

Dragon Sceptre to Gent Tube Conversion

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Part 1: Let's Begin.

First off this is intended to be more of a how-to.

Here we have a set of gent Dragon scale tubes by Toni. This set is the result of several days of labor intensive work as these are **NOT** canes, I cannot go into any detail but I can say the high skill level that I thought she has was an epic undervalued estimate.

After starting work on finishing the tubes with her it occurred to me this set was very masculine and was missing something. The more I looked at it and slept on it for several days the more it begged me to kick it up. I began to evaluate plating, emblems, inserts and shape. Nothing seemed to fit.

I then expanded the pool and removed the normal boundaries, beyond the series that the tubes were intended for (Gent Jr, Statesman Jr, Venus, Atrax, Emperor Jr). For every kit that I looked at, one kit kept coming back to haunt me, the Nouveau Sceptre, in Black Titanium and 22kt Gold.

This is the end result.



Part 2: Test subjects.

Next up I wanted to show how I went from a Gent Jr to a Nouveau Sceptre.

Instead of doing experiments, test etc on the dragon scale I went digging in my box of disasters and I found a willing candidate for testing. I had a snake skin blank that I butchered greatly but now has a second life in this project.

I measured and found that the lower tube is even on both sides, this would entail some buildup on one side ever so slightly, from 0.512" to 0.480", or a difference of 0.032" or 1/32". The Emperor and Nouveau Sceptre do not have this taper.

The upper tube on the Nouveau Sceptre flares out at the cap. Most of the images that I have seen the cap itself has a slight lip on it.

Also the upper tube is slightly LONGER on the Gent Jr series by about this much.



This minor difference would give some extra spacing between the end of the clip and the center band, which allows us to show more of the dragon scale so all is good with that.

Next concern was this.

How would we get the tube thicker without damaging the tube? Some more insight into the tube itself, sanding, in any grit, will damage the tube, kill the effect, change everything about it so there is strategic sanding only. Some said cast it and cut it down, which was tempting but cutting down into something so delicate that will get destroyed by just one mishap of sandpaper does not thrill me. The only viable option was to build up the gap with CA and hope it does the job.



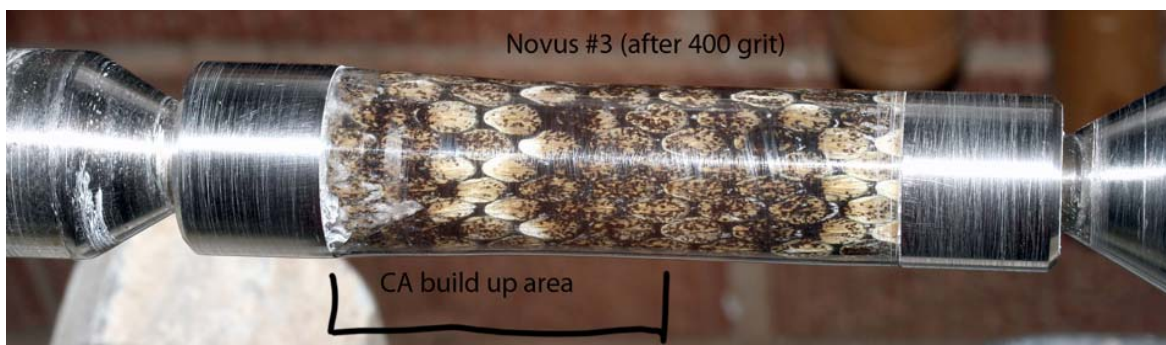
- The target bushings, of the Nouveau Sceptre, were waxed in its entirety. I used Renaissance Wax because that is what I had available.
- The test subject, cracks, flaw, damage and all was filled in with one pass of thin CA and allowed to dry (no spray on this one) I also got it on both thumbs and index fingers intentionally.
- Thick CA was then applied, well quite thick. It went on as thick as the RPM and tube would allow, when it started to sling glue from the tube it is saturated.
- I allowed the glue to sit and then started moving it over the blank from end to end. One side, the non-build up side, received very little and never on or close to the bushing.
- Once the glue started to dry I switched to using my fingers to work the CA into the areas I needed.
- After it was dry I sanded off the beads that formed in some areas with 80 grit. I then repeated this until it was over the bushing and half covered on the top.
- 80 grit Abranet was used and sculpted to shape.



- I skipped several grit steps and cut corners. I next used 240 grit then 400 grit.



- Then hit it with Novus #3 to see how bad things were.



- Lastly before/after shot. This is not going to win any beauty contest, nor is it for production. It is a proof of concept.



It seemed that yes, building up 1/16" with CA is indeed viable. This means tube repair for other kits could be used, over cut, over sanded tubes could use this method to salvage.

