

Buffing Finishes

1. Sanding the bare wood: With the piece still mounted on the lathe in the tenon, power sand bare wood. I start with a flexible spring .010" steel for 80/120 grit to eliminate wavy tool marks. Then switch an angle drill with 5" or 6" disc for higher grits. Use a soft backed disc for all grits. I sand to 220 grit for open grain wood and to 320 grit for tight grain wood. Sand the wood with the lathe in reverse and speed at app. 100 rpm.
2. Finish turning the foot: Reverse mount on the mandrel. Shape and sand the foot.
3. Applying finish: Remove the piece from the lathe. Apply first coat of Waterlox with a small cloth or brush. After 60 seconds wipe off excess with a paper towel. Let dry overnight between coats. Apply extra coats as necessary to completely seal punky- porous areas. Don't wipe off the last coat. Try to avoid runs but because Waterlox is thin you will get runs-don't worry, they will sand out later in step 4 below. Let the last coat dry at least 7 days so it gets very dry and hard.
4. Sanding the finish: Mount on the mandrel. Hand sand runs drips, brush hairs, dust, etc. with 600 grit. The sanding is easiest to do on the lathe. If there are drips and runs sand by hand with the lathe turned off. But if the final coat is fairly smooth sand with the lathe running slow approx 75 rpm. Sand just until most of the gloss is gone. It will be easy to see the runs, drips and orange peels because they remain glossy. Try to sand out all of the runs, but only most of the drips and orange peeling. Over sanding will result in a very glossy appearance / under sanding will result in a more natural wood grain appearance.
5. More sanding the finish: With the lathe turning, power sand with Abralon 1000, then 2000, then 4000. The Abralon is hook and loop and mounts to a

disc turned by the angle drill. Spend only enough time with the 1000 to get rid of the 600 scratches, it only takes one or two light passes with the 2000 and 4000. Don't try to hand sand with Abralon, at least it doesn't work for me. If you try to sand with the lathe off apply very light pressure and keep moving.

6. Buffing: Take the vessel off the lathe. Mount 8" buffing wheel on your lathe. Apply white diamond abrasive stick directly to the buffing wheel. Holding the vessel in your hands lightly touch the vessel to the spinning buffing wheel. Start with 700-900 rpm but experiment with lathe speed that works best for you. Several light passes should be all that is necessary to achieve a glossy finish. White diamond on Waterlox is very forgiving so you can go over and over any area until it shines like you want it to shine.
7. Waxing: If you like the finish- sign the bottom, then apply paste wax. Buff the wax before the wax gets too hard. Use a buffing wheel that is dedicated to waxing i.e. don't use the white diamond wheel for wax and visa versa.

If there are holidays or other imperfections don't wax...Rather hand scuff with 320 grit to give 'tooth' to the old Waterlux then apply 1, 2 or more coats of Waterlox and repeat steps 4-7 above.

Now for some random thoughts....The Abralon makes a big difference because it sands to the contour of the curved surface of the turned piece and it eliminates the need to use Tripoli. Abralon can be used wet or dry but I use it dry. It is very durable and is washable in clear water. Do not confuse Abralon with Abranet. Abranet is a screen-like abrasive that is a very aggressive scratchy product. Abranet is used for sanding green wood, not buffing or polishing wood.

I use Waterlox Original Formula. 1 - 3 coats on bare wood will leave wood grain visible so the piece still looks like wood ---5 coats fills in more grain so the piece has less wood grain visible and looks like it is plastic coated...you control the gloss by the number of coats applied. Some turners have commented that Waterlox tends to yellow the wood color and I agree that on some wood it does that. If that bothers you then for the first coat use a different product such as Formsby or Minwax then use Waterlox for the top coats.

Please call me (832 239 0659) with any questions or email me
epeine@comcast.net

Abralon discs 500/1000/2000/4000 grit mfg by Mirka sold by 2Sand or Sanding Glove

600 grit sheets mfg by Norton

1000/1200 grit Rhynogrip white zink stearate film discs mfg by Indasa sold by 2Sand

Hollowing mandrel sold by Craft Supply