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Wagner and Griswold Society Information > Cast Iron (general info) > Cleaning and Restoration

(Moderators: [Scott Sanders](#), [Jeff Friend](#))

🚩 How NOT to clean iron (Read 3147 times)	
<div><div><div>🔴Chuck Rogers</div><div>WAGS member</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>Posts: 8632</div></div>	<div><div>📄How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Mar 23rd, 2011, 11:11pm</div><div>Found a seller on Ebay that sandblasts his iron. I think the link came from another post here. Anyway, I politely mentioned how he is destroying the cast iron my doing this. His reply was also polite, and pointed out this site, as the source of his information</div><div>http://whatscookingamerica.net/Information/SandblastCastIron.htm</div><div>Another misinformed individual. I did send him a link to our cleaning, and seasoning section. He just mention how different people clean iron in different ways. Even if it's the wrong way. 😞</div></div>
<div><div><div>🔴Duke Gilleland</div><div>WAGS member</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>Posts: 3227</div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #1 - Mar 23rd, 2011, 11:22pm</div><div>Chuck, You might have noticed that Marty Greg & I all posted and advised AGAINST a LOT of the offered methods 😞 on this site</div></div>
<div><div><div>🔴Chuck Rogers</div><div>WAGS member</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>Posts: 8632</div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #2 - Mar 23rd, 2011, 11:38pm</div><div>I'm glad that others are looking out for our cast iron intrests. I only wish more people would learn the right way. I've read other posts in the past about different sites offering different (mis) information on cleaning. I guess this was one of them. I may not remember the sites, but I remember the poor methods. 😞</div></div>
<div><div><div>Ryan Volek</div><div>Ex Forum Member</div></div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #3 - Mar 27th, 2011, 4:45pm</div><div>So....just out of curiosity, what exactly happens when cast iron is media blasted? I know there are a lot of different types of media to blast with, like walnut shells and sand. And I know that depending on what type of media you used, it can do some good cleaning and stripping when it comes to old motorcycle parts. Does it just pit the surface of the pan or will it actually degrade the cast iron?</div><div>I've never blasted anything cast iron, but have always heard NOT to do it. Never really heard why...</div></div>
<div><div><div>Kyle Van Vleet</div><div>Ex Forum Member</div></div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #4 - Mar 27th, 2011, 7:16pm</div><div>From what I understand, and anyone feel free to step in and correct me if I am wrong, but when a piece is blasted it removes some of the top layer of iron similar to what sanding would do. Once the original outer finish of the pan is disturbed in this manner, it will never season properly again. Basically, from a collector point of view, the pan has been altered and is no longer original thereby ruining its value as a collectable piece.</div></div>
<div><div><div>Nancy Peeples</div><div>Ex Forum Member</div></div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #5 - Mar 29th, 2011, 11:54am</div><div>But no one ever answered to *how* does this mess up the iron? How does it hurt iron? Isn't it cast iron all the way through? I'd LOVE to know exactly what the damage can be.</div><div>Thanks</div><div>nan</div></div>
<div><div><div>🔴Tom Neitzel</div><div>Forum Administrator</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>So - What do they do with the rest of the mole?</div><div>Posts: 4559</div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #6 - Mar 29th, 2011, 12:11pm</div><div>It is cast iron all the way through. Instead lets think about a loaf of bread. It is all the same dough everywhere, but when you bake it, a crust forms. It is a different color and texture but still the same dough as inside. Cut off the crust and you still have the same bread, but it won't behave the same as a whole loaf. When the iron cools, the outer edge cools faster and makes kind of a crust. Take it off and it is the still the same but behaves different. Don't know if that is better or not 😞</div><div>Tom</div></div>
<div><div><div>Nancy Peeples</div><div>Ex Forum Member</div></div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #7 - Mar 29th, 2011, 5:54pm</div><div>Thanks Tom,</div><div>Sure, the way you've described it here makes sense. I think it is worth trying. If it works, I'll post it. If it doesn't, I'll post it.....</div><div>Great analogy though!</div><div>nan (who loves home made baked bread. I think there should be a air freshner called "Fresh baked bread"!!!</div></div>
<div><div><div>🔴Wes Auman</div><div>WAGS member</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>WAGS: Heartbeat of Cast Iron Cookware Collecting</div><div>Posts: 237</div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #8 - Mar 30th, 2011, 9:14am</div><div>I am not trying to start any trouble here.....But if taking the outside layer of iron off ruins the pan, wouldn't they be ruined by the milling process to smooth the inside? I personally would not sand blast any of my stuff. This is more because I have been wrong from angles I hadn't even thought of. I have seen pictures of smoothed bottom skillets, this would also take the outside layer off. Again , not trying to make enemies just trying to wrap my head around the whole process. If anyone has a piece that has been blasted that they want to sell I would be interested in doing some research into bringing it back to life.</div></div>
<div><div><div>🔴Tom Neitzel</div><div>Forum Administrator</div><div>★★★★★</div></div><div>So - What do they do with the rest of the mole?</div><div>Posts: 4559</div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #9 - Mar 30th, 2011, 10:32am</div><div>Not a bad question Wes. In my mind it's kind of a comparing apples and oranges question.</div><div>We have two viewpoints in my opinion. One is the collector. The other is the user.</div><div>From a collecting point of view, I want the piece to look and function the same way as it was intended to from the foundry. A piece that was just cast, then cleaned up a bit but not machined or polished would season up and look one way. Or if unused, it would have the look of having just left the foundry.</div><div>A piece that was polished would look and season different from just plain iron, but it would still look and work as intended from the foundry.</div><div>A piece that has been sandblasted would look and season differently than it would have from the factory.</div><div>From a collecting point of view, the piece has been forever modified from the original and has lost its value.</div><div>From a user point of view, both an original and blasted piece should still cook the same although the seasoning may look different.</div><div>That's my view anyway 😊</div><div>Tom</div></div>
<div><div><div>Nancy Peeples</div><div>Ex Forum Member</div></div></div>	<div><div>📄Re: How NOT to clean iron</div><div>Reply #10 - Mar 30th, 2011, 12:49pm</div><div>Wes,</div><div>I read all the posts in regard to this type of cleaning up a pan..... Certainly don't want to step on any toes.</div><div>But..... I'm not a collector, love the history of items... it interests me greatly to think these pans were used such a long time ago. As many times as we've gone through parts of CA (I live in San Diego) I always mention how tough it must have been for the early Settlers.</div><div>Anyway, that said. I did buy a pan from the Seller at a very cheap price, it is not blasted yet. It is a</div></div>

