

HOW TO MAKE A

Resin Plank Table

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

GlassCast[®]

How to make a Neon Resin Plank Table

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Introduction

The aim of this guide

The aim of this guide is to provide detailed step-by-step instructions that can be easily followed to help you create your own statement Neon Resin Plank Table using GlassCast® 3 clear epoxy coating resin. A Neon Resin Plank Table will be the envy of anyone who sees it and will be the hot topic in any room! It can transform a room, by adding a POP of day-glo colour so if you think your room is crying out for a piece of furniture like this it can be achieved by anyone from professionals to keen DIY'ers and requires no specialist additional equipment and no experience of furniture making. This encapsulation process can be used to create side tables, coffee and dining tables or to create bespoke bar tops, worktops or headboards and the colour is up to you. Other objects could be encapsulated in the same way as the planks, such as records, crushed glass and bottle tops using the same process and techniques, and the amazing finish will give a hi-gloss, glass like finish to any surface - whilst making the encapsulated objects look like they are suspended in the resin.



This guide includes all the expert advice you will need to avoid making common mistakes and make a success of your neon resin plank table project; so if you're serious about creating a striking piece like this it is advisable to read this guide and the technical and safety information in full before you start!

GlassCast® 3 has been specially developed to be the perfect resin for applications like neon resin plank tables and is self-levelling, has special additives to expel trapped air from the mixture, and cures to leave a stunning smooth, glossy surface which requires no flattening, polishing or further finishing - with its two part mixture it is very easy to use!

Before You Begin

Choosing and Sizing your Wood



The first step in creating your own neon resin plank table is to choose the wooden planks you wish to use - this will depend on the size of the piece you wish to create and the look you wish to achieve. You may need to cut down some of the planks to give a balanced mix of long and short planks, or a mixture of widths.

Tools, Materials & Conditions

This project requires very little equipment and the guide assumes the planks are prepared in advance and the materials, tools and accessories listed will be required to complete the project:

Materials

- GlassCast® 3 Clear Epoxy Coating Resin
- Neon Tinting Pigments
- Wooden planks & your choice of table legs
- Polypropylene Sheet or similar (to act as a base barrier)
- Flash/Release Tape
- Batons (or similar to act as side barriers)
- Polishing Compound (such as Pai Cristal NW1)

Tools

- PPE equipment - safety glasses, dust mask, nitrile gloves (as a minimum)
- Spirit level, planer, screwdriver and blow torch
- Digital scales, tape measure, ruler

Accessories

- Wood Stain
- Buckets, stirrer, spreader, microfibre cloth, brushes
- Tile Spacers
- Abrasive Paper (assorted) and a block

Conditions

A dry, heated environment of ideally 20°C should be maintained when using GlassCast® 3 epoxy coating resin. It is also essential to ensure you work in a well ventilated and clean space.



The GlassCast® 3 needs to be at (or around) 20°C, if the resin is too cold it will not mix correctly and may result in a cloudy finish. If the resin is cold it is very simple to bring it back up to the correct temperature by submerging the containers in a bath of hot water for a few hours prior to use. Do not attempt this project in cold or damp conditions as this will certainly spoil the performance and appearance of the resin.

Epoxy Resin for your Neon Plank Project

Epoxy is epoxy, right?



GlassCast® 3 is a remarkable clear epoxy resin developed specifically to provide beautiful, hard-wearing, clear gloss surfaces for tabletops, bar-tops, decorative floor effects, furniture and creative projects. GlassCast can be poured at thicknesses from just 1mm to thicker 5mm sections opening up a world of possibilities for embedments and encapsulations and can be layered to achieve the neon resin plank table! If you are looking for an epoxy resin suitable for deeper pours see the GlassCast® 10 and GlassCast® 50 clear epoxy casting resins available online.

This amazing resin is self-levelling and cures to leave a stunning smooth, glossy surface which requires no flattening, polishing or further finishing - it's a true 'pour and leave' product. If you do however need to polish the resin, to remove scratches or add a soft radiused edge to a cast surface for example, GlassCast is very easy to polish using simple abrasive paper and polishing compounds to restore a full gloss.

Special additives in the resin help to expel trapped air after mixing, meaning that in most circumstances there is no need to pop bubbles with a torch or heat-gun. The advanced 'UV' formulation of GlassCast means that it has non-yellowing properties far superior to those conventional epoxies meaning that it will start beautiful and stay beautiful for years to come.

