

I have been interested in woodworking for as long as I can remember. I remember being a little kid finding a nail and having to pound it into a piece of wood. I would constantly “borrow” my father’s tools (usually leaving them where I used them” and making whatever I could. It was in high school that I had my first exposure to turning though.

I took all of the wood shop classes that were offered, and in my senior year I chose a project that required turned legs. I was not permitted to turn them free hand, but did get an understanding of how the tooling works and finally got the opportunity to do a free hand turning the last week of class. I still have the table that I made.

Anyway, I have always been handy with mechanics and started playing with a small motor that was in the garage. I mounted a piece of 2X6 to the shaft (just with a hole through and a nut) and sharpened some screwdrivers and wood chisels. I really did not make anything, but I had some fun.

Well, lets fast-forward to about four years ago. I had a friend that had an old ShopSmith 10ER that was missing most of the parts. I was told that if I could get it out of the basement that I could have it. Once I got it out I found that it was missing the tool rest, and just about everything else. It only consisted of the tubes, the headstock, and the carriage. I was able to find the tool rest and stuff to make the lathe work through ShopSmith.



This set up has worked well for me since then, but I really started researching an upgrade and had to relocate my shop to the garage. Here are my results.

As most people who try turning quickly find out, turning is addictive. I am no exception to this rule. I turn every chance that I get. I primarily turn traditional bowl forms, but am beginning to get into hollow forms and natural edge turnings. Anyway, I have been interested in getting a new lathe for about four years now (yes, the same amount of time that I have had the SS). I put a lot of time into researching what lathe I would be satisfied with while staying within my budget (about \$1500) and soon found that there really are not a lot of options. Of course, there are the mini/midi lathes, and they are great, but I am

interested in turning larger faceplate stuff. I could go with the typical Jet 1236 (or other similar models), but when I looked at them I did not feel that they could handle what I wanted them to do (most of the low speed settings were too fast and they seemed much too light). From the beginning of my search I kept turning toward the Nova 3000.

First, you must understand that I am a very frugal (read cheap here) person. I am always trying to find a way to do or get something for less than it is worth, and that applies here. Perhaps that is why I kept looking at the Nova. It is very easy to modify this machine, there are additional bed sections available, there is an outboard turning arm, and it is very easy to upgrade the motor to an Electronic Variable Speed drive system. I guess by now you can tell that I chose the Nova 3K. I will be picking up my new lathe from the Delaware Woodcraft store on Wednesday November 17, 2004. I am not saying that this is the perfect lathe, but I really think it will work well for me. I am aware of the potential problems, but I also feel that I can overcome them with a little thought and patience. I am going to use the bench that I built for my SS (with a little modification) until I am certain of how I want the real one to function. I plan to have a lot of weight built into the bench, and being very short (5'-5") I will surely build it to suit my size.

I have made quite a few very nice bowls on the SS, but its limitations are really starting to become bothersome. The bearings are starting to become a problem, and I am very tired of needing a hammer and allen wrench to adjust the tool rest. I am also looking forward to a time when I can start a bowl between centers, and using the tailstock to reverse turn a bowl or vessel.

If I had a larger budget, I would not be buying this lathe. I would look into the Powermatic 3520A, the Vicmarc 300, the One-way 2436, and the Stubby, but in this part of my life, they are not possible. I will bide my time with this tool, possibly upgrading the motor as I mentioned above and adding the outrigger. I have read a lot of reviews and comments on the Internet and it appears that more people have been happy with the Nova than have not.