

Denise M. DeRose

Handled Clamshell Handbag



Materials:

Wood

- 2 discs between 6 and 9" in diameter -- 4/4, 6/4 or 8/4
- 1 piece of thin hardwood – ¼ inch thick and 4" x 10"
- Wood for waste blocks

Supplies

- Small piece of supple flexible leather 3"x7"
- Two sided turners tape
- Barge Glue
- CA glue thick
- Masking tape
- Epoxy

Tools/Accessories:

- Lathe
- Gouge
- Diamond parting tool
- Bandsaw with tilting table
- Spur drive
- Chuck

- Wood clamps (3)
- Flexible straight edge
- Drill
- Faceplate
- ¼ inch Forstner bit.
- ¼ inch dowel center
- Texturing or carving tools
- Dividers, internal and external calipers
- Wax
- Disc sander
- Sandpaper
- Tap for threading copper wire

Hardware/

- Cabinet handle
- Matching metal tubing 3/8 inch
- ¼ inch rare earth magnets (2)
- Heavy gauge copper wire that fits inside metal tubing
- Cap screws (2)

Turning the Bag

Cut two discs of identical size. Mark the center of each disc with a pencil. Use a couple pieces of turners tape and join the two pieces together, with the center markings on the outside. Cut two discs of scrapwood to fit your chuck. Drill a hole in the center of each. Apply CA glue to one side of the scrapwood disk. Using the drilled hole, locate the center of the large disc and glue one scrapwood disk on the center of one side of the large disc. Allow the glue to dry.

Open the jaws of your chuck wide. Place the side of the assemblage without the scrapwood against the opened chuck jaws. Bring up the tail stock and place the point in the drilled hole on the scrapwood. Lock the tailstock and ensure that the assemblage is pressed tightly against chuck jaws. Cut a tenon for the chuck in the scrapwood disc. Remove the assemblage and turn it around so that the newly cut tenon fits into the chuck. Tighten the chuck

Rotate the assemblage on the lathe slowly. The seam where the two large discs meet must be perfectly centered. Using a sharp gouge, begin to work from each edge to make the two discs perfectly round at the edge. It is important to achieve a clean cut without tearout.

Flatten the front and as much of the back of the assemblage as you can reach. Using a pencil, make two lines – one ¼ to 3/8 inch on the right of the center seam of the assemblage, and a second line the same distance to the left. This line will define the rim of your two discs. Using your gouge, remove material from the outside edges of the assemblage. You are trying to achieve a defined rim, with a gradual curve to the center

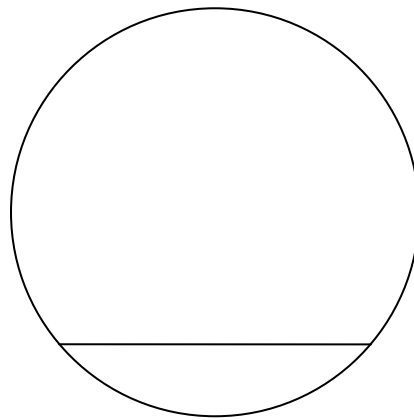
of the disc – not a yoyo shape. When the profile of both discs is identical, mark the center of the disk facing the tailstock. Test your remaining wasteblock disk to make sure it seats flatly against the assemblage. Glue it in place and bring the tailstock up.

When the glue dries, true up the wasteblock and cut a tenon to fit your chuck. Sand the edges and as much of both sides of your assemblage as you can reach. Take the assemblage off the lathe and using a narrow blade or boxcutter, carefully take the two discs apart and remove the tape.

Return one disc to the lathe. Hollow the disc to a uniform thickness of no more than $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch and no less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. Work from the outside to the inside, so that the rim does not warp. Sand the inside of the disc being careful not to heat the wood and cause warpage. It is often helpful to use a wax with your sandpaper. Do the same with the other disc.

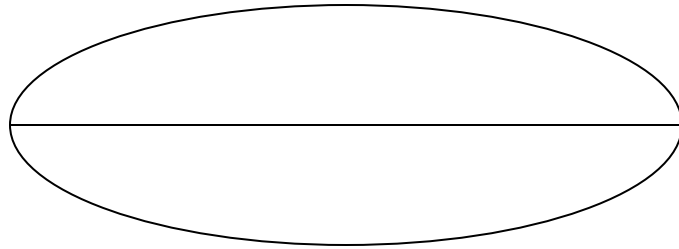
Using a vacuum chuck, remove the waste blocks from the outside of each disc and sand the exterior of the discs to at least 320 grit.

