



# Trends in Cabinet Finishing

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# TRENDS IN CABINET FINISHING

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# Finishing Style Trends



# High Gloss Finishes



High gloss cabinetry is a trend from Europe that has become increasingly popular especially on flat-panel doors.

As cabinet design become more modern the high gloss colours are becoming more bold. Not just white and black any more. Bright reds, deep blues and rich greys are trending.

Achieving a high gloss finish can be challenging. This will be discussed in the second part of this presentation.

# Dead Flat / Natural Look Finishes



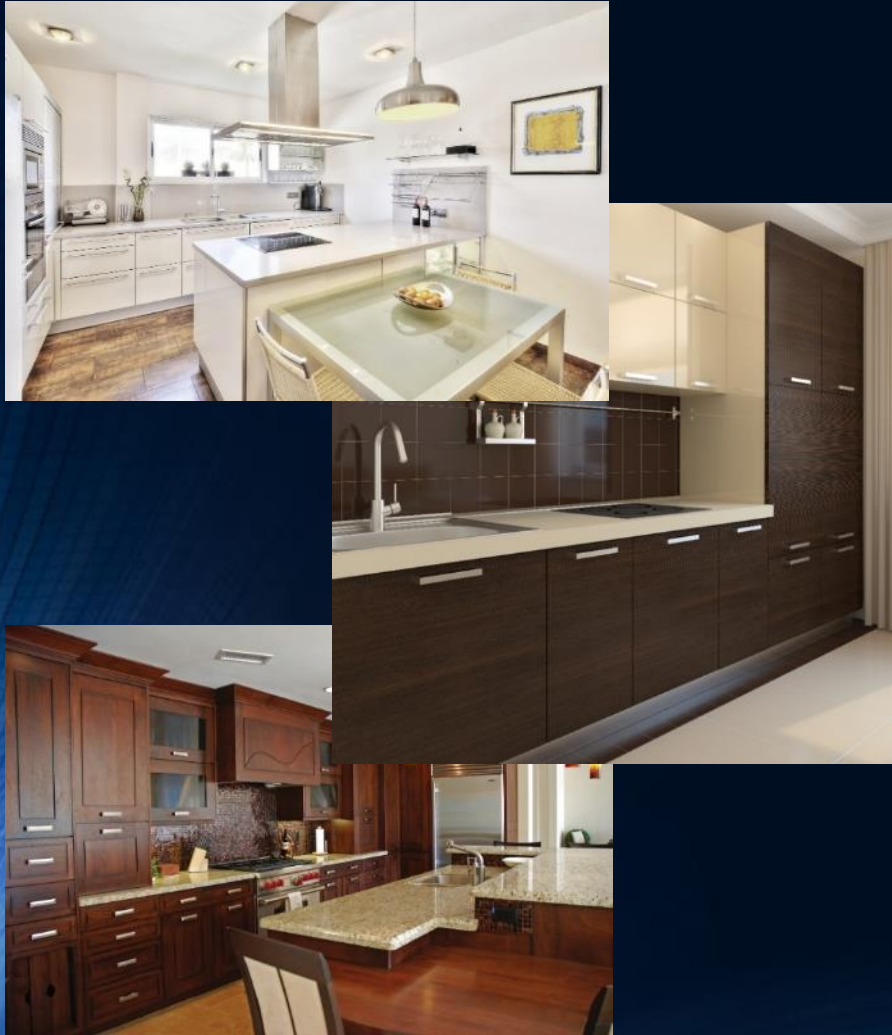
Conversely, dead flat or natural look finishes are also quite popular.

The idea is that the wood looks as if it has no finish, or is natural, but is in fact coated and protected.

This is especially desirable on many of the more non-traditional cabinet woods (i.e. walnut, wenge, zebrawood etc.) that are being used to achieve the modern, European style look.

Like their high gloss counterparts, this look can be achieved with catalyzed lacquers or polyurethanes which we will expand on later.

