

■ **Concentric Circles** We employed an even more involved procedure to carve concentric circles into the face of this petrified wood cabochon. We used two flex shafts, one used free-hand and the other secured in the fixture (see "Custom Flex Shaft Fixture," page 16) to serve as a mini-lathe.

Bond the cabochon to a metal dopstick, making sure that the cabochon is centered. Allow the epoxy to cure, then chuck the dopstick into the secured flex shaft. With the cabochon slowly spinning, mark three circles free-hand on the cabochon with a fine tip felt marker.

With a small diamond ball bur mounted in the second flex shaft, carefully grind three circles, one at a time. Place the bur on the first circle, brace the flex shaft with both hands to keep it steady, and running both flex shafts at medium and constant speeds, grind the circle. Repeat

for the other circles.

Polish the circles with wood polishing tools in the same manner working through the 600- and 1200-grits, finishing with the cerium oxide polish. The soft contours of the circles definitely generate more interest than the previously unadorned cabochon.



## more from *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist*

"Chalcedonies for Carving,"  
Helen Serras-Herman, MFA,  
FGA, July 2007

"Carving Nuts & Bolts,"  
Michael Dyber, May 2005

"Carving Ocean Jasper,"  
Helen Serras-Herman, MFA,  
FGA, February 2004

"Carving a Theme" series,  
Helen Serras-Herman, MFA,  
FGA, June 2002

"Gem Carving with a Fixed  
Arbor," Janet Vogenthaler,  
January 2001

## NEXT: CARVING AND SCULPTING

Once you begin altering and texturing cabochons, a natural progression is moving on to carving and sculpting stone. We had a chunk of rough black jade sitting on the workbench just waiting for it to speak to us. After watching a documentary on orcas, we had our inspiration: there was an orca waiting to be released from our chunk of black jade.

To sculpt a piece in low profile, you have to learn to think in 3D so you can envision what you are carving in the stone. We used our diamond saw to remove the excess material around the profile, and coarse diamond grinding wheels to rough the stone to its basic shape. The sculpting becomes easier and more fun when you begin to work with smaller and finer grit diamond burs to refine the shape and develop the details.

We polished all surfaces of the orca to a glossy finish. Then, to create its most recognizable feature, we textured that area using small diamond burs to create a white matte finish. Three dimensional sculpting can be an enjoyable and educational project.

We hope we've aroused your interest and piqued your sense of adventure so you'll try your hand at adding texture or other embellishment elements to cabochons. As with all new skills, take it one step at a time. Begin with simple projects, practice, practice, practice, and then move on to more intricate challenges.



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