How much resin will I need?

Working out how much resin you will need for a project like this can be a bit complicated because you need to allow for the resin layer underneath the planks, in between and around the planks and for the layer on top of the planks. The GlassCast website can help you accurately calculate the amount of resin you need. The table we have created measures 1.28 square metres so will require approximately 10kg of GlassCast per square metre of table - so for our table we will require just under 13kg, so three 5kg kits would be more than enough. A simple sum to calculate the area should be measured approximately in length, width and depth to find the cuboid volume, as follows:

$$\text{Length(in metres)} \times \text{Width(in metres)} \times \\ \text{Depth(in millimetres)}$$

The resulting number will be the volume of this shape in litres: For example:

$$1.6\text{m}(\text{length}) \times 0.8\text{m}(\text{width}) \times 10\text{mm}(\text{depth}) = \\ 12.8\text{litres}$$

In simple terms, 13 litres of resin can be approximated as 13 kilograms of resin. We would always suggest slightly over estimating the amount of resin you think you will need as it's always better to have mixed too much rather than too little to cover the area. In this project we will split the overall resin quantity into layers as we work our way through the steps.

Step-by-Step Guide

The most important advice...

When preparing for and undertaking the resin pours, the key to success is to follow the 5 points below. By following these simple steps you will avoid many common problems associated with working with resin.

- **Don't start with cold materials**
The working environment and unmixed resin containers should all be at 20°C before you start (if your resin is delivered cold it can take several hours for the resin to reach room temperature), resin can easily be brought back up to an ambient temperature by placing the containers in a bath of hot water until warmed through.
- **Maintain temperature during cure**
The temperature of 20°C must be maintained throughout the curing time of the resin (at least 48 hours). You should not allow the room to become cold overnight.
- **Work in a dust free environment**
Your working environment should be clean, level and as dust free as possible.
- **Measure accurately and mix thoroughly**
When measuring out the resin and hardener make sure you understand the mix ratio, in the case of GlassCast 3 the ratio is parts-by-weight - in this case 2 parts resin to 1 part hardener. Measure the two parts as accurately as possible, and never for example 'add extra hardener'. Mix the resin thoroughly and always use the 'double potting' method.
- **Mix and pour the resin in batches**
Measure, mix and pour manageable batches of GlassCast® 3 onto the floor starting with the furthest point from the door and working back towards the point of exit.

1. Prepare the Wood

First decide upon the size of the resin plank table you want to create, allowing for the gaps and borders. Our table has 8mm gaps inbetween the planks and a 12mm border around the outside and we will be pouring both the base and the top surfaces at a depth of 3mm each.



For this project we are using a basic redwood smooth planed timber which is inexpensive and readily available at your local DIY store or timber merchants. It is helpful if the planks are smooth, flat and dry before you begin. You could utilise recycled wood like old pallets, but we wanted clean, crisp lines so opted for new redwood planks already available in different widths for added interest.

Arranging the planks

Decide on the layout and design of your table - randomly mix shorter and longer planks and differing widths if you have them. This may require some cutting down to size so you can achieve a staggered pattern. Also remember that you need to allow for the gap between the planks and the resin border.



Layout

Lay out all the planks and draw a plan so you know how the puzzle fits back together. To add interest you can simply create lighter and darker planks using the techniques below.

Mark up the planks for lightening and darkening using masking tape labels.



Lightening the planks

To make some of the planks lighter use a water based wood stain or dye and brush on all surfaces of the planks. Allow it to dry thoroughly before moving on to the resin stage.

If you want to add more variation to the planks apply a second coat wood stain. It's important to use a water based product as oil based products can leave an oily residue on the surface.



Darkening the planks

You could use a dark wood stain as above to achieve the darker planks. But we found that using a blow torch moving steadily over the wood really brings out the natural grain in the wood. Make sure you practise this technique first on off-cuts. If you do find you darken any of the planks you can sand them using abrasive paper to lighten them up again.



Contrast

Lay the planks out according to the plan and check you are happy with the overall effect. You can now move on to setting up the baseboard and barriers ready for the first pour.

2. Set up the Baseboard and Barriers

This is one of the most important parts of the project and if done correctly will leave you with very little in the way of trimming and finishing to do at the end.