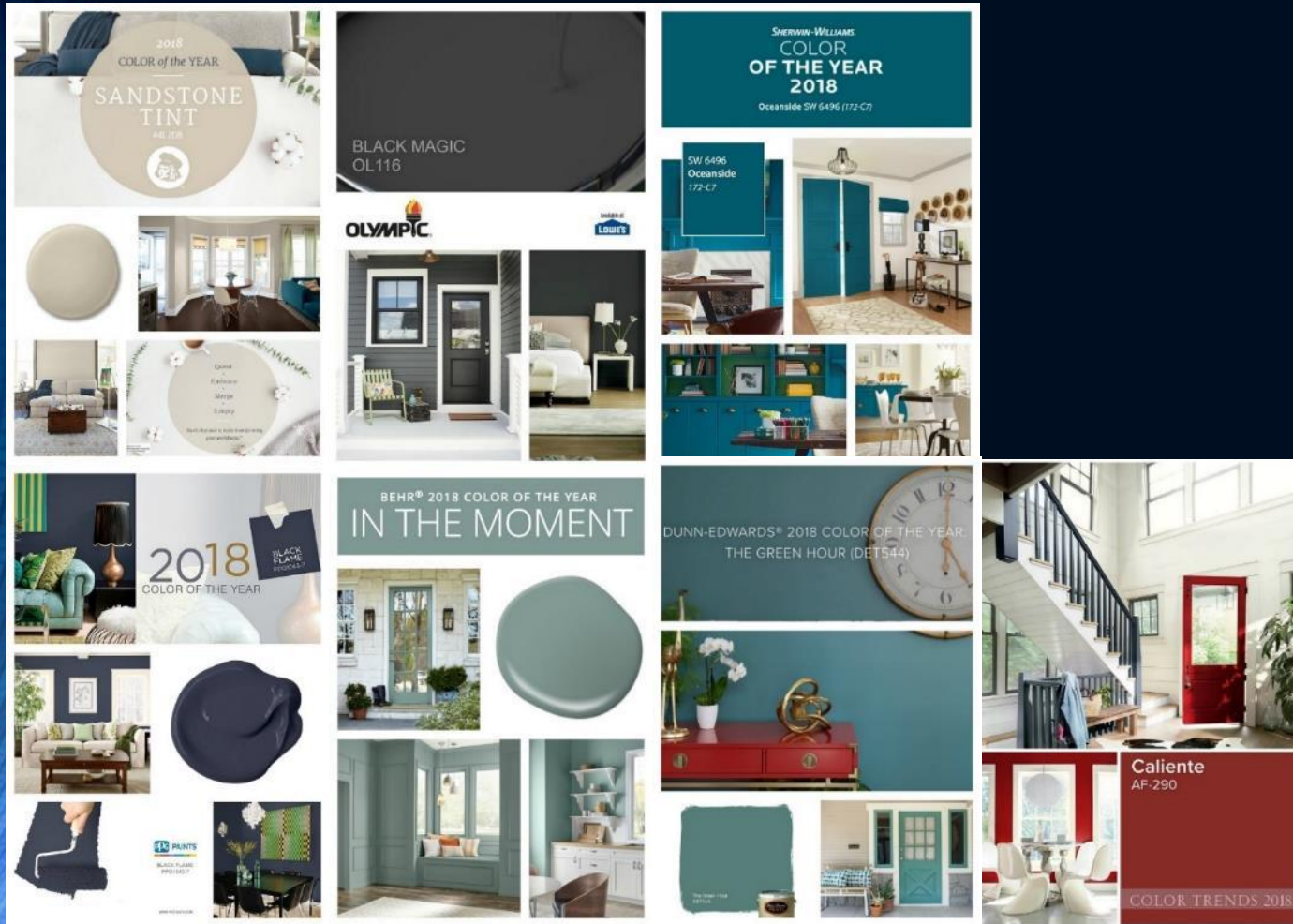
# Painted vs Stained vs Natural Woods



- Painted cabinets have dominated the North American market for several years
- The North American trends tend to follow Europe; Ligna (biennial German show) is usually the indicator of where trends are going
- Painted finishes look to continue to be dominant
- The colour palate looks to expand beyond the traditional whites
- Stained finishes look to be used to augment / accent a painted kitchen (i.e. a stained island)
- Natural woods mixed with painted components is expected to be a big trend in 2018



# Colour Trends for 2018



A look at the Colours of the Year for 2018 from the major consumer paint manufacturers gives a good indication where cabinet colours are heading.

