CHERRY

WOOD VENEER | SPEC BRIEF

FORTE
OPENING SOLUTIONS

01 – DESIGN OVERVIEW

Cherry has a warm light pinkish- to reddish-brown appearance that typically deepens toward a richer red-brown over time. It has a fine, generally straight grain with gentle figure and a smooth, medium-pore texture. Well suited to traditional, formal, and warm transitional interiors.

Its even texture and satiny grain can produce a refined finished appearance. A clear coat best preserves and emphasizes cherry's natural warmth and allows the species' natural oxidation to develop over time.

DEFAULT CUT	DEFAULT MATCH
Plain Sliced	**Book Match**
PORE STRUCTURE	**RELATIVE COST**
Medium/ Semi-Open	**Moderate**

02 – COLOR & TONE

Cherry ranges from a warm light pinkish-brown to medium reddish-brown, with a satiny, warm luster. Color is sourced from heartwood and is consistently warm, though natural variation in shade and undertone is inherent to the species. Sapwood is not permitted at standard grade.

TYPICAL COLOR RANGE

Light Pinkish-Brown — Richer Red-brown

SPECIFICATION NOTE

Cherry's most important color characteristic is its tendency to deepen with light and air exposure. An initial sample review may not reflect the long-term installed appearance. Discuss expected aging with clients before finalizing finish direction.

Aging note: *Cherry typically deepens toward a richer reddish-brown with sustained light and air exposure. This shift can be significant and should be anticipated as part of the design intent.*

03 – GRAIN & TEXTURE

Cherry has a fine, generally straight grain with a smooth, medium-pore texture. Plain-sliced faces can introduce gentle figure and mild cathedral movement. The semi-open pore surface finishes evenly and accepts clear finishes particularly well.

SPECIFICATION NOTE | STAIN ABSORPTION

Cherry can blotch under direct stain application. Clear or lightly toned finishes are lowest risk. Evaluate stain options on a finished 8"x10" sample—not a 2"x4" sample—before specifying any medium-to-dark stain direction.

Adjacent leaves are mirrored in book matching. Where grain figure alternates between leaves, a subtle barber-pole effect may appear as a natural characteristic of the match.

SEE ALSO: WALNUT

For a darker, richer wood character, see the **Walnut** Spec Brief. Cherry provides warmth in the warm-medium brown range; walnut offers deeper brown tones suited to contemporary and formal applications.

02 – CUT OPTIONS

CUT	GRAIN APPEARANCE	TYPICAL USE	KEY CONSIDERATION
Plain Sliced DEFAULT	Cathedral and straighter grain combined; gentle figure may be present	Traditional, formal, and warm transitional interiors; most common default	Most available; mild cathedral movement; gentle figure may appear
Rotary	Broader, flowing grain pattern	Cost-effective applications	More grain variation; confirm availability
Quarter Sliced	Straighter, more linear grain; minimal figure	Where a controlled, linear grain appearance is preferred	Lower yield; confirm with manufacturer; more restrained character

**Plain sliced is the default and most common specification for cherry. Clear or light finishes are recommended to preserve the species' natural warmth.*



PLAIN SLICED



ROTARY



QUARTER SLICED

CHERRY

05 – NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS TO ANTICIPATE

CHARACTERISTIC	APPEARANCE	GRADE CONSIDERATION
Color Variation	Mild tonal variation across face or between leaves	Allowable by grade; define acceptable color range explicitly
Color Streaks	Subtle linear color changes in the grain direction	Allowable by grade
Mineral Streaks	Darker lines or marks from natural mineral uptake	Allowable by grade; may be visible under clear finish
Gum Spots	Small circular accumulations of natural resin	Allowable by grade; limited at AA; may be apparent under clear finish
Figure	Irregular grain movement; may appear in plain-sliced faces	Not grade-controlled; contributes to natural character
Cross Bars	Faint horizontal bands crossing grain direction	Natural; cannot be fully eliminated
Barber-Pole Effect	Alternating light/dark leaves in book match	Result of book matching; not a fabrication defect
Small Burls/Pin Knots	Small circular or localized grain features	Allowable by grade; limited at AA

06 – FINISHING

FINISH DIRECTION	EXPECTED BEHAVIOR
Clear/Light Stain	Lowest risk; best preserves cherry's natural pinkish-brown warmth; allows natural oxidation to develop over time; all grain, figure, and natural characteristics fully visible
Medium Stain	Moderate risk; cherry can blotch under direct stain; may help reduce visible color variation between doors; evaluate on a finished 8"x10" sample before approving
Dark Stain	Higher risk; can mask cherry's natural warmth; may complicate long-term color matching as the wood continues to oxidize; validate on a finished sample and confirm design intent before proceeding

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

Clear or light finishes best preserve cherry's natural character and are lowest risk. Medium-to-dark stains carry blotching risk and may conflict with cherry's long-term oxidation behavior. If stain is required, evaluate on a finished 8"x10" sample and confirm how the finish will interact with the species' natural aging over time.

07 – SPECIFICATION WATCH-OUTS

Critical considerations prior to material release

01

Cherry changes color with time—an initial sample is not a reliable long-term prediction

Cherry typically deepens from a light pinkish-brown toward a richer reddish-brown with exposure to light and air. An initial sample at time of specification may not represent the door's appearance six months or two years into service. Uneven sun exposure across a door group can produce visible color differences within the same installation.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Discuss expected color aging with the client before finalizing finish selection. Consider a clear finish that allows and enhances natural oxidation. Document expectations in the project specification and obtain owner acknowledgment of anticipated aging behavior.

02

Heartwood color range varies—coordinating a door group requires careful material qualification

Cherry's heartwood is consistently warm, but natural variation in shade, depth, and undertone is inherent to the species. Doors produced from different flitches — or from different positions in the same log — can appear meaningfully different, particularly in installations with wide color ranges or significant natural light variation.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Define the acceptable heartwood color range explicitly in the project specification. For visually prominent or coordinated door groups, request a finished 8"x10" sample under representative project lighting before approving production.

03

Clear finish preserves character but makes natural markings fully visible

Cherry's natural character is most effectively preserved with a clear finish—but a clear finish also means that all natural markings, color streaks, gum spots, and tonal variation remain fully visible. These are allowable characteristics, not defects, but should be anticipated and communicated for aesthetically sensitive applications.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Establish the acceptable range of natural characteristics—including color variation, gum spots, and mineral streaks — in the project specification. Approve a finished 8"x10" sample that represents the full expected range before fabrication begins.

©2026 Forte Opening Solutions

877-332-4484

2026-FOS-LIT-136-1027

FORTE OPENING SOLUTIONS