

Piber & Tobak

Danish Pipe Makers

Vol. 1

1978 - 1998



Preface

The Danish magazine Piber & Tobak (pipes & Tobacco) has been writing interesting articles on Danish pipe makers since it first came out in 1978.

Unfortunately the Danish language is only known by few, so the articles have mainly been a source of information and inspiration for the Scandinavian pipe smokers.

We asked Piber & Tobak for permission to translate the articles so the information could be shared with others outside Denmark, and we reached an agreement making this possible.

It turned out to be a painstaking task to translate, scan pictures etc., so we really hope you appreciate the effort. This Vol. 1 is covering the years 1978 - 1998.

If the articles are well received, we will continue the effort and issue a Vol. 2 covering 1999 until today and include articles on Swedish pipe makers and other information that may interest you as well.

We hope you enjoy.

Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

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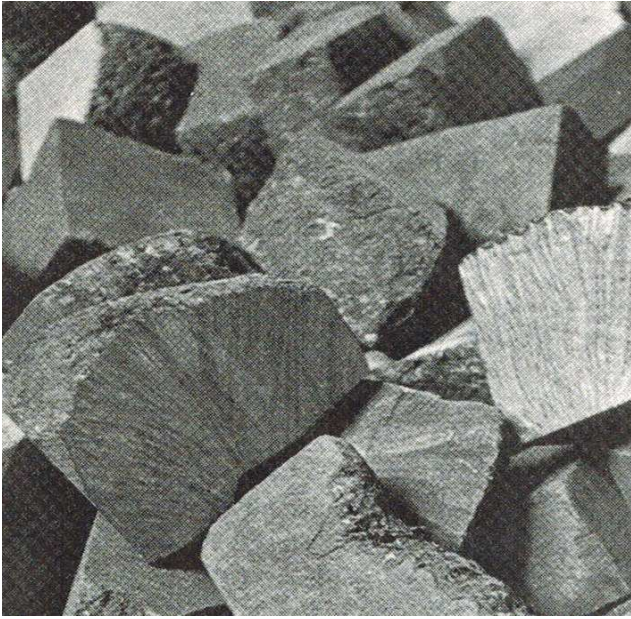
Borup's Famous Briar

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 2, December 1978

Written by: Jesper Boye

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

We have the good Danish beech tree to thank for being able to smoke one of the worlds best factory pipes, - the Stanwell pipe.

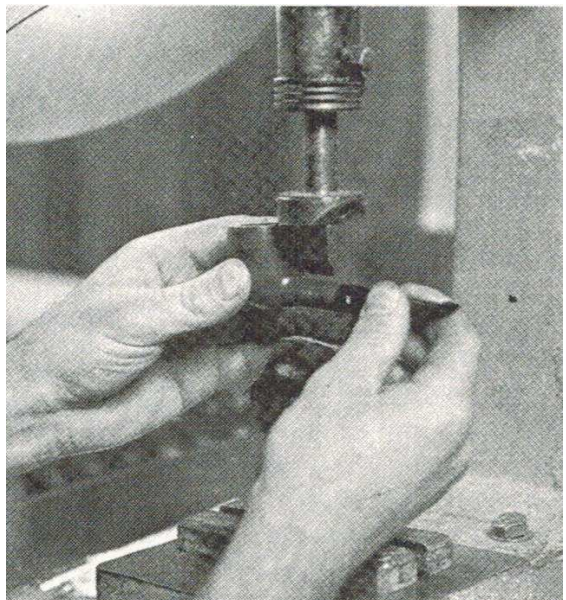


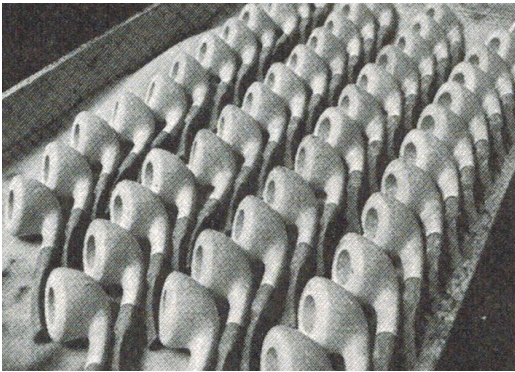
In 1942 it was no longer possible to import English briar pipes to Denmark. When the Danes who always had been (and still are) the most pipe smoking nation in the world could no longer get foreign pipes to smoke the 1940's "seaweed" tobacco, Poul Nielsen (along with five others) decided they might as well manufacture the pipes locally. Briar was impossible to get, but beech wood, - which also makes excellent clogs, turned out to be the best suited Danish alternative. In the beginning, - unlike today, - there was no large collection of models to choose from. In fact there was only one model, - a Bulldog. On the other hand the production was large, 2000 "Kyringe" beech wood pipes (as they were named after the town the factory was in at that time) were produced daily, - rather impressive considering that the daily production today is around 1000 pipes.

After the war the pipe got a different "tune". The Danish pipe smokers were again able to be "picky", - and preferred the English briar pipes over the Danish beech wood pipes (I wonder if there is still Kyringe pipes out there somewhere?). Pretty soon there was only one factory left. Stanwell was persistent, they started producing briar pipes. The root was imported from Spain, and later also from other countries exporting this wonderful root, - Italy, Corsica, Greece and Sardinia.

What should we name the baby?

The pipes needed a name. Naturally it had to be English since all good pipes came from England back then. Stanwell ended up being the ingenious name. Since then Poul Nielsen was only known as Stanwell, - he bought the name and is now named Poul Nielsen Stanwell. The question is whether the pipes would have fared better today by being named "Nielsen", - considering the Danish pipes world renowned recognition.



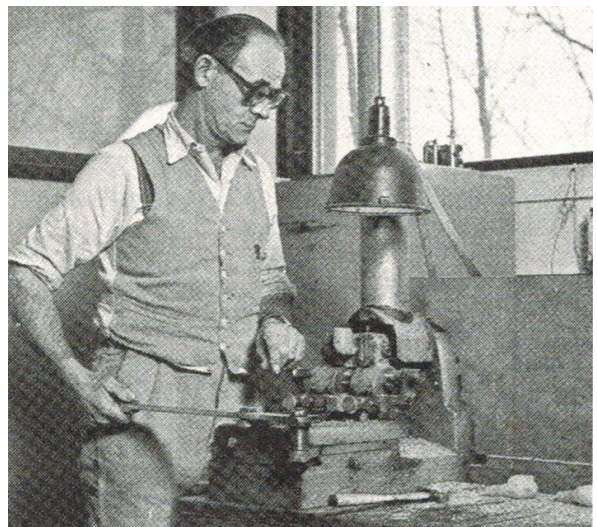


Danish design.

One of the reasons for Stanwell's success turned out to be the pipe design. Another reason was the well made stems, - emphasizing the quality of the Danish pipes. While keeping the classical shapes they also created more untraditional models which immediately became popular. One of the highly skilled people behind the Stanwell models is Denmark's maybe best known pipe artist, - Sixten Ivarsson, who for more than 30 years cooperated with Stanwell. Today more than 300 models are in the Stanwell selection, and they are exported to 50 countries.

Modern methods.

Approximately 10 years ago the factory moved from Borup to the middle of Sealand, and production facilities were expanded and modernized at the same time. Plenty of room is required when each pipe has to go through 60 - 70 processes before it is finished.



The production area is 2200 square meters in which approximately 100 people thrive in a large but cozy factory which is probably one of the most modern in its field. It is clean and bright everywhere. The brightness is due to special work lights, and the factory is kept clean with a large 90hp ventilation system, ensuring fresh air and a comfortable temperature.

From kr. 60 to kr. 5,000.

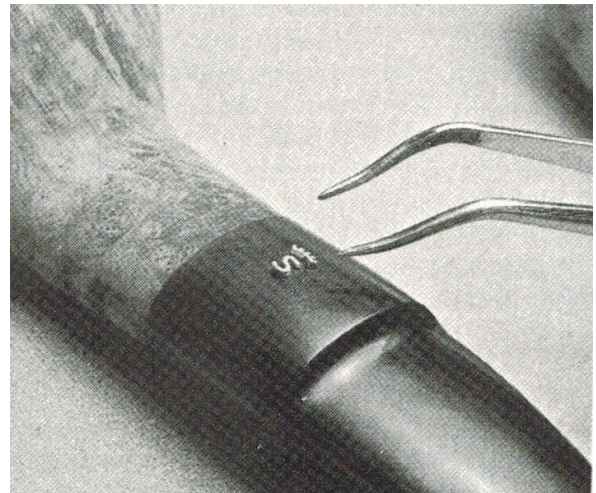
Stanwell has pipes meeting any budget.

From kr. 100 to more than kr. 300 for the Silver S model. Only half of the pipes produced receive the well-known S embossed in the stem.

Bijou is the name of Stanwell's seconds and they only cost around kr. 60.

On average one Straight Grain pipe is made each day. This is reflected in the price (from 2 - 5,000 kr.), - but they still sell like hotcakes.

In addition to Stanwell's fine bamboo pipes, I have a special soft spot toward the Sterling models with a silver ferrule fitted flush with the briar shank. It is a wonderful line available in both the well known sandblasted quality and the smooth model.



Stanwell abroad.

Germany, Sweden and USA have always been loyal fans of Stanwell. Japan is a large customer, but also the pipe nation England imports the pipes from Borup. Dunhill began importing the pipes for sale in England in 1977.

Stanwell is more than pipes.

At the factory in Borup they also produce pipe cleaners, and from the tobacco factory Petersen & Petersen in Horsens (the ones responsible for the MacCollins' European Championship tobacco) three tobaccos will be marketed under the Stanwell name. They all have the characteristics suitable for German taste, and hence it is

mainly sold abroad. A pipe tamper is also found. It is presented in Stanwell's latest colorful catalog amongst 50 or so pipes, - one more impressive than the other. Silhouette is the name of one of them, - a copy of Dunhill's little black pipe for people dressed in tuxedos. Stanwell's ebony colored version is an elegant smooth line fitted with a small ivory band.



Among perfumes and chocolates the Stanwell's can be purchased tax free on ships and in airports. A well known pipe smoker, - the former Prime Minister Harold Wilson, once visited Denmark. In Kastrup Airport he wanted to buy (as he put it) a good English pipe, - "I think I'll take a Stanwell". That must be considered a great compliment to Denmark's largest pipe exporter, - Stanwell in Borup.

At the Briar Master's

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 3, March 1979

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photos: Anders Bentzon

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Sixten Ivarsson - World Renowned Danish Pipe Artist.

Factory pipes can be excellent, - both to look at and to smoke, but at a point when a nice large collection has been accumulated, one may have become so selective that it's time to look for the real beauties, - the hand carved pipes.

Denmark is a spoiled pipe and tobacco nation; - we have been gifted with no less than a dozen of the world's best pipe carvers. Yes, - the grand old man, Sixten Ivarsson, is of Swedish descent, but after having spent 48 of his 68 well-preserved years in Denmark, I allow myself to call him a "Danish Pipe Artist".

How do you get the desire to become the worlds best pipe carver, - or one of them, as Sixten Ivarsson modestly prefers to convey it? Well, - when you have been a bill collector for a few years and realize that you can't pull the wool over peoples eyes, you start looking for something better.

At that moment, - shortly after the end of the war, Sixten was "lucky" enough to break the stem on one of his pipes. He went down to the repair shop at Østerbro in Copenhagen where he normally had his pipes repaired. Unfortunately the repairman was home sick, so Sixten had to perform the repair himself. He did this so well that he was offered a job as a repairman, - so he began working as a repairman at night and continued as a bill collector during the day. Later Sixten took the leap and became a fulltime repairman. He also began carving pipes himself, and the quality was quite good from the beginning. They were mainly made for personal use, - but when friends and acquaintances began "borrowing" the pipes it normally made him proud.



Sixten working with the lathe, - like most of the tools it has been in use from the very beginning.

Sixten Ivarsson and Stanwell.

Stanwell and Sixten have cooperated from the very beginning, and still do, even though Stanwell now have their own skilled designers. After the war, when Stanwell had to come up with new and exciting models, they were pretty much at their wits end, but at a casual visit to the pipe shop where Sixten performed his miracles they noticed his characteristic models. Stanwell purchased some of the designs immediately, - and over the years Sixten has designed more than half of the Stanwell models.

Sixten does sketch pipe designs, - but when he begins making a pipe it's the grain and not a sketch or pencil marks deciding the final design. Several of the Sixten Ivarsson's models have become very famous. One of the older, and still very popular models, is the slightly curved "peewit egg" with a bamboo shank. Another model was created by coincidence - as is often the case with brilliance. Sixten once had carved a perfect Straight Grain; Not totally perfect though, - it had an area on the bowl where the grain disrupted the overall impression. Sixten was contemplating how to save this beauty without causing damage. It took a stroll in Copenhagen to figure it out. He bumped into Tutankhamen's mother in law, - the early Egyptian queen Nefertiti (in shape of a bust), - her with the famous slanted head. That was the solution, - the pipe bowl was slanted in a similar way, and the pipe turned out perfect. This, - by the way, became a very popular model, and it can be seen in the old Stanwell catalogs.

The pricing of Sixten pipes does not go unnoticed either. The cheapest are sold on the Danish market, and prices begin at around kr. 500.- and up.

The rest is sold worldwide, - earlier it was mainly the Americans buying, but now it is the Japanese pipe enthusiasts who are ready "with the wallet". Recently a Sixten Ivarsson was sold in Japan for the modest sum of kr. 15,000.-, - which is the present world record. I wonder what will be smoked in that, - unless it is doomed to lie wrapped in silk for the rest of its days? But Sixten pipes are most definitely made to be used. Hardly any pipes are better to smoke; all details have been thought through, no need for filters or other patents.

Danish Pipe Carvers.

Why are there so many top pipe carvers in Denmark? The answer has to be that most have been apprentices of Sixten Ivarsson in the small shop on Strøget in Copenhagen. Here they were taught the art from the very beginning. Sixten is self taught, he tells that he saw how not to make pipes during the 5 - 6 years he worked as a pipe repairman. In addition Sixten has always worked alone, so he could take the time to concentrate on making the best of the best. Complaints can not be afforded, - if a mistake is made, the pipe is thoroughly inspected to ensure the mistake is never repeated again. Never feel bad about reworking something, - it has to be perfect. Due to this principle there is no mass production; - Sixten Ivarsson produces around 150 pipes a year. With Sixten's devotion to the pipes, one would think he also enjoyed a good pipe of tobacco. Until recently this was the case, the pipe only left his mouth on special occasions, - namely eating and sleeping. In favor of health he gave up the tobacco, - not eating and sleeping.

It is not without danger to be a pipe artist. Sixten proudly shows his scarred arm, - it's been a trip into the lathe, but in spite of blood, sweat and dust Sixten is not complaining. Every morning he takes the bus to Vimmelskiftet, and often he works very late to keep up with the demand for the worlds most expensive pipes.

The Wizard Tom.

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 4, May 1979

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photos: Anders Bentzon

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

A visit to Pipe-Dan's new discovery - the pipe maker Tom Eltang.

Twenty-one years of age and already a recognized name within pipe making, - that is Tom Eltang. The Japanese are delighted, - not only because it is "hand made in Denmark", but also because of the wonderful bent models with the very special finish.

Hobby becomes a job.

Tom began his career at home in the backyard where his dad smoked his pipe, it produced the spark to get things moving. Tom got a hold of a wood block and "went to town" using a pocket knife and sandpaper, - with no idea of the final outcome. He had no knowledge about pipe carving techniques, but since the first attempt turned out quite descent his interest grew stronger. At the same time Tom Eltang was finished with school (literally). He wanted to work with his hands in beautiful union with his fantasy, - and not slave over the books. Tom Eltang travelled to the capitol where the pipe-queen Anne Julie rules. Here he was employed as a pipe repairman; - the best possible beginning if one wants to learn the art of making good pipes from the ground up. For three years he worked hard repairing used pipes, but he also learned how to make a first class pipe.

Dan/Eltang.

Then he took the leap to an old hairdressing saloon. This was where Pipe-Dan had opened their new repair shop in Kattesundet, - next to the store. The repair shop had been moved from the basement, - which now functioned as a alchemist laboratory. Pipe-Dan had taken over manufacturing of the well known pipe perfume 2211, the efficient pipe cleaning solution made by Gert Holbek.

50 pipe repairs daily, - of which 90% is broken stems, is not very rewarding in the long run, so he negotiated with Mrs. Dan Christensen about producing pipes under a joint name. Since Pipe-Dan always had a tradition for having some of the worlds best pipes, - Sixten Ivarsson, Bo Nordh and Gert Holbek, just to name a few, it wasn't hard to convince Mrs. Dan.

One problem was the lack of a quality lathe. Tom solved this issue by purchasing a lathe the size of a Sherman tank. The truck driver transporting the lathe to the shop blocked traffic for quite some time, but he managed to make it through the narrow streets to the old hairdressing saloon, and they eventually succeeded in getting the half ton of old iron installed in the shop.



The former hairdressing saloon where Tom Eltang is performing his magic.

The details.

The show could begin, - and the first models saw the light of day.

The pipes have to go through quite a few steps prior to receiving the final stamping. It begins with a block of briar root, - most often from Sicily.

The first step is "bimsning", - meaning deciding the pipes shape based on grain, quality etc. using a special sanding wheel "bims".



Deep concentration while the stem is turned to match the bowl

One of Tom Eltang's specialties is the stain, - meaning the coloring applied to the pipe to highlight the grain. It is a so called 2-component laboratory stain being applied to the pipe using a pipe cleaner.



The sanding process with fine sandpaper can begin



The model is shaped on the sanding wheel "bims".

Following the "bimsning" the chamber and draught hole are drilled using a lathe. Then the stem is fitted before the black stain is applied.



Tobacco chamber is made using the lathe



Stain is applied to the bowl using a pipe cleaner

When the pipe is dry it's time for the time consuming sanding. The pipe is sanded with fine sandpaper, - a big job, which Tom explains can take most of a day!

The last step is the waxing. Using a polisher the pipe is getting it's final shine by applying carnauba wax.

A rare commodity.

The original Tom Eltang pipes are not individually baptized; - they have to make do with a number. In reality an Eltang pipe is an exclusive commodity. At present only about seventy pipes have received a number (ascending). This means that Tom makes one pipe each week on average, since he has been with Pipe-Dan for 1 1/2 years. So how much does a pipe cost? Approximately kr. 400 - 500, - and for the very best kr. 1200 - 2000. Quite a bit of money, but still within reach considering the prices on many of the other great Danish pipe carvers pipes.

"Pipe Man of the Year" Mogens Frohn, - the stout Fulton skipper, was honored with a Tom Eltang pipe. It is the only pipe made in two examples, and it has been named too. Obviously the name is "Skipper", and it can be viewed in the Pipe-Dan window display, where it is laying looking pretty with it's beautiful finish.

One can hardly mistake the style, - even though no two pipes are alike. They are all more or less traditional with a slight curve and a little finesse added; this makes each pipe a work of art. Maybe the stem has a special saddle, - something that takes hours to make by hand, or maybe a little detail on the bottom. On one of the models a so-called "bomb crater" typically found at the top of the mysterious fancy-pipes has been elegantly incorporated at the bottom so it matches the pipes Birds Eye Grain.



10% of the production turns out to be high grades.

Tom Eltang is a pipe smoker, but even though he makes some of the world's best pipes, he only smokes his Andreas Bauer meerschaum pipe. This may sound a little strange, but Tom explains that he's a perfectionist, so if he smoked one of his own pipes he would keep on thinking of ways to improve it, and that would be a shame. " But one day when I make the perfect pipe I can smoke for 10 years and still be completely satisfied with, - I may consider".

Tom is the lucky owner of a perfect smile, which as he explains it is "most suited for a light pipe with a bite friendly stem", - so it is not false modesty when he does not smoke his own pipes.

As a Young Boy He Carved Pipes

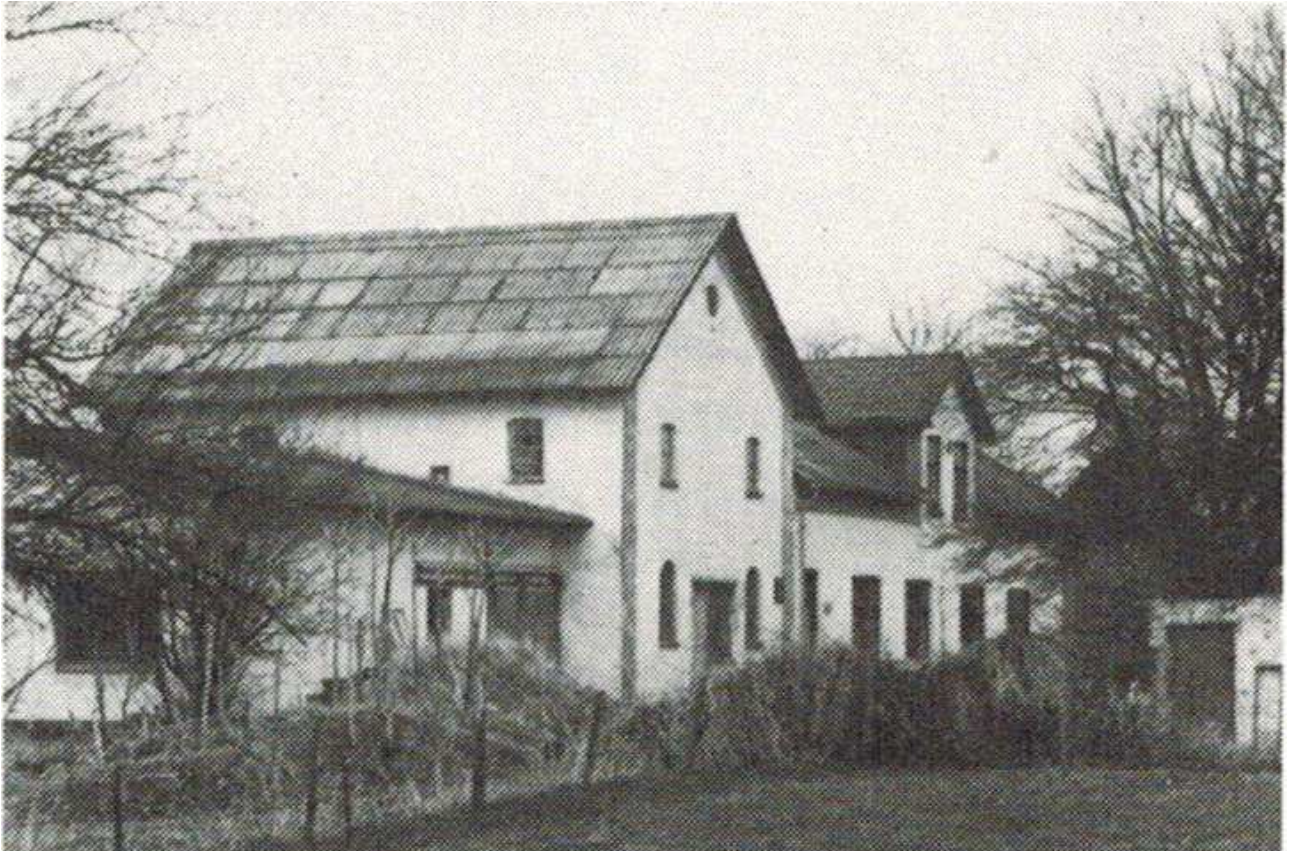
Piber & Tobak, Issue # 4, May 1979

Written by: Harald Grut

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It started as a hobby. The first Preben Holm pipes were created in an attempt to break with the traditional opinion on how a pipe should look. They were *different*. They were displayed in his father's tobacco store mainly as a prank. Nobody wanted to buy them, - they were too unconventional. Then one day, - it must have been in 1966, an American tourist came into the shop. He saw the unusual pipes, and something caught his attention. It was exactly something along those lines he needed for his store, - selling pipes and tobacco. He bought them all and wanted plenty more, - more than the young pipe carver could supply. Lon Schwartz from St. Thomas became Preben Holm's first export customer, - or more precisely the very first customer at all.

This is how it started. Now it has turned into a pretty nice, - but modest, pipe factory located in Torkildstrup in mid-west Sealand.



The factory in Torkildstrup

Modest? Oh well! Today Preben Holm has a market share in the neighborhood of 25% of the Danish pipe export.

From the very beginning Preben Holm has focused on export, so his models are just as known abroad as in Denmark. The designs are created by him, and they have a certain moderation as long as he follows his own heart. But if a foreign client has any special or "wild" ideas he can meet those expectations as well. This is why his production line is divided into two groups: "Traditional" and "Fancy". Whether the

pipes look like pipes or decorative sculptures, - as the pipes smokers in the USA desire, they all undergo Preben Holm's firm requirements concerning high quality in every step, - from selection of the raw briar block to the final products superior finish, which in the most beautiful way displays the briars grain.

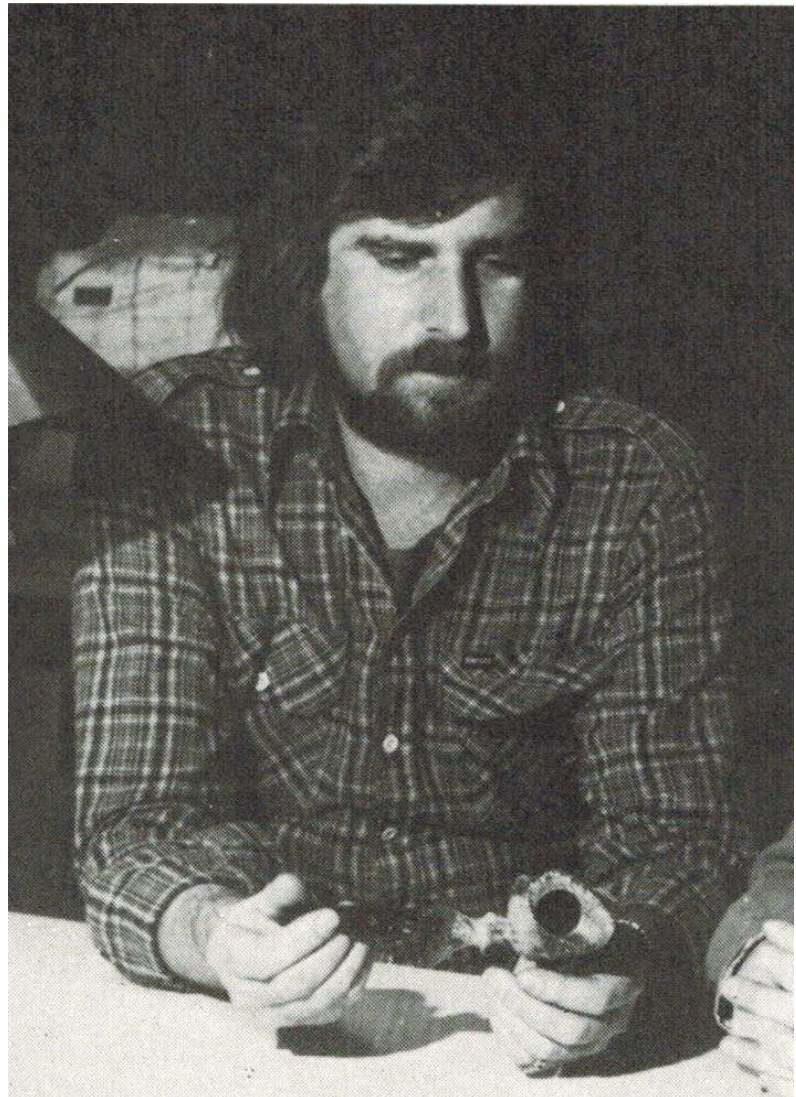
That the USA is the most important customer is almost needless to mention, - but Japan is catching up, and pipes are also exported to Germany, England, Switzerland Italy and Hong Kong. In total there are 18 - 20 different export markets.

One of the "big ticket items" only possible to complete at certain intervals is the "7-day set's" comprising of 7 matched pipes made out of the very best briar and undergoing the most delicate workmanship. Naturally they are protected in a custom made case as if they were pearls and diamonds. Just as naturally it is Americans who buy these "jewels", and they pay the modest sum of kr. 75,000. Oh yes, - when it comes to sales gimmicks Denmark can also participate.

Thanks to the recognition Preben Holm's models have gained abroad; an English firm approached him a couple of years ago. The company wanted a series of "modern" pipes to market alongside their large traditional program. Preben Holm was encouraged to send suggestions.

He was given carte blanche and created 7 models which were all accepted. They are now in production in mid-west Sealand, and are sent to London to be finished. Even though they have lost their identity as Preben Holm pipes, - they can now take pride in being sold under the English company's well-known brand. As a curiosum it can be mentioned that the company in Torkildstrup is the only one of the many pipe companies the English company cooperates with which has maintained its independence.

One should not rest on one's laurels, - so within the last 3 - 4 months they have been working on an idea in Torkildstrup. In all its simplicity it involves hand carved pipes to be sold at reasonable prices. Impossible? Preben Holm believes in the idea.



Let us first try to agree on the definition of a "hand carved" pipe. If you think that it is a pipe you patiently sit and carve using a knife you are on the wrong track. Of course machines are used. A pipe maker selects a briar block of extra fine quality, and after determining how the bowl can be best placed in the block he outlines the placement of the bowl and uses a saw to make the first raw bowl appear. Then several manual sanding processes follow (all of this can be performed by the push of a button using programmable machines at a modern pipe factory). What happens next is more or less determined manually. Stem work, - no, hand made stems are not within the budget, but a beautifully made factory stem with a comfortable lip, coloring and polish, and still carefully inspected following each step. If flaws appear in the briar during manufacture the result will be a sandblasted pipe instead of a smooth finish. If the flaws are minor "sand pit's" they can be removed by sanding the area, but then the pipe will get a slightly different shape.

In this fashion you get a hand carved Preben Holm pipe selling at kr. 128 in the finish called "Walnut", and kr. 188 for a finish called "Light". They are both very beautiful. In general there is no difference to the finish of the "cheap" hand carved pipes and the several hundred kroner more expensive models. You should not expect to find pipes with superb grain in the cheaper models; - neither should you expect to find them in too many shops. So far they have only been presented in 4 - 5 shops in Copenhagen, and they buy everything produced. However the production is increasing, - which should benefit pipe smokers nationwide.

NYHED fra

PREBEN HOLM

Briar Pipes



Deres helt personlige pipe

Der er en egen charme ved at eje en pipe, som ingen andre har magen til. Sådant en pipe kan De få, hvis De vælger en Preben Holm pipe. Ikke to piber er ens, fordi de er skåret i hånden efter rodens smukkeste struktur. Se en Preben Holm pipe hos Deres tobakshandler.

