OTTAWA PAINT CONTRACTORS

Cabinet Painting

Kitchen and bathroom cabinet painting and refinishing

16 Expert Answers from Paint IQ

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Q1

Will sprayed Ottawa cabinets chip at the edges?

Spray-finished cabinets can chip at edges, but the risk depends heavily on the product used, the surface preparation, and how the finish is applied — not simply the fact that it was sprayed. In Ottawa kitchens, where cabinet doors take daily abuse from hands, utensils, and the occasional elbow, edge durability is a legitimate concern worth understanding before you commit to a refinishing project.

The edges of cabinet doors and drawer fronts are the most vulnerable points because that's where the paint film is thinnest and where impact is most concentrated. A spray finish applied without proper edge preparation — light sanding to knock down sharp corners, thorough degreasing, and a bonding primer — will fail at edges faster than anywhere else on the cabinet. The finish needs something to grip, and a perfectly sharp factory edge gives paint almost no mechanical adhesion. Good painters will lightly ease every edge before spraying to give the primer and topcoat a fighting chance.

Product choice matters enormously here. **Benjamin Moore Advance** and **Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel** are the two most commonly specified cabinet paints in Ottawa professional work, and both cure to a very hard, chip-resistant film over 7 to 14 days. The key word is *cure* — a freshly sprayed cabinet might feel dry to the touch within hours, but the film won't reach full hardness for one to two weeks. Rehinging doors and loading shelves too soon is one of the most common reasons Ottawa cabinet refinishes fail at edges early. Ottawa's dry winter air actually accelerates drying time, but cure time is a chemical process that can't be rushed.

The number of coats also plays a role. A proper spray cabinet job involves a bonding primer, a light scuff sand, and two topcoats — with light sanding between coats. Skipping the intermediate sand leaves a weaker film that's more prone to chipping under impact. If a quote seems unusually low (under $2,500 for a full kitchen), it's worth asking specifically how many coats are included and whether intercoat sanding is part of the process.

Done correctly with quality materials and proper prep, spray-finished cabinets hold up very well in Ottawa kitchens — often better than the original factory finish on builder-grade cabinetry. If you're ready to move forward, you can browse painting contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find professionals who specialize in cabinet finishing.

Q2

What is the process for painting cabinet interiors and shelves in an Ottawa kitchen?

Painting cabinet interiors and shelves is a satisfying project that dramatically refreshes a kitchen without the cost of full replacement — and it's genuinely achievable for a capable DIYer, though the prep and product choices matter enormously for a result that holds up.

The interior surfaces of kitchen cabinets take a surprising amount of abuse: dishes sliding in and out, humidity from cooking, cleaning products, and constant contact with food packaging. In Ottawa kitchens, the dry winter air actually works in your favour during the curing phase, but summer humidity (especially in older homes without central air) can extend drying times and affect adhesion if you're not careful about timing.

Start with thorough cleaning. Cabinet interiors accumulate grease, dust, and residue that will prevent paint from bonding. Wash every surface with a TSP substitute (available at Home Depot or Kent Building Supplies in Ottawa) or a degreaser like Krud Kutter, then wipe down with clean water and let everything dry completely — at least 24 hours. Any lingering moisture or grease is the most common reason cabinet paint fails within a year.

Lightly sand all surfaces with 150-grit sandpaper to scuff the existing finish and give the primer something to grip. This is especially important on laminate or thermofoil interiors, which are notoriously difficult to paint without proper mechanical adhesion. Wipe away all dust with a tack cloth before priming.

Primer is non-negotiable here. For cabinet interiors, a bonding primer like Zinsser BIN (shellac-based) or Zinsser Bulls Eye 1-2-3 is excellent for sealing odours, blocking stains, and adhering to slick surfaces. Apply a thin, even coat and let it cure fully — typically 24 hours — before topcoating.

For the topcoat, **Benjamin Moore Advance** is widely regarded as the best choice for cabinetry in Ottawa's market. It's a waterborne alkyd hybrid that brushes and rolls smoothly, levels beautifully as it dries, and cures to a hard, washable finish. It comes in a satin or semi-gloss sheen, both appropriate for interiors. Expect to pay around **$75 to $85 per gallon** in Ottawa. Apply two thin coats rather than one heavy coat, sanding lightly with 220-grit between coats for a smooth result.

Use a quality 4-inch foam roller for flat shelf surfaces and a small angled brush for corners and edges. Foam rollers minimize texture in the finish, which matters in a space where you'll be looking at the surfaces up close every day.

The most important warning: **Advance takes 30 days to fully cure** even though it feels dry to the touch within hours. Avoid placing heavy or sharp items on shelves for at least two weeks, and be gentle with cleaning during the first month. Rushing this phase is how you end up with scratches and scuffs that look terrible by Christmas.

If your cabinet boxes are in rough shape — peeling laminate, water damage, or significant staining — or if you want spray-finished exteriors to match, that's when a professional cabinet painter adds real value. You can browse painting contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find painters who specialize in cabinet work.

Q3

How do Ottawa painters handle painting around cabinet hardware and hinges?

Removing hardware entirely is almost always the right move — it produces a cleaner result and actually saves time compared to carefully masking around every hinge, pull, and knob. A skilled Ottawa painter will unscrew every piece of hardware before painting begins, bag and label it by door or drawer so reinstallation is straightforward, and set it aside in a safe location away from the work area.

The reason this matters so much for cabinet painting specifically is that the finish quality expectations are completely different from wall painting. Cabinet surfaces get handled dozens of times a day, and any paint bleed under a hinge plate or around the base of a pull will catch the eye immediately — especially under Ottawa's bright winter light coming through south-facing kitchen windows. Masking hardware in place might seem faster, but tape edges rarely seal perfectly against the irregular surfaces of hinges and backplates, and you end up with a ragged paint line that looks amateur on an otherwise clean finish.

For the painting itself, the standard professional approach in Ottawa is to remove all doors and drawer fronts, paint them horizontally in a spray booth or on sawhorses, and paint the cabinet boxes in place. Spraying produces the factory-smooth finish that makes painted cabinets look intentional rather than improvised. If a painter is brushing and rolling rather than spraying, they'll use a high-density foam roller for the flat panels and a fine-bristle brush for the frame edges — working in thin coats with light sanding between coats using 220-grit paper.

One important consideration: if your existing hinges are surface-mounted and painted over from a previous job, removing them may pull finish or even substrate with them. A good painter will assess this before starting and may recommend new hardware as part of the project rather than risking damage trying to salvage old pieces that are essentially glued in place with decades of paint.

Hardware finish also matters when choosing paint sheen. Satin and semi-gloss are the standard choices for cabinet painting in Ottawa kitchens and bathrooms — they hold up to cleaning and don't show fingerprints the way flat finishes do, and they complement most brushed nickel, matte black, and brass hardware finishes currently popular in the market.

Cabinet painting is one of those projects where the difference between a good result and a great result comes down almost entirely to prep and process. If you're considering having your kitchen cabinets professionally painted, you can browse painting contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find painters who specialize in this kind of finish work.

Q4

Is two-tone cabinet painting with contrasting uppers and lowers popular in Ottawa kitchens?

Two-tone cabinet painting has become extremely popular in Ottawa kitchens over the past few years, with many homeowners choosing contrasting upper and lower cabinets to create visual interest and modernize their spaces. The most common combination is white or light gray upper cabinets paired with navy blue, forest green, or charcoal lower cabinets, though cream uppers with sage green lowers is also trending strongly in Ottawa's design community.

This trend works particularly well in Ottawa homes because it allows homeowners to incorporate darker, more dramatic colours without overwhelming the space during our long winter months when natural light is limited. The lighter upper cabinets help reflect available light and prevent the kitchen from feeling closed-in, while the darker lowers add sophistication and hide everyday wear better than all-white cabinetry. Many Ottawa designers are also using this approach to highlight kitchen islands, painting the island in a bold accent colour while keeping perimeter cabinets neutral.

From a practical standpoint, two-tone cabinet painting requires more precision and planning than single-colour work. Professional painters need to carefully mask transition lines, ensure colour consistency within each tone, and coordinate primer selection since different colours may require different base preparations. The cost typically runs $3,500 to $8,000 for an average Ottawa kitchen, depending on the number of doors, complexity of the colour scheme, and finish quality desired. Spray finishing produces the smoothest results but requires more extensive masking and ventilation setup.

One important consideration is ensuring the two colours complement your existing countertops, backsplash, and flooring. What looks stunning in photos might clash with your specific finishes and lighting conditions. Always test both colours with large sample boards in your actual kitchen lighting before committing to the full project.

If you're considering a two-tone cabinet transformation, you can browse experienced cabinet painters through the Ottawa Construction Network directory who specialize in this type of detailed colour work and can help you achieve professional results.

Q5

What are the best cabinet paint brands recommended by Ottawa painters?

Cabinet painting is one of the most detail-oriented jobs in the trade, and the paint you choose makes or breaks the result. Ottawa painters who specialize in cabinetry tend to have very strong opinions about brands — and for good reason. Cabinets take more abuse than any other painted surface in your home. Here are the products that Ottawa's cabinet painters reach for most often.

Top-Tier Cabinet Paints

Benjamin Moore Advance

This is the industry favourite among Ottawa cabinet painters, and it has been for years. Advance is a waterborne alkyd — it cleans up with water like latex but cures to a hard, furniture-like finish similar to oil paint.

