Recipe 32: Pre-'56 two-tone sunburst on ash

FINISHING RECIPE #32

Two-tone Fender sunburst in the pre-1956 style

The finishing recipe on the next page comes from the book, *Guitar Finishing Step-By-Step* from StewMac. This is recipe #32 for creating a two-tone sunburst in the Fender style like the one pictured above.

#5095
Guitar Finishing Step-By-Step

PRE-'56 TWO-TONE SUNBURST ON ASH

RECIPE 32

1. Spray wash coat and let it dry two hours. (Fender probably used the same ultrathin penetrating furniture primer described in the Blond recipe, and they may have wiped or brushed it on.)

2. Wipe on filler, let dry several days. To remove any surface residue, sand lightly with 180- or 220-grit Fre-Cut paper.

3. Spray two to four coats sealer, with 2 hours drying time between each application. As always, you want the sealer coat as thin as possible, but thick enough to sand nearly flat. Let dry overnight in a warm place.

4. Using 220-grit Fre-Cut sandpaper on a sanding block, level-sand to eliminate the majority of shiny spots.

5. Spray one or two coats yellow lacquer toner to cover, allowing 30 minutes between coats. Let dry two hours.

6. Seal with two coats of ready-to-spray clear lacquer, allowing 30 minutes between coats, and dry overnight.

7. Wipe-sand with 320-grit paper just to knock off dust. Avoid sanding through into the color and stay off sharp edges.

8. Spray dark brown tone, beginning with the sides and shooting outward to avoid overspray. When the sides are dark enough, begin shooting the edges of the top and back where they meet the side. Again, shoot outward to avoid overspray on main body.

9. Let dry for 15 to 30 minutes, then brush off any dry overspray using a soft, clean brush. Work from the center toward the edge.

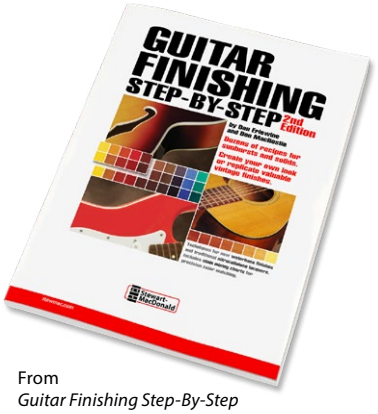
10. At this point, switch to the lighter brown by adding clear lacquer to the brown just used. Finish the sunburst from the center out to where the lighter brown meets the darker brown as it wraps over the corner. Let dry one hour.

11. Spray one wash coat of thin clear lacquer to stabilize the color. Let dry four hours or even overnight.

12. Apply a single coat of clear lacquer; wait twenty minutes. Then follow with 3 to 4 double coats, allowing two hours between applications. (A double coat means that you spray around the body once, then immediately go around again without letting the first coat dry.) After the second double coat has dried for two hours, sand with 320-grit no-load paper.

13. Hang to dry for a week or more. Wet-sand and polish as usual.

- 6 ounce wash coat your choice
- 4 to 6 ounces natural (golden) oil-based grain filler
- 180- to 220-grit Fre-Cut paper
- 1/2 quart or less sanding sealer: Choose from sanding sealer, vinyl sealer, or clear lacquer
- 8 ounce transparent yellow lacquer toner (see "Making lacquer shaders and toners" in Chapter 9: Step 8)
- 1 to 1-1/2 quarts clear lacquer
- 320-grit no-load paper
- 1 to 1-1/2 quarts lacquer thinner
- 8 ounces pigmented brown toner. You will use a dark and light version of the same toner—the lighter version is simply the dark version extended with clear lacquer to weaken it (see Recipe 31: Dark Salem Maple Shader)



From
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RECIPE 31 DARK SALEM MAPLE SHADER

This recipe is for our version of Dark Salem Maple, the dark brown-black pigmented shader that Fender uses for the outside color on a Strat-style sunburst (in either the two-tone or three-tone variety). It starts with a Van Dyke brown liquid pigment (brown darkened with black).

1. Place the liquid pigment in a suitable jar for mixing. Add small amounts of thinner to the liquid pigment until you get a slurry.