number 12 Griswold. He will be blasting it for me. Soooooooooooooo in short, I will see how it seasons and how it cooks. I will if the group is at all interested take pics (have my hubby do it) of the pan before and after.

I am interested from a cooks point of view. If it cooks great, I'm all in.
nan

🔴Roger Barfield
Forum Administrator
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #11 - Mar 30th, 2011, 1:30pm
Nancy, it's up to you what you want to do with your cast iron. Take a look at this thread below. There are photos that shows what blasting does. You say you love the history of items. If that's the case then why would you want to damage them with blasting? Once it's done it can't be undone. It's your skillet though, so you can do as you want.

Posts: 7399

<http://www.griswoldandwagner.com/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl?num=1210099387/0>

Nancy Peeples
Ex Forum Member

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #12 - Mar 30th, 2011, 1:56pm
Course..... it's a bit confusing though as the last post said from a collectors standpoint, no way..... but from a user's standpoint, it would work.

I did read through a good majority of the posts from the link you sent. What I find a big confusing is I read on this group never to clean your skillets in a self cleaning oven, then I just read yes, go right ahead and put it in the oven on self clean..... so as you can see it seems even among the collectors here, there is a division on how and how not to clean cast iron.

Right now, I've got a pan sitting in the garage for the second time with Oven cleaner.....

I DO love history and items of history-- I am not a collector and never professed to be one, I don't just "say" I enjoy history as you have written in your post above and I really didn't want to debate on a group I joined to learn-- I certainly hope this doesn't turn into an ugly debate or post bashing.

