

## In a pickle (whitewash on oak or pine)

Designers are always wanting to talk about the pickled finish. I can't tell you how many of these of these finishes I've done in my time. Keep in mind, not many designers know the real recipe for the pickled look — which entails using *unslaked lime*. (Try that one on for size! Look it up.)

Usually what designers want (and what you can achieve) is done easily with white paint and solvent or, water, if you're keen on using latex paint.

The effect is best achieved on oak, ash and some types of pine. On oak or ash, the paint will fill the pores as well as render a chalky look to the rest of the wood. With pine the wood will chalk-up, but it's harder to render an even look. If there are mouldings, the paint-wash will gather in the crevices. If this isn't to your liking you can always paint the wood white.

The panel in this example is a red oak plywood panel with solid red oak moulding attached to it.

Red oak, because of it's strong color, will add to the white-washed effect, creating a pink overtone (think Andy Warhol). White oak will have a starker pallor (for those old enough, think Edgar Winter).

### IN A PICKLE

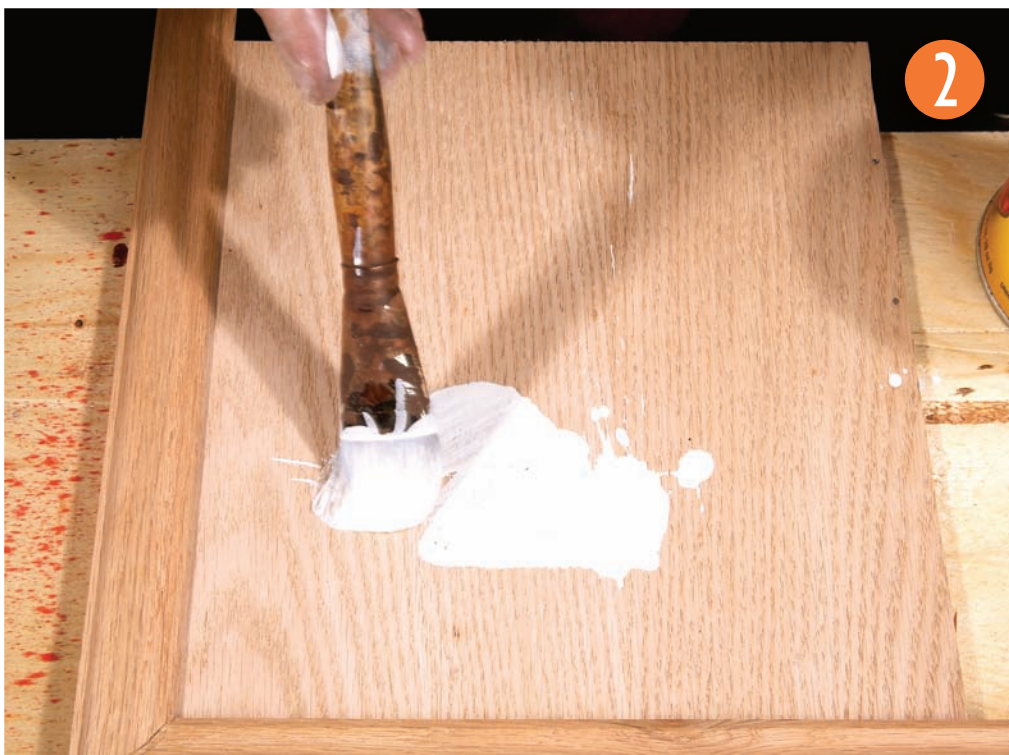
#### Materials

- White oil paint
- Stain brush
- Paper towels
- White shellac
- Denatured alcohol
- Plastic containers
- Paste wax



After scrubbing the wood lightly with a wire brush (going with the grain as much as you can), apply the thinned white paint.





This is something you mix to your liking. To start, I suggest three or four parts solvent to one part white paint. You may want it thicker, so you would need to reduce the amount of solvent or water (if you're using latex paint). Get it? (Remember, if you are using latex paint, it will raise the grain and the paint will set-up fast — so work quickly.)



It's about feel and achieving the look that you want.

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After painting the surfaces, wipe the excess from the wood using paper towels.



If the paint has set-up, wet your wiping towel with thinner and continue the wiping surfaces. The thinner will reactivate the paint and removal will be easier.

If you've used latex paint and it begins to set up before you've had time to remove it evenly, you will have a harder time trying to remove the excess. This is why I always use oil paint for this type of finish.

Wipe the excess paint from the wood, first across the grain and then with the grain. Wiping across the grain will push the paint into the pores and then gently wiping with the grain will even out the look.

Once all surfaces have been washed and wiped, allow everything to dry for twenty-four hours or so.

Apply a coat of white (clear) shellac using a 1-to-5 spit coat.

Sand this sealer coat with 320-grit sandpaper, rub with No. 0000 steel wool and apply a coat of wax. Or, you can top coat with lacquer or Varathane.

Top coating with polyurethane or varnish is not advised because they are amber colored. The white effect could wind up looking old and yellowed. The clearest *water-clear* finish is lacquer. For the novice, I recommend that you use brushing lacquer. You should practice using brushing lacquer on a sample piece first.



## Pickled finish on pine



After sanding the wood, dust off and then apply the paint, using the same method as for oak.



Once the wood is covered, you can pull the paint across flat surfaces.



I like to use paper towels to rid the surface of excess paint. This is where it can get tricky. Using uneven pressure when you rub can remove more paint in some areas than in others. You won't have this problem with oak.



Use a soft-hair brush (from the art supply store) to help even out the stain and color.

