

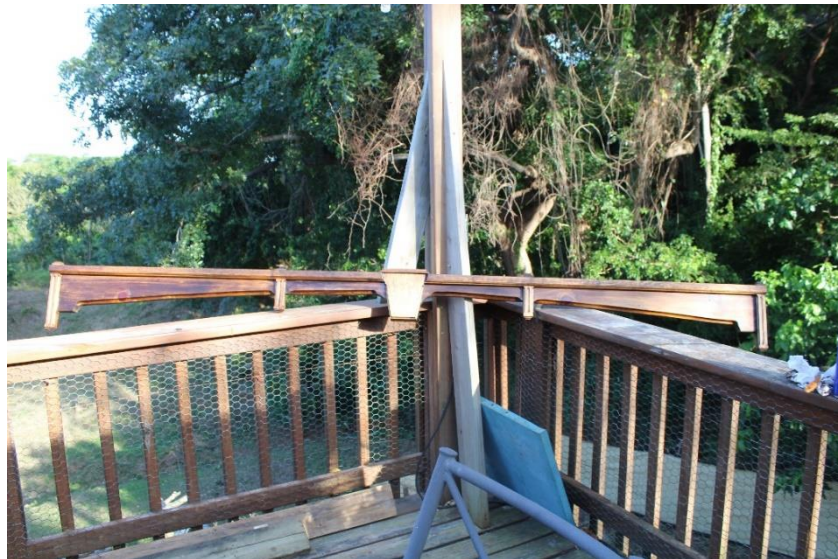
ROATAN 9 - More adventures

G Joseph Wilhelm, Honduras

Some fourteen years ago, I ended episode 4 of my “Novitiate’s Odyssey series (an early triumphal oeuvre if I may say so) with the question I now posed to my wife: “If a man in the forest speaks and there is no woman there to hear him, is he still wrong?” To which my wife’s immediate, unhesitating and presupposed reply was: “Of course! What a stupid question!” I countered with a weak “But I’m really only wrong occasionally!” To which she acquiesced, but this was one of those exasperating “occasional” moments.



Upon concluding my most recent narration, the arch only needed a pre-stain, staining and varnish. Here it is test fitted in place.



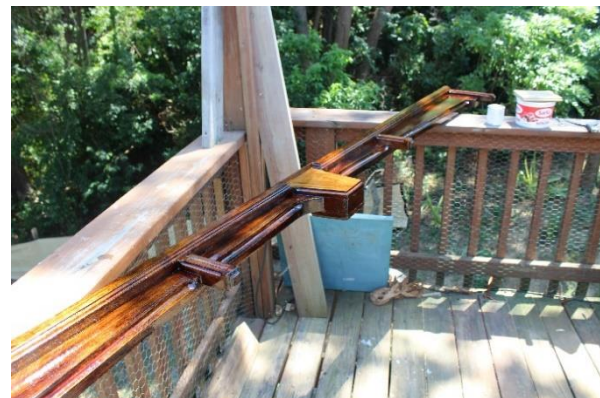
Pre-stain and first coat of provincial stain. Second coat of stain and varnish to follow.

My usual braggadocio of pronouncing the forthcoming highest quality finish was significantly blunted (First part of being wrong) by not considering the tropical humidity, temperature, unfamiliar varnish brand and paraphrasing Alfonso Bedoya with “Directions? We don’t need no stinkin’ directions!” Subsequently, neither the stain second coat or the varnish coat would completely dry and the formidable task of removing a tacky, gummy finish without harming the wood or initial stain coat began.

I discovered the only way I could scrape the finish off into small gummy balls was with my fingernails. Even plastic would gouge the soft wood a bit. After three hours I was done and paused to have my fingers bandaged. (This was the second part of being wrong).



Meanwhile, I finished the bottom of the now level shelf



Arch refinished. I used a lighter second stain coat and a familiar Minwax urethane varnish



Finished arch in place on the west wall shelf. The under-shelf wood and right side of the niche were also stained.

To those of my followers who think the progress is slow, that's because it is. Trying to "think ahead" down here is fruitless as the gains are not worth the mental effort. My toil takes a break when encountering an inordinate number of unique circumstances that did not plague my Florida domicile. For instance; The trees here are quite tall, 75-100 feet or more. After rain or prolonged wind, the substantial (hundreds of pounds) upper branches may break and either free fall or get caught in the foliage canopy to come down later, on a perfectly calm day, while sipping margaritas in a hammock underneath them, when you least expect it. They actually wait for humans who haven't looked up to survey overhead. The resulting panic when the initial cracking is heard is exhilarating but not a recommended experience. In fact, an entire tree came down in front of us shortly after we arrived, so we keep an eye towards the heavens when out and about. Supervising and keeping Juan, the grounds keeper, appraised of and correcting dangerous conditions from above takes some time.

If you have ever played the game "FreeCell"? It's like that here, but with yellow topped dry boxes. More time is wasted rearranging, repacking and moving them about to make room for organizational improvements. It seems a Sisyphean struggle at best. But yes! Some progress is being made and as the room is also going to serve as an office, library and displays for some of the 26 individual collections of mostly antique things, I have added some shelves to tame the clutter.



The north wall



Southeast corner shelves above the door and window. Another shelf above these is anticipated. All shelves and support brackets to be refined to furniture grade finish later, just "Gitten' er dun fer now."



Laminating the cantilever supports for the arch-shelf and the bench

Good news!! The municipality has paved the dirt road to our house (half of it) and they are actually picking up garbage curbside once a week. (Well excuse me! It's a big deal here. We're still celebrating.)

Cannot wait to finish the room. Then I can start on the bar.

We are already using the bench for blood work on the animals. With all the dust here, the instruments and apparatus will have to be kept boxed, in glass front cabinets or covered. Organizing design ideas are germinating to enable sweeping, vacuuming and mopping of the complete floor area with minimal or no obstructions, maybe just a chair. Anything heavy and in the way will be on rollers in order to inspect behind or under it for any type of beastie trying to squat in our abode. Laziness is the mother of efficiency and I am trying to elevate my usual "putzing around" to constructive activity without much success.

Cheers!
Joseph

Insight and comments welcome. Please take note of my new email: gjw8844@gmail.com

Published in the April 2024 issue of Micscape magazine.