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creative, tasteful, the tough,
excellent, resistant

Swedish edition

*Glitsa American's newsletter
for flooring professionals*

Magnificent Maple

Working with Maple and the Gold Seal System
By Duane Bartel and Randy Wirtz

In an industry traditionally dominated by the rich color and character of red and white oak, it seems designers and homeowners are increasingly drawn to the blonde natural beauty of Maple.

From installation to applying the topcoat of finish, maple offers unique challenges for the contractor. Each step builds on the next and it cannot be over emphasized that, especially with maple, craftsmanship at every stage of the project is vital to the quality of the end product. MFMA and NOFMA have developed good procedures for installation and preparation of maple floors for coating. Even so, look for future articles in this newsletter in which we will discuss some of the variations contractors use in sanding regimens for maple floors.

In this article we will concentrate on the application of the sealer and topcoats of our Gold Seal system. Reference will be made to other coating products as well in order to point out some of the advantages of using Glitsa's Gold Seal system on maple.

The Gold Seal system is comprised of two "Swedish Finish" sealers and two topcoat products. The sealers are Bacca and Glitsa Sealer. Both are excellent sealers with minor distinctions between the two. The choice of sealer usually boils down to the individual taste of the contractor. Bacca is more fluid than Glitsa Sealer. Accordingly, many contractors feel Bacca has superior flow and leveling qualities compared to Sealer. Glitsa Sealer dries faster than Bacca but is very similar to Bacca otherwise.

The topcoat products are Gold Seal and Lite Scent. Gold Seal is the original single component Swedish Finish topcoat. Lite Scent is very similar to Gold Seal, the principal difference being that Lite Scent was formulated to allow recoating over Gold Seal or itself following a 24-hour dry time. Recoating over Gold Seal using Gold Seal requires a longer wait. There are other minor differences, but like the sealers, the ultimate choice boils down to personal taste. Each has a strong

following and contractors have been known to argue over which sealer and which topcoat is the best choice.

Understanding the characteristics of maple before undertaking the coating job is essential to the contractor's success. Maple is more challenging than oak to achieve an ideal appearance. Maple's uniform surface, dense grain structure and subtle character make it very revealing of not only sanding defects but also the presence of any dust or debris that is permitted to get into the coating. Additionally, any defects in the coating application itself will stand out prominently. For these reasons, it is a good idea for the contractor to plan on putting in a little extra time and care into every step of a maple job. From floor prep and cleaning to coating, these efforts will all add up to make the difference between an outstanding or an unacceptable floor.

Cleanliness is crucial. The contractor should pay special attention to dust control throughout the preparation and coating steps to avoid having debris show up in the finish. Because of maple's character, it will prominently display dust or related debris as "junk" in the coating. In contrast, the high degree of variation of grain density, grain character and muted reflectivity in oak creates a lot of visual "distraction" from imperfections, making them much harder to notice. With maple, the contractor's skills are truly on display.

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For the Gold Seal system, intercoat abrasion is best achieved using a well-worn screen. Alternatively, many contractors have good success using a maroon pad with sanding strips. When the coating is cured sufficiently for abrading, care must be taken not to abrade too aggressively. Swirl marks created during intercoat abrasion will show prominently through the coating on Maple. Oak is more forgiving in this regard.

Maple requires careful consideration when selecting the type of coating. Sunlight alone will cause maple to change color over time regardless of what coating is applied. This color change can vary from yellowing to fading or bleaching. Additionally, some types of floor coatings yellow or amber over time. This could impact the appearance of the floor as it ages. Floor coatings that amber, or yellow as they age include polyurethanes and some water base coatings that have an oil or urethane component. Many interior decorators feel that rooms with yellow floors are difficult to decorate and draw too much attention to the floor. Swedish Finishes and some waterbase coatings have considerably less tendency to amber, so are a good choice with maple in this regard. Ambering is much less noticeable with oak than with maple.

Some water base products or polyurethanes will have an appearance over maple similar to a sheet of plastic, producing an “artificial” appearance, especially if the room is very bright. This should be taken into account if the room receives a lot of natural light or is brightly lit internally. One of the strengths of the Swedish Finishes is the “natural” appearance they impart to the floor.

Although it is a matter of personal taste, if a room receives a lot of light, either natural or from light fixtures, the completed floor may appear overly reflective if a gloss sheen topcoat is used. This may draw too much attention to the floor and make every kind of defect more pronounced. Matted sheens versus gloss topcoats on maple may achieve a more optimal level of reflectivity and reduce the appearance of sanding marks and coating application defects.

