



better color with **Glazes**

◀ Glaze left on edges and in recesses adds artificial age to a project.

Deeper, richer, more natural color on your project — that's the big benefit offered by the simple technique of glazing.

▼ A wide variety of staining products can be used as a glaze.

When it's time to apply the finish to a project, the routine is usually well set. You stain, then apply a seal coat, followed by the topcoats. But there are times when modifying this order can offer a nicer-looking end result. How about stain, seal, *glaze*, and finally, topcoat?

WHY USE A GLAZE? The glaze applied in between the sealer and topcoat is essentially a second coat of stain.

And the list of benefits that can be derived from adding this glazing step is surprisingly long.

A primary reason for using a glaze is to add more depth and richness to the

color of the wood. The glaze simply lies on the sealer giving you an extra layer of color. The cherry board on the opposite page and the door above show this effect.

Along the same lines, you can apply a glaze to adjust the color of a stained project. If, after applying a stain and sealer, the color isn't right, a glaze coat can often improve it.

A glaze also works well to mask color differences within boards or between boards in a project. Since it sits on the surface, a glaze will very effectively hide a streak of sapwood in cherry or walnut.

CONTRAST. The crown molding in the margin on the opposite page demonstrates how naturally finished oak benefits from a glaze. The dark glaze lodges mainly in the pores to add a subtle contrast.

AGE A PROJECT. Finally, one of the most common reasons for using a glaze is to give a traditional project an authentic, aged appearance. The door in the photo above is a good example. This works in two ways. First, the glaze helps reproduce the rich, reddish-brown color of old cherry. Second, traces of glaze left on edges and in corners simulates the accumulation of grime and aging of the finish over the years, as in the inset photo above.

WHAT DO I USE? There are a number of products that can be used as a glaze (margin photo at left). The common thread is that a glaze should have a fairly thick consistency. This helps the glaze "cling" to the sealed surface.

You can find formulations specifically designed for glazing.



These are essentially thick oil stains with a very slow drying time. This makes them easy to apply and to “manipulate” to the desired effect.

You’ll also find that thicker types of oil stains, as well as gel stains, also work well for glazing. Water-based glazes are available, but due to their faster drying time, they can be a bit trickier to use.

THE HOW-TO. Applying a glaze is one of the easiest finishing techniques in the book. Since the wood has already been sealed, you have great flexibility and control of the final color and the overall appearance. If you don’t like the result, you simply use a rag dampened with mineral spirits to remove the glaze and start over.

SEAL FIRST. The box below shows how to use a glaze to create an “antiqued” look. The stain and sealer (or just sealer) come first. Here, you can generally follow your

normal routine.

You have a pretty wide range of sealers to choose from. A glaze can be applied over varnish, lacquer, shellac, or water-based finishes. The exceptions are oil or oil/varnish mix finishes. They won’t seal out the glaze properly.

My personal preference is to seal the wood with a couple of thin coats of fast-drying shellac. Just make sure you seal the surface completely and evenly. Once the sealer is dry, lightly “scuff” sand with 320-grit sandpaper. This will help the glaze adhere to the finish.

APPLY GLAZE. The glaze can be brushed or wiped on — similar to applying a stain. Your goal is simply to cover the surface thoroughly — neatness isn’t a concern. And like a stain, you’ll wipe the excess glaze off before it dries. So try to limit yourself to a

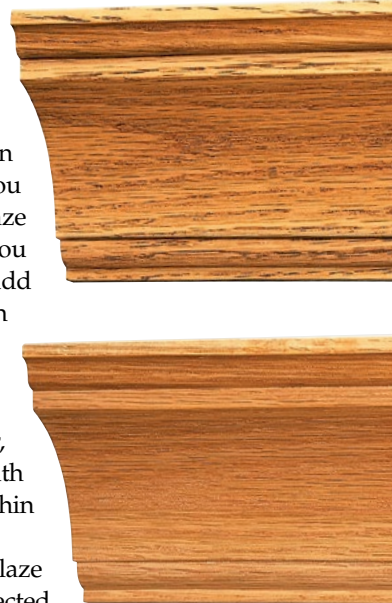
manageable area.

WIPE IT OFF. Before the glaze tacks up, start wiping the surface with a clean rag. This step is the key. You control the look of the glaze by how aggressively you wipe. If your goal is to add age to the project, you can be less thorough — leaving glaze on edges and in the recesses. When simply trying to enhance the color, wipe the surface clean with the grain, leaving only a thin film of glaze behind.

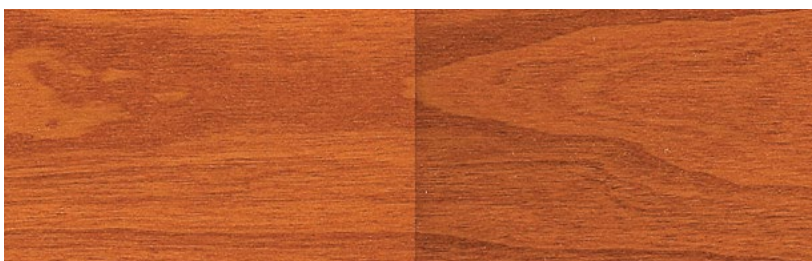
A TOPCOAT. Like a stain, a glaze always needs to be protected with a topcoat. This can be any compatible finish. But when applying the topcoat, there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

First, be sure the glaze is completely dry before finishing over it. The glaze is lying on the sealer, not in the wood. If it’s not dry, it can be lifted into the finish. Second, apply the first topcoat “gently.” Avoid vigorous brushing that might pull the glaze off the surface.

In a nutshell, using a glaze can be an easy way to bring out the very best in a project. And once you give the technique a try, it’s guaranteed to become a standard in your bag of finishing tricks. **W**



▲ The glaze settled into the pores of the upper piece of oak crown adding a subtle contrast not seen in the unglazed piece below.



▲ The board above shows how a glaze can be used to give cherry a rich, naturally aged color. The left half was simply stained and sealed, the right half was stained, sealed, and then glazed.

HOW TO: APPLYING A GLAZE



▲ After applying the initial stain, seal the surface thoroughly with a couple of coats of 1-lb. cut shellac.



▲ Once the sealer is dry and the surface lightly sanded, brush or wipe on a liberal coat of glaze.



▲ Use a clean rag to wipe the glaze from the flat surfaces, while leaving remnants in the recesses.