

# “Behind the Lathe”

by Johnathan Burton

## Anthony Turchetta

Penworks, Penchetta Pens & Nibs, Cave Creek Casting... What do all of these things have in common? The answer is quite simply Anthony Turchetta. As with most great pen makers, Anthony has diversified himself into many various aspects of pen making. Whether he is turning on the lathe, pouring a unique resin, or just enjoying the pens he creates, Anthony is enjoying every minute he has to spend on this art.

For many of us, we see pens here and there, but do we ever wonder who made them? I don't mean to say just what the person's name is, but who made them - what type of person. This article is the first in a long series from IAP that will be focusing on individual artists. Here, we will have the great opportunity to learn a little more about the individual pen makers we have come to know and respect.

Not surprisingly, Anthony was not born with a gouge in his hand. Having been born in Michigan, he attended Catholic grade school at St. Francis' before moving to Arizona along with his brother. “I feel like a native Arizonan” he says. All through school, Anthony was able to participate in various art and industrial classes. He was blessed with wonderful teachers along the way that helped inspire him and nurture his talents.

I asked Anthony how he was as a child. After commenting on how quiet he was, he did recall a story from high school that stuck out in his mind.

A group of kids were hanging out smoking on campus, and of course there was Anthony, right in the middle of them. Trying not to get caught, the whole group ended up having to run for freedom. Anthony, following the pack, presumed to scale a twelve-foot barbed wire fence. The only problem was that Anthony also had a cast on one arm. He ended up getting caught in the fence, dangling there like a helpless fish until the school authorities could catch up to him.



The “Trieste” series, one of Anthony's most popular. These pens are created using a Legacy 200 Mill.

*“There is nothing like a fine pen.”*



Anthony's home away from home - the office where you can find him and all of his pens.

***“Just being able to share your hobby with others that know exactly what you are doing is great.”***

Fast forward a few years, and we now find Anthony still in Arizona. He is married with three children, Paul, Anthony, and Vanessa. His two sons work for him in an insurance agency that he has owned for the past 24 years in Cave Creek, Arizona. Right next door, his brother has a music shop where Anthony visits to unwind. He finds joy having family so close.

When asked if any of his children share an interest in woodworking, he answered no. “Their hobbies are music, and they couldn't care less about woodworking, in fact, I try to keep Paul away from tools. You know, some people

should not be around tools,” he laughed.

Anthony is more than happy to talk about his family, his love for his children, and his wife. “I have been married to a wonderful Sicilian for 27 years.” He continued by saying, “I do my thing and she does hers. I can always count on her when I attend the out-of-state pen shows to help man the booth, she is good in sales there.”

What does Anthony do when he's not working in the office or in the shop? Well, he says that pen-making has killed many of his past hobbies. Having been an avid bowler, he bowled for twenty straight years but hasn't been able to pick up a ball in two years. Occasionally, he gets a chance to target shoot but his favorite past time and biggest passion, by far, is golf.

“My handicap has gone up five points since I've started taking my pen-making seriously, but I always find time to play at least two rounds a week. I just enjoy the game, the company and being outdoors. I know I will never be any good at it, but I just love the game and don't take it serious all the time, like some do. I just care to be good enough to win my bets.”

So are you beginning to know who Anthony Turchetta is? Well, most of you might not know that Anthony also would like to be a drummer in a jazz band someday. Until then, his favorite way to relax is to kick back in the shop, smoking a cigar, thinking of what needs to be made and visualizing a beach in the Caribbean with his name on it.

Beginning with a lathe that was given to him as an anniversary gift from his son, Anthony has enjoyed making pens from the start. From the basics, he was a self-taught penmaker for two years until he found The International Association of Pen turners. There, he was able to learn more. “The amount of knowledge, tips, and tricks there, can cut months off experimenting yourself. Seeing others' work, design concepts and materials, is also great. I have met members from local to afar and made some new friendships. Just being able to share your hobby with others that know exactly what you are doing is great.”



Anthony enjoying the view from his showroom.

Anthony continues to work hard defining who he is as a penmaker - a pretty mellow guy. Pen-making is ever changing and Anthony Turchetta is quickly making quite the mark in this unique industry. Anthony was also accepted as a member into the Pen-makers Guild, further demonstrating his amazing abilities as an innovator. Does everything always go according to plan? No, not really. "One night I ended up looking like papa smurf" he said. "A bottle of blue die I was opening, kind of exploded upward into my face, and my whole face was blue, it took almost two hours of cleaning to remove it." So, I guess that even Anthony has bad days.

Although Anthony did not have any mentors to mention by name, he did comment that he greatly admired the precision of Rich Klienz, the flair and art of the Gisi boys, and the production quality and capability of Ed Davidson.

Asking what he's most proud of, he responded by saying his Amber Ripple series. Also, that he was able to have one of the largest fountain pen nib companies fabricate his own solid gold nibs. "That was huge, being able to offer a high-quality gold nib. Without that, it is hard to get your fountain pens accepted by the fountain pen users."

Anthony not only has become quite known for his pens but also turns many other unique items, each made with the highest standard of excellence Anthony can achieve. His pipes, shaving brushes, and other works of art are all available through his website.

What does the future hold for Anthony Turchetta? Only time will tell. Anthony plans to move into a larger space this summer that will be dedicated solely to his showroom and workshop. Not only is Anthony planning to create more works of art there, but he has also added some of the top pen designers and manufacturers to the collection of pens he sells. Whether it be Visconti, Stipula, or Anthony's Penchetta pens, all are right at home at his showroom, Penworks.

Anthony also hopes that in the near future, he will be able to offer completely hand-crafted pens without the use of kits. Working now with a silversmith, and excited to learn how to use his new metal lathe, he will be pushing himself even more to become better and better.

***"My burning desire right now, would be to take a trip to Italy and see all the wonderful pen manufacturing houses."***

# Questions and Answers

**Q: What would you consider your “style” of pen-making to be?**

**A:** Unfortunately, we are all limited in style by the kits we use, and although I have recently purchased a metal lathe to start experimenting with cutting my own threads, I would have to say, just trying alternative materials to use that others don't, like using Lucite, bakelite, casting my own polyester resin colors, you know, things like that.

**Q: What is your favorite material to work with?**

**A:** Ebonite.

**Q: How much time do you spend in your shop?**

**A:** Usually three nights a week, 7-12 pm, and all day Saturday.

**Q: Is there a technique that is your favorite to use?**

**A:** Closed-end style pens.

**Q: What is the hardest aspect of pen making?**

**A:** Trying to find a design that I like.

**Q: What is the easiest aspect of pen making?**

**A:** Spending money buying supplies.

**Q: What thoughts would you like to share with other penturners?**

**A:** Don't undersell yourself or sell your products short.



Top and bottom:  
Private reserve  
Statesman pens  
from Anthony's  
collection.

*For more information  
about Anthony  
Turchetta's work, or to  
find more  
information about visit-  
ing his showroom,  
please visit his website at  
[www.penworks.us](http://www.penworks.us)*

