
After turning the tenon, I flip the piece around and mount it in a four jaw chuck and then drill a hole through the spout to a depth where it will later be hollowed using a Jacob's chuck. I then turn the spout round.



After turning the spout I take the piece back to the bandsaw and trim off some of the excess on both sides of the handle.



This next step is not necessary but I find it useful to create a reference for maintaining an area for the bottom recess while rounding the sides. I drill a hole in the top and mount the piece in the four jaw chuck using a worm screw. I then partially round the bottom to locate the outside diameter of the mounting recess.



After creating a reference for the bottom area, I mount the piece between centers for turning one side and round that side down to the spout and handle. It's very easy to cut off your bottom mounting area so it's a good idea to stop and check your progress often when rounding the sides. After rounding one side, I flip the piece around and round the other side while trying to keep the sides as symmetrical as possible. I generally leave the mounting points in case I need to remount to the piece to make adjustments.



Despite creating a reference for the bottom, I ended up cutting in to the area that I had planned on leaving for the bottom recess. The reference simply kept me from going even farther and ruining the blank. After turning both sides, I remounted the piece using a worm screw and adjusted the bottom, turned a recess, and shaped the bottom up to my side mounting points.



If necessary you can remount the piece between centers and adjust the sides being very careful not to cut off any of the bottom recess. After doing any necessary tweaking, use the bottom tenon for mounting in a four jaw chuck to shape the top and hollow the piece.



Here is a teapot ready for carving, sanding and finishing.



After completing turning on the lathe, I use a marker to finalize the basic shape of the handle. I also use a circle template to locate and define an outline of the feet on the bottom rim around the recess that I turned for chucking.



I then re-chuck the piece on the lathe and use a coping saw, jigsaw or a drill with sanding discs to remove the excess around the handle. I then drill a hole or a series of holes to begin carving the inside of the handle. If necessary, I use a coping saw to cut out a rough outline of the inner handle. With the piece held in the chuck I then use a Fordham, reciprocating carver, Dremel tool or hand tools to round and smooth the handle and to cut off the side mounting points. I also use a drill and sanding discs to power sand the piece.

I then remove the piece from the chuck and use a saw to make stop cuts on the sides of each foot being careful to not cut too deeply into the body of the teapot. I then carve and shape the feet using carving and sanding tools. Finally, I do some hand sanding in areas that I cannot reach with sanding tools and finish the piece.

I hope this has been of interest. Feel free to email me at cwalker934@gmail.com if you have any questions.