Turn a pear from various glued timbers

Vic Cracknell uses odd pieces of glued contrasting timber to create an interesting turned pear

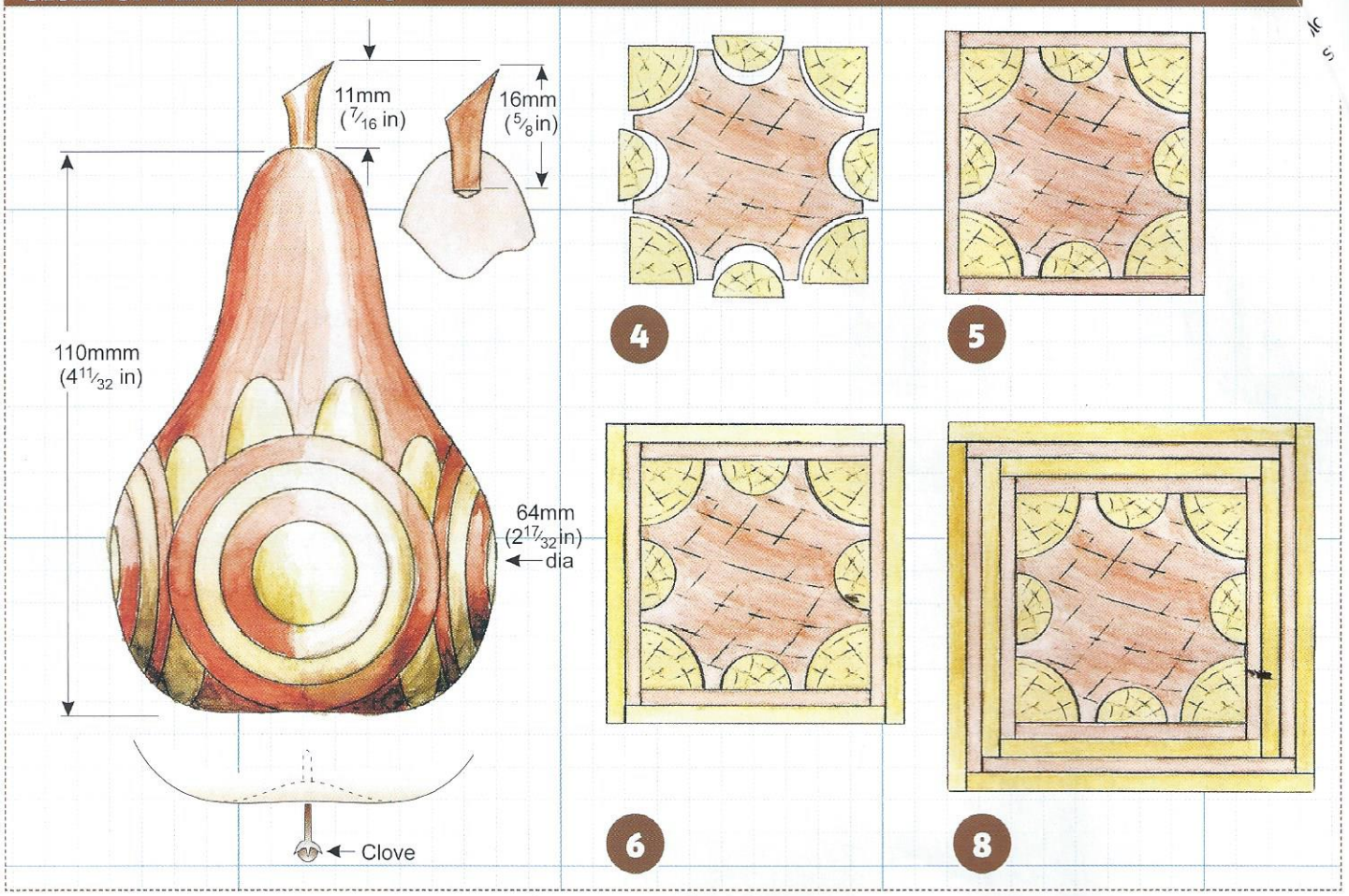
Have you ever had a tidy-up in your workshop and thought, "What can I do with these odd pieces of timber?" If so, this is your chance to produce a glue-up block and turn yourself a pear.

