

Classic Boat Connection's tips for staining and varnishing your classic boat

Surface Preparation

Begin sanding mahogany with an 18 inch sanding board and 80 grit sandpaper, finish with 100 grit. Finer paper will not leave enough surface texture to fill with filler stain. An air file will get the job done the fastest, fairing out wavy or gouged planks remarkably well, but must be handled carefully or damage will result just as quickly. Do not sand with a disc sander, a belt sander, or an orbital finishing sander. You need the long block to get a level finish.

Staining

Use the correct filler stain for your model boat. Filler stain is a thick paste and is thinned with Interlux 333 thinner to a consistency of thick paint prior to use. Paint it on with a brush, there is no need to rub it in. Try to stain one whole side of the boat before the stain begins to dry. Rub with clean, lint free cotton rags. [We sell 4 1/2 lb boxes of lint free cotton rags in the filler stain section on page 4.] If you allow it to become too dry, it will be very difficult to rub out. If you don't leave it on long enough, it will be too light. The amount of time required to set up will depend on temperature, humidity, and how much 333 you put in your stain mixture.

Sealing

Allow the stain to dry 3 to 4 days before sealing. Seal either with Pettit 2018 Clear Sealer or with varnish thinned 50 percent. We have better results with the Pettit Sealer. When using sealer, wear an organic vapor mask and have maximum ventilation. Do not use sealer by any open flame, it is extremely flammable. Apply two coats of sealer with a bristle brush. A sponge [foam] brush can disturb your stain. Just slop the sealer on like water, don't worry about the runs. Do not sand between coats of sealer, the sealer is too thin.

Sanding Board and Sandpaper

You should not use an electric finishing sander on your wood hull. A finishing sander will leave a wavy surface that is noticeable after varnishing. Our professional quality sanding board gives you the large sanding surface you need to get a level finish on your boat. Start stripping with marine stripper and a scraper. Then get the remaining stain out of the grain with a brass bristle pot scrubber brush [available at most grocery stores] and more stripper. Do not begin sanding until the wood is completely clean. Start sanding with 80 grit paper and finish with 100 grit. Finer paper will not leave enough texture to fill with filler stain. 3M Gold Resin Bond Aluminum Oxide Paper is a very high quality sandpaper that outlasts other sandpapers and resists loading.



BOARD Sanding Board 16 x 2 3/4" \$32

3M Gold Resin Bond Aluminum Oxide Paper 2 3/4"

BOARD80 80 Grit 25 Yard Stick-It \$82

BOARD100 100 Grit 30 Yard Stick-It \$99

BOARD120 120 Grit 30 Yard Stick-It \$82

BOARD220 220 Grit 30 Yard Stick-It \$82

Varnishing

When applying Epifanes varnish over existing varnish or urethane, wash the old surface with soap and water before sanding. Wash with large amounts of denatured alcohol and clean rags between every coat. Do not wipe down with mineral spirits, as it will dull the finish. Sweep your varnishing room the day before, allowing time for dust to settle. Hose the room down before varnishing, being careful not to get your boat wet. Your boat builds up a negative charge when you stroke it with the varnish brush. This charge attracts dust particles in the air. Spray your clothing and any plastic material with "Static Guard." Don't varnish on a windy day. When brushing Epifanes varnish or wood finish gloss, thin the first coat 50%, the second coat 25%, the third coat 15%, and additional coats anywhere from 0 to 7%. [If you use sealer, thin your first coat 25%.] Load the brush with just enough varnish for one stroke. Trust the flowing capabilities of Epifanes varnish. The brush marks and bubbles will flow out on their own. The most glossy finish is achieved with a minimum of brush strokes. Do not wipe the brush against the side of the can, as this will introduce air bubbles. When varnishing very large surfaces, you may use Epifanes Easy-Flow to extend the wet edge time.

Sanding

Do not sand the first two coats of sealer. Sand the first coat of varnish with 220 grit paper. Sand the second to sixth coat with 180 grit and the seventh to twelfth coats with 220 paper. You should use at least 12 coats of Epifanes varnish for good ultra-violet protection. If you try to get by with fewer coats, the sun can penetrate to the lowest layer and lift it. If your boat gets a lot of use, you will need to apply a couple of coats of fresh varnish every two years to maintain proper ultra-violet protection.

Which should I use on my boat, Epifanes High Gloss Varnish or their Wood Finish Gloss?

Epifanes High Gloss Varnish and their Wood Finish Gloss are both tung oil, alkyd resin based finishes that are unsurpassed in their ultra-violet protection. There is, however, one very big difference. Wood Finish Gloss does not need to be sanded between coats as long as you recoat within 72 hours. This feature can save you an incredible amount of time and work when refinishing your boat. You only need to sand for appearance, not for adhesion. [If you need to wait longer than 72 hours between coats, you do need to sand the Wood Finish Gloss just as if you were using High Gloss Varnish.] We do, however, recommend you use the High Gloss Varnish for your last coat. The Varnish tends to flow out slightly better than the Wood Finish and makes the all important last coat just a little bit smoother.

Either way you choose to refinish your boat, you can rest assured that with either Epifanes High Gloss Varnish or Wood Finish Gloss, you will have the best ultra-violet protection for your valuable boat that money can buy.

Worried about shipping your supplies in cold weather? All of our products can handle any cold that Minnesota [or the rest of U.S] can throw at it! Nothing we carry is harmed by cold temperatures.