

Robbie O'Brien French Polishing
MASW 6/8/19

Types and information on Shellac:

- Blonde, Orange and Garnet colors (blonde and super blonde are weaker finishes)
- You want DE-waxed (decant the product for a couple of days, wax sinks to bottom)
- Shelf life; Dry and cool in flake form
- Test shellac dissolved shellac by putting a couple of drops on a surface like a CD and see if it dry flexible or chips off... if flexible it is old & do not use if gummy
- Do not use shellac under 2 part finishes like epoxy or catalyzed type finishes

Use 1 pound cut (1ounce flakes (crushed) and 8oz Ever-clear)

Two types of finishes: reactive (oils, polys etc.) and evaporative (Shellac and Lacquer)

Ever-clear or grain alcohol flashes quicker (good)

Check sandpaper grading systems “P” Euro and “CAMI” American; get a chart like <https://www.mibnet.se>

Keep finish thin, for better tone, and less exaggeration of surface blemishes. Also cures better...

Preparation:

- Sand to 320 grit by steps 120-180-220-320
- Fill grain – dry – sand – fill again until smooth
- Do not buildup a filler mess apply it light and multiple times if needed
- Prep is important don't go too fast, you won't make it up with extra coats

Step One: Sealing

- With just the inter-pad apply very light coats with the grain. This is fairly dry and don't worry if you miss so on each layer it will even out.
- This was compared to frosting a cake... you are get frosting (shellac) on the surface continue until the pad is not picking up bleeding from wood or color from grain filler. Then let it dry 10 – 20 minutes.
- Keep pad in air tight container or bag when waiting to use again.

Step Two: Polishing

- Get a little olive oil (not much) and an outer cover ready (3 to 4 inches square).
- Charge and squeeze out inter pad and wrap cover around it then lightly squeeze until shellac comes to surface. If too wet blot, once adjusted flatten the face by pressing on bag, bottle or other surface.
- Start applying with the grain strokes (add a little oil if it is sticky – finger tip film...)
- Next build and spreading in light pressure circles.
- Finish with straight strokes following the grain; repeat until pad feels dry or no flashing is taking place. (Only use oil when needed)
- On the last strokes, following the grain, apply a little more “light” pressure to the surface.
- Let cure 30 – 60 minutes before next step.(or until not sticky)

Step Three: Leveling

- Light sand with 1200 grit CAMI wet & dry sandpaper, Just taking high spots - about 15 to 20% will be dulled. Do not cut into any color or stain! Watch the corners and edges!
- Start Step Two again and repeat these steps until you are happy with the finish...
- Do not level sand after the last step two process... let cure several hours or over night.

Step Four: Spiriting Off (removing any surface oil and burnishing)

- Be careful, use a pad that isn't very wet with grain alcohol... if it drips on your work it will take effort to fix!
- Rub with grain light at first... the surface will dull. Continue to wipe until shine returns and then push a little firmer to burnish surface.
- Let finish dry & cure a couple days before placing the instrument in a case.

Day Two 20190609

Step Five: Rub Out

- After the piece has cure a day you can buff by hand using Novis #2 polish or Meguiar's Glaze Swirl Remover. For high shine...
- For satin finish use extra fine steel wool and wax... be careful not to rub off the finish... lightly stroke with the grain.

Optional: Sizing (between Surface Prep and Step One)

- Type 1, egg whites wipe on let sit 3 to 5 minutes the wipe off, let dry, very lightly sand with 320 grit and reapply a second time wipe off again. Be careful not to sand through the egg white wash. (This make western cedar have a really nice color per Robbie)
- Type 2, thinned hide glue (3 or 4 time the water than normal) brush on and wipe off before it sets. Lightly sand 320 grit and repeat. Seems to take colored shellac a little better for color.
- Both types are different on each wood type, trying it, process may help make the wood look like it is aged.

Repair use solvent like turpentine to remove wax and then prep the surface for repair. Finish can be touched up, but wood damage will require more work. (color is an issue) Each repair is different.