

Filling Grain and Finishing Calls With CA Glue

Call makers use dozens if not hundreds of different products and techniques to finish their calls. The emphasis is on sealing the wood, and giving the call a durable finish that looks as good as it works. Finding the perfect finish has become the Holy Grail for many call makers.

For some time now, Pen Turners have been using CA Glue to finish their turned wood pens. It is a hard, durable and good looking finish. It is also relatively fast to apply. The CA finish is slowly making it's way to the Custom Call Making Community.

This article will cover how I use CA glue to fill grain and finish my calls. Again, there are several ways to apply CA glue for a finish. This one has given me the best results and is the easiest for me to apply. Here is how I do it.

After turning the call to shape, I take it off the mandrel. Depending on the bore of the call, I use a corresponding piece of Delrin with a couple of O rings set into it as a blind mandrel. The delrin is chucked up in the step jaws of my chuck



I use a blind mandrel to sand the call because it allows me to take the call off quickly and reverse it's position.

Sanding lifts the grain of the wood. Reversing the position changes the direction the call is turning and allows the sand paper to cut the fibers that have lifted, giving you a much better finish.

For this article I am going to use a Bonker barrel. Once the barrel is turned, and I rough sand it a bit to square up the ends, I place it on my delrin mandrel.



With the lathe running at the slowest speed, I start my initial sanding at 100 or 120 grit. I am trying at this point to build up some sanding dust on the call barrel. Once I have it sanded a bit, it is time to apply a coat of thin CA Glue.



The key here is to use THIN CA glue and to NOT wipe the dust from the

sanding off the call prior to putting the CA glue on.

With the lathe running, I apply the CA glue with one hand while continuing to sand with the other until the CA is spread over the entire barrel. Be careful as the CA Glue will dry quickly and it will start to react with the sanding dust and get hot on the piece of sand paper. Don't worry, everyone burns their fingers and glues them together as they learn this finishing process.



Once you have the entire barrel covered with thin CA, let the lathe run and the call fully dry. It will take about 2 or 3 minutes.



This is what your barrel will look like after the first application of thin CA glue.

Once dry, it is time to move to the next grit of sand paper and start lightly sanding the barrel.



At this stage, you want to sand all the CA Glue off the surface of the call. The thin CA glue will have soaked into the wood and filled some of the grain at the same time with the sanding dust that you left on the barrel as you applied the first coat of CA glue.

As you sand, apply a small amount of water to the sandpaper. This will help you see how you are doing. Remember to turn the barrel around so you sand it both ways.



As you sand, the call will dry and you will be ready to apply the next coat of thin CA.

Leave the sanding dust on, and apply another coat of thin CA glue using the same grit sand paper you have been using.

With the lathe running at slow speed, start at one end of the barrel and move the glue bottle to the other end as you apply a thin coat while spreading it with your sand paper.



Allow the CA glue to dry, and then start sanding with the next grit. On this call, I started at 100 grit, went to 120, and now we are at 150 grit.

Use some water to clean off the dust as you sand. It helps to see that you have removed all the surface glue. Again, these applications are done to mainly fill the grain.



Keep sanding until you have removed all the surface glue and the barrel is smooth again.

Apply another coat of THIN CA glue and sand it in as you apply it,



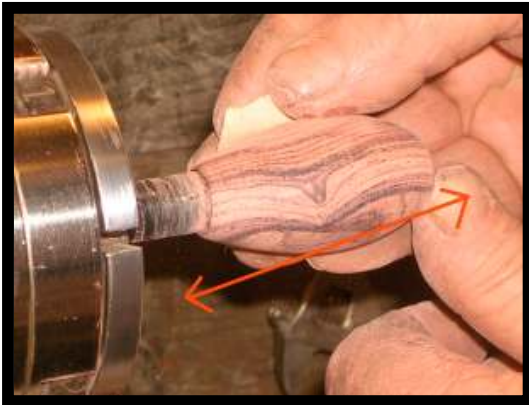
Switch to the next grit of sand paper and when the barrel is dry, begin sanding the surface glue off. You should be working with 180 grit now, and the grain of the call should be filled almost completely.

Once you have the barrel smooth, take a damp paper towel and wipe the barrel down. Check it to make sure that grain is filled. If not, you will want to make one more application of thin CA glue.



If the grain looks filled, sand the call a bit more, and then turn off the lathe.

Sand the call in the direction of the grain. This helps remove fine scratches left from the previous grits and gets us ready to start applying the finishing coats of CA glue.



If the grain still needs some work, apply more thin CA with the 180 grit and then after sanding off the surface glue with 220 grit, check the grain again. It should be filled enough to move on.

From now on, after we sand with each grit, we will be stopping the lathe and then sanding with the grain each time.

It is now time to switch to Medium CA Glue.



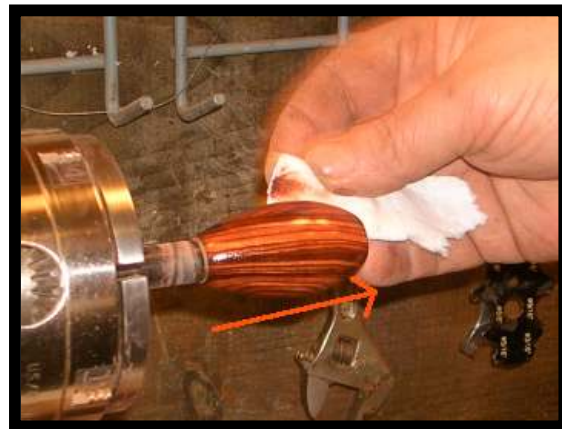
The application process for the Medium CA is a bit different because we are now changing to a finishing application to build gloss and add protection to the barrel.

Take about a 3" by 3" piece of paper towel and fold it into a small rectangle. Any paper towel will work as long as it is VIVA paper towels. They are the softest and most lint free you will find.

Apply a small dot of Medium CA glue on one end of the paper towel. Try to get a drop about half the size of a dime.



With the lathe running at the slowest speed, make ONE wipe from front to back with the pad of Medium CA glue.



Allow the glue to dry, and switch to the 220 grit. Sand the barrel smooth.

Stop the lathe and sand with the grain. It will look like you have removed all of the surface glue, but there will be a thin coat left that you can't see,

Prepare another piece of paper towel with some medium CA glue and make another wipe.



You can see the finish on the barrel starting to take shape.

Continue with wiping on the Medium CA glue



And sanding the barrel with the next finer grit. I sand and apply the Medium CA through 800 grit,

After sanding the barrel with 800 grit, it is time to buff the call out.

I start with Tripoli and buff the call with the grain. Use the same piece of delrin that you used as a blind mandrel to hold one end of the call barrel.

Then switch to a White Diamond wheel and finish buffing.



Finally, use a Carnuba wax wheel to finish the buffing process



The finished product



The CA Glue Finish is an easy and quick finish that is not only durable but good looking too. It takes a little getting used to, but once you get it down, I think you be impressed with the results.

However, there is a down side to this finish. If your call has a lot of intricate detail in it, this finish will not work. You will find it too difficult if not impossible to sand out the small detail without destroying all your work.

But for a call with a smooth flowing shape, it is one of the better finishes you can use,

Al @ THO

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