3 nye serier håndskårne piber

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DE LUXE WALNUT kitfri	vejl. udsalg kr. 128,00						
DE LUXE LIGHT kitfri	vejl. udsalg kr. 188,00						

Advertisement for the less expensive line

That the pipes are without flaws goes without saying, and there is a logical explanation as to why they are not grouped in various series and stamped with model numbers. Due to the manufacturing process no two pipes are exactly alike, but in general it is naturally the same model produced.

It seems to me that there is common sense behind the cheaper hand carved pipes. They will improve the pipe smokers awareness of how satisfying it is to own a quality pipe. And who knows, - it may be one of the more expensive pipes you purchase next time.

The smoking characteristics? I haven't even considered those. You would have to be a fool to make unsmokeable beautiful pipes, and foolish they are not in Torkildstrup. No pipe leaves Preben Holm's factory without him inspecting and approving it first. The quality level has to be maintained. It started as a hobby, - and it still is.....

The Jensen Family

Piber & Tobak, Issue #6, December 1979

Written by: Jesper Boye

Translated by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

If you take the train south towards Roskilde and get off in Lille Skensved you can visit the Georg Jensen pipe factory.

You may doubt that it's a factory when you look at the large 3 story yellow brick building; - it doesn't exactly look like a factory. When you reach the main entrance and find the discretely placed sign stating "Georg Jensen Pipe Factory" you know for sure you are at the right place.

I decided to take a walk around the 1500 square meter building to the rear entrance. Here I bumped into a friendly man who took me to the owner.



The GJ factory, - it is so beautiful that the locals have named it the "nursing home"

You may have pictured Georg Jensen, - who is now past 70 years old, sitting behind a large mahogany desk smoking a Havana cigar, - but that was not the case. He was actually sitting behind a drill press in the production area enjoying life (and his Yellow Capstan tobacco) while drilling draft holes in pipes destined to be stamped with the well-known GJ logo.

Let's start at the beginning.....

Around 25 year ago Georg Jensen worked for the port authorities, - and at the same time he was buying all kinds of old machines to refurbish, modify and resell. He did some repairs for a couple of shop managers involved in manufacturing buttons out of bone and stems for pipes, and they suggested that Georg Jensen should make some machines for pipe making.



Georg Jensen 70 years old

After quite some time the two shop managers succeeded in convincing a hesitant Georg Jensen (and wife) to not only build the machines, - but also become a partner and part owner in the new adventure. Pretty soon Georg Jensen and his loyal wife realized that they had to do it all. Times were hard. In a dark and very cold basement (his wife had to sit up against a gas heater to manage the cold), they had to work around the clock because the two partners had abandoned the adventure.



As it turned out people liked the pipes, and after a while they could afford to move the production to a better shop in Copenhagen. As demand continued to increase this shop also became too small, and Georg Jensen started making plans for a new large factory. The factory was built in Lille Skensved, and it is still the headquarters for the Jensen family's operation.

Georg Jensen's charming daughter is a non-smoker, - but she is just as dedicated towards the operation as her brother Per Georg Jensen who is the export manager. Per is a busy man, - in spite of his young age (21 years old) he is very experienced in the pipe business. He spent several years in Germany working with Gebrüder Heineman, a large German pipe company and GJ's largest customer. Just like the "Old Man", Per has been involved in the art of producing the quality pipes. If an employee calls in sick both father and son are able to step in and take the employees place at the lathe or polisher.

With a production in excess of 100,000 pipes a year, you have to maintain a suitable inventory of briar blocks. There are plenty of blocks even though the Mediterranean suppliers claim the opposite. They are kept in sacks at the back of the factory for a 6-month drying period before they are used in production. Next to the storage area the company pride roars. It is a massive ventilation system making sure that the briar dust is removed from the production area, - and the temperature is comfortable.

The most exciting part is probably the machines used in the production. There is plenty of them, and some date back 25 years when Georg Jensen was still working on his own, and some are his own masterpieces. The same goes for the modified (by GJ himself) machines from the now closed Lillehammer pipe factory in Norway.

Upstairs you find the "make-up" department. This is where the almost finished pipes arrive at Mrs. Jensen's laboratory to receive fillings and color following the quality inspection. The stain used is a factory secret, it consists of two to 10 components depending on the final finish.

Following a last inspection the pipes are ready for the final step, - the stamping. At this time the pipes have been passed through hundreds of hands and over 70 operations.

So who gets pleasure out of Georg Jensen's hard work? - the whole world actually.....

From Japan to Argentina, - roughnecks in the Caribbean, Australia, all of Europe with Germany in the lead and off course Denmark. The most northern customer is the Sirius dogsled patrol in Greenland, each year they receive a collection parachuted, - by parachute! They would probably enjoy the latest GJ model, - a nose-warmer named "junior".

You have to pay DM 1,200 if you want the very best. This is the price for a perfect Birds Eye recently sold at the Frankfurter-messe in Germany. The standard models sell for between kr. 100 and kr. 500. Even the cheapest GJ's are quality pipes, and Georg Jensen is the best proof of that. He never smokes a pipe from another maker, he enjoys smoking all 42 GJ models, - 24-7.

Yes, - the Georg Jensen name is well-known in the pipe smoker circles.....



Two times Chonowitsch, - Jess & Emil

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 7, March 1980

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photos: Jesper Boye

Translated by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Emil is known by most pipe fanatics; - he entered the scene after the war by taking over the Joh's Osborne store on Bredgade, Copenhagen. He operated the store together with his wife for 25 years, - when he finally decided it was time to become a pipe maker.

It was a visit to some ceramic-making friends (who had moved to Jutland to avoid the Big City's temptations!) that inspired him.

Anne Julie's husband, - Poul Rasmussen, became the chosen one to teach Emil the art of pipe making. For two years Emil was taught how to repair pipes, - the best way to learn the art of pipe making, at Poul Rasmussen's shop at Østerbro in Copenhagen.

After a couple of years as an apprentice it was possible for Emil to start on his own at the Atterup School by Faxe. The school was for sale (students not included), and it was big enough to hold both the shop and residence. Emil is still there, - working on and developing his well-known traditional models, after 15 successful years.



*The younger Chonowitsch
concentrating*

Emil's son wanted to become a vet. His name is Jess, and he began pipe making at almost the same time as his father. When he did not pass the entrance exam for the vet studies the first time around, he applied for a job as a worker at Poul Rasmussen where his father worked as an apprentice. Here he settled in for a couple of years until he was drafted into the military. Following his service he became an apprentice at the Nestor of pipe making, - Sixten Ivarsson, whose son Lars also had become infatuated by the art of pipe making, so the two famous sons both were apprentices at the same time.

Jess' career seems similar to most of the other famous names in the business. Just like e.g. Jørn Micke who studied medicine for years, but instead ended up as a world famous pipe carver.

Naturally Jess is also living

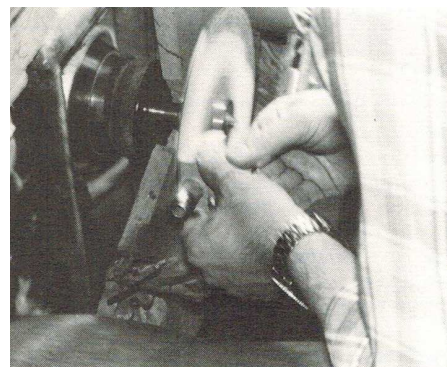
like most other pipe makers; - in an old farm house at the southern part of Sealand with the village school and retirement home just around the corner, and pigs grunting and chickens clucking just to make the scenery and work climate perfect.

Jess' workshop is not as glamorous as the father's woodworking classroom. Most would think that the homemade "shed" is the local snow cone booth, - but it is in fact the younger Chonowitsch's small but cozy workshop.

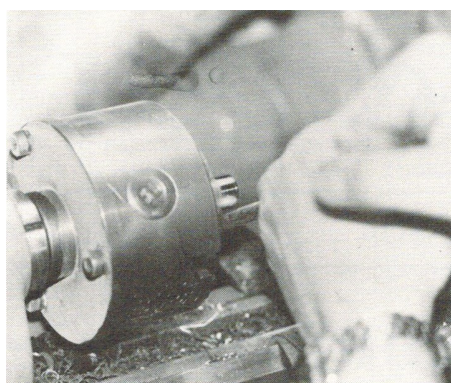


The artist in his workshop

Even though the pipes are hand carved, there are a couple of invaluable machines in there. A band saw is the latest acquisition so he no longer has to cut the briar blocks into suitable sizes by hand. A couple of lathe's and a so-called "bims" is also present. The "bims" is probably the most useful of all the mechanical contraptions, - on this the bowl is shaped by a rotating sanding disc. A polisher for the final "make-up" is also present. If you compare father and son it is hard to spot the relationship, - at least when it comes to pipes. Jess is more prone to the abstract shapes, - but without loosing the shape. Meaning the shape will not be altered if the grain does not flow as expected. It is only for so-called Cross Grain pipes this is an option. Cross Grain pipes are



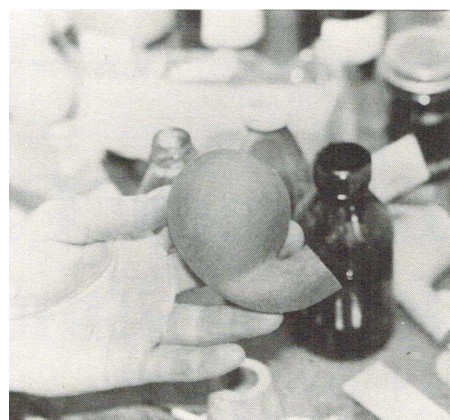
"Bimsning" of a bowl



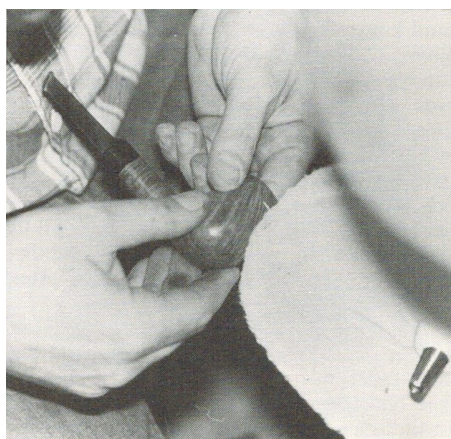
Silversmith work, - the band for the shank is shaped

unique. Only very few pipe makers make them, - mainly because they are rather complicated to make, and the briar and shape has to form a perfect balance. In the last order of three examples, more than ten semi-finished pipes had to be scrapped before he succeeded. Considering that a raw briar block in the best quality (extra-extra) cost around kr. 75, - it's no mystery that such a masterpiece will end up with a price tag of a few thousand kr. The name Cross Grain is a result of the Straight Grain being placed horizontally in a belt around the chubby shaped bowl. This allows for the Birds Eye to present itself in the best possible manner on both sides of the bowl.

The price for Chonowitsch pipes run between kr. 500 and kr. 3,500. A single pipe has made it to kr. 4,000. The few high grade pipes are stamped with a dove; - this stamp has only been in use 10 times so far. The Japanese have been the best customers. According to Jess this is because they are not afraid to pay a decent price for art, - or a work of art. "I consider myself more of a worker than an artist". This amount to quite a bit of money since



A Cross Grain is pre-inspected by applying a light stain



Final polish

the price has to be multiplied with 3 or 4 before it ends up in the mouth of a Japanese smoker. Just like the American market is being saturated by "Made in Denmark", - there are indications that the Japanese collectors are getting closer to completing their collections too, so Jess is looking for new markets. So far Germany and Switzerland look promising; - they happily pay DM 1,000 to get their teeth in a Chonowitsch pipe. In Denmark it is only Remo Sørensen on Strøget who gets the pleasure of having a pipe or two in stock, - and they end up in Japan anyway. Overall there is no problem selling the pipes. Nowadays Jess is constantly receiving calls from German distributors wanting to purchase everything that is being produced for the upcoming fairs in Germany.

Since we are talking about exclusive works of art it takes at least a full day to complete a pipe, so the annual production is limited to approximately 150 pipes. Half of the production is traditional Billiard shapes in large sizes for the German market, - often with a silver band. The rest are Bulldog and Dublin shapes, - and then off course the more advanced requiring a bit of creativity.

Jess smokes a tongue friendly tobacco, - most often in a meerschaum pipe of his own creation. It is the most beautiful I have seen for quite some time, but probably also the only one. First of all you are guaranteed to end up with "black lung" due to the dust, secondly the Turkish are not willing to let go of the white mineral. But Jess is not running low on smoking paraphernalia, - he has around 60 good briar pipes, - most by his own hand, you have to sample test a few before shipping to the other side of the world.



The Pipe Artist Nielsen

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 9, September 1980

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photos: Anders Bentzon

Translated by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

We visited Tonni Nielsen, - another young Danish pipe maker fetching worldwide recognition

In reality he should not have been a pipe maker. Following school he was supposed to become an apprentice as a machinist, - but as with many other big names within the pipe making trade he stumbled on the craft by coincidence. A friend lost a finger in some machinery just as Tonni was supposed to begin his apprenticeship, so he changed his mind and took a job as a worker at W Ø Larsen's pipe shop on Gartnerivej in Copenhagen. He had the "pleasure" of polishing pipe stems for a couple of years. It was quite a while before he was permitted to take the first steps towards becoming a pipe maker.

The first pipe was made under expert supervision by another well-known name in the business, - Former, who at the time held the position as manager at the W Ø Larsen pipe shop. The first attempt turned out quite well, - so well that the next steps towards becoming a pipe maker could be taken. The apprenticeship turned out to last almost 10 years before the dream was within reach: - To become an independent pipe maker with his own shop. Once again it was Former (who at the time was trying to create a name for himself) who made it possible. The Celius-pipes creator, - a gentleman named Rantzborg, passed

away. Rantzborg's widow contacted Former and asked him to sell the shop, - including a lathe, briar blocks and pretty much all other equipment needed to begin making pipes. Former asked Tonni if he would be interested, and since the price was kr. 15,000 (a very reasonable price for a fully operational pipe shop) Tonni decided to take the chance.

The new shop was located on Finsensvej in very modest facilities, - barely allowing you to breathe. Tonni had to find a more suitable space. About a year ago he and his American wife Barbara found a cozy little 2 story house in Hellerup, well hidden behind tall buildings on Strandvej. The downstairs has been adapted to accommodate his wife. She's a textile artist working with fabrics, designing colorful kids clothing and many other things. Upstairs Tonni has his workshop, - fully equipped with all kinds of machines: lathe, bims, band saw, ventilation, polisher etc.

The cozy little house works as a magnet to young talented pipe makers; this is where they can design their own pipes. When I visited, there were no less than 3 at it, - besides the ones dropping by to talk.



The Wizard, - here sitting on the ground, and his talented apprentice working on the final sanding.



*The chamber is drilled on the lathe "by hand".
Notice the drill, - it is homemade from an old file*

around 6 months, so you have to keep a 6-month inventory on hand to keep production going (kr. 50,000 worth).

With this in mind, it is understandable that a hand carved pipe reaches a certain price range. In addition not all blocks are usable, - in fact up towards 35% are scrapped due to flaws in the wood, which is very frustrating if a flaw decides to appear when the pipe is almost finished after a full days work.

Almost all pipes are exported, mainly to Germany. They are sold via one of Germanys largest wholesalers at kr. 200 to 800 a piece. This may not sound like much for a hand carved pipe, but when the pipe finally reaches the display case in the store, the price has multiplied by 3.

How can you recognize a pipe carved by Tonni Nielsen? The first you notice is the terrific stem work, and there are details and carvings giving the pipe a very unique character. The models are not as varied as one might think, even though no two pipes are

alike. This is due to the German demand for giant models. They are made in traditional shapes as well as the more fancy hand carved shapes (often bent versions).

Most people think it is more difficult to make a fancy shape, - but Tonni explains that it is harder to make a beautiful traditional shape. On the fancy model you can carve your way out of flaws in the grain, - thus creating a more perfect pipe. Making traditional shapes increases the scrapping rate, so in reality the traditional shapes should be more expensive than the sought after fancy's.



During the summer the shop move outside



Three really large masterpieces, - exceptional handy work

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In Denmark only one store carries the Tonni Nielsen pipes, - that is Wilh. Jørgensen on Strøget, who still has a couple of the so-called freehands available. In reality a freehand is a pipe created by the artist without

direction from a customer. Very beautiful and distinct examples are available at Wilh. Jørgensen at a price between kr. 800 and kr. 1,500.

Everybody has an idol, - and so does Tonni. In fact he has been modest enough to pick the best of them all, - the perfectionists perfectionist, the Swedish Bo Nordh. Not only does he make most of the special tooling himself (just like Bo Nordh), he is also working with the difficult shapes created by the master, while adding his personal touch in the details of the finished pipe. I'm thinking of the famous Calabash. For the novice I should mention that this is an incredible work, - impossible to create in theory, at least that perfect. The calabash has been replaced with briar, and Bo Nordh made the cup from buxbom. Tonni's Japanese agent came by with a luxury example of the model; - it was simply made from ivory and fitted with a buxbom cup. This got the creativity going inside the young Nielsen, but he did not make an exact copy. As seen in the picture, it is made from one piece of briar where the bottom has been treated to enhance the grain while the upper part is left untreated resembling buxbom. The pipe is polished by hand, and belongs in the upper end of the price range. Depending on the grain etc. it cost around kr. 2,500.

There's a reason the colleagues call him "Little Nordh"



The man behind the pipes, - Tonni Nielsen, show his pride the "Calabash"

A Pipe Maker in Haderslev

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 12, May 1981

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photo: Jesper Boye

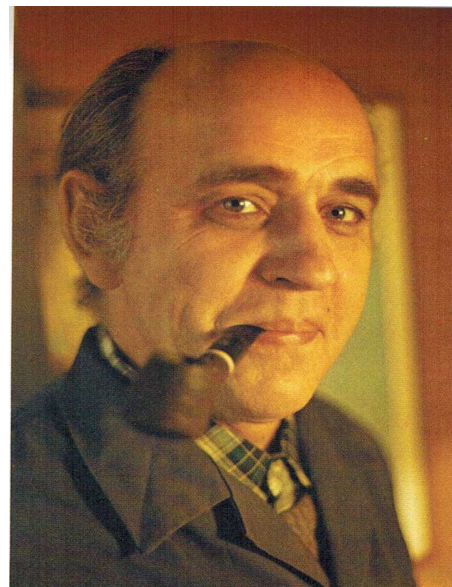
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

I you find the time to be a tourist in Denmark and go to Haderslev, there are at least 3 attractions worth your while. At the town square you can visit the Cathedral, and attend Mass. After Mass there is plenty of opportunity to quench your thirst, - the square is packed with small pubs selling a variety of refreshments. At the bar you will more than likely come across a glass jar filled with what looks like plums in water. It is Danish pickled eggs, - a good way to develop a healthy thirst, and a good "pick me up" the following morning. You eat the eggs with Tabasco, vinegar, mustard and other strong condiments, - and they are accompanied by a bitter and a bottle of the local brew. The third attraction is pipes. You find them in Lavgade, this is where the pipe maker BMH is located. The initials stand for Børge Mortensen Haderslev.



The pipes are inspected outside in the sunshine

established with Denmark as the main market. Store and workshop are combined, and you have to be prepared for a little dust, - pipes are made here. At the back of the room you find a small showroom where you can get tempted if the window display didn't do the trick. The stile is personal and very Danish, - often with beautiful grain. The process and the finish has been perfected over the past years, and the quality is very good, it's hard to point any flaws. The most surprising is the price. When you sell your pipes over the counter without any middlemen, you can sell at a discount, but in Haderslev you can buy a



Børge Mortensen

He is a modest man living for, - and with, his pipes.

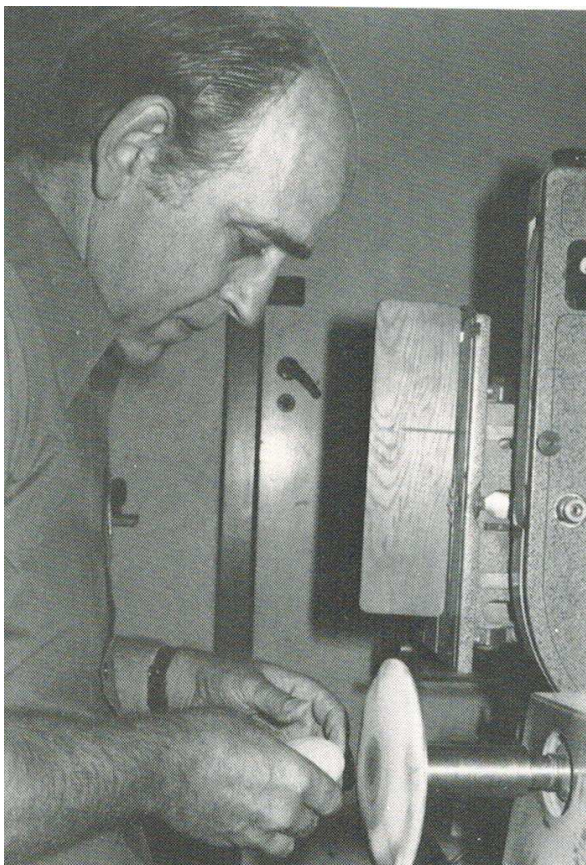
He was trained well. First he worked for Kriswill where he became a foreman, and later he joined Bari. but as many others he got the urge to open his own workshop.

Contrary to most other pipe makers he has managed to get by without exporting pipes, and over the past 4 - 5 years the business has become well



A selection from the showroom

good "pipe maker pipe" at the same price you pay for a factory made pipe, and for obvious reason those did not get the same level of attention when they were made. During the summer months sales are booming. The German tourists keep on returning to Børge Mortensen to buy more pipes.



Børge working at the "bims"



A couple of nice Straight Grains

Several of the repeat customers are bringing a sketch of an old long gone favorite pipe, - or a new idea they would like to order.

The locals are also very loyal customers. During my short stay I watched the local newspaper editor, artists and several other pipe smokers buy good Danish quality workmanship at a price that will suit any wallet.

Nihil sine labore

Piber & Tobak, Issue 13, September 1981

Written by: Jakob Groth

Photo: Anders Bentzon

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Piber & Tobak visits Erik Nørding. The little red-bearded tornado, who gladly works 60 hrs. per. week, - weekends too, - and who by mistake became successful with the fancy-pipes in America and later cooperated with pipe makers worldwide.

The adventure began in 1964. After working as a blacksmith, - and later machinist, Erik Nørding was completing his bachelors degree in Copenhagen. He was a pipe smoker and frequented the W Ø Larsen temple on Amagertorv when the tobacco pouch needed filling, or a pipe needed repair. He met Skovbo in the workshop. Skovbo was a pipe maker and repaired pipes as well, and he was the predecessor of another well-known pipe maker, Former.

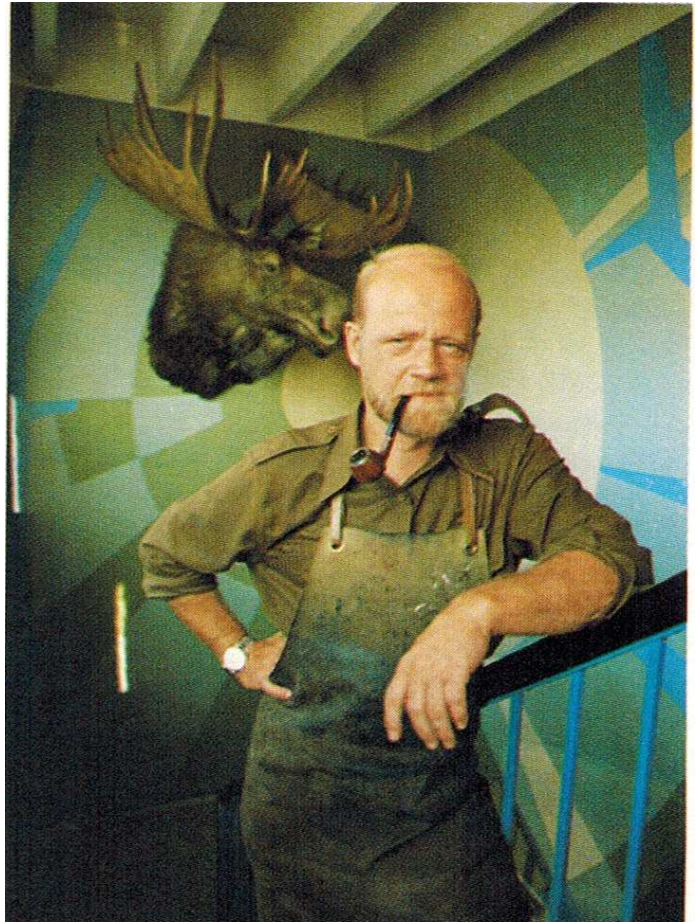
Skovbo asked the "blacksmith" if he would be willing to make some machines for him.

Nørding agreed and over the next few months he located a few old worn down machines suitable for the task, and turned them into the machines Skovbo had requested. Skovbo, - however, had forgotten to mention that his financial situation was at a low point, and he requested a payment plan over the next few years. Nørding was not too keen on that idea, - but he offered Skovbo a fair deal. Nørding was to become a partner in the new business adventure. Skovbo would make the pipes, Nørding would sell them, and when time permitted Skovbo was to teach Nørding to make pipes.

This is how it all started.....

Sales did not go well, apparently the pipes, - named "SON", were too expensive. After 3 months of operation Skovbo approached Nørding and told him "you do not have the necessary skill set, I can't teach you how to make pipes". Following this episode they went their separate ways, and Nørding decided to take the leap on his own!

He first made classical shapes without any great success, - they are hard to make by hand, but as always he got a great idea. Nørding thought he could make the pipes from a drawing (the engineering approach), so he contacted several stores and offered to make exclusive pipes based on the customers wishes (and drawing). This turned out to be a better idea. The first customer was a Pot-smoker, and he ordered six large Pot's he was very pleased with. Right before Christmas a Lady came into the tiny (6 x



It's Nørding smoking the pipe ! The Elk is one of the worlds largest, brought down with one shot by Nørding

6 meters) workshop on Knudslundvej, and she spotted one of Erik's "firstborns" she just had to have for a Christmas present. 60 kr. was a lot of money back then, but it turned out that she was employed at a chocolate factory and was able to pay with merchandise, - so it became a Merry Christmas for every one.

In 1967 Nørding could afford to hire a helper. It was a shop assistant from Wilh. Jørgensen on Strøget, - Tao, who is now successful with the "Svendborg" pipe.

The workshop moved to Fortvej, and an additional five employees were hired. The mysterious fancy pipes, - with bark on the top, were invented, and they became a megahit with the Americans who wanted (and could afford) something that the astounded pipe community had never seen before. Sales boomed, - 4,000 pipes were delivered to the US and the tourist shops on Strøget each month. The success was immense, - the American importer posted a full-page add in the bunny magazine Playboy (a \$ 38,000 price tag) and all heck broke loose.



A sample of Nørding's creations

Nørding had several other things going at the same time, - he is also an inventor. The many machines every pipe maker needs, - have been modified and improved by Nørding himself. As an example he uses pneumatics a lot, - even in a so-called turret lathe. Due to this he is able to supply hand carved Nørding pipes cheaper than the other pipe maker's pampered handiwork. Only an expert will notice the little tell-tell signs, and Nørding never wanted to be called an artist. Another invention he has been working on for

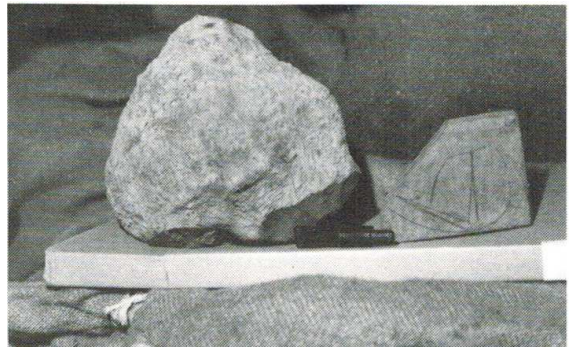
almost 5 years is a "marbleized" acrylic stem. Horrific idea as far as Danish pipe smokers are concerned, - but the Americans like them and that is Nørding's main market.

The acrylic stem is not a new invention, - but they are all hand made in Italy. After about a years hard work, - in close cooperation with Technological Institute, the die cast stem is getting closer to becoming a reality. It is cheap, and several pipe makers have already put in requests. Besides always being nice and shiny, the black version will never become green and tarnished, and the strength is good. The smartest about the system is probably a bushing to be inserted in the shank. The result is a stem with a perfect fit under any weather conditions, and even if the pipe has been on display in the shop window for years. The hand-cut version will cost kr. 150 - kr. 250 which is not bad.

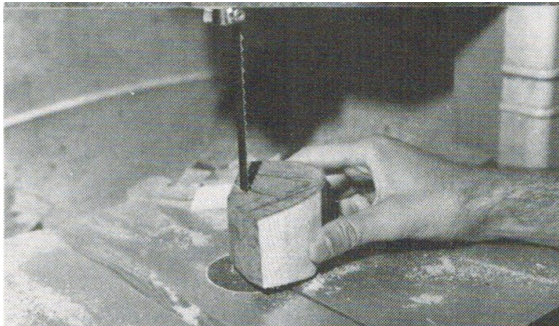
After 10 years, Nørding received an offer from the pipe factory Albing & Martsen's who had been making pipes since the war. They were interested in continuing, but were out of funds, so Nørding bought all their machines and equipment and moved once again. This time to Marielundsvej, - only a stone throw from the present location of the factory.

When the pipe factory Kriswill closed Nørding was there again, - he bought the complete factory but not the name. He made a deal with the English pipe factory Barling to supply not less than 100,000 pipes per year, - and at the same time he was producing his own series pipes in Kolding, and the hand carved pipes in Herlev. Expenses kept increasing, Barling's sales dropped, -and with a drop in sales of 50%, an increase in payroll of 100% and a declining dollar, the factory closed after about one year of operation. The buildings were sold, - but Nørding kept the machines.

For years Peterson had a pipe factory on Isle of Man, but when it was moved to Dublin, the locals decided to start their own factory. So far they had only made meerschaum pipes, but now they also wanted to make briar pipes. Nørding was contacted via Barling, and he supplied them the machines from "Kriswill" and know-how. In return he received a 50% share of the business. At the beginning semi-finished pipes were shipped to the factory at a low cost of kr. 10 per pipe, but the quality was not as good as the pipes produced in Denmark. The issue was resolved by exchanging workers to perfect the workmanship, and today 20 people are employed at the factory between Dublin and Liverpool. Besides the continued production of the Manx meerschaum pipes, the briar blocks for the Nørding pipes are also dried on the island. This normally takes 6-months, but in one of Nørding's efficient machines, this can be accomplished in a couple of weeks. In spite of the many trips back and forth before ending up as a Nørding, - it still pays off.



