



Arbortech Ball Gouge

Reviewed by Raf Nathan

Yet another innovative woodcarving attachment from Australian toolmakers Arbortech. The Ball Gouge is a clever round-headed cutter that is designed to carve mostly concave surfaces. Beautifully made, it has a 30mm diameter head with a reversible ring tungsten cutter that carves small and medium sized areas quite quickly.

It will fit pretty well all angle grinders, screwing straight onto the shaft, although you may need the included adaptor depending on the shaft diameter your grinder has. As it is a rather long tool there is quite a bit of leverage generated so a good quality grinder is essential.

The manufacturers claim it is self sharpening although I am yet to justify a need for this. The cutting ring can be easily loosened and moved to a new sharp edge as needed and with two faces available it should last for ages.

Like any tool you will need to learn to use it for best results. It will plunge cut but not that well. I found it best to have a low attack angle and this, to me, gave balance of control and waste removal. Having said that, a more vertical attack will remove less waste and hence allow even more control.

You can cut to a line with good control and accuracy so small bowls and spoon blanks are easily handled.

You can follow a drawn line quite easily. Endgrain will tear if the cutter is applied with the back edge. I found it best to have the cutter moving forward into the wood for cleaner results. For instance, when forming a bowl it was better to attack from say 9 o'clock arcing around to 3 o'clock, then turning the blank and repeating the process. After reaching about 25mm depth the cutter will then tend to follow the previous cut.

Hard and soft wood are both carved well, as long as you remember that this is a detail cutter rather than a tool for hogging off bulk waste. Having said

that you can carve a complete bowl internally with the tool. I tried plunge cutting into endgrain to attempt to hollow out a vessel but this is not the tool's forte, it was a slow process.

As with any power tool there is quite a lot of waste sprayed about, but this is shavings not dust. It does not tend to grab the wood, making it somewhat safe in use, but it is still a cutter spinning in a power tool so face protection and care in use are always essential.

Review tool supplied by Arbortech, www.arbortechtools.com