I very much appreciate the advice and will take it to heart and decide which way I'd like to go. But, I'm a good ole Irish/Italian girl who while listens to sound advice is and never will be brow beat into doing something one way or the other. I'll research it a bit more and go from there.

🔴Wes Auman
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #13 - Mar 30th, 2011, 3:55pm
After seeing the pics on the other thread, I would have to say that I agree with no sandblasting. There really is a major change in the surface. Thank You all for your input, I am still learning and slowly converting from user to collector.

Posts: 237

🔴Roger Barfield
Forum Administrator
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #14 - Mar 30th, 2011, 4:37pm
Well Nancy, sorry if you feel you've been misrepresented or brow beaten. Good luck with your skillet.

Posts: 7399

Nancy Peeples
Ex Forum Member

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #15 - Mar 30th, 2011, 5:43pm

Thanks Roger.... I will be sure to post how it turns out. Of course that would be either way. I am the type of person who would like to know if I were wrong..... or perhaps right.

🔴Chuck Rogers
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #16 - Apr 2nd, 2011, 10:53pm
I would look at it using this analogy. You find a car from the 1920's locked away in a barn for the past 90 years. The only thing wrong with it is a thick layer of dust, and dirt. Underneath of that dust and dirt, there is a perfect original paint job that could not be reproduced using todays methods. You may plan on driving the car, but why not maintain the originality of it by continuing to care for it.

Now instead of simply washing the car using a gentle method as not to damage the mint condition paint, you take a high pressure fire hose that is pumping dirty water from the local farm pond, and at close range, begin to blast the layer of dirt off with it, and in turn, stripping the paint. As I mentioned, this paint can not be reproduced, so you've destroyed something that can never be replaced. Why not maintain it's collectibility, as well as it's functionality by cleanig it the right way. Why be in such a hurry to get the cleaning done. I know that thing happen these days with the click of a mouse, or the flick of a switch. Do we have to carry that to every aspect of our lives. Learn to appreciate what has managed to survive for all these years, and be happy that you were another part of it's history, instead of it's demise.

Posts: 8632

🔴Dwayne Henson
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #17 - Apr 2nd, 2011, 11:19pm
If you do have your heart set on sandblasting a skillet, why not try it on a cheap newer #8 skillet from like a garage sale, try seasoning it, and see the results, if you don't like it you've only ruined a cheap pan instead of possibly a \$100+ pan.

Posts: 4254

🔴Jodi Nielson
WAGS member
★★★★★

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #18 - Apr 3rd, 2011, 4:36am
Hey Nan--

No one on this forum is trying to "brow beat" you or "force" you to anything--I'm sorry you feel that way. It's your pan, it's your money--the choice is yours.

Believe me when I say that I was baffled, confused and amazed by the sheer volume of information on this site when I stumbled across it last December. Prior to that I had never really thought much about cast iron pans as anything more than that--a pan. To be perfectly honest, I'd never even heard of Griswold or Wagner. 😊However, having spent the last 4 months reading and learning from the posts and information here, I can say that I have gained a new respect for cast iron. And for it's place in American History.

My point is this: You came here seeking information; you wanted to learn about cast iron. The members of this forum are the most knowledgeable people around when it comes to the identification, care and maintence of all things cast. It's their mission and they take it very seriously. It's not just a pan or something "collectable", no, it's a piece of History. And the supply is finite. Once damaged, either through abuse, neglect or ignorance, they cannot be replaced or restored.

Does sandblasting ruin the skillet? I don't know. But I can tell you this: given the considerable years of experience in dealing with cast iron that is represented on this forum, if they told me it would ruin the skillet, I'd believe them. Isn't that why you ask experts for advice?

The oven cleaner will work fine; you just have to be patient and let it do it's job. The crustier the pan, the longer it will take to eat through all that crud. I used 2 cans on my first pan because I just couldn't leave it alone. Why? Because I'm Irish too 😊My Mom always told me that "patience was a virtue" and I always reminded her that it "wasn't one of mine".