- **Finish**: Extremely smooth self-leveling, minimal brush marks
- **Durability**: Rock-hard cure after 30 days — resists scratches, fingerprints, and kitchen grease
- **Dry time**: Slow — 16+ hours between coats (plan your kitchen downtime accordingly)
- **Cost**: $75-$90 per gallon at Ottawa Benjamin Moore retailers (Randall's, Dulux, Monarch)
- **Ottawa consideration**: The slow dry time is actually an advantage in our dry winter interiors — gives the paint time to level properly instead of drying too fast with lap marks

Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel

The strongest contender to Advance, and some Ottawa painters prefer it for its faster recoat time.

- **Finish**: Urethane-modified for extreme hardness and stain resistance
- **Durability**: Arguably even harder than Advance after full cure
- **Dry time**: 4-6 hours recoat versus Advance's 16+ — a major advantage for minimizing kitchen disruption
- **Cost**: $80-$95 per gallon at Ottawa Sherwin-Williams locations
- **Note**: Slightly less self-leveling than Advance, so spray application is preferred

Benjamin Moore Scuff-X

A newer entry that some Ottawa painters are adopting for **high-traffic kitchen environments**.

- **Finish**: Designed specifically for scuff and mar resistance
- **Durability**: Excellent for homes with kids who slam cabinet doors
- **Cost**: $70-$85 per gallon
- **Limitation**: Not as hard a cure as Advance or Emerald for long-term kitchen grease resistance

Professional-Only Products

These are products most homeowners will not find at retail — they are sold through professional paint suppliers and require experience to apply properly.

Fine Paints of Europe Eurolux

The **absolute premium option** — some high-end Ottawa painters use this for luxury kitchen cabinet refinishing in Rockcliffe, Manotick estates, and custom-built Westboro homes.

- **Cost**: $130-$160 per gallon
- **Finish**: Mirror-smooth, comparable to factory lacquer
- **Application**: Spray only, requires controlled environment

Pre-Catalyzed Lacquer

For the **hardest, most durable factory finish**, some Ottawa cabinet specialists spray pre-catalyzed lacquer. This is what factory-finished cabinets often use.

- **Durability**: Unmatched — harder than any paint product
- **Application**: Must be sprayed in a controlled booth or well-ventilated shop
- **Cost**: Labour-intensive but material cost is moderate ($50-$70/gallon)
- **Note**: Strong fumes — typically applied off-site. The painter removes your cabinet doors, sprays them in their shop, and reinstalls. Many Ottawa cabinet painters work this way.

What Ottawa Painters Say to Avoid

- **Behr or other big-box house paints** on cabinets — they are fine for walls but lack the hardness and adhesion for cabinetry
- **Chalk paint** — trendy but soft, chips easily, and the wax topcoat breaks down in kitchen heat and grease
- **Regular latex semi-gloss** — will show fingerprints within weeks and chip at edges within months
- **Rust-Oleum Cabinet Transformations kits** — DIY kits that promise easy results but produce a plasticky finish that peels

Primer Matters as Much as Paint

No cabinet paint performs well without the right primer underneath. The standard among Ottawa painters:

- **Zinsser BIN Shellac Primer** ($50-$60/gallon) — the gold standard for blocking tannin bleed from oak and wood knots, bonds to virtually anything including lacquered and laminate surfaces
- **Stix Bonding Primer** ($45-$55/gallon) — excellent adhesion to slick surfaces like thermofoil or melamine
- **Benjamin Moore Fresh Start** ($40-$50/gallon) — good all-around option for wood cabinets already sanded

BIN primer has strong fumes — Ottawa painters typically schedule priming during warmer months when ventilation is possible, or use professional respirators and air scrubbers for winter work.

Cost Per Kitchen

Paint and primer for a **standard Ottawa kitchen** (typically 20-30 cabinet doors plus frames):

- **Materials only**: $250-$450 (2-3 gallons paint + 1-2 gallons primer)
- **Professional cabinet painting (full job)**: $3,500-$7,000 depending on kitchen size, number of doors, and paint choice
- **Premium lacquer refinish**: $6,000-$12,000

Ottawa cabinet painting prices run about 10-15% below Toronto rates for comparable quality and products.

The Takeaway

Benjamin Moore Advance remains the most recommended cabinet paint among Ottawa painters for brush-and-roll work. **Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane** is the top pick for spray application. And for the ultimate finish, **pre-catalyzed lacquer sprayed off-site** delivers factory results.

To find cabinet painting specialists, check the **Ottawa Paint Contractors** listings on the **Ottawa Construction Network directory** — and specifically ask which product they use and why. A painter who can articulate their product choice is a painter who knows cabinets.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Rrenovatios
- Grunt Work 4 Grunts
- Joe Imerti Contracting

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Q6

Should I spray or brush paint my kitchen cabinets in Ottawa?

If you want the short answer: **spray for the best finish, brush for the lowest cost, and either can look great if done properly.** But the real answer depends on your kitchen, your budget, and whether you are hiring a pro or tackling this yourself. Let me walk through the details.

Spray Painting Cabinets: The Professional Standard

Spraying is the preferred method among professional Ottawa cabinet painters, and there is a good reason — it produces a **factory-smooth, brush-mark-free finish** that is virtually indistinguishable from new cabinets.

Advantages

- **Flawless finish** — no brush strokes, no roller stipple, perfectly even coating
- **Faster application** — once masking is done, spraying a full kitchen takes hours, not days
- **Better coverage in detail areas** — raised panel doors, routed edges, and moulding profiles get even coverage without pooling
- **Thinner, harder coats** — spray applies thinner layers that cure harder than brush-applied paint

Challenges in Ottawa Homes

Masking is the big one. To spray cabinets in place, everything in your kitchen — countertops, appliances, floors, backsplash, and walls — needs thorough protection. Overspray gets everywhere, including into adjacent rooms if not properly contained.

Ottawa's seasonal extremes add complexity:

- In **winter**, your kitchen is sealed tight. Spray overspray and fumes have nowhere to go. Professional painters use **commercial air scrubbers and HEPA filtration** to manage this. A DIYer with a cheap HVLP sprayer in a closed-up January kitchen is asking for trouble.
- In **summer**, humidity above 60% can cause orange peel texture in spray finishes. Ottawa's July and August humidity regularly hits 70-80%. Professionals adjust gun pressure and thinning ratios accordingly.

The Off-Site Spray Option

Many Ottawa cabinet painters avoid in-home spraying entirely. Instead, they:

- Remove all doors, drawers, and hardware in your kitchen
- Transport everything to their **spray booth or shop**
- Prep, prime, and spray **2-3 coats** in a controlled, dust-free environment
- Reinstall once fully cured
- Brush-and-roll the cabinet frames (boxes) in place

This is the **gold standard approach** and produces the best results. Expect your kitchen to be without doors for **5-10 business days**.

Brush Painting Cabinets: The Accessible Option

Advantages

- **No masking of the entire kitchen** — just standard drop cloths and painter's tape
- **Lower cost** — no spray equipment, less setup time
- **Easier touch-ups** later — brushed surfaces blend with touch-up paint; sprayed surfaces often show touch-up patches
- **Manageable for skilled DIYers** — brushes and rollers are familiar tools

Achieving a Smooth Brush Finish

The key to brush-painting cabinets without visible brush marks:

- **Use a high-quality product** like Benjamin Moore Advance that is specifically formulated to self-level and eliminate brush marks
- **Angle brushes** (Purdy or Wooster Chinex) in 2-2.5 inch for cutting detail areas
- **Foam rollers** (4-6 inch high-density foam) for flat panel faces — these leave an incredibly smooth finish
- **Thin coats** — two or three thin coats always beat one thick coat
- **Add Floetrol** in Ottawa's dry winter to extend working time and improve leveling
- **Maintain a wet edge** — work quickly and avoid going back over partially dried sections

Realistic Expectations

Even with perfect technique, a **brushed finish will have some texture** when viewed up close in raking light. From normal viewing distance (3+ feet), a well-brushed cabinet should look smooth and professional. But if you hold a flashlight at an angle to the surface, you will see the difference between brush and spray.

For many homeowners, this level of finish is **completely acceptable**, especially at the cost savings.

Cost Comparison in Ottawa

For a **standard Ottawa kitchen** (20-30 doors, upper and lower cabinets):

| Method | DIY Cost | Professional Cost | |--------|----------|-------------------| | **Brush-and-roll** | $200-$400 (materials) | $3,000-$5,000 | | **Spray in place** | $350-$600 (materials + rental) | $4,000-$6,500 | | **Spray off-site** | N/A | $5,000-$8,000 | | **Lacquer off-site** | N/A | $6,000-$12,000 |

Ottawa pricing runs 10-15% below what you would pay for the same work in the GTA.

What About the Cabinet Frames?

Regardless of whether doors are sprayed or brushed, the **cabinet boxes (frames) are almost always brush-and-rolled in place**. Spraying frames in an occupied kitchen requires too much masking. A skilled painter can get the frames looking very smooth with foam rollers and a quality enamel.

