

Cindy Drozda

"The Fine Art of Woodturning"

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CD's Finishing Techniques

The main component of my finishes is abrasives. By polishing the bare wood to 1000 or 2000 grit, and then sanding between coats with 2000 and finally 4000, I get a very transparent smooth finish.

You can find my "Arsenal of Abrasives" on my website, along with sources for the products that I use. There is absolutely no room for scratches or tearout on this kind of finish, so it is a bit of work!

The finish is a "hand applied oil", and I use several different oil finishes depending on my mood and how long I have before having to ship the piece somewhere. The "Phoenix" series pieces are (I believe) done with Tru-Oil, which is a polymerized linseed oil based finish that dries in 2 hours. They may be done with Waterlox, though. The "Celebration" series uses (again calling on a shaky memory) either Waterlox (usually my favorite), a tung oil based finish, or a mix of Lee Valley Polymerized Tung Oil and Minwax Wipe-on Poly. With the wood properly prepared, the actual compound that is applied means very little.

The penetrating-oil type of finishes tend to accentuate the wood figure. They also tend to "amber tint" the color of the wood, and/or darken it a bit. Lacquer or cellulose sanding sealer will not change the wood color much, but they don't give the depth to the figure, either. I use spray or wipe-on cellulose products on colored pieces sometimes, particularly on very small pieces, like dyed finials, or with colors that I want not to darken, like spalted wood or holly.

Finishing has no "easy" solution. It is work and to the extent that you are willing to work, your work will be that much better looking!