



MAKING A CYPRESS VASE

By Peter Charlton

On 11/08/2021 a cypress pine outside 18 Leinster St Paddington was cut down as part of an up grade of the garden. The tree had very deep flutes on the perimeter and a dark red colour in the centre with a pale outer. There were some inclusions where the tree had grown around its own bark. Several lengths were retained.

On 22-8-2021 two short lengths were rough turned and stored till their weight stabilised. I checked their weight daily.

On 3-09-2021 a larger piece was rough turned between centres. Photo 1 shows the bark and the flutes, it was an ugly shape in the beginning.



2.

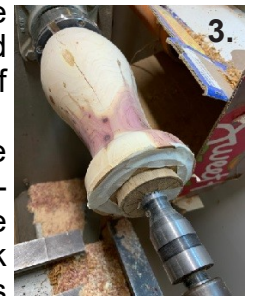
Once the outside was complete (photo 2) I cut a tenon on the bottom then ran a 45mm Forster bit down the centre to a depth of 215mm.

The piece was then moved into the house to dry and was weighed daily. The weight at the start was 1180g and on 19-09-2021 it weighed 885g.

During the drying process some cracks appeared in the heavier section and some of the bark inclusions started to shrink. There was not much distortion as the axis of

the vase was the centre line of the tree.

On 19-09-2021 I finished turned it taking off about 5mm diameter at the large section and cut the neck till the wall thickness was ~10mm. This process involved holding the tenon at the bottom of the vase in a four jaw chuck and the making of a jam chuck to fit the 45mm neck. Photo 3 shows the jam chuck used to steady the rough turned vase as it is finished turned (one of the cracks is visible). Once the exterior was complete the jam chuck was removed and the throat widened. This widening exposed significant voids in the neck area.



3.

On 21-09-2021 I mixed some epoxy resin (left over from a kayak repair) and painted it into the cracks while the resin was runny, then I painted the whole outside. As the resin started to 'gel' I painted it into the deep cracks and voids to fill them completely.

On 22-09-2021 I sanded the resin to 320 grit and finished it with a wax polish. Removing the tenon on the base that I had used to hold the vase while turning and sanding necessitated reversing the piece in the lathe, holding it by the neck in an expanding 4-jaw chuck, see photo 4.



4.



5.



6.

Lesson: the kayak resin is not completely clear but it is easy to sand. This needed to be done by hand with the lathe not turning because the resin became hot very quickly.

The finished vase (photo 5) and again beside an earlier small vase (photo 6). The red colour has faded over the two weeks since the small vase was finished and waxed.