

In the workshop with... Ronald Kanne



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RONALD KANNE

Dutch woodturner **Ronald Kanne** shows us around his workshop

Previously – and still sometimes – a sound engineer in radio and TV, Ronald Kanne discovered woodturning around 10 years ago. He grew up six metres below sea level, telling us: “Like a real Dutchman should!” His hometown was a small place, called Marknesse, in the North East Polder, in the Netherlands, but Ronald is now based in Nieuw-Wehl in the countryside in the east of Holland. Here, he tells us about his inspirations, his start in turning, plans for the future and more...



A selection of bird feeders

How, when and why did you start turning?
I don't remember exactly. It must have been about 10 years ago when I wanted to make a specific little thing for restoring the old farm where I live. I had previously seen an old man at a market turning and it looked so easy! I thought “I can do that” and bought a lathe – you can find hundreds of cheap lathes on eBay. My turnings were bad, but it was the machine and gouges that were no good. After buying a book and slowly learning how to present a freshly sharpened tool to the timber, I became addicted. I often drove home from work late and would think: “Step on the gas and I'll be home by 10, then I can eat and make shavings for at least an hour!”

What and who are the greatest influences in your work?
Nature. My biggest aim is not to make beautiful artistic pieces, but for the wood to be beautiful.

If you were to offer one sage piece of advice to someone what would it be?
If you want to have fun while turning, make sure you use decent tools and a heavy lathe.

What music and which book are you currently into?
The book I am reading is *De eeuw van mijn vader* – translation: *The Century Of My Dad*

– by Geert Mak. The book is about the history of Europe from the late 19th century until a few years ago, told through the lives of the family of the writer.

What is your silliest mistake?
To start reading *De eeuw van mijn vader* by Geert Mak...

What has been your greatest challenge?
The first time I sold 30 identical bowls, which I had to produce in time for a deadline, but knowing my skills were not yet good enough to do so. I succeeded, it was done in time and I learned a lot from it.

Name one thing on your turning 'to do' list?
Make small delicate things, like the pieces by Hans Weissflog. I particularly admire a piece called 'Small Treasures II', which is a pierced star bowl with a stand made in African blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*).

Tell us about the piece you are currently working on?
There are always several things I'm working on at the same time. My kiln is working now and is filled with lots of bowls, walnut (*Juglans regia*) peppermill blanks and platter blanks as well as a few huge beautiful ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) pieces. Just out of my workshop is a thin lampshade and I've just finished



ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: Two examples of Ronald's spalted beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) bowls

some delicate work for the restoration of a 'Friesche staart klok'. I'm also working on a bunch of bird feeders as well as four bowls made from a chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) tree. The tree fell down last autumn. One of my customer's four children are moving out of the house this year and she wants to give all four of them a bowl made out of the tree – the children played, cried, ate and lived in and under it. This is the best job there is!

What is the one piece of equipment or tool you would not be without and why?
When producing bowls, I use my own designed tool: a piece of wood with two nails in it, which scribe two lines in the bottom of the bowl. On wet wood, the outer line is the minimum tenon size; in dry wood the inner scratch is.



Ronald's highly innovative, patented tool

If you could change one thing what would it be and why?
Time – more of it and more room as well as a bigger workshop! But that is three already...

What is your favourite type of turning?
I particularly enjoy rough turning wet wood into roughly shaped bowls.

If you had one wish, what would you wish for?
What could be better than complete peace on earth?

If you could have one piece of equipment, what would it be and why?
That's more or less asking 'what if you were alone on a desolate island...', so I think the question is irrelevant... ●



Remounting a dry bowl



Demonstration with Austrian turner Manfred Gangle



Unloading stock



Ronald in the shavings with his chief quality control



Salt, pepper and nutmeg mills

LIKES

- College woodturners are nice people. They never stand behind their own ego
- The sometimes unexpected grain in the fresh wood, while making a bowl
- I like to teach and demonstrate now. I love to explain what I do as well as I can and when I see a student having a 'lightbulb' moment
- Being physically tired after a day of chainsaws and turning wood blanks
- That I can only find four dislikes in woodturning!

DISLIKES

- The dust
- No matter how much I try to clean myself of shavings, I always find shavings in my whole house...
- Production turning is working on your own – that's nice for about three days...
- If you're turning on a certain level, all the gear you need is expensive, expensive, expensive!

HANDY HINTS

- Undertake a course with a well-known woodturner to improve your skills. I took several, including one with Glenn Lucas. It was fun and worth the money. Woodturning gets to be more fun if you are better at it!



Concentrate and look serious!

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VIDEO LINKS

To watch Ronald at work, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVf6CZ8IVSU, or www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLZ-beMeJuc