

Woodworking Excellence

BY MEGAN FITZPATRICK

Find inspiration in this award-winning work of your fellow readers.



As a mechanism to show off the amazing work done by you, our readers, this year we held our inaugural "PWM Excellence Awards." Via social media, we invited submissions in five categories: Boxes & Smalls, Seating, Tables, Cabinets & Casework and Turnings, Carvings & Objet d'Art. (For 2014, we'll announce the contest in the February issue of the magazine, as well as online.)

The editors chose a winner in each category (each of whom receives a \$100

gift certificate to shopwoodworking.com), as well as a grand-prize winner (who receives a gift certificate and a free trip to Woodworking in America 2014).

Plus, all entries were posted online for voting in the Readers' Choice Award, for which the overall vote recipient receives a \$100 shopwoodworking.com certificate.

The choices were not easy – each of our four editors selected a different winner in just about every category (and we were sometimes surprised by

one another's selections). But the one on which we all agreed was our grand prize, which goes to Autumn Doucet for her Figured Cherry Chest – it seems to us just about perfect in every way.

The Readers' Choice Award goes to Kevin Bird, for his 3D Box Bowl (page 38).

We were particularly glad to see a number of submissions from young woodworkers (Kevin is one of them), many of whom are still high school and a few who are even younger. We feel confident the future of the craft is in good hands.

In the following pages, we feature both the Editors' Choice winner and Readers' Choice winner in each category, along with a bit of information about each project. Our hope is that you'll find inspiration in the work, and consider sharing your own in 2014. **PWM**

Megan is the editor of this magazine and can be reached at megan.fitzpatrick@fwmedia.com or 513-531-2690 x11348



"Badness you can get easily, in quantity; the road is smooth, and it lies close by, But in front of excellence the immortal gods have put sweat, and long and steep is the way to it."

—Hesiod (circa 750-650 B.C.),
Greek poet

GRAND PRIZE

Figured Cherry Chest

8½" d x 14" w x 10" h

Autumn Doucet,
Wenatchee, Wash.



We found this small chest to be just about perfect in every way – from the bookmatched cherry veneers to the delicate ebony and holly string inlay to the clever hidden brass latch in the mother-of-pearl and abalone flower inlay.

Autumn Doucet made this piece for a disabled veteran who wanted an attractive chest in which to store medications. The recipient cannot grip small items, and that requirement led to the integration of the oversized ebony tray handle with easy-to-grip grooves in the side, as well as mother-of-pearl accent inlay that helps to mitigate what could look bulky without it. The spring-activated lock is easy to open with just the touch of a fingertip or knuckle.

“As a teenager, I whittled a ball in a cage out of a piece of broom handle and have been woodworking ever since,” writes Autumn. Because woodworking classes were largely unavailable to women when she first became interested in the craft, Autumn taught herself. She has been a woodworker for 40 years.

EDITORS' CHOICE

Small Box

5⁵/₁₆" d x 8¹/₄" w x 4¹/₂" h

(approximate size,
converted from millimeters)

Rob Stoakley

Wilton, Salisbury, U. K.



Chip-carved Bible Box

9" d x 12" w x 3" h

Bill Johnson,

Cullowhee, N.C.



For this category, we had four editors and two strong opinions. So, after many failed attempts at cajoling folks into a majority decision, we decided to award two makers the Editors' Choice in the Boxes & Smalls category.

Rob based his burr-elm veneer and Indian ebony box on a much larger version by Robert Ingham. The project is composed of roughly 100 separate pieces of wood on a plywood substrate, and includes custom brass hinges by Andrew Crawford.

What impressed us about this build – in addition to its elegant appearance – is the delightful surprise of the perfectly mirrored inlay on both the top and underside of the top, which is revealed when the piece is opened.

Bill prefers to think of his basswood chip-carved piece as a carving in the shape of a box, and while he acknowledges that it can be used to hold any number of things, the Gothic arch design he incorporated made him think of churches, so "Bible Box" seemed appropriate for the title.

The intricate and impressive details of the lovely carving simply made us think it was a winner.

READERS' CHOICE

Rose Jewelry Box

4 d x 9³/₄" w x 4³/₄" h

Nairi Safaryan

Glendale, Calif.

It's no surprise that Nairi's intricately carved boxwood jewelry box won the Readers' Choice award – the unfurling petals of the flower and the leaves and stem are incredibly lifelike. Also incorporated are such delightful details as an inchworm with tiny feet (look closely at the stem).



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Curvis Sedes II

22 d" x 22" w x 28" h

Jason Bedre

Georgetown, Texas

We thought this cherry and walnut chair was a show-stopper when we first saw it—and that was before we realized the back and seat were coopered from solid-wood pieces that taper out to the edges. Also of note are the dovetailed seat stretchers and splined and dovetailed miters.

