

FINISHING YOUR HEIRLOOM TABLE

Oak Dining Table

I wanted to keep the large, oak dining table, in the photo at right, fairly light in color. But I also wanted to blend any color variation in the wood and enhance the beautiful figure of the oak. To accomplish this, I turned to a custom-mixed stain that I've used on oak a couple times before and had very good results with.

I started by taking a trip to an art store to pick up a small tube of burnt umber artist's color. Back at the shop, I mixed 3 tablespoons of the burnt umber pigment to 2 pints of boiled linseed oil.

Once your stain is well mixed (it takes quite a bit of stirring to get a smooth mix), it can be applied just like an oil stain. Wipe or brush it on, let it sit on the surface for a short while, and then thoroughly wipe off any excess with a clean rag.

You want to let the stain dry for a good 24 hours before applying the topcoat. A dining table needs a pretty durable finish, so I followed the stain with 3 coats of *General Finishes* wiping varnish. This gave me just the right amount of build with a nice, soft sheen.



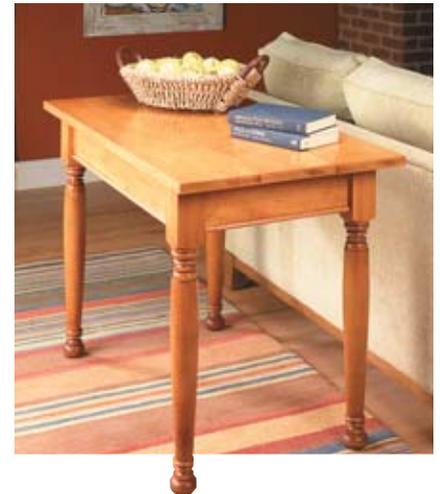
Pine Kitchen Table

I tried two different approaches for the finish on the pine kitchen table — one very traditional and one with a more contemporary feel.

TRADITIONAL. For the traditional version in the top photo at left, I started by staining the entire table with *Bartley Antique Pine Gel Stain*. The article on page 22 of issue No. 150 — *Antique Pine Finishing Secrets* — will give you some helpful information on successfully staining pine. Again, for a topcoat, I applied three coats of *General Finishes* wiping varnish.

PAINTED. On the second version (bottom photo at left) I went for a little bit lighter look and painted the base with an off-white satin latex paint. A painted base will tend to “scale down” the appearance of the solidly built table. This option makes a lot of sense if the table is going into a smaller space.

Before I brushed on the latex paint, I applied a coat of white pigmented shellac sealer (there are several brands). This will keep any defects (sap pockets, knots) in the pine from showing through the paint. The table top was finished exactly like the first version.



Maple Sofa Table

The choice of a stain color for the maple sofa table in the photo above was pretty easy. I wanted to give it that rich, aged maple color you find on some classic antiques.

Maple is a wood that can often look blotchy after staining. Thick gel stains are a good solution to this problem. So after some careful finish sanding, I applied a coat of *Bartley Country Maple Gel Stain*. It was the perfect color. When the stain was dry, I followed the same routine — three coats of *General Finishes* satin wiping varnish. The finish is durable but not too thick. **W**