

Suggestions for Rose Makers by R. K. Lee

This text describes the author's own experiences that do not necessarily have to correspond with our opinion.

Materials

Use parchment that is unfilled (contains no glued and chalk layer to make it white and smooth). The roses illustrated here used natural color parchment reclaimed from obsolete manuscripts that had a brown to grey brown color. White parchment tends to be rather garish in appearance. However, if light toned woods such as maple are used, white parchment can look appropriate.

The best glue for rose assembly is hide glue (cabineter maker's glue) that is freshly made and applied thinly. The glue can be spread on waxed paper in a thin layer and then the parchment may be placed upon the spread out glue. If made too wet, the parchment will change dimensions and spoil the result. Dilute the glue with two parts of hot water to make thin glue for temporary joining tasks.

The best wood for wood layers is pearwood, stained maple, or walnut for dark colors. For a light colored result use maple or beech. Soft woods like pine are not cohesive enough the cross grain direction for rose making.

Knife for Rose Making

Use a "chip carving" or luthier's knife for all rose cutting.

The majority of popular replaceable blade knives are neither sharp nor hard enough nor steady enough for rose making. The luthier's knife has a small blade that is straight, at a 30 to 45 degree angle to the axis of its large wooden handle.

Sharpen the knife frequently. Use an Arkansas, Belgian, or Japanese yellow water stone. The knife must look like a mirror after sharpening! Most importantly, work slowly and carefully in a relaxed manner; do not hurry.

The spinnetino rose can be made in a day or two. The 1690 rose can take more than a week.

Punches for Round Holes

The small round holes must be made using a sharp punch. The punch must have parallel outsides (do not use a common leather

punch which has tapered outsides).

These punches are best made from tool steel (drill rod), but for a small number of holes even soft steel may be used.

Use a countersink to form the cutting edge and a drill for the center of the hole.

The edges can be dressed with a fine stone, or by means of the countersink (or center drill).

Very small carving gouges can be used for the semicircular figures. Do not attempt to cut small circles with a straight knife.

Bottom Parchment Layer

Temporarily glue the parchment layer to a fine grained backing of maple, birch, (plywood) or pressed board. Artist's suppliers have a rubber based glue for this which is adequate. Better is hide glue that is diluted. When the rose is completed, it can be separated from the backing with a pallet knife assisted by sparing use of hot water or steam. The bottom layer should be cut with the knife cuts on the waste side of the outlines.

Turned Wood Ring

Turn the wood ring for the spinnetino rose in a lathe. Glue the wood to a paper layer that is in turn glued to a piece of plywood scrap that is screwed to the lathe's faceplate.

After turning, the paper layer can be carefully separated from the plywood, using hot water.

Do not allow unsupported wood parts to stand for any time before final assembly, or they will become elliptical. After a rose is finally assembled, it is quite sturdy and can be stored a long time. It should be stored between weighted wood plates to keep it from curling up.