



SHOP HRS.
OPEN - MOST TIME
CLOSED - SOME TIME
BUSY - ALL THE TIME
ON SCHEDULE
NONE OF THE TIME

In the Workshop with Charles Neil

Monthly Newsletter

No. 8

February 2008

Welcome to all New Subscribers!

Just 'Shut Up' and DO IT!

Now, I've told you about having to comb my hair, shave, wear a red shirt, and last month I told you about the thorough shop cleaning we did over the holidays, well, it didn't stop there . . . check this out . . .

For years we have thought about separating our shop, the front having saws and assembly, the back, wood processing. With fuel costs so high, now seemed like a good time as we would only have to heat the front. So Billy, my friend Jim Getz, AKA 'possum cop, put up a partition with 2 - 2 1/2' x 10' doors so we can easily move stuff through. Bob can even walk through these. Well, it's just 2x4's and plywood, fit good, worked good, I had to test stuff, it looked great! I was quite happy with the results . . . then it happened.

Sherri comes walking into the shop, "That wall has to be painted!"

I questioned why? You don't see it on camera and . . . so what if you do? Wrong response, so I protested as best I could on my way to buy the paint.

We painted the wall, used an airless sprayer, had to thin the paint about 2 quarts of water to 5 gallons paint to get it to spray, finished the wall, there . . . all done, cleaned up and put

everything away. Sherri comes to check it out.

"Wow, that looks better, sure makes the other wall look bad now."

Sometimes ya gotta know when to keep your mouth shut, but not me, I said, "We're out of paint (not really)." She said nothing, I thought I had won. Twenty minutes later she comes in and tells us "There is five gallons of paint in the car."

I looked at Billy and said, "*Just shut up and do it!*" Now this is the wall where all the products are on shelves, routers, router table, chop saw, etc. We had to move everything, cover it, do you have any idea how much dust hides behind and under stuff? But we did it, sprayed the other wall, cleaned everything up and put everything away.



Now this should be the end of the story, but oh no. We have one more inspection to pass. Yep, you got it, now the other two walls look bad. So we got everything down, moved it and painted the other two walls. End of story.

Are you kidding? Now everything needs to be rearranged, is there no mercy? Nope. Now

we all at some point moved all the furniture in a room five or ten times, until it suited, but table saws and sofas are quite a different animal. So the director gets a cup of coffee, a roll around office chair and directs.

At one point I told Billy, "Hey, we gotta move this over there...again."

He said, "Okay, wait a minute until I can get my spine back in alignment!"

But finally, on day three, we got it to suit. Of course she did help in cleaning and waxing all of the equipment and noted how bad everything still looked and asked, "How did you make such a mess of this stuff? Beats me, it has only been used day in and day out for 15 or 20 years, can't imagine how it got those scratches.

We even got to take down all the light bulbs and wash them. So where does this story end? You got me, color schemes and curtains perhaps?

Last I heard was, "I don't want MY shop looking like a bunch of pigs work in it!"

Moral: Just Shut Up and Do It!

'Bout Done

Well, by the end of this week I will have the Finish DVD series entirely filmed. We purchased some new sound equipment so after hearing the difference, Sherri decided we needed to re-film (we always put out the best that we can) the entire series, except for Oil Finishes. We are so glad we made this decision and you will be too. On this, the third take, we boiled it down a little more, we were able to put more information into less minutes. Not much "Cuttin Fool", couldn't, just too much to cover.

The hardest part of all of this was to test, use, check, so many products. We had products sent in here we had never heard of, and after testing them, you won't hear about them from us either. I even got some "Water Base Linseed" oil from Europe, reading the label it says it contains no solvent and on the very next line it says it is flammable and dangerous if inhaled....and can self ignite....okay! I dislike linseed oil by itself, so why do I have this?

To simplify finishing is like trying to simplify cooking spices in a general sense, you can't and with so much mis-information and poor labeling it is actually disgusting. I've said this before, if ya make it complicated you can sell a solution.

