

# ColorTone Aerosol Finishing Set Instructions for Dark Back Guitar Lacquer

## Tips and instructions for achieving a professional finish

**Keeping it Simple:** The ColorTone® Finishing Sets let you finish an entire instrument without an elaborate spraying setup or equipment.

### ColorTone products included in this set

- 1 - Powdered Grain Filler, Neutral
- 1 - Vinyl Sealer
- 1 - 50s Classic Color Lacquer, Aged Clear
- 1 - Tinted Lacquer, Tobacco Brown
- 3 - Clear Gloss Lacquer



### Spray tips

Nitrocellulose finishes should have a total of 6–12 (or more) coats—sealer, color, and clear coats combined. The total number will depend upon how thick your coats are, how much sanding you do, and what your final desired finish thickness is. Beginners should spray 10–12 coats to avoid sanding or buffing through the finish. As you gain experience, you'll find that fewer coats are required.

Spraying conditions are important. For best results, a low humidity environment is recommended. We suggest a spraying temperature of 70° F with 50% humidity.

Before spraying, we recommend placing your spray cans in a container of warm tap water. The increase in temperature helps the lacquer flow better and reduces unwanted spitting. When the can begins to feel cold during use, we recommend switching to a warmed can as chilled cans are more likely to spit. Place the chilled can back in the water so it can be warmed back up and used again.

To prevent runs and sags we suggest spraying light coats and lots of them. It takes a little longer but is less frustrating in the long run.

If you do get a run or sag, simply let the finish harden for 24 hours, then level-sand the blemish using 400-grit sandpaper on a backing block.

To clear the spray head, invert the can and spray for 2–3 seconds. Keep the spray tips clean by soaking them in lacquer thinner between coats. This helps prevent clogging and spitting.

When spraying, keep the spray parallel to the surface of the guitar for even coverage.

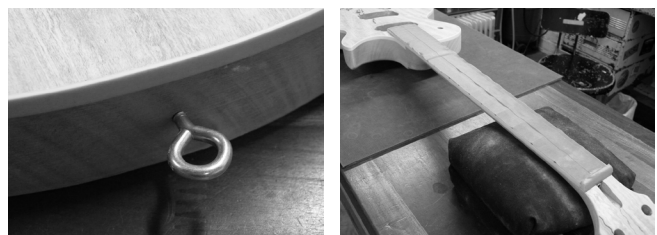
Conducting a test on a piece of scrap wood will help you achieve the desired results. If it looks good on your test piece, it will look good on your guitar! Make sure the scrap is similar in color to your body and neck.

### Wood prep for finishing

Inspect the body and neck for any dents, chips, or other imperfections and repair them. Small dents can be steamed out by placing a damp cloth over the dent and applying heat with a soldering iron. Chips, knotholes and gaps will need to be filled. We recommend filling them with a thick viscosity super glue.

Drill a 5/64" hole for the lower strap button. Temporarily install an eyebolt in the hole, to serve as a hanging hook during finishing.

Mask off the face of the fretboard and nut.



## **Sand the body**

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Using 150-grit sandpaper on a foam sanding block, sand the neck, body and peghead face—making sure to sand in the direction of the grain.

After the initial sanding, wipe the back of the body, neck and peghead face with a damp cloth. This will raise the grain to reveal fibers that need additional sanding. Let the damp areas dry, then sand the raised grain with 220-grit sandpaper. Next, take a damp cloth and raise the grain over the instrument one more time and sand using 320-grit sandpaper.

Use compressed air, a tack cloth, or vacuum to remove dust.

## **Filling the grain (optional)**

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Traditionally, the pores of open grained woods such as mahogany, ash, and koa need to be filled in order to achieve a level surface to build your finish on. This has, however, become an optional step.

While many manufacturers still use grain filler on their builds some, including Gibson and PRS, are foregoing this step on some models in favor of a thinner finish. The choice is yours.

We suggest using our Neutral ColorTone Powdered Grain Filler following the instructions on the label. Three applications are recommended to get a nice flat surface to build finish coats over.

Let dry for 4-5 hours after final application.

## **Build a level surface with Vinyl Sealer**

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Shake the can for at least one minute after the agitator rattles.

To prevent runs, don't spray too heavily. We recommend multiple thin coats, with the aerosol held 8–10 inches from the surface of your instrument. Spray 2–4 coats, allowing at least 1–2 hours between spraying.

Between sealer coats, sand very lightly using a sanding block with 320-grit sandpaper to remove any fuzz or lint that may appear. This is not the same as level-sanding: use a light touch, being careful not to sand through to the wood. Let final sealer coat dry for 24 hours before spraying color coats.

## **Color coats**

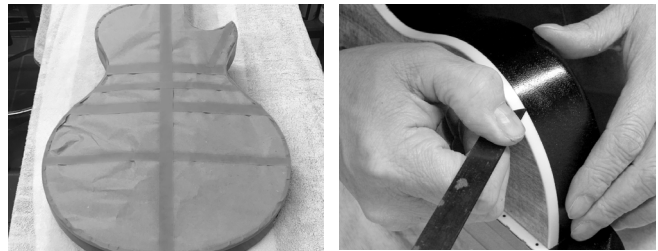
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Mask off the peghead face, the top of the body and the binding on the body and neck. Use care when masking to make sure the tape stops where the binding meets the body. This will prevent any excessive scraping or unwanted touchups.

Shake the can for at least one minute after the agitator rattles. Apply 1–3 color coats or until desired coverage is reached. Spray 2–3 coats a day, 1–3 hours apart.

Wait two hours after your last coat and remove the masking off the top and bindings, leaving the masking tape on the face of the fretboard.

Inspect the binding and scrape off any brown overspray that might be on the body.



## **Clear lacquer coats**

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Remember to shake the can for at least one minute after the agitator rattles. As with the previous coats, we recommend spraying multiple thin coats, with the aerosol held 8-10 inches from the surface of your instrument for best results.

Apply 4–10 coats, 2–3 coats per day, allowing 1–2 hours between coats. Let dry for 24 hours before level-sanding. After level-sanding apply 1–2 additional coats.

## **Cure the finish**

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This is very important: let the finish cure for 10–14 days before final sanding and buffing. A hard-cured finish will buff out well, while an uncured finish will drag and soften due to the friction of buffing.

## **Final sanding and polishing**

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After the finish has dried for 10-14 days, peel the tape off the fretboard. Use a razor blade or scraper to remove any overspray on the board, then polish the frets using extra fine Scotch-Brite or 0000 steel wool. Follow up by cleaning the fretboard with ColorTone Lemon Oil (#3864) or your favorite conditioner.

We suggest starting the polishing process for the body and neck by wet-sanding with 800-grit Micro Finishing Papers. Starting with a higher grit reduces the possibility of sanding through the clear coats into color.

Wet-sand up to 1200-grit then apply medium and fine ColorTone Polishing Compounds with a soft cloth or foam polishing pad. Follow up with Swirl Remover for a high gloss finish.