

Review of the Harvey T60 Woodworking Lathe

By Ian Outshoorn

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About me

I've been looking for a decent big lathe for a while now. My first lathe was a Teknatool TL1500 that I picked up with a serious case of rust, I cleaned it up and happily turned on it. I then upgraded the motor to a two horsepower three phase motor with Teco FM50 Inverter. This made the machine a much better lathe. One of the things about it though is the swing at 395mm (14"). This was always going to be my main bug bear as the hats I want to do need to start at about 420mm (16 1/2").

So I have been online a while now looking for that elusive combination of high quality, big swing, heavy weight, cost and availability - and I think I've found it.

The Lathe

The Harvey T50 & T60 lathes were recently brought into New Zealand by Grant and Michelle Tatham at Woodworking HQ (see Fig. 1).

A Chinese built lathe, that can't be any good can it? However, the specs looked good, turns out that Harvey Industries also supply their lathe to the United States where it's been branded as the Laguna Revo 24-36 with a few cosmetic changes.

So I took a drive down to his showroom with a couple of big green blanks, first impressions were good. The thing is big and heavy and one hundred percent cast iron. I looked at the quality of the casting and was impressed. The edges are nice and clean, the paint is nice and thick. Inside of the headstock shows no rough casting, the lathe bed ways are massive. The head slides easily along the bed so you can stand at the end and turn. My back will appreciate this as I won't need to lean over the bed. The tailstock end of the bed features a swing-away section so that you can work without the tailstock being in the way. It also means that you don't have to lift the very heavy tailstock on and off the lathe. This is standard on the T60 and I recommend that you buy it with the T50 as it's a safety feature that your back will thank you for.

The Spindle thread is 1 1/4" x 8tpi, hollowed through and has a Morse 2 taper. The Spindle sits in a tapered nose instead of the flat face on a lot of other lathes, this makes access to the back of bowls much easier. The tailstock also has the Morse 2

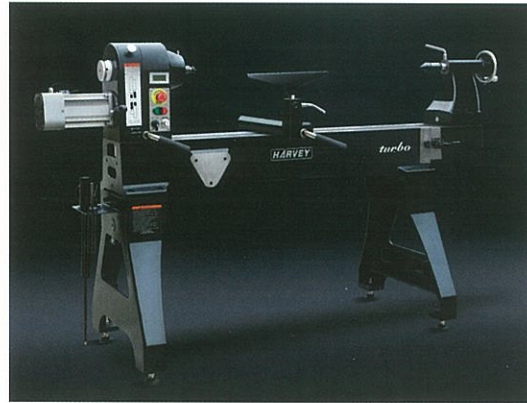


Fig 1 Harvey T50 Lathe

taper and features a self-ejector. I didn't think much about it at the time, but it's fast becoming a very nice thing to have. The tailstock spindle is still hollow so you can use lamp holder augers.

First Turning

I mounted the 450mm (17") blank on a 150mm (6") faceplate and screwed it onto the lathe. The blank wasn't properly round and weighed about 25 kg (55lbs). Set the belt to the low setting of 60-660rpm and started to wind the speed up. At the point that the lathe just started to vibrate I checked the speed at 521 rpm.

There is no way that I could have done that on the old lathe even with it bolted down. Presented the 19mm bowl gouge and was able to peel large shavings off the blank. The neighbour came to see what was happening as the shavings were blowing into their workshop. This was fun and not hard work. (see Fig. 2).

At Home

I bought the T60 there and then, Grant was to deliver the lathe once I'd emptied the workshop out and made room. This lathe is big and needs more room to get the full benefit of the sliding headstock.

So now, "The Black Thing" as it's been dubbed, is in its place (see Fig. 3). Luckily the lathe comes with decent sized adjustable feet. The weight 360kg (800lbs) means that it doesn't move at all while turning. I'm going to have to look at fixing the concrete as it's very thin and I can feel flexing under me when I'm turning a big blank. Turning bowls while standing at the end of the lathe is very enjoyable.

There is a 508mm (20") extension bed available that can be bolted to the lathe in three different locations: by the headstock at 90° for turning the back of the bowl, at the tailstock end to extend the bed by 500mm and below that to allow you

to turn 860mm (34") outboard. The main bed also can be doubled in length by purchasing another bed and leg and simply bolting it onto the lathe.

