

Behind the Scenes

with Kurt Hertzog



Klingspor's Woodworking Shop

When you hear the name Klingspor, usually two things come to mind. First, there are the Klingspor abrasives which are available to hobbyist, professional, and industrial users worldwide. Founded in 1893, the company has served the abrasives' marketplace for over 120 years. The second is Klingspor's Woodworking Shop. Not nearly as old, the foundation for this company was set in 1989 when the president of the North American Division of Klingspor tried an experiment to avoid paying for the disposing of quality abrasive products that were end cuts or too small for cost-effective packaging. The idea was to make them available to the amateur woodworker at a reasonable price. An advertisement was placed in *Fine Woodworking* magazine, offering a box of twenty pounds of mixed short pieces and cutoffs for \$29. The idea took off and the rest is history.

With the success of the twenty-pound box of abrasives, a separate company was formed to continue the offerings and expand into the newly found customer base. The new company, Klingspor Corporation, produced *The Sanding Catalog* as their marketing tool. Along with Bosch as an initial supplier, they branched into the tools and equipment of woodworking. In 1991, they opened the first retail store—the Woodworking Shop in Hickory, North Carolina. In 1997, the Charlotte store opened, 1998 saw the Winston-Salem store open, and 1999 brought the Raleigh store into operation. Though the Charlotte store has since closed, the remaining three retail stores offer walk-in shopping to the woodworking enthusiast or professional.

Even though Raleigh has the largest retail space with about 10,000 square feet, the Hickory location takes care of the Internet and catalog sales, as well as their own retail store operations. The sales are roughly split 40% retail and 60% direct sale through catalog and Internet. Producing six catalogs a year and sending out over 600,000 of them gives the in-house catalog creation folks plenty to do.

Nearly every turning club member knows of the discounts offered to clubs participating in Klingspor's mailing program and that perk touches club members wherever they are located. Klingspor has a long tradition of supporting nonprofit woodworking associations, guilds, and teaching programs through discounts and group buys. Locally, all the stores have nearby guilds and crafts organizations that they assist, including pro-

viding club meeting locations at the stores. The Hickory store hosts the North Carolina Woodturners Association (a chapter of the American Association of Woodturners), the Western Piedmont Woodcrafters, and the Catawba Valley Woodcarving Club.

Once a year, Klingspor's Woodworking Shop holds the "Extravaganza." This year, it is entering its fourteenth year and has been a huge success. Klingspor originally teamed up with Delta Machinery to hold the first Extravaganza in Hickory, with the premise that it should be a woodworking show where the attendee pays nothing for admission and nothing for parking. Since the beginning, they have kept that tradition. Show up, park, and come in to the two-day event to enjoy everything woodworking for free. The Extravaganza is held at the Hickory Metro Convention Center located about two miles from the Hickory store. Using 30,000 square feet, the show features free classes and demos, shopping and a trade show, the woodcarvers' annual competition, exhibits of woodworking, and more. The Friday and Saturday Extravaganza will usually draw about 6,500 people.

On-site for the event are representatives of many of the tool and equipment manufacturers, including *Sorby* and *Crown* woodturning tools. The Carolina Mountain Woodturners run their "Turning Learning Center," teaching newcomers how to turn. Also on-site helping with demos and teaching are the North Carolina Woodturners Association, Western Piedmont Woodcrafters, Catawba Valley Woodcarving Club, Marquetarians of the Carolinas, and local schools with woodworking and pottery programs. Past years have included the Smith Rod Company providing instruction on how to make fly rods.

With all the classes, demos, and exhibits, along with forty-five to fifty vendors on the trade show floor, folks are rarely at a loss for something to do or see. Drawing attendees from fifteen surrounding states, the Extravaganza is something to see. The 2014 dates are October 17th and 18th. Check the website for more details.

This year, Klingspor's Woodworking Shop is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Each month throughout the year, they will be offering something special as part of their celebration. Also, in December, they will have a drawing for a brand-new pickup truck. You can find details on how to enter on their website, since no pur-

chase is necessary. However, every purchase throughout the year gets that person an entry into the drawing. For more information about the Extravaganza, the 25th anniversary celebration, or Klingspor's Woodworking Shop, visit www.woodworkingshop.com.