I know that I'd be interested in seeing the "after" pictures and reading about whether or not the sand-blasted skillet actually was more difficult to properly season than the one you cleaned with oven cleaner. Try and fail, try and succeed--it's how we learn.

Hope you stick around....

Posts: 792

Nancy Peeples
Ex Forum Member

📄Re: How NOT to clean iron

Reply #19 - Apr 8th, 2011, 1:14pm
Jodi,

Actually, it was bead blasting I spoke about..... not sure if I am the one that mentioned sand blasting. At any rate, I had no intentions of leaving unless I was booted. I am still reading....learning. It is "a" pan that was bead blasted. I haven't received it yet..... karma? Maybe..... I do love the pans I have received so far.

I actually put my OTHER pan my Mother gave me back into the bag for the third time because it bothers me that it's my "best" pan I have so far and I have no idea what it is! Ya..... that IS Irish. <eg>

Like I said though, I am not debating this. I asked a question, it was answered. There are two groups of collectors and I'm positive more than that. So far-- I've only seen this one and one other. Seems like eveyrone has their own ideas of how to clean these pans.....We'll see what happens..... I will certainly take before and after pictures as I said, this is a WagerN #12 that was bead blasted.....

THanks fdoor the howdy and for the stick around 😊
Nancy

Nancy Peeples
Ex Forum Member

 **Re: How NOT to clean iron**

Reply #20 - Apr 8th, 2011, 1:17pm

[Quote from Dwayne Henson on Apr 2nd, 2011, 11:19pm:](#)

If you do have your heart set on sandblasting a skillet, why not try it on a cheap newer #8 skillet from like a garage sale, try seasoning it, and see the results, if you don't like it you've only ruined a cheap pan instead of possibly a \$100+ pan.

Dwayne,

I think you might have my posts confused. I never said the pan was \$100. It's a Wagner, #12 and I paid \$27.50 for it..... Just for the record.....

If I said something else..... pure confusion as I've bought several pans in the past few weeks.....

Just purchased a Griswold large TM, beautiful. Can't wait to get it.

Nancy

🔴Tom Neitzel
Forum
Administrator
★★★★★

Posts: 4559

 **Re: How NOT to clean iron**

Reply #21 - Apr 9th, 2011, 9:40am

Nancy, just to stick away in your list of facts, there are several types of blasting, even bead blasting.

Ones that **hurt** the collector value of the iron (because the blast material is harder than cast iron and removes material) include:

Sand (like Aluminum Oxide, Silica, and Silicon Dioxide) and Glass beads.

Ones that are **safe** (because they are softer than cast iron and do not remove metal) include:

Walnut Shells, Plastic Beads and Soda (yes, Baking Soda).

Somewhere here on the forum I posted a picture of an unopened can of Sprite that I took the paint off of with soda blasting and didn't damage the aluminum.

Tom

Nancy Peeples
Ex Forum Member

 **Re: How NOT to clean iron**

Reply #22 - Apr 9th, 2011, 2:19pm

Thanks Tom,

I sort of regret having it done, UNLESS it works. I really do hope it hasn't ruined the piece, and if it does..... lessen will have been learned.

I bought the one pan from the seller, but he hasn't sent it yet and because of that he is sending an additional pan, the one he was unable to sell. So I will take pics and send them to a member because honestly, I have NO idea how to get them on this site. I'll trust a "person" to put them on this site. If it works, I'll be very happy and sad if it doesn't. but as I said, I'll take pics before and after. You can tell me what you think.

I have a totally separate question to ask so I'll start a different topic.

Thanks to all for all the advice, even if I irritate ya!

nan

🔴Dwayne Henson
WAGS member
★★★★★

Posts: 4254

 **Re: How NOT to clean iron**

Reply #23 - Apr 13th, 2011, 7:20pm

Nancy, the \$100+ I was refering to, was the possible book value of many Wagner #12 Skillets, not what you paid for it. Hope that clears up my statement. 😊