

General Finishes Candlelite Stain on Butternut

This was the desk clock shown at the December 2021 Craft Corner

Marshall Stearns

- Surface finish was from jointer, planar and edge shape router. Quite smooth. (Surfaces were not sanded. I might have sanded the routed end grain.)
- At this point the pieces (top, central block and base) were not glued together.
- Sealed surface prior to carving to reduce blotching:
 - Sprayed a light even coat of Minwax Fast-Drying Polyurethane on:
 - The top surface of the top.
 - The left, right, front and back of the central block.
 - Rubbed out all surfaces that will be visible using grey synthetic pad.
 - The edges and bottom of the top had been masked for later gluing.
 - The base was not sprayed.
- Chip carved sides and front.
- In this process I had transferred a carving pattern to what later was to become the back. I decided against that pattern, erased it off and had to sand it to remove the indented lines from the tracing stylus. I did not re-seal the back surface. This largely removed the sealing of the back.
- Glued on the top and base.
- Ragged on General Finishes Candlite Gel Stain, then wiped it off, brushed stain from the carved facets, repeated this till the stain pretty much no longer wiped off.
- Cured a week or two.
- Shellac coat #1: Ragged on blonde dewaxed 1 ½ lb. cut. Ragging here is much better than brushing or spraying. Plus, it does not puddle in the carved facets.
- Rubbed out with grey pad.
- Coat #2
- Rubbed out with grey pad and cleaned up the darkness of some end grain with 200 paper.
- Coat #3

- Coat #4
- Rubbed out with well-worn brown bag paper.

This left a very nice, rich, moderately dark color. The carved facets showed very well. The stain very nicely brought out the fine carvings which otherwise are somewhat lost in the grain lines of the butternut.

If I should want a lighter color, I should seal the surface more.

The back side, which was not sealed, was quite blotchy and showed the grain strongly. The lesson here is to seal butternut prior to using stain.