Setting up the base barrier

Once you have accurately calculated the total table area including the border and gaps between the planks you need to prepare the baseboard. Use a sheet of chipboard larger than the table top to stick the baseboard to. Make sure it's completely flat and level then stick the baseboard to the chipboard using double-sided tape.



Polypropylene sheet

It's very important that you use a suitable material for the baseboard that epoxy resin will not stick to. In this project we used polypropylene sheet which is totally non-stick, can be reused and will give an adequate finish for the underside of the table.



Setting up the side barriers

Again using a material that epoxy resin will not stick to, to create the barriers and secure them to the baseboard. For this project we use timber batons and covered them with a special release tape which epoxy resin does not stick to.



Folding the tape

Positioning the tape to leave an overhang then folding it to create a hinge effect is a really useful way of sealing the side barrier to the baseboard. The release tape is available in a 25mm and 50mm widths so is great for covering the batons and sticking down to the base.



Seal the corners

Make sure that you seal the corners of the barriers and the baseboard to make the box watertight to prevent any leaks and to stop the resin from sticking to the wooden batons.

Make sure you work the tape right into the corners of the mould to minimise bumps in the cast resin.

3. Measuring and Pigmenting the Resin

Having previously worked out the total amount of resin needed to complete the project we need to pigment the resin in one batch to ensure a consistent colour throughout. This means measuring out the total amount of the resin (Part A) and adding the total amount of pigment required which will be required throughout the 4 steps in the project.

First you will need to measure out the total amount of resin (Part A) in to a clean bucket using digital scales. The GlassCast 3 resin has an easy to use 2:1 mix ratio by weight - this means you will need 2 parts resin (Part A) and 1 part hardener (Part B). Do not measure out any hardener (Part B) at this stage, this will be added at each of the 4 stages of the project.

Using the calculation on page 5 we know that we will need 12.8kg GlassCast® 3 in this project so 2 parts resin = 8.54kg.

Weigh out 8.54kg Part A into a clean bucket using digital scales and add the pigment - try and experiment before so you can calculate the ratio of pigment to get the colour you wish to achieve.

To achieve the eye popping colour in the project which is vivid but still translucent we used the ratio of 50g pigment to 15kg GlassCast, this worked out at just under 2 bottles of the neon yellow pigment. Thoroughly mix the pigment into the resin using a stirrer, making sure that you scrape the sides of the bucket and the mixing stick as the pigment does tend to cling to them. Keep stirring steadily and folding in any unmixed pigment until the colour is consistent throughout the mix.

4. Resin Process for each Stage

Measuring and mixing the resin

For each of the 4 stages weigh out the GlassCast® 3 pigmented resin and the correct amount of hardener for that layer. Be as accurate as possible - using digital scales and sticking to the mix ratio by weight:

By Weight: 2 (parts resin) and 1 (part hardener)

Best practise for mixing resin and hardener together is to always mix for a minimum of 3 minutes, making sure that you scrape the side and bottom of the container to ensure a thorough mix before transferring to a second container to mix again (see double potting method on page 11). Mix in multiple, smaller batches



Resin and hardener

The success of your GlassCast® 3 project will come down to the correct measuring, mixing and pouring procedure.

Weigh out 2 parts of the pigmented resin and 1 part of the hardener using digital scales into a bucket and mix together.

Remember: only mix up the amount required for the layer you are working on.



Mixing

Mix the resin and hardener together for a minimum of 3 minutes making sure that you scrape the sides and bottom of the bucket and mixing stick.

Slow, steady mixing is very important to minimise air entrapment.

Multiple Pours

As well as making thorough mixing more practical, mixing in multiple smaller batches has some other advantages too. Such as being able to attend to each batch individually, avoiding mixing up unwanted quantities of resin and ensuring thorough mixes throughout the project.



Double-potting

After mixing the resin in the first mixing bucket for three minutes, transfer the mixture into a second bucket and mix again slowly and steadily for 3 minutes to ensure a complete mix. This is known as 'double potting'. It's a good idea to label the buckets '1' and '2' to avoid confusion.

IMPORTANT:
Double potting!

To get the best results from the GlassCast® 3 epoxy resin it is advisable to 'double-pot' each mixture. This means mixing the resin and hardener together steadily and thoroughly in the first bucket, making sure that you scrape the sides and bottom of the bucket then after approximately 3 minutes transfer the mixture into a second bucket without scraping the bucket and mix again for a further 3 minutes. This will ensure no unmixed resin finds it's way on to the surface being coated.

