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Subject: Solid State vs Vacuum Tube Finish  
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Fri, 09 Sep 2005 16:49:46 GMT  
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I was finishing off a few projects in the past couple of weeks and it dawned on me as to what irks me about polyurethane finishes. It's solid state compared the vacuum tube you get with oil finishes. When poly dries, light does not seem to diffuse through the layer of finish. Rather, reflections happen on the surface, resulting in very crisp and sharp reflections. Look closely at light points on poly finish and they all have sharp edges. Clinical to a fault. Oil finished (tung, linseed, etc) on the other hand gives soft diffused reflections, where light points have fuzzy edges. Warm and luscious.G.

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Subject: Re: Amen, Brother Gar, except.....  
Posted by [Bill Epstein](#) on Fri, 09 Sep 2005 21:53:03 GMT  
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...this Minwax Wipe-On Poly Satin on the 2Pi Towers (Speakerman made me do it) looks really natural.

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Subject: I love Wipe-On  
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Sat, 10 Sep 2005 22:13:42 GMT  
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Bill, I discovered the Wipe-On this summer too! Amazing stuff. The high-gloss version still looks plastic but found a way to fix that completely by accident. Apply a coat of tung oil in the normal way (flood, wait and wipe) but don't let it dry completely. In about 4-5 hours when it's "almost" dry, apply the Wipe-On. I then put a coat of Wipe-On on once a day for 3 to 4 days. I find I get the best of both worlds. The protection and smooth feel of poly, but the soft sheen of oil.

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Subject: Re: layering poly  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Sun, 11 Sep 2005 00:11:40 GMT  
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I've been finishing my archery equipment with poly for a long time (brush on, spray, and wipe on). I apply 3-4 coats of gloss, then 2 coats of semi-gloss, then a couple coats of satin. If it still has a sheen some 0000 steel wool real light will remove it nicely. With this kind of layering you get the protection and hardness of gloss without the shine. Be careful you don't get the types mixed

around or it'll eggshell badly. One way to smooth out brush on nicely is to brush it on, let it set for a few minutes, then lightly spray with the same type. This levels it out much better than just brushing.

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Subject: Re: Solid State vs Vacuum Tube Finish  
Posted by [Bill Martinelli](#) on Sun, 11 Sep 2005 01:51:40 GMT  
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You should give Varnish a try some time. You can use tung oil and let it cure for a few days, then use 3 coats of varnish. make sure to sand between coats because varnish will not burn in like a lacquer.

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Subject: Only if I can wipe it on  
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Mon, 12 Sep 2005 13:21:04 GMT  
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I can do a decent job with a brush, but no where close to mark-free finish I've been getting with wiping. It takes a heck of a lot longer to build up a good coat with wiping, but hey, I'm not a pro with deadlines, so I've got time on my side. BTW, I heard over the weekend that manufacturers are mandated to phase out certain types of finishes by 2007(?). What are the details of this? Gar.

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Subject: Re: Only if I can wipe it on  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Tue, 13 Sep 2005 02:14:09 GMT  
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I'm telling ya, just spray a light coat of the same type of poly (gloss on gloss) a few minutes after you've brushed on a coat and it will smooth it right out. On the other hand, I like wipe-on too, because I tend to put the brush-on stuff on too thick===runs.

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Subject: Re: try this.... Wipe on is for martha stewart  
Posted by [Bill Martinelli](#) on Wed, 14 Sep 2005 03:13:51 GMT  
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Gar, If you have a few minutes to spare for a great finish try this. Sand your wood up to 220 and

then litely go over it again with 400, especially on end grain and just break off the fuzzies. Apply two coats of tung oil; after at least 3 hours of the first coat very litely sand with 400 and apply second coat. allow the oil to tack up and then burnish smooth with a clean cloth. let dry at least overnight depending on the tung oil you used. It should be hard dry and no longer gummy or tacky. Buy the best natural brush you can find. a good two inch brush is going to cost around 20.00. buy a gallon of paint thinner for cleaning the brush. clean the brush three or four times with small amounts of thinner. clean the brush so it's like it was brand new. dry it off and wrap it up. it will last a long long time. Apply coat one of Varnish. let dry overnight, sand with 320 to break down the standing wood fibers and ready the surface for the next coat. dust off all powder residue. Apply coat two and let dry overnight. sand again with 320 paper and dust off all powder residue. You must sand in between all coats for adhesion of the coats. Varnish does not burn in to itself. it relies on a mechanical bond. Apply coat three, let dry overnight, sand with 400 paper, dust off. Apply the last coat, (4) let dry... at least overnight, days would be fine and even a week or two if you can wait. Now for the part that will bring your finished pieces to life. Very carefully wet sand with 400 wet-or-dry paper. use 3 or 4 drops of dish soap in liter of water. the soap has a surfactant in it which is a wetting agent and give the water lubricity. as you sand, wipe off a spot and look and see that all is smooth. you will notice indentation in the finish as small shiny areas that the sand paper has not hit yet. You should get all of these out (or at least most of it) and we can move on to the next step. Use 0000 steel wool. with a steady hand in the direction of the grain. pad down the whole piece. The steel wool will get into any recesses you missed and even out the whole finish. It will start to look a little dull and not very shiny. We are looking for a satin finish so just wool the piece down so there are no swirls, archs, or strange patterns on the surface. dust everything off. You have been very careful not to cut through any of the delicate corner or edge areas so now we can finish up. Apply a thin coat of Johnsons Paste Wax. buy it in the grocery store. If you have a large project, work in small areas. When the wax start to haze over, wait 15 more seconds and with a clean cloth gently rub out the wax. You will see a shine start to come out, the steel wool marks will fade away and your cloth will glide across the wood with a silky feel. one more coat of wax and sit back and admire. The tung oil will work into the wood and bring out it's tone and accentuate the grain structure, along with hardening the wood fibers inside. The Varnish ( I always use long oil, marine, spar, varnishes) will amber out and mellow with time. the richness of the wood will be brought out even more with age. It all sounds like a lot of work but if your making something for yourself, why not take the extra time to beautify and protect your project. One you do this a time or two you'll see there isn't all that much involved in the process. Bill

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Subject: Re: try this.... Wipe on is for martha stewart  
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Wed, 14 Sep 2005 17:25:29 GMT  
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I don't know Bill. I certainly don't want to mess with Martha...Thanks for the detailed instructions. Definitely one for the archives. Truth be told, I switched over to wipe-on before I really gave brushing a try. Now that I have my shed up, I can move my finishing out of the basement and take my time with it. I have the perfect piece to practice on. Finally finished my Smith Horns by increasing the thickness of the bells. It's still my intent to re-do these next year with real wood, so I don't mind experimenting with them. Thx, Gar.  
Smith Horns

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