



Lacquer-Dipping Finish

I've been questioned about my technique for dipping barrels in lacquer. First, this is not my technique. I got it from Russ Fairfield's pages referenced on our homepage. In short, I bought a few 3' lengths of 1/4" all thread and cut them to desired lengths... depending on the pens I turn. Make sure to add a few inches for insurance. When I first started this I also bought a number of different 1/4" fixtures: threaded inserts, nylon bushings, etc. to try and get a variety of widths to match the OD of the barrels being dipped. These are to be used as bushings/spacers above and below the barrels to allow the lacquer to flow smoothly down the assembly while it's drying. I now use pieces of Delrin turned step-wise to match the ID and OD of the barrels (this works better for keeping the lacquer out of the tubes on larger pens). This is an Afzelia Burl Sierra barrel w/the first coat.



Posted By alamocdc (Billy A. Burt)
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http://www.thepenshop.net/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=999&PN=1

I've also turned dipping bushings/spacers using 7mm tube and a variety of materials. Make sure the transition from the barrels to the spacers is as flush as possible. Otherwise you'll get a lip or bulge of lacquer at the bottom of each barrel. If I'm using bushings other than those I've turned with a step and I'm not satisfied with the fit at the ends, I'll seal the tubes w/base plate wax. Gently stir the lacquer and try to avoid creating bubbles. The rest is simple. All you do is dip the barrel/bushing assembly (allthread included) in the can of lacquer. I use quart size, but one gallon cans would work as well. I'm still using my first quart and have plenty left for many more pens so it doesn't really use that much. Let as much of the excess drain/drip back into the can to avoid waste and mess. Then I set them up to dry and cure. I use a 2x4 with holes drilled in it to except the threaded insert I have on the bottom end of each assembly. After at least one hour, I'll dip the barrels again. If I'm happy w/the look of the second coat, I'll let the blank(s) cure for at least a week before wet sanding w/MM (starting at 3200) and applying TSW. Two coats is the exception, but more dense woods don't usually need more than two. For anything with even the slightest hint of open grain I usually dip at least three times (usually 4). Before the 3rd and 4th dip I take the barrel/bushing assemblies off and flip them so that the thickness of the draining lacquer will be more evenly distributed. If you don't, the result will be barrels with more lacquer on the downward end of the barrels. It's not so much that you can see it with the natural eye, but you'll be able to tell after MMing. I've actually taken the finish back to wood by not doing this and using less than 3 coats. This means starting over.

This should be simple enough that all can understand. BTW, make sure you keep the barrels perpendicular to the earth's surface while drying. We have this thing called gravity that causes things not in the solid state to accumulate on the "low" side.