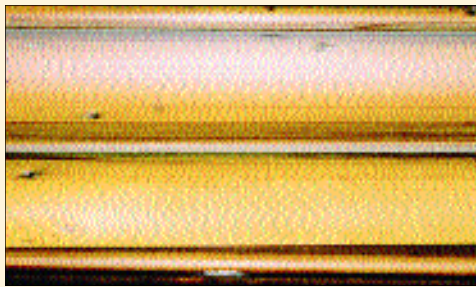


# Altering

by Marc Lizer



*It's not uncommon for a moulding's finish to vary from one batch to another. In this case, I needed to alter the moulding I received at the shop (above) so that it would more closely approximate the finish of the sample (at top). Fortunately, altering the finishes of mouldings with a wax-based finish is not difficult.*

**F**or better or for worse, wax finish mouldings have been very popular lately—at least in our shop. Many moulding suppliers are either introducing or expanding their offerings of moulding with wax-based finishes.

Of course, variations in the surface finish from one batch to another is normal in the framing industry, and wax finishes are no exception. In fact, I've found that often just handling the moulding can alter the “look” of its finish. Sometimes you can call the vendor and ask them to try to find some moulding sticks for a specific match so that you know what you'll receive will match the sample on your wall. However, this is not always an option, and suppliers make it clear to their customers that “color may vary.”

There is, however, a solution to this predicament. If you need to match your moulding to a specific sample or piece of artwork, you can easily modify the wax finish to suit your needs. You don't need much expertise or materials.

## Materials

You'll need: satin finishing wax (in desired color), a small container, a foam brush, one or two rags, and, if you'd like, rubber or plastic gloves.

## The Process

Once you have your materials ready, prepare your workspace and lay the moulding flat on a worktable or bench. The first step will be to brush the satin wax on the moulding; it will collect in the crevices, but result in a shiny, even coat (see photos 1 and 2). Let this dry overnight. The next day, the moulding should have a dull or “satin” appearance to it (see photo 3).

Next, take a rag and rub the moulding until the finish is to your liking (see photo 4—my customer doing a segment to his liking). Photo 5 shows the original corner sample, before and after the finish was rubbed; photo 6 shows three finished sticks of moulding before they are cut and joined; and photo 7 shows a corner of the finished frame.

Remember, steel wool, wire brushes, toothbrushes or other implements can be used to create different effects. Experiment on your corner samples or scrap.

# Wax Finishes



*You don't need many materials to create a new finish: just satin finishing wax, some small containers, a foam brush, some rags, and rubber or plastic gloves, as shown here.*