2. Add clear lacquer to the slurry a little at a time, until you get a brown lacquer. Mix well.

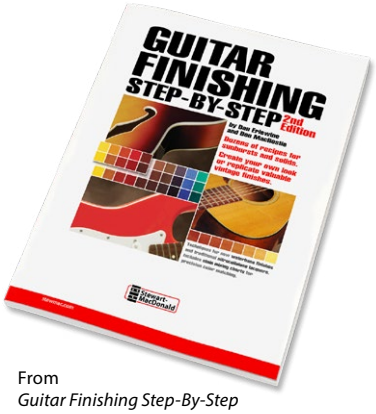
3. Add black lacquer until you achieve the final color you're after, and mix well again.

10 ounces ready-to-spray lacquer, or clear lacquer thinned 1 to1 (5 ounces lacquer to 5 ounces thinner)

1 tablespoon Van Dyke brown liquid pigment

2 ounces black ready-to-spray lacquer, or black lacquer thinned 1 to 1

Lacquer thinner



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Making lacquer shaders and toners

Make lacquer shaders and toners by putting the appropriate colorant into clear lacquer or other clear topcoat, such as shellac or waterbase finish. Use one of the following colorants (they're all detailed in Chapter 3):

NGR stain mixed in any standard dye strength can be added in up to a 1 to 1 ratio to unthinned clear lacquer. Because NGR stain uses glycol ether as one of its solvents, it can be used in place of lacquer thinner, both coloring it and thinning it simultaneously without imbalancing the mixture or changing the lacquer's drying properties. Glycol ether is a retarder, however, and since it makes up 30% of an NGR stain, it will slow down the lacquer's drying time considerably—maybe by a whole day or more.

Alcohol stain (usually made from powder; see Chapter 8) can be added to lacquer, but if the stain is straight alcohol stain (usually methanol without glycol ether), you risk imbalancing the lacquer's drying properties if you add more than 10% of the stain to the lacquer. Some powdered alcohol stains can be dissolved in NGR reducer, which is better for mixing into lacquer.

Liquid universal concentrated dye stain is the best way to color shaders and toners because the dye is so strong that you don't need much at all to get your color. Therefore, even though it has glycol ether in it, there's not much chemical altering going on. Add this within reasonable limits to your lacquer. Within the dye industry, other names for this type of liquid dye concentrate are solvent dye, metallized azo dye, nerosol, and orasol.

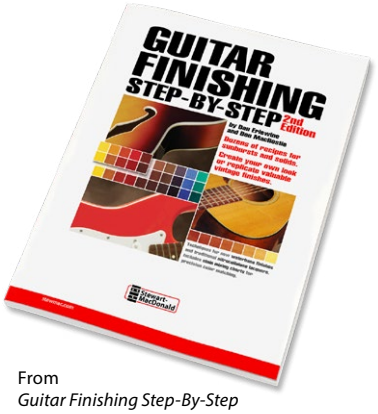
Traditional lacquer toners are mixed as follows: 2-1/2 pints of clear lacquer, 5 pints lacquer thinner or acetone, 1/2 pint of liquid color concentrate. This produces one gallon of a typical transparent shader as used by Gibson, Guild, and others within the industry.

Once mixed, you may want to thin the shader further with regular lacquer thinner. The color coats are only intended to achieve a color, not to create a build, so they should remain thin. Before you use a shader or toner at this step, always strain your colors well before spraying them. Also make sure your gun and cup are perfectly clean, and put a mesh strainer on the spray gun's siphon tube.

Mixing a strong shader

If your goal is a strong color but a thin finish, mix a stronger than normal lacquer shader, one with more dye and less clear lacquer. But practice first on scrap. Alcohol-soluble color in NGR dye can float up into the clear topcoats to muddy the transparency, shift color, or bleed onto white bindings. Strong thin shaders can be made several ways:

- Mix the powdered dye with half the amount of NGR solvent. You can always add more solvent later to weaken it.
- Instead of adding the NGR dye to the lacquer, reverse the process and add a small amount of lacquer to the NGR stain. Add just enough to give the mixture some body to help hold it in place and keep it from running.
- Use liquid concentrated dyes instead of NGR or alcohol stain mixed from powder. A little goes a long way.
- Instead of adding lacquer to the NGR stain, add a small amount of shellac as a binder. Shellac can be sandwiched between lacquer coats in small amounts.
- In addition, you might add small amounts of pigment (black or dark-brown liquid pigment) to the lacquer to darken it. This gives a pigmented look than straight stain, however.



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