

EDITION 2

FINISHING TOUCH

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS



ACANTHUS
INTERNATIONAL
A Thomas Riley Company

EXPLORING THE LEGACY: THE HISTORY OF FINE WOOD FINISHING PART 1

Welcome to another edition of “Finishing Touch”, where we celebrate the artistry and innovation that define our industry. In this edition, we'll take a journey through the ages as we uncover the rich history of finishing and its evolution.



[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



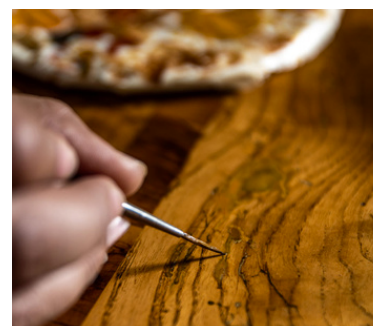
**ARCHITECTURAL
FINISHING**



**EXTERIOR FINISHING
& RESTORATION**



**ANTIQUE RESTORATION
& FURNITURE REFINISHING**



**ON-SITE
TOUCHUPS**

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE HISTORY OF FINE WOOD FINISHING

PART 1

PART 2

ANCIENT BEGINNINGS

OLDEST WOOD FINISHES:
LINSEED AND TUNG OILS
FROM ANCIENT CHINA

3000 BCE - 500 CE

MEDIEVAL MASTERY

SHELLAC FROM LAC BUGS:
A VERSATILE, GLOSSY FINISH
FOR PROTECTION AND SHINE

500 CE - 1500 CE

THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

FRENCH POLISH:
THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS
POPULAR TECHNIQUE

17th Century (1600s)

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

TECHNOLOGICAL
ADVANCEMENTS:
STEAM-POWERED
MACHINERY TO
ACCELERATE PRODUCTION

18th to 19th Century (1700s - 1800s)

SUSTAINABILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES:
COLOR MATCHING AND
QUALITY CONTROL

20th to 21st Century (1900s - 2000s)

THE MODERN ERA

BLENDING TRADITION AND
INNOVATION:
FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABILITY,
CUSTOMIZATION, AND
PERFORMANCE

21st Century (2000s - Present)

ANCIENT BEGINNINGS

Our journey begins when civilizations first discovered the transformative power of natural substances for protecting and enhancing wood surfaces.

The oldest wood finish is arguably oil; traced back to ancient China, linseed and tung oil were most popular for everyday uses. Tung oil was squeezed from a tung tree nut while linseed oil was taken from a flax seed plant.



These coatings, though easily accessible, were not always easily applicable to wood and dried too slowly for efficiency. The coatings therefore were used for less exposed surfaces, such as chairs, rather than on tabletops or high-traffic areas.

While early wood finishes in ancient times faced challenges, they laid the groundwork for future innovations, demonstrating the enduring human quest to protect and enhance the beauty of wood surfaces.

MEDIEVAL MASTERY

As societies progressed into the medieval period, advancements in wood finishing continued to evolve, building upon the foundation laid by ancient civilizations.

During the Middle Ages, which lasted from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century to the beginning of the Renaissance in the 15th century, craftsmanship flourished. Shellac, a resin derived from the lac bug and known for its glossy finish, gained popularity during this time.



Artisans produced an array of furniture pieces, including tables, chests, and beds, often adorned with intricate carvings and decorative details reflective of the prevailing architectural and design styles of the era.

Woodworking was not limited to furniture alone; craftsmen also constructed architectural elements such as doors, windows, and beams for homes, castles, and cathedrals.

THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

During the 17th century, French polish and varnishes became prominent in wood finishing. French polish was first introduced in Britain by two French brothers. Many Victorians loved the new glossy look and chose to have their furniture refinished using this technique. The French polishing technique was commonly used on mahogany and other expensive timbers, it was considered an enhancing finish for fine furniture and musical instruments.

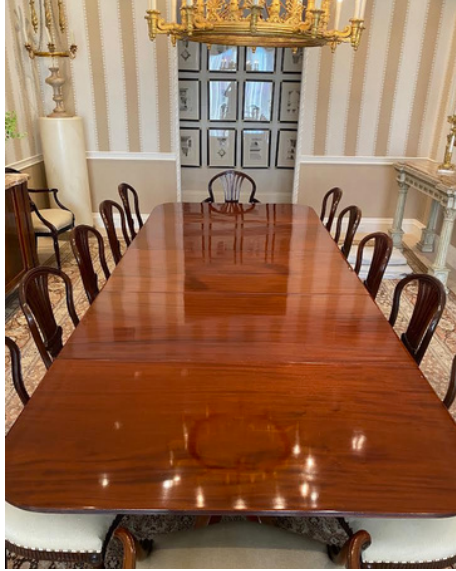


Crafted with shellac and alcohol, its sheen symbolized luxury and refinement in aristocratic circles. This period epitomized meticulous craftsmanship and aesthetic sophistication in woodworking.



TO BE CONTINUED IN PART TWO...

FRENCH POLISH



The French Polish technique can be used for any wood surface including furniture, cabinetry, millwork and trim as seen here in an array of different projects performed by Acanthus International.



Wood finishes have been used for centuries as a means of beautifying and protecting wooden crafts. Through historical analysis of antique wood, we can understand the process of finishing used by past artisans.

Stay tuned for Part 2 of Exploring the Legacy: The History of Fine Wood Finishing, where we'll explore the evolution into modern times and see what may lie ahead!



**ARCHITECTURAL
FINISHING**



**EXTERIOR FINISHING
& RESTORATION**



**ANTIQUE RESTORATION
& FURNITURE REFINISHING**



**ON-SITE
TOUCHUPS**

**WE PLEDGE SUPERIOR ARTISTRY WITH THE HIGHEST
STANDARD OF PERSONAL SERVICE FOR EACH CLIENT
WE HAVE THE PLEASURE OF SERVING.
CONTACT US TODAY TO DISCUSS YOUR PROJECT.**



429 25th St. West Palm Beach, FL 33407
(561) 333-8921 • info@acanthusintl.com

ACANTHUS
INTERNATIONAL

A Thomas Riley Company