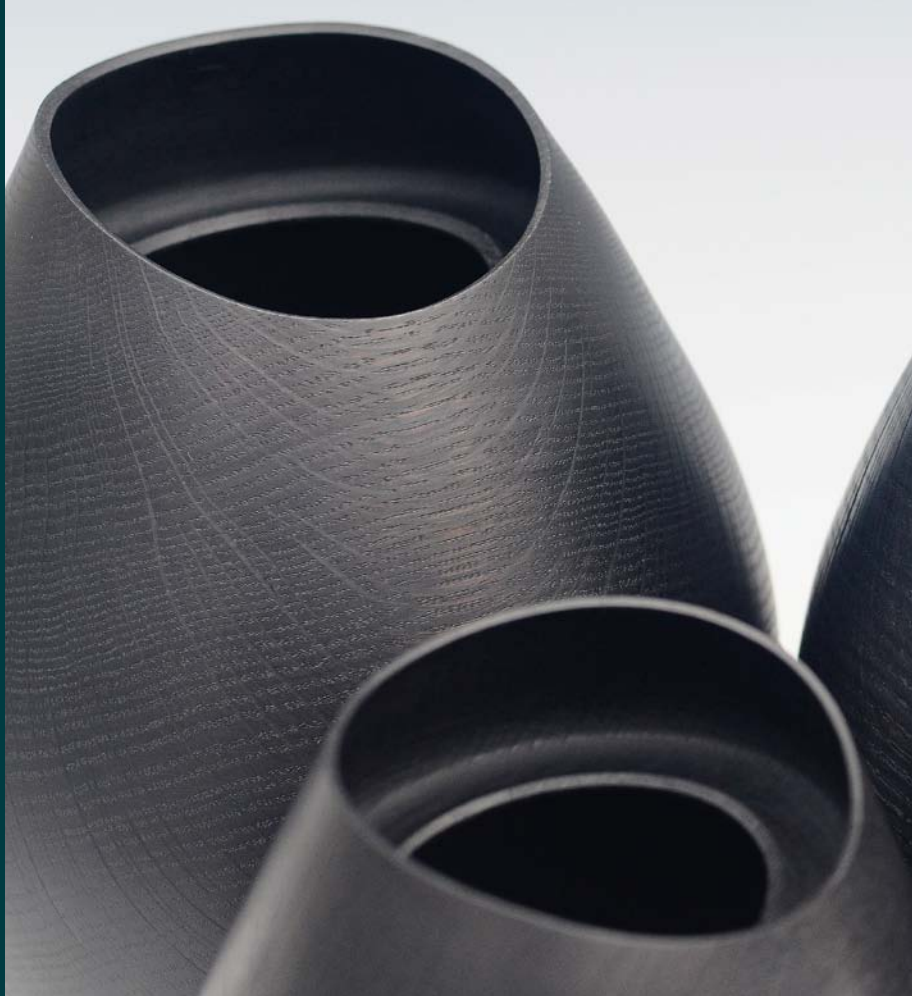


Irregular Perfection

Liam Flynn, born into a family of woodworkers in the small town of Abbeyfeale, Ireland, was “banging around” in his father’s shop by the time he was 8. His father didn’t use a lathe, and it wasn’t until a few years later that Flynn tried turning at a friend’s house. “Straight after that,” he says, “I had to have my own machine.” And before long, “I decided I didn’t want to do anything but this.” With no access to a teacher, Flynn learned by turning and reading. Thirty years on, working in the same shop his father and grandfather used, Flynn makes his living by turning vessels. He chainsaws his blanks from straight-grained sawlogs and turns them green. As the vessels dry they distort slightly. Flynn carries that irregularity into the textured surfaces he carves, working without layout lines. Flynn says the overall shapes he turns haven’t changed radically over the years. Essentially, he says, “I’m still trying to do the same thing. I’m trying to find the perfect line, the perfect form.”

—Jonathan Binzen



Photos: Liam Flynn

How They Did It Turn to p. 96 to see how Flynn produces these beautiful forms, both on and off the lathe.

Audio Slide Show To see the chips fly in Flynn’s Irish workshop as he pursues the perfect form, go to FineWoodworking.com/extras.