The American Marquetarian

Winter 2009/2010

Quarterly Newsletter of the American Marquetry Society
a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the art and craft of marquetry
www.americanmarquetrysociety.com

New Officers

Joe & Chris Schnell
Editors

Susan Jorgenson
Pattern Librarian

Julie Russell
Board Chairperson

Jim Sweet
Vice President

It's time to renew
New Dues – $25

Mailing label has your expiration date.

Photos from 2008 Show

Front cover: "Window to Garden of the Gods" by Rich Gady, 20" x 27". This is an example of trompe-l'oeil, an art technique where the viewer is tricked into believing he or she is seeing a three deminisional object. Nicely done Rich.

Above: "Stardust & Chocolate" by Cristina Alvarez Magliano 24" x 8".

Right: "The Sawdust Shop (sign)" by Dave Fifield, 11" x 15"

Above: "Gazing in the Mirror" by Phillip Fine, 15"x20". Below: Tabitha (greyhound) by Jamie Villamor, 9"x10"

Below right: "Humidor with Rose" by Rob Reed, 9" x 14.5" x 4".

UV Resistant Wood Finishes

By Dave Peck

Over the years I've always heard that the Ultra Violet Resistant finishes are not worth messing with. However, I recently read an article praising their effectiveness. Ah ha, it's time for an experiment. Photo 1 shows my test board shortly after applying the finishes. Photo 2 shows how that same board looks after sitting in full morning sun for a week. Photo 3 shows how it looks after two weeks and photo 4 shows how much it changed after 2 months of sun. I agree that the last thing in the world you are going to do with your marquetry

