

French Polishing NI



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The purpose of the finish on a piece of fine furniture – its *raison d'être*, to add a little French polish – is for surface protection and figurative enhancement. The simplest definition of French Polishing is “The application of a glossy surface to timber, by the means of a Lac or Shellac solution”. Shellac being a polish made from the exudation of the Lac Beetle, mixed with methylated spirit. Though finishing techniques can reproduce a variety of looks in the refurbishment of fine furniture, only time can produce that genuinely antique look – a look that had its roots in the original finish. If the purpose of French Polishing is simple, (being to seal the timber, and prevent movement due to moisture absorption) but the practice is as complex as the craft is old. It wears well and keeps the dirt out, whilst providing a superior finish. And refurbishing furniture that has been properly finished in the first place is particularly challenging, though, when you get it right, its enormously rewarding for craftsman and client. French Polishing is a very popular finish for fine pieces of furniture, and the application is an art in itself. The application of numerous layers of polish by a rubber (a pad made of wadding and cloth to apply the polish) until the desired degree of depth is obtained. Then the piece of work is cut back by the craftsman until the desired finish is obtained. In the hands of a capable craftsman hand French Polishing provides an immaculate finish to your furniture, whilst enhancing the features of the timber.

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