

Boxes that Turn Heads

Steven Kennard's winding path through woodworking has included stints making theatrical props, building furniture and kitchen cabinets, restoring antiques, and refinishing grand pianos. But through it all, he says, "My passion has always been the turned wooden box." An Englishman who now lives in Nova Scotia, Kennard is entirely self-taught. He bought his first lathe in the late 1970s so he could turn replacement parts for antiques. Within a few weeks, he had turned his first box. Thirty years later, he's still intrigued by the mysterious voyage each box provides, and



is able to sell them for as much as \$2,500. For most of his boxes, Kennard favors African blackwood for its color, density, stability, and forgiving grain structure. He often uses cocobolo and thuya burl as accent woods. Kennard engraves the blackwood with a rotary tool fitted with jeweler's burrs. He does the work freehand and without laying out the design. "I'm not a great measurer," he says, "I like to work by feel."

—Jonathan Binzen



Photos: Steven Kennard

How They Did It Turn to p. 98 to see the precision and planning that goes into one of Kennard's turned boxes.

Pro Portfolio For an audio slide show featuring more of Kennard's work, go to FineWoodworking.com/extras.