For this project, you will need two contrasting timbers; I chose to use maple and sapele. The main block is 45mm (1¾in) square in a dark-coloured timber (sapele). You can choose to use a length of your choice, but remember that it must be long enough to handle safely on a machine and also must be exactly square. Ensure that your measurements and cuts are accurate as if they are not, this will be visible in the finished block.

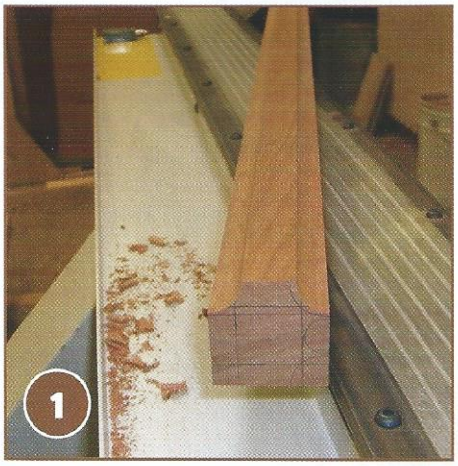
TIMBER REQUIRED

Sapele measuring 45mm (1¾in) x 45mm (1¾in) for the main block
Inlay 1 – 4 pieces of maple 15mm (⅝in) x 15mm (⅝in)
Inlay 2 – 2 pieces of maple 15mm (⅝in) x 30mm (1⅛in)
2 pieces of sapele 3mm (⅛in) x 50mm (2in)
2 pieces of sapele 3mm (⅛in) x 56mm (2¼in)
2 pieces of maple 3mm (⅛in) x 60mm (2⅜in)
2 pieces of maple 3mm (⅛in) x 66mm (2⅝in)
2 pieces of sapele 3mm (⅛in) x 66mm (2⅝in)
2 pieces of sapele 3mm (⅛in) x 72mm (2¾in)
2 pieces of maple 6mm (¼in) x 72mm (2¾in)
2 pieces of maple 6mm (¼in) x 75mm (3in)

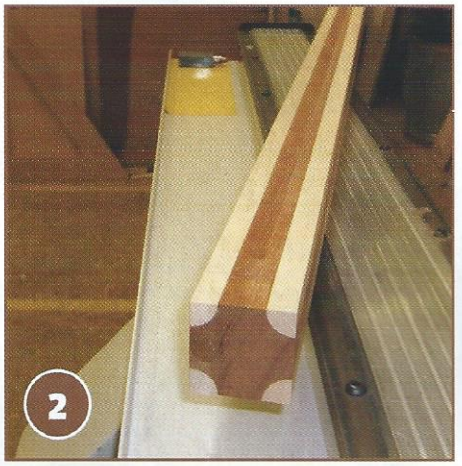
GLUED UP PEAR DIMENSIONS



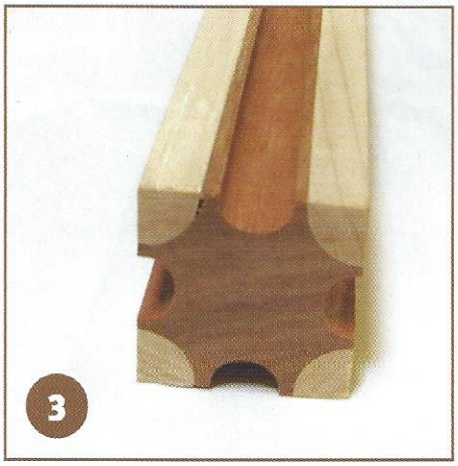
1 Take a block of sapele measuring 45mm (1¾in) x 45mm (1¾in) and using a moulding block in a spindle moulder, cut a scotia in two corners



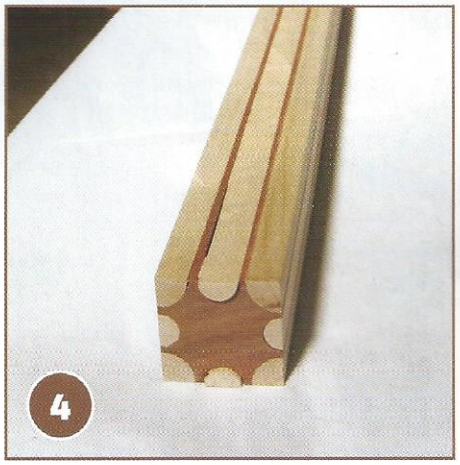
2 Take the block, and fill the first two corners with the maple inlay measuring 15mm (⅝in) x 15mm (⅝in). Clamp the wood in place to ensure that the inlays stick securely before moving on. Repeat the same process for the other two corners of the block, and fill with the same-sized inlay, measuring 15mm (⅝in) x 15mm (⅝in), as before and clamp until the glue is dry. Clean the excess glue, and now your block has four maple inlaid corners



