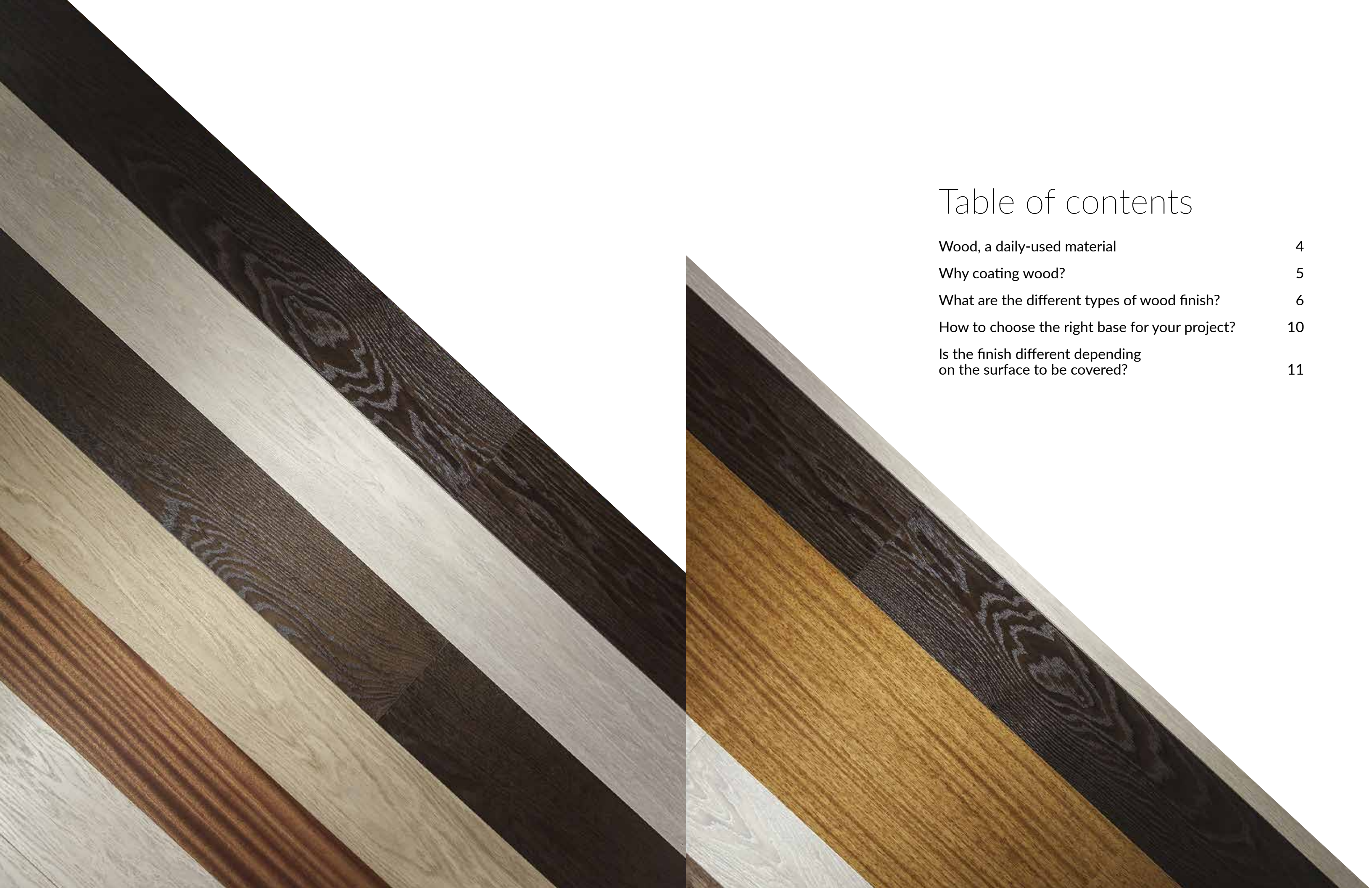


# COMPARATIVE GUIDE

**WHICH PRODUCT COULD  
BEST SAVE THE NATURAL  
LOOK OF YOU INTERIOR  
WOOD SURFACES?**





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# WOOD, A DAILY-USED MATERIAL!



Wood has been part of your environment for decades. Its natural look undoubtedly gives your house its warm lavish character. As a wood lover, you know it is essential to protect your outdoor surfaces as well as the indoor ones. But which is best: wax, oil or varnish?

**How to choose the protector that will best meet both your current desires and your expectations over the next few years?** Will you be able to apply it adequately without having to call on a professional?