DIY Reality Check

If you are considering DIY:

- **Brush-and-roll is very doable** for a patient homeowner willing to invest the time. Expect a full kitchen to take **3-5 weekends** including prep, prime, and two coats.
- **DIY spraying is risky** without experience. Runs, sags, orange peel, and overspray are extremely common. Renting an airless sprayer ($80-$150/day in Ottawa) does not come with the skill to use it on cabinetry.
- **Prep is 70% of the job** regardless of method — cleaning, degreasing with TSP, sanding, filling holes, and priming. Skimp here and no application method will save you.

The Verdict

Hire a professional who sprays off-site for the **best possible finish**. Choose brush-and-roll with premium enamel for a **great finish at a lower price point**. Avoid DIY spraying unless you have experience — the margin for error on cabinets is very small.

Browse **Ottawa Paint Contractors** on the **Ottawa Construction Network directory** to find cabinet specialists. Ask each painter which method they use and request photos of recent cabinet work — that will tell you

everything you need to know about their quality.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- Above All Painting Inc.
- 613PAINTING INC
- Ottawa Caulking
- Titley Construction

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Q7

How long does cabinet painting take for a typical Ottawa kitchen?

One of the biggest surprises for Ottawa homeowners is just how long a proper cabinet painting job takes. This is not a weekend project — even for professionals. Here is a realistic timeline breakdown so you can plan around kitchen disruption.

Professional Timeline: 5-10 Business Days

For a **typical Ottawa kitchen** (20-30 doors, upper and lower cabinets, island if applicable), here is how a professional job breaks down:

Day 1: Assessment, Door Removal, and Hardware

- Remove all **cabinet doors, drawer fronts, and hardware** (hinges, pulls, knobs)
- Label every door and hinge location (critical for proper reinstallation — Ottawa's older homes often have cabinets that are slightly out of square, so doors are not interchangeable)
- Document any damage, repairs needed, or areas of concern
- **Time**: 3-5 hours depending on kitchen size

Days 2-3: Preparation

This is where the real work happens and where corners get cut on cheap jobs.

- **Degrease** all surfaces with TSP or a commercial degreaser — kitchen cabinets accumulate years of cooking grease, especially above the stove
- **Sand** all surfaces to create mechanical adhesion (120-150 grit for wood, finer for previously painted surfaces)
- **Fill** any dings, holes, dents, or wood grain (on oak cabinets, grain filling alone can take a full day)
- **Caulk** gaps between frame pieces and wall
- **Clean and tack** all surfaces to remove sanding dust
- **Time**: 8-16 hours of hands-on prep work

Day 3-4: Priming

- Apply **one coat of bonding primer** (typically shellac-based BIN or Stix) to all surfaces
- **Sand primer** lightly with 220-grit once dry for maximum smoothness
- Inspect for any imperfections and spot-fill as needed

- **Time**: 4-6 hours application, plus drying time

Days 4-7: Painting (Two Coats Minimum)

This is where the method matters for timeline:

Spray (off-site): Two coats with sanding between can be completed in 2-3 days in a controlled spray booth. However, **cure time between coats varies by product**:

- Benjamin Moore Advance: **16-24 hours** between coats
- Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane: **4-6 hours** between coats
- Pre-catalyzed lacquer: **1-2 hours** between coats (fastest option)

Brush-and-roll (on-site): Two coats on doors plus frames typically takes 3-4 days, with drying time between coats.

Days 5-7: Frame Painting (On-Site)

While doors are being painted (either off-site or drying between coats), the painter works on **cabinet frames** in your kitchen:

- Mask countertops, walls, and appliances
- Prime and paint frames with two coats
- This work happens in your kitchen, so expect **limited access to counters and appliances** during this phase

Days 8-10: Reinstallation and Touch-Up

- Reinstall all doors with **careful alignment** (this takes longer than people expect — especially in older Ottawa homes where settling has shifted the cabinet boxes)
- Install new hardware if upgrading
- Touch up any nicks from handling and transportation
- Final inspection and clean-up
- **Time**: 4-8 hours

Total Disruption to Your Kitchen

Here is the real question most Ottawa families care about:

- **Doors off your cabinets**: 5-10 days (off-site spray) or 7-14 days (on-site brush)

- **Painters actively working in your kitchen**: 3-5 days total (not consecutive with off-site method)
- **Kitchen partially usable**: Throughout most of the process — your appliances, sink, and counters are accessible except during frame painting days
- **Kitchen fully done and usable**: After reinstallation, but **cabinets are not fully cured for 30 days.** Be gentle with doors during cure time — no slamming, no heavy scrubbing.

Ottawa Seasonal Timing Considerations

Our climate affects drying and cure times significantly:

- **Winter (November-March)**: Ottawa's forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 15-25%. Paint dries fast — sometimes too fast, causing lap marks. But **cure time is actually longer** in very dry conditions for waterborne alkyds like Advance. Budget an extra day or two for proper curing between coats.
- **Spring/Fall (April-May, September-October)**: **Ideal painting season.** Moderate humidity (40-55%), comfortable temperatures, and you can open windows for ventilation during on-site work.
- **Summer (June-August)**: High humidity (60-80%) slows drying times significantly. Advance paint that recoats in 16 hours during spring may need 24+ hours in a humid July kitchen. Air conditioning helps but adds to the timeline.

What Slows Things Down

Common delays on Ottawa cabinet jobs:

- **Oak grain filling** — if you are painting over oak and want a smooth finish, filling the open grain adds 1-2 full days
- **Dark to light colour change** — going from dark stained wood to white may require an extra coat of primer and paint (3 coats total)
- **Damage repair** — water-damaged or delaminating cabinet edges (common under Ottawa kitchen sinks) need rebuilding before painting
- **Lead paint** — pre-1978 Ottawa homes may have lead paint on cabinets. Safe removal adds time and cost under Ontario regulations
- **Large kitchens** — a 40+ door kitchen with island, pantry, and butler's pantry can take 2-3 weeks

DIY Timeline Reality

If you are doing this yourself, **double or triple the professional timeline**. A DIY cabinet paint job on a standard Ottawa kitchen realistically takes **3-5 weekends** (working Saturdays and Sundays), assuming:

- Weekend 1: Remove doors, clean, degrease
- Weekend 2: Sand, fill, repair
- Weekend 3: Prime everything, light sand
- Weekend 4: First coat of paint
- Weekend 5: Second coat, reinstall

That is **5 weeks without cabinet doors** — make sure your family is on board with that.

Cost vs. Timeline Trade-Off

In Ottawa, expect:

- **Fastest (lacquer off-site, 5-7 days)**: $6,000-$12,000
- **Standard (spray off-site, 7-10 days)**: $4,500-$7,000
- **Budget (brush on-site, 10-14 days)**: $3,000-$5,000

You are essentially paying more for less disruption to your kitchen routine.

For quotes and scheduling, browse **Ottawa Paint Contractors** on the **Ottawa Construction Network directory**. Ask each painter for their specific timeline and method — a professional who gives you a detailed day-by-day plan is one who has done this many times.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Joe Imerti Contracting
- Capital Paint
- Demontigny Carpentry

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Q8

Can I paint laminate kitchen cabinets in my Ottawa home or should I replace them?

Great question, and one that Ottawa homeowners wrestle with constantly — especially anyone who bought a home built in the **1990s or 2000s** when laminate (melamine and thermofoil) cabinets were everywhere. The good news: **yes, you absolutely can paint laminate cabinets**, and for most Ottawa homeowners it is the smarter financial move. But it requires a specific process that differs from painting wood cabinets.

Paint vs. Replace: The Ottawa Math

Let's look at the actual numbers for a **standard Ottawa kitchen** (20-30 cabinet doors, uppers and lowers):

| Option | Cost Range | Timeline | |--------|-----------|----------| | **Professional laminate cabinet painting** | $3,500-$6,500 | 7-12 days | | **Refacing (new doors, keep boxes)** | $8,000-$15,000 | 2-3 weeks | | **New IKEA/budget cabinets installed** | $12,000-$20,000 | 3-6 weeks | | **Custom cabinets** | $25,000-$50,000+ | 8-16 weeks |

Painting saves you $8,000-$40,000 compared to replacement. Even the highest-end professional paint job costs a fraction of new cabinets. That money can go toward countertops, a backsplash, or new appliances — upgrades that collectively transform a kitchen more than cabinets alone.

Ottawa's cabinet painting costs run about 10-15% below GTA prices for comparable work.

When Painting Makes Sense

Paint your laminate cabinets if:

- The cabinet **boxes (frames) are structurally sound** — no water damage, no delamination on the boxes themselves
- The **layout works for your family** — painting does not change the kitchen design
- Door **hinges and hardware are functional** (or you are willing to upgrade them for $200-$500)
- You want a **dramatic visual change** without a major renovation
- You are **selling your home** and need maximum ROI on a kitchen update

When Replacement Is the Better Call

Replace rather than paint if:

- **Cabinet boxes are damaged** — water damage under the sink, warped or swollen particleboard, broken shelving

- **Thermofoil is actively peeling** on more than 30% of doors — the substrate underneath is often too degraded for paint to adhere long-term
- You need to **change the kitchen layout** — move appliances, add an island, change from galley to L-shape
- **Drawers and hardware are failing** — soft-close drawer slides and European hinges on old laminate cabinets cost nearly as much to retrofit as new cabinets with them built in
- The cabinets are **pre-1990 particleboard** that has absorbed decades of kitchen moisture

How to Paint Laminate Cabinets Properly

Laminate is slick by design — paint does not grip it without **aggressive preparation**. Here is the process that Ottawa cabinet painters follow:

Step 1: Clean Thoroughly

Degrease every surface with TSP (trisodium phosphate) or Krud Kutter. Laminate cabinets accumulate a film of cooking grease that is invisible but will prevent adhesion. Pay extra attention to doors near the stove and range hood.

