

# Mixol®: A Truly Universal Colorant

By Michael Dresdner



The idea behind them is great. Imagine a colored liquid you could add to absolutely anything – stain, filler, lacquer, waterbased coatings, varnish, shellac – to mix

exactly the color you need. The problem is that, in reality, there are waterbased universals, that also mix with shellac, but not oil; and oil-based ones that will go into solvent and oil-based mixtures, but not waterbased ones.

Mixol® is different: it's a truly universal colorant. Sold as a concentrated liquid in a wide range of colors, this finely ground pigment-based material mixes instantly into waterbased, oil-based, or solvent-based stains, finishes, putty and filler. It even mixes into gel stains and gel polyurethanes.

“Mixol is ideal for anyone who has ever found themselves with a stain or finish that is not exactly the color they want, or is too weak a color,” explained JoAnne Campisi, of Sepp Leaf Products, the U.S. distributor for Mixol. “It opens a new world to finishers and woodworkers. Every product you use can now be any hue or tint you can imagine. It will mix into oil, water, solvents, lacquer, shellac, waterbased coatings, oil-based varnishes and polyurethanes, putty, pore filler or wax to make paints, glazes, stains and toners. You can even use it to color French Polish. It provides an opportunity for hobby users to get their hands on a material that is typically only available to the formulating trade.”

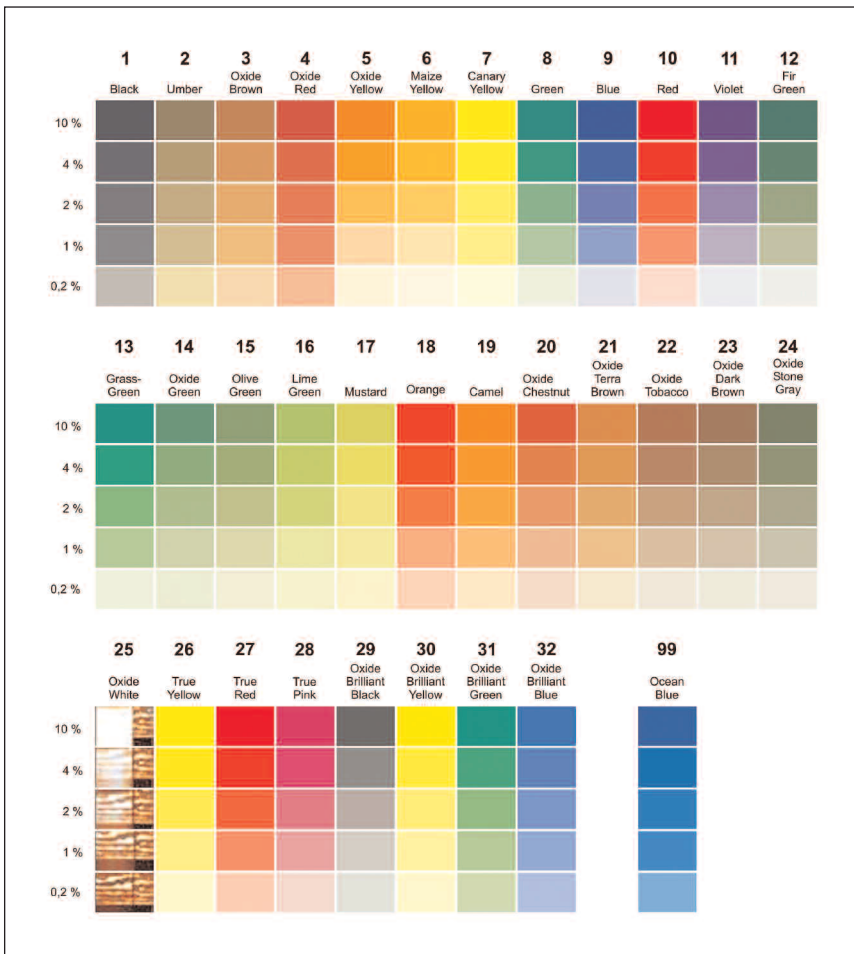
The key to how it works is that, unlike other colorants, it contains no binder, only pure color in a universal solvent. It is the binder that typically creates compatibility problems and, lacking one, it will mix with anything. However,

it must be mixed with something. Used straight out of the bottle, it will not dry. The absence of a binder also means it has an indefinite shelf life, and there are no storage issues with either heat or freezing. Since it mixes with water, cleanup is frightfully easy. It washes off your hands and brushes quickly in soap and water.



While Mixol is not new, it has only recently been offered to us woodworkers here in the U.S. It has been manufactured in Stuttgart, Germany, by a small family business for 40 years, and is the only product they make. Until recently, it was primarily sold to faux finishers, decorative painters, plasterers and formulators: those who mix stains and finishes for a living. The original owner, Mr. Willi Diebold, acquired the rights to make, package and modify the tinting paste from the inventor, the Swiss pharmaceutical company Sandoz, in 1960. Since then, the company has added new colors and expanded sales. It is now available in 17 countries worldwide.





measure Mixol in drops, not ounces. Most important is the ease of mixing. Mixols will disperse quickly and evenly with very little mixing in virtually all materials." That means you can free up shelf space for just one product that lasts indefinitely. Since it is neither flammable nor hazardous, it is easy to ship and can be bought online.

"About two years ago," Campisi recounted, "I went to a wood finishing conference in Red Wing, Minnesota. A number of luthiers (guitarmakers) came to me asking for a way to tint their coatings with a vibrant, shiny finish. They found the Mixols were more vibrant and gave them more color options than anything else on the market.

"Mixols have also found their way into Hollywood. The complete stock, every bottle we had in stock in every size, was rushed to Connecticut for use in Steven Spielberg's recently released movie *War of the Worlds*. Every time you see red, it's Mixol.

The manufacturer is a family company in the truest sense of the word. There are only seven employees, and they are all related: husbands, wives and cousins. Set in a charming German town whose history goes back to the 1600s, the factory, I am told, is so immaculate that you can eat off of the floor.

"Mixol has a better and larger color assortment than other universals," Campisi told me, "and one that is more appropriate for wood tones. The material is smoother, and two to three times more concentrated, meaning less product is needed to get the same color. Our customers

The sole North American importer is Sepp Leaf Products, primarily a gold leaf retailer. You can buy Mixol at all Woodcraft stores, and at [www.woodcraft.com](http://www.woodcraft.com). In the largest size, the different colors are different prices, but in the small bottles, they are all priced the same; around \$5 for a 20 ml bottle.

"In short, Mixol lets you mix anything, any time, in any place. It opens your shop to a rainbow of possibilities."