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Installing wicks in Kosmos Lamps

Wild & Wessel of Berlin in 1865 developed the "Kosmos" burner, where a flat-wick formed is round, 20 years prior to the introduction of center draft lamps. Kosmos lamps remain popular and in production to this day because the side draft burner obviated the need for a central air shaft through the fuel reservoir; fonts were easier to manufacture than center draft lamp fonts and allowed the use of glass, pottery and various metals to be used to fabricate more shapes and designs of fonts.

Glass Font >>>

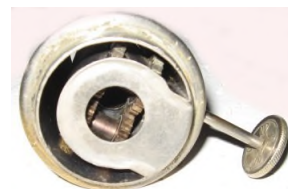


Kosmos burners can have either a flat bottom (far right) or an extension that fits into the font to hold the wick in place.

As Kosmos fonts generally lack a separate fill cap, the burner must be removed to fuel the lamp. Threaded burners means the wick is twisted when the burner is installed, meaning the wick is also twisted and thus becomes shorter so it may not reach the bottom of the font to soak up all the fuel. The inserted wick holder keeps the wick from twisting.



20" L&B



View of the flat bottom of a W&W "Imperial" burner showing the gearing used to raise and lower the wick.

A Kosmos Matador with a wick sleeve extension can hold the wick with barbs on long, flexible fingers. The barbs must be bent to a 90° angle to insert fully into the wick. Often the fingers are tied or secured with a rubber band to keep the fingers and barbs in, against the sleeve itself, so they do not impose an impediment to sliding the wick into the bottom of the burner.



The barbs ^^^ at the end of the fingers bent to 90°.

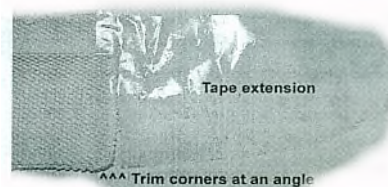


Rubber band ^^^ used to hold the fingers close to the wick sleeve.

NEVER USE THE WICK WINDER TO INSTALL A WICK

Wide carton tape can be used to make an extension on the wick. Shown at right is 2" clear carton boxing tape to form an extension. The tape overlaps the wick by about $\frac{1}{2}$ " and is pressed firmly into the wick. The top corners of the wick and the tape extension are tapered so there are no sharp edges.

(Clear tape is hard to photograph. Sorry.)



The photo at right shows the extension has been pushed up through the wick gap, then the wick has been PULLED through the burner by using the tape extension. The rubber band restraining the fingers has been cut and removed and the tail of the wick inserted into the clips on the wick sleeve.



Remove the tape extension. At this point in the installation process the wick is repeatedly raised and lowered. The gearing or barbs holding the wick are on opposite sides of a flat wick and can cause one side of the wick to be higher. Repeatedly raising and lowering the wick can equalize the sides of the wick so they raise and lower uniformly...but can still be uneven from one side to the other. Uniformity of height is irrelevant at this point - uniformity and consistency is the goal here.

If the seam of the exposed wick cannot be made to raise and lower uniformly, the seam can be "tacked" closed with a couple of stitches about $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the top of the wick. Because the inner wick sleeve is tapered the sewing cannot be done lower than $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top of the wick or the wick will not retract into the wick sleeve far enough to turn off the lamp.



The wick can now be retracted so the lowest point is just barely visible above the wick sleeves. (1) Trim the high places on the exposed wick with sharp shears so the exposed wick is roughly even in height all around. (2) Retract the wick to just below the wick tubes to create a channel. (3) Put the burner on a DRY font and then put a teaspoon or so of alcohol or kerosene in the channel so it soaks into the top of the wick all around. It is easier to use a syringe or eye dropper to evenly spread the fuel. (3) Install the flame spreader (if a Matador burner). (4) Raise the wick so the lowest visible part of the wick is just barely visible of the draft tubes. (5) Light the wick, replace the chimney, and let the wick burn until it is completely extinguished. The wick is cotton and will burn once the fuel is all burned off, burning right down even all around with the draft tubes. Some thicker wicks will require a second or even a third "levelling burn" to get the wick surface absolutely flat. Now the wick will burn without any flame spikes.

Fuel the lamp, wait a half hour, light it and enjoy your lamp!

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