

BOOTLEG BRONZE CLEANERS

PS finds surprising results after testing a few homemade metal polish recipes on some really dirty portholes.

Lest you think multi-billion-dollar chemical companies and their geeks in white lab coats have a lock on cleaning your bronze, there are numerous homebrewed cleaning solutions that folks claim have the ability to put a shine on your bronze and a gleam in your eye.

We decided to test a few of these strange brews. Below are three recipes and our test results. The first two were pulled from the Internet, and the third was sent in by reader Scott A. Morris of Clinton Lakes, Ill.

HOME BREW NO. 1: SALT AND VINEGAR PASTE

- **Recipe:** Dissolve 3 teaspoons of salt into 1 cup of white vinegar. Add enough flour to make a paste, then scoop the paste onto a clean sponge and polish. Rinse with hot water and buff dry with a soft cloth.
- **Result:** This polish worked surprisingly well. While it took a little scrubbing, and we had to let the tougher stains soak for 10 to 15 minutes, it worked well overall and earned a rating of “Good” on our test scale.

HOME BREW NO. 2: LEMON PASTE

- **Recipe:** Polish with a soft cloth soaked in a solution of lemon juice and baking soda, or sprinkle baking soda on a slice of lemon and scrub. (We made a paste as in Brew No. 1.)
- **Result:** After the mini-volcanic reaction of mixing lemon juice and baking soda settled down, the resulting paste

powered off the stains exceptionally well with minimal scrubbing. We tried using a slice of lemon, but the cloth held up better and worked best while rubbing—it was also less messy. This home brew polish earned a solid rating of “Very good” on our test scale, comparable with many of our top commercially produced performers.

HOME BREW NO. 3: MORRIS’ MIX

- **Recipe:** Subscriber Scott A. Morris makes his polish by blending polishing compound (not rubbing compound) with a small amount of silicone car wax—according to Morris, a little experimentation will yield your best mix.
- **Result:** “Fair to Good” overall, however, it took a bit of rubbing to clean our nasty bronze. We used a half-and-half mixture. Varying the mixture (say adding more polishing compound for tougher stains) might have produced even better results.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results in the home brew category were pretty impressive, particularly considering that the first two have all natural ingredients and that all three are economical to make. While the Brews Nos. 1 and 2 cleaned the bronze, they lacked the “luster” of products such as the Miracle cloth. Following up the cleaning with a coat of wax (or even Morris’ Mix) would add shine and additional protection.