

Product Review

Kallenshaan Woods Laser-Cut Pen Body Kits

by Kurt Hertzog

Often you'll see a pen that really knocks your socks off and the obvious question to the owner is, "It is so beautiful, where did you get that?" Generally, the owner received it from someone as a gift or else bought it from a penmaker, but once in a while, the owner is the maker. Depending on their skill level, the eye-catching pen could be one of their own creations. It can be inlaid, carved, pyrographed, painted, or some other means of creative pen blank ornamentation could be employed. For those who haven't gotten to the point of creating their own blanks or performing exotic after-turning decoration, there is a family of kits currently available that makes it easy for most anyone to create a real eye-catching pen.

Kallenshaan Woods is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is a father-and-son business that got its start in the laser-engraving arena. Ken Nelsen has been doing custom laser work for years, and recently, with the addition of his son Colin in the business, has branched out into the laser-cut kit business. Currently, they offer a wide array of different kit designs and are feverishly working on more to add to their line. These range from relatively simple Christian Cross inlays (see **Fig. 1**) to piano keys to state flags to puzzle-cut arrays. The laser-cut pen body wood kits I reviewed were for the Sierra and Baron pen kits.

Depending on your skill level, *Kallenshaan Woods*

offers something that is within your capabilities. Some of the *Kallenshaan* kits consist of a simple wooden sleeve that the tube is glued into and then a simple contrasting



Fig. 2

The Moonscape, like the Cross, is an easy kit that produces an eye-catching pen.



Fig. 1

The Cross is an easy kit for the newcomer to pen turning.



Fig. 3

The Stars and Stripes produces a stunning result, yet is easy to do.



Fig. 4

The kits have complete instructions along with everything needed, including the rubber bands used during assembly.



Fig. 6

There are 35 kits currently available with more to come. You'll find something of interest for your skill level.



Fig. 5

The parts to the kits are top-shelf—being laser-cut to fit precisely.

insert(s) is glued in. The Cross, Fisherman, Tuxedo, and Moonscape (see Fig. 2) are examples of the sleeve concept. If you are relatively new to pen turning, I suggest that these would be better choices for starters. But as your skills progress, you'll probably want to move into the slightly more difficult kits.

Although some retailers call it the "Gatsby," the Sierra pen kit is a single tube kit that is pretty easy to make and is offered by just about every vendor who sells pen kits. Regardless of the name, the drill size for the tube is 27/64", and depending on the manufacturer, the tube length is 2-1/4"—give or take a touch. The pen kit can be bought from your favorite kit seller, and the Kallenshaan kit is used in place of the solid wood body. In other words, the Kallenshaan Woods products are the actual wood cladding to which the brass tube(s) is glued.

Other Kallenshaan kits, for example, the Stars and

Stripes (see Fig. 3), Canadian Flag, Puzzle (see Fig. 4), and Grand Piano, are available for two-piece pen kits such as the Baron—which again is offered by just about every one of the major woodturning retailers—Statesman or Jr. Gentlemen. These kits are a bit more difficult to make, but are certainly doable, they just require a bit more patience and dexterity. The parts are dyed and made to have a true-to-life color scheme.

The kits are all-inclusive. The wood parts are precision cut from the appropriate color species or are dyed to provide that color (see Fig. 5). The instructions included with the kits are very detailed and the packaging even includes a color photograph of the finished pen. Kallenshaan's kits even include the miniature rubber bands needed to hold the pieces in place while you are gluing them together. All you provide are the base pen kit, adhesive, and the pen turning skills. Some of their kits are available only for the Sierra-style, some only for the Baron-style, and other kits are offered for both. At this point, I think there are 35 different kits available, so there will surely be something of interest that will jazz up your pen kit preference (see Fig. 6).

I found the kits fun to do and was extremely pleased with the quality of everything related to the project. The instructions were comprehensive and the individual kit pieces were extremely well cut and colored. The end results are truly stunning. Of course, the mileage may vary based on your pen turning experience, but you really can get a giant step forward using any of the kits from Kallenshaan.

They can be ordered directly through their website at www.kallenshaanwoods.com. If you frequent the various woodturning symposiums, you will often see Ken and Colin there demonstrating and laser-engraving while you wait. As Siskel and Ebert used to say, Kallenshaan Woods products deserve a "two thumbs up."