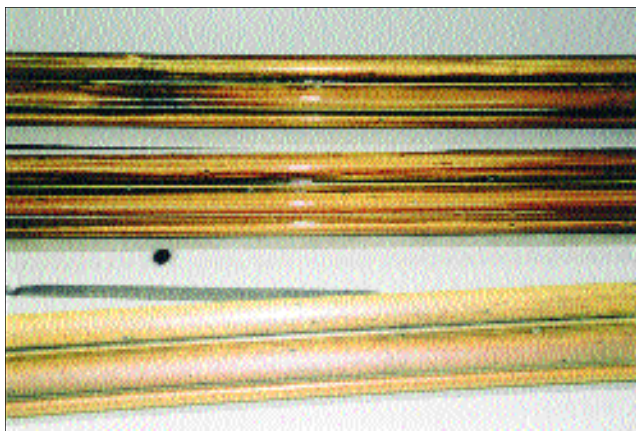


Photo 1

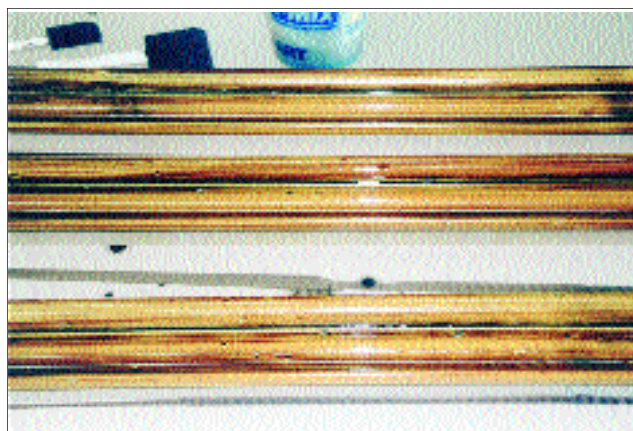


Photo 2

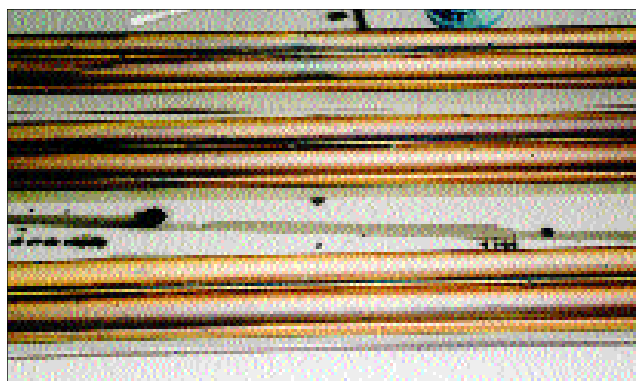


Photo 3

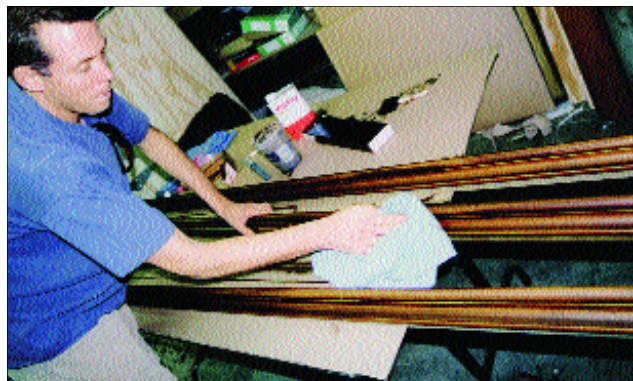


Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

# Altering Wax Finishes

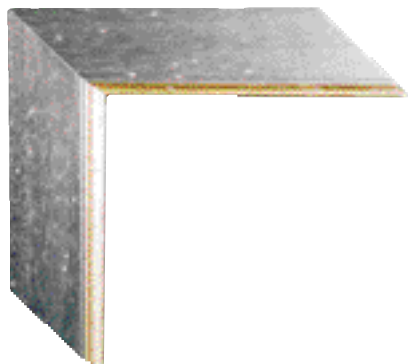


Photo 8

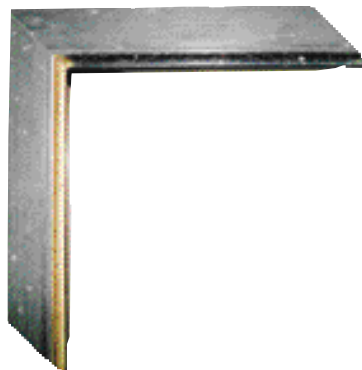


Photo 9



Photo 10

## Other Alternatives

I have also found that you can remove the gold lip on Larson-Juhl's Couleurs Provence line with a little steel wool for fantastic results. I believe that the moulding in this line is finished first, and the gold applied as a final step. Because the gold is not directly applied to the wood it is easy to liberate from the substrate. In other words, with a little elbow grease you can scratch the stuff off.

Another alternative is to use a very light touch and take off the top coat of wax from the lip. This brightens up the gold a bit, but be careful: just a touch too much pressure and you'll obliterate the gold altogether.

Photo 9 shows the original corner sample, while photo 10 shows a sample from which the gold lip has been partially removed. In photo 10, you see a corner of the completed, altered, frame.

As you can see from photo 11, this same technique works well with different colors from the line. These alterations can make the mouldings much more flexible; as you can see in photo 12, I was able to combine yet another color with a silver fillet once the gold lip was removed.

Other moulding lines, besides this Larson-Juhl one, that I have found are flexible and easy to work with (i.e., it is easy to add and remove satin wax finishes to suit) are The Country Cousins from La Marche and many of the Roma lines.

## Pricing

Obviously, you'll want to charge appropriately for services rendered. Include your cost for materials and additional labor time. Fortunately, the expended material cost is not great. After some experimentation you will see that your actual working times are actually less than you thought. ■

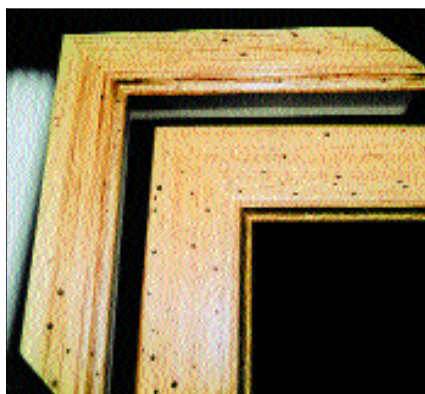


Photo 11



Photo 12

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*Marc Lizer has been framing at the family business, The Canvas Peddler, North Hollywood, California, for many years.*