Of course, several factors have to be taken into account when choosing a protector. In order to help you in your search, these guidelines offer you a great deal of tips from experts having hands-on experience with the products. Thanks to their sound advice -gathered throughout their years of experience-you will be able to choose the right product. In addition, you will learn how to apply it and adequately maintain all your indoor wood surfaces so they will last longer!

**Here is a brief list of surfaces and structures that require good maintenance:**

**FLAT SURFACES:**  
pfloors, walls, panelling, ceilings, stairs

**FURNITURE:**  
chests, tables, chairs, dressers, desks, bookshelves, buffets

**KITCHEN ACCESSORIES:**  
salad bowls, spoons and forks, vegetable and meat chopping boards.

**DECOR :**  
Window and door frames, shelves, mouldings, panelling and decorative woodwork, windowsills, various objects.

**OTHERS:**  
Kitchen and bathroom cabinets, kitchen and bathroom counters.

## WHY COATING YOUR WOOD?

Any coating helps protect and maintain wood furniture and surfaces. Depending on the product, it may nourish or protect your belongings. How does it do so? The finish keeps the wood intact by penetrating deeply or superficially.

As for outdoor wood surfaces, this noble material needs protecting. The most common risks are...

- 1) **Stains**
- 2) **Discoloring and yellowing** caused by sunrays
- 3) **Deterioration or darkening** caused by humidity
- 4) **Scores and scratches** of all kinds
- 5) Various **buildups**
- 6) **Daily incidents** damaging the surfaces

Determined to protect all your wood surfaces, you want to apply the right product to preserve the character of your material. Be aware that the look wanted is crucial. Indeed whatever your choice-wax, varnish or oil, your expectations will guide your decision.

This being said, it is important to know that the products sold in big stores are often unrecognized by the salespeople who do not have the right knowledge of them. This is why it is recommended to get the information from specialized retailers in order to know the effect of a product components on the surface to be treated, as well as on your health and your environment. **This information may have a real impact on several factors, namely: maintenance, esthetics, and long-term protection.** For example, if you wish to save the natural aspect of the wood, some products will do better than others. This is why it is useful to consider the features of each finishing product in order to select the one you really want.



# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF WOOD FINISH?

Wood finishing products come in three aspects: mat, silky or glossy. However, depending on your taste and the expected outcome, some finishes are more suitable than others to enhance the natural aspect of wood. To help you choose the right product, here are the most commonly used and recommended: wax, varnish and oil.

## WAX

Who does not remember the smell of freshly waxed floors at his parents' or grandparents'? This good old tradition is now almost over. Waxing calls for several coats as well as a long drying time to allow the wax to harden and adequately protect the wood. Being soft, it will not resist intensive use on large surfaces. On the other hand, **it will enhance the natural shine of less frequently used items and leave a characteristic odor.**

Either silky-looking or old-fashioned patine, wax is sought by whoever wants to preserve the ancestral and architectural look of woodwork, frame or heritage site. Do you care about your health and environment? Several existing waxes are made from bee wax. Why not choose the latter?

### EXPERT'S TIP

Needless to say that wax leaves a rich shiny finish, which tells you about time gone-by. Make sure you use it on less frequently used items. Wax is the ideal finish on ceilings since these are not as strained. Moreover, it will not drip like oil or varnish. This will make the application easier. However avoid using wax in humid areas such as bathrooms since wax will not stand water.

Be aware that once the wax is applied, it will be difficult to go back because this operation prevents any other product from adhering until the wax is removed. If you still want to wax your floor, we want you to know that it will be more vulnerable than if you use varnish or oil.



## VARNISH

Varnish has long been used for wood finishing. Nowadays, the restrictions imposed on toxic emissions have modified the once popular products containing polyurethane which is said to cause cancer. Varnish producers have then modified their recipe. But it is essential to be vigilant since some varnishes, despite the change, are still harmful even among those that are water-based. **Beware of synthetic varnish** (oil, alcohol, urethane, etc.) because this product remains at the surface of your floors permanently and emits contaminants daily while you are in your property.

Pour harmoniser vos meubles, boiseries et planchers, le vernis saura satisfaire vos besoins décoratifs. Le produit se décline autant sous l'aspect satiné, brillant, mat que laqué. On reconnaît l'application de cette substance par le film qu'elle laisse sur les surfaces traitées. Les vernis ont effectivement la particularité d'agir tel un plastique : il se dépose sur votre bois, mais il ne l'imprègne pas. Par ailleurs, **les vernis à base d'eau ont une légère pigmentation blanchâtre, ce qui protège vos surfaces du jaunissement.** Par contre, les vernis composés d'huile les jaunissent davantage.