Part 3: Taming the Dragon

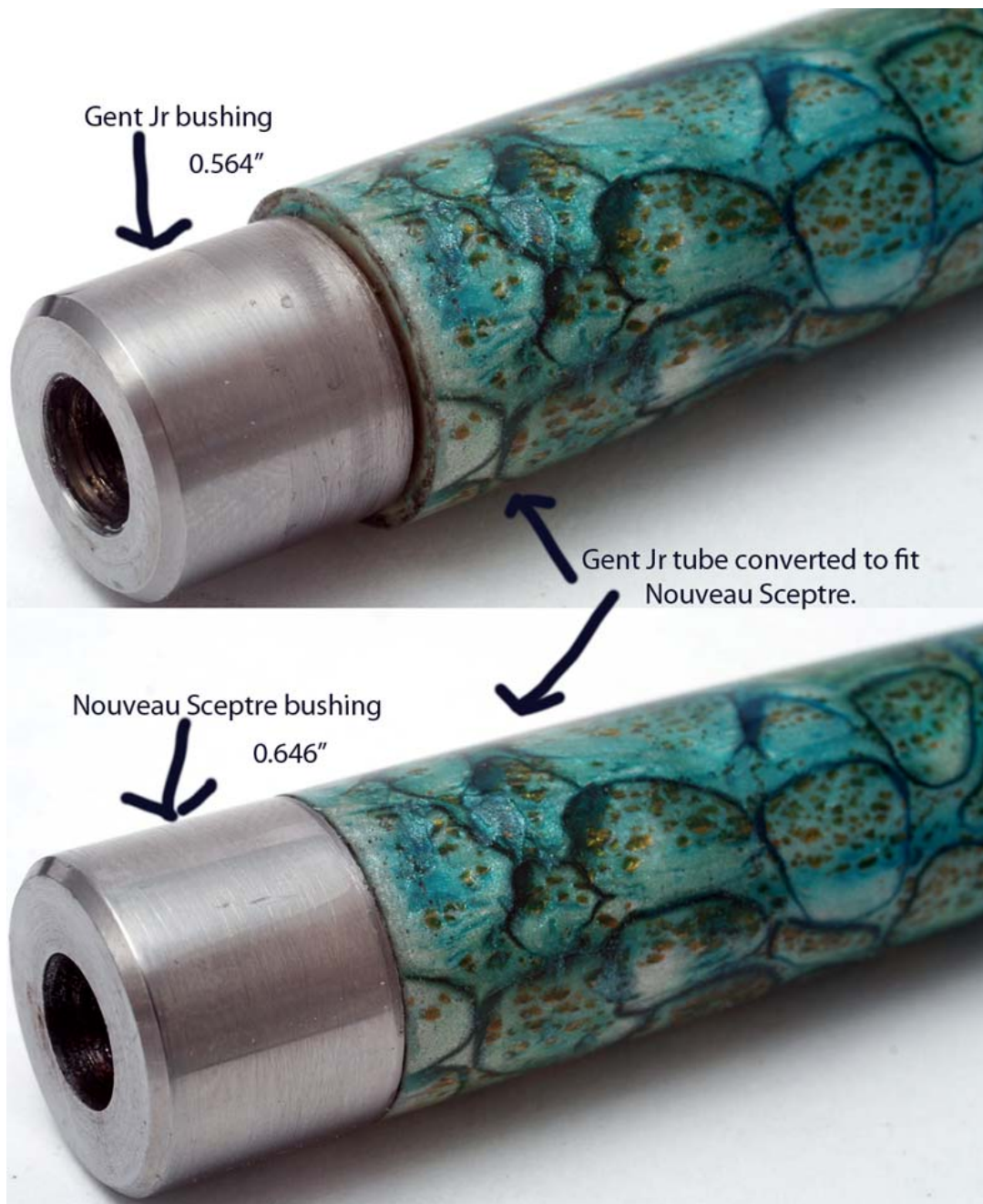
Today was the big day; I was going to convert the upper tube. Sorry but the photo's are lacking during work as my 1,000% focus was on doing the deed and making NO mistakes.

Here is what our goal is.



I did not pull stops, cut corners or the like. I used Abranet in the following grits, 80, 240, 400, 800. I also used this 1,500 grit that I have of regular sheet paper. I also used Novus, #3, #2 and #1 (#1 is a cleaner and mostly rubbing alcohol for cleanup) The CA that I used was UFO Odorless Thin and Odorless super-gold+ THICK CA. This stuff is not cheap but quite a beautiful thing when doing projects like this. I then used a 16x loupe to inspect the finish.





The lower tube was build up with CA in the same method the day before the upper tube was done. Reason for that is because it was minute and took no time at all to finish.

It also helped with encouragement for the upper tube.

Part 4: Lessons Learned



- Toni is an exceptional artist with epic loads of talent and skill.
- CA can be used to sculpt.
- Never be afraid to experiment, think outside the box, and be constructive, creative and original.
- I think I broke the 'IAP how many coats of CA you apply' rating :) see the "[How thick is your CA finish?](#)" rating. Guess my CA is over 9,000.
- Novus is epic! Can almost clean up 400 grit marks from CA, almost. 600 grit is normally where I start using it at and 800-1500 is optimal range to switch over.