Fig. 1. The Klingspor's Woodworking Shop is in a building set back a bit from a quiet road in Hickory, North Carolina. It is certainly easy to miss when driving by unless you keep a sharp eye out.



Fig. 2. The appearance of the Woodworking Shop from the outside belies the huge space inside the building. The facility houses the walk-in showroom, offices, warehouse, and shipping.



Fig. 3. Immediately on your right when you walk in is an extensive library complete with books, videos, magazines, and most important, comfortable chairs. You can peruse the materials at your leisure.



Fig. 4. Known for their knowledgeable and helpful staff, you can get assistance whether you are there in person, on the phone, or on the Internet.



Fig. 5. Klingspor's Woodworking Shop has an extensive offering of woodturning tools, equipment, woods, supplies, and more.



Fig. 6. Items can easily be found with wide, well-marked, and lit aisles and displays. It is also a fun browsing experience if you don't have anything specific that you are looking for, but just want to spend some time looking around.



Fig. 7. As the name “woodworking shop” indicates, Klingspor has the spectrum of woodworking needs covered, not just woodturning—hand tools, power tools, machinery, and more are available for the woodworker.



Fig. 10. Carvers and homebuilders, as well as those in between, are not forgotten. The store is well stocked with nearly anything a woodworker, woodturner, woodcarver, or wood enthusiast could need. The packaging that is available ranges from the individual bubble pack to contractor’s packaging.



Fig. 8. If it is for woodworking, whether machinery or cutters, it is available at the store. The wide array of manufacturers’ equipment and blades provides plenty of choice. Both the professional and amateur product lines are carried.



Fig. 11. Klingspor’s Woodworking Shop supports the local clubs, as well as those throughout the country. They have discounts for clubs joining their mailing program, and provide meeting space and support for local clubs.

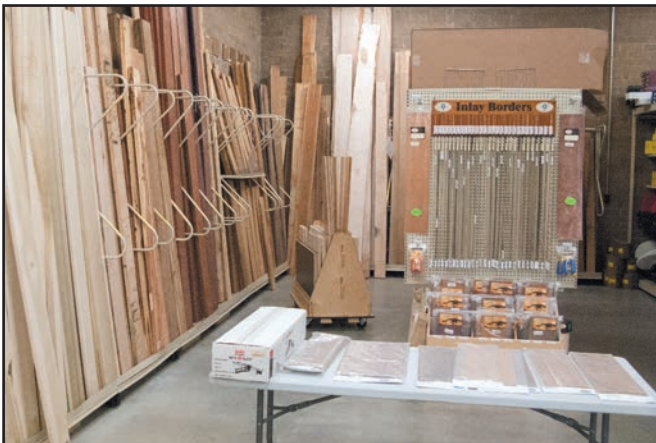


Fig. 9. North Carolina is world famous for its furniture and woods, and the selection of lumber, veneers, borders, and turning stock is extensive. Woodworkers and woodturners can fill their building materials list here.



Fig. 12. The local American Association of Woodturners chapter, the North Carolina Woodturners, meets here. One of the fun things the chapter does is to have fresh popped popcorn for the meetings, which is very popular with members.



Fig. 13. Each year, Klingspor's Woodworking Shop sponsors the "Extravaganza," which encompasses the entire local fairgrounds. In its fifteenth year, it has become a must-attend event for all the local clubs and craftsmen.



Fig. 16. Whether someone has never turned or has had limited experience, young and old have fun making pens, tops, or just chips. It is such a positive experience that many who try this for the first time become turners.



Fig. 14. In addition to the trade show, there are extensive displays, nationally and internationally known demonstrators, and hands-on turning sessions.



Fig. 17. Not only turners, but carvers, furniture makers, and other craftsmen have their work on display, which provides great exposure for the clubs as well as the individual, whether amateur or professional.



Fig. 15. The various chapters and guilds team up to help new turners, especially the young turners. The mini-lathes and experienced instructors make a safe and fun environment for the nonturners to get first-hand experience.



Fig. 18. With nice weather at that time of year and also being located on the fairgrounds, plenty of outdoor activities can occur. Most other events don't have the capability of running chainsaw operations ranging from safety demos to chainsaw carving. The Extravaganza does.