Parlant de composition, qu'en est-il exactement. Talking about varnishes, what is it about their composition? **On the market, you will find water-based, synthetic and industrial varnishes.** Here are their main characteristics:

### 1) INDUSTRIAL VARNISH

- This varnish is purchased only by floor makers.
- You will not find it on the market.

This is the varnish that you find on pre-varnished flooring that you buy at big retailers. Since it contains aluminum oxide, this product will ensure a 15-25 year durability period. However, at the time of restoration, the sanding needed will exhaust anyone who wants to do an impeccable job. This is why most people end up removing the floor completely. This is a blast for the environment, right?



## 2) SYNTHETIC VARNISH

- This category is composed of the following: oil, urethane and alcohol.

You can easily tell the synthetic from their strong odor.. However, they are most often chosen because of their greater durability, that is 10 to 15 years. Since urethane and alcohol varnishes are difficult to apply, professionals are often called on since their drying time is relatively short. In addition, no matter the type of varnish you choose (oil, urethane or alcohol), you will have to leave the premises during the renovation. As for the maintenance, we want you to know that you will have to do over the whole surface, starting with the sanding.

## 3) WATER-BASED VARNISH

- They are called hybrid or latex.

This varnish has the lowest VOC content. Less harmful, it can be applied without a mask and you can stay home during the renovation if the place is well ventilated. Water-based varnishes are least durable and resist on average 10 years. Their main advantages are undoubtedly: their ability to preserve the natural color of wood, their anti-yellowing UV filter and less toxic emissions. **Besides the fact that this varnish reacts to humidity and calcium, its application is tricky. This is why it is recommended to call on a professional to do the job.**

However, consider that what lies at the surface is similar to what is found in synthetic varnishes. actually, although the emissions are much less toxic, once the water evaporated, the water varnish remains a plastic substance that contains semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOC) , one of these being dibutyle phtalate (DBP). **These can generate emissions that will stay in the surrounding air for several months, even years.**

## EXPERT'S TIP

Do you care about health and environment? Then look for transparency, for companies that do not mind revealing the components of their products by writing them on their containers. This will enable you to control your family surroundings.

Although resistant on the surface, varnish has the reputation of ensuring a good protection thanks to the film lying on the wood structure. To give it back its new aspect, you absolutely have to sand.

Have you chosen to varnish a wood surface? If your project is a small one or if you call on a professional, no problem!. However, if you are planning to take on a larger surface such as a table, a big piece of furniture, a door or even a floor, get ready to act fast because this product dries in a short time. Brushwipes on a drying surface become visible as well as overlapping, especially if you are not a restoration expert.



## Oil

Oil is a great impregnating product that can both nourish and protect wood. This way you will be allowed to enjoy its beauty and texture for a long time. Moreover, if you have a big family and pets, you will appreciate the easy restoration of the surfaces most frequently used. It is indeed possible to restore only patches using oil finishes. By penetrating the wood, oil gives back lustre and shine to the worn surfaces, making them like new again without having to strip or sand. **Maintenance is then made simple and easy. Choosing oil means opting for a long-term beauty and durability investment.**

Some of the reasons why oil lovers choose this product is that they want to **revive authenticity, the natural character of the wood and create a lavish warm environment.** The deep natural shades of the wood gives the decor a distinctive touch. It is equally important to know that the yellowing of the wood can easily be avoided when using an oil containing white pigmentation.

Be aware that there are natural ecological oils that are strongly recommended to replace chemicals. This allows you to minimize your environmental impact while protecting your health and environment.

A well-maintained oiled structure has an almost unlimited lifetime. Consider the old churches treated with flax seed oil that date back nearly 2000 years!

## EXPERT'S TIP

Besides nourishing the wood, oil allows it to breathe and protects it from water. By deeply penetrating the pores of the wood, it makes it more resistant to humidity, heat and average wearing of large surfaces. This why it is often recommended for bathroom projec, those close to sources of heat, or in houses with fluctuating temperatures.

Remember that any material that is brought into contact with food calls for a food grade application. Think about salad bowls, butcher's boards and children's toys. Many people favor the use of ecological oil in order to avoid chemicals being brought into contact with food.

Being made from renewable natural ingredients, ecological oils are easy to find on the market by those who look for products with low environmental impact. Its great covering power makes it worth buying. Oil has an exceptionally high coverage ability. Some natural ecological oils can cover at least three times as well as any other product.

Finally beware of spontaneous combustion. A cloth soaked in oil must not be left in a garbage can or compost bin where it may catch fire. Make sure you clean your tools after using them and soak in water any cloth that has been used to oil. Be cautious!

# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BASE FOR YOUR PROJECT?



First of all, it is most important to adequately prepare the surface. The more open the wood pores, the better penetration and better protection. Cleaning and sanding is a must in any wood project no matter the species.