Tape the edges of the hollowed discs together. Using a flexible straight edge, decide on the shape of your bag and mark the bag with a pencil line to show the portion of the form to be cut off. Using the bandsaw, cut along the marked line. Be careful because your form is not flat. You may wish to hot glue the form to a carrying board or to wedge the edges before cutting. Sand the bottom edge.

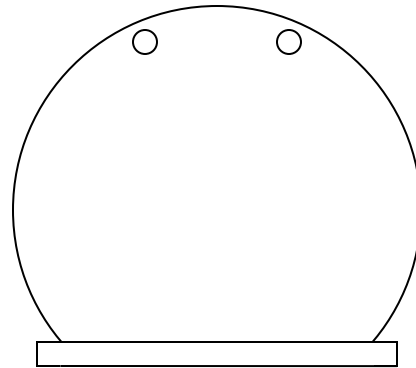


Making the Baseplate:

Place the cut edge of the taped discs on a piece of paper and trace around the edge. You are making a template for the baseplate. The template should be about 3/8 of an inch larger than the bottom outline of the bag. Work with the paper until you have a shape that you like. Trace the template onto the thin hardwood and cut the shape out on the bandsaw. Cut the shape into halves lengthwise.



Using the tilting table of a bandsaw or disc sander, cut a bevel along the bottom edge of the center line for each side of the baseplate.



Making a Leather Hinge:

Using a piece of paper, trace the inside diameter of the cut edge of the taped discs. You are making a template for a leather hinge. Cut the leather using the template that you have just made. Dry fit the pieces – the baseplate, the leather and the discs. The leather hinge should fit inside of the discs and not under the edge. Trim so that it fits well. Trace the outline of the leather onto the baseplate pieces, centering the leather. Spread barge cement on the top of the baseplate within the outline. Spread Barge glue on the rough side of the leather. Allow the leather to dry so that it is barely tacky. Apply a second coat of Barge to both the leather and the baseplate. Allow it to so that no threads come off when you touch it. Place the leather on the baseplate within the outline and

smooth out any wrinkles. Allow it to dry for about 20 seconds. Then fold the baseplate along the beveled center seam, slightly moving the leather. Put your baseplate aside to dry.

Assembling the Bag:

If you are going to dye or color or paint your bag, it is best to do it before the bag is assembled.

If you are going to affix a medallion of some sort, think ahead about securing it from the inside with screws. Now is the time, rather than after the bag is assembled, especially if you have big hands.

Also, if you are going to line your bag with suede, the suede should be applied before the bag is assembled. (see **Thinking about Lining** below)

When you have the bag colored as you want it, apply tape around the perimeter of the bottom cut edge of the bag to protect the bag from epoxy. Mix a small batch of epoxy. Apply the epoxy to the bottom cut edge of the bag. Place the taped discs onto the baseplate. Use a wood clamp to exert some downward pressure on the discs against the baseplate. Do not tighten to the point that all the epoxy is squeezed out. Clean up the edges of the baseplate. Allow the epoxy to dry.

When the bag is dry, use the handle to determine where to drill holes for the handle. Drill holes using the drill press. It is important that the holes are straight and parallel to the center line and not angled in or out.

Cut four pieces of copper wire to the desired length. Be sure to allow sufficient room for fingers to curl around the hardware, but shorter is better than longer. Tap both ends of two pieces of copper wire and only one end of the other two pieces of copper wire. Put four cap screws on the one end of four pieces of wire. Untape the discs. Insert the copper wire from the inside of the bag and screw the copper wire into the handle. Determine the correct length for the metal tubing and cut the tubing. Unscrew copper wire from the handles and thread wire through the tubing. Reinsert into the handle. When all adjustments are completed, place a drop of CA glue in endcaps and handle holes and screw it all together.

Surface decoration:

Clamshell bags are particularly suited to central medallion designs. If you are going to use a central medallion, be sure you affix it securely by either screwing the medallion from the inside or by drilling holes in the bottom of the medallion, epoxying short brass pegs into the holes, and epoxying the pegs into holes you have drilled on the bag front. Be sure to also epoxy the medallion onto the front of the bag.

Thinking about lining:

A clamshell bag requires an interior lining of some sort so that contents do not spill out when the bag is opened. There are a couple of options possible. One is simply to glue suede or fabric to the interior of the disc and then to cut gussets to glue onto the bag edge. This takes a bit of fussing. The other method is to sew a small bag, similar in design to a brown paper lunchbag that would fit inside your bag. Velcro is used to affix the lining to the bag interior along the top edge.

Other Options for this Form

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