Wax Build-up Procedures

Performing wax build-up procedures with Foredom's new Wax Carver (WC-1) wax-working unit contributes to higher levels of service from your shop and service department

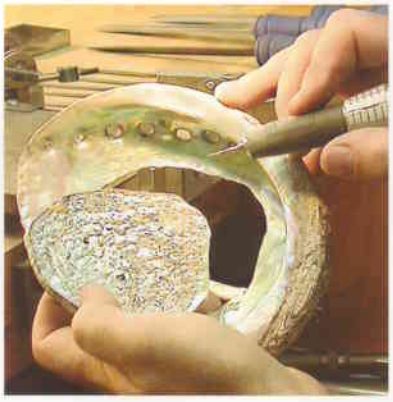
By Mark B. Mann

Design and technical contributions by JA Certified Bench Jeweler Michael Dickey of Michael Dickey Designs, Redlands, CA

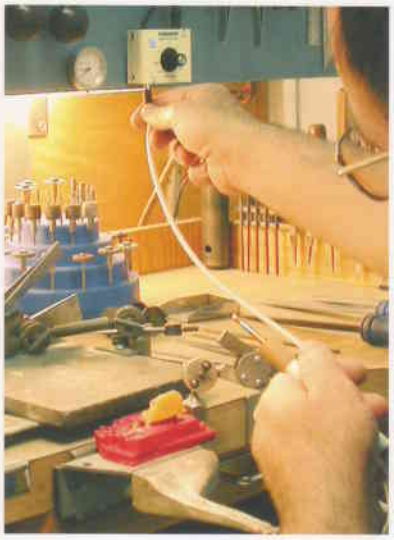
The Wax Carver (WC-1) is a new wax worker the Foredom Electric Company recently made available to the jewelry industry. To present many of its features, Michael Dickey performs the following wax build-up project.

Dickey's customer asks that part of an abalone shell be used as a centerpiece for a 14k yellow gold free-form pendant.

Dickey uses a tungsten carbide bur and the Foredom micromotor to remove the most interesting and colorful section of the shell. From this, he fashions a smaller piece suitable for the pendant. (He wears a face mask when working with the abalone to avoid breathing in the dust generated from the process.)



The shell is covered with a lubricant so the wax won't adhere to it during the build-up process. Dickey mounts the Foredom WC-1 Wax Carver temperature control box to the upright shelf above his bench. The on/off switch also controls the amount of heat to the tip. He turns on the unit and sets it to the desired temperature. The tip quickly reaches and holds the temperature.



Dickey keeps a large reservoir of unmelted wax above his bench pen. With the supplied small spoon tip, melts and transfers the wax to the rim of the pendant. The handpiece is lightweight and the flexible cord can be detached from the power supply. The cork keeps heat away from Dickey's hands.

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Form No. 863 n 10/03

Printed in USA

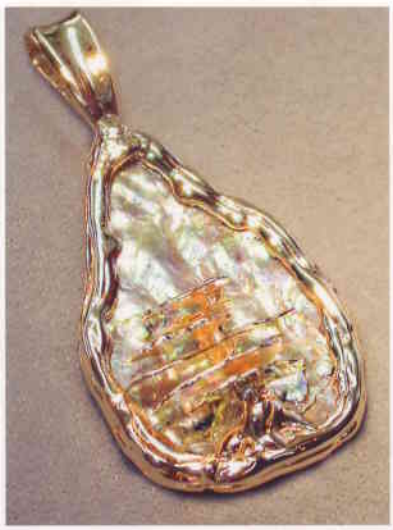
The outside border is complete. Dickey builds some "boughs" for his tree design on a separate block. He changes the tip on the handpiece and incorporates them into the design.

Note: Change tips with the heat on by using pliers or another holding device. If the handpiece is allowed to cool, the wax may hold the tip onto the shaft.

Dickey makes a bail from carving wax and has attached it to the top of the pendant. Here he details the tree with the optional curved tapered tip.

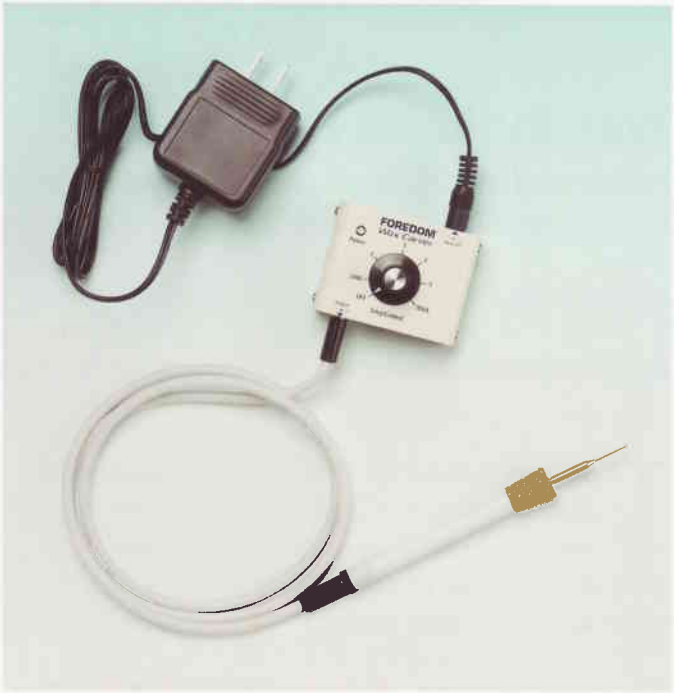
Because he took care to cover the shell with a wax lubricant, he's able to easily lift off the wax design to prepare it for casting.

The 14k yellow gold pendant is finished and ready for delivery to the customer.



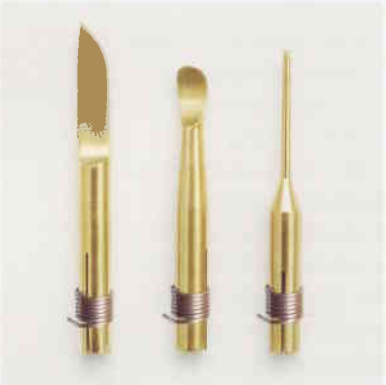
The Professional Bench Tips here are from an article which first appeared in the August 2003 issue of Professional Jeweler Magazine.

Procedure Photographs by Gail Dickey



The Foredom Wax Carver WC-1control box measures 2½" by 2". The transformer plugs into the top portion of the unit and an electrical outlet. There is a "power on" indicator light on the top left corner that flashes constantly when the unit is on. Approximate tip temperatures range from: Low—95°, 2—200°, 3— 340° , 4—425°, 5—525° and Max is about 560°. A 230 Volt model with transformer adapters for European and British electrical outlets (WC-2) is also available from Foredom.

From left to right, the knife, small spoon and straight taper tips are supplied with the unit. They are made of brass and all tips can easily be filed or bent into custom shapes for specific uses.



From left to right, the curved taper, small flat, large flat, and large spoon tips are optional. "The scoop tip moves large amounts of wax, more than any tip on a wax worker I've used in my 30-year career," says Dickey.