Step 2: Scuff Sand (Do NOT Skip This)

Sand every surface with 150-220 grit sandpaper or a sanding sponge. You are not removing the laminate — you are creating microscopic scratches for the primer to grip. Use a random orbital sander on flat surfaces and hand-sand the profiles.

For **thermofoil cabinets** (the vinyl-wrapped type), sand lightly — too aggressive and you will cut through the vinyl layer.

Step 3: Prime With a Bonding Primer

This is the **single most critical step**. Regular primer will peel off laminate within weeks. You need a **specialty bonding primer**:

- **Zinsser BIN Shellac Primer** — the best adhesion to slick surfaces. Strong fumes (plan for ventilation or warmer-month application in Ottawa)
- **Stix Waterborne Bonding Primer** — excellent adhesion with lower fumes. Better for Ottawa winter work when ventilation is limited
- **Kilz Adhesion Primer** — good budget alternative

One coat of bonding primer is usually sufficient on laminate. Let it dry completely (BIN dries in 45 minutes; Stix needs 2-4 hours).

Step 4: Light Sand the Primer

320-grit sandpaper, just enough to knock down any dust nibs or texture. Tack cloth to remove dust.

Step 5: Apply Two Coats of Cabinet-Grade Paint

Best products for laminate cabinets:

- **Benjamin Moore Advance** — self-leveling, hard cure, excellent on laminate over proper primer
- **Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane** — faster recoat, extremely hard finish

Two thin coats minimum, with proper dry time between coats. Spray application is ideal for the smoothest finish on laminate.

Step 6: Cure Fully Before Heavy Use

This is where Ottawa homeowners get impatient and ruin the job. Cabinet paint on laminate needs a **full 30-day cure** before it reaches maximum hardness. During this period:

- Do not slam doors
- Do not scrub with abrasive cleaners
- Do not stick anything adhesive to the surface
- Wipe gently with a soft damp cloth only

In Ottawa's dry winter conditions, cure time can extend slightly. Running a humidifier in the kitchen (40-50% RH) helps paint cure properly.

Durability Expectations

Let's be realistic: **painted laminate will never be as durable as factory-finished wood cabinets or new laminate.** However, a properly prepped and painted laminate cabinet can look great and hold up well for **7-10 years** with reasonable care.

The most vulnerable areas are:

- **Edges and corners** where fingers grip to open doors
- **Around handles and pulls** — using hardware (not finger pulls) dramatically reduces wear
- **Under-sink area** — moisture exposure can eventually undermine adhesion

Ottawa Heritage Homes: A Special Case

If you own a heritage home in the **Glebe, Sandy Hill, or New Edinburgh** and a previous owner installed laminate cabinets during a 1990s renovation, painting them can be a smart interim step. It freshens the kitchen enough to buy time while you save for a proper heritage-appropriate kitchen renovation that the Heritage Conservation District guidelines may influence.

The Professional Advantage

While DIY laminate cabinet painting is possible, the **failure rate is high** — far higher than on wood cabinets. The bonding primer application and proper sanding technique are where most DIYers go wrong. A professional Ottawa cabinet painter who regularly works with laminate knows exactly how aggressively to scuff, how thick to apply primer, and how to get a smooth topcoat on a surface that fights adhesion.

Connect with specialists through the **Ottawa Paint Contractors** listings on the **Ottawa Construction Network directory**. When contacting painters, specifically ask about their experience with **laminate and thermofoil** — not all cabinet painters are equally comfortable with these surfaces.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- Above All Painting Inc.
- L.L. Renovation
- Eastern Residential Solution
- Leeds Property Maintenance

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Q9

What primer works best on oak kitchen cabinets before painting in Ottawa?

Oak cabinets are the most common cabinet painting project in Ottawa — they were installed in just about every home built between **1985 and 2005**, and most homeowners are ready for a change. But oak has a specific challenge that makes primer choice critical: **open grain and tannin bleed.** Pick the wrong primer and you will see

raised grain texture and yellow-brown blotches bleeding through your beautiful new white paint.

The Oak Cabinet Challenge

Oak has two properties that affect painting:

- **Open grain**: Those deep, prominent wood grain lines that define the oak look. If you want a smooth, modern painted finish, you need to fill them. If you are fine with visible grain texture showing through the paint (a perfectly valid look), you can skip grain filling.
- **Tannin bleed**: Oak contains natural tannins — water-soluble compounds that migrate to the surface when activated by water-based products. They show as **yellow-brown discolouration** bleeding through light-coloured paint, especially white and off-white. This can happen weeks or even months after painting.

Best Primers for Oak Cabinets

#1: Zinsser BIN Shellac-Based Primer

This is the undisputed champion for oak cabinets among Ottawa painters. Ask any cabinet specialist and BIN will be their first answer.

- **Tannin blocking**: **Best in class** — shellac completely seals tannins. No bleed-through, period
- **Adhesion**: Bonds to bare wood, stained wood, varnished wood, and even lacquered surfaces
- **Grain filling**: Does not fill grain on its own (you still need a separate grain filler for a smooth look), but seals the wood so grain filler and subsequent coats do not raise the grain
- **Dry time**: 45 minutes — the fastest drying primer available. Huge advantage for kitchen cabinet projects where every hour of downtime matters
- **Sand-ability**: Sands beautifully smooth with 220-grit
- **Cost**: $50-$60 per gallon at Ottawa paint stores. You will need 1-2 gallons for a standard kitchen

  The downside: BIN has **strong alcohol fumes**. In Ottawa, this is a seasonal consideration:

- **Spring/Summer/Fall**: Open windows, run fans, wear a respirator. Fumes dissipate in 1-2 hours after application
- **Winter**: This is where it gets tricky. With windows sealed and the furnace running, BIN fumes circulate through your entire home. Professional Ottawa painters either use **commercial air scrubbers** or schedule BIN priming during milder shoulder season days when windows can be cracked. Alternatively, they remove cabinet doors and prime them in a garage or shop

#2: Stix Waterborne Bonding Primer

The best low-fume alternative when BIN's smell is not feasible — particularly for Ottawa winter projects.

- **Tannin blocking**: Good but not perfect — may require two coats on heavy tannin bleeders like red oak
- **Adhesion**: Exceptional bonding to virtually all surfaces including slick varnish
- **Fumes**: Minimal — safe for occupied Ottawa homes in winter
- **Dry time**: 2-4 hours recoat
- **Cost**: $45-$55 per gallon in Ottawa

Best for: Projects where you cannot ventilate (mid-January kitchen job), or homeowners with chemical sensitivities. If using Stix on oak, **do a test patch first** — apply one coat, wait 72 hours, and check for tannin bleed. If you see yellow spotting, add a second coat of Stix or spot-treat with BIN.

#3: Zinsser Cover Stain (Oil-Based)

A solid mid-ground option with good tannin blocking and easier availability than BIN.

- **Tannin blocking**: Very good — nearly as effective as shellac
- **Adhesion**: Strong on wood surfaces
- **Dry time**: 4-8 hours — slower than BIN but manageable
- **Fumes**: Moderate — better than BIN but still requires ventilation
- **Cost**: $35-$45 per gallon
- **Note**: Oil-based, so clean-up requires mineral spirits. Some Ottawa painters avoid oil products due to cleanup hassle

#4: Benjamin Moore Fresh Start High-Hiding Primer

A good general-purpose option for previously painted oak cabinets that have already been sealed by old paint.

- **Tannin blocking**: Moderate — fine if old paint/stain is already sealing the tannins
- **Best for**: Repainting cabinets that were previously painted white or light (tannins already sealed)
- **Not recommended for**: Bare or stained oak being painted light for the first time
- **Cost**: $40-$50 per gallon

Grain Filling: The Extra Step for a Smooth Finish

If your goal is a **smooth, modern painted finish without visible wood grain**, you need to fill the grain before or after priming:

Option 1: Aqua Coat Grain Filler ($25-$35 per quart)

- Apply after sanding bare wood, before primer
- Water-based, easy to sand
- 2-3 applications may be needed for deep red oak grain
- **Most Ottawa cabinet painters' preferred product**

Option 2: Drywall compound skim coat

- Apply a thin layer of lightweight drywall compound over primer, then sand smooth
- Very affordable but messier and more labour-intensive
- Works well but adds 1-2 days to the project

Option 3: High-build primer

- Products like Zinsser Bulls Eye 1-2-3 Plus can partially fill grain with multiple coats
- Will not completely fill deep oak grain — only reduces it

Skipping grain fill: Many homeowners and painters choose to **embrace the visible grain**. Painted oak with visible grain has a handmade, textured character. It is a legitimate design choice, not a shortcut. Discuss this with your painter — it saves a full day of labour and **$300-$500 in cost**.

