

paint!

an affordable solution for a kitchen facelift



by **Dave Mark**
Sales Representative
Grauer's Paint & Decorating
Lititz

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Now homeowners and professionals have waterborne products available to mimic the desirable hard durable finish of oil based products—without the headaches.

Two of the most common questions we hear are "Will I have to remove the old finish?" and "Is the product durable?" The old finish does not always need to be removed. However, if the current topcoat on the cabinets is peeling, flaking or failing, then it would be wise to remove it. Remember, your new coating on any surface is only as good as what's underneath it. This definitely

applies to kitchen cabinets. If you're uncertain of whether your finish needs to be removed, take pictures and/or bring a door or a drawer into your local paint store. A salesperson will be able to identify any issues and provide you with the next direction.

Assuming the cabinet's coating is stable, the second step is to clean and abrade the surface. I prefer to clean and de-grease the surface prior to painting. A simple cleaner such as Dertex, TSP or Krud Kutter works well. It may take several applications to clean thoroughly, but these cleaners

For some of us the kitchen represents a place to congregate, a place to share highlights of our day around the dinner table, or just a place to enjoy good cooking. Whether you're a child or a grown adult, memories are created in the kitchen. It may be a certain aroma coming from the oven or the chatter of voices that triggers a warm memory for you. I'm sure each of us can recall a time of sneaking warm cookies off the tray without our parents noticing! Many of my childhood memories were made in my parent's kitchen. It was decked out with

the early 1970's dark, walnut-stained cabinets with rather unique fake brass hardware mounted in the center of each door. To this day, I have fond memories of that outdated room.

Kitchens come in all shapes and sizes. Some common materials used during the fabrication process of cabinets can be laminate, plywood, particle/MDF board, solid wood, and metal. In a sense, it's just another surface with a protective coating or finish. With the proper preparation, all of the above surfaces can be refinished without disrupting our normal

routine in this popular room. The big question is, how?

For those of you who can afford to hire a professional painter, I strongly recommend going that route. Professional painters know what they are doing and they are very efficient in doing it. For those of you who would prefer to take on the challenge by doing it yourself, you'll be happy to hear that the process is not all that difficult.

As for myself, I was a painting contractor for eleven years and have worked an additional five years

behind the counter selling premium Benjamin Moore paint. I've refinished countless kitchens over the years and have used various products. When I first started refinishing kitchens cabinets, the products were always oil based with high odor. Even though the reward was a factory-like finish, it was a challenging process.





medium to fine grit (220-320) sanding block and/or paper. After completing the sanding process, make sure to vacuum the surface thoroughly and use a tack cloth if needed to remove dust.

Once the prep work is completed primer can be applied. During this third step, there are two different primers that can be used for this process. One is the traditional oil based primer and the other is a water-based product. Oil is not user friendly. However, if you have grease that cannot be removed, oil will seal the surface. You will have to contend with the drying time, odor, and most importantly, cleanup. Personally I like using oil, but in the past decade manufacturers have designed water base and urethane acrylics to seal and adhere to the surface. These products will not seal grease or wax.

So, how can you tell if a residue is still on the surface after cleaning and abrading? If you choose the water based method, I would start by purchasing a quart of primer and priming several different small areas near your stove as this is a grease prone area. While brushing or

rolling, the primer will separate, turn yellow, or just not adhere if residue is present, in which case you need to switch to an oil based product. You can also try the fingernail test by allowing the primer to dry for a minimum of 24 hours. Afterwards, try scratching it off with your fingernail. If it adheres, great! If not, you'll need to switch to an oil based product. Your local Benjamin Moore retailer will recommend a quality primer designed to accommodate your project.

After priming the surface, the fourth step is to fill nail holes and caulk cracks. The primer leaves an excellent foundation for this process. I recommend using a good water based caulk and shrink-free spackling for nail holes and light imperfections. If you're replacing hardware and need to fill larger holes, a more durable wood filler should be used. Depending on the size of patches, spot priming these areas is a good method to prevent flashing through the top coat.

After completing step four, it's now time to proceed with choosing a finish coat. With today's paint

manufacturing technology, you'll achieve a hard, durable finish using water clean up products without the headaches of oil based paints. Benjamin Moore has several products designed especially for cabinets that are being used by professionals and many homeowners. Their Advance waterborne interior alkyd and Cabinet Coat urethane acrylic lines are great products that provide a long lasting finish. These products can be sprayed, brushed or rolled and were designed to mimic the properties of oil based paints. They level out and leave minimal brush strokes and offer a hard durable finish unlike other traditional water based products. If you choose to roll either product, I recommend using a fine mohair or velour roller cover. Each applicator will leave minimum stipple (orange peel texture) on the surface. If a thicker roller cover is used, the texture is more apparent. If you want a factory-like finish, spray the doors and drawers in a well ventilated, climate controlled area. Allow adequate dry time in between each coat. You'll have a new kitchen in no time, saving you money and the headaches from a complete remodel!

One last recommendation to have smooth cabinets—lightly sand and dust between each coat of paint. Use a very fine 220-320 grit sandpaper and repeat the dust extraction process. If a coarser grit is used, it will scratch each coating and might be visible through the final finish.

Like many similar coatings on the market, Advance and Cabinet Coat cure and harden over time. I like to tell homeowners to allow a minimum of seven days drying time on shelves before stacking dishes or other heavy objects. Allow 30 days before cleaning or scrubbing the surface. If needed, a lightly damp rag can be used during the curing time.

If you have any questions, please stop by one of our 3 locations or call your local Benjamin Moore retailer.

David Mark has been in the coatings industry for over 15 years and works as a Sales Representative at Grauer's Paint Store in Lititz.

R&A

will not leave a residue that will interfere with the bonding process. Some over-the-counter cleaners will leave an

invisible residue or wax that will affect paint adhesion. Once the surface is clean and dry, lightly sand with a

of primer and priming several different small areas near your stove as this is a grease prone area. While brushing or



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