What we have done, and hopefully accomplish, is to show stuff that works, how it works and why it works. Are the products we have the only thing out there? No, not at all, but at least you will know what to look for and why. The object of the video series is to inform you to a level where you can make "smart" choice and know why.

Videos in the series already completed are "Building to Finish - Sanding & Smoothing," "Preparing to Color and Repairs," "Dyes and Stains," and "Oil Finishes." We will be shipping these titles to those of you who have pre-ordered withing the week (except to Canada, because of the high shipping charges we will be holding for the entire set). The last titles will ship in about 2-3 weeks. Again, we are sorry for the time it has taken since we first announced the pre-order, but...we apologize in no way for the content that you will receive in this set.

I will continue to take pre-orders until February 15, 2008 at the reduced price, February 16th the price goes to list retail, so if you haven't ordered your set, I encourage you to get your order in.

Price vs. Quality

About ten years ago I bought some router bits, they were by the company's statement, state of the art, best out there and were the most expensive. Nice packaging, looked great. First time I used one, the carbide came off and the second broke in half. I called the company, they told me I didn't use it correctly. Reluctantly they sent me another set, same thing, pure junk. My point here is that price doesn't always dictate quality.

Product Reviews....now this is an area I really didn't want to go, but like the finishing stuff, you tell someone how to do something and they go get some off the wall, watered down product, and if it fails then you gotta explain and help them out, and you're gonna hear, but you didn't tell me that. That is where products with good customer service comes in. No matter what tool or product you buy, anything can have a defect, it is how it is resolved that matters.

We are doing a "Resource" page on our website (Sherri is working on it in her spare time!). It is simply the folks we have been doing business with forever and who we have had good success with, again, are they the only ones, of course not, but I can only tell ya what I know and use, and I surely don't claim to know it all, just like you, I learn every day.

Now having said all that, my intention was to do these videos as generic as possible when it came to products and tools, but that didn't work. The number of emails asking what we used was unbelievable, so we re-looked at it and decided unlike the TV shows, we would show what we were using, ok, problem solved, NOT!

Now we are getting everybody wanting us to use their "whatevers." Now I'm just like you, I like tools, A LOT! And over the years I've built my shop up, added this, added that, if a

specific project needed something I didn't have I tried to either get it or make it, but oh no, my welded, patched, extension cord replacement, glue covered, stain sloped tools I've worked with forever isn't desirable to be seen by the public, I guess it is like an ugly dog...good dog, but he looks better leaving than coming, but ya still love him.

So I guess we're gettin some new stuff, yea, yea, yea, now I got nothing against new tools, who would? But like those great jeans or sneakers that you been five years breakin' in and are just now getting comfortable and you come home and find them in the trash and dig them out, it is hard to part with good friends, So I'm having some issues here.

DVD Update

Great news! Woodcraft Supply will begin selling select "In the Workshop with Charles Neil" DVD titles online and in their catalog sometime in the very near future, they are waiting on the first shipment to arrive at their warehouse.

We too will still offer them for sale directly from our website where you will find the entire list of titles available.

February DVD Feature: "The Adventures of Bob & Charles"

7 Disc Set - 352 minutes
Complete Projects: Keeping Chest & Colonial Candle Box



You also get actual size pattern for the Keeping Chest feet and the sliding lid for the candle box as well as a drawing of the molding profile and a list of the hardware used.

"I have watched the first 4 of the Adventure DVD. THEY ARE EXCELLENT!!!" Lee M. - Maryland

We are offering it until the end of February at the reduced price of \$89.95 but only through this newsletter, just click below to purchase. The price goes back to \$119.95 at the end of this month.

www.antiquesbuiltdaily.com/februaryspecial.htm

For those of you who received "The Adventures of Bob & Charles Set, I have located a DVD case that holds all seven discs and will be sending each of you one as soon as they arrive.

The Finish Line

Dyes - Stuff

Pretty simple, right? Wrong.

