



PRESENTING  
***HIDDEN BEAUTY*** by  
RON HUGHES

## **About the Artist**

Ron Hughes' interest in woodturning began in 9th grade. Often, he would finish the school day with 45 minutes of playing on a lathe in the woodworking shop. That interest then lay dormant for the next 50 years!

A few years ago, Ron purchased a second-hand lathe and began turning again. He devoted the next couple of years to skills development. As they improved, he began turning larger pieces and the old lathe struggled to keep up. A couple of years ago, the motor seized, grinding everything to a halt. Ironically, this occurred just after he had accepted a commission for a large salad bowl to be a birthday gift, so the pressure was on.

The silver lining behind that cloud was that he ended up with a brand-new lathe. With a more precise and productive machine, he began exploring exotic woods. These include Japanese plum, claro walnut, and purple heart. That said, local woods like ash, maple, and elm are still the mainstay of his work. Somewhere along the line, he discovered several woodturning channels on YouTube. He credits Phil Anderson with inspiring him to turn "flaws" into "features." Ron now looks for gnarly pieces of wood as well as straight-grained ones. He has learned to look for the hidden beauty in the wood and is always open to surprises.

Ron is mainly self-taught, picking up tips and techniques from online turners. He has moved beyond considering himself strictly a hobbyist, having begun accepting commissions of various kinds. The most interesting of these is turning walnut knobs for a dresser that came from Ireland with the commissioner's great-grandmother.

Ron says, *"My woodturning endeavours are always an adventure. While the outside of the raw material hints at what might be inside, one never knows what is there until the process is underway. Early on, my taste was limited to what might be called "production pieces." Now, I'm much more interested in adapting and adjusting as the work proceeds to see what hidden beauty God has tucked away inside. I sincerely enjoy getting into a piece of wood and being amazed at what only He has seen until my tools reveal it."*

## **About the Exhibit**

Hidden Beauty gives us a look into the inner features of wood, as revealed through turning. Typically, this includes unusual grain patterns and features such as knots, bark inclusions, insect activity, and *spalting* (mineral deposits associated with the decay process). In this display, you'll notice that several pieces include bark features. I used to see these as ugly. Now, I appreciate them as evidence of the unique aspects of all created things. You will also observe wood from several different species of trees. Each has its own appeal, from the bold straight grain of white ash, through the contortions of Japanese plum, to the barely perceptible grain of horse chestnut. I find few things as satisfying as wandering out to the woodshed, identifying a promising-looking piece of firewood, and securing it to the lathe to see what I might find. Sometimes, I start with people in mind (as when a birthday is approaching) and let that influence how I develop the work specifically for them. Often, I begin without anyone or anything in view and let the hidden beauty of the wood reveal itself to me.

**Contact the artist directly with any enquiries:** Text/talk: 905-386-4004 Email: [rbhughes@vaxxine.com](mailto:rbhughes@vaxxine.com)

**This exhibit runs April through June 2023**

Thanks to the Third Chair Gallery Café for hosting.