The Professional Process: Primer on Oak

Here is the step-by-step that Ottawa cabinet painters follow:

- **Degrease** all surfaces with TSP
- **Sand** with 120-150 grit to remove old finish sheen and create tooth
- **Fill grain** with Aqua Coat (if smooth finish desired) — sand smooth between applications with 220-grit
- **Apply BIN primer** — one full coat, brushed or sprayed
- **Sand primer** with 220-320 grit — just enough to smooth, not cut through
- **Spot check** for tannin bleed after 24 hours — if any yellow shows, spot-treat with another coat of BIN
- **Apply cabinet-grade paint** (two coats)

Cost Impact

For a standard Ottawa kitchen, primer and grain-filling work adds roughly **$400-$800** to a professional cabinet painting job (labour + materials). The total project for painting oak cabinets professionally in Ottawa:

- **Without grain fill (visible grain)**: $3,500-$5,500
- **With grain fill (smooth finish)**: $4,000-$6,500
- **Premium spray finish with full grain fill**: $5,500-$8,000

The Bottom Line

Use Zinsser BIN shellac primer whenever ventilation allows — it is the most reliable tannin blocker and produces the best foundation for paint on oak. Switch to **Stix bonding primer for winter projects** or ventilation-limited situations, and plan for a possible second coat for tannin insurance.

For oak cabinet painting specialists, check the **Ottawa Paint Contractors** in the **Ottawa Construction Network directory**. When getting quotes, ask specifically what primer they use on oak and whether they include grain filling — these details separate quality work from paint jobs that start yellowing in six months.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Oliver Painting Inc
- Denys Builds Designs Renovations
- Nic’s D.U.C.T Works Inc

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Q10

How durable is painted cabinet finish compared to factory finish for Ottawa kitchens?

This is one of the most common questions Ottawa homeowners ask before committing to a cabinet painting project, and the honest answer is that a **professionally applied painted finish can rival factory quality** when the right products and techniques are used.

Factory Finish vs. Professional Paint Finish

Factory finishes on mass-produced cabinets typically use catalyzed lacquer or conversion varnish applied in a controlled spray booth environment. These finishes cure chemically rather than just drying, which gives them excellent hardness and resistance to moisture. However, many builder-grade cabinets sold in Ottawa actually have **thermofoil or melamine finishes** that can peel, bubble, and delaminate over time, especially in our kitchens where temperature swings between cooking heat and Ottawa's **winter indoor dryness** (sometimes dropping below 25% relative humidity) put constant stress on adhesive-based coverings.

A **professional cabinet painting finish** using a high-quality hybrid alkyd enamel like Benjamin Moore Advance or Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel delivers a finish that is genuinely comparable to factory lacquer. These products self-level beautifully, cure to a hard shell over 7-14 days, and resist yellowing. When applied over proper primer on properly prepared surfaces, they hold up remarkably well.

What Makes the Difference in Durability

The durability gap between a painted cabinet finish and a factory finish comes down entirely to **preparation and application quality**:

- **Surface preparation** is everything. Cabinets must be thoroughly cleaned with TSP or a deglosser, lightly sanded with 150-220 grit, and wiped down to remove every particle of dust. Ottawa homes with forced-air heating tend to accumulate fine dust quickly, so prep work needs extra attention.
- **Primer selection** matters enormously. A shellac-based primer like BIN or a bonding primer like Stix ensures adhesion to existing finishes. Skipping primer or using the wrong type is the number one reason painted cabinets chip and peel.
- **Application method** determines the final look. Professional painters in Ottawa typically spray cabinets using HVLP or airless sprayers to achieve that smooth, brushstroke-free factory appearance. Multiple thin coats with proper flash time between them build a finish that is hard, even, and durable.

- **Curing time** is critical. A painted cabinet finish reaches full hardness in **14-30 days**. During that period, homeowners need to be gentle with the doors and avoid stacking items against painted surfaces.

Real-World Performance in Ottawa Kitchens

Ottawa kitchens deal with some unique stresses. Our long heating season means **dry indoor air for 5-6 months**, which can cause wood movement and stress paint adhesion. Cooking moisture, grease splatter near the stove, and daily wear around high-traffic drawers and doors all test the finish.

A well-executed professional paint job should give you **8-12 years of solid performance** before showing meaningful wear. You might see minor wear marks on the most-used drawers and doors around the 5-7 year mark, but touch-ups are straightforward. By comparison, a factory thermofoil finish on builder-grade cabinets often starts peeling near the dishwasher or oven within 5-8 years with no easy repair option.

Cost Comparison for Ottawa Homeowners

Professional cabinet painting in Ottawa typically costs **$3,500-$7,500** for an average kitchen (20-30 doors), depending on the size and complexity. Full cabinet replacement with factory-finished cabinets runs **$15,000-$40,000+** for comparable quality. That makes painting an outstanding value, delivering 80-90% of the look and durability at a fraction of the cost.

If you want that factory-smooth result, look for painters who specialize in cabinet refinishing and spray in a controlled setup, either offsite or with proper containment in your home. The Ottawa Paint Contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory include professionals experienced in cabinet refinishing who can walk you through their specific process and products.

Bottom line: do not let anyone tell you a painted finish is automatically inferior to factory. **With the right prep, products, and painter, you will get a kitchen transformation that looks stunning and lasts.**

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- Above All Painting Inc.
- Diamond renovations
- Jaiko Cleaning Services
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION

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Q11

Should I remove cabinet doors for painting or paint them in place in Ottawa?

If you want a finish that actually looks professional and lasts through years of Ottawa kitchen use, **removing the doors is the way to go every single time**. Painting doors in place is a shortcut that almost always shows in the final result.

Why Door Removal Produces a Better Finish

When cabinet doors stay on their hinges, you are fighting gravity, drip lines, and limited access to edges and recessed panel details. Paint pools in the hinges, runs form on vertical surfaces, and you cannot properly coat the back side of each door. Every professional cabinet painter in Ottawa worth hiring will remove every door, drawer front, and piece of hardware before starting.

Here is what proper door removal allows:

- **Horizontal spraying or rolling** eliminates drips and sags. Doors laid flat on sawhorses or a spray rack receive an even coat that self-levels beautifully.
- **Full edge coverage** on all four sides of each door. Edges that get missed are where moisture enters the wood and causes peeling, which matters in Ottawa where **indoor humidity swings from 20% in January to 65% in July**.
- **Proper sanding and priming** of every surface, including the backs of doors, inside edges of face frames, and hinge mortises.
- **Cleaner hinge areas** since you remove all hardware before painting, then reinstall with fresh screws into clean holes.

The Step-by-Step Process

Here is how experienced Ottawa cabinet painters handle the removal and reinstallation:

- **Label everything.** Every door and drawer gets a numbered piece of tape that matches a numbered spot on the cabinet box. This sounds basic, but with 25-35 doors in a typical Ottawa kitchen, getting them back in the right order matters. Hinge placement varies slightly door to door, so swapping doors means alignment headaches.

- **Remove doors and hardware.** Hinges, pulls, knobs, and catches all come off. Hardware goes into labeled bags. If the existing hinges are worn or cheap, this is the perfect time to upgrade to soft-close hinges for **$4-$8 per hinge**.
- **Set up a spray area.** Many Ottawa painters either take doors to their shop or set up a temporary spray booth in your garage or basement using plastic sheeting and portable ventilation. This keeps overspray out of your living space and provides the dust-free environment needed for a smooth finish.
- **Prep, prime, and paint frames in place.** The cabinet boxes (face frames and interiors if desired) are masked, sanded, primed, and painted while the doors are drying separately. This is actually more efficient since the painter can work on both simultaneously.
- **Apply 2-3 coats with sanding between.** Each door gets light sanding with 320 grit between coats to ensure adhesion and a glass-smooth result.
- **Reinstall after curing.** Doors need at least **48-72 hours of curing time** before reinstallation, and 14-30 days before they reach full hardness. Professional painters use **door bumpers** on every door to prevent freshly painted surfaces from sticking to frames during the cure period.

When People Try to Paint in Place

The main reason homeowners consider painting doors in place is to save time or because they are nervous about reassembly. Some DIY guides suggest it is fine. In reality, painting in place leads to:

- **Visible brush marks and drip lines** on vertical surfaces
- **Paint bridging between door edges and frames**, causing the door to stick and then chip when opened
- **Unpainted back sides** that absorb moisture unevenly, leading to warping
- **Paint-clogged hinges** that squeak and bind

Cost and Timeline in Ottawa

Professional cabinet painting with full door removal in Ottawa typically runs **$3,500-$7,500** for a standard kitchen and takes **5-8 working days** including cure time between coats. You will be without doors for approximately 3-5 days. Most painters set up a temporary system so you can still access your dishes and essentials.

The extra labour for removal and reinstallation adds roughly **$500-$800** compared to a theoretical in-place job, but the quality difference is night and day. You can find experienced cabinet painters through the Ottawa Paint Contractors section of the Ottawa Construction Network directory, where professionals list their specific cabinet

painting process.

Remove the doors. **It is the single biggest factor in whether your cabinet paint job looks DIY or professionally done.**

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- EasySave Painting
- BR Wood Finishing
- Eastern Residential Solution

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Q12

What colour trends are Ottawa homeowners choosing for painted kitchen cabinets right now?

Ottawa's kitchen cabinet colour trends have shifted meaningfully over the past couple of years, and what is selling right now reflects a mix of national design movements and preferences that are distinctly local to our city's housing stock and lifestyle.