Jason calls it an exploration of coopered shapes, traditional dovetail joinery and bent laminations.



READERS' CHOICE

Blacker House Arm Chair

20" d x 24" w x 36" h

Jalen Waggoner,

Frankfort, Ind.

What we knew that perhaps many online voters didn't is that Jalen is still in high school (and his other entry, a Maloof-style lowback chair, also garnered a lot of votes).

Jalen calls this mahogany and ebony chair his first "real" project, and it was quite a challenge because he was working only from pictures. He started by making full-size drawings, then built a poplar prototype to work through the details. The mahogany is resawn from one 16/4 board to ensure a good color match.





EDITORS' CHOICE

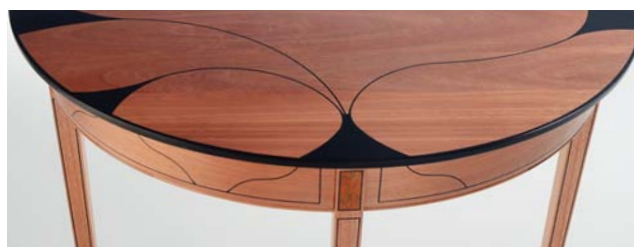
Lyptus Demilune Table

15³/₄" d x 37¹/₂" w x 30" h

Michael McKee,
Charlotte, N.C.

Michael's lyptus with dyed-pear inlay table was our winner due to his elegant coupling of a classic form with contemporary details. It is instantly recognizable as a Federal table made modern.

The design on the top was inspired by the doodles he used to draw in high school, says Michael, and the black edging was inspired by his love for acoustic guitars, where that detail is commonly used.



READERS' CHOICE

Living Queen Anne

11" d x 37¹/₂" w x 29¹/₂" h

Tyler Huhn

Morris Plains, N. J.

As in our Editors' Choice, it may have been the marriage of old and new that impressed voters for the Readers' Choice selection. The maple burl live-edge top is a 2"-thick slab and the base features hand-carved ball-and-claw feet on the front legs. The front legs were glued up to achieve the required thickness, which we noted lent to the traditional base form a more contemporary look that helped to marry it with the top.

But, Tyler, who has been learning woodworking as a high school elective for four years, says the lamination decision was out of necessity due to limited wood selection. Serendipity, then.

Both Tyler and Kevin Bird, the Readers' Choice winner in Turnings, Carvings & Objet d'Art, were taught by Michael Campbell at Morristown High School. Job well done sir!





EDITORS' CHOICE

Bell Cabinet

15" d x 26" w x 62" h

Dean Vande Griend

Story City, Iowa

Dean's white oak, padauk and poplar cabinet has echoes of James Krenov in the design – though Dean hadn't studied Krenov's work before making it (we'll chalk that up to collective conscious). We responded to the meticulous joinery details (including the purposely proud dovetails at the case bottom) and small design touches such as the shape at the top of the door frames mirrored in the feet.

Dean tells us he wanted an element of surprise when the cabinet was open, so he designed drawers that appear to be floating, and he used contrasting wood to draw the eye.



READERS' CHOICE

Jewelry Case

13½" d x 24" w x 51" h

Paul S. Ressler,

New Market, Md.

Paul chose curly maple cockbeading to highlight the drawers in this walnut case piece, which began as a design for an AutoCAD course – after which, he built it for his wife.

This jewelry chest was near the top of our list for the Editors' choice, too; we admire the clever integration of side panels for hanging necklaces and the like.



EDITORS' CHOICE

Soft Spring Wind

4 $\frac{1}{8}$ " d x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " w x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ " h

Nairi Safaryan

Glendale, Calif.

We had a hard time narrowing our choices in this category (and two of Nairi's pieces were among our favorites), but we all agreed that this sculpture in palo santo was a true work of art. The level of detail and meticulous execution—along with the emotion evoked, made this our winner.

Nairi writes that he tries to always incorporate humor into his work, which I think we see here in the slipped shoulder strap—and though the face is blank, there is coquetry captured in the tilt of the head and body position.



READERS' CHOICE

3D Box Bowl

14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " dia. at top, 7" dia. at bottom x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " h

Kevin Bird,

Morris Plains, N.J.

It seems difficult to fathom, but this oak, maple and mahogany segmented turning is Kevin's fourth turned project; he's taking woodworking classes in high school and his first turning lesson was a year ago.

Kevin writes that he was inspired to make this when he saw someone else struggling with a 3D design, and while he had enough woodworking and design experience to design and prepare the turning blank, "It was a colossal task for a novice." We agree.