5. Stage 1 - Pour the Base Layer

Calculate the amount of resin and hardener required for the base layer pour. The base layer (which will be the underside of the table) needs to be poured at a depth of 3mm. This will form a layer that the planks will sit upon in stage 2.



How much resin?

Table area 1.28sqm x 3mm depth = 3.84kg

So, at the 2:1 ratio we will need

$3.84 \times 0.666 = 2.56\text{kg resin}$

$3.84 \times 0.333 = 1.28\text{kg hardener}$

Accurately measure out the resin and hardener and mix according to the directions on pages 10-11.



Pouring the resin

Pour the resin directly onto the base board in one go. We know that the amount calculated is correct for a 3mm depth.

You may need to help the resin to spread around the surface area, although GlassCast3 is specially formulated to self level.



Spread out the resin

Using a resin spreader move the resin around the baseboard until full coverage is achieved. The GlassCast 3 is a specialist coating resin and has special additives which will help it to settle completely flat. It also cures to a hi-gloss finish which in the surface pour will mean we don't need to flat or polish the surface.



Air bubbles

GlassCast has excellent properties for expelling air bubbles trapped in the resin from the mixing and pouring stage. When the resin has been poured you may notice some tiny air bubbles, but after a few minutes you should start to see them begin to rise to the surface and pop by themselves. If any bubbles do persist you can remove them using a heat gun on a low setting. Using a heat gun to gently warm the surface will help to break the surface tension and expel trapped air. Do not overheat the resin.

Leave to cure to the B-Stage

Now leave the resin to cure to its B-stage. This means that the resin is firm enough to sit the planks in stage two but still has a tackiness left in it to help the next layer of resin bond properly to it. In an ambient temperature of 20°C the B-stage will be achieved in approximately 12 hours, but do check with a gloved finger so you can prepare and pour the 2nd layer while stage 1 is at the B-stage. If you do miss this stage you can key the surface with abrasive paper and pour on to that. You should be able to feel the tackiness of the resin but none should stick to your glove.

6. Stage 2 - The Sealing Layer

At each resin stage of the project we will use the same process for measuring, mixing and pouring as described on pages 10-11.



Sealing layer calculation

To seat and seal the planks we will need the equivalent depth of 1.5mm resin.

Table area 1.28sqm x 1.5mm depth = 1.92kg

So, at the 2:1 ratio we will need

$1.92 \times 0.666 = 1.28\text{kg resin}$

$1.92 \times 0.333 = 0.64\text{kg hardener}$



Measure, mix, pour & seal

Once measured and mixed pour the resin straight onto the base layer and using the spreader move the resin around to cover the base if necessary.

You are now ready to place the planks onto the bed of resin. Using the poured out resin and a brush, paint the resin onto the underside of the planks to seal them.



As you lower the planks tilt them on the long edge and lower slowly with a slight rocking motion until the plank is sitting on the resin. This will help to prevent air pockets being trapped on the underside of the planks.

Keep going until all the planks are roughly in position, then using the brush and the resin around the planks brush over all surfaces of the planks until all the wood is sealed.

This sealing stage is very important as it will stop air bubbles escaping from the wood.

Once all the planks are coated in resin spend some time positioning the planks and securing them into position using the tile spacers to maintain the 8mm gap while the resin is curing. If required use some spacers to secure the gap around the outside. This will stop the planks from floating around on the surface of the resin. Once you are happy with the spacing and are certain all of the surfaces of the planks are sealed leave the resin to partially cure.



Ideally you need to remove the tile spacers when the resin has started to gel whilst it is still easy to remove them. It can then be left to reach the B-stage again before moving on to stage 3 - the fill layer.



Removing the tile spacers

When you remove the tile spacers the resin should be very tacky, but this will be much easier than trying to remove them at the B-stage. Reaching this stage should take around 3 hours and any marks visible in the resin at the B-stage will be covered on stage 3, the fill layer.

7. Stage 3 - Pour the Fill Layer

In the 3rd stage we want to fill all the gaps between and around the planks until the resin is flush with the tops of the planks. If you have chosen a different depth plank, size gap or border you will need to adjust your calculation.



Fill layer calculation

To fill the gaps between the planks and fill the border we will need the equivalent depth of 2.5mm resin.