The Dominant Trend: Warm Whites and Off-Whites

Pure bright white cabinets are fading out. Ottawa homeowners are moving toward warm whites and creamy tones that feel less sterile and more inviting, especially during our long grey winters when a cold white kitchen can feel clinical under artificial light. The top-selling shades right now include:

- **Benjamin Moore White Dove (OC-17)** — the most requested cabinet colour in Ottawa for the past 18 months. It has just enough warmth to feel soft without reading as yellow.
- **Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace (OC-65)** — for homeowners who still want a clean white but not the blue-cool tone of older whites.

- **Sherwin-Williams Alabaster (SW 7008)** — another warm white that photographs beautifully, which matters for Ottawa's active real estate market.

Warm whites work particularly well in Ottawa homes because our natural light tends toward cool and grey for much of the year. A warm white cabinet reflects that light in a flattering way rather than amplifying the grey.

The Rising Trend: Deep Greens and Rich Blues

The biggest colour movement in Ottawa kitchen cabinets right now is **bold lower cabinets paired with lighter upper cabinets** (or open shelving). Homeowners are getting adventurous with colour on the base, while keeping things light up top to avoid a heavy feel.

Popular bold choices:

- **Benjamin Moore Hale Navy (HC-154)** — a deep, classic navy that works in both traditional Sandy Hill heritage homes and modern Kanata builds
- **Benjamin Moore Salamander (2148-10)** — a rich forest green that has exploded in popularity
- **Sherwin-Williams Iron Ore (SW 7069)** — a near-black charcoal for dramatic modern kitchens
- **Benjamin Moore Knoxville Gray (HC-160)** — a sophisticated green-gray that sits between bold and neutral

This **two-tone approach** is especially popular in Ottawa's older neighbourhoods like the Glebe, Westboro, and Old Ottawa South, where homeowners want to honour the character of their century homes while making the kitchen feel current. A dark green or navy base cabinet against original hardwood floors and bright walls creates a look that feels rooted and intentional.

The Steady Performer: Warm Grays and Greiges

Gray cabinets peaked a few years ago, but **warm grays and greige tones** remain popular for Ottawa homeowners who want something other than white without committing to a bold colour:

- **Benjamin Moore Revere Pewter (HC-172)** — the quintessential greige, works in every Ottawa neighbourhood
- **Benjamin Moore Chelsea Gray (HC-168)** — a medium-dark gray that adds sophistication without feeling cold

What Is Falling Out of Favour

- **Cool grays** with blue undertones are declining rapidly. They can look icy in Ottawa's winter light.
- **All-dark kitchens** (dark upper AND lower cabinets) are being replaced by the two-tone approach.
- **Distressed or antiqued finishes** are nearly gone from Ottawa renovation requests.

- **High-gloss finishes** have given way to **satin and semi-gloss**, which hide imperfections better and feel more contemporary.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

Colour choices in Ottawa are influenced by factors that differ from Toronto or Vancouver:

- **Heritage conservation districts** in areas like New Edinburgh, Rockcliffe, and the Glebe sometimes influence exterior colour palettes, and homeowners tend to carry that traditional sensibility into their kitchens
- **Resale value matters** in Ottawa's competitive market. Warm whites and classic navy consistently photograph well for listings and appeal to the broadest buyer pool. Cabinet painting for resale typically costs **$3,500-$6,000** and delivers one of the highest returns of any kitchen update.
- **Natural light levels** vary dramatically by season. A colour that looks perfect in June may feel oppressive in January under pot lights. Always test paint samples on a cabinet door and view them at multiple times of day and in both natural and artificial light.

Finish Matters as Much as Colour

Satin finish is the clear winner for Ottawa cabinet painting right now. It offers a subtle sheen that is easier to clean than matte, hides minor imperfections better than semi-gloss, and resists fingerprints. For families with young children, satin is the practical sweet spot.

When consulting with cabinet painters, bring photos of the overall look you want and discuss how the colour will interact with your countertops, backsplash, and flooring. The Ottawa Paint Contractors listed on the Ottawa Construction Network directory can help you navigate colour selection with real-world experience in Ottawa kitchens across every neighbourhood and housing style.

Colour is personal, but starting with what is working well in Ottawa homes right now gives you a strong foundation to build from.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Diamond renovations
- Custom By Arie

- Hannah's Colour Wave

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Q13

How do I prevent brush strokes when painting kitchen cabinets in my Ottawa home?

Brush strokes on kitchen cabinets are the telltale sign of a rushed or under-prepared paint job, and in Ottawa's dry winter air they can be even more pronounced because paint dries faster than you expect. Here is how to eliminate them, whether you are tackling this yourself or evaluating a painter's process.

The Best Approach: Skip the Brush Entirely

Let me be straightforward. If your goal is a **smooth, factory-like finish with zero brush strokes**, the answer is to **spray your cabinet doors** rather than brush them. Professional cabinet painters in Ottawa use HVLP (high volume, low pressure) or airless sprayers to apply paint in thin, even coats that self-level into a flawless surface. Spraying is why professionally painted cabinets look fundamentally different from DIY brush work.

Spraying requires:

- **Proper containment** with plastic sheeting and ventilation (especially important in Ottawa winter when you cannot open windows freely)
- **Doors removed and laid flat** on a spray rack or sawhorses
- **Multiple thin coats** (typically 2 coats of primer + 2-3 coats of paint) with light sanding between each
- **A dust-free environment**, which is challenging in Ottawa homes during heating season when furnace air circulates fine particles constantly

  Professional cabinet spraying in Ottawa runs **$3,500-$7,500** for an average kitchen, and the finish quality is worth every dollar.

If You Must Use a Brush or Roller

Some areas, like cabinet face frames, inside corners, and detail work on raised-panel doors, may require brush work even when spraying the flat surfaces. And some homeowners choose to roll and brush as a DIY project. Here is how to minimize brush strokes:

Choose the Right Products

- **Use a hybrid alkyd enamel** like Benjamin Moore Advance or Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel. These self-leveling paints are specifically formulated to flow out and erase brush marks as they dry. They are more expensive at **$55-$75 per gallon** but the difference in finish quality is dramatic.

- **Add a paint conditioner** like Floetrol (for latex) to improve flow and extend the open time. In Ottawa's dry winter air, paint can start setting up on the brush within seconds. Floetrol gives you an extra 30-60 seconds of working time.
- **Never use flat or eggshell paint on cabinets.** Use **satin or semi-gloss**, which self-level better and are easier to clean.

Use the Right Tools

- **Foam rollers (4-inch, high-density)** for flat panel surfaces. A good foam roller leaves a finer texture than any brush and approaches the smoothness of spraying. Use Wooster Jumbo-Koter foam covers.
- **High-quality angled brush (2-2.5 inch)** for edges, inside corners, and detail work. Use a Wooster Shortcut or Purdy XL Glide. Cheap brushes leave cheap-looking marks.
- **Never use a natural bristle brush with water-based paint.** Natural bristles absorb water and splay, leaving heavy marks. Use **synthetic filament** (nylon-polyester blend) for water-based products.

Master the Application Technique

- **Load the brush properly.** Dip only the bottom third of the bristles, then gently tap (do not wipe) against the inside of the can. An overloaded brush drips; an underloaded brush drags and leaves marks.
- **Apply in one direction with long, even strokes.** On cabinet doors, follow the grain direction of the wood or the longest dimension of each panel section.
- **Tip off immediately.** After applying paint, lightly drag the very tip of the brush through the wet paint in one continuous stroke from end to end. This evens out the coating and pulls together any ridges. Do this ONCE, not repeatedly.
- **Do not go back into drying paint.** With self-leveling enamels, the paint will flow out and smooth itself over 10-20 minutes. Touching it during this window creates permanent marks. This is especially important in **Ottawa's heated winter air** where drying starts faster than you expect.
- **Sand between coats with 320 grit.** This knocks down any texture and gives the next coat a smooth foundation. Wipe with a tack cloth after sanding.
- **Apply thin coats.** Two or three thin coats are infinitely better than one thick coat. Thick coats sag, hold brush marks, and take much longer to cure.

Control Your Environment

Temperature and humidity have a massive impact on how well paint levels out. Ottawa's winter indoor environment is problematic because:

- Relative humidity often drops to **20-30%** with forced-air heating, causing paint to skin over quickly
- Running a **humidifier in the painting area** to maintain 40-50% humidity dramatically improves leveling time
- Ideal painting temperature is **18-24°C** (65-75°F)
- Avoid painting near heating vents or in direct sunlight from south-facing windows, which accelerates surface drying unevenly

The Realistic Assessment

Even with perfect technique, a brush-and-roller application will never match a sprayed finish on large flat surfaces. If you are painting 20+ cabinet doors and want a smooth result you will be proud of for years, **spraying is the standard for a reason.** Many of the Ottawa Paint Contractors on the Ottawa Construction Network directory specialize in cabinet work and spray in controlled conditions that deliver that factory-smooth result.

For small touch-ups or if you are painting just a few doors on a bathroom vanity, the brush-and-roller technique above will serve you well. For a full kitchen, invest in spraying.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Prochampion
- Ottawa Caulking
- CONSTRUST BK INC

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Q14

Can I paint bathroom vanity cabinets the same way as kitchen cabinets in Ottawa?

The short answer is yes, the painting process is very similar, but **bathroom vanity cabinets face tougher conditions than kitchen cabinets**, and you need to account for those differences or the finish will fail prematurely.