There are three dominant types of dyes.

- Concentrates - like TransTint
- Powdered - like W.D. Lockwood & Transfast
- Pre-Mixed - like Mohawk, Gemini, Behlen and General Finishes

Then we have water base - solvent base and oil base.

Dyes are NOT an exterior coloring, they fade faster than anything, exterior use should be pigmented stains, with exterior UV protective top coats.

Water base is the most colorfast (fades less)

Concentrates can be mixed to make a dye, used to tint or adjust color of dyes and stains

Pre-mixed dyes are usually "metal complex" dyes - Lockwood sells a few also.

Metal complex dye pigments are far more colorfast than regular dye, but still not an exterior quality.

Regular dyes can fade fast under florescent lighting and in bright sunny rooms, metal complex is far better in these environments.

Water base dyes are far easier to hand apply than solvents, they dry slower and give you more work time.

Solvent dyes are best sprayed, particularly the pre-mixed, which are usually called NGR. (Non-Grain Raising) and is actually Glycol-Ethers (like you care) which dry very fast.



The best way to apply a dye is to saturate, soak it well, wipe it down, let it dry.

Spraying gives better control in applying dyes.

One coat of dye gives one color, two will double the color, stains do not work this way. The exception is oil dyes, the oil seals the wood so very little penetration is achieved with multiple coats.

Wiped dyes blotch the worst.

Avoid drips, brushes don't do well, staining pads and gloves and gettin' nasty work well.

Drips will show, if you get a drip on bare wood, quickly wipe it with dye.

Do pieces and parts in sections.

Work fast.

Dye, when it dries may look like *()*&^ but as soon as a top coat hit it, the true color returns.

Dyes often look lighter when dry than when wet and people will re-dye, DON'T or it will go too dark.

If it gets uneven or goes too dark, wipe it with it's medium, i.e., water, alcohol or use some lacquer thinner to even it out.

If it has gone south, apply a lighter color, it will lighten it.

If it has gone completely south, use some chlorine bleach, it will kill the color and remove most of it.

Wear good gloves, use a respirator and have plenty of ventilation, even water base product uses chemicals.

If you bleach it, wash it down with a 50/50 mix of baking soda and water, then wear a good respirator when you sand.

Many products labeled stains are actually dyes and/or combinations. A lot of Box store stains are oil based dyes, usually weak and don't dry well at all.

Follow this link to view my video on telling the difference. I go in depth, visually on this topic as well as stains in the finishing video series.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGZfmxbzTZg>

Water base stains - Best stuff on the Market
End of Story.

The Weather Report

Well, one week we are in the 30's, next the 70's, I'll go with the 70's. Poor ol' Bob up in Wisconsin is gettin' hammered well below 0, high winds and snow and I can't even imagine what you guys and gals in colder areas have to deal with! Bob, he calls that God's country, of course, Bob is not unlike a polar bear, likes it cold, if it is above freezing it is cut-off shorts and sleeveless shirts - strange for a fellow with no hair!

Today it is about 70 degrees with a 35% humidity, perfect for water base finishes. 70 to 80 degrees with 50% or less humidity is perfect finish weather.

Keep in mind though, even with temperatures fluctuating as they have this winter, it takes several days of sustained temp and humidity change to affect your shop conditions, it is still winter.

Craftsman Profile

Whispering 'bout Wood!

When I first got to know Bob Kloes, we hit it off immediately. One of the common denominators was that we both had given up very secure careers to do the woodworking thing. Now, I wouldn't suggest this to anyone, Bob will tell you and I will tell you, it is tough, and you have to have your family on board, behind you all the way or it is a no go. But to the other side, to be able to follow your passion is something few get to do, then when something like this DVD and Internet stuff happens, well, it all seems to be worth it.

