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Furniture Refinishing . . .

ANTIQUING

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Antiquing has a special place in the world of furniture renovation. Antiquing can give furniture a mellow or aged appearance, and often gives new life to seemingly hopeless furniture.

The antiquing process involves spreading a thin coat of glaze over a colored base coat, then selectively wiping off the glaze to allow the base color to show through. Antiquing or glazing requires little skill or practice. It is fast and economical. It is also an effective way of achieving the eclectic look currently popular in today's decorating schemes.

An antiqued finish is not appropriate for all pieces of furniture. It does not belong on fine furniture where there is a distinct and beautiful wood grain. Neither is it effective in straight-line pieces such as parson's tables. Generally, the final result will be more pleasing if the piece has some raised or depressed areas that can be accented — turnings, grooves, carvings, etc. Blemishes, cracks, crazing and other marks typical of old varnish or enamel finishes can also enhance the final finish. These areas often pick up the glaze and result in an interesting piece.



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Select the Color

Choose a color that will accent or complement your decorative scheme. Red, green or blue base coats suggest dark glazes. Beige, gold or pastels are usually best with light glazes. Other exciting color combinations, such as orange, yellow or lime on white, can be made by mixing your own glaze.

Keep in mind that glazing will dull and mellow the base coat color considerably. For example, to get a nice pomegranate red as the final product, begin with a brilliant red-orange for the base coat. Be especially careful when selecting the glaze. Too dark a glaze on a dull, low intensity base coat can cause the final finish to be dark and dreary. To enhance dull base coats, frost with glazes containing white, gray or some other light color.

Materials Needed

- Semi-gloss enamel for base coat
- Glaze, or ingredients for mixing your own
- Brushes
- 4/0 steel wool
- Soft, lint-free rags or cheese cloth
- Tack rag
- Protective finish such as satin finish varnish or polyurethane or paste wax

Use Antiquing Kits or Things-on-hand

Most paint companies carry kits containing all the supplies needed to antique a piece of furniture. If the job is a small one, the convenience and cost of commercial kits should be considered. For large jobs involving several pieces, it may be to your advantage to purchase ingredients separately and mix your own glaze.

The glaze, sometimes called graining ink or antique finish, can be purchased in most places where paints or craft supplies are sold. Glazes are available in a limited selection of wood tones and colors. Some are similar to oil wiping stains while others are like pigmented inks.

If you do not want to be confined to a limited color selection when choosing a glaze, you may mix your

own by using small amounts of three common materials.

Mix thoroughly:

- 3 tablespoons turpentine
- 1 tablespoon clear varnish or boiled linseed oil
- 1 teaspoon (+ -) oil color

In selecting oil pigment, use artist's oil colors. If you want wood tones, raw umber produces a deep amber tone while raw sienna results in warmer, reddish tones. Lamp black is used to darken other pigments. White or any color can be substituted for wood tones to produce frosted or colored glazes.

Prepare the Surface

Unfinished furniture. Sand the piece to be sure it is smooth. Wipe with a tack rag to remove sandings. Wash lightly with a solvent to remove any grease. To eliminate an undesirable grain, apply a neutral filler according to manufacturer's instructions. If you think you may want the piece refinished naturally in the future, apply a coat of shellac to prevent the paint from seeping down into the wood pores.

Old furniture in good condition. Completely remove all old wax, polish, grease and dirt with detergent and solvent or use a solution containing trisodium phosphate (TSP) to clean and roughen the old finish so the new base coat will adhere to it.

Old furniture, dark stain. Remove dirt and grease. Sand smooth and wipe with a tack rag. Apply sealer coat of shellac to prevent old stain from bleeding through base coat. Lightly sand before applying enamel primer.

Old furniture in poor condition. If the piece has a varnish or lacquer finish or several coats of paint, remove them with paint and varnish remover, make repairs, fill any holes and sand well before the base coat is applied. Remember that rough surfaces will be magnified in the final finish.

If original drawer pulls and other hardware will not be used, remove them and plug the holes with filler. After the new finish has hardened, drill new holes and apply new or more appropriate hardware. If the original hardware will be used, clean it well and apply a protective finish.

On a plain piece of furniture, deliberate blemishes may be made by distressing the surface. A gentle beating with a chain, stroking with medium or coarse sandpaper, or uneven markings with nails will produce a texture that the glaze can settle in.

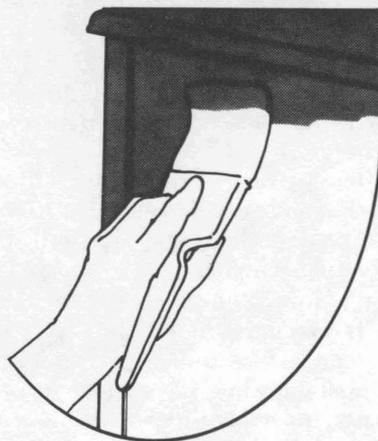
Plain surfaces can also be enhanced by adding decorative detail such as moldings, plaques or decorative strips which can be glued or nailed into place.

Apply the Base Coat

A glaze may be applied to any appropriate finish that is in good condition, but the standard beginning is

a coat of semi-gloss enamel in either a color or a wood tone. Latex paint may be used; however, it may raise the wood grain. Follow the manufacturer's directions on the paint can label.