Raw briar and the first outline of the bowl



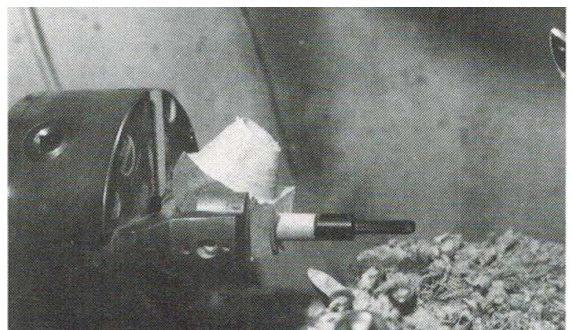
The first trimming of the shape

The Manx meerschaum pipes, - now bearing the Nørding name, is a must for people who prefer meerschaum, but still likes to empty the pipe by tapping it against their wooden clogs. It tastes perfect from the very first smoke, and the meerschaum has been through a calcination process where it is heat treated and boiled in oil. The result is a meerschaum pipe able to withstand being dropped on the floor, - unlike the Turkish meerschaums. It is a bit heavier due to the absorbed oil. The latest from Nørding/Manx is a line of hand carved pipes. The first pipes just arrived for testing when Piper & Tobak was visiting.

Many Danes know the Nørding pipes, but they have not become real popular even though Denmark is a pipe smoker nation. Nørding believes this is mainly due to the many changing wholesalers who never really managed to promote the name. First it was Hirschsprung, - sold to Nordisk Tobakskompani. Then it was Wulff suffering the same fate. Then Wilh. Jørgensen. Sales declined, - and since 1980 Mischou has the honor. They have big plans for Nørding, and they just released pipe cleaners under the Nørding name.

As mentioned Nørding has worked with, and supplied to most pipe factories in the world. He can meet any quality requirement. As a curiosum, it can be mentioned that Nørding has supplied a number of Carey pipes to USA. He also makes high end pipes. The specialty is a 7-day set; - it is sold in America for around kr. 25,000. The most expensive set sold for kr. 130,000, - cash money. It was (off course) a Beverly Hills customer showing up with police escort and the whole shebang who became the proud owner.

It's not only the pipes that are unique. The man behind the name is rather unique too. Some collect stamps or works by Wagner, - Nørding goes tiger shark hunting in the pacific (it's hanging at home above the swimming pool).



Stem is fitted

In addition he is considering being represented in Guinness Book of Records. One of the worlds biggest Elks is hanging by the stairs leading up to his office, - brought down in Alaska with one shot, - by Nørding off course. We wait in anticipation for the next creations by Nørding.

How much for a Nørding?

Nørding pipes are special since all are hand carved, - more or less. About half are made with machines, but without a model, - meaning every pipe is unique. The rest are "real" hand carved pipes as we know them from other pipe makers.

In the first group the cheapest sell for around kr. 90. These are pipes with heavy staining to hide minor flaws. I noticed a group of sandblasted classics, almost white as porcelain in color; those are very nice pipes suitable as daily smokers.

For kr. 138 you can get a semi-rusticated pipe, - a nice work pipe, especially the short light billiards.

As mentioned earlier, one of Nørding's specialties is the acrylic stem. The advantage is the price, and it lasts just as long as an ebonite stem, and is just as good to smoke from. Pipes with this type of stem can be purchased for kr. 158.

If you are looking for a bit more everyday luxury you have to pay kr. 198. For that you get a nice smooth or tan shell pipe. I stumbled on a bent classic with the bowl leaning slightly forward. The blasting was

perfect, - showing ring grain all around the bowl. Such pipes deserve careful treatment and good tobacco. With a heavy silver band added, - increasing the strength of the shank, the price is kr. 288.

A silver band on a smooth luxury pipe cost kr. 358. The soft shiny surface goes well with the silver, - especially on classic models like the Apple.

If you want a real hand carved pipe the prices begin at kr. 300. Here you also get something for your money, design and smoke ability, - the two things that has made Nørding an expanding business.



The master showing samples of the different models

The Queen of Pipes

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 14, December 1981

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photo: Anders Bentzon

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Anne Julie, - a pipe maker with an eye for shape and detail

The Queen of pipes, - Anne Julie, has the pleasure of being one of the best known Europeans in Japan. First of all due to her numerous tours and participation in Japanese TV shows, - but naturally also because her hand carved specialties have gained incredible interest on the other side of the world.

Her pipes have become an attraction which many tourists, - mainly Germans and Japanese, seek out in their travels. In fact she has become quite a competition to "The Little Mermaid" when people from all over the world visit the pipe paradise Copenhagen. Like most of the other famous Danish pipe carvers she entered the trade by coincidence....



Anne Julie, - the woman behind the red/white dot. Always in a good mood.



An elegant shape

In 1967, following the death of her husband, - the well-known pipe maker Poul Rasmussen, Anne Julie suddenly were responsible for a complete pipe making workshop she never really had shown much of an interest in before.

Even though she was now on her own with the children, she felt the shop had to continue.

Anne Julie had no prerequisite besides a natural skill set and an good artistic eye. So she combined all of those with a little bit of luck, and within a few years she has become an institution within the pipe making community.

The first experiments performed in the old shop in Hornemansgade turned out so well that she decided to bring a few with her in the suitcase during a vacation trip to the USA. While she was sitting in her hotel room in New York she, - and the telephone book, decided to go to the nearest pipe store to show them what she could do. The store was located on Madison Avenue, and strangely enough it had a Danish American manager.

He thought the pipes were very "charming", but he did not think



Anne Julie inspecting one of her creations

they would be able to fetch the prices Anne Julie wanted. He agreed to take them on commission while Anne Julie visited some friends in San Francisco. It became a very short visit, when she landed in San Francisco she was asked to return to New York on the first available flight.

A pipe interested TV producer had heard of the story, and wanted her to participate in the American show "What's My Line", - in Denmark known as "Tippejob". The celebrity panel did not guess her occupation, - and she won the grand prize of kr. 6,000 and an extra weeks stay in New York paid by the TV station.

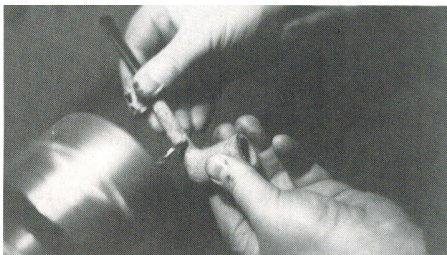
How is that for luck!

Anne Julie's pipes are unique. She tells that it's impossible to determine how the pipe would/should turn out just by looking at the briar block. The block first needs a trip to the sander "bims", - and then the grain will determine the end result.

Even though Anne Julie has made more than 1,000 pipes over the past 10 years, she recognizes every single one no matter where in the world she's "crossing paths" with them. The "tell-tell" signs are not only the red/white logo, but also the unique shape and finish. As mentioned Anne Julie is "self taught", - but that doesn't stop her from teaching others, she has been a mentor for Tom Eltang and several Japanese artists. She also taught evening classes where people could learn how to carve their own pipe "from scratch", - but there's no time for that any longer. The pipes are in such a high demand that you have to order a year in advance to buy one. It is not only the pipe smokers who happily pay between kr. 500 and kr. 20,000 for an Anne Julie pipe, also collectors purchase pipes with no intention of smoking them at all.



Anne Julie working in the shop



A pipe taking shape

Anne Julie is living in Roskilde. She's a hobby farmer, - always on the move. Her "Pipe-Bar" in Vester Voldgade in Copenhagen just expanded and now includes all kinds of arts and crafts, - from shirts to briar cufflinks. For several years Anne Julie has been announcing "Pipe-man of the Year", but her passion is "Girls for Pipes". She finds it strange that you don't see more female pipe smokers, even though more have shown up over the years.

One thing is for certain, - she will not go without a good smoke.....

BANG

Piper & Tobak, Issue # 15, March 1982

Written By: Harald Grut

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

The history of a pipe making workshop.

Bang pipes are not very well known in Denmark. In fact, - they can only be found in a couple of specialty stores in Copenhagen and a few stores elsewhere in Denmark, but pipe smokers in Germany, Italy and Japan consider Bang Pipes the "cream of the crop".

In reality S. Bang is not a pipe carver, - but let us start at the beginning.

During the German occupation a hopeful young man began his apprenticeship at a tobacconist in Copenhagen (only the God's know how anybody could learn anything about tobacco in those years). After the war tobacco was sold in a different way, - behind the counter, in several retail stores such as Illum and W. Ø. Larsen on Amagertorv. Svend Bang wanted to be independent, and the opportunity arose when he became the agent for an English tobacco firm not previously represented in Denmark. It is no secret that it was Astley's tobacco's he represented, - a friendly W. Ø. Larsen customer had told him about the brand. At the same time a tobacconist store on the upper side of Store Kongensgade became available, - so Bang took the leap.



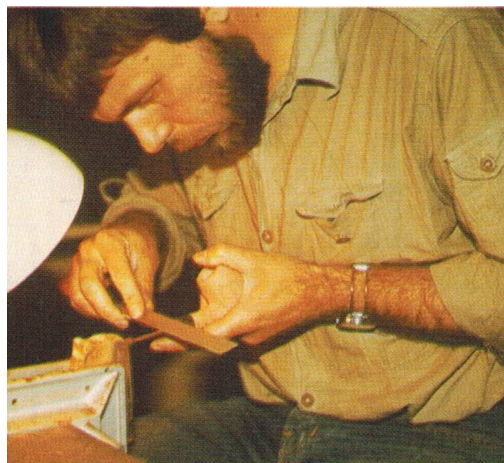
Per Hansen working on a bowl

The store had been the "tobacco, beer and weekly magazines" kind, but now it was transformed into a "Pipe & Tobacco Temple". The years as point man at W. Ø. Larsen had not been in vain, and soon the store in Store Kongensgade became an attraction for Copenhagen's pipe smokers, and the Astley's tobaccos became a success from the very beginning.

It was during those years the Danish hand carved pipes were noticed overseas, - and Bang wanted to be part of it. Bang's pipe making workshop materialized in 1968 in a small backroom of the store. A single pipe carver took care of the small, - and far from impressive, production.

This changed in 1970 when Per Hansen replaced Bang's first pipe maker, who has been long forgotten. Per knew a thing or two about carving pipes. He was an electrician by trade, but had been experimenting with pipe carving at the legendary Hans Hartmann's shop on H.C. Ørstedvej. Then he worked for Preben Holm for a few months before Svend Bang finally hired him. At the same time the workshop was moved from the small backroom in the store to new surroundings in Nyboder, - only a few minutes walk from the store.

Per wouldn't be alone for long. The demand for Bang-Pipes grew, and since they also did pipe repairs he couldn't keep up with it all. In the fall of 1971 he was accompanied by Ulf Noltensmeier, - but call him "Nolte" or you won't get a response. His road to pipe carving had been somewhat complex. A sociology study was cut short, first by the youth rebellion of the 60's, and then he was drafted. He served in Vordingborg and was extremely bored. The Danish military's welfare committee recommended he take up pipe carving as an occupational therapy.



Ulf Noltensmeier "Nolte" working on a stem

And when the military service was finally over, the pipe carving had won over the sociology. He was employed by Preben Holm, - here Per and Nolte met for the first time. Then he worked for Anne Julie for a while, and finally he was employed by Bang.

And they are still there, - Per and Nolte, they simply are the Bang's pipe making workshop. The very interesting part is that they from the very beginning have been working as completely independent and individual pipe makers, growing better and better over the years. So they really aren't Bang's pipe making workshop, they are the independent artists Per and Nolte.

They both admit that they are influenced by, - no inspired by, the "Grand Old Man" Sixten Ivarsson. Which pipe carver isn't? But they have developed their own style, - if influenced by anybody it would be from each other. Per is probably the most imaginative, his pipe shapes have the greatest span. Yes, - his imagination has led to some less flattering penis-like models in recent years. The Germans love them. Nolte's attitude towards pipe shapes is leaning towards the more classical models, - but when it suits him he can create some very sculptural beauties.

A Bang pipe is handmade all the way, except for the basic machining processes all pipe carvers use, - which doesn't prevent calling the pipes hand carved. One critical point differentiates the Bang pipes from most others, - the stems are 100% handmade. One can dispute whether this makes a better pipe, but the undefined feeling of having a handmade stem between your teeth has a mysterious meaning to a true pipe enthusiast.

Also the sandblasting is performed "in house". Per is responsible for this, it is performed at a rented facility in town, and the sandblasted Bang pipes are very beautiful. In recent years Per has also turned into somewhat of a silversmith. The excellent silver fittings decorating some of the Bang models are his doing.

It says itself that Bang has a limited annual production craftsmanship in this category is time consuming, and shortcuts are not an option. Most of the Bang pipes are exported. How big a share of the total Danish export of hand carved pipes they have is left unsaid, to avoid stepping on any toes, but it is considerable. In 1976 the facilities at Nyboder had become too small, so Bang sold the store and workshop and moved to new and bigger surroundings in Livjærgade on Østerbro, - and they are still there.....

To hold a Bang pipe in your hand, enjoying the grain, the harmonic shape, the craftsmanship and the finish is what the pipe smokers in Germany, Italy and Japan are willing to pay a small fortune for, - the perfect smoker in short. I will refrain from mentioning prices; - if you want perfection you have to pay.....

So where is Svend Bang, - the man naming the pipes, in all of this? Well, - he is taking care of the commercial side of the business, - which is not to be belittled since it is the basis of the very existence of the pipe making workshop. In addition he has the tobacco agency to run, - and it is not only Astley's any longer. When time permits, - which isn't often since there is also a stamp collection to care for, he is engaging in the pipe making craft himself, but they are not named Bang, and would hardly fetch amazing prices abroad.

So now you know what pipe smokers from Germany, Italy and Japan would answer if you ask them what they know about hand carved Danish pipes: "Bang!".



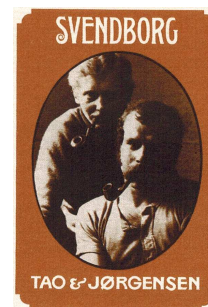
Tao and the Svendborg Pipe

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 17, September 1982

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photo: Jesper Boye

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen



You always connect Tao to the Svendborg Pipe. He now started on his own, - but the Svendborg pipe is still being produced by five women and his old associate Henrik Jørgensen at the helm.

At the end of the 60's it was sufficient to have desire and drive to make it in the pipe making business. This was the case with the banker Henrik Jørgensen, and the shop assistant Tao Nielsen. They both wanted to move away from Copenhagen. They didn't know exactly where, but since Tao was an eager yachtsman and the Nordisk pipe factory, - based in the seafaring town of Svendborg, was for sale, the choice was made. The old machines, - typical post war monstrosities partly built from car parts, were acquired at a very reasonable price, and they still work today.



A look inside the old port office

At the end of the 60's the so-called fancy models, - rather horrific briar chunks with the bark left on top, were a big hit. The Americans thought they were the most beautiful handicraft. Tao had been taught how to make them by one of the "inventors" Erik Nørding, - so naturally they joined the fancy craze. At one time they had twelve people employed at Svendborg, - but as with any other fashion craze the demand slowed down and prices dropped when everybody decided to make fancy pipes for the USA.



Tao's new store

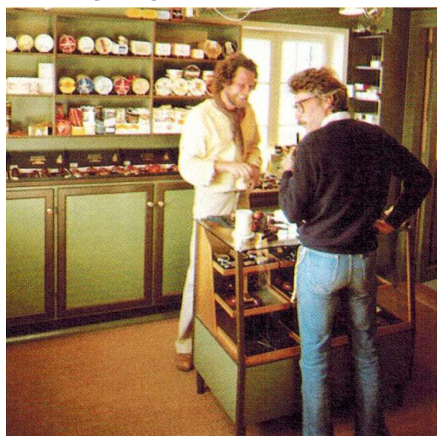
Henrik Jørgensen and Tao discovered this in time, and decided to change production. New models were designed, and the well-known German wholesaler Seifert from Kassel guided them on the way. Svendborg now concentrated most of their effort on the German market, and introduced the large bowls with 9 mm filter, - all in line with the German preference.

Over the years about 100 models have been created, and most are still in production. For the Danish market they have been "downsized" a bit, and are available in the traditional smooth version as well as a sandblasted finish which has become very popular over the recent years.



Finishing touch is applied

Tao is going solo.

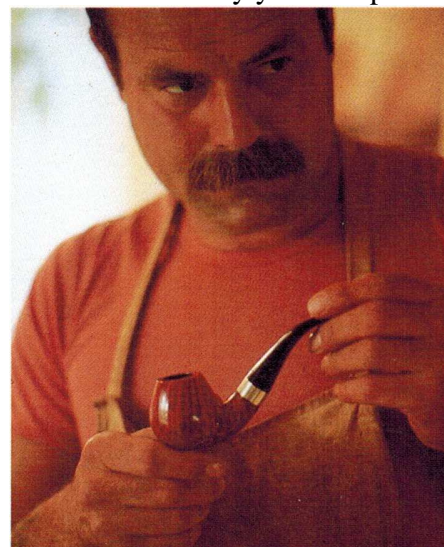


Rainer with a customer

Up through the 70's several of Denmark's world famous pipe makers have worked at Svendborg, - among others Poul Ilsted who also worked for W. Ø. Larsen for a while. As Tao they all favored the hand carved pipes. Only 3,000 were made every year compared to the machine made production of 20,000. All have artistic blood in their veins, and if it suits them better to work 3 nights in a row to finish a pipe, then they just do it. Tao felt this was what he wanted to do, so he and Henrik Jørgensen agreed that he might as well start on his

own. He did so this year with his good friend Rainer Jaesche. They bought the old port office in Svendborg, and has customized it to hold an exclusive pipe shop, - and a work shop where Taotic ideas can have free reign.

The store is primarily operated by Rainer, and you can find Stanwell, Savinelli and Svendborg pipes, - and off course Tao's hand carved creations. A lot of good tobaccos also leave the counter when the many German sailors visit the store. They are also tempted by quality pipe paraphernalia and leather bag's. If that is not enough, - then the "Dunhill fever" has reached Svendborg too (the one with male perfume in tobacco stores!), so you can get Savinelli for your armpits and



Tao inspecting one of his beauties



A sampling of Tao's creations

Dunhill for your cheeks too. In spite of this Tao's store is well worth a visit. His own masterpieces are priced from kr. 500 to kr. 1,500 for a nice traditional shape. They are guaranteed good smokers. Even though my finances were on the low side I was tempted, and I ended up leaving with a nice little sandblasted Billiard. My favorite pipe, - at least for a little while.....

From Painter to Pipe Maker

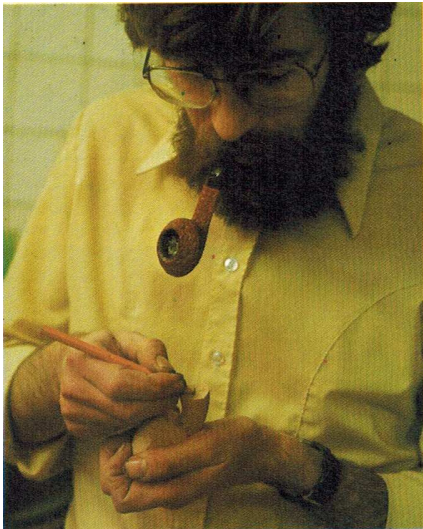
Piber & Tobak, Issue # 19, March 1983

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photo: Ole Christiansen, Hans Mogensen

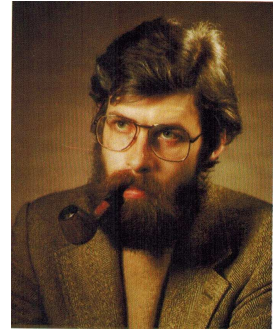
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Pipe maker visit at Peter Hedegaard, - besides pipe making he has the following passions: WAGNER, WHISKEY, VIOLINS and W.Ø. LARSEN.



The general outline is marked prior to "bimsning"

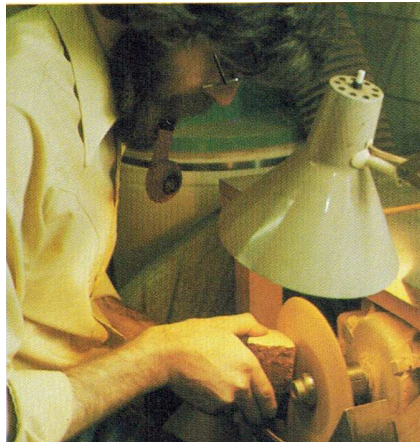
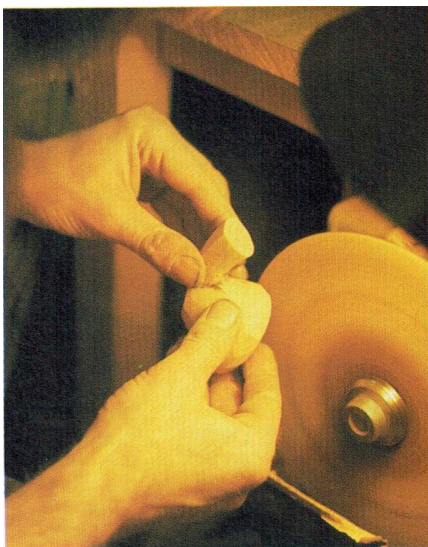
He looks like Methuselah with the long beard and droopy eyes. He claims to recall he's past 30 years of age, and the droopy eyes are not a result of exaggerated interest for the passions listed above, but due to the long work hours necessary to satisfy eager customers in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy, - where most of his pipes are sold.



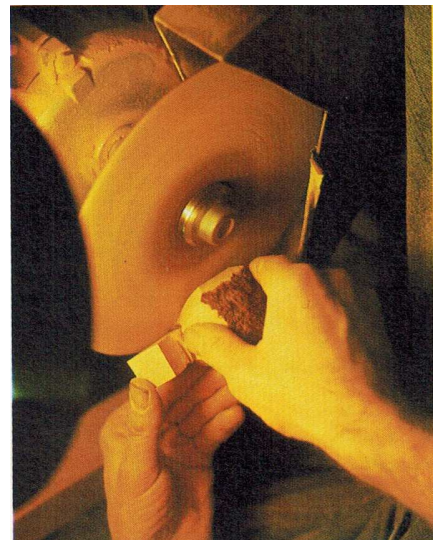
If we turn the clock back to 1975 a painter in Grenå was getting pretty tired of turpentine fumes. He needed fresh air, and during his vacation in the fall, he traveled to Copenhagen for the very first time. He immediately went down Strøget to Amagertorv where one of the city's "Pipe temples" are located. It was with awe and devotion Peter entered this world, - which later became so important to him, for the very first time. He spent several happy minutes contemplating before asking to meet the manager himself, - Ole W.Ø. Larsen. He presented himself as a promising young man with a craving for manual labor, but they had

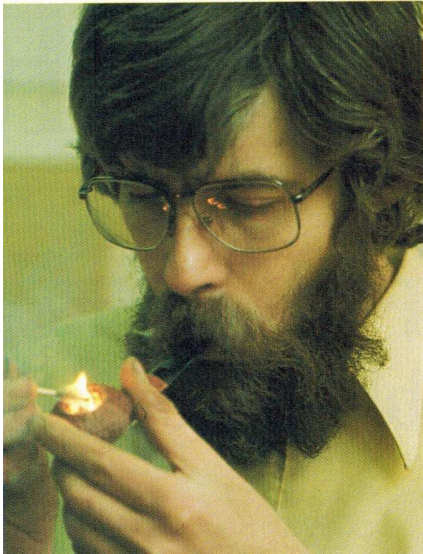
no open positions since he just employed two new apprentices in the shop. But the indomitable young man, - who by the way takes a great interest in theology, believed in himself and his calling as a pipe maker.

As a result he up-rooted his family, - in February 1976, and moved to Copenhagen to pursue a career as a pipe maker at W.Ø. Larsen. It is fair to say he was a novice, but skilled mentors (Jess Gertsen and Tonni Nielsen) and hard work developed his talent to a point where he three years later decided he might as well become his own master, - just as Tonni and Jess.



"Bimsning" of the root, - this is the sanding step where the quality of the root and the shape of the pipe is revealed





Peter smoking one of his own creations

Peter himself thought that the first batch of pipes he made turned out to be "Gods gift to humanity", so he sent them to the well-known German wholesaler Otto & Kopp. Today he has a slightly different view on those first frail attempts. Words like "Crap" may be a bit of an overstatement by the Master, - but as the pictures show, there has been a significant development.....

Peter has twenty standard models in his program, - the rest are a figment of his imagination or the German and Italian customers specifications. Peters sales in Denmark are very limited, - but a small crowd of loyal fans cheer whenever something is returned by the picky Germans. The quality superb, - only the very best raw materials are used. At present Peter has raw briar blocks in stock worth kr. 18,000, - an increase of kr. 7,000 in five years. Peter Hedegaard considers pipe making an art form as well as a craft, but modestly prefers to call himself a craftsman. It is hard work, and it only allows him to maintain a slightly excessive mediocre lifestyle. This is done in the company of Duke Ellington,

vintage port, Whiskey, Søren Kierkegaard and fine wine. Wagner is the worst passion. He has seen the final great masterpiece 17 times in the same production, - quite an impressive feat considering that Parsifal lasts as long as two double-length movies. If you can't find him at the Royal Danish Theater, - where he's also taking violin classes from a pipe smoking conductor, you might locate him at the Bayreuth Festival Theatre where he often spends time in the lounge criticizing world famous conductors in the company of the stars of the opera. He is probably sitting there now.



The stem being worked

A nice man making nice pipes, - look for yourself:



A "String of Pearls" even Peter is satisfied with

Former

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 20, May 1983

Written by: Jakob Groth

Photo: Jakob Groth

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

The mentor and "Godfather" of so many of Denmark's great pipe makers.

Rural surroundings have always had a captivating effect on pipe makers, and several have established themselves in the southern part of Zealand

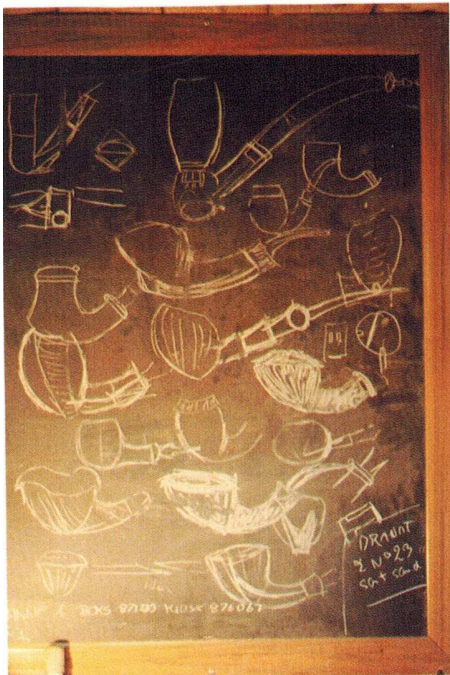
In a small town by the name Høsten near Haslev, - barely qualifying to be called a one-church-town, you will find Former. Open fields, a small pond, a church and a couple of farms are the closest neighbors to the old merchant house, where Former and his wife Lene have settled down.

But let's go back 20 years or so.....

Here we find a young boy 15 years of age, - dreaming of becoming a mechanic or machinist. There were no openings at the time, so the dream of an apprenticeship was replaced by a job as a worker at Poul Rasmussen who had a large pipe making workshop. Here he went through the mandatory steps for any upcoming pipe maker, - something most present pipe makers look back on with mixed emotions of horror and romance, namely pipe repairs all day long. Former tells that he also had to run errands all over town to



You are always welcome in Høsten



New models being developed

pick up and deliver the repairs. This gave him a lot of contacts, and that turned out to be useful later. In the shop the preferred smoke was the "Tram Operator Nielsen" mixtures, supplied by a customer who experimented with mixing tobaccos at home. I would have liked a taste of those!

A couple of years later, - when W.Ø. Larsen was looking for a new employee, Former made his first (!) pipes from start to finish. The pipes secured him the position, and things were finally moving in the right direction. Former was taught how a pipe is supposed to look in real life, how to work hard, and how to keep a workshop in check. He slowly became the "unofficial" manager of the shop. Many young talents have been shaped by Former in the W.Ø. Larsen workshop. To name a few indebted to Former: Anne Julie, Tonni Nielsen, Poul Ilsted, Per Hansen, Teddy Knudsen and others.....

The nickname Former appeared during this time. His real name is Hans Jonny Nielsen, but if you compare photos from his youth with photos of the English comedian Georg Formby you will understand how the nickname Former came about.

In 1974 Former wanted to try his luck as an independent pipe maker. There was plenty of room in the old merchant house, so he purchased the machines needed and opened shop. In Germany they soon found out that this "Former"



Quality Inspection

guy made wonderful pipes, and today most of the pipes are sold in Germany and Switzerland. Lene is in charge of export and the finances. She used to work in the export department at W.Ø. Larsen, so she's quite experienced with financials, production and pipes! In addition she is one of the few females I know who's always smoking a pipe, - a Former off course. In the latest DM in pipe smoking she came in third. Former deviates from most other pipe makers, - he is very productive. He is making 500 - 600 pipes annually. 90% of those are standard models, and the remaining 10% are so-called Freehands. He has 20 different standard models. The advantage of this is, that you can get a well crafted quality pipe at a fair price. When nature, the local soccer team, music or whatever it might be inspires him, or if he decides one of the standard models needs replacing, - then he will sit down and create a few freehands, and if one of them turns out just right it may make it into the standard program. Recently Former has developed a specialty, - the so-called "Spigot", it is inspired by the old long meerschaum pipes. Former is telling he is very particular when it comes to lines, shape, smoke ability and stem work, you don't doubt this when you see, - and smoke, a Former pipe. They are lucky in southern Europe, but they can also be a bit strange as Former is telling; During an export tour in Germany they had a real masterpiece on display at the booth. An aficionado of the German kind came to look at the pipe. For the next hour he walked several kilometers while circling the pipe, stopping to adjust it a little bit, looking from all angles, circling again, adjusting again, - and so it



A sample of the production



A nice evening awaits!

continued.... The price of DM 2,300 was not a problem, - but *was* it the right one? When he finally made up his mind and purchased the pipe, - Former congratulated him with the purchase and wished him many enjoyable smokes from it. The German replied in horror that he had no intention of ever smoking the pipe! Former and Lene both agree that this is one of the most peculiar episodes they have come across, - after all it is the purpose of Formers pipes.

Thurmann from Fiolstræde

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 22, December 1983

Written by: Jesper Boye

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Bjørn Thurmann has been located in Fiolstræde for 1 1/2 years now. Here he has opened a cozy little tobacco store with a pipe workshop in the basement. He knows his business, - and he should, he has been an apprentice at Dunhill in London and other well-known stores.

