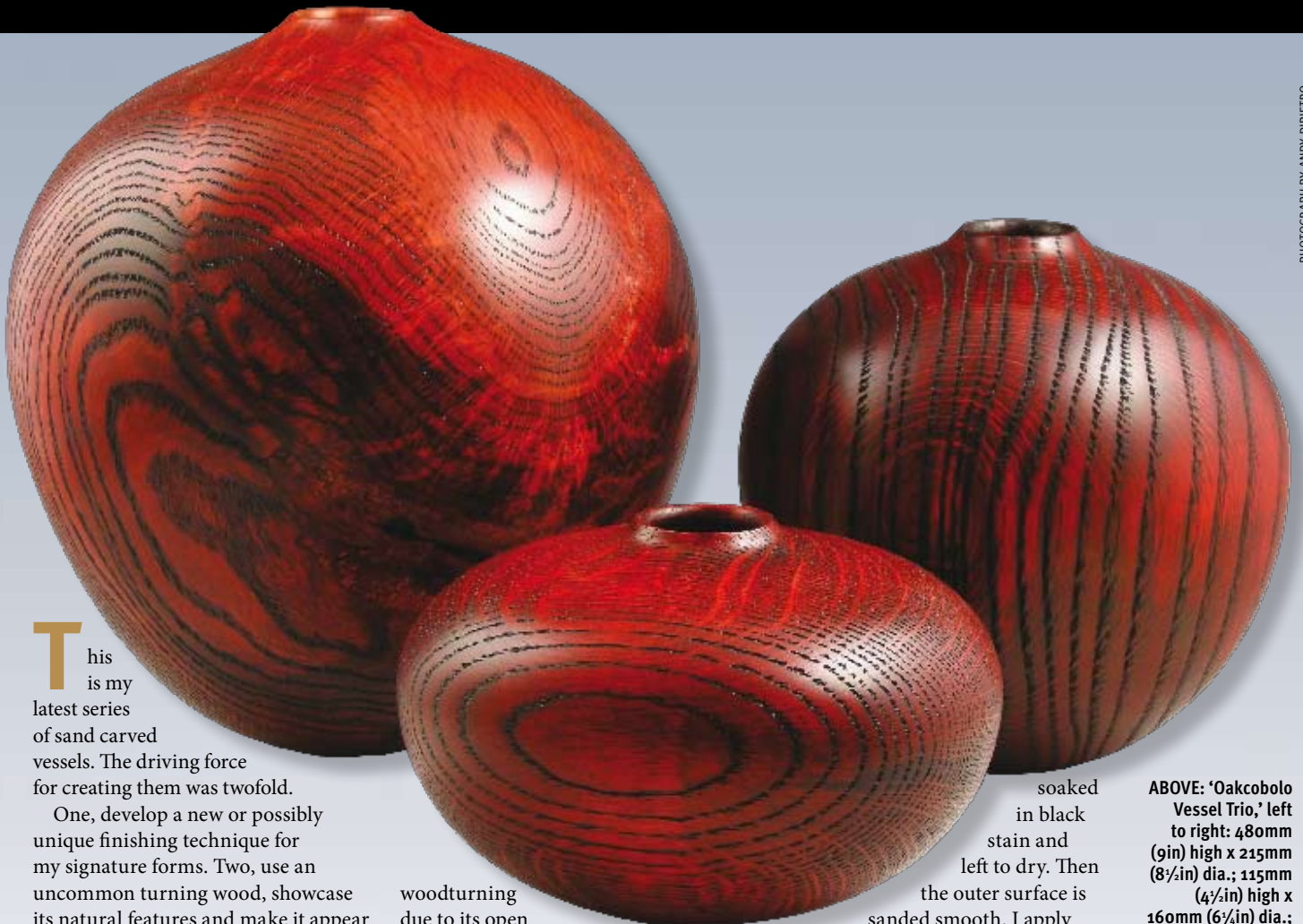


Andy DiPietro – Oakcobolo Vessel Trio

Andy DiPietro shares this clever trio of hollow forms which are stained to look like they are made from exotic timber. This trio represents his latest series of sand carved vessels



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY DIPIETRO

This is my latest series of sand carved vessels. The driving force for creating them was twofold.

One, develop a new or possibly unique finishing technique for my signature forms. Two, use an uncommon turning wood, showcase its natural features and make it appear to be exotic.

In my corner of the world, red and white oak are abundant resources for cabinet making and spindle turnings. White oak (*Quercus alba*) was popularised during the Arts & Craft furniture movement for its distinctive medullary ray fleck patterns. The rays are unique to the oak family and my inspiration was to showcase them in a hollow form. I prefer Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) to white oak for the wider growth ring patterns, but both work well.

Oak is often overlooked for green

woodturning due to its open grain structure and high tannin content. The tannins react with iron and steel tools and create those disturbing black surface stains as the wood dries. Not to mention the rust mess it creates on cast iron lathe rails.

My hollow formed vessels feature a curved neck and shoulder region that flow into a long graceful catenary curve that forms the sides and bottom of each vessel.

The new finishing technique involves sandblasting the entire surface to create deep grooves and pockets. The whole vessel is then

soaked in black stain and left to dry. Then the outer surface is sanded smooth. I apply red stain to the newly exposed surfaces, followed by yellow stain, which colours the medullary ray patterns orange. The final finish involves several coats of tung oil and lacquer for added depth.

The light-fast stains applied to my oak forms are fashioned after the short-lived exotic cocobolo colours and hence the pun, oakcobolo.

ABOVE: 'Oakcobolo Vessel Trio,' left to right: 480mm (9in) high x 215mm (8½in) dia.; 115mm (4½in) high x 160mm (6¼in) dia.; 165mm (6½in) high x 165mm (6½in) dia.

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