

Paint Filling Lasered Plaques

Patrick Quittem at JDS Industries, Inc. shows us how

Every day hundreds of thousands of awards and recognition products are sold worldwide. An ever-increasing portion of those products are made from wood and are designed specifically for laser engraving. Whether it's genuine walnut, red alder, cherry or bamboo, these laserable products can account for a serious portion of a retailer's yearly income.

While laser engraving on wood has presented many new opportunities for the retailer, one common question is often asked: "How do I add more contrast to my lasering?" Poor contrast is typically a result of lasering a plaque consisting of denser wood. At times we often see plaques consisting of multiple 'planks' that each laser differently, resulting in a finished product that may be unacceptable. This is where 'paint filling' comes into play.

In the past, wood stains or off the shelf aerosol colour sprays were used to darken the laser engraved areas of plaques. This was a relatively easy way to hide the lack of contrast, but presented other problems. These stains and off the shelf sprays often provided spotty coverage and tended to soak, bleed or wick into the wood. With the advent of LazerDark™, we now have an easy to use solution.

LazerDark™ aerosol is a two-part system consisting of a semi-transparent colour spray and a clear finish coat spray. This two-part system is designed specifically for enhancing the laser engraved area on most types of wood. LazerDark™ is specially formulated to virtually eliminate wicking; leaving a crisp edge to your engraved area. The LazerDark™ colour spray is currently available in black and dark brown.

Applying LazerDark™ is an easy five-step process. For comparison sake we'll look at two examples, a genuine walnut plaque and a genuine red alder plaque (figure 1 above right).



figure 1

1. Apply laser mask to the wood substrate to be lasered (figure 2).



figure 2

2. Laser the substrate (figure 3).



figure 3

3. Apply one medium coat of LazerDark™ colour spray and let it dry for one to two minutes (figure 4).



figure 4

4. Apply one light to medium coat of LazerDark™ clear finish spray and allow ten to fifteen minutes for drying time (figure 5).



figure 5

5. Remove laser masking (figure 6).



figure 6

Once completed, placing a plaque that has been lasered and filled using LazerDark™ next to one that has only been lasered shows a dramatic difference (figures 7 and 8 above right).



figure 7



figure 8

With the sheer volume of lasered plaques sold daily, LazerDark™ is a must have product that every awards and recognition retailer should have in their toolbox of tricks.

Our thanks to Patrick Quittem at JDS Industries, Inc for writing this article. Patrick has more than 20 years of experience in design, marketing and information technology. He can be contacted at patq@jdsindustries.com.

For more information on JDS Industries, Inc. please visit the website at www.jdsindustries.com.