Summer 05 Board Build Off Winner Walkthrough

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Loki440 the winner of the Summer 05 Silverfish board build off, sponsored by Revenge Trucks bring us a very thorough walk through of his build process for this immaculate deck entry.

Well to start a bit of history about me, First off my name is Kyle Mckenzie and im 22 years old and hail from Prince George, British Columbia, Canada, but I am currently living in Calgary Alberta for my Third year of schooling here. Ok now to longboarding related stuff I really only started longboarding and skating in general in April of this year (2005), due to a life’s change and events in my life I found longboarding as a new hobby and caught the bug.

But enough of that, I started building boards only in June of this year, and started by purchasing the roarockit vacuum bagging kit to try it out, with just the blank longboarding kit so most of the stuff was already take care of such as what glue to use, cutting and arranging of the ply of maple and the general shape of the board. But due to my need to modify almost everything I own or come in contact with I had to add another inch of camber to the board and paint my own graphic on the board to make it personal even thoe basic compared to my other boards.

This is how it is currently configured

But since that board, I have made a few boards either for myself or for friends that I have gotten into the longboarding scene, or just people who have wanted a custom board from me. But I build them in a limited function due to the fact that I have moved back to Calgary for school, don’t have a vehicle here to easily pick up supplies, plus no shop to work in so weather outside become a big factor in my building capacity, but im making dueJ, as I seem to have at least one board on the go at a time.

Well enough of that useless info and on to the board that won the End of Summer Build Off Contest and building in general. To start the board was made with 5 layers of 1/8” Baltic Birch and was cut out to be 42” long by 11” at its widest which tapers down to 9.5” in the back, and a 35” wheel base if measuring at the inside truck mounting holes, yes so its rather large, a bit to large to me, so ill be shortening the dimensions on the next board I make with a similar shape to make it a little more a carver than a speed board. Both the nose and tail were angled upwards at roughly a 12 degree angle to help alter the angle geometry of the trucks so that it would turn better due to the long wheel base, and it has ¼” of concave for the standing area, which turned out to be perfect for me for this board as I don’t notice the concave but my feet are planted nicely and don’t feel like the want to slip off the board when hard carving at speed.

Now for construction details, currently I use titebond III wood glue to laminate all my layers together, the pressing method I use depends mainly on the type of board I am building or the shape wanted for that design, but for this board I used the clamp method, by which I make a rough mold of what kind of shape I want the board to have with scraps of wood and what ever else I can usually find and this is all done on large sheet of plywood I have which is roughly 14” by 70” so I can do a wide range of boards on that sheet. Once that’s done I start gluing the layers together (1/8” Baltic Birch which I cut into 48” by 12” sheets) and then press them into the shape I want by clamping down the now rough blank.

Here is a picture of the board being pressed, If you notice it’s being pressed on my bed due to lack of work space.

After everything is clamped down I leave the board in the press over night to allow the glue to dry and so the shape is maintained. So the next morning you now have a roughly pressed board in the shape you want. As for the actual shape I draw them out on 12” wide brown masking paper that can be purchased at any hardware store, it’s usually in the paint section and comes in a roll format. What I do to get my board shape symmetrical is to draw a center line down the piece of paper then only draw one side of the board, after im happy with the shape I use a razor to cut out the outline of the shape and to cut along the center line at the end of the board design so that I have a reference mark, then all I do is align that sheet of paper on the rough board blank which usually already has a center line drawn on it, and then just trace the edge of the paper and once done the one side, I flip in over and do the same thing on the other side which can get you to roughly 1/8” accuracy if not better. So after that is drawn on the board then I just cut it out with a jigsaw with a fine toothed blade on it so it doesn’t splinter the wood too much. But the morning after pressing it was raining and all that day so I had to improvise so I actually cut the board in my room. By cutting it in a box so I wouldn’t get saw dust everywhere as shown in the picture below. Then I would proceed to sand the edges and round the corners with a power sander or files depending on what’s needed, and also mark and drill the truck mounting holes and countersink them.

Shape roughly cut out in a box on my bed showing that you can make a board with limited space, just have to get creative.

I had to mount the trucks and see how it looked at felt. (this is the point where I test my boards by proceeding to jump up and down on them, cause if there going to break I would rather them do it at this stage than after spending all the hours on finishing the board, just to have it break once your done, but I haven’t had a bad board yetJ, plus I take them for a short ride if the weather is nice)

From this point I proceeded to vacuum laminate on the Figured Anigre and Australian Lacewood veneer to the bottom of the board as shown in the following photo.

