



Werzalit tops

Werzalit Tops: The original “core” business of ATC was SM France table tops but several years ago we switched to **Werzalit-Germany** who is the originator of the process, and SM France was a licensee. **Werzalit-Germany** uses a mixture of European Beech (about 80%) and pine, mostly heartwood (about 20%). Critical to the performance of the tables are the sizes of the wood pellets used and the amount of resin absorbed by the wood. **Werzalit** shreds and mixes the wood to their own specification from logs. **Werzalit** now uses 25% to 28% resin making a superior product. Certain sizes, particularly popular in the US are made here in Pennsylvania by the USA division of **Werzalit-Germany**.

In the process, first the wood is shredded, then dried and when hot and dry, infused with resins. Then the resin impregnated wood is cold molded into slightly oversized blanks, held together just by compression, prior to going into the hot press for “cooking” under heat and pressure. In the hot press, first a single sheet of melamine impregnated paper is fused to the wood substrate both on the top and bottom.

The press re-opens, and the decorative and finish sheets are added; then the press slowly closes (aiding in the preheating of the sheets) and clamps down tightly to fuse everything together. Every day’s production is tested by boiling some samples of the production, submitting them to various pull and breaking tests, chemical tests, etc. The date, shift and lot number of each top is noted on the underside of the tops so that any deviation from standards can be easily traced.

The result is an extremely durable top, resistant to weather, chemicals, hot pans (up to 350 degrees Fahrenheit), cigarette burns, warping, etc. You have all the surface characteristics of a laminate top, but without any joints. There is no possibility of peeling, separating, chipping, or cracking.

Due to the fact that the tables are made in molds, special sizes are not possible. Personalized or custom tops are popular, cost effective and have the same durability as standard tops. The designs are digitally printed on special paper and then manufactured in the usual way. Delivery for custom tops is usually about 6 – 8 weeks from the approval of the image by the client. A minimum of only 15 pieces is required to make Custom tops. Custom top samples cannot be made on “spec”. Normally we will send the client ½ or ¼ of a full top, retaining half or a quarter at the factory for matching purposes. The client will sign off on the top, and we can proceed to production. We must have a full deposit for custom tops, and these orders are non-cancelable.

All darker colors do tend to show imperfections, dirt and damage more than lighter colors and solids show more than patterned tops. Further, they absorb more heat from the sun and are more prone to warping and fading. Light colors, particularly when used in tropical and un-shaded locations, will perform and look better longer and be more comfortable.

Color changes are inevitable over time for all tops. In fact color changes are not subject to guarantee unless there is a manufacturing defect. Real granite changes color, automobiles fade, roofs fade, houses fade, bricks change color, yet for some reason clients expect an \$80 top to be immutable.

Light colors will change less perceptibly than dark colors, particularly in full sun. Colors with red in them will change more than colors without red in them. And, yes, there have been known to be defective tops where we have had color changes prematurely and in those rare cases, we will replace the tops in a reasonable time period.

Note that it is normal for Werzalit tops to have a slightly higher center as they are designed for outdoor use and this aids in shedding water.

NEW LAST YEAR was the **Carino Compact** line of tops. Although presenting a very different appearance, these thinner tops are manufactured by a similar process and virtually all of the colors and patterns of **Werzalit** are available in **Carino**. The “core” of **Carino** is also phenolic resin but instead of impregnating wood particles, the resin is impregnating cellulose fibers. The edges can be either ½” or built up to 1” but the process currently permits only the dark edge as the décor cannot be carried down over the edges.

Carino tops are denser and require metal inserts, so we have to know exactly where the holes must be for each top. As such they will be manufactured to order here in Pennsylvania.