

## CAST RESIN BLANKS

By Dana Staab

I've been experimenting with resin, and here's what I've discovered so far.

I use *Castin' Craft Clear Casting Resin*<sup>1</sup> that I bought at the local *Michaels*<sup>2</sup> craft store. For colors, I'm using the mica powder found at *From Nature With Love*<sup>3</sup>. They have many colors, a lot of which give a beautiful pearlescence. I also use *Pearl Ex pigments* by *Jacquard Products*<sup>4</sup>. They're much more expensive, but are available at a local art supply store.

I use aluminum tubing in different diameters for molds. I turned some plugs to fit the ends. You don't need mold release agents; just knock the blank out when it sets. The tube molds should be about 6 inches long because the resin shrinks a bit.

I've made some molds by wrapping aluminum foil around all but the top surface of a wood pen blank. No release agent needed because you'll just turn the foil off. If you want to see the blank before cutting and turning it, use a release agent. DO NOT use one with silicone, because if you get any on wood, you'll have big problems with finishing it.

I mix the resin and pigments in 3 oz. paper cups. Mix the resin and mica with a wooden stick until it is completely dispersed, then add the hardener and stir completely. You have plenty of time if you don't use too much hardener and/or the temp isn't too high. Two ounces of resin only requires a tiny bit of mica, less than would fill a cold capsule.

Pouring two or more different colors of resin into the molds without too much blending is problematic at this point. The resin is very thin, like maple syrup. You can control it better in the aluminum foil molds. Pinch the rim of the paper cup to control the flow of resin, keeping the cup close to the surface of the resin below.

I let my resin set for 24-48 hours inside. The resin won't set at less than 60 degrees and takes a long time at less than 72 degrees.

Cut, drill and turn as with any other plastic blank. I sand with 220 dry, then 320 wet, 600 wet, then Micro-Mesh dry from 3200-12000. I put a coat of *Mequiar's Hi Tech Yellow Wax*<sup>5</sup>, a high gloss carnauba, on after assembly.

I plan to experiment with fillers to add a little body to the liquid resin. I'll make some reusable flat molds once I get my formulae and techniques established.

I hope this gives you some more ideas.

Products and sources referenced in the article;

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<sup>1</sup> Castin' Craft Clear Casting Resin  
<http://www.eti-usa.com/consum/castresn/castresn.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Michael's Stores, Inc.  
<http://www.michaels.com>

<sup>3</sup> From Nature With Love  
<http://www.from-nature-with-love.com>

<sup>4</sup> Pearl Ex  
<http://www.jacquardproducts.com/products/pearlex/>

<sup>5</sup> Mequiars  
[http://www.mequiars.com/product\\_showroom/showproducts\\_template.cfm?SrcLine=PP&SrcCat=4](http://www.mequiars.com/product_showroom/showproducts_template.cfm?SrcLine=PP&SrcCat=4)