Table area 1.28sqm x 2.5mm depth = 3.2kg

So, at the 2:1 ratio we will need

$3.2 \times 0.666 = 2.13\text{kg resin}$

$3.2 \times 0.333 = 1.07\text{kg hardener}$



Fill the gaps

Remember to follow the resin process on pages 10-11 for stage 3 to prepare the resin. Then pour half of the mixture in the gaps before pausing to distribute the resin around the area and use the heat gun to help to get rid of any air bubbles that may be clinging on to the sides of the planks. Take care with this stage as it is the deepest pour. By pouring in two halves it means any air bubbles don't have as far to rise up.

Then pour the second part of the mixture to fill the resin flush to the top of the planks. Use the resin spreader to push any excess into the gaps and border and using a paint brush to break the surface tension paint over the tops of the planks to evenly distribute the resin over the project.



Air bubbles

Use the heatgun again to gently expel any air that may be trapped and leave the resin to cure to the B-stage.

Take care at this stage to make sure that you check in all gaps and against all edges as once the resin is cured you will not be able to remove any air bubbles.

Once the resin has reached the B-stage, test again with a gloved finger to make sure it is tacky then you can go ahead with the 4th and final stage pour.

This 4th layer will form the shiny surface of our table so you need to take extra time to ensure that everything in this stage is done perfectly - from the measuring and mixing to the pouring and curing.

8. Stage 4 - Pour the Surface Layer

Make sure that the resin process from pages 10-11 is followed exactly for this critical final pour.



Calculation

For the 4th and final pour you need to measure and mix the same amount of resin and hardener as Stage 1 - both the base and surface will be 3mm in depth so that the planks appear to be suspended in the middle of the resin.

Resin = 2.56kg

Hardener = 1.28kg



Measure and mix the resin and hardener before pouring out the mixture in one go and if required using a spreader to ensure full coverage. Don't forget to double pot the mixture.

Then prepare a cover for the barrier box to make sure that no tiny particles of dirt or dust that may be in the air can get on to the curing resin.



Now leave the resin to fully cure. This will take at least 24 hours, but if you can leave it for longer it is advisable. We left this table for 48 hours before being checked and then demoulded.

9. Removing the Barriers

Before removing the barriers make sure that you check using a gloved finger that the 4th and final stage has fully cured. Be patient at this stage and make sure the resin is fully hardened. If the resin is fully cured you will not be able to make a mark with your thumbnail no matter how hard you try. You can then remove the barriers and baseboard.



Removing the baseboard

Turn the table top upside down and you will see that the base will peel away really easily if you have used a non-stick material like the polypropylene sheet.



Removing the side barriers

Then turn the table top back over and prise off the barriers - these should easily pull away if you have used the non-stick release tape.



You will notice that the sides of the table look quite good already but there will probably be a meniscus of resin around the edge of the piece that needs to be removed and some finishing to achieve the high gloss.

10. Finishing

To remove the sharp meniscus of resin and leave the edges as smooth as possible we used an electric planer and then used abrasive papers to wet sand the edges and a polishing compound to bring the edges up to the same hi-gloss as the table top.



Planing the edges

If you don't own an electric planer it may be a good investment for this project, you could do the same job by hand although it will take a considerable amount more time and effort. The finish the electric planer leaves is pretty good on it's own and will not take much further work to bring up to a full shine to match the surface.



Wet Sanding

Good technique is called for when flattening the edges. You will need to gradually work your way up through the grits of paper starting with 240 grit then moving up to 400 grit, 800 grit and finally 1200 grit. Make sure that you use a block behind the paper and make sure that you change the water between each grit. Using the block will avoid accidentally radiusing the edges and make sure that you only move on to the next grit when you've removed all the scratches from the previous grit.



Polishing

We used the Pai Cristal NW1 polishing compound which is a fast cutting compound ideal for tough plastics like epoxy. The full shine on the table edges can be reached by hand polishing or by using a power polisher and can be achieved quite quickly if done by hand.

When the polishing stage is complete use a clean microfibre cloth and wipe the table surface and edges to remove any residue. If you realise at this stage that any scratches remain in the resin you will need to repeat the grit stages of the resin - starting with the 240 grit paper and working up through increasing fine grits of abrasive paper.

Fitting the legs

At this point the table top is essentially completed and all that remains is to fit the legs of your choice. We chose some industrial style legs in black from the Hairpin Leg Co - the legs you choose depends on your preferred style and the look you are going for.