All of that said, when we started doing all of this stuff, we picked up on Marc Spagnuolo, aka The Wood Whisperer on youtube.com, doing some woodworking videos with some humor, good stuff. One of the first things we

noticed was how well it was filmed and the sound quality, as we did our thing and it grew, we watched Mark grow also. One of the first impressions I had was that Marc, being young, would attract a younger audience and help introduce woodworking to a new generation, and he is doing just that.

When Sherri went out on the forums seeking advice on making our video quality better and some tech stuff, Marc immediately responded and has been a tremendous help. In addition to his woodworking skills, he is a tech whiz.

Over the past several months Marc and I have had several conversations, kinda wood shop talk stuff. We hit it off and come to find out, he gave up a career as a micro-biologist, you know, lab coats, DNA, maybe get to mess with a rat or two, making a zillion bucks, secure forever, to pursue his passion for woodworking.

Marc's enthusiasm is genuine, I remember all too well when I learned something new or was able to show how to do something, how great that feeling was, and I still get that feeling every time I complete a video, whether full-length or a clip.

You will probably agree that most of us old timers write such a youngster off - how could he possibly know when he is so young. Well, that is the beauty of Marc, he doesn't say he know it all and openly admits that he is learning every day, from ol' guys like me, but he has invited a whole generation as well as us ol' folks to learn right along with him.

Bob is going to be back in Virginia in May and we have extended an invitation to Marc and his wife Nicole to visit as well. Just imagine what we might come up with!

I'm proud to call "The Wood Whisperer" my friend. Oh, one more thing I have noticed with Marc, his energy and enthusiasm is

contagious and seems to be getting some of us ol' geezers off the sofa or out from behind the computer and actually in the shop doing some woodwork. I guess we could call Mark the viagra of woodworking!

So, Marc, *What's Your Story?*

I would be more than happy to give you some insight into how I got where I am. And believe me, I still have a long way to go. So grab a cup of coffee and get ready for a long story. I grew up in Trenton NJ and had my first taste of wood dust when my step-father renovated our house. I learned



how to swing a hammer, operate a drill, and even frame a wall. Growing up, I would build various things with my step dad's tools like treasure boxes and speaker cabinets. I really had no idea what I was doing. And in college, I even made reptile cages for my own pets, and wound up making several other cages for friends. In fact, the first thing I was ever paid to build was a 6' x 6' cage for an iguana.

After college, I moved to the West Coast to begin my career in biotech. Like many of you, I had a good career ahead of me.....and hated every minute of it. I had a horrible commute, a bad relationship with my boss, and my love for science was quickly diminishing. Now on the other end of the spectrum, my woodworking hobby was getting more and more serious. I just couldn't get enough shop time. In fact, my wife started getting quite annoyed with me because I wanted to spend all of my free time working in the garage. I loved spending time with my wife, but there was just something about being

in the shop that really healed the wounds of the work day.

I started doing jobs here and there for friends and neighbors, which really planted the seed for my thoughts of starting my own business. After a while, we decided to move from Southern California to Arizona. Since I needed to quit my job anyway, my wife suggested I take some time to work with David Marks (that's a whole other story). After the short-term apprenticeship (and I use this term loosely), we made the decision to start the business. I had to start from scratch. But I had two things going for me: a nice big garage for a shop and my wife makes a healthy salary. Things were tight for a while, but I managed to get by with only a few jobs here and there during the first year of business. During that time, I started to offer woodworking classes out of my shop. I also started shopping myself around as a woodworking instructor and scored a few jobs at woodworking schools around the country.

So by the end of the first year, I had a good website, lots of business cards, lettering on my truck, but not enough business to pay the bills. In order to help out, I got a full-time job with an engineering company here in Phoenix. I still ran the business on the side and I learned a few lessons. First, I was reminded how much it sucks to work 9-5. I also learned that I would be miserable doing anything other than following my dreams. So once we got through the rough patch, I decided to double my efforts and go back into woodworking full-time. And just to make things a little easier, I started working for a refinishing shop in Phoenix a few days a week. I had a steady flow of customers and felt pretty comfortable for a year or so.

