

fresh from the store replica, I see my grandmother's old trunk.

This is the way I look at old radios. My philosophy qualifies my approach to restoring them. I want them to retain their character. I don't want them to look beat up and junky, but in restoring them, I want to respect their age, and the life that has been invested in them.

I do not attempt to take out every imperfection.

I do not attempt to remove all the old stain, down to bare wood.

I do not try to give them a piano finish.

I do not try to make them look brand new.

I try to make them look nice. Comfortable. Like my grandmother's trunk.

This presentation is predicated on my philosophy and assumes no repair is needed.

Where Do You Start?

1. Remove everything that isn't wood.
2. Clean the cabinet, inside and out.
Need: Compressed air, clean dry microfiber cloth

Decision – To what degree do you want to address the current finish?

- A. Just need to deal with some minor scratches.
Need: Howard Restore-A-Finish. (Follow product directions)
Apply with a clean lint free rag. Wipe excess away and allow to dry. Buff
- B. The finish needs to be removed.

Decision – What is the best way to remove the finish on this radio?

Every radio is different, and there is no one best way to remove the finish.

Possible approaches:

Stripping solutions:

Dad's (Available from Amazon.com)

1. Must wear chemical gloves and use in well ventilated space.
2. Apply with a brush, wait. Remove with plastic scraper. Requires thorough cleaning to Remove all residual. May require repeating process. Let dry completely. If it raises The grain you will have to sand lightly with 220 or great sandpaper.

Note: Sanding can be detrimental if not done carefully. Wrap sandpaper over a flat surface. Sand with grain. Very little pressure. Curved surfaces, and edges take almost no pressure.

3. This product or others like it are good for thick lacquer finishes and polyurethane.

Citristrip (Available at Wal-Mart)

1. Should wear chemical gloves, but does not require open ventilation.
2. Apply thick coat with brush. Wait 30 minutes (up to 24 hours) and remove with plastic Scraper. Use abrasive stripping pad dipped in gel for stubborn areas. Small pick or toothbrush can be used in recessed areas. Clean thoroughly to remove all residual Let dry completely.

The Victorian House Wood Refinisher (available at Best Hardware)

1. Wear chemical gloves. Use in well ventilated space.
2. Pour small amount in metal or glass bowl. Dip #00 steel wool in solution. Squeeze out Excess. Work in small area. Use circular motions until finish dissolves. Wipe immediately with paper towel. Repeat in next area.
3. This product will dissolve a thick layer and works best on finishes that are not thick.
4. You are able to control how much of the stain is pulled up and allows retention of original stain and the patina.

5. No sanding required.

Scrapping Tool

Use sharp blade. Be very careful, as you can easily gouge the wood or rip the veneer. Follow the grain. More forward than downward pressure. Even strokes. Does not remove old stain or patina.

A Very Unorthodox Approach To Refinishing -- Blending

This process will only work in certain situations, and the only way to know if it will work is to try it. Generally speaking, I would not recommend this approach unless you are willing to accept that you may have to can the whole effort and strip the cabinet.

This is a process you might consider on a cabinet that is in fairly good condition, but with scratches, dulling, scuffs and other minor imperfections, and you do not feel you would be satisfied with the results of a product like Howards Restore-A-Finish.

Steps in the Process:

1. Clean the cabinet using Murphy's Oil Soap. Get into crevices with toothbrush, and pick. Dry thoroughly.
2. Using 220 sandpaper, very lightly sand all surfaces. Remove all sanding residual with micro fiber cloth and tack cloth.
3. Using a lent free cloth, apply desired stain directly over the sanded lacquer finish. You may need to wipe off some excess.

Note: The light sanding breaks the surface of the lacquer. When the stain is applied it tends to flow the lacquer, and blend with it.

4. Let dry. CAUTION. Drying time is much longer than normal. Expect up to three days before it is ready for you to shoot a new coat of lacquer.
5. Coat cabinet with new lacquer with the desired number of coats.

Applying Stain and Finish to a Stripped Cabinet

Decision: To sand or not to sand?

It is not necessary, in most cases to sand the cabinet, unless the grain has been raised by chemically stripping, or it is a part of the blending process above. Only by observation and touch can you determine if sanding is really necessary.

If you do sand, follow these precautions:

1. Use the highest grade possible to achieve the desired results.
2. Wrap sandpaper around a sanding block. Fingers do not apply equal pressure.
3. Be extremely careful on rounded surfaces, and edges.
4. Use very light pressure.
5. Sand with the grain, never across it.
6. When sanding veneer, be aware how thin it is. Do not sand hard or too long, as you may damage the veneer.
7. Stripping harshly, and sanding down to bare wood may expose wood surfaces you do not expect, nor want exposed.

Applying Stain

1. Be sure cabinet is free of any stripping or sanding residual.
2. If you need to use a tinted lacquer on the base or some edge, do it prior to staining the rest of the cabinet.

Need: Painters tape (green), and masking paper (green)

- A. Cut masking paper slightly smaller than the edge to edge are you need to mask off.

- B. Tape down along edges, careful not to cover any area intended for tinted spray.
- C. Spray with even strokes from outside the target, to past the target. This ensures even covering and avoids start spots.
- D. Allow drying between coats. Coat to desired color.
- 3. Apply stain with a lint free cloth in overlapping strokes. Wipe excess.
- 4. Allow to thoroughly dry.
- 5. A very light sanding with a finishing grade sandpaper might be needed. Be sure to remove residual with tack cloth.
- 6. Spray clear lacquer as above, with even strokes, moving from outside target to past target. The number of coats is subjective.
- 7. Only the very lightest sanding between coats might be needed. If so, use a very high grade finishing sandpaper (Above 220). Do not sand after the final coating. (May need to rub gently with #0000 steel wool to remove dust particles)

About Spray Lacquers

Typically, you will use a gloss finish. There are numerous brands, and most all of them are good.

One observation – Deft spray lacquer is a good choice because it uses a vertical spray patten, where as most use a circular patten. The vertical pattern makes for more even coating.

Also, you may find using a trigger attachment helpful in maintaining consistent spray patterns.

Supplies List

Stripper

Dad's – strong – must ventilate AMZ

Citristrip – milder – no need to ventilate WM

Victoria House – mild, but needs ventilation BH

Chemical grade gloves ACE, L

Sandpaper – never less than 220 ACE , L\

Steel Wool

#00 for stripping with Victoria House ACE, L, WM

#0000 for final buffing

Painter's Tape – Green (leaves clean line, doesn't leave residue) ACE, L

Masking paper – Green (lacquer will not bleed through) ACE , L

Spray lacquer – recommended Deft because of spray pattern ACE

Trigger attachment for spray cans WM, ACE, L

Howards Restore-A-Finish (covers minor scratches) ACE

Scraper (use at your own risk, but sometimes it's the best tool for the job) ACE , L

Metal or glass bowl for stripping solutions (Victoria House)

Paint brush – to apply strippers

Paper towels – various uses, but needed for Victoria House Finish Remover

Stain – Minwax is good, but there are many to choose from. Do not use water based stains.

Microfiber towels – WM

Compressed air (moisture free) WM

Legend

AMZ Amazon.com

ACE Ace Hardware

WM Wal-Mart

L Lowes

BH Best Hardware (True Value)