



A GUIDE TO SELECTING THE RIGHT FRENCH POLISHER

THE POLISHING COMPANY

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THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED FOR GETTING FAST ANSWERS FOR PEOPLE WITH BUSY LIVES. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR READING IN FULL OR SCANNING. IF YOU PREFER TO SCAN, CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

- Asking The Right Questions
- Tricks Of The Trade
- Key Takeaways

LETS BEGIN ...

Selecting the right French Polisher can be a daunting task and expensive, especially if you don't get the desired results. We have found that potential clients will get a number of quotations and pick the mid price- which makes total sense. You don't want to pick the cheapest, as you don't want a poor finish and/or sloppy service. Equally, you don't choose the most expensive as you want a fair price and value for your budget.

This guide is to help you choose the correct company for the job, so you are well informed and your expectations can be met.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Are you getting a Strip and Re Polish?

Will it be touched up and made good?

Will it be finished by Hand or Off The Gun?

Will a trainee or the head technician carry out the works?

Is it a day rate or a quoted price?

When embarking on the quotation process, you may find that prices fluctuate considerably. This is important to understand as using the mid price formula can be deceiving as each company quotation will be determined by an applied method.

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TYPES OF FINISH



TOUCH UP / MAKE GOOD

There was a great Yellow Pages TV ad from the 1980's with a guy that threw a party and his parents were coming home. One thing to keep in mind: the table was immaculate and in pristine condition, other than a scratch that was touched in within seconds (of course it's TV and editing plays its part). This was simple work as the polish hadn't broken down over years of use, or discolored in sunlight. The term "Make Good" is as suggested, making good of the situation in the best possible way.



STRIPPING & RE POLISHING / REFINISHING

When a "Touch Up / Make Good" is not applicable, a strip and re polish is generally required. This is common when the application has broken down (peeling, blistering etc.), or when the surface has been scratched quite badly, which then requires sanding and stripping to get a uniform finish. In some cases, you can part strip and blend back in if the surface application is in good health.



HAND FINISH

This is the traditional French Polisher way of finishing. This is often the case with boardroom tables, staircases and handrails. Hand Finishing is a refined skill that is developed via experience over time. This is more labour intensive but it's the approach that gets the best results for high customer expectations. If you have a boardroom table for instance, and the table is the centerpiece of the room, you can tell a big difference between this method and "Off The Gun".



OFF THE GUN

A modern way of finishing - though the quality is different from a Hand Finish technique - this is designed for high turnover (manufacturing) and of course certain types of wood. An "Off The Gun" finish is common with Oak and Pine though not suitable for the likes of Mahogany, Walnut and exotic woods. An inexperienced polisher will normally do everything "Off The Gun", as they do not have the skills to finish by hand. However there are often times an "Off The Gun" is the correct application and required route to getting the best finish and desired results.



COLOUR MATCHING

There are at least 8-10 factors that go into getting the correct colour and sheen level. Quite a bit of our work comes from flooring companies and decorators, as the skills required are not in their remit. In principle, it sounds easy to do but often goes wrong (in the hands of the novice), normally costing the company twice in the process.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Low balling: pricing low to win the quote and then billing for extras

Double billing: as the client was not satisfied with the "Make Good" job and then commissioned the job to be stripped and done again, thus paying twice for the works.

Maximising margins: sending out the trainees to carry out the restoration works to increase profits

Cutting corners: using quick fix solutions and cheap materials, so the finish lasts long enough to put distance between the invoices being paid and a non chargeable call back

Pricing: open ended day rates, where the price escalates beyond estimated time of completion

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Understand what type of finish you are getting and add that to your pricing considerations

Does the company have the right skills to complete the works?

How reactive was the company - were they prompt in visiting and supplying the quotation? This will certainly reflect on the quality of delivering the final service

Did the company come across as knowledgeable and were they able to answer all your questions to your satisfaction?

Are you getting a day rate or a quoted price? The latter often works better for the client on smaller / one off projects as any delays are not passed on.

ONE LAST THING



Be aware of Oil and Wax finishes. A DIY enthusiast with a rag and some oil can achieve this - using a French Polisher would be a waste of your budget as it requires minimal skill. The downside of oil, is the monthly upkeep as the look diminishes rather quickly. Once oil is applied, reversing and changing the application is expensive and time consuming as it has to be lifted from the grain before being re finished in a polish or lacquer. Wax is similar to oil; the finish can rapidly degrade, though some clients like the look and are happy to engage on the upkeep.

We undertake a large amount of correctional work; this ranges from poor finishes by inexperienced polishers to colour matching going wrong. Whilst this benefits us and gives us a steady stream of work, it does not have any benefit for the customer. Hopefully, reading this guide will help you avoid spending more money than necessary and gives you an insight into selecting the right polisher for you.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, FEEL FREE TO GET IN TOUCH ...



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