

# Making a Realistic Cigar Pen

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A.K.A "Wood Butcher"



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# Making a Realistic Cigar Pen

By Bill Bettag

The caveat: This is one method, my method, of making this fun pen, not the only one.

The blank I used is a stabilized maple burl that comes in a standard size and quality or a “presentation” size and quality, the presentation size is a little larger. The ash part of the pen is non stabilized buckeye burl with as much gray in it as possible.

The kit I used is the Apprentice Jr. Gentlemen’s from CSUSA in either gold or chrome.

I begin by squaring both ends of the maple blank, I use a band saw but other tools will suffice. Remove as little material as possible. Glue a 1 1/4” to 1 1/2” long piece of buckeye burl to an end of the maple being certain that the adjoining surfaces are sanded smooth and dust free. Glue with medium CA without using accelerator and clamp the two pieces together allowing it to cure for 20 minutes or more.



Once the bond has cured find the center of each end of the glued up blank and drill a 1/8” hole 1/8” deep in



each end. Cross cut the buckeye burl, ash end, with a fine tooth saw. Mount the blank on your lathe using a spur drive center and secure the other end with a 60 deg. live center in the tail stock, don’t over tighten, the buckeye is soft and we don’t want to “chamfer” the hole in the maple end.



Time to do some turning. I am comfortable with a lathe speed of 2650 rpm; your comfort level may vary from that. Using your favorite tool turn the blank to the largest diameter possible for the blank being used. An overall length of 6 1/4” will look good when finished and about 1/4” will be removed



from the ash end when near the end of the process. Shape the mouth end of the maple to what you think looks best. Turn the ash part to a little smaller diameter so it will look like it has been burned away.





Slow the lathe and sand with 320 sandpaper until it is smooth then stop the lathe and sand the long way to remove the scratch marks. No need to sand the ash, we're gonna mess that up later. DO NOT remove the blank from the lathe yet.

Open the pen kit and remove the parts.

The parts **Below** will be used in this pen.

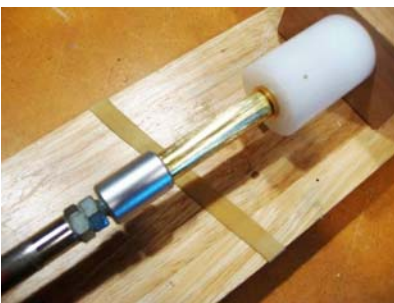


Sandpaper the brass tubes for better adhesion.

The parts **Above** can be discarded or put aside for use elsewhere.



Assemble the components for both ends of the pen being careful to align the parts as you press them together to avoid breaking or bending them.



When pressing the lower end tube, the smaller diameter one, to its components be sure to press it only to the start of the threads and not on to the threads.



Tape the 25/64" drill bit at 2 - 7/8" from the start of the flutes to set the depth of the hole, **not** the end of the bit point.

Tape the 15/32" drill bit at 1 - 7/8" from the start of the flutes, **not** the end of the bit point.



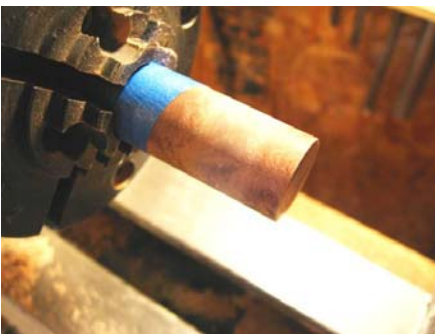




Back to the lathe; Part off the ash end from the mouth part of the pen. With this particular kit the length of the mouth part of the blank must be 3 1/4" long. The ash end will be shorter but around 3" will be sufficient. Remove from the lathe and with painter's tape, protect the mouth end in preparation for drilling.



Mount a 4 jaw chuck on the drive end of your lathe and secure the mouth end of the blank in it. It is very important that you get this as centered as possible, i.e. no wobble when turning, or things won't line up well later on.



Part off any nub and square the end of the blank before drilling with the 25/64" bit. Careful you don't get the wrong bit (DAMHIKT). Keep a really square edge so the joint won't be obvious when finished.



Install the 25/64" bit in a drill chuck mounted in the tail end of the lathe. Lathe speed as slow as it will go and slowly drill the hole up to the painter's tape. I use the hand crank on the tail end to advance the bit slowly clearing the shavings often. Test fit the parts assembly (the one that holds the ink cartridge) to be sure it fits and will go in deeply enough.



With the lathe off test fit the lower assembly in the hole you drilled.

Remove the part assembly and, with a parting tool make a recess that will fit the protruding part of the upper parts assembly. I made a tool from an old screwdriver that works well for this.



Test the fit, it has to be flush or the pen won't close up tight when finished.

