

Spraying Latex with HVLP



Q Can I spray latex paint as well as clear wood finishes with one of your HVLP sprayers? Should I use a turbine system or a conversion gun?

A Our HVLP systems spray latex so well that I've actually begun to think of paint as just another finish. I recently finished a bookcase job in white, using an old EagleSpray ES-1000 turbine and an AccuSpray gun to apply a good-quality latex enamel. Following the recommendation on my cheap viscosity cup (#196039, \$3.99), I thinned the paint to about 60 seconds' viscosity. To fortify the paint while making it less viscous, I thinned it with Hydrocote Resisthane plus a little water. The mix was very roughly 50% paint, 40% Resisthane and 10% water (I just guessed at quantities until the viscosity came out right.) I used the gun's standard .051" nozzle, which worked perfectly. The paint went on quickly and evenly with very little overspray, flowed out nicely and cured to a very satisfactory finish which, thanks to the Resisthane, is good bit harder and more durable than straight paint. I had almost no trouble with sagging or running on vertical surfaces, though it was my first experience with paint on big uprights. Although I called it done after two topcoats of my paint mixture, many customers report superb results by adding one or two finish coats of straight water-clear Resisthane, creating the depth and sheen of a first-class pigmented lacquer.

A 3-stage turbine will deliver heavy finishes a little faster than the 2-stage model I used, and you can boost the fluid flow through a conversion gun by jacking up the pressure as much as you like (if your compressor's big enough, and if you don't mind trading overspray waste for speed). However, my bookcase project proved that latex doesn't require as much power as I used to think—it's basically no big deal. This is good news. It means that non-hazardous water-based finishing gives you access to hundreds of colors as well as clear topcoats, and you can produce finishes that are as durable and attractive as any on the market. And while you're between projects you can rush out and paint the whole house, too.

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