WHY IS A FINISH APPLIED TO WOOD?
1. A good quality finish such as varnish, offers a level protection to the surface of the wood.
2. A finish will enhance the natural grain, lifting the perceived value of the product.
3. Preservation of wood is another reason for applying a finish, lengthening the lifespan of the piece of furniture.
4. A dye applied as a finish, will change the ‘colour’ of the wood, giving the illusion that ‘cheap’ pine is actually more expensive mahogany.
5. A finish will provide a gloss, matt or silk finish, depending on preference of the customer.

INITIAL PREPARATION
Filling cracks - PVA or cascamite mixed with wood dust producing a paste, which is then applied to cracks and gaps.
Premixed wood fillers are also available, as powders to be mixed with water or applied straight from a tube.

Shellac - Supplied in stick form, in various shades. It is melted into holes / cracks in the wood with a soldering iron and then levelled, usually with a chisel.

Wax sticks - useful when repairing scratches, nail holes or cracks. The stick is warmed up and when soft, pressed into the hole / crack. The surface is then levelled with glass paper.

GENERAL WOOD FILLERS
Shellac and Polishes
Shellac is a non-toxic, natural finish, produced from processed resin, that is secreted from the forest inhabiting insect, Laccifer Lacca, found from India to the Far East. The processed resin, which, in the form of light brown flakes, are mixed with alcohol, producing a liquid. Shellac, the basic ingredient of a range of polishes, including white polish and button polish.

Shellac based polishes, produce a high quality finish, typical of vintage furniture, but they do not withstand water or heat very well.

NATURAL WOOD AND WAX FINISHES
Wax - for interior use. Popular, in Victorian times and has recently seen a resurgence. Supplied as a liquid or paste. It is good practice to apply a coat of wax periodically, which helps to refresh the finish.

A first coat of wax is quickly rubbed into the surface, in a circular fashion. Use a clean cloth to remove surplus wax. Leave to dry over night and then apply another coat, following the grain. When dry, polish the surface with another soft cloth.

WOOD DYE AND STAIN
Varnish
Varnish is supplied as water based or oil based. Water based varnish is an environmentally friendly version of the oil based varnish.
Polyurethane Varnish and Yacht Varnish, give a quality, protective finish. Varnish is UV resistant, protects the surface of the wood and helps prevent cracking and shrinking. It can be purchased as a matt, silk or gloss finish. Varnish is applied by brush or spray gun.

PRIMERS, UNDERCOATS AND TOP COATS
Paint primer is required to seal the wood, so that the next paint, which is undercoat, can successfully adhere.

Undercoat is supplied in a restricted range of colours and is selected according to the colour of the final top coat. The undercoat blocks all blemishes, goose and marks, providing a blank canvas for the top coat.

The top coat provides the final finish, in terms of the colour and whether it is matt, silk or gloss.

WOOD DYE AND STAIN

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PAINT AS A FINISH
Paint is basically the same as varnish, although it contains coloured pigments. Paints are applied with a brush or spray gun and add a protective layer to the surface. Paints are available as matt, silk and gloss finishes and they are either water based or oil (solvent) based. Unlike many other finishes that enhance the natural grain of the wood, paints hide the grain.

DIFFERENT GRADES OF GLASS PAPER ARE USED TO PRODUCE A VARIETY OF FINISHES

PRIMERS, UNDERCOATS AND TOP COATS

SANDING / GLASS PAPERING

NATURAL WOOD

DIFFERENT GRADES OF GLASS PAPER ARE USED TO

Water based paints (acrylic paints) are environmentally friendly. They dry more rapidly and do not produce the odours associated with solvent based paints. After use, brushes and equipment can be cleaned in soap and water.

Solvent based paints are more damaging to the environment and the health of humans. Brushes and equipment have to be cleaned with thinner or white spirit. When drying, the solvents evaporate, releasing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the atmosphere.

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