Photo 1 - Start

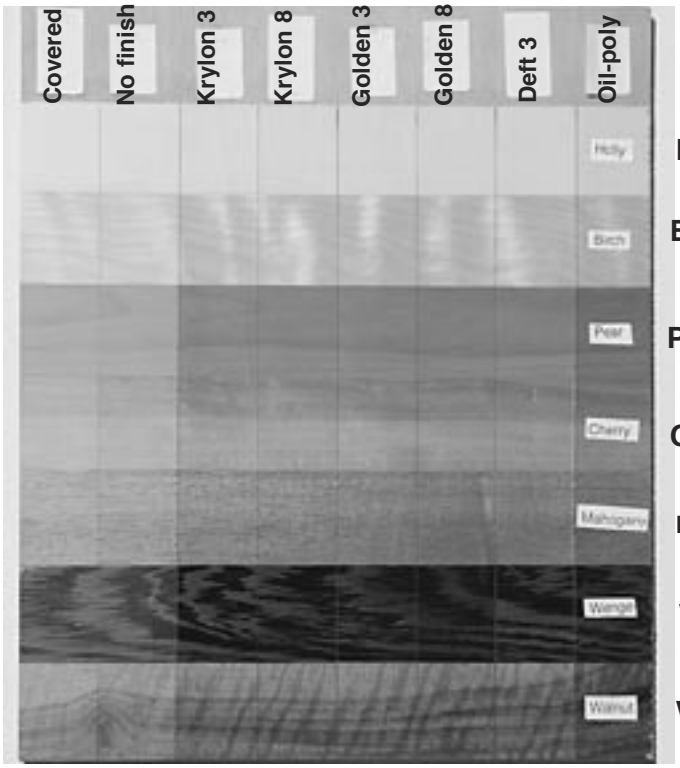


Photo 2 - One Week

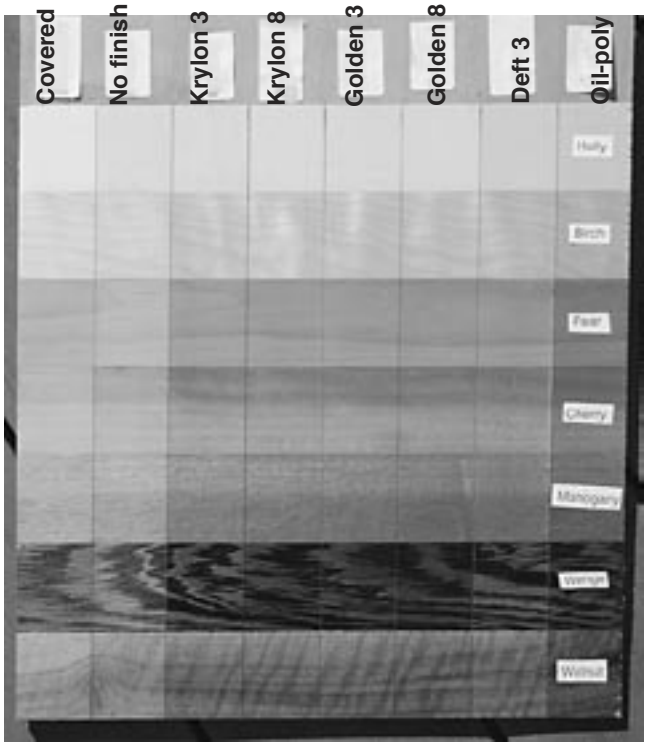


Photo 3 - Two Weeks

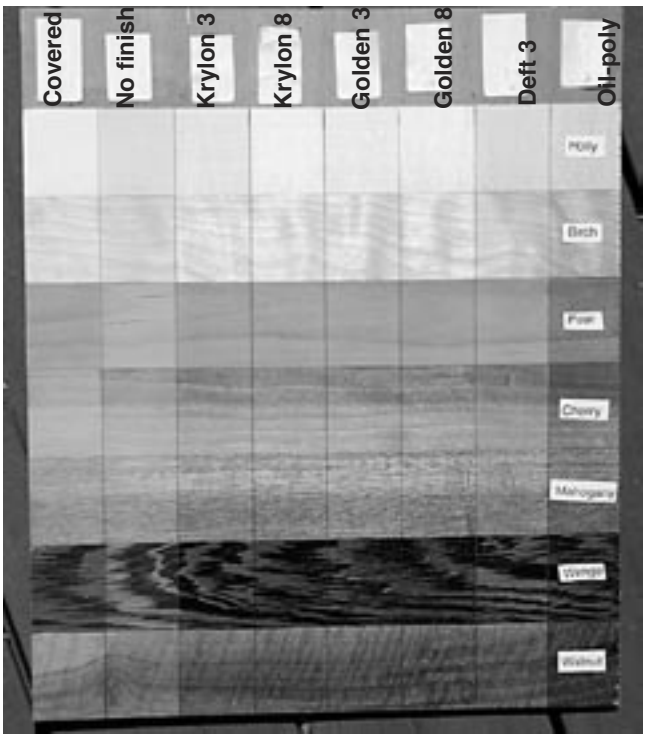
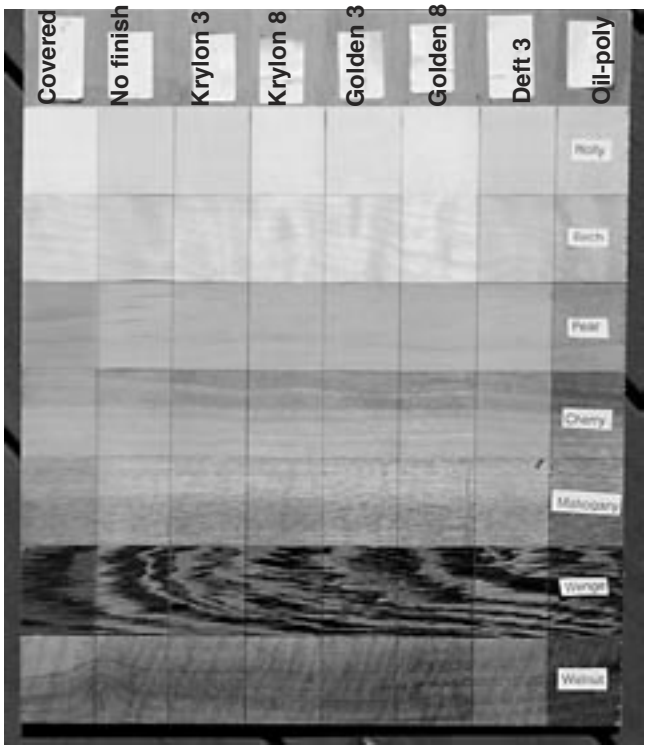


Photo 4 - Two Months (See Color, Pg 20)



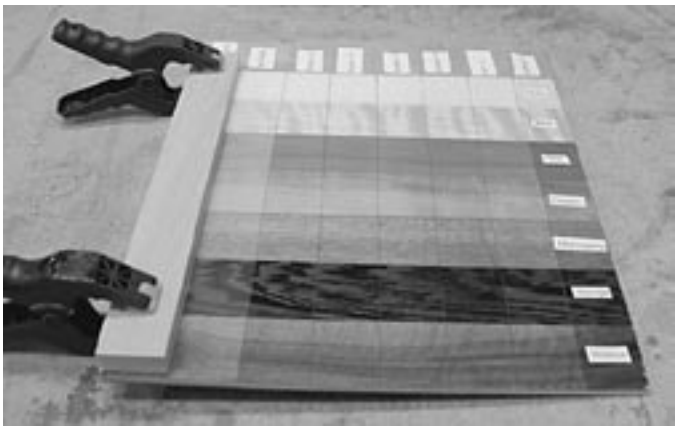
is place it in full sun, but, putting the test piece in direct sun compresses time and allows us to see how a normally handled marquetry would look several years down the road.

