

## Stains and finishes for carvings

Your choices of finish are many and varied yet our carvings will lend themselves to most of them. We recommend simple staining, wax polishes, and gilded, painted or lacquered finishes.

Once your carvings are applied to your work and ready for finishing, make sure they are sanded and smoothed to your requirements before proceeding with your chosen effect.

Please remember to take safety precautions when using stains, varnishes and waxes. Protect your hands and eyes especially by wearing gloves and goggles. It is also advisable to wear a mask and ensure adequate ventilation when using solvent based products.

## Preparation

Our carvings are suitably finished by the hands of the wood carver. You may wish however, to bring the final level of smoothness to a standard of your own choice. Any sanding should be undertaken carefully with fine sand or glass paper.

Before using proprietary finishes, it is advisable to fill any 'end grain' or blemish with wood filler. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

*Craftsman's Tip - An old fashioned technique is to use a mixture of ordinary wood glue and fine, clean, sieved sawdust to make a filler paste that resembles wood grain fibre.*

*Craftsman's Tip - In the case of pierced carved detail you can make up 'match stick' files by rolling small strips of sandpaper into a manageable stick for sanding inside edges.*

In the case of larger items, the overall product can be sanded once in situ with a fine abrasive 'star' or 'flap' wheel attachment on a sander.

After sanding the carving, ensure that the overall surface is clean, dry and dust free before proceeding with the desired finish application. Prior to lacquering or fine polish work it is always advisable to clean up with methylated spirit; this will not leave drying marks.

## Wax and Polishing

Apply a light or clear coloured wax to a well prepared surface. Two or more applications may be required, given the absorbency of the wood. Apply wax lightly with a cloth or brush and, once dry, buff to a deep rich shine that will age to a fine patina in the fullness of time.

We would recommend, and have used in our brochure photography, water based, toluene free products. Ensure adequate ventilation especially when polishing in confined areas.

As referred to in the section on applying stains (above), it is best to avoid the use of stained waxes due to the possibility of a build up or 'clogging' of a dark wax in the end grain of

deeply carved or cross grain areas. It is better to lightly apply stain separately where required.

## Painted effects

Painted surfaces should be prepared and primed before any marks or blemishes in the naturally carved wood are filled.

In applying subsequent coats of paint, be careful not to apply an excess of paint so that detail is lost through it collecting at a low point of the relief carving.

## Staining

It is better to apply a separate stain when working with darker colours on carvings rather than one that is incorporated with a wax or varnish finish as well. This is to avoid a build up of pigmented wax or 'clogging' in the end grain of deep carved sections.

Stain can be applied to effect by brush, spray or soft cloth. In application, the stain should be used sparingly and worked quickly. Do not allow the build up of dark stain in deep recesses or end grain. Protect your eyes and skin. Once dry, a medium grade wire wool can be used to rub down, de-nibbing any raised grain. Remove dust ready for your building coats.

## Varnish

After careful preparation and removal of all dust, a clear acrylic varnish can be applied directly to the work in several coats, building to the required finish and always following manufacturers' instructions. Should you desire to enrich the natural tones of the wood with stain, then this should be applied separately rather than as combination 'one coat' stain and varnish (see section on 'Staining' above).

The inherent characteristics of a natural product such as wood may cause some variation in colour, particularly when treated with some oil based varnishes.

For interior use it is advisable to use an acrylic varnish as these minimize any alteration of wood colour due to the effect of the varnish.

For carvings that have been mounted in a site out of doors, ensure that exterior or marine grade acrylic, epoxy or oil based varnish is used.

## Lacquering

The end quality of French polishing relies to a large degree upon the level of dust free cleaning achieved in preparation of a smooth surface and the absence of dust in the surrounding atmosphere during drying of the lacquer.

An applicator or 'rubber' should be made from lint free cloth (muslin or ideally chamois

leather) wrapped around an absorbent pad of cotton wool. The polish is absorbed by the pad and applied with a steady 'figure of eight' motion.

Lacquer can be optionally mixed with linseed oil and some methylated spirit to ease application. It should not be applied in low temperatures, damp or dusty conditions.

As with any solvent-based product, you should adhere to basic health & safety rules and ensure adequate ventilation.