Of course you can switch from wax to varnish or oil depending on the project and the look desired. Your values and your environmental awareness will also help you with the product to choose. Finally take into account the covering power before making the final choice.

## Differentiating wax, water varnish and oil!

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS	WAX	WATER VARNISH	OIL
Technique (cloth, paintbrush)	Cloth	Paintbrush and Pad	Cloth
Type of finish (mat, silky, glossy)	Silky/Patine	Mat/Silky/Glossy	Mat/Silky
Respecting the wood grain	**	*	***
Covering power (3 coats)	100-300 sq.ft.\L.	33 sq.ft.\L.	170 sq.ft.\L.
Drying Time	Long	Short	Long
Durability on furniture or floor	12-18 months	10-20 years	2-15 years
Look	Antique	Mat to glossy	Mat to semi-glossy
Yellowing resistance	*	**	** with white
Scratch resistance	*	***	**
Scratch fixing easiness	**	*	****
Health and environment protection	Yes if natural	No	Yes if natural
Cleaning	Delicate	Easy	Easy; requires a neutral-PH cleaner
Application easiness	**	*	***
Odour emissions	High	Low	Low
Available colour range	Limited	Colourless	Wide range
Surface restoring	Easy	Tricky, sanding or stripping	Easy

# IS THE FINISH DIFFERENT DEPENDING ON THE SURFACE TO BE COVERED?



The type of surface is not the only element to consider when finishing. There is also the location of the wood structures. Here is some advice:

## BATHROOM

In a bathroom, you absolutely need to consider humidity. This is why wax is not recommended. Varnish can be used. However it has to be promptly be restored; otherwise water may seep in deteriorate the wood surface. Because of this, oil is an interesting alternative since it is both waterproof and easy to restore.



## KITCHEN

In the kitchen, you need to consider stains, grease and cooking steam. Oil will better meet your needs... and is healthier. In fact, oil is the best product to resist both water and heat. As for wax, it could not stand these conditions. A lot of kitchens have a varnish finishing, it will be tricky to restore it yourself without having to call on a kitchen expert.

## FLOORS

Oil, varnish or wax may be applied on this surface. However it is important to consider the durability expected and the maintenance needed because this is one of the most intensively used surfaces. Unlike oil, varnish will give this surface a plastic look; this means that scratch fixing calls for sanding the whole surface.

## STAIRS

Oil is the perfect product for stairs. Besides protection and durability, it offers a major advantage when restoring stairs. As they are frequently used, the finish will wear out more rapidly. With oil, all you need to do is to apply a coat directly on the worn spot. As for varnish, it is a harder job since the surface needs sanding to be restored. Once the stairs installed, it is complicated to revamp them. Actually, sanding the corners, the risers and the curves of each plank is laborious work that is not needed when using oil. By choosing oil, you also avoid overlapping effects or uneven sanding which may break uniformity.



## BEDROOM AND READING ROOM

These are the most suitable places for applying wax because they are not as intensively used. In addition, the scent of wax is comforting. This product is particularly recommended for moldings, walls and ceilings because it is easy to apply and it will not drip. Varnish and oil may also be used. However, oil is a healthier option, considering the absence of long-term emanations.



**To sum up**, when you think about restoring wood surfaces, remember to adequately protect these structures from... stains, yellowing, heat, water and humidity, darkening, wearing.

**Also consider...** the covering power of the product, the easiness of application, the durability, the drying time, the look, health, environment.

## CHOOSING HAS NOW BEEN MADE EASIER!

Each product has a purpose and there is a purpose for each product! Henceforth in an era of environmental issues and awareness of the impact of products on human health, varnish yields enviable room to beewax and ecological oil finishes.

In short, to make your choice, it is recommended to take into account the advantages and disadvantages of wax, varnish, and oil. To do so, analyse the properties of each considering its durability, its resistance, the location and the surface to be treated, remembering to consider the impact of its use on health and environment

Thus, for a natural look of the wood, wax and oil are favored. If your priority is durability, varnish and oil will meet your needs.

Finally, for a successful restoration project you will be proud of, consider the easiness of application, the protection and the look.

### DISCOVER KUNOS OILS

For the protection of your indoor wood surfaces, choose your finish according to the look you desire while preserving and nourishing the wood. To know more about ecological oil, download our Kunos product guidelines.

**LIVOS**  
A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE  
KUNOS  
OIL FOR INDOOR WOOD

**A HEALTHY AND EFFICIENT OIL**  
Better than a varnish.  
An impregnating oil.  
Easy application  
And superior performance.

**User guide: protect your interior wood surfaces in a perfect way**  
Discover examples of achievements as well as our expert tips for a flawless application with Kunos oil.

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