



Nova Woodturners' Guild

Nova Scotia, Canada www.novawoodturnersguild.com

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Guidelines for Competitors

The following set of Guidelines is intended to assist turners when preparing entries for the annual NWG Competition. These are not rules, but intended to make life easier for competitors, judges and competition organizers and a more successful show for all involved.

Before you begin:

Design — What are you trying to create?

A successful entry is the result of careful design with obvious thoughtfulness and rationale used in determining proportions, structural integrity, materials, intended use, finishes, colours and decoration.

Things to think about:

- Is your piece functional, artistic or a combination of the two?
- Are your selected materials (wood species, size, etc.) right for the piece you are creating?
- Remember the 30×30×30 cm (12×12×12 in) size limit and the 50% mandrel rule.
- If your entry has multiple parts, do they complement each other? For example, a pen and pencil set might be entered as a single entry and they will be judged as a set. To do well, they must be of similar quality and standard, look good together and be of the same or complimentary wood (species, grain pattern, etc.)
- If you are using non-wood components (e.g., ice cream scoop or pen kits), does the choice of kit or finish complement the wood or detract from it? For example, a highly glossy chrome finish on a kit may tend to overpower plain wood species and your effort in turning will shrink into the background. Good results are often seen with very shiny kits when done with woods with bold grain and colour (e.g., Zebrano or Tulipwood) or with spalted or highly figured woods like burls. Satin finishes may be a better choice with woods with simpler or more subtle grain and colour.

Turning/Finishing Process

Once you have settled on a design, it's time to get started turning. This is a competition and pieces will be judged on five (5) separate and equally weighted criteria. This means that great care needs to be taken at each step in the process. Make sure you don't rush or skip on any step to ensure the best overall result. Remember, each judge will view your work based on their own specific specialties.

The criteria are:

1. Craftsmanship
2. Tactile Qualities
3. Appearance
4. Uniqueness
5. Difficulty

It is good to review the "Competition Judging Guidelines" document on the NWG website to see what types of things the judges will be looking for in each criterion. Here are some pointers to help you excel.

Does the overall design fit with your skill level and ability? While it's good to push yourself for competition, it is important that your pieces are executed well. A daring design with turning problems and finish imperfections will not do as well in scoring as a simpler design that is executed to a high standard.

Precise techniques will vary depending on the category (spindle / faceplate, etc.) and your design intent, but in general:

- Curves should flow smoothly and feel good
- Changes in curves should flow smoothly
- Wall thickness should be consistent and even, and appropriate to the intended use (e.g., thicker in a fruit or salad bowl, thinner in a decorative piece)
- Insides of vessels as well as outsides should be smooth and free of tear out / ridges, finish applied correctly
- Any inlays, void filling or crack repairs should be smooth and flush with the wood surface (unless there is a design reason otherwise and this must be explained on the Competition Judging Form under Turner Comments)

Finishing is an area where pieces often fall short. Overall scores in a class are often quite close and the scoring for 'Finish' can make the difference between not placing and winning your class.

Make sure your surfaces are free of sanding scratches. The judging area is typically very well lit with good overhead lighting and often large windows with diffuse natural light. Make sure you examine your piece carefully in bright lighting for areas that may need more sanding attention.

The choice of finish (i.e., satin, semi-gloss or high gloss shine) is largely a matter of personal preference. Note that high gloss or buffed finishes will often highlight any sanding scratches or tear-out, so make sure your surface preparation is thorough.

Note that the display location is not precisely climate controlled and may be drier or more humid than your shop. Pieces can change shape dramatically in just a few days while on display (e.g., cracks opening up, snug lids becoming loose, getting wobbly on uneven bases, etc.). Keep this in mind and try to make sure your entries are completely dry and stable before the show commences.

Preparing Your Entries

Paperwork

- Make sure you complete one (1) Competition Cover Sheet with your personal information and list of entries. This is the only form that will have your identifying information on it and will be used by the Committee to register and track entries.
- Complete three (3) Competition Entry Documentation Sheets for each entry; one original and 2 photocopies are fine. These are presented to the judges with your entries so that they each have the same information on your piece(s).
- Complete as much of the requested information as possible. It gives the judges the best idea of what your intent was and any challenges you encountered and overcame during the production.
- Titles:
 - Titles for pieces are not necessary, but you may choose to give your entry a particular title. If you choose a title that has an unclear, cryptic or personal inspiration, it is a good practice to explain the inspiration of the title in your description to avoid confusion for the judges.
- Description / Intent
 - Describe what you were trying to achieve with your design and the piece in general. This will help the judges to understand why you made certain choices in the creation of your piece.
 - If there is anything hidden or unusual in your piece, it is good to point that out in this section so the judges do not miss aspects of your work.
 - Any particular challenges you faced in the creation of the piece are good to describe, which may relate to the grain, problems with the wood or reasons for selecting your finish technique. These help the judges understand your choices.

Packing

- Make sure your pieces are well packed, particularly for fragile or multiple part pieces.
- Any particular instructions for unpacking should be on a separate sheet packed on top of the packing material so that it is the first thing the Competition Committee will find when unpacking your entry. Adding a photograph of the piece where a particular

presentation is required for proper display would be very helpful to the Committee in meeting the turner's intent.

- Clearly mark your name on the outside of your packing containers and mark the 'Up' direction for fragile pieces.
- Please use only rigid packing containers for your turnings.