Same Process, Higher Stakes

The core steps are identical: remove doors, clean thoroughly, sand, prime, apply 2-3 coats of quality enamel, reinstall after curing. The products, tools, and techniques that work for kitchen cabinets work for vanities. But bathrooms add environmental challenges that kitchens do not:

Moisture Is the Primary Enemy

Bathroom vanities live in a moisture-rich environment that kitchen cabinets simply do not experience to the same degree. Every shower or bath sends humidity levels spiking, and Ottawa's seasonal extremes make this worse:

- **Winter:** Your bathroom goes from **20-25% humidity** (dry heated air) to **80%+ humidity** during a hot shower, multiple times per day. That massive humidity swing causes wood to expand and contract, stressing paint adhesion at joints and edges.
- **Summer:** Ottawa's humid July and August weather (often **70%+ outdoor humidity**) means bathrooms stay damp longer because the moisture differential between inside and outside is smaller.
- **Condensation:** Cold Ottawa winter air hitting warm bathroom surfaces creates condensation on cabinet surfaces, especially on vanities positioned near exterior walls.

What This Means for Product Selection

For bathroom vanity cabinets, you need to be **more particular about products** than you would for kitchen cabinets:

- **Primer:** Use a **shellac-based primer** like Zinsser BIN rather than a standard latex bonding primer. Shellac primers are completely moisture-resistant and provide the strongest adhesion barrier. This is non-negotiable for bathroom applications. Cost is roughly **$45-$55 per quart**, and you will only need one quart for a standard vanity.
- **Paint:** A **hybrid alkyd enamel** is even more important in bathrooms than kitchens. Benjamin Moore Advance or Sherwin-Williams Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel cure to a hard, moisture-resistant shell. Avoid standard latex wall paint entirely. Some professionals use a **waterborne lacquer** for vanities, which provides even better moisture resistance and a harder cure.

- **Finish sheen:** Go with **semi-gloss rather than satin** for bathroom vanities. Semi-gloss repels moisture better, is easier to wipe clean, and holds up to bathroom cleaning products. The higher sheen is less of a concern in a small vanity than it would be across 30 kitchen doors.
- **Clear topcoat (optional but recommended):** For bathroom vanities, adding a **water-based polyurethane topcoat** over the paint provides an extra layer of moisture protection. This is not always necessary for kitchen cabinets but adds meaningful durability in a wet bathroom environment. A good option is General Finishes High Performance Top Coat at **$25-$35 per quart**.

Specific Differences in Preparation

Mould and Mildew Check

Before painting any bathroom vanity in Ottawa, **inspect the interior and underside for mould**. Older Ottawa homes, especially those in neighbourhoods like Sandy Hill, Centretown, and Old Ottawa South with original plumbing, frequently have slow leaks or condensation issues under bathroom vanities. If you find mould:

- Clean with a mould-killing solution and let dry completely
- Apply a mould-resistant primer like Zinsser Mold Killing Primer
- Address the moisture source before repainting, or the mould will return

Ventilation Assessment

Ottawa building code requires **bathroom exhaust fans rated at minimum 50 CFM** for bathrooms. Before investing in a vanity paint job, make sure your exhaust fan works properly and is actually vented to the exterior (not into the attic, which is a common issue in older Ottawa homes). A functioning exhaust fan is the single best protection for your painted vanity finish. Upgrading to a **humidity-sensing fan** for **$120-$200** is a worthwhile investment that protects both the paint and the bathroom generally.

Cost for Bathroom Vanity Painting in Ottawa

Bathroom vanity painting is more affordable than kitchen cabinets simply because there are fewer doors and less surface area:

- **Standard single vanity** (2-4 doors, 1-3 drawers): **$500-$1,200**
- **Double vanity** (4-6 doors, 4-6 drawers): **$800-$1,800**
- **Full bathroom cabinet suite** (vanity + linen closet + medicine cabinet): **$1,200-$2,500**

These prices include door removal, full prep, priming, painting, and reinstallation. The cost per door is slightly higher than kitchen cabinets because the setup and cleanup time is similar regardless of how many doors you are painting.

Curing Time Is More Critical

This is where many Ottawa DIYers run into trouble. Painted vanity cabinets need **at least 14 days of curing** before the finish reaches full hardness, and during that time you should:

- Keep the bathroom well ventilated
- Avoid placing wet items directly on painted surfaces
- Use cabinet bumpers to prevent doors from sticking to frames
- Wipe up any water splashes promptly

Rushing to use the vanity before the paint fully cures is the most common reason bathroom cabinet paint jobs fail within the first year.

Bottom Line

Paint your bathroom vanity using the same professional techniques as kitchen cabinets, but upgrade your products for moisture resistance and pay extra attention to ventilation and curing. The Ottawa Paint Contractors in the Ottawa Construction Network directory include painters experienced with bathroom cabinetry who understand the specific moisture challenges Ottawa bathrooms present across all four seasons.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Floor-2-Wall Inc
- Don Sincennes Painting
- True Tone Painting

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Q15

How to Maintain Painted Kitchen Cabinets So They Last Longer in Your Ottawa Home?

Painted kitchen cabinets are one of the most popular upgrades in Ottawa homes right now, but they take more abuse than any other painted surface in your house. The combination of **cooking heat, steam, grease splatter, and constant handling** means painted cabinets need specific care to look good long-term. Here is a practical maintenance guide based on what actually works in Ottawa kitchens.

The First 30 Days: The Curing Period

This is the most important and most often ignored phase. Even though your cabinets feel dry and hard within hours of painting, the paint is **not fully cured for 21-30 days**. During this curing period:

- **Do not use any cleaning products** — water only, with a soft cloth
- **Avoid stacking items against painted surfaces** — plates, cutting boards, and appliances can stick to uncured paint and peel it when moved
- **Do not apply shelf liner** — adhesive liners will bond permanently to uncured paint
- **Handle cabinet doors gently** — slamming during the cure period can chip edges
- **Keep kitchen humidity moderate** — run your range hood exhaust when cooking and avoid excessive steam. Ottawa winters with forced-air heating actually help (lower humidity speeds curing), but summer humidity **above 65%** slows it.

  Many premature cabinet paint failures in Ottawa trace back to aggressive use during the first month. Patience here pays for years.

Regular Cleaning: The Right Way

Once fully cured, establish a regular cleaning routine:

Weekly (high-touch areas):

- Wipe cabinet fronts around handles, especially near the stove and sink
- Use a **soft microfibre cloth dampened with warm water and a tiny drop of dish soap**
- Wring the cloth nearly dry — you want damp, not wet
- Wipe in the direction of any visible brush or grain texture
- **Immediately dry** with a second clean cloth — standing water is the enemy of painted cabinets

Monthly (all cabinets):

- Full wipe-down of all doors and drawer fronts
- Clean the cabinet tops (above-cabinet grease buildup is heavy in Ottawa homes where the range is below overhead cabinets)
- Check hinges and hardware for looseness — loose hinges cause doors to sag and chip paint on edges

What NEVER to use:

- **Abrasive cleaners** (Comet, Bon Ami, baking soda paste) — they scratch the paint film
- **Magic Erasers** — these are micro-abrasive and will dull the sheen on painted cabinets, especially on satin and semi-gloss finishes
- **Vinegar or ammonia-based cleaners** — they can break down the paint's protective resins over time
- **Spray cleaners with bleach** — bleach degrades paint binders

Dealing With Grease Buildup

Ottawa kitchens accumulate grease on cabinets faster than you might expect, especially if you do a lot of frying or baking. That sticky yellowish film on cabinet surfaces above and beside the stove is aerosolized cooking grease.

For light grease: Warm water with dish soap works perfectly.

For heavy grease buildup: Mix a solution of **1 tablespoon of TSP substitute** (sold as TSP-PF at Ottawa hardware stores, around **$8-$10**) in **1 litre of warm water**. Apply with a soft cloth, let sit for 2-3 minutes, then wipe clean and dry. This cuts through months of accumulated grease without damaging properly cured paint.

Prevention: Run your **range hood fan on medium** whenever cooking, not just when things are smoking. This captures grease-laden air before it deposits on cabinet surfaces. If your range hood vents to the exterior (common in newer Ottawa homes), it is even more effective. If it recirculates (common in Ottawa condos and apartments), clean or replace the charcoal filter every **3-4 months**.

Preventing Chips and Scratches

Edge chipping is the #1 complaint with painted cabinets. Common causes and fixes:

Cabinet door bumpers: Install **small self-adhesive felt or silicone bumpers** on the inside corners of every door and drawer. These cushion the closing impact and prevent edge chipping. A pack of 100 costs **$5-$10** at Home Hardware or Canadian Tire in Ottawa. This single step eliminates most edge chipping.

Soft-close hinges: If your Ottawa kitchen still has standard hinges, upgrading to **soft-close hinges** prevents the slamming that chips paint edges. Hinges cost **$3-$6 each** and are a straightforward swap. For a kitchen with

20 doors, budget **$60-$120** for hinges plus an hour of installation.

Handle and knob placement: If your cabinets do not have handles and you are opening them by gripping the door edge, you are wearing the paint at those contact points. Installing **simple cabinet pulls** (available from **$2-$8 each** at Ottawa suppliers) eliminates fingernail scratches and grip wear.

