

Sunset
**Furniture
Finishing**

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Durable Varnish

Varnish is probably the toughest, most moisture- and heat-resistant finish with which you can protect your furniture. Even though a good modern varnish takes longer to apply and to dry than shellac or lacquer, its durability makes it the preferred choice for many home woodworkers.

Available in gloss, semigloss (satin), eggshell, and flat sheens, varnishes vary widely in their characteristics. Alkyd varnish and polyurethane are two main varieties; three spin-offs are phenolic-resin (spar) varnish, rub-on varnish, and

water-based materials. For a description of each type, see the chart on page 10.

Here are application tips for alkyd varnish, polyurethane, and rub-on mixtures. For a closer look at water-based finishes, see page 69. Apply exterior spar varnish in the same manner as interior alkyd products.

Applying alkyd varnish. Often referred to as oil-based varnish, this is the most common of the new interior types. (*Natural* varnishes, increasingly scarce, are mixed in turpentine.) Though not as hard as poly-

urethane, alkyd varnish is more flexible, so you can recoat without worrying about bonding.

Because alkyd varnish is thinned with mineral spirits, it's compatible with most stains, fillers, and sealers. Like most varnishes, it's susceptible to darkening with time, but can be stripped with chemical removers.

Fillers are seldom used with varnishes, but a sealer is always recommended. It's simplest to use a thinned-down solution of the varnish itself as a sealer. Build up the surface with gloss varnish, then switch to the sheen of your choice for the final coat.

A varnish finish supplies both a warm glow and great protection; it's an especially good choice for elegant dining ensembles like this one. The final finish may be rubbed out to either a high gloss or a soft satin sheen.

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