

## Lacquer Finish

If you have a beautiful piece of hardwood and want to show off the figure in the wood, lacquer is a great finish to go with. The following steps might seem very labor intensive but, when taken in the following order, you can finish out a project in less than a week. The drying time in between steps accounts for most of the time. I think that the results will justify all of the time spent.

1). Sand to at least 400 to 600 grit on the lathe. I go through the grits starting with 180, 220, 320, and 400. Be sure to clean between grits and for the final step, if you have an air compressor, clean off with an air gun. I slowly go over both inside and outside, getting into all the graining and getting out all the sanding dust I can. Inspect carefully under a close light for any surface defects such as sanding marks or opening in the grain, or any other imperfections. Lacquer is unforgiving; it will amplify any defect that you overlook.

### STEP #2 IS BEST DONE WITH A PAIR OF RUBBER GLOVES

2). While the bowl is still on the lathe, take a small rag and apply a generous coat of a premixed solution 70% Deft paint-on lacquer and 30% lacquer thinner to the inside and outside of the bowl as close to the chuck as possible. Remove as much of this mixture as you can with a dry paper towel. Then using lacquer thinner on a cloth, wipe the bowl off to bare wood. This process does several things at the same time. You are sealing the wood so the remaining process will layer and not continue to soak into the wood. This will also neutralize most surface oils that could affect the finish. You can repeat this step if you feel another coat is necessary to seal the wood. I use my Cole Jaws to finish turning the bottom of the bowl and then repeat steps 1 and 2. Let this set up at least over night. Make sure the surface is smooth and ready to go to the next step.

### THE REST OF THE STEPS ARE OFF THE LATHE

3). Apply four to six coats of spray on lacquer to the outside of the bowl. I use Deft Spray on gloss. Apply as thick as you can. Just be careful to keep the spray nozzle some 6 to 9 inches away always moving to avoid any build up or drips. Wait approximately 10 to 15 minutes between coats and then allow it to dry at least 24 hours.

4). Wet sand with water using 1500 grit wet or dry sandpaper. All you are doing at this stage is leveling everything out without going through to the wood. If this happens, just stay away from this place and keep on leveling until you have completely sanded.

5). Repeat steps 3 and 4 until your surface is completely smooth. Then wet sand again with 1500 grit.

### REPEAT 3, 4, AND 5 FOR THE INSIDE OF THE BOWL

6). When you are done sanding, apply Scratch Out to a soft rag and rub out the lacquer using a circular overlapping pattern one small area at a time. Then finish off buffing with a soft cotton cloth.

If your project is a bowl or platter you have to step through the process for the inside and then again for the outside starting at step three.

The Scratch Out and the wet or dry sandpaper can be purchased at Wal-Mart in the automotive department. There is also a 3M Clear Coat Rubbing Compound. Both products do the same thing by removing scratches in clear coat automotive finishes. The Scratch Out does not cost as much as the 3M Clear Coat Rubbing Compound.

You might want to try it on a small vessel the first time to see how the technique works. The reward comes when you buff the bowl with the soft rag and you see the beauty of the wood coming through the lacquer.

I hope you find this finishing technique as rewarding as I have.

Wm. Kendall Westbrook

It has been almost two years ago when this was written. During those two years I have tweaked some of the steps.

#### Step 1

I would also recommend sanding with the grain when you finish with 320 and with 400 grit sandpaper. The sanding marks from 320 and 400 grit paper will show under the lacquer if you're not careful to sand with the grain.

#### Step 2

I would just go ahead and apply a second coat as a routine step. This is quick and easy to do on the lathe. I use the 70/30 mixture brush on lacquer and lacquer thinner. I do not use lacquer sanding sealer. This product has solids in it that in, my opinion, tend to affect the clarity of the finish.

#### Step 3

I am now using a product called Gem Coat A179 High Gloss Clear. This is a spray on lacquer. I think it offers a thicker coat for each application and is less prone to run. Gemini Coatings are carried by Bejamamin Moore. I am sure other paint stores carry this product. This just happens to be where I found it.