



1951 FORD COUNTRY SQUIRE

*Wood Refinishing, Phase Three
by Ron Carpenter*

This is where I finally made the decision to use Varnish for the wood siding. I did a lot of checking with others, and I originally was going to choose clear Urethane for the wood as I felt that it might be longer lasting. But I ran into the issue that I had to seal the wood before I did anything to it, and I could not get a clear answer as to how best to seal the wood before I put the Urethane on it. Then I needed to figure how to add a little coloring to the Urethane to achieve the color on the wood. I did not feel that adding color would make the "wood" warm enough. I started by using clear Urethane on the samples of the "sea grass Mahogany" (the name of the type of wood on the inserts) that Rick gave me. My wife was not happy with how it looked so I put some varnish on the wood and she loved that. It was also suggested to me that should I mess up and I had to remove the urethane that it would be a lot harder for me to do that.



For a side note on this, Rick Mack, our wood kit supplier, provided me with some sample pieces of wood that was used for the door frame and the inserts. I tried spraying clear urethane on the inserts and I could not achieve the color or the depth that we were looking for so that was another one of the reasons that we went with the varnish. I also called the guy that put the wood on my 1941 Packard 120 station wagon and asked him what he used on the wood and he told me that they put Epifanes on it and it has been ten years and it still looks fantastic, so once again I felt that the Epifanes varnish was the way to go for me..





So, for these reasons I decided to use varnish and I chose Epifanes, which is a product of Holland. I was told that it was the best boat varnish and would look great. Rick had also recommended that I use Epifanes and I needed to put 12-14 coats of varnish on the wood. I first started by choosing a wood stain for the wood (don't stain the inserts). We tried several stains on the sample wood that Rick provided and chose Honey Walnut and then varnished over that to see what we had. I then had to figure out how to apply the varnish and dealing with sealing the wood. I called the help desk technicians at Epifanes 1-800 number and they told me that I could use 50% varnish to 50% Epifanes thinner to seal the wood so that answered the question on how to seal the new wood. They told me to use 10-15 % reduction for the coats. I was also told to use foam brushes as they give the best finish. I did as they instructed me to do and I found that I could not get the varnish on smooth enough and it was "puddling" in the corners. When I did the long panels it just looked "bad" and I could not get it the way I wanted it. SO I called them back and again talked to them about reduction if I wanted to spray the varnish on. They once again told me to reduce it to 10-15 %. This time I went out and bought a HVLP (High volume and Low Pressure) spotting gun to spray it on. Well 15 percent was too thick and it did not work so I added more thinner and I sprayed on beautifully and I did not have to sand each time just scuff it. I ended up around a 25-30% reduction and that seemed to work just fine.



A note on sanding the panels when I used the foam brushes. I had to wait a couple days between coats and I used 220 grit for this and I spent HOURS sanding between coats. I knew that I had to find a better way and that was why I started using the spray gun. I could spray it on and sand the next day. The panels required the most sanding no matter how I put the varnish on. To start with, when you put on the 50/50 mixture on to seal it, the first coats cause the wood grain to rise up. I had sanded the wood door pieces and the panels with 180 grit and it was nice and smooth but the grain pops up with the sealing process. I sanded all the pieces with 220 grit after the second pass of 30% and after about the 4th pass it stayed down and was nice and smooth. The panels have the grain (remember it was called seagrass mahogany so it had grain in it) and I had to put around 6-8 passes on it before the sanding process made all the "varnish levels" the same and it was nice and smooth and I could put the varnish and only have to lightly sand and to scuff the varnish between coats.



With the actual preparation I used cotton gloves to keep my hand prints off the wood. • I sanded everything and used tack rags to get all the dust off the wood to be sprayed. • I set up the wood inserts in my enclosed car trailer on a 4x8 plywood table I set up. • I set up another 4x8 table in my garage back room to paint the wood door frames. • All of these pieces were set up using 1 inch blocks that I cut out of 1x2 wood so that the parts were off the table top so that they did not stick once I had everything varnished. • I chose to only put 7 passes on the inside pieces as I felt that it would be enough protection, really unless I get caught in a rainstorm I won't be taking the car out in the rain. On the outside I did put 14 passes on the varnish to give me the depth that I wanted. • You have to

be very patient when you're working with the wood. Through out the process I have sanded out the runs as necessary but by spraying I have greatly reduced my sanding on the parts.



1. This picture shows how I started with the wood being on raised 1 inch blocks. I prepared the wood and tacked it before I started spraying. Actually I started on the passenger side by brushing the wood and I did not like the results so all the pictures are for the drivers side as the passenger side has been completed and I have a better idea of what I am doing now. At this point I have also to stain the wood before I start. The wood will be sprayed with a 50-50 varnish-to-thinner to seal the wood.

2. I have set up the panels to start spraying them There will be no sanding as they don't need it on the back sides like the front sides need it. I will put 7 coats on these panels as I felt it was enough.

3. This illustrates the back of the wood with a couple coats of varnish on the wood. The grain and color is starting to come out now. These parts have been stained and you can see the varnish is bringing out the richness of the wood.

4. This shows the back of the wood panels and even though there is no stain on the wood it is still getting a "RICH" texture on it. I have to say that the color of the stain is "Honey Walnut"

is is very light anyway so the color of the varnish is bringing out the color in the wood.

5. This is a good one to show how the one inch blocks are holding up the wood from the table and there are only a couple coats of varnish on the wood at this time.

6. Now the color of the wood is really starting to come forward and looking good with about 6 coats on the wood.

7. I have turned the wood over now and you can see it has no varnish on it yet. Just raw wood with the Maple walnut stain on it.

8. I now have 4 coats of varnish on the wood and it is starting to come to life.

9. The color is continuing to come alive now at 7-8 coats on the wood.



12



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10. With this picture you can see we are over halfway there and it is looking beautiful.

11. This is what it looks like at 14 coats of varnish on the finished product.

12. I have actually been sanding and spraying all the parts so that I can keep track of the total number of coats on the parts. These panels I have sanded with 220 sandpaper to prep them for varnish. The back side is not all that critical for sanding just have and tackled off. With the raw wood on the inserts as soon as I put the 50-50 varnish-to-thinner on the wood the grain will really pop up so this is what I start with.

13. I have made 4 passes on this panel and you can see the grain in the finish. It is easier to sand the panel now and get the varnish leveled out with no raised grain showing in the finish.

14. I have sanded the panel with 180 sandpaper to get the varnish level so that when it is finally completely varnished it will be a mirror and have depth in the final product.

15. I have now finished varnishing all the panels and you can see the reflection in the wood panels and they are beautiful. I put 14 coats on these also.

16. You can get an idea of how the panel and the frame work will look together when I show how I reinstalled the panels on the framework. Also, I get to show off that I am a Packard fan too.



16

Next time I will be discussing how I put the panels and wood back together with the hundreds of screws. They will then be ready to install on the car.