Touch-Up Protocol

Even with perfect care, minor chips happen. Keep a small container of your cabinet paint colour for touch-ups:

- **Store leftover paint** in a small, tightly sealed glass jar (not the original can — large cans let in too much air each time you open them)
- For small chips, use a **fine artist's brush** (not a foam brush or roller)
- Apply paint to **only the chipped area** — do not try to blend outward
- Two thin coats with 2 hours between beats one thick coat
- Allow **7 days** before cleaning the touched-up area

Important: Touch-up paint may not match perfectly if your cabinets are more than 2 years old — the original paint will have aged slightly. This is normal and usually only noticeable in direct sunlight.

Ottawa Climate Considerations

Winter heating: Ottawa's forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to **20-30%** in winter. Extremely low humidity can cause wood cabinet doors to contract slightly, potentially cracking paint at joints. Running a **humidifier** to maintain **35-45% indoor humidity** in winter protects both your cabinets and your hardwood floors. A whole-house humidifier installed on your furnace costs **$200-$400** in Ottawa and pays for itself in protecting every wood surface in your home.

Summer humidity: Conversely, Ottawa summers push indoor humidity to **55-70%**. This can cause painted cabinet doors to swell slightly. If you notice doors sticking or rubbing, do not force them — the wood will contract again in fall. Forcing swollen doors chips paint edges.

When to Repaint

Properly maintained painted cabinets in an Ottawa kitchen should last **7-12 years** before needing a full repaint. Signs it is time:

- Widespread yellowing (especially white and light colours near the stove)
- Multiple areas where paint is worn through to primer or bare wood

- Overall dullness that cleaning does not fix
- Cracking or alligatoring in the paint film

Professional cabinet repainting in Ottawa runs **$3,000-$7,000** for a full kitchen depending on cabinet count and whether doors are sprayed (best finish) or brushed/rolled. That is roughly **10-15% below GTA pricing** for the same scope.

For cabinet painting or maintenance questions specific to your Ottawa kitchen, the **Ottawa Construction Network directory** lists painting professionals, and **Ottawa Paint Contractors** can connect you with cabinet finishing specialists in your area.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Stef's Quality Painting
- Speedy Pete's Inc
- Whole Home Beauty (WHB)

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Q16

Can You Paint Over Previously Varnished Cabinets Without Stripping Them in Ottawa?

The short answer is **yes, you can paint over varnished cabinets without fully stripping them** — but only if you follow the right preparation steps. Skip or shortcut the prep and you will end up with paint that peels off in sheets within months, especially in Ottawa kitchens where heat and humidity fluctuations stress every painted surface.

Why Varnish Is Difficult to Paint Over

Varnish creates a **hard, smooth, glossy surface** that paint cannot grip. It is specifically designed to repel moisture and prevent things from bonding to the wood underneath. Painting directly over varnish without preparation is like trying to stick tape to a greased surface — it will hold temporarily but eventually let go.

Ottawa's seasonal humidity swings make this worse. Cabinets expand slightly in **summer humidity (55-70% indoors)** and contract in **winter dryness (20-30% indoors)**. This constant movement breaks the weak bond between paint and untreated varnish.

The No-Strip Method That Actually Works

Here is the complete process professional Ottawa cabinet painters use to paint over varnish without chemical stripping:

Step 1: Deep Clean (Do Not Skip This)

Varnished kitchen cabinets accumulate years of **grease, cooking oil, and fingerprint residue** that sits invisibly on the surface. Even great primer will not stick through a grease layer.

Cleaning process:

- Remove all doors, drawers, and hardware. Label everything (painter's tape with numbers works well)
- Wash all surfaces with **TSP solution** (1/4 cup TSP per gallon of warm water)
- Scrub with a Scotch-Brite pad, paying extra attention to areas near the stove and above the dishwasher (steam deposits)
- Rinse with clean water and allow **24 hours** to dry completely
- Cost: **$8-$12** for TSP, Scotch-Brite pads

Step 2: Sanding (The Key Step)

This is where you replace chemical stripping with mechanical preparation. You are **not removing all the varnish** — you are **dulling the gloss and creating tooth** (micro-scratches) for primer adhesion.

Sanding protocol:

- Use **150-grit sandpaper** for the initial scuff (220-grit is too fine to cut through varnish effectively)
- Sand every surface that will be painted — fronts, edges, backs of doors if visible, all frame surfaces
- Use a **sanding sponge** for profiles and moulding details
- Sand until the surface feels uniformly dull and slightly rough to the touch — **no shiny spots**
- Vacuum all dust, then wipe with a **tack cloth** to remove fine particles

Time investment: For a standard Ottawa kitchen (20-25 cabinet doors + frames), expect **3-5 hours** of sanding. An orbital sander speeds up flat surfaces but you will still hand-sand edges and details.

Step 3: Bonding Primer (Non-Negotiable)

This is the product that makes the whole thing work. A **bonding primer** is chemically formulated to adhere to slick surfaces like varnish, laminate, and glossy paint. Regular primer will fail.

Best bonding primers available in Ottawa:

| Product | Type | Cost/Gallon | Best For | |---------|------|-------------|----------| | **Zinsser BIN Shellac** | Shellac-based | $45-$55 | Heavy tannin bleed, dark varnish | | **KILZ Adhesion** | Latex bonding | $35-$45 | General varnished surfaces | | **Zinsser Bulls Eye 1-2-3 Plus** | Latex bonding | $35-$40 | Light-coloured varnish | | **Benjamin Moore Stix** | Latex bonding | $40-$50 | Best overall adhesion |

Application:

- Apply **one even coat** with a high-density foam roller (4-inch for doors, 6-inch for frames) and cut in edges with a quality angled brush
- Do not apply too thick — runs in primer create bumps in the final finish
- Allow **24 hours** to cure in Ottawa's typical indoor conditions
- Lightly sand with **220-grit** after primer has cured, then tack cloth

Step 4: Paint Application

With properly sanded and primed varnished cabinets, you can use any quality cabinet-grade paint. For best results:

Recommended paints:

- **Benjamin Moore Advance:** The gold standard for brush/roll cabinet work. Self-levelling alkyd-modified formula that dries to a smooth, hard finish. **$55-$70/gallon** in Ottawa.
- **Dulux Cabinet Coat:** Excellent Ontario-made option with exceptional hardness. **$45-$55/gallon.**
- **PPG Breakthrough:** Dries very hard, very fast. Good for time-sensitive projects. **$50-$60/gallon.**

Application tips:

- Apply **two coats minimum**, threeif going from dark varnish to white
- Use a **high-density foam roller** and tip off with a quality brush for the smoothest finish
- Allow the manufacturer's recommended recoat time between coats (Benjamin Moore Advance needs **16 hours** between coats)
- **Do not rush recoating** — this is the most common cause of sticky, soft cabinet finishes

Step 5: Cure Before Reassembly

Painted cabinets need time to harden before you put them back together:

- Wait **minimum 3-5 days** before rehanging doors
- Wait **7-14 days** before stacking anything against painted surfaces
- Wait **21-30 days** for full cure before using adhesive shelf liner

Ottawa's **winter heating season** (November-March) actually accelerates curing thanks to low indoor humidity. Summer projects take longer to fully cure due to higher humidity.

When Stripping IS Necessary

The no-strip method works in most situations, but you should consider stripping if:

- The existing varnish is **peeling, cracking, or flaking** (paint will not hold on loose varnish)
- There are **multiple thick layers** of varnish creating drips and buildup
- The varnish has a **wax or silicone topcoat** (common on antique or high-end furniture-style cabinets) — even bonding primer struggles with wax
- You want an **absolutely flawless furniture-grade finish** — stripping to bare wood gives the best possible result

Chemical stripping adds **$500-$1,000** to a professional Ottawa cabinet painting project and **8-12 hours** of labour for a DIY approach.

Cost Comparison: DIY vs. Professional in Ottawa

| Approach | Cost Range | |----------|------------| | DIY (no-strip, 20-25 doors) | $300-$500 in materials | | Professional brush/roll (no-strip) | $2,500-$4,500 | | Professional spray (no-strip) | $3,500-$6,000 | | Professional spray (full strip) | $5,000-$8,000 |

Professional spray finishing gives the smoothest, most durable result and is worth the premium if budget allows. Ottawa pricing runs **10-15% below the GTA** for equivalent cabinet painting work.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Using a liquid deglosser alone (no sanding):** Liquid deglossers like Krud Kutter work as an addition to sanding, not a replacement. On thick varnish, deglosser alone gives inconsistent results.
- **Choosing the wrong sheen:** Semi-gloss is standard for cabinets. Satin works but shows fingerprints more. Flat or matte on cabinets is a cleaning nightmare.
- **Skipping the doors-off approach:** Painting cabinets with doors attached gives poor results around hinges and edges. Always remove doors.

For professional cabinet painting over varnished surfaces, browse the **Ottawa Construction Network directory** or check **Ottawa Paint Contractors** to find painters who specialize in cabinet refinishing. A professional assessment of your existing varnish can save you from a costly approach that does not suit your specific cabinets.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- Above All Painting Inc.
- Floor-2-Wall Inc
- Joe Imerti Contracting
- EasySave Painting

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Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Paint Contractors. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any painting project. Information is current as of October 4, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawapaintcontractors.com** for the latest answers.