The paint should be applied with a brush since brush marks can add character. To assure even coverage, brush first with the grain, then crosswise and then with the grain again without re-dipping the brush. Where durability is important, apply two coats of the base color. Allow the piece to dry at least 24 hours between coats and sand lightly in between. Do not sand the final coat. A glaze takes best over the natural sheen of the enamel. Buffing will enhance the sheen.

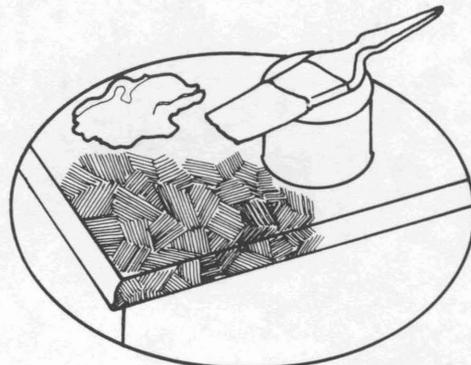


If there are distress marks or places where you will want the glaze to fill in the holes, thin the enamel slightly so it will not bridge the pores.

Apply the Glaze

The manner in which the glaze is handled will determine the success of the project. Always test the glaze for color effect, how long to let it set, how to wipe it off, etc. If the glaze dries too quickly, add a drop of linseed oil.

The glaze may be applied by brush or rag in a "slap-dash" operation to one section at a time. Be sure to cover the section completely because uncovered spots will not tone in the same as the rest of the area.



With that exception, smoothness of coverage is not critical.

The amount of time allowed before wiping the glaze affects its appearance, the ease of wiping and the degree of control over the toning. The glaze usually begins to stiffen in 10 to 15 minutes. It is nearly impossible to remove all the glaze, but if you remove too much, merely apply more and then wipe off a lesser amount.

Wipe the Glaze

- Wipe the glaze off in any way that seems to produce the results you want.
- Wipe hardest on high spots — corners, edges, knobs, mouldings, etc. This will appear as though wear and use caused the erosion of the glazing. Any place where normal use might have worn the finish, remove most of the glaze.
- Wipe least or not at all in depressions, carvings and low spots such as turnings and grooves.
- On large areas such as table tops, drawer fronts and the sides and ends of chests, wipe the center, blending the glaze from light in the middle to fairly heavy toward the edges. Highlight the edges with only a light amount of glazing.
- Add to the decorative quality of intricate carvings and turnings by spot-wiping highlights with a cloth over the end of a finger or with a cotton swab.
- To accent the grain or attractive old finish deterioration, wipe across the grain or cracks with a thin rag pad. This will allow the glaze to settle into the fine cracks or grain.



Special Glazing Techniques

Sometimes a piece of furniture requires a special finish technique. Though most require practice, there are unlimited possibilities for the effects you can create. Some of the methods used to achieve special patterns and textures include:

Brush-tipping or dry brushing. After wiping off most of the glaze, use a fairly stiff brush or steel wool in long, straight strokes to provide the look of wood grain. Keep the brush dry by wiping occasionally on a cloth or paper towel.

Stippling. Dab at the partially wiped glaze with the bristles of a stiff brush.

Texturing. Crumple a piece of newspaper, plastic wrapping paper or dry sponge and dab it over the surface.

Sponging. Use a piece of natural sponge to get a rough surface. Apply the glaze by constantly turning the sponge.

Marbling. Lay a sheet of plastic wrap on the glazed area and crumple it a bit; then gently peel it off.

Tortoise. Several glazes may be used for a tortoise shell effect. Then follow same procedure as for marbling.

Spattering or flecking. After the glaze has been wiped off using the brush-tipping technique, dip the brush into the glaze and then remove any excess glaze. Flip or splatter the glaze off the end of the brush by striking the base of the brush against the palm of your hand. Always test against a dry board to be sure flecks are small and not large drops of paint. Do not apply uniformly.

If you are not satisfied with the final appearance of the piece, let it dry overnight. Then take a new look. If you want to remove more glaze in some areas you can do it quickly by lightly rubbing with 4/0 steel wool. If you want to remove all the glaze and start over, you can remove most of the glaze with a rag dipped in turpentine. It is important not to wait too long.

Apply Final Finish Coat for Protection

Glaze is not a particularly rugged finish. To protect the beauty and to enhance the durability of the antique finish, a final top coat is recommended. Wait at least two or three days for the glaze to dry completely before applying the finish; otherwise, the glaze might be softened.

The top coat can be either a water-clear varnish or polyurethane. Varnish finishes are available in flat, eggshell, semi-gloss and gloss lusters, while polyurethane is available in high gloss and satin luster. Where appearance is more important than durability, it may be best to select a flat or eggshell finish to give a low luster. On kitchen cabinets, woodwork, tabletops and other surfaces that receive hard wear, a glossier finish such as semi-gloss or high gloss will wear better. To dull the shine, rub with 4/0 steel wool after the piece is completely dry. This will not affect the strength of the finish. Paste wax may also be applied for a low-luster, non-permanent finish. If paste wax is preferred, wait a week before applying. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and buff for a nice sheen.

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