

In this case, just such a discovery is made. What had appeared to be a simple piece of wood turns out to be a burl. Within the wood there is a large piece of rot cutting across the wood from one side to the other. It had not been previously visible.

"When I see something like that I know there's been a disruption in the growth and where it heals you get all the different little growth patterns," explains the talented craftsman. "If you're not careful you could cut the pattern right out."

The lathe spins the wood so quickly, that it is not possible to clearly see whether the unusual pattern created by the anomaly remains. Care is necessary at this point, as Mr. Thur continues to cut into the wood.

"I am trying to true it up," he explains.

He removes the rough bowl from the machine and points to a delicate pattern at one side. It is almost iridescent, and this is the characteristic that he will work to enhance through long and careful sanding.

"That would make the difference between \$50 and \$150," he says of the pattern which would be lost if it were ground down further. "I spend a lot of time finishing my pieces. I tell people it takes six hours to do a piece and ten years to learn how to do it."

Mr. Thur appreciates the beauty of the various types of wood. Bird's-eye maple, which has patterns which Mr. Thur likens to mountain landscapes, particularly delights him. But his favourite is the old-growth wood.

"I like the stuff with the history," he says.

Not only are the bowls beautiful, but they are also functional.

"My idea is, and has been from the start, that at some point you will get tired of looking at it," he maintains.

That's why it's important to him that each bowl has two purposes.

The bowls range in price from \$75 for a small piece, to as much as \$2,500 for one of the crafted treasures made from the most ancient pine.

Mr. Thur's studio and gallery is located at his home on the Old Muskoka Road near Utterson.

His gallery is open to visitors, and he also works on commissions. He participates in the annual Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour, and is a founding member of the Muskoka Seven, Group of Artists. ❁

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