

What is Paua Abalone?

Paua is a species of abalone only found in the sea around New Zealand. This marine mollusk eats seaweed and lives clinging to rocks in depths of 1 – 10 meters, typically along the shoreline.

There is no other shell in the world that has color like Paua; colors naturally vary from greens and pinks to purples and blues, with some showing gold and crimson tones. The colors in Paua shell change when viewed at different angles. Paua's iridescence, similar to Mother of Pearl but far more brilliant, is what makes Paua shell such an amazing material for Pen blanks. Every shell is different in its color and patterns making every pen blank unique.

About our Blanks

Our blanks are cast using a vertical casting method utilizing a clear plastic tube as the "container" for casting; the result is a crystal clear casting which allows excellent viewing of the abalone prior to turning.

Trimming the ends

Some turners have success using a barrel trimmer for trimming and squaring blank ends; we HIGHLY recommend using a squaring jig and sanding the ends. When sanding (or using a barrel trimmer if that is what you choose), go slow and easy to avoid heat.

Turning

As you begin to turn the blank, you will see the clear tube being "turned off" until you have turned far enough to reach the acrylic resin.

Turning our Paua abalone blanks is no different than other acrylics; turn it down to the correct size using your method of choice: mandrel and bushings, turn between centers (TBC) or using calipers.

Sanding and polishing

Once you have reached almost the correct size, sand the blank with lathe running; we recommend a 220 grit to remove and lathe tool marks. I have found that, at this point, turning off the lathe and gently sanding the blank end to end with a 400 grit sand paper to remove any rotational sanding marks is key in getting a glass like finish. Once this end to end sanding is complete you should not see ANY rotational sanding marks on the blank. At this point, we recommend finishing by wet-sanding with Micro-Mesh starting with the 1500 grit and proceeding thru each grit to 12000. Use plenty of water! Wet-sanding accomplishes several things; it keeps things cool, it helps to keep the micromesh free of buildup, and it gives a scratch free finish. Once you have reached the 12000 grit, finish with a polish of your choice.