But let's start at the beginning. "Old" Thurmann opened his store in B.T.-centralen on Strøget on May 1st 1953. It became one of the best tobacconists for miles, - with the biggest selection.

I started working at the store 20 years ago, - in 1963, so I guess I can be considered one of the "old boys (he's 37), in fact I started much earlier, - back in 1953, sorting pipes at the store, I guess you can say I was born in a briar block!

After working behind the counter for a couple of years, "the old man" decided I needed something extra.

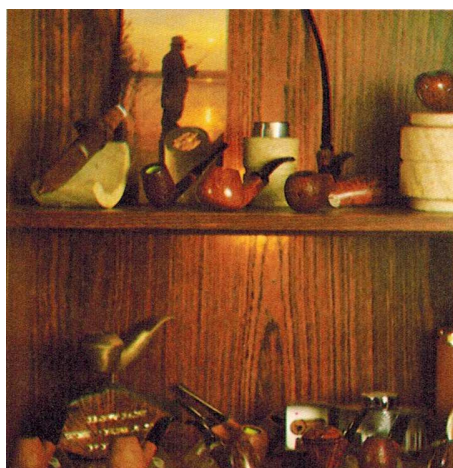
He got me a position in London; - over a 6-month period I had to work at five different locations. First I worked at A. Lewis &

Westminster; - they had 48 stores in London. In some of their stores they mainly sold newspapers and chocolate, - and you really had to pay attention to understand the cockney accent, in other stores you almost had to wear white gloves. The "grand finale" was three weeks behind the counter at Dunhill on Duke Street. Back then they were still selling a few pipes, - but it was mainly hair lotion, ties and lighters. In December 1968 I had the opportunity to travel to Chicago to work for "a small tobacconist store with only 52 employees", - the largest in the world. I was working there for a 6-month period. The store was amazing, - if we didn't have a certain pipe model in the store you just called one of the 17 assistants in the warehouse and explained that you needed pipe model such-and-such with this type of grain. You explained that you were working at counter 8 on the north side, and a few minutes later the pipe was delivered to you via a Pneumatic Tube Transport System.

They also carried a nice selection of tobacco, including their own blends. We sold approximately 250 ton each year. We can't compete with the American sales gimmicks here in Denmark. When a new tobacco was introduced, they simply released some of the flavor via the air-conditioning so the ladies could smell it and ask - "which brand is that wonderful tobacco?", - "Well, - let me show you Madam....."



The cozy store is equipped with a table and chairs, and customers come in to try the latest tobacco and have a talk about pipes.

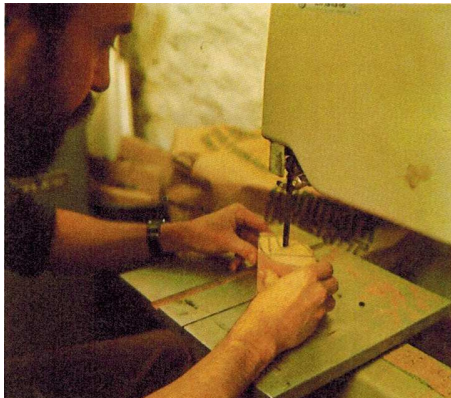


A small display, - Thurmann also sells tampers, cufflinks made out of briar, hand made knives and other fine items

When I returned to Denmark I had lots of ideas, but we have to face it, - Denmark is a small country. We have a population of 5 million here in Denmark, in Chicago alone the population is 9 million.

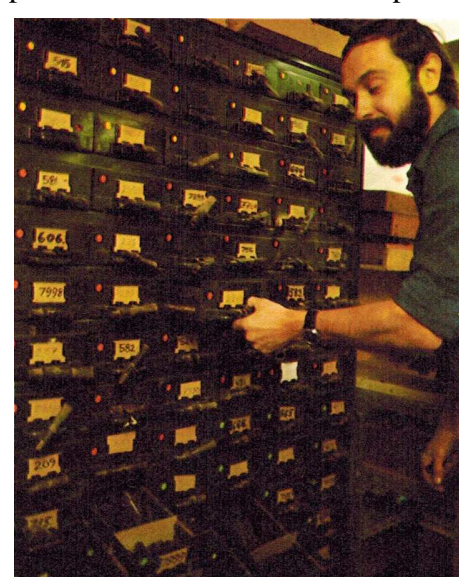
But we were still busy at B.T.-centralen, and one year we sold 25,000 pipes from that little store, not many stores will ever try that here in Denmark.

As most are aware; - the Danish pipe making began with Sixten Ivarsson. At the end of the 60's sales really took off, - we bought



The shape is cut on the band saw

a lot of hand made pipes and sold them under our own name. Then we realized that we might get them a little cheaper if we made them ourselves. We had bought pipes from Larsen & Stigart. Larsen had been a foreman at Nørding, but he started making pipes on his own and he named them Mr. Andersen! Back in 1972 we produced a lot of pipes. The Danish market became saturated with pipes, so we started exporting. In 1974 I only focused on production and export, but as with most other handicraft products you don't get rich. No matter how hard you work you still only make those \$2.13, - so I was very happy when



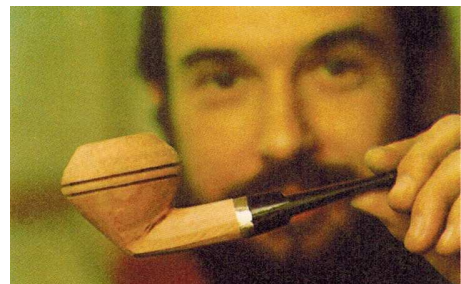
The stem inventory

When I pick up a block of briar I have to have an idea of shape, stem and color within 10 seconds, - if not I'll move on to the next block.

I can't sit all day long staring at the block and ponder. The ideas have to come to you immediately, - and then it's a matter of transferring the ideas from your head to your hands and make the perfect pipe. Only one in a thousand is able to do this, and it's not something you just learn. But anybody can learn how to make a pipe that will serve its purpose and please yourself or others. The Danes probably have the best taste in pipes. They tend to choose the pipes that are hardest to make, - small classics. But I also sell the "big chunks" with 9mm filter here in Denmark. The shapes change all the time. Five years ago I made pipes with sharp edges, - most still do, but now I'm leaning towards softer shapes. Also on the stems, they are rounded and very "lip friendly". I prefer smaller pipes, and I recommend these to others. It's easier to become familiar with a small nosewarmer than a long pipe where you keep on bumping into people!



When I'm standing looking at a block of briar I have to "see" the pipe within 10 seconds



30 minutes later you can already see what the final result will look like

I can always recognize a pipe I made by the lines. The prices on Thurmann's pipes start at kr. 200 and up..... The most expensive I ever sold was a set of three pipes placed in a sandblasted and polished briar block. It was a very beautiful set, and for years I didn't want to sell it and used it for display. One day I ended up selling it for kr. 10,000 to a German who sold it in Germany for DM 12,000 - 15,000. Some people don't care what it cost.

The cheapest I ever sold was probably in Søborg when we were getting ready to move. I had 10 hand carved pipes I wanted to sell cheap. I walked up to the local newspaper and told them: "Listen, I'm having the world's best sale, - pay as you please!" They wrote a big article in the paper, and the following morning 42 people were waiting in line when I opened. We let them in one at a time, and most didn't really believe it, - "Can I really buy this one for 5 øre" (1 cent), - "Yes, off course you can". Most got embarrassed and bought a pack of pipe cleaners too. I ended up making kr. 54 and 15 øre on the 10 pipes. Not the biggest profit I ever made, but it gave a lot of publicity and happy customers, and that is some of the best you can get.....



Ivarsson Junior

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 23, March 1984

Written by: Jakob Groth

Photo: Jakob Groth and Jens Hammer

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It is now 20 issues ago we last wrote about Ivarsson. At that time it was Danish pipe makings "Grand Old Man" Sixten Ivarsson we portrayed (even though he is of Swedish descent).

Back then we really didn't mention Sixten's already famous son Lars. Famous and famous! - In Denmark this really means that a small select group of people know that "here great pipes are carved". You have to go abroad to find the great masses of fans eagerly awaiting the next shipment from Lars.

It is not surprising that Lars has chosen this path considering his background. It is easier to state when Lars didn't make pipes, than to find out exactly when he first began, - namely the first couple of years of his infancy. He gladly admits that he is very privileged, - only few kid's have been able to earn pocket money by carving pipes at their dad's workshop. Already at 17, - in the early 60's, he sold pipes under his own name to Iwan Ries in Chicago, probably the biggest pipe store in the world. The pipes sold in excess of \$ 100.

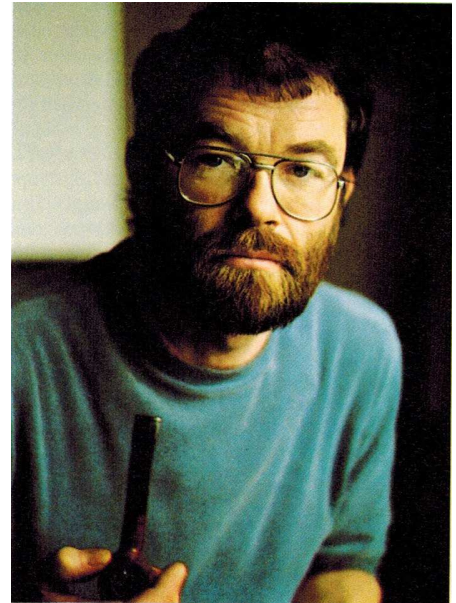
Even though it appeared that a long and prosperous carrier waited, Lars felt he also needed to know what books were. He finished college and continued studying to get a degree in economics. Student loans were avoided by making pipes and releasing weather balloons for the Danish Meteorological Institute (not at the same time though!).

After a couple of years Lars realized that a glorified career as a pipe carver was the preference, - but he completed his studies anyway. Since then he has been making pipes. As many other pipe carvers, he bought a farm in southern Zealand and opened a workshop. The past year he has spent most of his time in Copenhagen working in Sixten's workshop in Vimmelskaftet.

Correct, - Lars is the son of Sixten, - but he still has his own style. Not surprisingly the early production resembles Sixten's shapes, but fairly early on he developed his own unique shapes. Lars is telling that a good approach has been to sit and draw curves, shapes and lines, - not complete pipes. This gave him an independent sense of shapes. Today you have to be somewhat of an aficionado to spot the relationship between Sixten's and Lars' pipes.

Sixten's pipes are often slender, curved and with a small "tail" at the bottom of the bowl, - like the famous peewit-egg or Nefertiti. Lars, - on the other hand, is trying to find out how short, compact or curved he can make his pipes. Many of his pipes are not suitable for people with a big nose. Some people may claim that these pipes must smoke hot, - but the length of the pipe has no relevance. The smoking pace and amount of briar used in the bowl are the important factors.

Lars did get one of his traits from Senior, - perfectionism. Lars states that chamber, smoke channel, tenon, mortise, stem and button all are made to perfection, - and we have to agree. In spite of his education he does not think about the financial aspect while carving pipes, - that comes later when the



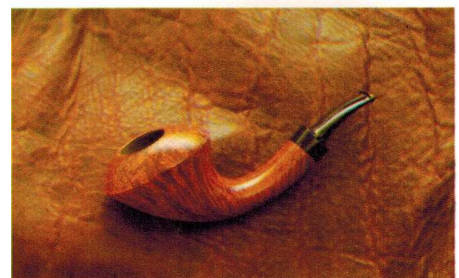
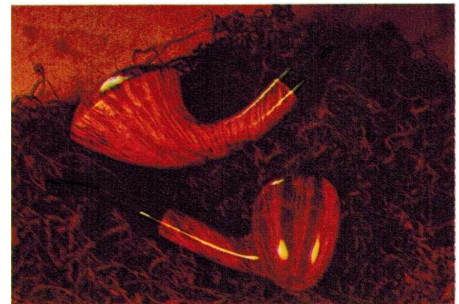
Lars, - as the Japanese view him

product is finished. He belongs to the group of pipe makers who doesn't say "this is how it turned out". That is probably why he is calling himself a "fusspot with sense for shapes".

The prices for Lars' pipes are naturally at the same level as Sixten's. Earlier a large part of the production went to the USA, but in the past 10 years almost the entire production has been sold to Japan. He is pleased with this change. The Japanese are quality-conscious smokers who considers pipe makers as artists, - not like the Americans who begin any sentence with "how much?". In Japan the cheapest pipes, - meaning the normal sandblasted models, cost between kr. 1,000 and kr. 1,500. In Denmark they are impossible to find.

Lars is not kidding when he states that he can't afford to smoke his own pipes. When it happens it is always a pipe with flaws or imperfections and they quickly disappear again. The Japanese are superstitious people, and when they see him smoking a pipe they always ask if they can buy it. The masters own pipe, - it must have magical powers. I don't know if this is the reason I always see him smoking a Stanwell DM 82 pipe, - it could also be praise to Stanwell. Lars has been having good luck at the DM, but he is also at home there since the DM tobacco is his daily smoke!

To Lars it is not enough to make perfect pipes, - and he has always been "playing with knives". Most pipe carvers make their own drill bits out of old files, - Lars thought it could be fun to make his own knives, and they are quite nice. As with the pipes, the knives are made from scratch. Everything is handmade, - blade, handle and sheath. Listening to him talking about the technical challenges is an adventure. As an example, there were problems getting raw stainless steel in the proper quality, - only Sandvik in Norway could solve this issue. The very beautiful handles are made out of



A selection of short, compact and curved pipes



Not your average kitchen knife

buxbom, mahogany or briar. Lars is telling it took several attempts, in cooperation with the Institute for Heat Treatments, before the hardening of the steel was perfected. As a result the stainless steel is razorblade quality, and to my surprise he demonstrates this by sacrificing a part of his lush beard.

Lars emphasizes that the knife making is only a hobby. He only makes about 20 per year, and understandably the prices are at the same level as for the pipes.

He has made two million pipes

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 26, December 1984

Written by: Jesper Boye

Photo: Gunnar Larsen and Jesper Boye

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It was pure tranquility as I was riding through Fåborg in the southern part of Funen on my bicycle. The sunshine in the narrow cozy streets and the marina inspired me to find my bent skipper-pipe and fill it with Bengal Slices. It smells like newly tarred rope, and feeble souls think it should only be smoked on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic. But I was smoking it peacefully while enjoying a beer with the locals at the marina, and they asked if I ever had visited Viggo. I had not, - so I wandered around behind the warehouses until I found his pipe workshop well hidden in a little corner. You can't miss Viggo the pipe maker, - wearing his big leather apron, knitted cap and pipe in the summer heat, he looks like an advertisement on an old tobacco jar.

Viggo greets me with a smile and a warm "Goddaw!"

before he takes me through his small shop to the workshop and office in the back. "Modest surroundings compared to the heydays in Kolding, - but perfect for me" Viggo says.



But let's start at the beginning;



Immediately after WWII it was all about beech wood pipes. The briar had still not made it to Denmark, so the first couple of years we worked with beech wood planks from Sweden and Finland. If nothing else, - I gained a lot of experience working with wood, and I was good with my hands and could get a lot done within a short time.

Because of this, I dared to go out on my own back in the 50's, and I opened my own pipe making workshop. Briar had finally arrived, the finest quality, and at a modest price. I paid about kr. 1 for a briar block back then, - far less than today's ridiculous prices where you pay kr. 200 for a good quality briar block, but it was a challenge to get decent materials to work with.

We began considering the grain and more advanced models besides "the straight and the bent". I named the factory Bari, and

we went from "nothing" to a large factory with more than 30 employees and worldwide export.

Everybody knew Bari's models, - and we were particularly famous for our stems. The stems were high quality with a perfect fit. I had developed a precision machine able to work the stems within 1/10 mm. Unfortunately I had to sell Bari a few years back to a West German company, - but they couldn't move the factory. Danish works are just better, and if nothing else then I'm proud that my "baby" is still a great success.

For a while I traveled around the world to find the best briar, - and I sold some, but I can't be without pipe making, so my wife and I traveled all over Denmark to find an oasis where we could start over

again. We settled down in Fåborg, and now I concentrate on making hand carved pipes, but also the more consumer friendly cheaper machined models.

I am keen on good workmanship I can vouch for, - this keeps the customers happy. It must be good workmanship since I only had one complaint after selling almost two million pipes over the years.

Most Danes won't pay the price for a good hand carved pipe. The materials are so costly these days that only Germans and Americans allow themselves to splurge. I enjoy when they come to visit and are all excited.

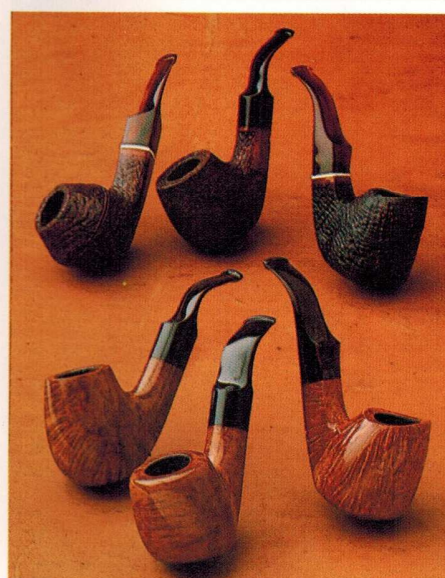
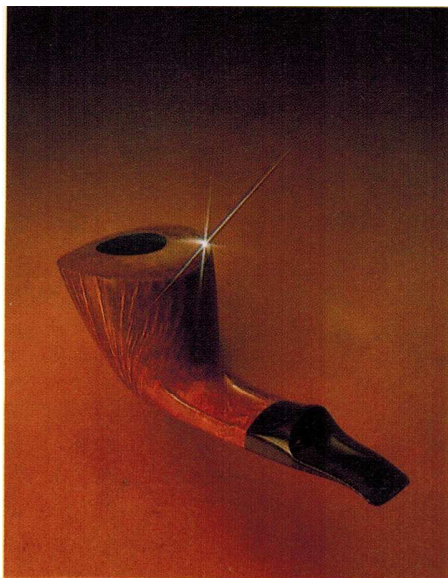
They understand the cost of good workmanship, and they always have time to talk (even if it slows down production). Many visit, - known as unknown.

Recently the German TV stars Rex Gildo and Udo Jürgens came by.

You have to concentrate when making pipes. If you don't catch the idea right away, - but get interrupted, you might as well start over. It is hard to recreate the same idea later. Due to this, I'm now moving the workshop to our private

home. It's not that I don't appreciate visitors, - all pipe smokers are welcome, but all the kinder gardens and housewife societies on "workshop visits" does not work if you want food on the table. It's not that I have to make lot's of money, - I can't take it with me anyway, but it does require peace and quiet to be creative. I strive to make the pipes great everyday smokers. A perfect Straight Grain is a wonderful pipe, but the grain is so dense that the pipe has to rest, so those should only be smoked on occasion. I prefer Flame Grain myself, - here the wood can "breathe", and you can smoke it often without getting sour. They cost around kr. 260, but I also make pipes selling for thousands when the wood permits.

Since I'm moving the shop, I have teamed up with a good friend and expert, Jens Erik Olesen, who is also carving pipes as a hobby. End October he is opening a wine and pipe store here in Fåborg, - two things I think go well together, and he is very dedicated. At the same time he's planning on starting a pipe club covering the southern Funen area, so anybody interested should give him a "push". I would like to have a pipe club in Fåborg; - pipe smokers seem to be calm and friendly people.



The Peculiar Pipe Maker in Frederikshavn

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 29, September 1985

Written by: Leif Andersen

Photo: Bjarne Nielsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Piber & Tobak is visiting Mogens Johansen in the cozy workshop at the heart of Frederikshavn. He was born curious, - and his biggest wish is to visit Copenhagen. The 32-year old pipe maker has never been there!

When you are walking down Søndergade towards the town square in Frederikshavn, you will find a sign by house number 5 stating: Piber & Tobak, Joh's hand made pipes. We walk down the alley and find a large sign above an old black barn door. When stepping into the store you immediately get a sense of being at a tobacconist's back in 1885; cobblestone on the floor, shelves made out of raw wood, beamed ceiling and the old cash register with handle and bell. Very cozy! The "master" appears from behind a curtain to welcome us. After a brief chat we walk into the heart of the store, - the workshop. This is where it is happening!

"People always drop by" he says while wiping his hands in the red apron, - and we can sense that you're always welcome here, a man is sitting smoking a pipe of tobacco while reading the daily newspaper and enjoying a cup of fresh made coffee.

"All the chats about pipes, tobacco and everyday events during the day results in longer work hours in the evening, but that's quite OK" Joh's tells us while we are lighting our pipes and tasting the fresh made coffee.

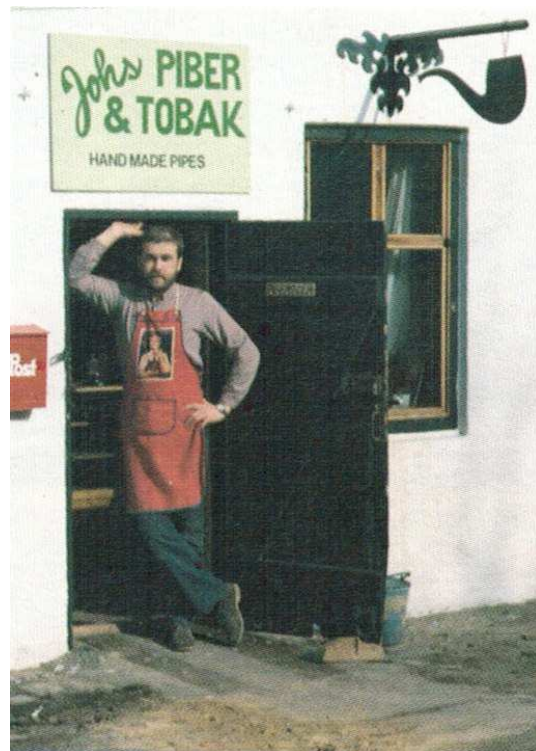
Joh's, - whose real name is Mogens Johansen, was born a few miles outside Frederikshavn in 1953, and he was born curious. After completing an apprenticeship as a plumber in 1974 he has worked as: an assistant in a kindergarten, welder, shipbuilder, shop assistant and stone mason.



In between jobs I began making pipes to pass time. I was curious, and I wanted to make "my own" pipe. For a year I was sanding and polishing to the best of my ability, and a local pipe maker gave me some pointers to make it a little easier. I installed machines in the basement myself as I needed them, and after a while I had a complete workshop. When one of my acquaintances heard about the hobby he asked if I could make a pipe for him. I thought so, - but quite frankly, the end result did not meet the "customers" or my own expectations. Joh's is laughing thinking about it.

The unemployment office offered me a job as a technician at a local radio station. I was curious and accepted, but after 9 months my curiosity was cured, - and the pipes sitting on the shelf in the basement were turning out much better now.

I enjoyed working with the pipes, and since I was spending more and more time in the small workshop I thought I could try to make it a way of living. I was very careful at first, - I rented an old horse stable here for kr. 300/month plus electric, and slowly the customer base grew bigger.



You can see from the many newspaper clippings that the local press is giving me a lot of support; - they call me "The Peculiar Pipe Maker". The articles helped getting my name out there.

It's not a 9 to 5 job to be self-employed, but I didn't expect that either. A lot of days I work 14 - 16 hours, but it doesn't matter. I feel fortunate, and I only expect to be able to put bread on the table every day for me and my family, - and maybe a little butter on Sunday's.... I don't have dreams about a production with several employees, - but I can still call myself CEO!



We understand how the "The Peculiar Pipe Maker" came about after reading one of the newspaper clippings, - proof of one of many ideas stemming from the briar and stems in the workshop.

I thought it was about time the local community found out who I was. Being poor, - as many other little pipe shops, I couldn't afford a flashy add in the paper, so what could I do?

Who's the best PR man in Denmark? Prince Henrik off course!

I made two nice pipes, a straight and a bent. I also made a nice box with a brass plate, - draped with a red cloth. I called the newspaper and told them about my plan. The journalist thought it was a great story, so I ended up getting a half a page story in the paper for the price of two pipes!

Joh's proudly shows us the thank-you letter from Amalienborg.....

As many other craftsmen he hesitates when we begin asking about the prices:

It's always difficult to put a price on a pipe. It depends on the quality, shape and many other factors. They normally start at kr. 200 and up. I make a lot of custom pipes, and those are priced based on the task at hand. The most expensive pipes are sold to Germany, they cost between kr. 900 and kr. 1,400.

I normally say I can make a pipe suitable for anybody's taste, - and wallet. It's expensive to have all those briar blocks in stock; it has to be considered too.

Do I have any "role models" from the pipe making world? Yes, - when I see a picture of Poul Ilsted's or a Peter Hedegaards pipes I get excited. If I one day can afford it, - and if they would let me, I would like to meet the two gentlemen.....

And then I'd like to see W. Ø. Larsen's pipe museum in Copenhagen, - I've never been in Copenhagen!



Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde of Pipe Making

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 34, November 1986

Written by: Bjarne Rasmussen

Photo: Leif Slot

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Policeman in the daytime, and pipe maker at night! Believe it or not, but in this way a civil servant has found a way to increase his income via his hobby.

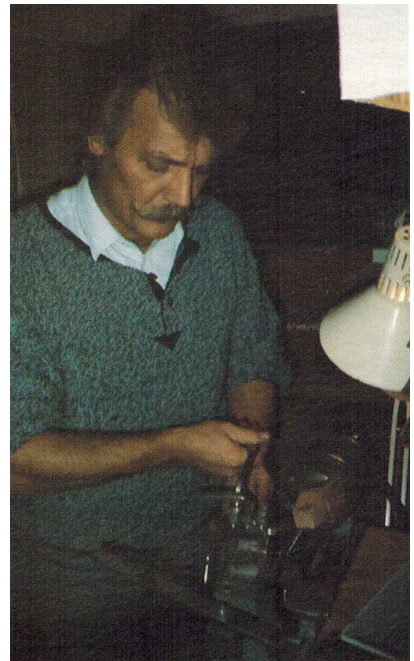
His name is Leo Børgart and the interest for pipes comes from his father who was a dedicated pipe smoker. One day Leo had to pick up one of his fathers pipes from repair, but it wasn't ready, so Leo took it to Peter Svendsen who repaired it while Leo watched. That sparked the interest!

By trade Leo is a woodworker, so he put this knowledge to good use and began making pipes.

The first pipes turned out to be very nice, so the interest grew, and Leo discovered that not only could he have fun making the pipes, he could also please others in the process.

At first the pipes were sold to friends and colleagues, but as time passed his pipes became more and more popular.

When the day came, where Leo thought his pipe making skills had reached a level where the quality could satisfy even the pickiest customers, he went to Den Permanente (a cooperative of Danish artists and entrepreneurs) on Vesterbrogade in Copenhagen to show them what he could do.



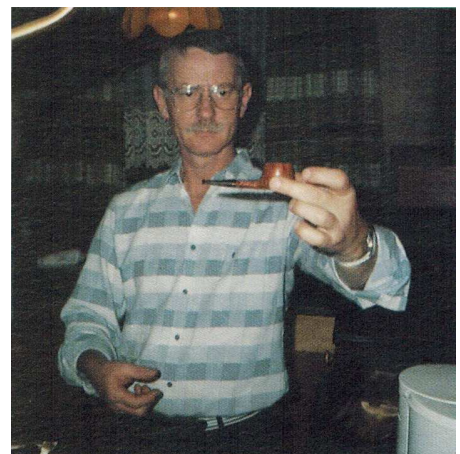
As a result, Leo's pipes are now displayed among other arts and crafts made by the most famous names in Denmark.

Leo himself is also in high demand. He is teaching night school in pipe making in Køge, and the Tourist Association has also made requests.

The original Leo Børgart pipes do not have a special name; - they are simply stamped with a number (1 - 4) depending on the quality. The models are more or less traditional, but with a slight tilt or a little refinement making each pipe unique. One refinement is a red/blue band embedded in the shank, and it really looks quite nice.

In connection with the WM in soccer Leo made a special pipe with a red/white band embedded in the bowl. Quite a few were made, and they all sold. Pipe Man of the Year 1986, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen received one of these pipes from Leo during DM in pipe smoking at Folkets Hus.

The smooth finish is Leo's preference, but he also makes sandblasted and rusticated pipes. He has made some very unique, - but still classic, rusticated models. The price for a Leo Børgart pipe run from kr. 250 up to kr. 1,100, - so there is a wide selection.



John Vinstrup - Pipe Maker

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 41, September 1988

Written by: Bent Haller

Photo: Bent Haller

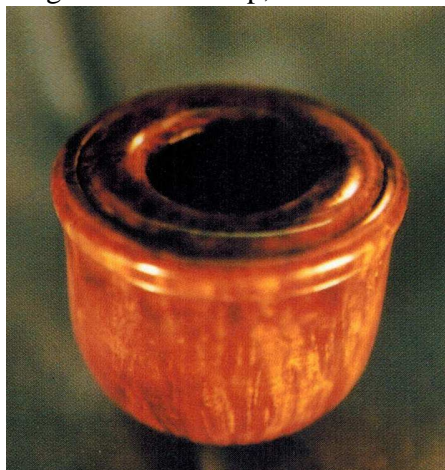
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

I have smoked a pipe for more than 25 years, - but it is not until recently that I discovered there could be more dimensions to the noble art of smoking tobacco. All pipe smokers know the classical ritual where they loose themselves in the blue fog, but I found something that went deeper. One day I was visiting John Vinstrup, the pipe maker in Koldby, 15 miles from Thisted. While I was studying a pipe, which is now in my collection, I realized that a pipe is

not just a pipe, every pipe no matter size or shape can be inspired. When I was sitting enjoying the first smoke I discovered that this pipe was different from the rest, - both hand made or production line pipes. Opposite the production line pipes which are always static and thereby unchangeable, - Vinstrup's pipe was assymetrical, it was a sculpture, a small masterpiece I had purchased. The pipes shape was moving, creating space and life. When an item get's inspired by something personal and original, is created from within by need and desire, when the inspiration suddenly links determination and the unexplainable, when the shape "creates itself" and becomes something opposed to looking like something, then it's no longer workmanship, - it's art.



John Vinstrup in store and workshop



The "baptismal font"

Since then I have invested in a total of five Vinstrup pipes, - not as an investment, but because of the artistic experience. Two of the pipes are from his UNIKA-series. An exclusive family, - hard to come by, expensive, flawless, shape, color and grain creates a unity.

John Vinstrup is not mass producing pipes, - that is already being done by others. To him the pipe represents a state of mind, his identity is connected to the shape he's carefully reaching. He *has* to carve the pipe.

If you visit his little store in Koldby, there are always beautiful pipes to look at while you smoke a tobacco sample, and at a reasonable prices between kr. 300 and kr. 500.

"They have flaws, so I'm selling them cheap" he explains.

