Making a Xebec in a Small Bottle

Making ships in bottles is a fine art with lots of potential for excellence. Mastery of the techniques you chose to use is possibly the largest factor in producing work that is of good or better quality. For myself, I like working with wood, paper, wire, string, etc. As my skill with a specific material improves, I try to do projects that challenge my skill with those materials. I was recently gifted with over 100 small "AccuVac" bottles, which hold just a few milliliters of water. The bottles are used in a spectrophotometer to measure ozone levels in parts per millions, so the glass must be very clear and have very little distortion. I figured it would force me to improve, trying to make things so small.

This is the used bottle before dressing it up:

This is how you dress up the spout:

I tried doing this with a stone wheel, but a sandpaper wheel works better.

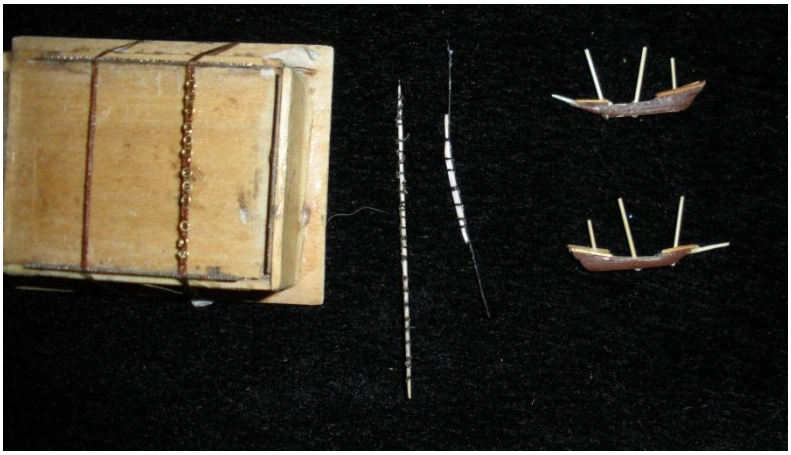
This is the dressed bottle:

The bottle still needs cleaning, but that is fairly easy.

To the right is the bottle cap, purchased from a craft store.

This is the only way I could make a hole for the neck of the bottle. I couldn't get a vise tight enough to drill the piece out, without crushing it.

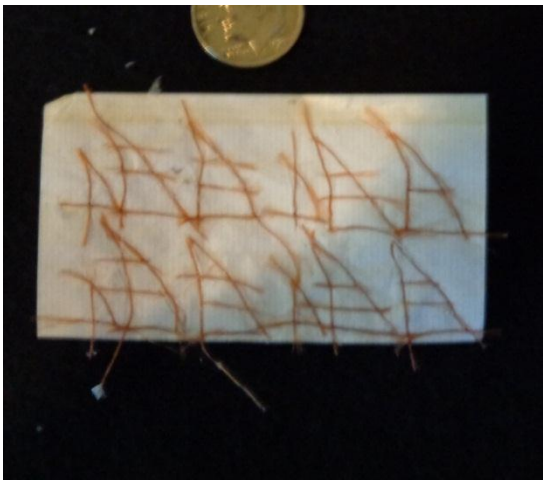
These are ships in different phases of development. All the wood is bamboo. The thinner pieces have to be sliced as thin as possible and sanded thin enough to bend around the carved decks. The bowsprit is the smallest pin I could find at a bridal sewing shop.



This is the assembled ship. To the left is one of my failed attempts to make round ports for cannons, but I didn't use it.

In the middle are the spars. These are bamboo whittled thin and sanded. The black thread is attached using half-hitches and clove hitches.

To the right are two ships assembled before adding spars and sails.



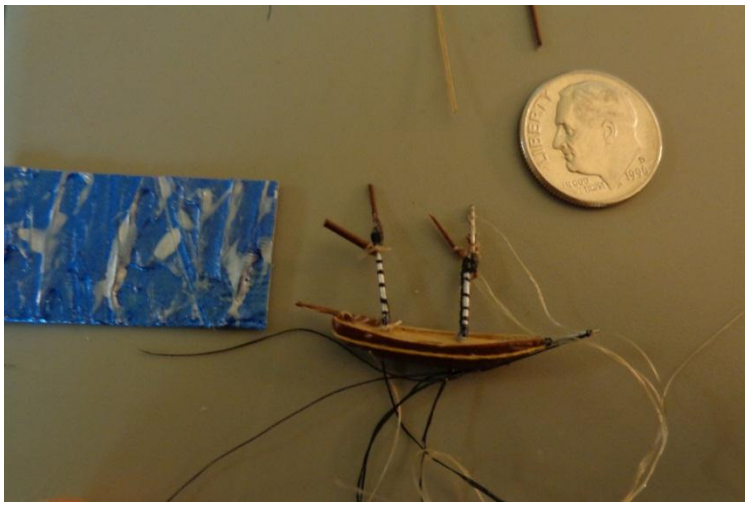
To the left are Xebec sails prior to cutting them out. The thread is fly tying thread. You can tell I am very forgiving of myself when making sails this small.

Below is the cleaned bottle with the sea inserted. The sea is made with a latex craft putty with metallic blue paint mixed in. I put it on one side of a piece of white paper and paint the back side blue.

The foam is white paint, and it is glued in place with clear craft glue. Once this is accomplished, the hull of the ship can be glued in place, again with the clear craft glue.

This is the finished product. I can't get a good picture of the finished work, because the glass reflects the flash.

for the Xebec. The bands on the mast are made with string, half-hitches and clove hitches.



This is a Baltimore Schooner with the same size bottle. Below are portions of the masts made from the same small pins I used for the bowsprit

To the left is a close look at the schooner, but I gave the ship away without getting a picture of the bottled product. (I keep doing that.)