Matted sheens offer the benefits of hiding sanding defects on both the surface of the wood and from intercoat abrasion, as well as hiding dust and other debris that may have been introduced to the finish during the coating operation. However, there is a down side to using matted finishes. Possible sheen inconsistencies, streaking and other flattening agent orientation problems can pose problems for the contractor. Careful and consistent lapping technique, uniform coating thickness at the recommended coverage rates and thorough mixing of the product to evenly disperse the matting agent will help

achieve optimum results and avoid streaking or sheen variation across the floor. The best compromise may be to use satin or semigloss topcoats. Once again, because of the highly reflective nature of maple, these sheen problems may appear in maple more so than in oak.

As a general rule of thumb, when coating maple, fewer and thinner coats are best. A contractor who applies four coats in an effort to get exceptional depth of finish is truly pushing his luck. The homeowner who has his or her mind set on a highly glossy, thick looking floor coating should be educated on the associated risks relating to appearance and possibly performance.

Seal coats should be kept thin. When sealer is applied to maple in excessive amounts, a degrading of the appearance can take place. Most noticeably, dive down can occur along board edges. The sealer penetrates into the seams at a more rapid rate than on the board face. The result is an unsightly break in the uniformity of the seal coat. This is most noticeable where coats are applied on the heavy side. Thinner coats will help greatly to reduce dive down. Also, when seal coats are put down too heavy, light reflects through the film surface much more, making defects stand out clearly.

Like the seal coat(s) before it, the topcoat should be applied at the recommended coverage rate and no heavier. Avoid applying the finish coat too thick for the same reasons as above. Some contractors will flood the floor with a thick topcoat in an attempt to gain more working time. Others will apply heavy topcoats with the idea that they are creating a thicker wear surface that will provide superior service. This is not the case. A heavy coat will take longer to fully cure than a coating applied at the recommended coverage rate. Because its ability to cure has been compromised, the thick coating can scratch and scuff more easily and have less ability to resist damage during the initial curing phase. Coatings applied at their recommended coverage rates will provide the best possible performance and have a better appearance than those applied too thick.

If the contractor must apply a gloss topcoat to a maple floor, the extra step of hand sanding with the grain is an effective, though labor intensive, alternative to avoid swirl marks from screens or abrasive strips. Sand paper mounted to a sheetrock sanding pole is a useful tool in this instance.

A well-done maple floor is a thing of beauty. However, It will demand more from the contractor than a conventional oak floor. But if he carefully applies his skills and goes the extra mile, he can be proud of the finished product. ♦

Aerosol Now Available in Satin

Glitsa GoldSeal Touch-Up Aerosols are the ideal touch-up products for small areas with light scratches. Now GoldSeal Aerosol is available in all four sheens: Gloss, Semi-Gloss, Matte and Satin!

GoldSeal Aerosol is most effective on areas of less than one square foot. This product is intended to rejuvenate the surface appearance of small worn areas. For larger areas or areas with excessive wear, recoating may be necessary.

Glitsa's GoldSeal Aerosol along with Glitsa Clean Wood Floor Cleaner and Safeglide® Felt Floor Protectors are the perfect add-on sales at the end of a job. This provides your customer with the proper cleaning and maintenance products to ensure a long lasting floor and relationship. ♦





The Facts About Glitsa

She Don't Smell Too Good (But She Sure is Purdy) A Letter from Duane Bartel-Part One of Four.

I like to say our finishes smell bad because they are working so hard. Beyond the humor, there is actually a lot of truth in that statement. Glitsa isn't in this industry to win accolades for its fragrance. We would have to compromise too much of what really matters to our customers to do that. What our customers demand is the toughest, most durable and beautiful wood floor finish in the industry. Think of it as Miss America with a black belt.

But the question persists. Why do Swedish Finishes smell the way they do? Let's start by describing what a Swedish Finish is.

A Swedish finish, also referred to as a Conversion Varnish, is a coating consisting of specialized resins suspended in solvents. The resins, which are engineered to be exceptionally tough and durable, must be held in suspension using solvents that are tailored to work well with those resins. Some of the solvents that meet these requirements are called aromatic solvents. They are called aromatic because they have a strong aroma. Not necessarily a "purdy" aroma, just a strong aroma.

On occasion, a contractor will say to me that he prefers waterborne finishes partly because he doesn't have to wear a respirator or ventilate the house after applying the finish. There is a dangerous fallacy in this thinking. All floor coatings use solvents and resins. All these products emit vapors during application and curing that can be harmful without exercising suitable precautions. One product shouldn't be deemed safer than another simply because it does not have a strong odor. These are solvents that are not aromatic that are just as harmful or worse than many aromatics. With any floor-coating product, use of a respirator during application and proper ventilation of the home during curing are fundamental to protecting the health of the contractor and homeowner.