If you are considered a good customer, you may be able to convince him to bring out the pipes he has a hard time parting

with. If you manage to get access to the backroom, and you're able to pay the price without getting a nervous twitch, then you can acquire a pipe, - a work of art, you won't find anywhere else.

I have tried to find out exactly why his pipes are different. For quite some time it was just a feeling, something undefined stimulating my curiosity. First of all it's connected to Vinstrup's talent, and his ability to know exactly how far he can go without crossing the line. He is using his abilities to the fullest. Then there is his method of work, - involving the ability to spot the briars potential, and very high standards. As a result the scrap bin is a lot bigger than the wallet. If you ask him about his thought

process when creating a pipe his typical answers is: "I just make them!" That is a sufficient answer to him, and he probably thinks that my enthusiasm is a little extreme.

But you don't need the master's opinion when you have one of his creations in front of you. I believe his pipes speak their own language, and with a little determination you may be able to interpret. To a lot of people a pipe is a pipe, - nothing more, they can't tell the difference. Maybe it's not so strange.....

Who, - besides a small group of pipe aficionados, can be hysterical enough to find beauty and inspiration in puffing on a sour pipe. But if you're willing to open your eyes, and be a little receptive, you can quickly learn how to distinguish the ordinary from the sublime.

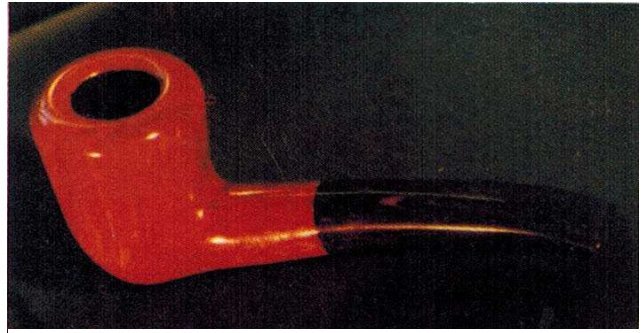
John Vinstrup creates subtle deviations in the shape, he is moving the centre of gravity to what is known as "the golden ratio" in the art world, - thus creating balance and harmony, - but not a static harmony. The subtle deviations create movement, and movement is life, - in paintings, sculptures, music or like in this case "in the briar". In addition I see a clear correlation between old Nordic tradition and innovation. When I say this, John Vinstrup is shaking his head, but I still believe I'm on the right path. In the best part of his collection, - the pipes he is using for display (or keep for himself), there is a common thread to the past. A good example is what I call the "baptismal font". Whether John Vinstrup is willing to admit the correlation or not, - there is a clear resemblance between this pipe and the roman baptismal font from the 1100's: The tight lines of the bowl with decorations on top, on the baptismal font a rope, on Vinstrup's pipe a ring.

Such a shape, - and the associations you get when looking at it, can make you view pipe smoking as something different from "burning leaves, toxic smoke and bad smell", something deeper and spiritual, a psychological ritual. Do not disturb when you see a man "looking inward" while smoking his pipe. A further development of the "baptismal font" I find in flawless Straight Grain with a hand made Cumberland stem. Here the shape is rounded, simple and clean. No sharp edges, it is resting, floating, and the softness never turns weak since the bowl is such a pronounced component. The beautiful stem enhances the grain and adds balance to form and colors.



A Straight Grain with black polished rim

with many possibilities. Here three shapes are merging into one. If you turn the pipe you notice how the movement keeps creating new angles, new pictures. Your eyes begin to wander, experiencing and getting surprised..... You hardly get closer to functionalistic art.



A flawless Straight Grain with Cumberland stem

How important color and grain is can be seen in a Straight Grain with a black polished rim, - a classical shape with a modern twist. In between the black stem and rim the color is glowing, and the grain turns into a decoration, almost a relief, a pipe is also a picture and an experience of colors. The last of John Vinstrup's pipes I want to mention is the abstract. A pipe which could be a model for a granite or a marble sculpture, a shape

Naturally all of this is subjective talk, - it has to be. A shape has to be seen in real life, not from a photo. The article is only written to call attention to a very exciting pipe artist, an attempt to divide things since there is a fine line between workmanship and art, and an attempt to convey true excitement and joy for a trade which is able to move boundaries in this so technical day and age.

Let me end this article by quoting the English writer W. M. Thackeray: "The pipe draws wisdom from the lips of the philosopher, and shuts up the mouth of the foolish!"



A Straight Grain Freehand

W. Ø. Larsen through 125 years

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 45, September 1989

Written by: Per B. Jensen

Photo: Per B. Jensen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

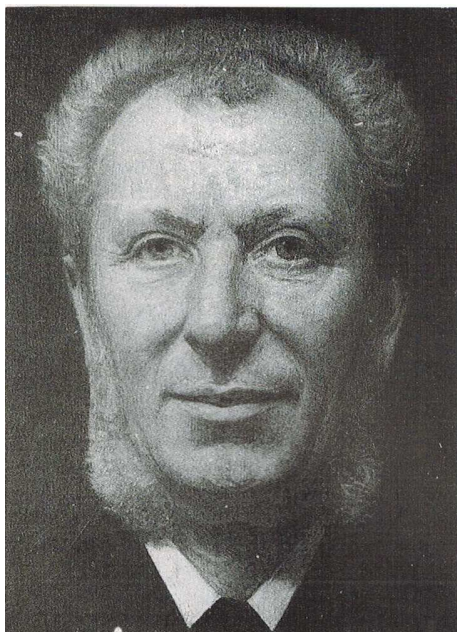
It all started 125 years ago, - on October 25th 1864, when the first W. Ø. Larsen received his certificate of matriculation, and was permitted to operate a retail shop for cigars and tobacco on Amagertorv no. 1 in Copenhagen. The store opened on November 4th 1864, and since then four generations of W. Ø. Larsen's have made sure it is still possible to purchase cigars and tobacco at W. Ø. on Strøget.

When the store opened it was a very different city compared to what we know today. It was while Højbro Plads still had market day, the Stork Fountain wasn't there yet, and all transportation of goods was done by horse and carriage. It would be another three years before it was decided to abolish the mounds, moats and gates to the city. Copenhagen was a city you "locked" for the night.

Judging from the wrapping paper the stores assortment was mainly Dutch tobacco's and Havana cigars, but it's reasonable to assume that they also carried porcelain and meerschaum pipes. Around the turn of the century the store in no. 1 had become overcrowded, so they purchased the house at Amagertorv no. 9, - where W. Ø. Larsen still resides today. Next time you visit the oldest



W. Ø. Larsen on Strøget anno 1989



The first W. Ø. Larsen from 1864

tobacconist store in Copenhagen you may hear history whispering in your ear when you know that the house was built in 1790, it survived the great fire of 1795, the bombardment of 1801 and as mentioned it has housed four generations of tobacconists.

In 1919 W. Ø. Larsen died, and his son L. P. Larsen took over. During his time the store developed to become the preferred supplier of tobacco to the upper class' and the proprietors. He continued in his fathers footsteps without making many changes to the assortment. There was no need, at the time they only smoked cigars. In those days every boy would get a cigar holder at their confirmation. They were not always made out of amber, - but their nickname was "ravrør" (amber-tube). Since then the cigars have suffered an ill fate. Ole W. Ø. Larsen, - fourth generation and present owner is telling us with a nostalgic look in his eye: "When I was an apprentice back in the 30's, it wasn't uncommon to sell Our own Havana cigars in boxes of 100 or 250".

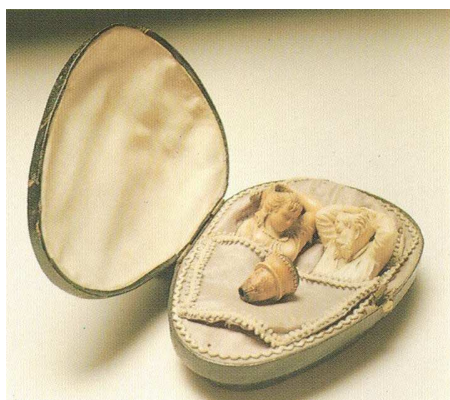
Even though D. Y. W. Ø. Larsen, - Ole W. Ø. Larsen's father,

didn't take over the store from his father until 1920, it was him who started importing Havana cigars, tobacco and pipes at a large scale during and after WWI. He was an enterprising man who initiated a great deal of what the store is known for today.

He started his own cigar manufacturing. It was also him who decorated the store with old pipes, an idea which later would turn into the very interesting W. Ø. Larsen pipe museum to the right of the store on Amagertorv (initiated by Ole W. Ø. Larsen). He also amassed a comprehensive library on tobacco culture.

Due to this library, - W. Ø. Larsen is the place where journalists, Denmark's Radio, the TV Theater, The Royal Theater and others go when they need to know about smoking habits and tobacco culture. Or they borrow props from the museum to be able to smoke tobacco on a pipe from the correct era. Next Christmas when you watch "Nøddebo Parsonage" it is very likely that the long pipes are borrowed from W. Ø. Larsen. If you want to know more about the old long pipe you can read Ole W. Ø. Larsen's book on the subject.

The period during and immediately after WWII is filled with stories about the hard times smokers had to endure. Ole W. Ø.



These two cigar holders are from the museum, - one of many unique items

Larsen does not think it was all that bad, - at least not for

pipe smokers. The supplies could be made to go further, they could supplement with Russian tobacco, and at no time did W. Ø. Larsen have to go to the extreme of selling Danish tobacco from Funen. The cigars were horrible. It could be because one of the main suppliers also sold fruits and vegetables, maybe he had a surplus inventory of other types of leaves!

During WWII it was impossible to import briar pipes. After the inventory had sold there were only the Danish beech wood pipes left. When the situation normalized after the war, W. Ø. Larsen thought that the selection was rather standardized. The models were rather uninteresting with very few variations, and the quality was not exactly what they preferred to sell to their customers. It is Ole W. Ø. Larsen's belief that a pipe is a personal thing, and they

should be able to offer hand carved pipes of high quality and design. Since the pipes could not be imported, and the Danish hand carved pipes predominantly were the so-called Fancy-models for the American market, Ole W. Ø. Larsen only saw one option: They had to create and produce their own pipes. So they did, - and that was the beginning of what we know today as the W. Ø. Larsen pipe. Poul Rasmussen was the first pipe maker to make the W. Ø. Larsen pipes in his workshop. Later W. Ø. Larsen got their own workshop where Poul worked as foreman for years. Several of today's recognized Danish pipe makers worked in the W. Ø. Larsen workshop, - such as Ilsted, Anne Julie and Peter Hedegaard.

The W. Ø. Larsen tobaccos are made elsewhere based on their recipe. What isn't smoked in Denmark is exported to Europe, - mainly Germany. Also Japan is becoming a big market. Ole and Inge W. Ø. Larsen take care of the export, and they also design the labels and tins. As part of the export business the family travels a



The store at Amagertorv no. 1



There are many temptations in the store

lot, and at seminars they make an effort to spread the knowledge of Danish pipe culture.

Naturally a lot has happened since 1864, but you can still feel the history when you walk up the stairs while trying to decide if you should take a look at the pipe museum, or if you should head directly for the store to have a great chat about pipes and tobacco in Copenhagen's oldest tobacconist store.

Congratulations with the 125 years W. Ø. - see you soon.....



Wrapping paper from 1903

A Tribute to Ivarsson

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 51, March 1991

Written by: Jakob Groth

Photo: Jens Hammer and Jakob Groth

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

In Piber & Tobak's issue # 3 from March 1979 Sixten Ivarsson was portrayed for the first time in the magazine. Already then, he was called Danish pipe makings "Grand Old Man". He has now turned 80 years of age, and he is still going strong making world-class pipes. We send him a delayed congratulation with this tribute.

A couple of issues back we brought an article concerning the history of Danish pipe making. The article was based on a seminar held by myself. In the article we may not have been quite clear in describing Sixten's central role in the Danish pipe making history (even though he is of Swedish descent). Yes, - Poul Rasmussen and W.Ø. Larsen have both been of great importance by having workshops where many great pipe makers have been trained, but the great inspiration and *createur* is without a shadow of doubt Sixten Ivarsson.

Let's briefly repeat Sixten's history, - described in more detail in Piber & Tobak # 3. After the 2nd world war, times were tough for Danish pipe smokers. The tobacco was of a very poor quality, - if you could call it tobacco at all, and descent pipes were nowhere to be found. The Danish manufactured pipes, - with English sounding names like Earl and Duke, were made out of dubious local types of wood, and smoked out of despair not desire. Not surprisingly skilled pipe repairers were a sought after commodity at the time, when trying to prolong the life of pipes made prior to the war.

By sheer coincidence, Sixten turned up at Suhr's pipe repair shop to have his pipe repaired just as their repairman had taken a leave

of absence due to illness.

Sixten, - who was pretty good with his hands, repaired the pipe stem and some of their machines himself, and they immediately offered him a job. For a while he worked as bill collector in the daytime and pipe repairman in the evenings, - but in the end he became a fulltime pipe repairman. For a few years he learned how pipes are made, - and maybe even more important how they shouldn't be made. A few years after the war, the first briar blocks started arriving in Denmark. This improved the Danish pipes significantly, but they were still not comparable to *real English pipes* which were still not available. Due to this there was a demand for well made pipes with nice grain, and this was the basis for the very first briar pipes Sixten made while still performing the daily repairs. Prices were already high back then, - the first pipe was priced at kr. 85, and you could get 5 - 10 of the normal Danish pipes for that, but quality pipes were scarce and this was reflected in the price. Sixten is not the type who will just

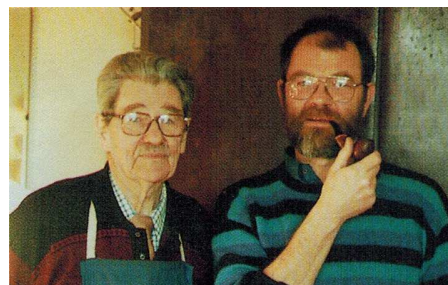


It is hard to believe that Sixten is born in 1910



Different stages of production

stick to what is considered traditional and recognized. He began making his own models, and they were not like anything else available, - the classic model, and when the English finally became available again Sixten's pipes continued to sell. At this time Sixten began working with Stanwell (former Kyringe) on pipe designs, and this made those (for the time) unusual models available to the masses.. At about the same time Sixten opened his own little shop in Teglgårdsstræde, but he moved shortly after, in 1952, to Vimmelskaftet where he has continued to operate. At the beginning on the first floor, - and later he moved to the 3rd floor.

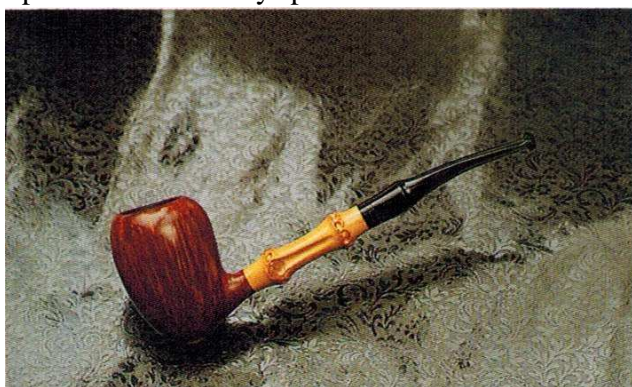


Sixten and Lars Ivarsson have a good working relationship

So what are Sixten's accomplishments?

1. As mentioned above, he was the creator of shapes and forms never seen before, - often combined with unusual materials such as bamboo and horn. Some of these models have become modern classics, such as the "peewit-egg" and "Nefertiti" with the slanted bowl.
2. In addition he has never been afraid to teach others, - Stanwell or other pipe makers. Quite a few of today's very best pipe carvers owe a lot to Sixten, and they are not afraid to admit it. This includes Jess and Emil Chonowitsch in southern Zealand, Jørn Micke on Bornholm, the Swede Bo Nordh, Flemming Petersen in Borris and off course Sixten's son Lars.
3. Pipe makers who didn't work directly with Sixten, but trained elsewhere, quickly mention Sixten as a source of inspiration. To name a few: Per Hansen and Ulf Noltensmeier "Nolte" from Bang and Bjørn Bengtson from Malmø. It can be summarized with this Sixten quote: "a master who doesn't allow his students to become better than himself is a poor master!".
4. He would never compromise on quality, - it has to be the best, and if it isn't it has to be improved. This is without a doubt the reason for the high standard you see from most Danish pipe makers today, - not quite seen anywhere else in the world. The matter of compromise also applies when it comes to putting a price on a pipe. When Sixten has put his soul and efforts into making a pipe, and later tells the price to a potential buyer, the buyer should not begin to negotiate about the price. It is an insult to the pipe maker.

Finally Sixten was probably the first to conquer the export markets, - back then the USA, and later Japan. This feat really spiked the interest for Danish pipes.



The "Peewit-egg" with bamboo is one of Sixten's most popular models, and for a good reason, it is a wonderful pipe

Let me finish this tribute to Sixten Ivarsson by wishing him many good years, - and pipes, to come.....

Winsløw, - A Successful Pipe Maker

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 52, May 1991

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

At the recent DM in pipe smoking I was walking around enjoying the large and wonderful display of pipes. Most of Denmark's great pipe makers were represented, so I was spending quite a bit of time admiring all the craftsmanship.

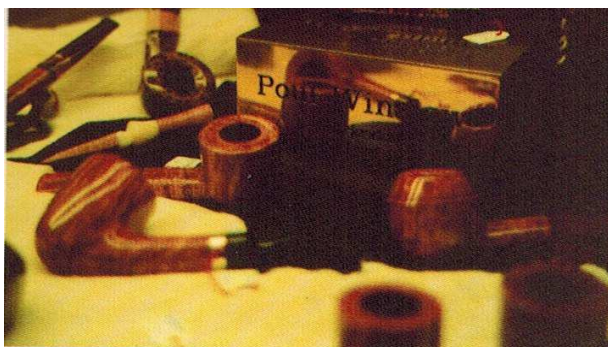
One of these great pipe makers is Poul Winsløw from Hvidovre. He has a past as foreman at Preben Holm, - and his time as an independent pipe maker only goes back six years.

All beginnings can be troublesome, but Winsløw soon realized that all the pipe makers were more than willing to pass on their experience and good advice. As a result Winsløw had a hard time deciding on a style and production method, - he was "all over the place". At the time pipe making was in a "slump", not the best conditions for a new and upcoming pipe maker.

Poul Winsløw was determined. The pipes were produced, and he made frequent trips with the Rødby-Puttgarden ferry to Germany, - his main market today.

In the six year period Winsløw has managed to establish a name as pipe maker in Germany. His pipes are found in most well assorted stores in the large cities. "Danske Pibe" in Hamburg is one of them, for years they have made room for his pipes in their fine catalog. To accomplish all of this within six years may seem hard to believe for many, but it has been very hard work. Cooperation with Stanwell and Dunhill made the trips to Germany possible, and while demonstrating their products he could also present himself, - a great help! He did not display his own pipes at the shows, but meeting people and getting your name "out there" is important when you try to enter a new market.

Each year the large fairs in Frankfurt and Dortmund are clearly marked on the calendar. At these fairs Winsløw meets the German dealers and gets a feel of where the market is moving, - it is very strenuous, a lot of contacts have to be made.



The fair in Frankfurt is an actual consumer fair with everything your heart may desire. It's taking place in both spring and fall. The Dortmund fair is in the fall, and now they also include pipes, tobacco and accessories, earlier it was only cigarettes and cigars. So what's the reason behind Winsløw's success? One of the reasons, - besides his hard work, is probably found in his ability to combine the traditional models with an exciting finish, such as using various materials for the transition from stem to shank, and the stem work itself. The stain known

from the DM program is called "Leopard" in Germany, and it is very popular. Winsløw doesn't think pipe making should be boring, - he doesn't want to get stuck in a specific design, there has to be room for creative thinking. It also has to be added that Winsløw has pipes in all categories, - from kr. 700 up to kr. 2,500 for the very unique pipes. After a successful stay in Frankfurt, Winsløw and his helper are working on new exciting models. If you're lucky you might find them at Remo Sørensen on Strøget in Copenhagen, or at Pibesmeden in Århus.

New Pipe Maker in the Heart of Copenhagen

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 53, September 1991

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Lars Colberg and Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

At the end of June, the center of Copenhagen had a new and exciting store added for us pipe smokers. Manduela Riser-Kusk opened her new domain in Studiestræde, - one of the many streets running parallel to Strøget.

Manduela is a fairly unknown name within Danish pipe making. Five years ago she worked at the museum in Svendborg with Ole Bang, - who also worked as a wood turner in his free time. They were making pepper mills, bowls and candleholders, and Manduela was getting pretty good at it, but she would really like to try making a pipe.

Besides it's many bars, - Svendborg is known as the town where Tao and Poul Ilsted live, and one day Manduela met Poul Ilsted. She asked him if he could show her how to make a pipe, and Poul Ilsted replied: "Sure I can, here's a file, a block of briar and some sandpaper, - get cracking!".

Manduela, - now an apprentice, spent every day in Ilsted's shop, and she was taught the trade from the bottom. The first year she spent filling, turning and filing. Making an actual pipe came much later, - as her master she's a perfectionist. She was taught all about the briar and it's hidden secrets, - and after 3 1/2 years she handed in her test piece: A six-sided classic with Cross Grain, - a wonderful piece of workmanship!

The remaining 6 months Manduela made her own pipes, and the idea of having her own workshop emerged. She moved to Copenhagen and had contact to the pipe maker Svend Celius, before she ended up at Pibe-Dan where she worked with Ph. Vigen at the workshop in Kattesundet. When it was announced that the shop would close she had to look for a new place, and one day after work she came by Studiestræde 40 where a perfect little store with a shop in the back was available. She contacted the agent to hear on pricing: " Really, - that much?". Manduela *wanted* the store, so she was working intensely to make money. A lot of pipes were made, either for resale through Pibe-Dan, or for export to



The new shop and proud owner, - Manduela

Germany. Per Billhäll was a great admirer of Manduela's work, and he purchased a great number of pipes, - and finally she managed to get her name on the lease.



2 times "Manduela"

Lemon, Palm and Snake wood. Artificial amber in a variety of colors is also used. Manduela even had completely translucent artificial amber made, - something I have never seen before.

The perfectionist is surfacing when it comes to amber stems. The tenon transition has to be hidden or "it looks sloppy". Wood types matching the stem and pipe colors are used to eliminate this issue. Another specialty is the use of "soup bones!" During a visit to her parent's farm, the dogs chewed up bone caught her attention. She took the bone home and dried it for about a year. The longer you wait the whiter the shank bone gets, and you have to get up real close to notice that it's not ivory. It looks great!

With such a time consuming process behind every pipe, it's no surprise that a "Manduela" pipe is pricy. When I visited the store there were beauties on display costing well over kr. 2,000, - but then you also get a very unique pipe without flaws. Manduela does make pipes at a more modest price too. In Denmark there are limited buyers for this price level,

so Gent's Shop in Copenhagen Airport and Kohle in Germany distribute the pipes on the big markets. Due to this, Manduela does not depend on sales from the store in Studiestræde, but she's happy to be independent. To be able to plan your whole day without consideration to others is a luxury she appreciates. She does hope that pipe smokers will find their way to the store to have a talk and touch the wonderful materials and pipes, - and the cigar and cigarette holders she also makes.

Manduela's pipes are mainly of a classic design. They are easier to sell, but harder to make. The size varies from large to very small feminine models. The time spent at Ilsted has not been in vain, a lot of Ilsted's curves and proportions can be recognized in Manduela's pipes, but there are significant differences, - size being one of them.

Manduela still hasn't purchased a band saw or sander, so the beautiful pipes are made on lathe and "bims", and after a long process they are finally polished. One of the trademarks, - separating her pipes from other carvers, is the choice of stem materials. The traditional black stems are hardly ever used. She prefers to work with wood types suitable for stem work due to their appearance, hardness and properties, - such as: Guaiacum, Ebony,



*A cigarette holder made out of briar and amber.
Perfect work on the "bims"*

Piber & Tobak wishes Manduela the best of luck, - and we hope a lot of pipe smokers visiting Copenhagen will pay the store in Studiestræde a visit. The wonderful pipes, - and Manduela deserve it!

Søren from Søborg

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 54, November 1991

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Among stores and banks on the main street of Søborg, - in an alley, you find one of the Danish pipe makers with great success abroad.



Søren, - with the last name Refbjerg Rasmussen, is probably the only professional pipe maker in Denmark without "proper" training. The others have been apprentices at W.Ø. Larsen, Poul Rasmussen (Anne Julie) or others, but Refbjerg is living proof that anybody can become a pipe maker as long as you have the interest, skill and sense for design.

We write 1970. Refbjerg is a home, - where his father is carving his own pipes. "I can do that too!" He borrows his father's basement, buys a lathe, and the pipes are being made. At the time only the American market was interesting. It was "over there" the money had to come from, so Refbjerg contacted the American Embassy and got addresses on just about anybody involved in the pipe business in "The Promised Land!". About 2% replied to Refbjerg's letters, - enough to start an actual production.

Soon the basement became too small, and the production was moved to Wergelands Alle. Workers were hired to keep up with

the demand for the Danish freehands with the raw bark top, - the so-called fancy pipes. This period is without a doubt the most busy for Danish pipe makers. Along with Nørding, Preben Holm and Karl-Erik, - Refbjerg was busy flooding the American market with these characteristic pipes, which were easy to manufacture but still could bear the important stamp "Handmade in Denmark". Refbjerg's production was moved to the present location in Søborg, where the 200 square meter shop each day produced 120 pipes for the USA. They even shipped pipes on Sundays, and Refbjerg had to go to the train station with those shipments. The interest for Danish pipes has never been that high ever since!

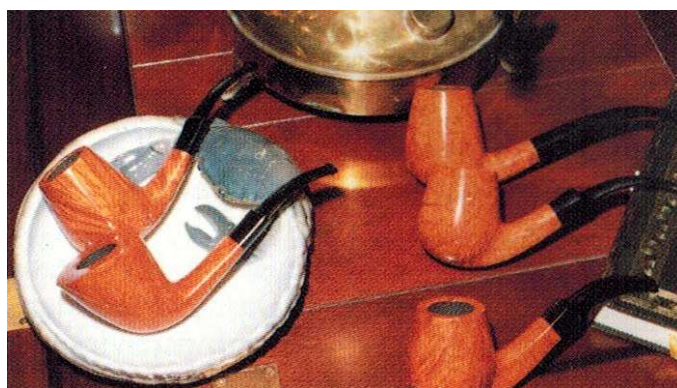
You had to strike while the iron was hot!

Slowly the American market deteriorated, and Refbjerg had to look for new markets. As all other Danish pipe makers he looked towards Germany, - this is his main market today.

These days Refbjerg works alone making fine hand made pipes. As earlier he does not have an inventory readily available, and often he has to disappoint pipe smokers dropping by the workshop. Nothing is for sale, it's all reserved.

The workshop has been divided up in different work areas. At one end he has a special room

used for drying the briar blocks to prevent them from cracking (not too warm). Refbjerg has a lot of different types of briar: The best Corsican plateau briar is priced at around kr. 20,000 per sack, but he also has very large blocks for jumbo-pipes or pipe stands. Besides a band saw, the production area holds two lathes, one for rough shaping, and one for making stems (molded stems are also used). The work area reflects the time where Refbjerg had several workers employed; - there are several work stations with "bimse" and sanders. As most pipe makers Refbjerg has to go through the tedious work of



manufacturing tools for the lathe etc. himself. The pipe making business is too small for anybody to mass-produce the special tools required.

At the other end of the workshop, - opposite the drying room, there is another storage room. It holds Refbjerg's collection of other materials, - such as: Stems, bamboo, horn galalith, amber and rods for stems. He also performs repairs for stores in the area, and he is the type who prefers to have materials on hand if an idea should emerge, - no waiting for materials, you have to get to it while the inspiration is there. Refbjerg's strong suit is his speed, for a modest



amount people can purchase a unique hand carved pipe. All pipes are not perfect. The pipes without flaws get a nice orange stain, while the pipes with sand spots get a darker stain, and the worst will get a sandblasted finish. All classical models are made, - there are no particular favorites. Refbjerg's pipes are not sold in Denmark. "I never needed to look for buyers for my pipes, so off course my sales are directed towards where the demand is the greatest" he states. Once in a while he does miss bumping into somebody smoking a pipe with the clear "R" logo, - "but I can't have it my way every time" he states. He can always comfort himself with the fact that his pipes have been in an American movie, and that John Wayne owned a "Refbjerg".



To keep up with "what's moving" in the market, Søren Refbjerg attends the Frankfurt fair each year. Here his agent, - Otto & Kopp, present all the Danish pipe makers products to the Germans. In this way Refbjerg hopes to keep up with the trend, like everything else the demand for pipe models and finishes changes over time.

With an annual production of around 4,000 pipes Refbjerg is doing pretty well, and hopefully the pictures show that some of these pipes are very fine specimens.

Danish Pipe Makers with a Worldwide Reputation

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 55, March 1992

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Piber & Tobak is paying a visit to two of the great names within Danish pipe making, - Bang and Peter Hedegaard. Both have been mentioned earlier in this magazine, but it has been almost 10 years, and a lot of things have happened since then.

Bang's Pibemageri.

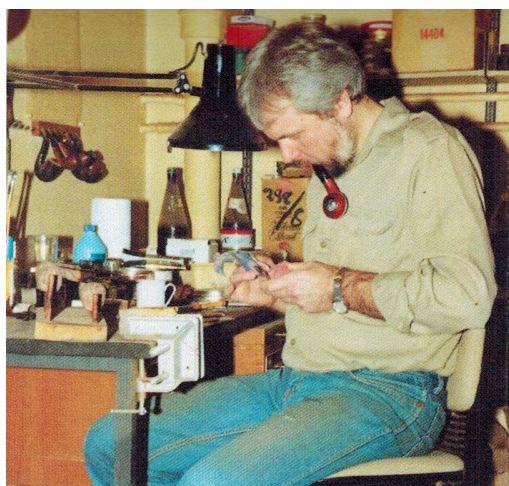
The name "Bang" came from the company's founder Svend Bang. In January 1970 he began making pipes in Nyboder with Per Hansen as the working force. Later Ulf Noltensmeier joined, and the workshop moved to the present location in Livjærgade on Østerbro. In 1984 Svend Bang wanted to retire, and it was a logical move to ask Per and "Nolte" if they were interested in continuing the business.

A new world emerged for the two men, till then they had "only" been busy creating the beautiful pipes to fill the order. Earlier they had very limited knowledge of the marketing aspect, but with help from Bang's contacts, they succeeded in expanding the business and their knowledge within the trade. Prior to taking over the business they only had to concentrate on one thing, - now they were suddenly responsible for areas like purchasing and correspondence, - tasks they didn't give much thought to earlier.