So a recap of what I was looking for in a lathe:

- 500mm (20") minimum swing, the T60 has a 620mm (24") swing
- 1100mm (43") minimum length
- Heavy, no sheet metal legs, cast iron if possible
- 2HP motor
- Electronic variable speed with belts for low down torque
- Remote control of the lathe at the tailstock end
- Standard spindle threads and Morse 2 tapers
- Swivel head or sliding head
- A banjo that once locked down stays in place without flexing
- Headstock and tailstock to line up perfectly every time
- Locally available with spare parts if needed Affordable



Fig 2 First Shavings

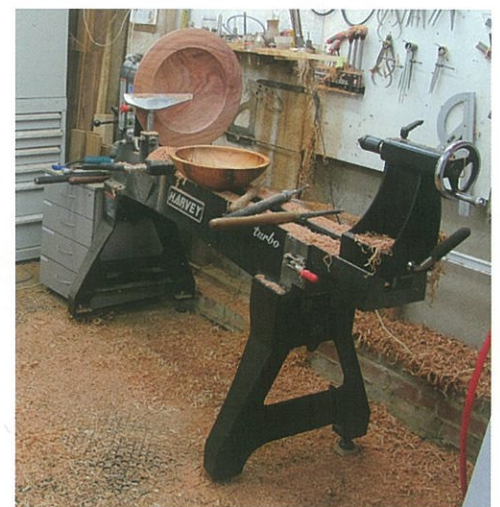


Fig 3 Harvey T60 first bowls

So far this lathe ticks all of the above boxes. Of course there are things that could have been done better. The spindle lock allows your fingers to get pinched between it and the hand wheel if you're not careful. I have changed the hand wheel design to fix this.

The belt ratio's are not quite right on the higher range. To Grant's credit at Woodworking HQ, he has listened and got Harvey to manufacture a different ratio pulley setup which I'm trialling now. Try getting a manufacturer these days to change their mind on anything! Bodes well for the future of these lathes in New Zealand.

I have also added a remote control to the setup (see Fig. 4). The remote control allows me to control the speed forward and reverse without crossing in front of a spinning blank. I have still left the run/stop/rev switch intact on the headstock, this will very handy when lifting heavy blocks onto the lathe. When I opened up the front control panel I was pleasantly surprised to see the neat wiring. Often shortcuts are taken in these hidden areas, not with the Harvey. (see Fig. 5).

The next thing I've done is add a braking resistor unit to the inverter so I can take advantage of dynamic braking, useful

when turning large heavy blanks. This is the beauty of these modern inverters, they can be programmed to suit your style of turning. Of course out of the crate they work just fine but I'm a well known techie fiddler that actually reads manuals

Final thoughts

So do I recommend the T60? Hell Yeah! If you're looking for a lathe with a bigger swing than 400mm (14") then the T60 takes some beating. I've turned on quite a few lathes now and this one is right at the top. I guess you would think that I have to say that as I did buy the lathe after all. However the more I get to turn on it the happier I am. I can now start to plan some bigger works like two foot hollow forms and wall hangings. I've already wet turned some of my biggest platters ever (see Fig.6). No longer is my lathe the limiting factor in my thinking.

The lathe is available from **Woodworking HQ**,
32 Adams Drive, Pukekohe, Auckland, New Zealand
www.woodworkinghq.co.nz

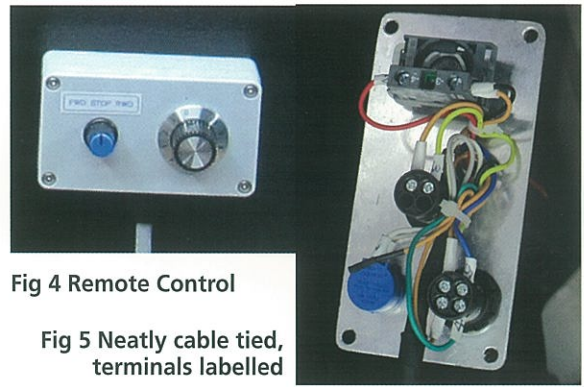


Fig 4 Remote Control

Fig 5 Neatly cable tied, terminals labelled



Fig 6 Camphor Platter 565mm

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