After the veneer was pressed, trimmed, sanded, and holes redrilled, I clear coated the bottom of the board to seal the wood which is always important if you going to be paint on any graphics on the wood just in case the paint you use bleeds into the wood. So this is where I decided how wide the silver leaf stripes would be.(they became a little wider than planned in order to cover up an area where I sanded through the thin veneer, and it was my first time working with metal leaf, but I learned in order to achieve the finish I really wanted I should of clear coated a bit more and made the surface glass smooth, that way the leaf is more chrome like, and not showing off the wood grain like mine did, but I liked how it turned out in the end anyways) So after I had decided how I wanted them I proceeded by masking off the areas where I didn’t want silver leaf and then went ahead with applying the gold sizes (its sort of a glue that remains tacky for 24hrs and is used in metal leafing) so I let that tack up then applied the very very thin sheets of silver leaf to the areas with a soft bristle brush. After that I then removed the masking and let the gold sizes dry for a day. After it was dry I then preceded to engine turn the silver leaf, this is done by putting fine scratches in the surface of the silver leaf, and is done with some type of very minor abrasive, as in my case some velvet wrapped around a hackie-sack as I didn’t have any cotton balls handy.

But after all that was done that is where I proceeded by applying many coats of clear to the bottom and top of the board at the same time allowing clear to run into the truck mounting holes to seal the board which will be re drilled later, but during this time is when I applied the Emerald Green metal flake to the top of the board by masking off the area I didn’t want the metal flake to be and by painting/spraying/sprinkling the metal flake on using what ever equipment or method you want to use. It’s advisable to first paint the area where the metal flake is going with a matching color to the flake that way if you have a thin area where some metal flakes might not be you will still not notice because the flakes blends into the underlying basecoat color. Now because the metal flake is little particles of usually polyester or plastic nowadays, you will want to bury it in multiple coats of clear because if you don’t and go and sand that area you will cut into the metal flake which will cause the areas where you cut into the metal flake to turn a chrome color(as that is the base color of basically every metal flake out there) now if it was a chrome colored flake it wouldn’t really matter but any other color flake it does, another method is to put down a chrome colored flake initially then use a translucent or candy paint over top of the flake to give you the color you want. This is also the same point that any pinstripping, graphics, and apply the oh so important logo is done lol.

So after the many and many coats of clear in order to build up enough thickness in order to wet sand the board plus ideally waiting a couple weeks for the clear to fully dry(but I usually can never wait that long unless using automotive urethane i.e. a post catalyzed urethane, but they require spray equipment in order to paint with it) but wet sanding is a process by which you use a sanding block with wet/dry sandpaper and progressively go to a finer and finer grit while using a bucket of soapy water and dipping your sanding block into it thus keeping the sandpaper wet and the board wet to help remove particles which are formed when sanding, and also increases the usefulness of your sandpaper and keep dust down. But after I have sanded to a point that im happy with as far as the smoothness of the board goes (even thoe im never happy, damn perfectionismJ) then I proceed to use automotive car glaze and wax to bring the board to a really nice shine and very slippery finish, this is also where I redrill the bolt holes and re apply a little bit of clear with a small artists brush to the holes to seal them just incase I reopened the wood structure when I re drilled them. Then I cut out my grip tape and apply that and then mount all my hardware. Then of course take it out for its maiden voyage no matter who the board is for I still get to ride it first (one of the perks to building boards J) And then make any tuning adjustment that I think are needed, and then your done.

Here are the pictures of the completed board that were used for the contest even thoe the metal flake is so hard to capture on a picture compared to what you can capture on video (Now I just need to get some big flywheels)

And then there you have it you have another board in you quiver, but the thing I like other than riding them of course it is when you go to a mall or what not, there are so many people who just turn heads at what you have strapped to your back

from 1yr olds with there cute big eyes to Grandpa’s just smiling away or wondering what the heck type of skate board that is, plus all the complements you get when you least expect it, such as waiting in line in a mall food court then being taped on your shoulder proceed by a 65 year old man saying that’s some nice veneering work.

But really anyone can make a board, and lack of space is not a reason as I have proven, but it’s always wonderful to see all these new shapes and designs coming from the various other awesome custom board builders on the silverfish forum, so take the plunge and make your own board and check out the board building section of the forum.

I can be contacted for whatever reason on the forum by PM my handle is Loki440 or by email at Loki440 at hotmail dot com but being a hotmail account and me sometimes skipping over a message while going through my junk email folder (due to the setting I have selected) a PM is more reliable, and if your interested here is the link to my myspace site which has basically become a myspace for my board building Loki440, but I might eventually put together a site for myself but due to all my hobbies that might be awhile. So keep building, always learn, and keep the stoke alive.