All woods CHANGE over time when exposed to UV light. I say change because the wood may get darker or lighter. Cherry will darken significantly in just a short time. Walnut will lighten but over a longer time. I personally avoid using padauck, yew, mansonia and cherry because they change so much. Traditional wood finishes provide minimal (if any) UV protection. The best we have been able to do is to recommend that the marquetry be kept out of direct sunlight. If this simple step is done any changes will be over a long period. Still if there is a product out there that will control the color change we need to know about it.

Making the test board:

Two inch wide strips were glued to a 1/4" plywood substrate, with the strips running horizontally. The woods are (starting at the top) holly, birch, pear, cherry, mahogany, wenge and walnut. There is bare plywood showing where the names of the finish are at the top. The names of the woods on the right side were applied to the veneer strips. I sanded using a random orbit sander, with dust collection, starting with 80 grit and progressing through 120, 180 and 240. I marked off 8 evenly spaced areas using a pencil to divide the areas for the different finishes. The far left area has no finish and it has been kept in the dark to provide a reference to compare the other areas against (a board was clamped over this area – See Photo 5). The next to the left area also has no finish but has been exposed to sunlight the same as the other areas to the right. Masking tape was used to protect the adjacent areas as each finish was applied.

Photo 5



The finishes used in the test:

The first two columns from the left are bare wood with no finish applied. The third column has 3 coats of the Krylon UV Resistant acrylic finish. The 4th column has 8 coats of the Krylon finish. The 5th row has 3 coats of Golden (brand name) UVLS varnish. (UVLS stands for Ultra Violet Light Stabilizer). Row 6 has 8 coats of the Golden finish. Row 7 has 3 coats of Deft, a lacquer based finish, and row 8 has 3 coats of Sam Maloof oil and poly finish (See Photo 6).

Photo 6

After applying the finish: Note in Photo 1 that the darker woods became noticeably darker than the unfinished sections to the left.

Exposed to full sun: The test board was placed on my deck where it received full sun in the morning and shade in the afternoon. Direct sun accelerates the changes. How much? I cannot quantify it. As I shot the photos I tried to get the same lighting situation, mid morning with the light coming from the upper left, but this too is unscientific. In other words this is an amateur experiment and should be taken with that in mind.

After a week: Comparing photo 1 to photo 2 we can see a marked difference in the holly that was covered vs. the uncovered/unfinished square. The exposed holly is already getting darker. We can also see the whole right column with the oil/poly finish has darkened the wood. We can see the darkening of the cherry heartwood along the top half of the strip but the sapwood, lower portion, on the cherry hasn't changed much. At this point the UV spray finishes doesn't seem to have made much of a difference. I was impressed with how quickly the pear faded and was surprised to see the mahogany developing a sapwood/heartwood variation.

After two weeks: Photo 3 shows the greatest contrast and the UV protection at its greatest effectiveness. Notice on the top (holly) row that the Krylon, 8 coat, and the Golden, 8 coat, squares are still virtually as white as the left hand square that was kept in the dark. Ditto the birch row. The wenge shows less definition in the grain pattern where the UV protection was applied. As expected the oil/poly finish is showing up the darkest on all the woods.

After two months: Photo 4 shows continued degredation. The dark woods have gotten lighter and the light woods have gotten darker. In other words there is less contrast between the woods. There is still protection shown where the UV finishes were applied but one has to look hard.

Final thoughts: UV finishes provided a period of protection but it's not forever. My guess is that in a home situation without direct sunlight the UV protection will at least double the period of time before the full effect of UV exposure takes place. Both of the UV finishes that I tried applied easily with the Golden Varnish taking longer to dry but that can be expected. I've been using Deft in spray cans. Switching to Krylon will be an easy change and the price is about the same. The Golden finish is more expensive but it did provide better protection especially with 3 coats. My conclusion is that the UV finishes are worthwhile and think I'm going to switch. One thing that I won't change is how I select my veneers for the marquetry.

Think tonal values: Considering the fact that wood colors/values change with time makes it even more imperative that we think about tonal values as we select the woods for our picture. I've always been one to select all the woods for my marquetry "before" I start cutting. Within that selection I try to have some very light and very dark woods. This allows me to find clear differences between the mid range pieces. As this experiment has shown, in the end the very lights will no longer be very light and the vary darks will no longer be very dark. But by using some very light and dark woods, after a long period of time the value relationships between the different pieces will still reveal a pleasing picture.

Where We Live

Paid Members as of 10/28/09

2 - Ireland
1 - Finland
1 - Japan
1 - Brazil
1 - England
1 - Australia
4 - Canada

The number of new members has been increasing in recent years but also the number who do not renew so our total membership has grown slowly and now stands at 235.