I am sometimes asked what causes some contractors eyes to water. This is caused primarily by the presence of an alcohol solvent that is a very close cousin to the alcohol used in beer. Another minor factor influencing eye irritation is the presence of a very, very minute amount of formaldehyde that is integral to the resin.

In future articles I will be going into greater depth on the subjects of toxicity of solvents and resins, including the much-exaggerated matter of formaldehyde. Unfortunately, there is a lot misinformation in the industry regarding the risks associated with various products. There are urban legends and myths that ignore reality, common sense and good science. I intend to replace myth with fact in these upcoming articles. ♦

I N T H E F I E L D

Thin Coats For The Best Job

By Barry Nelson, Sales Manager

With all types of finishes thin coats vs. thick coats has always been a controversy in the field. I'd like to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of this controversial subject for our Infinity Waterbase finishes. First off, I would like to say, "always follow the recommended coverage rate listed on the instructions." As a manufacturer, we do extensive research and testing to arrive at the coverage rates that we list on our instructions. These coverage rates will give you the best results when applying the finish and also the best performance over the life of the finish coats.

A thin coat of Infinity (500 to 700 sq. ft. per gallon) will set up quicker, which in turn will allow less time for atmospheric conditions to act in a negative manner. By this I mean you will have less time for any airborne dust or particles to stick in the finish and less time for any surface irregularities to develop. One of the most common problems that can be alleviated by a thinner coat is applicator streaking (trail ridges).

In most cases contractors like to put down heavy coats of finish for better build, and to do a better job of covering irregularities between coats such as screen and inter-coat abrasion marks. The most common things I see in the field when finishes are applied at heavier than recommend rates are sheen variations, applicator trail ridges,

Figure 1. Thin Coat

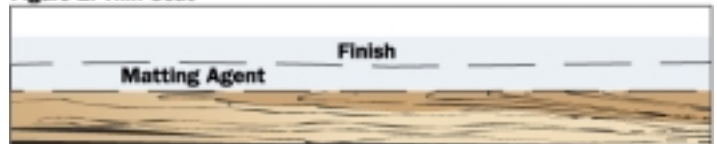


Figure 2. Heavy Coat



and encapsulated bubbles. A heavy coat can allow the matting agent to float apart and lay uneven, causing sheen variations. With waterbase finishes, heavy coats in hot, humid weather can cause the floor to cup around the edges in some situations. When coatings are applied heavy in extreme cold conditions, and the house has not been brought up to the recommended temperature range, "Cold Checking" may occur. Cold checking, which looks like a broken mirror, is a condition that occurs when the finish does not fully cure and starts to crack because of the combination of cold temperature and a heavy coat of finish on the floor.

Please remember one thing, "always use the recommended coverage rates". This will give the customer the best possible floor and will make your job and mine easier. ♦

CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT

Sun Valley Custom Wood Products Inc.



Floor specs: Over 8,000 sq. ft and custom stairs, 7" No. 2 common tight-knot White Oak with a micro-bevel. Light screen to leave a manufactured mill mark to give an appearance of light distress. Custom Gold Seal Stain mix, two coats of Bacca and one coat of Lite Scent Matte. Over radiant heat.

Sun Valley's system of choice is two coats of Bacca and one coat of GoldSeal Lite Scent.

His tip to other contractors, "Clean the area well before coating." He says to wipe down all outlet covers, tops of doorways, walls and any areas that can collect dust and debris. This will ensure the best results for a clean debris-free finish on the floor. The trends in his area seem to be moving toward rustic and recycled or historic woods using custom milled woods. ♦

Carl Reinoehl, Sun Valley Custom Wood Products Inc., Bellevue, Idaho has been in business and using Glitsa products for 19 years. His business is 98% residential, installing and finishing floors in the homes of Arnold Schwarzenager, Bruce Willis, Jamie Lee Curtis and many other business and entertainment celebrities.

Carl says he is his own worst critic, but is proud of the fact that he has never left a customer unsatisfied. Carl says "I think Glitsa is bullet proof to other finishes and is the best working".



Sun Valley Custom Wood Products Inc. crew: (left to right) Tim, Joe, Shane, Brian, Carl, Rusty, Jesse and Josh.

Infinity Sweepstakes Update



Visit us
at Booth
8124

Infinity Waterbase is riding ahead of the competition. Take part in this phenomenon by entering for a chance to win a 2000 Harley Davidson Softail Night Train custom detailed with Glitsa Infinity logos.

Don't let this ride pass you by. Try Infinity today and enter now. Drawing will be at NWFA 2001 Convention in Palm Springs.



We want to hear from you!



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