Last summer Per and "Nolte" could celebrate their 20 year jubilee as a team, - a feat that might seem close to impossible



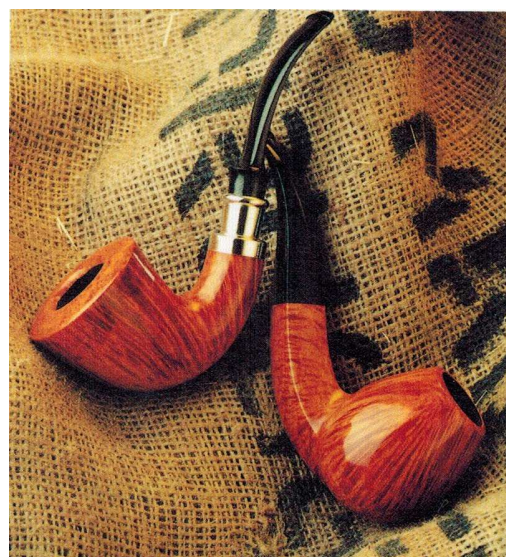
Per Hansen shaping a bowl on the lathe



Ulf Noltensmeier applying the finishing touches

to most. 40 - 45 hours per week, year in and year out the two pipe makers have worked alongside one another. Two pipe makers with joint production make it necessary to have a clear set of rules: Firm work schedules every day and weekends off, - the free time many individual pipe makers take in periods are strictly banned at Bang. They don't see each other after normal work hours. In their private life with wives and children they go their separate ways, and this is one of the reasons they have been able to continue the joint venture for so long. Today they depend on each other. To be able to support one another is key to the daily work. When new ideas emerge it is a plus to have somebody to discuss the details with. Also their different mentalities is a benefit, - when one of them is at a low the other one is there with full support. The pipe making is naturally based on vast routine and experience, and the positive criticism they give each other is one of the main reason their pipes are considered some of the best crafted in the business today.

When you see a collection of Bang pipes, you might recognize the individual style favored by each pipe maker. Per admits that he has moved towards the more classical shapes over the years, - thereby getting closer to "Nolte's" trademark. This is mainly due to the market trends. Both describe a Bang pipe as a pure classic. Their philosophy is based on the pipe being viewed as three individual parts: Bowl, shank and stem. These are joined to complete the form. The bowl has its own complete form, and is attached to the shank. A Bang pipe has very "tight" lines, - this combined with the significant amount of time Per and "Nolte" use on the stem work for each pipe results in a pipe with a perfect balance. They do not have standard models. There is a common theme for the production, but the focus is on the individual pipes presentation of itself to meet the high standards required to "earn" the S. Bang stamping. The Bang sandblasting is a chapter of it's own. Per is in charge of this (on borrowed equipment), and his years of experience show, you rarely see a better finish. The fact that Per knows each pipe and the quality of wood used to make it, enables him to perfect the sandblasting process and avoid any damage to the wood structure or form. The preferred result is a flawless pipe with a polished finish made from Corsican briar. Filler is banned from the workshop! All pipes are fitted with a handmade ebonite stem. "We make stems for pipes, - not pipes for stems" as Per puts it. They do not use Cumberland and artificial amber; - both agree that it wears too fast. "A Bang pipe remains nice a lot longer when it's fitted with a black ebonite stem!" Some of Per and "Nolte's" pipes have very nice silver trim added. What's unique about the silver work is that each band is custom made for each individual pipe to make sure the size and shape match the pipe. Silver can also be added in form of a lid, or a ring (maybe on a Bulldog), as long as it is true to the form.

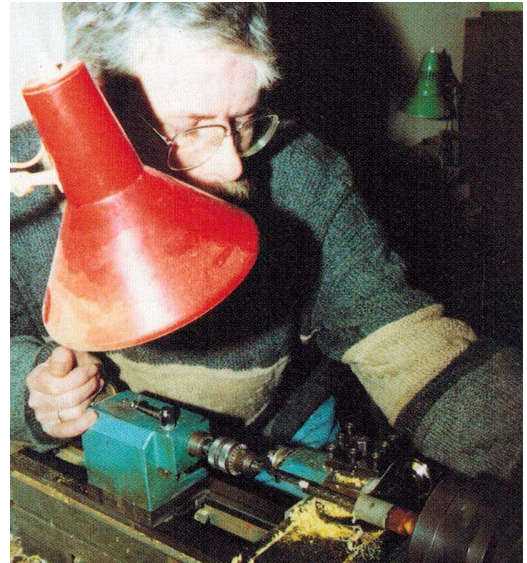


They speak for themselves

Per and "Nolte" both agree that their perfectionism is the reason for their success. No quick compromises which can damage the name and production later. The scrapping rate is about 20%, but it varies quite a bit. As "Nolte" put's it: "You can select 10 briar blocks from a sack and make 10 perfect pipes. From the next 10 blocks out of the same sack you may only get 5 sandblasted pipes!" If you want to purchase a Bang pipe you have to pay quite a bit of money. But by buying a pipe it easily took a full day to make, it ensures that the investment will bring you joy for years to come. Bang pipes are sold in most of Western Europe, and a large number is exported across the Atlantic to the demanding pipe smokers in America and Canada. In Denmark you can enjoy the Bang pipes at Remo Sørensen in Copenhagen, Marius Mortensen's Eft. in Nykøbing F., Mogens Thomsen in Odense and at Pibesmeden in Århus.

Peter Hedegaard.

Peter Hedegaard can be characterized as one of Danish pipe makers "Grand Old Men". Peter began as an apprentice at W.Ø. Larsen in 1976, where he worked with names like Jess Geertsen (Ph. Vigen) and Tonni Nielsen. Three years later he opened his own workshop in a basement in Ryesgade on Østerbro. Not much light or fresh air, but it was conveniently located just below his apartment. Copenhagen became too cramped for Hedegaard, - he wanted to move away from Copenhagen, so he found a suitable shop in Helsingør overlooking Kronborg Castle. The first time he saw the shop, it had no dividing walls whatsoever. He was asked how much space he needed, - and coming from an 18 square meter basement he went a little overboard. "I need 80 square meters, so put a wall here" he said, - but when he turned around and realized how big the room was, his common sense kicked in, and he ended up with the present 54 square meters. Plenty of room for lathe, "bims" and polishers. Since he now also had another luxury, - sunlight, he decided to raise the floor at one end of the room so he had a view of the shop. An old shop manager's dream was fulfilled! Next to the platform Peter made a small office, - his dream of being able to overlook the production on the "factory floor" had finally come true! Peter is definitely not without humor! At the end of the 80's Peter felt the declining interest for pipes. The many anti-smoking campaigns were taking their toll, and the anxiety was spreading within the trade, - it was very noticeable at the spring fair in Frankfurt. Peter managed to get out of the slump, and the demand for his wonderful pipes is back at the previous level.



Quality stem work on the lathe



Amazing work

He is no longer working around the clock. His surroundings have been making demands, so the work hours are more structured now, and he enjoys being alone in the workshop. He can set his own pace, nobody gets annoyed, and most importantly he can choose the music: Peter fully decides when to listen to Ellington or Wagner, - two of his great passions.

So how do you recognize a Hedegaard? Peter gave us the recipe: "Hold the pipe in front of you, - if the lower line from the shank to the front of the bowl has a certain curvature it's a Hedegaard". This was tested and verified by examining a number of different pipes, and it was obvious.

Peters stem work is also perfect, and the manufacturing process differs from others. Many hours of practice have made Peters stems something special. I showed Peter a Hedegaard purchased in 1983. He recognized it as one of his, but he pointed out the improvement with clear examples. The above mentioned curvature has become more pronounced, and the stem opening has been expanded to make it more "tongue friendly". Another improvement is the stain, - it is more refined now. If the stem is removed, you will notice that the edge by the mortise is stained like the rest. "You have to find ways to continually improve the quality" Peter explains. He is also working diligently with improvements concerning balance, such as the ratio between bowl and stem, but also the thickness and the width of the "bite" is important to the pipes performance.

The biggest challenge is still to make a classic model. There are strict requirements for the shape itself, and the requirements concerning symmetry make it a challenge. Peters favorite and trademark is the Bulldog. More difficult details: The sharp edges on the shank have to extend onto the stem, but there

also has to be a little curvature on the front and back where the shank meets the bowl. Peter makes it perfectly!

"New ideas have to come to you by themselves, - if you begin borrowing from others you are on the wrong path!" A lot of inspiration comes from semi-finished pipes, - the pipe is turned and studied, the creativity and sense for shapes spark a few ideas, and a sketch is drawn. "It is not a problem to develop new models; - the problem is to find new materials to incorporate on the pipes". Peter is happy to acknowledge that the customers deliberately steer away from ivory these days. As a replacement he is using shank bone, - and this is accepted. Once in a while he is using silver, and a lot of buxbom which Peter has been fortunate enough to get from an old nursery in Ryesgade.

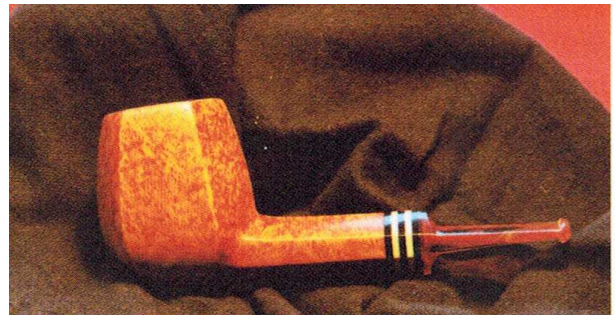
As most pipe makers Peter has a set of basic shapes forming a baseline when he's working at the lathe, but in the end the briars grain determines the final outcome. "I can make 10 pipes that are exactly alike, - but that's no fun!" he says. Most pipes are made on the lathe, but some are only made on the "bims".

When making asymmetrical shapes there is no need for the lathe. The stems are made from synthetic amber, Cumberland and black ebonite. From April 1991 until February 1992 Peter Hedegaard made his shop and machines available to Ph. Vigen (Jess

Geertsen). Both trained at W.Ø. Larsen, but today their models are quite different. Jess is very good with the silver work, and Peter is hoping to gain experience with this from Jess. Peter produces around 350 pipes per year. Most are sold in Europe, but Japan is also buying quite a few. To work on 9mm filter pipes for Germany is no longer a big problem. Naturally it limits the possibilities concerning the shank design, but over time you get better at overcoming this obstacle. Many have a hard time understanding why a pipe should be so expensive, but when they are told that Peter on some days can discard 10 blocks or more, it's no surprise that the price goes up.

Peter is eager to share his knowledge. A while back a girl came by from the AMU-Center (adult vocational training program), - she wanted to train as a pipe maker. Peter tried to deter her due to the uncertainty in the business, - but she insisted. She kept on coming back with her request, - and finally Peter gave in and offered her 5 weeks training. She is now thriving working for Erik Nørding!

At the age of 40, Hedegaard has no desire to change careers. "I don't feel like doing anything else. As long as people are interested in my pipes I will keep on making them, and I hope that continues far out in the future!"



Another fine example of Peters work

LB-Pipes from Kramnitze

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 57, September 1992

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

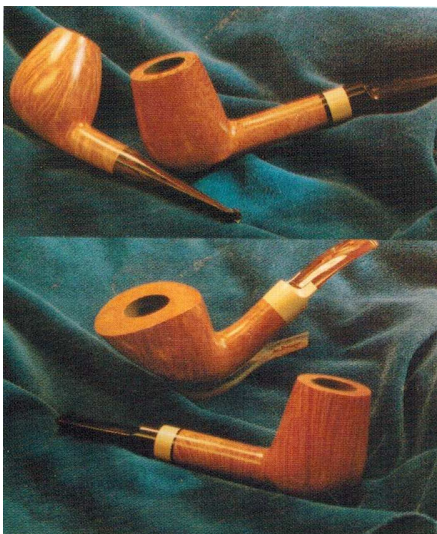
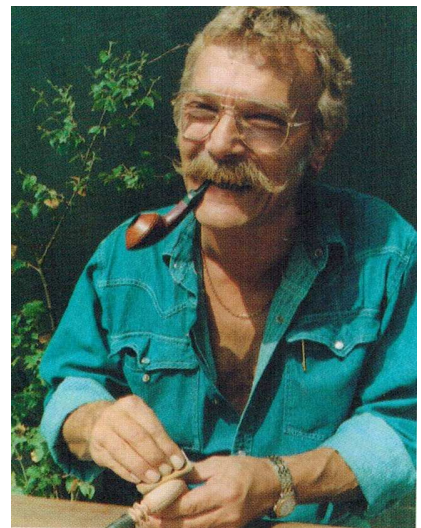
Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Leo Børgart has been mentioned in an earlier issue of *Piber & Tobak*, - but since he has now become a fulltime pipe carver, we have decided to bring a small portrayal of the "recluse".

Leo began making pipes in 1974. He was at the Pibe-Dan store to have a pipe repaired. He was given permission to go back to talk to the repairman, and the chat and demonstration that followed sparked Leos interest for the pipe making trade.

He established a small workshop in his house in Slagelse, and all his friends and colleagues were excited whenever he could find the time to make a new pipe. As a result the marketing slowly became more organized, and in 1985 Leo Børgart was officially registered as a pipe maker. From his new facilities in Solrød Strand he was making "pipes for the people". Already back then Leo had a philosophy that his name as a pipe maker should be established in an untraditional manner: Workshops on the town square in Køge, at art galleries and at consumer fairs. For several seasons Leo has also been teaching night school classes in pipe carving, - not only to make a name for himself, but as many other pipe carvers he is not afraid to teach others the trade.



In the fall of 1990 Leo managed to get the first overseas contract. As part of the deal they purchased the right to the name, so you will only get "LB"-pipes at the private workshop. As a result of the new and increasing interest for his pipes Leo decided to dedicate all his time to pipe making. He quit his job, sold his house and moved to the southern part of Lolland with his wife Anette. They found a wonderful farmhouse near Kramnitze, where the low mortgage allows you to slow things down a bit. One of the reasons for choosing Lolland is the wonderful nature. Even though Leo is born and raised in Copenhagen he really appreciates the nature. Another consideration was the pipe smoking neighbors to the south. German's are willing to pay a good price for a handmade pipe. Sometime in the future they will build a bridge to Femern, and then it will be easy for the Germans to take a trip to Kramnitze to buy a new pipe or two.

Leo differs from most pipe makers by using the lathe manually; the block is secured in the lathe, but the shaping of the pipe is done manually by using chisels. Naturally the best Corsican briar is used, - and when the bowl has been turned, "bimset" and sanded the stain is applied. The staining spans from virgin over orange to red and sandblasted depending on sand spots and filler. If any filler need exceed 1 mm the pipe will be sandblasted, - no matter where on the pipe the spot is. Leo points out that a sandblasted pipe smokes just as well as a smooth "LB"-pipe without flaws.



The pipes are made from imagination only! The shape can be decided by the grain or by an idea for a new shape. All models are good size in consideration of the southern neighbors.

The stems are also handmade. Leo likes to work with Cumberland: "It gives character to the pipe, and it looks nice". Amber is also used quite often, and another feature is adding wood trim on the shank, - such as buxbom, ebony or lemon wood from Ceylon.

In general Leo's pipes are more fancy than most, - but that did not deter me. The decorations are not exaggerated, and they compliment the fine craftsmanship quite nicely. Since it can be difficult to keep up with the demand, Leo has succeeded in getting other pipe makers pipes on display. In this way the visitors can see what is developing on the Danish market.

Being a "city slicker" one could fear that it would be problematic to move to the countryside, but Leo has embraced the wonderful nature of Lolland. Long walks on the dikes are a source of inspiration.



If you are heading to southern Lolland I recommend going by Leo's workshop, - it is well worth the trip.....

Dieter Gottschling, - Who's That?

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 59, March 1993

Written by: Carlo Waaentze

Photo: Chr. D. Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Dieter Gottschling, - who's that?

A lot of participants at RM-92 asked that question when they were admiring our prize table, - which included a pipe donated by Dieter Gottschling. So who is it?

Dieter Gottschling is living on the island Læsø in one of the best kept houses, in one of the most tidy gardens I have ever seen.

Upon recommendation by Anne Julie my wife and I paid him a visit. His workshop is a small, - but cozy, room in a building in the back. Inside it is so tidy that it is hard to imagine it's a pipe making shop.

His story is as follows;

Dieter has been a commercial fisherman for 25 years, - the past 14 as skipper on his own vessel. Illness forced him ashore, and he developed an interest for pipe making. He worked as an apprentice under Joh's in Frederikshavn, - and Joh's is still "keeping an eye on him".

In spite of his illness Dieter has a warmth, humor and optimism about him anyone should envy. On December 1st 1991 he started as an independent pipe maker. Due to his health issues and extreme perfectionism his annual production is limited to about 200 pipes.

He was showing us a box of discarded pipes. They would have made wonderful "everyday pipes", but since Dieter doesn't use filler, the pipes had to be discarded. When you buy a pipe from him he will show you any flaws, - if he can find them. Yes, - that is how hard they are to see.

I "accidentally" bought two pipes from him, one priced at kr. 200 and another priced at kr. 300. In this price range they do have minor flaws, - but I haven't found them yet. He couldn't find them either, - but they are there he assured me.....



The briar determines the shape of the pipe. His cheapest pipe is a "ladies pipe" priced at kr. 150, otherwise the prices range from kr. 200 up to kr. 1,000.

In consideration of the German tourists he also makes the very large "here comes a real pipe smoker" pipes. My inherent aversion towards these "chunks" prevented me from taking a closer look.

Dieter also makes jewelry. Briar blocks not suitable for pipe making are sliced and fitted with small amber pieces. My wife liked the composition, but they were a little too big for her liking.

Go to Læsø and pay him a visit, - he is a very warm and friendly man to talk to, but do it before he finds out how good his pipes are, - he might raise the prices.

Anne Julie, - she's still going strong. She has a big project going at the harbor in Vesterø. She promised me, - almost, that she would take up pipe making again soon, and carve new exciting models. She has been so busy with the business and painting that there has been no time left for pipe making.



A Pipe Maker from Karise

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 59, March 1993

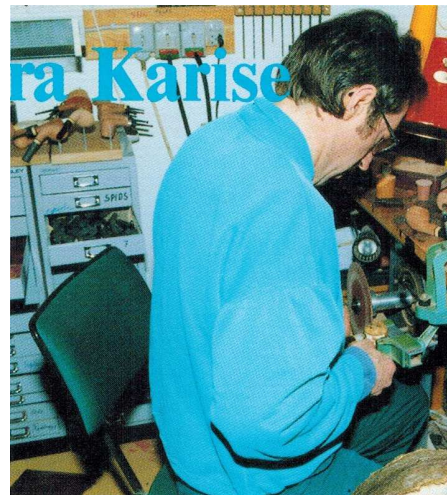
Written by: Christian D. Larsen

Photo: Christian D. Larsen

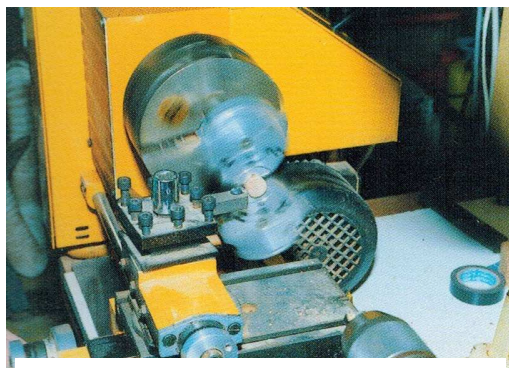
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Last summer I travelled to Lolland to write an article about Leo Børgart. "I had invited one of my good friends Jørn Larsen", Leo said. Jørn Larsen turned out to be a very nice man, and he also knew how to make pipes. Great was my surprise when I later found out that Jørn Larsen had been making pipes for a living for several years! I thought I knew of all the Danish pipe makers so it was a surprise that this professional pipe maker had slipped through the cracks. I had to find out more, so in January I paid Jørn Larsen a visit.

Jørn Larsen's interest for pipes began when he started smoking a pipe at age 15. Him and a friend turned into dedicated pipe smokers, - but it irritated Jørn that the friend always had some very pretty pipes. Jørn wanted to make one of those pretty pipes himself, so he got a hold of some "hobby blocks" with the stem attached. He lost interest, - he even quit smoking, but it all came back one day he was helping his mother clean. A "hobby block" appeared, and his interest and energy came right back!



Stem work



Shank work

Since 1987 pipe making has no longer been a hobby bringing happiness to friends, family and himself, - now it's a way of living. Before then Jørn had completed an education as a machinist, and he already had a general idea about the direction he wanted to take during his apprenticeship, so he built a lathe. The lathe is one of the most important tools for a pipe maker. Since Jørn's home isn't far from Emil and Jess Chonowitsch, it is obvious that there has been a lot of communication between them and the pipe maker in Karise. Jørn has gained a lot of knowledge about pipe making, and especially the cooperation with Jess has been fruitful for both of them.

A modern workshop, - and storage for briar, has been established at the lovely home. I was surprised to see the many machines he had managed to fit into the workshop: Three lathes, several drill presses, sanders and polishers, - but no band saw! Each lathe is used for different processes when making the bowl: One lathe is used for drilling the draught hole and mortise, the second is used to drill the chamber, and the third is used to shape the bowl after it has been through a rough milling process. The rough milling is performed in a small enclosure at a corner of the shop; - it's a little "messy". The machine is homemade, and it totally eliminates the need for a band saw to pre-shape the briar block, - and it takes care of a lot of the work you would normally do on the "bims". The pipe still needs to go through additional steps on lathe, "bims", polisher and several applications of stain before it is finished. The many machines make it a lot easier to make pipes, but



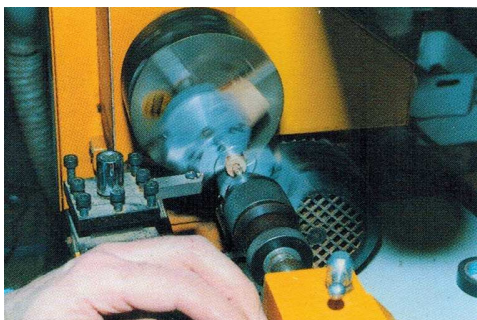
Very nice Bulldog's

naturally the individuality is important. The shape of the bowl is changed if major flaws appear in the briar; - making sure the proportions between bowl and shank remain correct.

The bowls are fitted with either molded or customized stems made from rods. The customized stems also deviate from what other pipe makers normally do. Again he has a special machine; - among other things it can make a saddle stem that is 100% symmetric. It could be done by hand, - but time is money! The continued work with the stems show Jørn's attention to detail: A lot of sanding, beautiful straight edges and a tenon with a perfect fit!

Jørn Larsen is a perfectionist. He is using a lot of time on the stem work, but also the bowl and shank demand a lot of attention. Flaws are carefully filled and the shank is filed to make sure the stem fits perfectly. Finally the tenon is polished, - something most pipe makers forget. The overall impression is that you get a fine product. I studied many of the finished pipes, and spent quite some time looking for flaws. Jørn's philosophy is that the customer has to be able to see the flaws when the pipe is new. It is better the flaws "disappear" as the pipe ages and takes color. The demand for certain models, - and the price they fetch on the market, sometimes forces him to compromise to get a competitive product.

His models are mainly classics, - Lovat, Canadian, Pot. Jørn also makes his own models with a more "free" form. I had called the pipe maker in advance to ask if he could make a couple of Bulldogs. It's my favorite shape, but I have also learned from other pipe makers that it is one of the more difficult shapes to make. The finished pipes clearly show that Jørn knows how to use the lathe. Most pipes are fitted with black stems, but Cumberland and artificial amber is also used.



Drilling of the mortise

The finished pipe is either sandblasted, or left smooth, - and the colors range from dark brown to light orange. Some pipes are decorated with cast silver bands or buxbom, but the decoration has to be discreet. He does not like to add too much "pop" to the pipes to make them "exciting". Jørn describes his pipes as "solid". His straight models tend to be Cognac-shaped with a very straight shank.

That Jørn is fairly unknown in Denmark is because most of his pipes are sold in Germany and Switzerland.

"I'm better known in Hamburg than Karise!" he states. Jørn agrees that German customers are more willing to pay the price

for a hand made pipe. He sometimes misses the contact to the pipe smokers and he would welcome more socializing between the Danish pipe makers.

With the workload it is difficult to find time for renewal. When he finally takes a break he enjoys to go fishing, and the surrounding nature is a source for inspiration. One of his models is named "The Swan", and sometimes he can ponder over the shape of a chestnut, an egg or a rock. His biggest wish is to make a pipe based on a snail shell, but the shank is posing a problem.

If Jørn stays busy he can reach an annual production of approximately 400 pipes. He considers himself a craftsman, and he enjoys showing a product he is satisfied with. Judging from the demand from the south, a lot of people share that sentiment. I hope we get to see Jørn Larsen's pipes in the Danish tobacconist stores the price tags on his pipes are far from scary!



Joh's and Johannes

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 61, September 1993

Written by: Chr. D. Larsen

Photo: Chr. D. Larsen

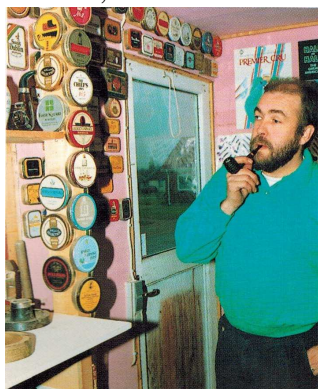
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Piber & Tobak has been in Vendsyssel to visit the pipe makers Mogens Johansen (Joh's) and Johannes Hoffmann Jepsen

Joh's

Mogens Johansen is a self-taught pipe maker. It all started 10 years ago when he made the first pipes from the well-known "hobby blocks". He barely finished the first pipe when a friend came to visit: "I'll take that", - and it developed from there. More became interested in Joh's pipes, and in 1985 his father in law invested in an old motor from a furnace to aid production, - it began moving quickly. A dream of having a combined workshop and store was realized in 1985 - 1987. Joh's store in the center of Frederikshavn became one of the most frequented. The rumor spread like wildfire, and at one point he had to close the shop. "You can't make a living by drinking coffee, eating Danish pastries and talking to customers all day long!" The first "customers" were already waiting with a bag of Danish pastries at 9AM when the store opened, and Joh's is not the type to chase people away, so he didn't finish many pipes.

In 1987 the pipe maker and his family moved to Gærum about 5 miles west of Frederikshavn, and he established a workshop next to the home. He is not without humor, - the area is divided up in two areas: "Building A" and "Building B". Building B is where all the machines are located, - lathe, band saw and polishers. Building A is a small area where the customers and other interested people can talk about pipes, - and smoke a sample of tobacco, while studying pipes and tobacco tin lids. Like some other pipe smokers, Joh's is a collector of lids from old tobacco tins, and it has turned into quite a nice collection.



Joh's collection of lids



Joh's is proudly showing us "Building A" and "Building B"

In 1985 Joh's biggest wish was to travel to Copenhagen to meet some of the big names in Danish pipe making. The wish became a reality, - and Peter Hedegaard has been supporting Joh's with practical advice when needed over the past few years. Joh's is more than willing to teach others: "I can teach anybody to make a pipe. The problems arise when you work alone and the creativity has to be used!" Joh's wasn't trained by anybody, so he does not have any preconception about how a finished pipe should look.

When making a new pipe he already has a general idea of what the pipe should look like when he first studies the briar block, and the shape is outlined with a pencil. At this stage the first briar blocks are getting scrapped. The work continues on the band saw, lathe and "bims", and then it's time for the sander. Joh's still lacks experience in this technique: "I'm afraid to go lower than grit 150". This is Peter Hedegaard's influence, - earlier

he didn't use a sander, - it was all done by hand. The pipes are still getting a final sanding by hand before the stain is applied. The Bulldog is Joh's favorite shape: "You almost have a love/hate relationship to this model, it has its predefined characteristics, but you can still experiment with the shank/bowl ratio, edges and stem." Most stems are hand made, and he is not set on one type of material, they come in

black ebonite, amber and Cumberland. Joh's has a vivid imagination when it comes to the shapes. The stems can be 3-sided or oval, and he uses silver, buxbom and iron wood for decoration, - as long as it all forms a unity.

Joh's is meticulous when it comes to the shape, - the grain is secondary. The pipe has to feel right in your hand; - the lip is another area he puts a lot of effort into. The flawless pipes get an orange stain, - this color enhances the grain. When it comes to pricing Joh's has a philosophy of his own. He would rather sell a pipe a little cheaper than having it on the display for a long time, - without any buyers.



Joh's pipes

Johannes Hoffmann

A good example of Joh's sincerity is Johannes Hoffmann from Ravnshøj, - like Gærum, a small town outside Frederikshavn. Besides being a pipe maker he's a teacher at the local high school. He's a farmhand as well, - and then he's a keen golfer (9 handicap). In 1985 Johannes owned a couple of pipes, - he only smoked on rare occasions. For Christmas his wife gave him a couple of the "hobby blocks", - Johannes had never expressed any desire to carve a pipe, but his better half always had a flair for



Johannes' "Pipe-Line"

keeping him busy. The work began on Christmas Day. One of the blocks was secured to the dining table with a clamp, and he went at it with a file. At one point assistance was required, and Johannes found his way to Joh's. More "hobby blocks" found their way to Ravnshøj, and the teamwork between the two pipe makers has developed over the years. Johannes doesn't have all the machines required, so Joh's is taking care of drilling the chamber, draught hole and mortise. Prior to this, Johannes has decided on a shape, and the rest of the work is performed back in Ravnshøj where he has a small workshop in a backroom. The workshop is

equipped with "bims" and polisher, but all sanding is done by hand. He is completely on his own, and he's got a trick or two up his sleeve. One is the treatment of the draught hole. Experience shows that his process makes a Hoffmann-pipe a lot easier to break in! Even though the two pipe makers can spend many hours in each others company their shapes and colors are very different. Hoffmann prefers the classical lines with a tulip-shaped bowl. In addition he thinks his Pipe-Line model is very nice. Johannes is a true royalist, and he gave Queen Margrethe II a special version of the Pipe-Line pipe for her 50th birthday. The bowl was red, and the stem was made out of white artificial amber.

When so much of the work is done manually it takes a long time to finish a pipe. He normally works on 6 - 7 pipes at one time. If he get's stuck he will move to another pipe and return to the problem later. Most times the problem solves itself just by waiting. As with other pipe makers the mood is a factor:

"Some days nothing works. Then I find something else to do, - I have to do something!" Johannes likes to make pipes to customer's specifications: "I prefer to talk to the customer first, - appearance and profession means something." Quite a few briar blocks were sacrificed before an order to Cologne was finally completed, but now the pipe is displayed on the mantle in the German home. The choice of color is mainly orange, but the red stain is one of Johannes favorites. He prefers to leave the pipe with a natural look, but this is only possible when the bowl is flawless.