Follow the manufacturers instructions to fit the legs - which will be a relatively easy process because the legs can be fastened straight into the planks on the underside of the table.



Fitting the legs

Mark up and then drill through the the resin into the planks using a spacer so you don't drill too far into the planks, then follow the manufacturer's instructions to secure the legs to the table.

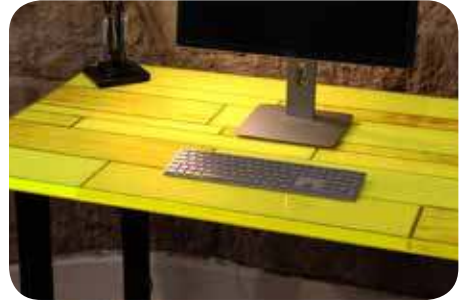


Once the legs are fitted securely turn the table over and that's it - your Neon Resin Plank Table project complete!

For the quality and uniqueness of the finished table, this has been a relatively simple project to complete. The amount of hands on labour time was only a few hours minus the curing times. If you want to produce a stunning piece of furniture like this and you use the GlassCast® 3 Clear Epoxy Coating Resin, and follow the guidance you can expect results every bit as good as ours!



11. After Care

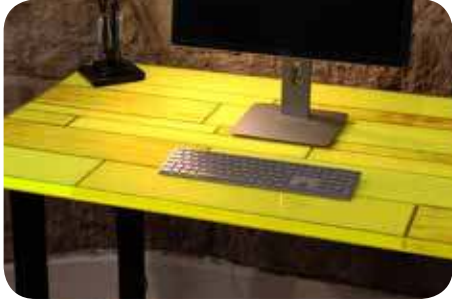


Now that your GlassCast® 3 resin plank table project is complete you'll want to keep it looking great for years to come.

Here are a few important things to keep in mind when looking after your GlassCast project:

- **Hot Objects** - You should not place hot objects directly on to the resin surface (pots, pans, plates or mugs) as this may mark the surface. Instead use coasters or heat proof mats. If you do find that hot objects have marked the surface it can be flattened and polished again using the steps on page 18 to remove any marks.
- **UV Light** - GlassCast® 3 has been designed to have the best UV stability of any epoxy resin on the market and should withstand years of indirect sunlight with very little effect. However, common with just about all materials of this nature, prolonged exposure to UV light, particularly direct sunlight, can eventually cause some change in the appearance of the resin. For this reason, finished GlassCast® projects are not recommended for outdoor use and should be kept away from direct sunlight where possible.
- **Scratches and Marks** - GlassCast® 3 is a very hard wearing plastic and will hold up to the rigours of light daily use without marking. However, accidental damage can be caused by sharp objects scraping over the surface of the resin or from things being dropped onto it. If this occurs, these can be polished out using the same process that was used for the initial sanding and polishing ; i.e. abrasive paper (for coarse scratches) followed by polishing compound to restore the gloss.

12. Alternative Projects



GlassCast® 3 is the ideal epoxy resin for this amazing neon plank table and the techniques used to create this eye-popping table can be used to create bar tops, table tops and headboards and the look can be changed very simply to give a totally different look to suit any style.

Variations on this process could be:

- colouring the planks to be encapsulated with different wood stains or paints
- stencilling or shading the planks
- having larger or smaller gaps and borders
- changing the colour of the resin
- changing the layout of the planks to create a pattern - like herringbone

GlassCast® 3 is the ideal epoxy resin for the applications described above and any piece created this way could be the centrepiece for a designer apartment or modern office, needing little more than the GlassCast® 3 resin and neon pigment! This resin is also suitable for use on Penny Floors and is compatible with the GlassCast Tinting Pigment range and Pearl Ex Metallic Powders.

Also available in the GlassCast range are the:

GlassCast® 10 Casting Resin for Jewellery, Crafts, 3D ResinArt, Doming and Encapsulation

GlassCast® 50 Casting Resin for River Tables, Furniture Infills, Knot Filling, Sculpture & Encapsulation

Useful Information

Industrial Box Section Table Legs available from the Hairpin Leg Co:

www.thehairpinlegcompany.co.uk

GlassCast 3, Neon Tinting Pigment and ancillary items available from:

<http://www.easycomposites.co.uk>

Wood Dye available from:

www.liberon.co.uk

Tile Spacers available from DIY stores or Tile Suppliers.

Wooden Planks and Batons can be sourced from your local Timber Merchants or DIY Store.