

Dunn's Oil Finish

Kelly Dunn, north end of the Big Island of Hawaii.

A Simple Finish and The One I Really Use



I create my own Danish oil finish. The translucence is mostly from linseed oil, but the problem is it does not dry well. Use Watco Danish oil or mix a third boiled linseed oil, a third gloss polyurethane, a third mineral spirits. (Paint thinner). Immerse the finished bowl (I stop at 320 grit) in this mix until it has not changed for 24 hours. Three days to a week. I have a drip rack in my bucket (30 gallon trash can). Time it so you can dry the piece before

your mix hits (starts to harden) on it. I like Bounty paper towels.

Time varies from mix to mix. Let the bowl dry, I use a home made kiln as it is so wet here. Next day dip the bowl a couple times. Let drip then dry it. Start watching it. If the mix bleeds to the surface wipe it dry. I power buff all shiny spots. Use brown Tripoli buffing compound. Do this each day until you have buffed the entire piece.

That said, you can see why not to many people want to do this much work for a bowl. The above works fine but is not what I do.

WHAT I REALLY DO - TWO PART PROCESS

My first mix is boiled linseed oil thinned with maybe a quart of thinner per gallon. The mix always needs tweaked over time. The dryers in the oil will evaporate over time. You will need to begin adding a few drops to a few tablespoons of Japan Dryer, depending on how much mix you have.

Start the process with the finished bowl as above. If oil bleeds to the surface of the bowl when you hit it with the buffing wheel you either need to dry the bowl longer or start adding the dryer. With Linseed, if the bowl feels slick and oily it is not dry. Do not push the process or you will have a bowl with undried pockets of oil in the cell structure. It will bleed when the bowl gets warm.

The day the linseed no longer changes the appearance of the bowl (normally day 3 to 5), I then dip the bowl in a thinned down polyurethane. You can use commercial Danish oil for this.

My mix is poly, thinned down a bit with thinner and enough boiled linseed oil to give me 10 minutes of drip time before it begins hitting. I dip the bowl and let it drip on a rack for 10 minutes and dry it and put it in the kiln. Always check for bleeding in the kiln or your drying space. The volatiles in the mixes can force the mix to the surface where it will harden-giving you a most horrible mess to buff away.

Do not use any Japan Dryer with polyurethane. It will gel the mix. If you use varnish instead of poly in this mix Japan dryer is compatible. But I have never needed any with this second mix.

This second mix will gel over time. Tweak the mix till you are happy with it. Know that in a couple weeks you will to have to start adding thinner. When the mix begins gelling, make a new mix. If you are going to do this once in a while put the mix back in cans and seal them. This double mix system of mine works for me. It is a lot of work and tricky. That is the main reason I hesitate to teach it. My experience has been that folks push this process and want to complain to me. Follow my instructions.