3 Take the block, and this time, cut a groove in the centre of each corner (as shown) until you have four identical grooves. To do this, use a drip cutter in a moulding block on a spindle or a router



4 It is now time to inlay the other four grooves you have made with the rest of the maple, using a moulding cutter. Use a table saw to cut the two pieces of inlay in half until you are left with four identical pieces. Once the inlays have been glued into place, clamp the two opposite sides first and clean off the excess glue and then fit the other two inlays. You will now be left with a square-shaped block. Note the routing errors towards the end



ake your square block and now fit the 3mm (⅛in) x 50mm (2in) sapele to two sides of the ck. Clean off the surplus glue and repeat the ame step for the other two sizes but using the 3mm (⅛in) x 6mm (¼in) inlay

6 Next, layer the piece of maple 3mm (⅛in) x 60mm (2⅜in) on top of two of the previous sapele inlays of the same size. Repeat this step with the other two pieces of maple until you have a completely new layer of maple on top of the sapele

7 Repeat this layering process further, this time using the 3mm (⅛in) x 66mm (2⅝in) piece of sapele, first on two sides, then on the last two faces using the 3mm (⅛in) x 72mm (2¾in) pieces, and fix into place with glue. The block will now look like this

8 Once again, take the piece of 6mm (¼in) x 72mm (2¾in) maple for the first two sides of the block, and finish with the 6mm (⅛in) x 75mm (3in) piece to complete the square. You now have a length of wood which is ready for turning. In this case, we are going to turn a pear

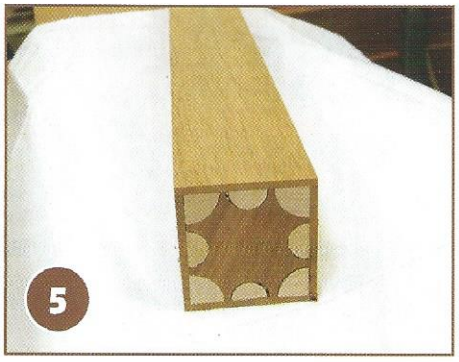
9 Cut off a length of the block, measuring 100mm (4in) and mark an exact centre. This needs to be indented with a centre punch or pointed bradawl

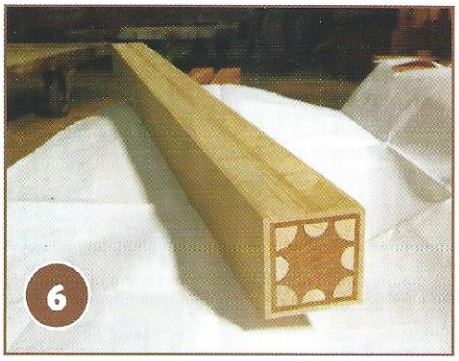
10 Next, mount the block between centres using your preferred drive centre (four-prong or steb) and using a spindle roughing gouge turn down the piece until round. Turn a spigot at one end, using a parting tool to allow the piece to be mounted in a pair of scroll jaws on a chuck

11 Mount the piece in the chuck and shape the piece using a combination of both a spindle roughing gouge and spindle gouge for the finer detail until you have achieved the pear shape you desire. Since the item is held at one end only, it is easy for you to create the dimple in the bottom of the pear. Then, drill with a 1.5mm drill in order to accept a clove head at the final stages of finishing. Once drilled, sand and finish using a sanding sealer and wax

12 Reverse chuck the pear and mount it so the spigot end is located at the tailstock end, then turn away the spigot to create the neck section until the spigot has been removed. Sand to a fine finish and apply sanding sealer as before to finish. A small remnant will remain which needs to be sanded or carved off once removed from the lathe. When off the chuck, drill the neck end to accept either a natural stalk or, as in this case, a turned and carved one. Whichever you choose, fit the stalk into the top end, and mount a clove into the hole in the bottom to form a realistic flower shape. Apply the final finish to the areas previously untouched and you now have your laminated pear

13 The finished pear is now complete ●





ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIC CRACKNELL