Another example of Johannes capabilities

The stems used are mainly molded, but ebonite stems are also made. All work is done by hand: "I work very systematic on the tenon; the stem is turned continuously to make sure the fit is perfect." Special files and skills have made him an expert in this area. He also uses Buffalo horn for the stems. Opposed to Danish cow horns these are more solid. He once asked one of the local farmers if he couldn't get him some cow horns from the slaughterhouse, and one day he received a 20 gallon drum filled with cow horns. They had to be boiled before they could be used, - this was done in the kitchen: "Not the most pleasant experience!" Johannes recalls. He mainly uses black and Cumberland, - a good match for the light stained bowls. Johannes also got a hold of Cretan buxbom; it's a lot lighter in color than the Danish.



Joh's-pipes

How do you reach the customers?

To make his name known Johannes participates in consumer fairs, and he is also present at competition smoking events. During the summer he has a working booth at "Skivern Strand" or in "Faarup Sommerland", - in both places you meet a lot of German tourists. In March Johannes also displayed his pipes at the DM in competition smoking.

Joh's is also making an effort to reach the pipe smokers. His pipes were also displayed at the DM, but on a daily basis his pipes are sold by a jewelry store in Saltum. Every other Saturday he has a booth at the local market, and he encounters many amusing episodes. One of the usual questions asked is: "Which kind of wood do you use for pipes?" Joh's has a good sense of humor, - so one day he answered: "Pipe wood!" The customer seemed satisfied with the reply, - and he left the booth with a new pipe. Joh's has quite a few repeat customers from Germany; - they come back to the shop in Gærum at regular intervals, so it's not a problem to find buyers for the annual production. Joh's is inspired by the great Danish pipe makers: "I only get better by making more pipes, but I can't make a living from the pipes and my good sense of humor alone!" He states. He has a part-time job in addition to the pipe making.



Joh's-pipes

Joh's and Johannes common interest has developed into a friendship. Each year they exchange Christmas presents. They "Swap" two pipes: A beautiful pipe and a horrible pipe. They also buy the briar blocks together, and the sorting/dividing is quite entertaining. Hoffmann is looking forward to the government passing a law making it possible to take a leave of absence; he will probably take advantage of the opportunity and increase his present annual production of 52 pipes.

Lastly a story about how to promote yourself;

In 1985 they were having a fair in Aalborg. The city of

Frederikshavn had a booth at the fair, and since the Prime

Minister Poul Schlüter was opening the fair, Joh's saw a chance for a happening. He gave Poul Schlüter a beautiful pipe "The Saving Pipe of the Year". Both chamber and draught hole were missing, and he explained to the Prime Minister that he could send the pipe to him to be drilled when the Danish Government had eliminated the balance-of-payments deficit, - at that time the Danish pipe smokers would be able to afford tobacco for their pipes again. The happening got quite a bit of attention in the media. He never received the pipe to be drilled though, - even though the deficit was eliminated by Poul Schlüter's Government in recent years.

Benni - The Pipe Maker from W. Ø. Larsen!

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 62, December 1993

Written by: Chr. D. Larsen

Photo: Chr. D. Larsen

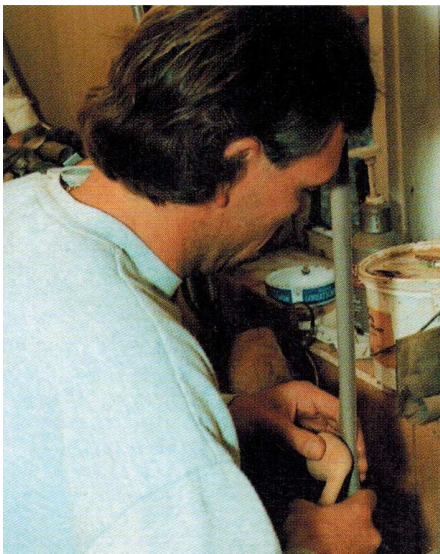
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It's a Saturday in early October, and I'm travelling through the pretty scenery of southern Zealand to pay a visit to one of Denmark's most anonymous pipe makers, - Benni Jørgensen. Since 1987 he has been associated with one of Denmark's largest pipe and tobacco stores, W. Ø. Larsen on Amagertorv in Copenhagen. Benni Jørgensen has settled down in an old farmhouse near Jungshoved, southeast of Præstø,



Hovmarken 2. A wonderful view of Benni's home

with his wife and two boys. It's a tranquil place: A red painted timber framed home with a thatch roof and a view of the ocean. This jewel, - which can make any romantic envious, has been fully restored and modernized. The pipe workshop is located in one of the outbuildings, but Benni and his wife Jette are planning to move it to the main house to get more room, but also because they are planning on converting the third outbuilding into the main living area. This is where you have the most beautiful view of the ocean and the landscape.



Benni working at the sander!

Benni Jørgensen became a registered pipe maker in January 1986. Earlier he made pipes for friends and family as a hobby, but when a bad back made his job as a joiner difficult he decided to take the leap into the unknown. He was introduced to pipe making by coincidence a while back: One day, his pipe smoking boss had brought one of the well-known briar blocks with an attached stem to work. Benni got hooked on the idea, and they made a small shop at the boss' home where they worked on those "hobby block" pipes all winter. They got the blocks from another local pipe maker who later arranged a showing at W. Ø. Larsen. When Benni became registered he began selling his pipes through the German agent Kohlhasse. "In the beginning I "stole" ideas and shapes from other pipe makers - it wasn't until I was employed by W. Ø. Larsen I had to learn how to make a pipe". Benni is referring to the special W. Ø. style; - he had to adjust his shapes and models to conform to this new standard.

The cooperation with W. Ø. Larsen

At the beginning there were a lot of discussions between Benni and W. Ø. Larsen concerning shapes and models. At W. Ø. Larsen they were always willing to give Benni constructive criticism, - a criticism Benni is grateful for today: "As a pipe maker you have a tendency to think you are making the best of the best, - self-criticism doesn't come until you gain some experience". Today Benni is his own master. He decides singlehanded what is made, - but in the back of his mind he still considers if it would meet the approval of W. Ø. Larsen. The cooperation with the W. Ø. Larsen dynasty on Amagertorv requires

that all sales have to go through them. He's still allowed to sell pipes at home "out the back door", but all sales to agents and stores have to go through W. Ø. Larsen. Due to this, Benni has to say "No thanks" to a lot of German customers, but he is quite happy with the arrangement. It is a great advantage to know that you have a buyer for the finished pipes, and at the pace the pipes are leaving the store in Copenhagen Benni is staying quite busy. You have to consider that 90% of the W. Ø. Larsen sales are exported, and we are talking high volume! In addition you have to consider that many German customers expect to get a 6-month line of credit! Nobody in their right mind would prefer this over cash!

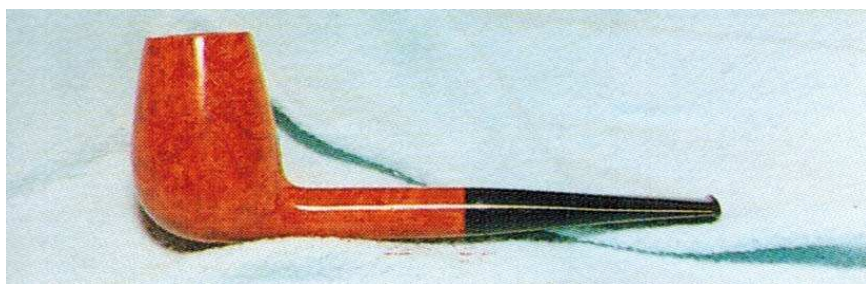
When it comes to W. Ø. - pipes there are two categories;

The so-called catalog pipes are photographed, and then the customers can order the pipes based on the pictures in the catalog. Naturally the pipes they receive are not exact copies of the photo; - we are talking about a hand made product. Benni is making them in cooperation with his wife; - she has been part of the production for the past three years. These are the grades named "Select", "Two Tone" and the sandblasted in the stores.

The other category of pipes, are the pipes created based on the briar blocks grain, - his so-called Free-hands. In this category Benni is his own master, - if you look past the occasional special order. At a German fair, a customer had seen a pipe he was all excited about, so Benni had to "recreate" the shape as best as he could. During the first years at W. Ø. Larsen Benni only made pipes in this category.

Making the pipe

When Benni starts working on a new block of briar he's trying to detect the most favorable grain/shape for that particular block. Each step is carried out with extreme accuracy to get the very best from the Corsican briar. Classical models are preferred, - but flaws can result in changes during the process. Changes are easier to apply to bent models. The pipe is shaped on the "bims", - no lathe is used: "I can



A W. Ø. Larsen "Select" made by Benni!

optimize the shape/grain when working on the "bims", this is not possible on the lathe!" Benni says. When the rough shape is outlined the next step is the sander. Where other pipe makers spent a lot of time at the "bims" - Benni deviates by moving to the sander early in the process. Due to this, the finished pipes have softer curves and less sharp transitions between bowl and shank. Benni is viewing this as an advantage; flaws appearing during the process can result in new models. In addition he has experienced that a sanded pipe takes a different color compared to a "bimset" pipe. When the base stain is removed the differences appear, and Benni clearly prefers the result from the sanding. The finished pipe sometimes changes shape several times. Benni is stubborn, and his scrap percentages are low: "I'll fight the flaws until they are gone!" he says. Off course the most hopeless block with cracks are lost causes. With this tedious process it is no wonder that the prices reach kr. 5,000 - 6,000. When a new batch of Straight Grain pipes is delivered, Benni, Mr. Ole W. Ø. and Mrs. Inge sit down in the office.



After a trip to the lathe the pipe is worked on the "bims": Are the lines holding?

Each of them get a deck of cards (no picture cards), and the pipes are displayed on the table. Now the pipes are graded by each of them from 1 - 10, - 10 being the best, and they actually get fairly close to one another in the grading.

The catalog pipes are first machined on the lathe, then "bims" and finally the sander. The base stain is removed by hand. These pipes are fitted with molded stems, - but no two pipes are exactly alike. This gives a better variety when the customers have to select a new "W. Ø." for their collection!

The models are W. Ø. Larsen's, but by now Benni actually considers them his own. There are two basic shapes: Straight and bent, - and variations are limited by the chamber/draught hole. Like most of the Danish pipe production the choice of colors is very conservative. It benefits nobody to make a pipe that more than likely won't sell. At the moment experiments are made concerning a so-called "Super-pipe", - a rather dark color which is not too popular with the Danish customers, but it is a very popular abroad. Today the bright orange colors dominate Benni's pipes, and both W. Ø. Larsen and he are pleased with that!

At the store they make an effort out of telling customers not to remove the stem from a warm pipe. It will result in a poor fit, and worst case the shank can crack. To make sure the pipe smoker can use a pipe cleaner in the bent pipes without removing the stem, Benni uses a special drilling for the draught hole. On the bent pipes the draught hole is placed close to the top of the shank, - meaning the pipe cleaner will find its way to the bottom of the mortise.



Beautiful Free-hands! You almost have to believe the grain is painted on, - but it's not!

To guide the pipe cleaner into the draught hole a small groove is milled from the bottom of the mortise into the draught hole. It requires skill, - but it is a demand from W. Ø. Larsen on bent models. On the real Fancy-pipes, exported to mainly American and Japan, this is not possible. Benni always makes sure the mortise is colored like the rest of the pipe, it looks better and it reduces any expansion from smoking.

The hand made stems are made from ebonite and artificial amber. The amber is used quite a bit: "It is a nice material to work with" Benni says. Concerning the difficulty of making handmade stems; Benni thinks that most pipe makers go wrong when drilling/widening the bore at the lip area. For the bore he use one drill bit, and for widening the bore at the lip area another. He is using a very thin bit, and he is slowly moving it back and forth milling the area to the correct shape. When the stem has been heated and is ready for bending, he is inserting a small wood block at the lip, and a pipe cleaner in the bore to make sure the bore doesn't collapse during bending. Using molded stems is a necessity for pipe makers, and Benni does not feel bad about it, the stems you get from France nowadays are of good quality. Depending on the quality, the pipes are fitted with various fittings: Silver rings or plates (also engraved), buxbom, ebony, amber, Brazilian rosewood or the special cocobolo wood in an array of brown, yellow and white colors.

A new addition at W. Ø. Larsen is the sandblasted pipes. They look like a tan-shell, but they have a darker base stain. Benni is keeping the process to himself; - it took a long time to find the right color combination. The new pipe is selling like hotcakes even though pipe smokers tend to be cautious when new items are introduced. The price is a little higher than the price for a regular black sandblasted pipe

since the process is more time consuming. If the color application fails the first time, the pipe needs another sandblasting.

Past and present

When Benni is looking back at his development as a pipe maker, he thinks that the very first models were quite horrible. "The transitions from shank to bowl were quite clumsy!" as he put's it. Today these details are considered carefully along with the pipes proportions, bore and stain. He also knows a lot more about what the world expects from a pipe; - in America they want a pipe that makes a clear statement, - in Japan they prefer small and elegant pipes.

Benni is quite conscious about his private life. Even though Jette is involved in the pipe making, they both strive towards keeping it a regular 8-hour job with the weekends off. But

when the demand soars they both work longer hours. They live a very anonymous life in the southern part of Zealand. In a single phonebook you can find Benni listed under his profession, - he doesn't really need to advertise. As he put's it: "If I was at a booth selling my pipes stamped "Benni Jørgensen", and W. Ø. Larsen was next to me selling my pipes stamped " W. Ø. Larsen" I have no doubt who would sell the most pipes!" Benni is quite comfortable with the W. Ø. Larsen arrangement; - it brings him more than food on the table. I'm also quite comfortable walking to Amagertorv to buy a new "W. Ø." pipe.



An example of the new sandblasted model

Following the visit at Jungshoved I have the deepest respect for this wonderful craft!

Eltang - The Pipe Mekka in Tårbæk

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 67, March 1995

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Tom Eltang has taken a new initiative and opened a workshop and store on Tårbæk Strandvej 89 in Klampenborg, - Piber & Tobak has paid him a visit.

In spite of his modest age Tom Eltang is one of pipe makings "Grand Old Men": - At the age of 16 he began his apprenticeship at Anne Julie. Back then, - in 1974, she had her workshop on Vester Voldgade in Copenhagen. It wasn't a spontaneous act that led Tom in the direction of becoming a professional pipe maker; - he had already been playing with the idea several years.



Tom's favorite place, - behind the counter, posing with the longest pipe in the world....

When his friends were playing with Tekno-cars and Märklin-trains he would be at the tobacconist store with his nose pressed up against the window looking at the pipes. Pipe magazines were studied, and his interest for the trade kept on growing. The first two days at Anne Julie were spent on repairs - drilling stems! Training was at a minimum, - it was "learning by doing", so at the end of the day Tom would fill his pockets with all the failed attempts, it was too embarrassing to let the others find out.

Three years later Tom went over to Kattesundet where Pibe-Dan wanted to open a pipe workshop. The famous hatch between the store and workshop was opened, and the following three years countless pipes



Three wonderful Eltang's

made their way from the store to Tom, who made sure the necessary repairs were performed. Besides repairing pipes, there was also time to make pipes, and they were sold in the store. The pipes were stamped with consecutive numbers, and with an average production of one pipe per day the amount of pipes produced during his three years at Pibe-Dan were limited. The time at Pibe-Dan was very enjoyable: The pleasant times drinking

morning coffee with the rest of the employees, - including the shop manager Mogens Henriksen, are still quite clear in his memory. But Tom became restless! The first ambition concerning pipe making had been fulfilled: Tom Eltang had become a recognized name in the pipe making business in Denmark and abroad. He decided to become a sailor, and for a year he was crisscrossing the Danish waters aboard a small coaster. In 1981 he returned to Tårbæk, and Peter Hedegaard helped him make contact to Oldenkott, - a large German agent and pipe factory, and the doors to the world were open. In the meantime the workshop had been moved to Vedbæk Stationsvej, and Tom would stay here for 12 years.

Working with Stanwell

One day Tom had a visit by Poul Stanwell, Lillelund and Dehli from the Borup factory. Over coffee and danish they were discussing pipe making and models, and when the gentlemen from mid Zealand were getting ready to leave Tom said: "Leave this pipe with me, and I'll show you what I can do with it!" That became the beginning of a relationship that has continued until today. Tom applied his characteristic stain to the pipe; - in Stanwell's program it is called "Golden Contrast". As a result, Tom is now receiving semi-finished pipes from Stanwell, - and then he sits in his barbers chair at home and applies the final finish and the characteristic 2-

component stain to the pipes. In 1981-82 Tom went on so-called demonstration tours for Stanwell. Tom would visit stores in Germany and Switzerland, and he would finish pipes at a working booth. For transportation he had purchased an old Morris Minor and fully restored it with red leather seats and all the trimmings! These trips lasted most of the winter; - it was backbreaking work, not much time for the comforts of home. One day Tom called his wife Pia, - no answer. This continued for a couple of days, and when he finally reached her he got the explanation: He had become a dad for the second time - and this ended the tours in Germany and Switzerland. The relationship with Stanwell concerning the "Golden Contrast" continues, and in addition Tom also creates new models for Stanwell's large program, - year pipes and regular pipes. It was a great experience for Tom to be present at the World Championship in Pipe Smoking in October; - one of his creations was used at the event. The model is No. 190 in the Stanwell program, and it is selling quite well.



Finishing and stem work is completed at the homemade oak table

Pipe making

The hand made pipes are made the usual way, - the briar blocks grain determines the shape. Tom is using templates, but the ideas are evolving as he works the briar. His philosophy is that a pipe is "a piece of wood with a rubber stem attached", so most of the pipes are not equipped with "all the trimmings".

On occasion a silver or brass band is fitted, but it is the shape, the proportions between bowl, shank, stem and the grain that completes a perfect pipe. Tom's specialty is fitting oval silver plates flush with the surface, - so in reality all pipes could be fitted with a silver plate. The 2-component stain is used on 99% of the pipes. The color composition dates back to his time at Anne Julie, and it is his trademark. It is applied in five steps, - a slow process where sanding is required between each step. The pipes are fitted with a black stem. On the front page of an old issue of the German "Pipe Club" magazine an Eltang-Bulldog fitted with a dark amber stem is shown, - but that is a rarity. The biggest challenge is the classical Billiard, but most of Tom's pipes are quarter-bent to get the most out of the grain. The shape of the bowl can be a bit untraditional, but the classical lines are maintained. Stanwell's no. 137, - a Dublin created by Tom is a good example of this. One of Tom's strong suits is his ability to make pipes based on customer wishes. I have two Eltang's made from a "customer sketch", and they both fully meet expectations concerning measurements and proportions. During my visit Tom



One lathe for stem work, one for briar and one for decoration!

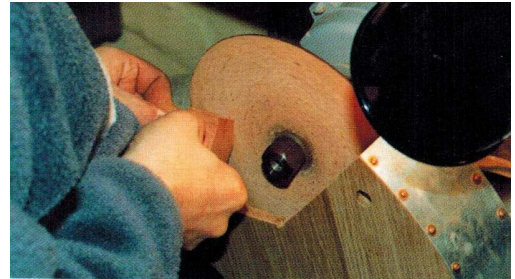
just finished a Pot made from a sketch, - a beautiful piece of workmanship. Stanwell is always taking advantage of this special skill, - it is here in Tårnbæk their masters for future molds are made.

The store

Tom is a very outgoing person, and he always wanted a store where he could meet the customers. Exchanging experiences and ideas with people who share the same hobby and passion is a must!

For years Tom has been looking for a suitable location. Yes, - when Pibe-Dan closed he was offered to take over the store and the complete inventory, but with two little girls at home, and a wife who had absolutely no interest in taking part in the daily operation the idea was doomed from the beginning.

Instead Tom stayed in Vedbæk and kept an eye out for another opportunity. He was busy collecting antiques: Long-pipes, cabinets, signs and tobacco jars, - anything that could be used to decorate the store when it finally materialized. As an example the old cash register had been decorating their living room for 12 years, - a long wait, but Eltang has the patience required. In November Tårnbæk's Pipe Mekka opened, - and the location is perfect: 2 minutes walk from the home, and it holds the store and the workshop as well. The store has a lot of atmosphere, and all the items mentioned earlier are now displayed perfectly. Besides his own pipes, the store carries a large selection of Stanwell's in very nice grades. The workshop is one of the most cozy I have ever seen. Lathes, band saw and "bims" have been placed in a very efficient manner, - everything has its place. You have to make sure you don't scare the customers away, for many it's the first time they see a pipe workshop. Tom bought all materials Pibe-Dan had for pipe repairs: Stems in all shapes and materials, bushings, bands, and pretty much anything else you might need to repair a pipe. Tom can repair almost any pipe, and the price is very reasonable.



Tom working at the "bims"



A classical Pot and a nice quarter Bent

As a consequence of the closing of Pibe-Dan a lot of pipe makers left the trade. Tom has often mentioned to the other pipe makers that they should join forces and open a store where they could take turns minding the store. They could make people aware that the pipe makers again were united, - just like in the past when people were travelling to Kattesundet to admire the Danish pipe maker's workmanship. Tom is willing to let other pipe makers display their pipes in his store, and he is always helpful if a young pipe maker is

coming by with a problem: "I'm not going to be the reason they have to use 3 months to solve the problem. It's about teaching others so the trade can survive for a long time!" A philosophy he shares with people like Peter Hedegaard and Sixten Ivarsson.

Tom's big dream is to run a successful business, - a place people travel to from all parts of Zealand. With a glint in his eye he says: "Yes, one summer I would like to be able to put a sign in the window stating: "Closed due to Prosperity", - and then sit down at the marina enjoying my retirement while drinking a cold beer!"

Piber & Tobak wishes Tom the best of luck with the Pipe Mekka.....

A New Pipe Maker

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 67, March 1995

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It is no longer common for new names to join the pipe making trade; -actually it is more common that established pipe makers look for opportunities elsewhere, so it is a pleasure to be able to announce that a new pipe maker has taken the leap into the unknown to make pipes to us pipe smokers.

Korsør is a well-known ferry town, - but now they also have one of the highly skilled Danish pipe makers in town: Vagn Nielsen completed his apprenticeship in the spring, so now he can add "Pipe Maker" to his business card.

In reality Vagn is a professional within the construction business - for several years he worked on foundations. He did a lot of travelling in

Denmark, and even abroad. In his free time he made pipes as a hobby, and he either sold them or gave them as gifts to friends and colleagues. The interest for pipe making came by coincidence: One day Vagn saw a briar block at a store in Korsør, - completely raw, and since he was a pipe smoker he thought: "I can figure out how to make a pipe!" One of his friends saw the finished pipe, - he was very excited, and he bought it immediately. It was made from scratch, - no "hobby block" with a pre-installed stem. The stem was purchased from P. E. Hermann who's still the main supplier of briar block to most Danish pipe makers. Vagn continued to make pipes as a hobby for the next 10 years, but when he was granted early retirement due to a work related accident he could devote all his time to the pipe making.



The small belt sander is used for the stem work

between the bowl and the shank. I studied several of Vagn's pipes during my visit, and I have to admit that the beautiful symmetrical shapes on the bowl meet the requirements needed to qualify as a classic. Vagn also created his own version of a Bulldog. It differs from other pipe maker's versions by first being



Time for stem work.

Vagn is known to strive for the very best result, - and it seemed natural that he became an apprentice of Manduela Riger-Kusk at her workshop in Copenhagen. Through her he was introduced to a whole new world, and contacts and friendships were made with many of the Danish pipe makers. During his apprenticeship he visited Danish pipe making's "Grand Old Man", Sixten Ivarsson, several times, - as Manduela he has his shop in Copenhagen. It was Sixten Ivarsson who one day encouraged Vagn Nielsen to begin making stems from rod's. When you work with another pipe maker every day, it is easy to begin "borrowing" from each other, but from the very first day Vagn decided to create his own line: Softer lines are mixed with the more pronounced features seen on Bulldogs and faceted pipes. Vagn feels it creates a nice effect, and he points out that it's very important to have a clear transition

cut at the upper part of the bowl, and then having two rings fitted. "I could copy the other Bulldog's, but I have to believe in what I make, - that's the more important!". Next he will be adding inlayed silver bands on the square shank, - the soldering iron has been acquired, - it was a Christmas present from Manduela. A special model Vagn has created is a hexagon shaped classic with the bowl tilted slightly forward. It is made with either round or angular shank. These pipes are some of the most difficult to make: The bowl has to be perfectly symmetrical all the way around, and the grain has to be horizontal to get the Birds Eye effect. The stain he uses is the typical light orange and bright red colors; he thinks this is what suits the pipes best. He mainly uses silver if a band is applied, it's traditional, but this is what enhances a pipes appearance best. If other materials are considered, it will be: Laburnum, bone, horn or olive wood. The olive wood is brought back during vacations in southern Europe. "I deliberately don't use Buxbom, - it has become too common, and I find that olive wood has better features." He's not afraid to improvise, - at present he is playing with the idea of using a wing bone he got from a dead swan, it may end up as a band on a pipe fitted with a military mount. The material is hollow, but it can be filled, and that would be something new!

The pipe workshop is placed in a little shed next to his cozy home at the outskirts of Korsør. The 10 square meter shed has been fully insulated, and it is equipped with everything needed to make hand carved pipes: Two lathes (one for bowls and one for stems), "Bims", belt sander, band saw, polishers and a spotless workbench where each tool has it's place, - I was all excited! From my previous visits at other pipe makers, I have experienced that cleaning and organizing happens about once every month, but Vagn prefers order. The machines have been



Two Bent and a Bulldog

purchased over the years, and Vagn has refurbished them himself (he also used to work as a blacksmith), and he made the fixtures to secure the briar block in the lathe himself. Vagn normally uses the "bims" to shape the bowl, - hardly ever the belt sander. Final sanding is done by hand. There is no rule book on how to make a pipe, and Vagn has taken the words of wisdom Sixten Ivarsson once told him to heart: "It doesn't matter how you make the pipe, - as long as you make it well!" The "bims" is probably the most important tool for Vagn; this is the preferred machine when the hand carved pipes are made. The stem work is done on the other lathe, - the tenon is milled and the bore is drilled. The stems are made from the traditional ebonite, but artificial amber is also used for Vagn's pipes: "It's a wonderful material to work with. It doesn't require as much sanding, and you can always see what you are doing inside the bore!" On the other hand you can't make any mistakes since it is obvious to see exactly how the milling of the bore at the lip was made. Vagn is a master at this, and he received praise from his strict master for his work. He only uses handmade stems for his pipes. The bowl and stem have to form a unity. He's using the belt sander to remove excess material when making saddle stems, but the rest of the work is done by hand. Vagn's older brother, - who's a shop manager at a machine shop, has offered to make a machine to ease the work, but Vagn turned him down: "Pipe making is a craft, and this part of the process has to be maintained!"

Vagn is looking back at his apprenticeship as a very fruitful time: "I found out what I want. Manduela often told me not to let others dictate what to do. It sounded strange at the time, - but now I get it!"

Vagn's strength is his attention to detail, an area you can't ignore if you want to make a name for yourself in Danish pipe making. The time spent at the store in Studiestræde with the customers also gave him a sense of what it was the customers wanted. His biggest critic is located within the four walls at

home: His wife Pia, who has followed him throughout the development, likes to give advice and hint's when new pipes are being presented in the living room. Their son Steffen often joins Vagn in the workshop where he is filing away on old semi-finished pipes. The small belt sander in the shop is proof that Pia gets involved: One day she saw an ad for the machine, and she thought it would be handy to have in the workshop. She bought it for Vagn, and his comment was: "She's a good girl!".



Perfect stem work, the band is buffalo horn

The "Vagn Nielsen" pipes are sold from the home on Gunversvej in Korsør, and if you are lucky you may find a few at Remo Sørensen on Strøget in Copenhagen. Vagn's biggest wish is to make a living as a pipe maker, - and in connection with WM in pipe smoking in SAS Falkoner Center a collection of his pipes were displayed. Overseas contacts were made, and today the whole collection is at Peter Heinrich's in Cologne.

We wish Vagn the best of luck for the future, - and for his pipes!

Fine pipes from Finn

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 71, March 1996

Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translated by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

Over the past few years you have been able to admire the hand made pipes from Finn Andersen, Skovlunde in connection with the local pipe smoking competitions on Zealand. Finn has been a pipe smoker for more than 40 years, and he made the first pipe when he served in the army. The briar block was purchased from Pipe-Dan, - and during his watch he would work on the pipe. The final result was a "Chimney" style pipe, similar to the models you could purchase from Pipe-Dan. Since then Finn had purchased the usual briar blocks with pre-installed stems, but the pipe making didn't really begin until he joined Nordisk Tobakskollegium in a visit at

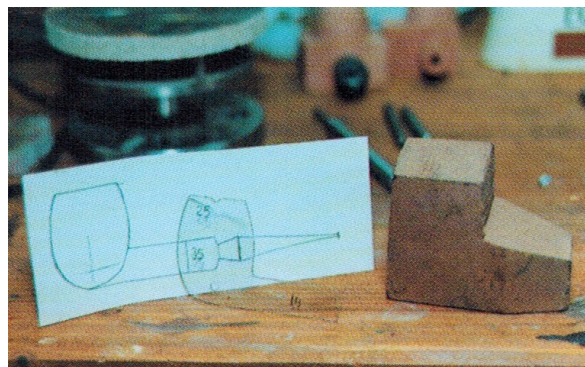


Finn milling the smoke channel

being a blacksmith by trade, so he has made a lot of those special tools himself; Conical drill bit's for army mount stems, special files, drill bit's in odd sizes and a device to secure the briar block in the lathe, - to name a few.

Since the visit at Søren Refbjerg's work shop, - Søren has been a tremendous support for Finn during his "apprenticeship". Refbjerg is always ready to give feedback, - good or bad, And Finn has no doubts that he owes Søren from Søborg a great deal for his advice concerning finish, stain and proportions. Finn's models are mainly classical shapes: A small short straight model in a light finish is the desired end result when a new briar block is picked up. Finn is a perfectionist, - and this affects his choice of briar. When a new model is being developed, he first tests it on lower grade briar, and when it is approved he moves to the more expensive briar, - priced at kr. 170 per block. He is using templates of clear plastic, - this allows him to see the grain through the template, and he can place

the shape in the best possible way to get the most out of the grain.



Drawing, template and a sample block of briar

the pipemaker Søren Refbjerg in Søborg.

Immediately Finn thought "That's what I want to do!".

Following the Refbjerg visit in 1992 the tedious work of building a work shop began. He purchased a big old lathe and had new bearings installed in it, - later a smaller version followed. Then polishers, "bims" and a wonderful work bench he always keeps tidy. "I have to keep things tidy due to the limited space" he explains. But the machines are not enough. Almost all tools used on the lath are special tools, - and purchasing them would be a costly affair. Finn has the advantage of



A Finn pipe in fine company.



