



CARVEWRIGHT™

WOODWORKING SYSTEM

TIPS & TRICKS

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Finishing Techniques - Part 1

Michael Tyler, Editor

As woodworkers, we all are interested in learning tried-and-true methods for applying finishes to our projects!

This Tips & Tricks issue begins a series of some finishing techniques and suggestions gathered from some of our fellow woodworkers and members of the CarveWright Forum. A very special “thank you” to Doug Haffner, Ike, Jerry B., RayTrek, and Sharon B. for sharing some of their finishing methods with us!

Ike's Finishing Tips!

by Rick Tuttle - “Ike” on the CW Forum

I have been making signs since I was 17 working for my uncle's sign shop. That was 30 years ago and through those years I picked up some time saving methods of finishing a sign. I recently re-finished a sign using some of my favorite techniques.

How to paint recessed & raised lettering:

When painting recessed or raised lettering it is easy and fast. When the CarveWright has finished carving the sign I take my torch and lightly burn off the “fuzzies” inside the letters. Or if it raised lettering, I torch the area *around* the letters to get rid of the “fuzzies”.

If the lettering is going to be black or any other dark color, I simply use Walmart brand spray paint. It is inexpensive, dries quickly and lasts a long time.

I spray the letters and edges making sure to spray the whole letters by turning the sign to the sides, upside down, etc. Make sure you spray any end grain well.

With lighter colors (like white or yellow) I apply acrylic paint with an artist paint brush. I brush the paint into recessed lettering, not worrying if it slops over a little. Once the paint is thoroughly dry, I just plane or sand the excess paint from the background, then finish. With raised lettering, I first paint the back-ground using the method as above, let the paint dry, then plane or sand the excess off the raised letters.

To paint the raised lettering a contrasting color, I start with a 3” trim roller. I don't leave it at 3” - rather, with a hacksaw I cut it into **three** 1” rollers. (fig. 1)



fig. 1

Then I take the 2 end caps and install them into the 1” section and snap it back on the handle.

(cont.)

Please visit the manufacturer's website for more information about the CarveWright machines and see the Pattern & Project Depot at:
www.carverwright.com

For Additional Patterns you can add to your Designer software library, please visit:
www.carvebuddy.com

Ike's Finishing Tips! (cont.)

To stop the roller from sliding on the handle I use duct tape cut into thin strips. I apply the strips about 1/16th-inch from the roller making sure the roller spins freely. (fig. 2)



fig. 2



I lightly burn the edges with my torch to remove fuzz from the paint rollers after cutting. I also lightly torch the nap to make it even. (fig. 3)

fig. 3

Now I am ready to paint, again preferring an acrylic paint. I pour the paint into a paint pan and load the roller with paint. It is important to load enough paint, but not too much. Too much and you will have over run on the letters. Too little paint, you tend to press harder which also results in run over. The key is to lightly press allowing the roller to do the work.

You want to just paint the top of the letter, if it does run over a little it is not the end of the world! You can always come back and touch up if you like! (fig. 4)



fig. 4

One coat will not be enough to cover, plus the second coat will cover any the spots you missed. Sometimes a third coat is needed.

Remember don't get into a hurry - that is when you become sloppy. Also never try to reach across the board to paint a letter. I know that sounds funny, but when you are in a hurry we do funny things!

Always let your paint dry thoroughly before finishing with a clear gloss. I use acrylic polyurethane made by BEHR from Home Depot. Using a HVLP sprayer I spray the sign positioned flat on the bench. I apply at least 3 light coats total allowing each coat to dry before spraying the next. Even with this finish it can yellow the letters if applied too thick, especially with recessed lettering. To help avoid this I spray a light coat of Krylon Crystal clear (spray can), do not spray heavily. This is an oil based product and too much will not allow your acrylic to adhere. I would avoid Spar or lacquer, varnish etc. they contain an amber tint that will yellow white lettering. (fig. 5)



fig. 5

How to paint a detailed image:

Detailed images can take a long time to paint. Here is way I found to quicken the process for some details and still look great. The first thing I do is paint the areas that have one color - i.e., grass or trees, sky etc. Paint the area with the one color not worrying about it getting on other sections. Don't go crazy, but don't freak out if green for the grass touches the tree trunk! Once you painted the single color areas let them dry or, as I do, use a hair dryer to help dry. When dry, I start painting over the remaining detailed sections until I reach the desired results. (fig. 6)



fig. 6

An Old Sign Refinished to New Condition!

The photo examples I have shown you are of a sign I made 22 years ago that needed to be refinished. Whether you are making a new sign or restoring an old one, the method is the same with a little adjustment. If needed, clean an old sign before painting. This may take only blowing the sign off to using a stiff brush. You may have some cracks that need to be filled. I recommend Durham rock hard putty for that. It is very economical and can be found at just about any hardware store or home and garden store. It comes in a powder and is mixed with water to a pancake batter consistency. It dries fast and can be painted or stained. (fig. 7)



fig. 7

With this sign I did need to fill in some cracks. After I did this I spray painted around the letters and the borders with a red oxide primer from Walmart. (fig. 8)



fig. 8

I sanded the letters, but not to bare wood. I left the previous paint for a primer. (fig. 9)



fig. 9

Then instead of sanding the inside background area of the sign, I used my die grinder with a wire brush wheel to remove the excess paint and give it a rustic look. Then again with my die grinder (with a 45 degree bit) I worked around the edges away from the raised letters. This makes the outer surface lower and helps you from getting paint outside the letters. (fig. 10)



fig. 10

Using my torch, I heavily burn the inside avoiding the letters and painted border. This adds more to the rustic look and will burn any feathers/fuzzies around the edges. (fig. 11)



fig. 11

This sign has two recessed pine tree carvings and I brushed in the paint (like I would if I were painting recessed lettering), trying not to be too sloppy. Using the 1" roller, I applied 2 coats of white and two-tone painted the M & M in blue and white colors. I then spray finished using Krylon Clear (but I do not recommend this for an exterior sign). Much of the sign is painted but I want the background to 'gray' naturally with age.

So that's about it. I hope some of my tips will help you with your next sign project!

Here is my finished sign...



Editor's Note: Thank you, Ike, for the great tips! Happy Carving!

Michael

Michael Tyler - Editor

Additional Resources

RESOURCES...

There are numerous resources for the CarveWright/CompuCarve owner to make their experience with these machines much more enjoyable.

Every owner should join the CarveWright User Forum (<http://forum.carviewright.com/forum.php>) where fellow users share their experiences and knowledge with these machines on a daily basis. It is a FREE service that you will surely appreciate. A handy Search Feature helps you find answers to any questions you may have.



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