

The Form Beneath the Surface

A Beginner's Perspective

I arrived at Chris' virtual workshop with a pocket knife, a flat head screwdriver that I had "sharpened," a stick that I had mutilated with them, and a puzzled demeanor. A beginner in every sense.

On the surface, I found a man with a British accent, gently going on about tools and sweeps, wood and grain, grips and techniques, safety and discipline, and a keen sense of the fundamentals of education. But I just wanted to carve furniture ornamentation.

As young men do, I hacked away at the surface, seeking the quickest way to the form. I found quickly the error of this method, and repeated a project until I was proud of the result. I repeated it 7 times. With each repetition, a little more of the waste wood came away from the beginner to reveal the Apprentice, one who is willing to listen, and to study.

We are subjects ourselves, the carver lies beneath the waste, and the waste is removed by practice under careful tutelage. WWTV connects you to more than a brilliant asynchronous learning resource. It connects you to a Master, which connects you to his teacher, Gino Masero, and to his, and so on, back to the craftsmen who first hammered steel, who first shaped wood.

Chris shows in great detail, and careful educational design, the fundamentals of carving. He does so within every project. He is diligent in passing on the techniques that will teach you to think like a carver, so you can apply those concepts to any design. I know that I am a beginner, but to the best of *my* ability, I *know* that I apply the techniques of a Master. And every time I carve, a little more of the waste is removed.

When I arrived, I knew nothing. Now I can confidently differentiate a good carving tool from a bad one and know which tools I need and which I do not. I can sharpen them to a point where I could hand it to a master, and he would approve. I can select wood and know its tendencies, cut cleanly and safely, and have produced work of which I would *never* have thought myself capable. Everything offered here is a skill, and it must be earned with practice. I have burned many a carving, and shortened many a gouge, all investments in becoming a better carver. But it is the connection to the true subject of this resource for which I am most grateful. To know that I am a member of a lineage of wonderful craftsmen, using the same tools, in the

same manner, removed by both time and distance, yet connected from across the world - the true form beneath the surface of Woodcarving Workshops.

-Justin Moon