And of course, in November of 2006, we started The Wood Whisperer. Nothing has been the same since. What started as a fun little side project has taken over my life and career and I wouldn't have it any other way.

We are still evolving as a business, but one thing is clear: The Wood Whisperer is our future. The show and website are now my full-time job. And I couldn't be happier, since now I get to build great furniture and teach people as I go. And since I am by no means finished with my own training, I will take my viewers along for the ride as I improve different aspects of my craft.

I hope sharing my experience will help you in achieving your dream.

Visit Marc at:

www.thewoodwhisperer.com

You Might be a Woodworker if

...you are sitting in church wondering what you could make from all those pews of quarter sawn white oak. Arw01

...you pull the top off your CA glue bottle with your teeth and end up gluing your lips together. Bob N, GA

...lint is the least of what is caught in the lint trap of your dryer.

...your kids can sleep through the sound of a planer or a router being used in the basement, and they don't even adjust the sound level of tv when the table saw is running. CurlyCherry, MN

...you complain because your old clothes are going to Goodwill...when they should really be "promoted" to shop clothes. Duggie, ON, CA

...vacations are planned around what there is to do "that's woodworking related."
Eightfingers, MO

...when you empty the shop trash can it is more like an anthropological dig than a clean up chore. GMike

...you wear a WoodNet hat and just smile if someone asks why it says WoodNut.
K.L.McReynolds, KS

...you check out woodgrain imprint on concrete. Knotscott, NY

...you have named all your tools women's names. Like a dust collector being named Monica, for the obvious reason, of course!
Mags, AZ.

...you have used super glue to close a wound.
Papadan, KY

...your shop is insured for more than your home. Poppie, KY

Sherri's Update

DVDs are shipping daily, thanks for your support, the feedback and comments have been great and help us to put out the best product we can.

The "Ask Charles Neil" Forum is now live on our website, you can go there from the main page of our website, just click on the link. I am using a program from a provider that is free, thus we have to tolerate some ads, don't feel a need to click on them unless you are interested, it is not an affiliate program, just

there because the forum is free. The purpose of the forum is to allow you to discuss woodworking issues directly with Charles, when he is at the shop, he will check in at least once a day. He will still be "lurking" on the other forums, this is where we find out what you want to learn or are having issues and perhaps Charles can help, so, join the forum.

Don't forget that if you send our newsletter to two woodworkers, using the link at the bottom of the newsletter email (Send to Friends) I'll send you a link to receive a 10% discount on any DVD (s) you purchase in the next 30 days. Many of you took advantage last month and you can too!

Time to say Goodbye for this Month

Now What?

Well, I got to finish up building some pieces, customers getting anxious, then I'm gonna do a router DVD set, a lathe set, more later, but they will be quite extensive.

We got some clips to do for Woodcraft, they are fun, get to play with new tools. Where do they find this stuff? They come up with some of the neatest stuff I ever saw. Check out some of our clips:

<http://www.brightcove.tv/channel.jsp?channel=1155152696>

A lot of you have followed this DVD, youtube thing from the beginning and have seen it evolve, it has been like wandering through a maze, blind folded. Not sure where you are going and no clue as to what twist or turn lies ahead, the path seems to be getting a little

clearer now, certainly can't give up the "day job" of woodworking, but thanks to all of you, it may be possible to one day concentrate fully on education entirely, time will tell.

I'm pleased that Woodcraft will be carrying selected DVD titles (as Sherri told you earlier), the newsletter continues to grow each day as well as youtube and brightcove.tv and of course we now have our own little forum on our website.

So I think that perhaps we will be able to keep on teaching what we can, at least for the foreseeable future.

I guess dreams can come true.

One last thing, now that the finishing videos are under control, I'll be getting back to making sawdust again so upcoming videos and newsletters will be focusing more that direction, looking forward to it. Also in future months I am adding a section to highlight a product, tool or piece of equipment.

Catch ya next month!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.