Precision stem work

As a specialty, Finn uses a drill to make the chamber, - normally it is milled. Finn feels that the camber is more even and without marks when it is drilled.

About a year ago Finn started on silver smith work. Financially it made sense; - your choices are limited when using prefabricated silver. Finn took classes through his union, and today he is so skilled that he can add a silver accent if it suits the pipe. In addition a silver band can reinforce a thin shank that may be prone to



Flux is applied to the silver

are handmade as well. At first Finn used molded stems, but he got tired of not being able to get a "deep black" finish. He buys ebonite and Cumberland rods and makes the stems on the small lathe.

At the age of 56, Finn started rather late with the pipe making, but he is constantly improving by practicing. If others have a desire and interest in making pipes, Finn is very accommodating passing on his experience. His role model is Bangs Pibemageri: "Their sense for form and finish is fantastic; - I don't know if I will ever make it that far".

So far pipe making is only a hobby, but when Finn retires (in about 4 years) there will be more time to indulge:

"I have a lot of ideas, - but too little time". A few of us are looking forward to his retirement.....

There are no guarantees though, and flaws inside the briar often result in discarded blocks when cracks or voids appear during the process. On the smooth models a sand spot or two are accepted, - but filler is only used on the sandblasted and rusticated models. Finn is a very honest person, and he always points out any flaws to the customer before selling a pipe. "You need to know what you are buying" he explains. Some pipes are decorated with bands of boxwood, laburnum or lignum-vitae.



The master for milling facet pipes is made by Finn

breaking if handled wrong. He also makes miniature pipes that are soldered to the band itself. There are no limitations, - it's about getting the pipe smokers to stop and say "What is that?", Finn explains while working on ferrules for army mount models. He was familiar with the soldering technique already, so the challenge is in the molding. Prior to soldering the silver is cleaned with flux, and the flux is removed later using a sulfuric acid solution. If this is not done, the flux will form a hard coating on the silver. At present he is experimenting with silver on the stems which



A view of the work shop

Poul Hansen - Denmark's Oldest Pipe Maker

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 74, December 1996

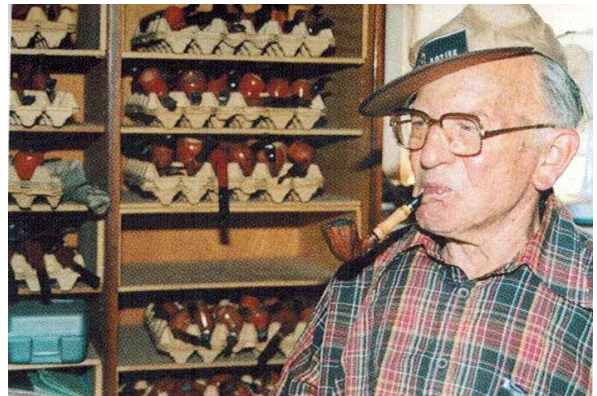
Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

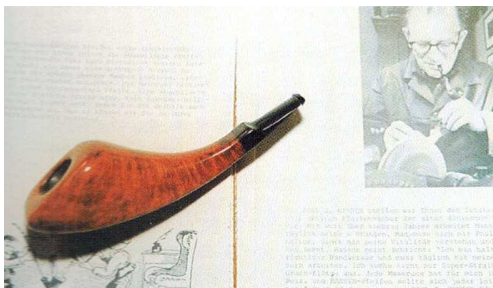
Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

At the age of almost 87, Poul Hansen is indisputably the oldest active pipe maker in Denmark. Hopefully this article will tell exactly how active he is.

It is 1940 in Copenhagen. It is during WWII, and there is a shortage of just about anything. Poul Hansen is working as a machinist, and he is very good with his hands. At work, a couple of his coworkers would like to give a pipe to one of the foremen as a present. Like everything else, a pipe is not easy to come by, but the coworkers don't think it will be a problem for Poul Hansen to make one! So where do you find the right materials? Through the rumor mill they find out that a cigar dealer in the Bremerholm-area is supposedly selling briar blocks, - the wood used for pipes. When Poul Hansen approaches the cigar dealer he is met with the question: "Which qualifications do you have within pipe making?" Well, - Poul Hansen was fairly convinced he would be able to figure it out. It later turned out that the briar blocks were of a very questionable quality, - but this is how it all started.....



Poul Hansen in his characteristic profile. Notice the inventory in the background. In the Pibe-Dan days he was called "The man with the egg cartons!"



A freehand by Poul Hansen. Underneath a mid 60's pipe catalog from Switzerland covering Poul Hansen pipes

Later an acquaintance referred him to Sixten Ivarsson to make parts for machines. At the time Sixten had already established a pipe workshop in Vimmelskaftet, - so in return for the parts Poul Hansen received briar blocks and lessons in pipe making. At the same time a hotel clerk named P.E. Hermann received a grant to go to France, to further educate himself within the hotel business. During his stay, he made contact to people in Corsica, and they made him the importer of their briar blocks in Denmark.

Poul Hansen settled down as a pipe maker on Uglevej, and aided by Sixten Ivarsson's and Hermann's knowledge of customers, he slowly established a good customer base, - and the shop was moved to Frederiksvej in Valby.

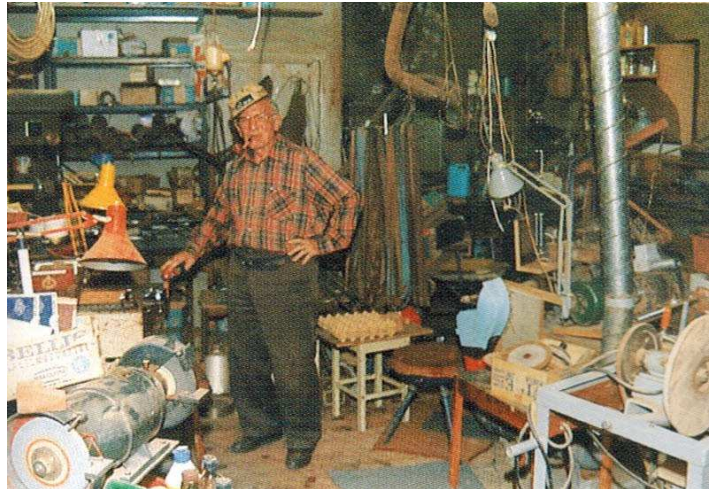
One day, - in 1962, Poul Hansen was walking down Vibevej in the northwest area. Before becoming a pipe maker he had a little workshop where he manufactured metal planters. For the fun of it he walked into the alley to refresh old memories, and he discovered that a shop in the back was available on the 2nd floor along with his old shop facing the street. A shoe manufacturer had closed, - and since Vibevej was a lot closer to his home Poul Hansen decided to rent both shops and move there. On the 2nd floor he established a workshop and office, and the other shop was used for



Another hand carved example, - this time the catalog is from Japan telling about Jess Chonowitsch

storing and drying the briar blocks.

Contrary to most other Danish pipe makers Poul Hansen has always handled the sale of his pipes himself, - no foreign agents are taking care of distribution. In other words, - he has always been fully in charge of what was produced and sold to the customers. Yes, - his pipes have been advertised in the big colorful catalogs of Iwan Ries in Chicago, Dan Pipe in Hamburg Germany, and also by Pibe-Dan in Kattesundet. In general those adds had to be considered promotion of his pipes, - not specific shapes available for sale in large numbers. One exception is Pibe-Dan: In some cases there was a mass production of certain shapes, - such as the popular "chimney".



Poul Hansen in the workshop

Poul Hansen has experienced a lot through his life as a pipe maker. He was part of the big "boom" in the mid 50's where any man with respect for himself, had to make his own pipe(s). The well known briar block with a stem attached sold like "hot cakes" at the Pibe-Dan shop. Most times the finished product was brought back to the shop for evaluation, and quite a few were told in a nice way "that they should probably look for opportunities outside the pipe carving trade" - as Poul Hansen puts it. At this time any briar block was used, - nothing was discarded since the demand was extremely high. Poul Hansen has also participated in the big "road shows" for Stanwell and Nørding abroad, - backbreaking work, but it gave you a different customer perspective.



Semi-finished shapes

When the blocks arrive they are sanded, - "it makes it easier to see the grain. Off course I don't know what's inside the wood, but it gives me a hint on how to get the most out of it" Poul Hansen says. Then he works the block into a semi-finished shape, - "By doing this I avoid cracks. Cracks often appear if you leave the rough blocks whole. I have less waste, and when I later have to fit the stem it fits perfect and permanently!". A method I never heard of before. As mentioned earlier, then Poul Hansen decides on the shapes himself, but I do see a lot of straight models. "It's an easy model to sell" he explains. Poul Hansen has a rather large inventory of pipes, - but that doesn't worry

him, - "So far I have had no problem getting them sold!" he answers when I point it out. Models are made from pure imagination, - but the boxes with discarded bowls are often used as inspiration. A discarded shape can become quite nice if you change the proportions, or maybe make the walls of the bowl a little thinner. Poul Hansen doesn't use much time on a certain model or pipe, - "it doesn't pay if the pipe won't sell" he explains. The blocks with very nice grain are worked on the "bims", - the lathe is

only used to make the chamber and smoke channel. The expensive pipes normally get the same dark brown stain, enhancing the grain as light streaks; - this color will reveal any mistakes or flaws, so it is a good indicator of the quality. Around 300 pipes of this quality are made every year. He makes around 1,200 of the cheaper grades each year. They are turned on the lathe, and the "collar" at the base of the bowl is removed on the "bims". All smooth pipes have handmade stems; - the sandblasted pipes have molded stems. I couldn't find any sandblasted pipes in the shop, and Poul Hansen explained



Lot's of discard bowls are ready to inspire new models

that the Japanese buy them all, - "they can't get enough!, the reason is that I once priced the sandblasted pipes too low, and the Japanese have a hard time understanding that prices go up once in a while, so they still get them at a discounted price - they are very happy". Japan is the biggest market for the pipes from Vibevej. Most often the order states how many pipes of each grade they need, and the price for each grade they have to pay. The shape is Poul Hansen's choice, but years of supplying pipes to them also means that he knows what they are expecting from him. The price is crucial. Poul Hansen recalls a visit by three Japanese who were introduced through a Japanese dealer. They visited Vibevej, and one of them found quite a few pipes he would like to purchase. The total bill became rather high, - kr. 10,308 to be exact, but Poul Hansen felt he would give the guy a break, so in ignorance he stated at he would give

him a discount of kr. 308, making it kr. 10,000 even. That turned out to be a mistake! The Japanese was offended and aired his honest opinion to Poul Hansen: He had never asked for any favors, and he was quite able to pay the price, - at which point the exact amount was put on the table. Later Poul Hansen learned from the Japanese dealer that he could easily have "saved the situation" by saying he had made a mistake, - the price was kr. 11,000. This would not have sparked the same reaction. The workshop is a fantastic area, - I could have spent days nosing around in there. There are all kinds of machines, - most made by Poul Hansen to make sure



A wonderful trio

they are just right for pipe making. As an example he has made a machine to grind the handmade stems on, which makes sure that the height of the lip is exactly the same on both sides. The same type of machine can be found at Nørding, another pipe maker with a passion for machines. Erik Nørding is

"popping" by once in a while, and then the two pipe makers have a good talk about the past. The cutting bits for the lathe are home made, and Poul Hansen can mill all kinds of brass collars for the shank. Even silver collars for army mount pipes are made by hand using homemade devices. The education as a machinist has been very useful. Every little corner of the shop is being used, and even though it might look a little "messy", Poul Hansen knows exactly where everything is. There is a place for mixing stains, a place for "bimsning", a band saw, several lathes, workbenches etc. I asked if he would consider getting an apprentice, - "Yes, - but pipe making is not a recognized trade, so it is not possible to hire an apprentice within the law. In addition you have to know a bit of foreign languages, write letters from time to time, being good with numbers and bookkeeping is an advantage, and then you have to be creative and good with your hands. Those people are few and far between!"

In spite of his high age Poul Hansen has no plans on retiring from making pipes. He is in excellent health, mentally and physically. During vacations he often travels abroad, - each year he visits both France and Lapland to explore the magnificent nature. The experience is brought back home via his camera; photography is his past time passion.

Following the visit I am full of admiration for this man!.....



And then the Iwan Ries Catalog used as background for a perfect "Hansen"

Karl-Erik Pipes

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 76, May 1997

Written by: Peter B. Lau

Photo: Søren Neergaard

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

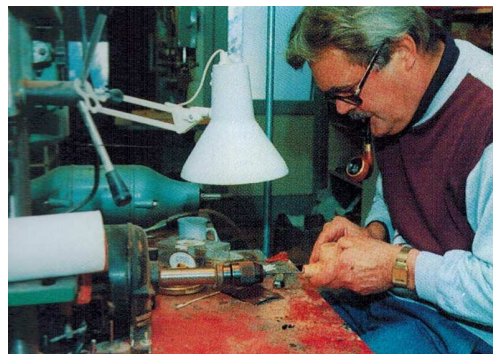
During the past couple of years it has been possible to purchase Karl-Erik Ottendal pipes from the Danish pipe stores. For several years the pipe maker only exported his pipes, but he has realized that there also is a potential in the Danish market. In this article we portray a pipe maker who understands to develop his craft.

Working with pipes began by sheer coincidence: In 1958 Karl-Erik was an apprentice as a lithographer in Korsør. Everybody at the printers was smoking a pipe, even the foreman who at that time was Karl-Erik's brother-in-law, and he even made his own pipes. Karl-Erik was invited to his workshop; - per today's standards you would hardly consider it a real pipe workshop. Everything was done manually using files etc. Karl-Erik was eager and stubborn, so during the remainder of his apprenticeship he refined his work and the pipes were sold to his coworkers, - as Karl-Erik puts it: ""I really wanted that motorcycle!"".



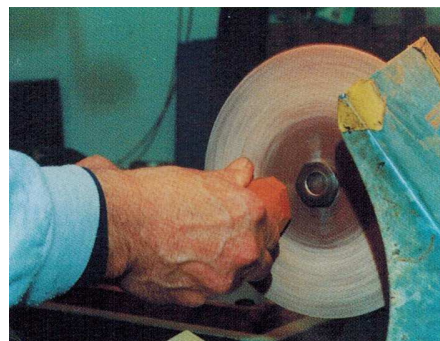
A half-bent modelis being drilled. This is why the drill bit is placed low in the mortise.

In 1970 the pipe maker had taken advantage of his professional trade and created a 4-color catalog of his creations. He showed the catalog to Oppenheim's agent for the USA during a dealer fair in Copenhagen, - and he liked the pipes. Karl-Erik quit his day job and started producing fancy pipes for the American market. He needed machines, and Carlo Madsen who worked as a pipe maker at Pibe-Dan at the time helped him install the machines and introduced Karl-Erik to the function and use of band saw's, "bims" and sanders. It would take another 9 months before Karl-Erik dared to use the machines! The sale of fancy pipes in the USA was booming, and in 1971 Larsen & Stigart, Remo Sørensen and Karl-Erik joined forces, and Karl-Erik was to produce for the American market. Later Karl-Erik wanted to be independent, so he opened his own workshop with 14 employees in Sengeløse. In the early



The smoking qualities have to be perfect. Here the draught hole is drilled to hit perfectly in the bottom center of the chamber.

When the apprenticeship was completed he was stationed in Africa, - Nairobi in Kenya to be exact. We are now in the early 60's, and the young lithographer was training the locals in the art of printing. The pipes are still in the back of his mind; - the only pipes available were the Kilimanjaro pipes - the African meerschaum pipe. After 4 years in Africa Karl-Erik returns to Denmark, and after roaming around for a while he ends up settling down in Hedehusene. In 1967 he had made 12 pipes, and he decided to show them to Pibe-Dan. "You probably have to improve a bit, - but then you are welcome back!" the verdict sounded. He then proceeded to Remo Sørensen, who at that time was located at the Royal Hotel, and he got the same verdict. But Karl-Erik was determined and stubborn, so he continued working with his file and saw.

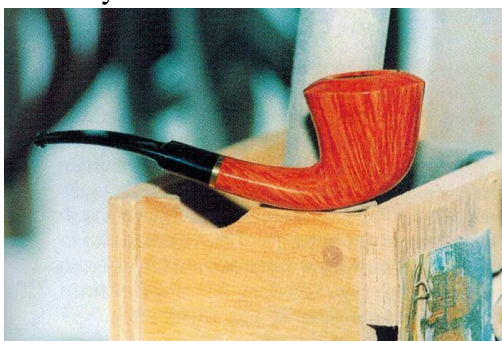
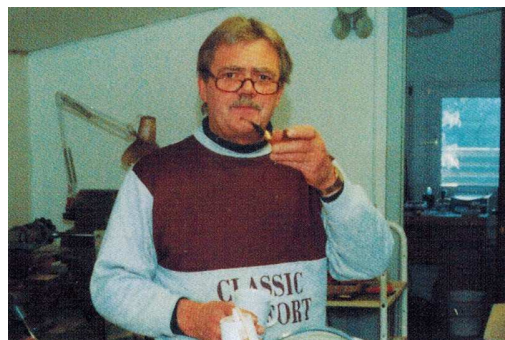


Unfortunately the picture can't show how fast Karl-Erik works on the "bims"

70's his production had been about 400 pipes a year, - but 5 years later this had skyrocketed to 40,000 a year, and almost everything produced went to the USA.

The second oil crisis at the end of the 70's had a major impact on the business. The dollar dropped resulting in lower prices. New markets were found in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, - but the two latter markets soon faded. In 1989 Karl-Erik began working with Design Berlin. They work with pipe tobaccos, - but also pipe production. Over the next 6 years Karl-Erik provided a lot of support to Design Berlin

concerning the production of pipes, but also within distribution on the German market. Demonstration tours were arranged all over the country, - and it was hard work to sit at a working booth all day talking to customers, and at the same time you had to concentrate on making a perfect pipe. After hours you would continue socializing with the agent and dealer you were visiting, and often it was very late when you finally made it back to the hotel. Next morning it started all over again. The demonstration tours normally lasted 5 weeks.



A straight Grain with a brass fitting

In May 1995 Karl-Erik began selling pipes on the Danish market. Today he is selling around 2,800 pipes in Denmark each year. The rest of the annual production of 4,200 pipes is exported to Germany and Austria. Karl-Erik is very happy with the sales in Denmark: "It is vital to have a network of good dealers who likes your pipes!"

Today Karl-Erik is living in Tune south of Roskilde, and next to his home he has established a 20 square meter workshop. Here you find all a pipe maker will ever need: Band saws, lathes, "bims", sanders and polishers. In conjunction with the workshop he has a nice office where the pipes are sorted and

placed in boxes prior to being shipped all over the country. In the office you also find a variety of "Karl-Erik tobaccos", - a product first introduced in Berlin. The tobacco is still sold in Germany and Denmark. "The tobacco's only bring in a very small profit, - but they help promoting the brand" Karl-Erik states. Today Karl-Erik is alone in taking care of the production. "It is probably the biggest difference from earlier days. As a result of my attention to detail and patience, I know every single pipe leaving the workshop. In addition I decide what is being produced, - choice of finishes and models are mine alone".

The staining is a combination of the basic colors red, blue and yellow. Trends and his imagination decides the final result. "The popular colors from the 70's are coming back, but now the pipes have to be polished, matt pipes won't sell". Matt pipes lose the contrast quickly since they have been treated with oil making the grain darker. A polished pipe is first lacquered. Then the lacquer is removed again by sanding, - but some of it remains in the wood making the polish last longer. For the German 9mm pipes he only uses acrylic stems. This material remains shiny and black. "The Germans don't want anything else" Karl-Erik states, but there are some down sides to the material: "I believe the stems are hard on your teeth, and then they are difficult to shape, - they simply melt. They are fitted with a Teflon bushing to ensure a perfect fit under any conditions, - hot or cold!" The pipes for the Danish market are fitted with black ebonite or Cumberland stems.



Two different stages in Karl-Erik's production. The one in the back is the very first pipe he made using a file

Karl-Erik considers himself a "well organized pipe maker". The pipes are produced in batches of 150. During production the pipes are sorted: Some are selected for silver or brass fittings, others will go to sandblasting. The process is so organized that by the time the smooth pipes are ready for filler, the sandblasted are returning to the workshop for the next steps in the process. I doubt any other pipe maker can operate "bims" and sander as quickly as Karl-Erik: If the pipe is without too many features he can process up towards 50 pipes in an hour, this combined with the organized processing make the price for a hand carved pipe very competitive. "I can't make one pipe at a time, - nor 400, but 150 pipes of more or less different design fits my pace" Karl-Erik says. The smooth pipes are sorted into 4



Not only classical models are made, - here an example of a freehand



An A-series pipe displayed on the lathe

categories depending on the appearance of the grain and the amount of filler used. Off course the best are without filler. Contrary to other pipe makers, who will often change the pipes shape during the process, Karl-Erik already has the final shape identified during the cutting step on the band saw: "A typical "Karl-Erik" is a pipe where stem and bowl creates a unity. On the half-bent pipes the stem will always be in line with the top of the rim, - and price and quality always go hand in hand. If they don't the customers won't come back" he states. When asked how he has changed over time he replies: "I make what I feel like making. I do not copy other pipe makers, - why would I? Just like a painter we have a certain style recognized in the production. We change over time, but the "tell-tell" signs are still reflected in the production.

Karl-Erik's pipes can be admired (and bought) in approximately 50 pipe shops across Denmark - with only one dealer in each town.....



Among friends called "Benner"

Piber & Tobak, Issue # 81, September 1998

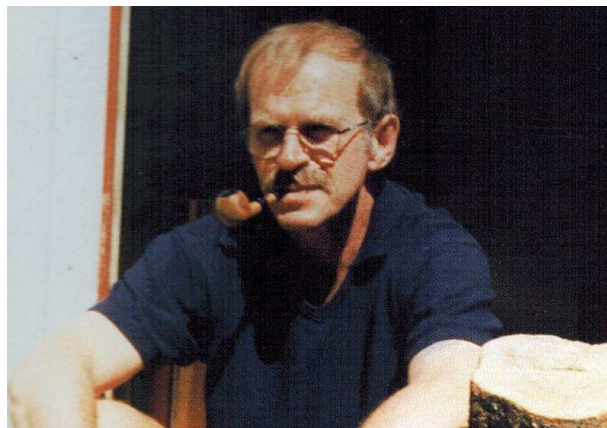
Written by: Christian Dencker Larsen

Photo: Christian Dencker Larsen

Translation by: Sheilah & Poul Rasmussen

It is a little odd to write an article about a person you have known for the past 14 years. Both Bent and myself were present, - on the evening in February 1984, when tobacconist Preben Reimann Jensen arranged a pipe smoking contest in Roskilde-Hallen. This evening would be the first steps towards the formation of Roskilde Pipe Club, and we both signed up as part of the team who would arrange the constituent assembly. On this occasion we were both elected for the board, and we remained there for several years. The friendship has developed over the years, - so it's a statement of fact that both Bent and I had a hard time with the odd situation that suddenly emerged, when I had to sit as an interviewer asking all kinds of questions.

In his professional life Bent is a carpenter. In his spare time he enjoys a great deal of bicycling, - and then he makes pipes. I think Bent is one of the Danish pipe makers who have the best understanding of shapes. His sense for how a Pot, a Bulldog or a classical Billiard has to look is in line with my own perception. As a result Bent's pipes are well represented in my personal pipe collection, - "over-represented" according to my better half!



Two nicely rusticated pipes. Bent makes a very deep rustication

Even though we have known each other for years, Bent never told me how he first began as a pipe maker: We write late 60's - Bent has been working for Myresjöhus - but he and a colleague decided to take the leap and open their own business manufacturing windows. The pipe maker Karl-Erik just happened to have his workshop just above their shop in Hedehusene. One day Bent had an errand upstairs, and he takes advantage of the situation to buy a pipe. Bent was already a long time pipe smoker, and since Karl-Erik and Bent got along quite well he had the opportunity to buy more pipes. One day Karl-Erik asked: "Don't you want to make one yourself?", and Bent took the challenge. It was during the fancy-pipe

period, so there were not too many demands concerning proportions etc., so the first attempts turned out quite well. At one point the production of windows stopped, and Bent started working for a glazier, but the work did not agree with his bad back, so one day he was back at Karl-Erik's, - now employed in the pipe workshop. It was at the peak of the pipe making period: Fancy-pipes were flying out of the workshop and across the Atlantic to the craving American pipe smokers, - so at one point Bent decided to try his luck on his own. At Zetervig's on Nørrebrogade in Copenhagen he met Ingelise Frederiksen who was an importer for the American market, - and she was the one encouraging him to take the chance. In 1975 He opened a workshop at Maglehøj Mølle in Hedeland southeast of Roskilde where he continued production of Fancy-pipes for California the following two years. "The wilder the better, - all I made was those horrible pipes" as Bent put's it.

As everybody else Bent purchased the briar blocks from Hermann in Slagelse, and through him he made contact to S. Bang. Bent and Bang were getting along pretty well, and one day Bang suggested that he could get Bent access to the German market through the agent Otto & Kopp. Kopp would come by to look at some pipes, and this suited Bent's future plans well since the American market was declining. The orders got smaller and prices were dropping, so it was only a matter of time before the Fancy-adventure



A wonderful bent Tanshell with "Shilling" grain

would be over. Kopp came by and looked at the Fancy-pipes, and it was obvious that he was getting more and more upset. All discussions were between the German and S. Bang; - Bent was just standing there without a clue watching S. Bang getting more and more anxious. It turned out that the German only wanted classic shapes, - not Fancy-pipes. S. Bang had arranged another showing with the German in two weeks, - this time it would be classic shapes. Bent suddenly had a problem, he wasn't familiar with making classic shapes, but he managed to get 20 pipes ready. Kopp liked the pipes, so Bent was back in business. The pipes for West Germany were at a totally different price level, and the fairs in Frankfurt gave him an opportunity to meet other pipe makers and the customers as well. When the



The prize pipe from DM 1988

American market finally collapsed overnight, Bent drove to Pibe-Dan to show a selection of his pipes. Pia and Mrs. Dan were obviously pleased with the pipes, and after a while they suggested that Bent could begin as a pipe maker in the store as a replacement for Tom Eltang. But that wasn't anything for Bent; his moods did not go well with the set working pattern for that type of store. His changing moods were also the reason for his sudden exit from professional pipe making: Gitte, - his wife at the time, had enough, and the divorce hit Bent so hard that he dropped pipe making completely. All machines were sold for next to nothing - he simply didn't want to look at lathes and polishers ever again. Bent moved to an apartment in Tune, - where he's still living, and he began working as a carpenter again.

It is one thing to leave a trade that had meant so much to you, - it's another thing to stick with the decision. His

fingers started itching, and thoughts of one new model after another were popping into his mind, so in 1985 he contacted Karl-Erik, and Bent started making pipes again on his machines in Sengeløse. The pipes were mainly sold to friends and contacts from the many pipe club's that seemed to pop up all over Sjælland at that time. In 1988 Nordisk Tobakskollegium arranged a competition as part of DM in pipe smoking's 10 year jubilee: Create "Pipe Model of the Year" to be used during the competition. Bent was the lucky winner with his suggested Apple model with an oval shank, - and it became part of Stanwell's standard lines. As a side remark I can mention that Bent is an experienced competition smoker, and he has been competing at the DM on Hotel D'Angleterre every year since 1980.

In 1992 he stopped making pipes at Karl-Erik's workshop, and 4 years went by without making a single pipe. Again ideas were popping into his mind, but in spite of several requests from his surroundings, Bents cautious nature prevented him from taking the trip to the bank to ask for a loan. Finally he simply had to: "That is a decision I have never regretted" he says. When asked how it was to start again he

replies: "I was very nervous. My own and others expectations scared me. I had bought 20 - 30 briar blocks, and after a couple of rounds with the lathe I was back in the hang of things again!"

Bent always had an ability to renew himself, - both with respect to shapes and to finish. It is the most unusual thing that can inspire a new shape. From his time at Maglehøj Mølle he recalls an episode vividly: Bent is home for lunch, and he is sitting in the kitchen. Suddenly it hits him, - the faucet by the sink is a shape that could be used as a basis for a pipe model. His wife states: "You are crazy", - but he's already heading for the shop. A couple of days

later he brings the new shape home. Gitte has to admit that the pipe, - which is very nice, is a copy of the faucet. he has been playing with ideas in similar ways throughout his time as a pipe maker. Bent can wake up in the middle of the night, - with a new shape fresh in mind, and then it's time to get a hold of pen and paper to make a sketch of the bowl. I have been in the company of Bent several times, when he suddenly becomes distant. He is suddenly sitting in his own little world where thoughts and ideas are floating around. To this he comments: "A lot of people ask me if I can only say Huh?"



Examples of Bent's new "Sea Coral"

In connection with the apartment in Tune, Bent has a small garden with a shed. This is where he has established the "smallest pipe workshop in Denmark" as he put's it.

Being the prankster he is, - Roskilde Pipe Club has a standing invitation to visit the workshop. We just have to spread the visit out over a month or two. The workshop is small, but Bent has all the machines he needs to make pipes: Lathe, "bims", sander and polisher. Bent is a "neat freak", so the shop is always spotless.



One of Bent's favorites, - a small Apple with contrast stain

Bent's favorite models are the Bulldog, The Apple and the Billiard with a Cognac stain. The pipes are often short and small "nosewarmers" easy to smoke without getting "lockjaw". And then he is stubborn: If he has an idea he will continue to hunt for a solution. For years he's been working on a solution on how to make a "Sea Coral" similar to the Savinelli, - and I have to admit that his finished attempts are very good. Another example is the dark contrast stain Tom Eltang is using. Bent is getting very close to a similar effect, - but only because of his persistence.

One day he's contacted through his brother, and is asked to test a hard wood type. Bent brings out his new handsaw and starts cutting, - nothing happens! The block is then brought to work, and he runs it through the band saw. A colleague is pointing out that it is olive wood, and finally things begin to add up. He recalls seeing pipes made out of olive wood in some Italian pipe magazines years' back, so Bent begins making a few models. Since then more models have emerged, and even though it is said it's a very oily wood species there has been no complaints concerning the smokeability, - quite the opposite.

Contrary to many other pipe makers Bent doesn't mind telling who inspires him: "I like Tom Eltang and Anne Julie's work a lot; - Tom Eltang due to his color, finish and models, Anne Julie because of her crazy ideas - there are probably some similarities there - and then both are very pleasant people!"

When asked if he one day would consider making pipe making his way of living again, - he promptly replies: "No, - there are too many uncertainties in the business. But on the other hand, - if a large pipe store one day offered to sell a selection of my pipes I would definitely consider!"



A "lyre", - the rings are made of buxbom

By the way, - Bent's last name is Nielsen.....