Using thick CA, medium CA or epoxy and apply the glue to the hole, not the part assembly, and insert it deep enough that the threads are flush with the end of the blank, NOT the bottom of the recess. Let this cure completely or you will have a real problem later (DAMHIKT). Don't get glue on the threads either.



Tape the ash end as you did the other end and mount it in the 4 jaw chuck. Now turn it to the same diameter as the other end. Remember, get it as centered as possible, make sure it runs smooth and doesn't wobble. Square the end if needed so it will match up to the other end of the pen. Drill the 15/32" hole up to the painter's tape (1 7/8"). It will go into buckeye a little and that's okay. Test fit the assembly in the hole and if it fits, remove the ash end from the chuck.



Use the same glue as before, apply it to the hole, not the pen parts from the kit, and insert the assembly all the way in. Don't get glue on the rim that protrudes. Allow this assembly to cure completely.

When the adhesive is fully cured screw the two parts together and you have a cigar. The joint will probably not be smooth so keep unscrewing the two parts of the pen until you find the place where the "wood grain" matches. Using your favorite smoothing tool turn the assembled blank till the whole thing is smooth and the sides are parallel. You may have to take just a little off the ash also so it's below the maple if you removed enough material to flush these up.



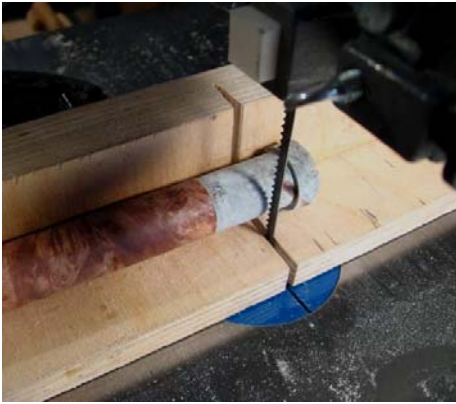
I find that I have to locate the exact start point on the threads when putting the pen together to get a flawless joint. This is fixable but I haven't perfected it yet.



Mount the ash end on the lathe with the spur drive and a 60 deg live center in the hole with the parts assembly and slow the lathe so you can apply 2 coats of thin CA on it but NOT on the buckeye ash. Use accelerator if you wish, then sand with the 1800 Micro Mesh only. Stop the lathe and sand with the 1800 MM the long way to dull and smooth the finish. Remove all gloss and any shiny spots. Don't round over the square edge of the end with the 60 deg center. Remember, it's a stabilized blank and doesn't need 40 coats of finish, just enough to assure an even finish. Now do likewise with the mouth end of the blank, Note the protected threads in the picture and that the nib has been removed, turn between centers, 60 deg. Drive and live centers.







Now for the ash. This is really the easiest part, as you will see. Saw off the end of the ash to the length you desire. I use a bandsaw. Save the little piece you cut off.

Mount a small pointed grinder tip (mine was part of a small set of diamond carving cutters) in a Dremel, or some other rotary tool, and begin poking holes, side grinding, grinding off the edges of the ash and generally just chop up the buckeye burl a bunch. Make some shallow grooves radially on the ash so it looks like it burned in layers. Go to a cigar store, a friend who smokes stogies or find pictures on the net so you know how it should look and copy that. Work your way all around the ash end but don't get into the maple part.



Now we burn it. I have an expensive wood burning tool, but a cheap one will do the job too. Add some "burnt" detail but don't go nuts and overdo it. You can add some more at any time you want but it's hard to get off.



Note the burn ring on the maple that makes it look like it has been hot. I guess it was hot wasn't it?



The band, I went to a local cigar shop and asked if they had any cigar bands from high end cigars. After I showed them what I wanted them for they gave me a whole cigar box full. They may become a client, I'm thinkin'.

Use a good quality spray adhesive, I like 3M, and spray a flattened band on the back side with a light, even coat. Place the band on the cigar where it won't interfere with the separating of the parts and press the band down well.

Last thing is to take that small piece of buckeye burl and rasp, sand or carve dust and small chunks into a small plastic bag to go with your creation; it will make a believer of those who see it.



Some closing thoughts; I'm sure some of you craftsmen, and craftswomen, will have ideas to add to this process and be assured I look forward to learning from you and benefiting from your experience. I have a few ideas as to how to improve the process and the finished product such as, a different species of burl, a better quality kit and some small improvements in the process to make it a quicker build. The first one took 6 hours (used a painted ash for that one), the second took 4 hours and now I can build one in about 2 ½ hours, plus glue dry time. I should have taken photos of all the screw ups but then why publish your mistakes.



Thanks for taking time to look this over and all comments and criticisms are welcome; unless it becomes another dead horse floggin' event.

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