Dark greys & blacks, blues, reds, light greys and off-whites.

# Colour Trends for 2018



So what are we likely to see?

Blues are already becoming popular. Quite similar to pallet of 2018 Colours of the Year. Whites and very light off whites continue to be dominant.

As for stain colours, though not as prevalent as painted finishes in cabinetry, do trend. Grey stains continue to be popular. Greens and earth tones are expected to be popular and dark colours are likely to see a resurgence.



# Technology Trends

# Polyurethane Finishes



- These European (Italian) style wood coatings are also called 2K PU's, 2 Component PU's or Catalyzed PU's
- Not to be confused with retail PU's
- Tend to be used as a high-end alternative to traditional North American acid cured wood coatings (lacquers & varnishes)
  - Can be more durable
  - Relatively easy to spray
  - Higher build systems available
  - Conventional PU, acrylic, WB & polyesters
  - More expensive
  - Easier to achieve high gloss & dead flat looks

# Polyurethane Finishes



## Wet Look / High Gloss

- Very popular European look
- Easier to achieve with PU
- Systems can be built higher to yield a closed pore gloss look
- May still require buffing; dust is always the enemy

## Natural Effect / Dead Flat

- Resin technology available with PU give a more open pore look
- With some its possible to look like the wood is unfinished yet still protected.



# Waterborne Coatings



Where are we, as an industry, with waterborne wood coatings?

- Despite not being a new technology, the adoption of waterborne is far from wide spread; still a small percentage of the market

Why is that?

- The expectations on waterborne performance is difficult to achieve (i.e. application characteristics, durability, look)
- There is a significant learning curve in moving to waterborne
- There is a fear or stigma about waterborne

# Waterborne Coatings



Where do they stand now?

- Waterborne coatings are dramatically improved (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> generation in most cases)
- The look is indistinguishable from solvent
- Application is still a little trickier
- Durability is pretty close to most pre- and post-cat finishes

What is the future of waterborne?

- Unless government regulated the market will remain solvent based
- Waterborne is marketable to consumers but switching to waterborne can be tricky

Are there other “green-ish” alternatives to waterborne?

- YES!

# Formaldehyde Free Finishes



- Formaldehyde is found in the resins used to manufacture plywood, MDF, adhesives and coatings all used in the our industry
- Its has been shown to have adverse health affects both short and long term
- From a coatings perspective, workers are exposed to formaldehyde during the application of conventional acid cured lacquers & varnishes and while the work is drying and the coatings are flashing off
- Consumers can even be exposed to residual formaldehyde during and after install when off-gassing is still occurring
- Formaldehyde free coatings are available that do not contain any formaldehyde in the resin or the catalyst and do not liberate any formaldehyde during the drying and curing process
- While this technology has been around for 5 or 6 years, adoption is slow as these products typically have a higher applied cost
- Interest is growing and formaldehyde free is highly marketable





# “Low” VOC Finishes

- This can be a complicated topic
- VOC = Volatile Organic Compounds; the solvents that work with the resin to form a film on the substrate and evaporate into the air
- Can cause health effects and negative environmental impact
- VOC regulation is widely varied
  - Canadian Architectural Coatings VOC Regulation 2009
  - SCAQMD
  - US EPA AIM VOC Rule
  - Varied state & local regulations
  - All of the regulations vary somewhat

# “Low” VOC Finishes

- There is no definition for “Low” VOC because of the varied regulations
- Most industrial wood coatings are
  - Lacquers <680 g/l
  - Conversion varnishes <725 g/l
  - Stains <550 g/l
  - Waterborne <250 g/l
- Most manufacturers have products in each of these categories that are well below those limits
- Typically the VOCs are reduced by using exempt solvents such as acetone that can make the product less user friendly

# HAPs Free

- HAPs or Hazardous Air Pollutants are defined list of solvents defined by the US EPA Clean Air Act that are known or suspected to have negative environmental or health effects.
- This is a US legislation and not regulated in Canada
- With that said, several manufacturers in Canada offer HAPs free wood coatings because
  - a) They sell product into the US or
  - b) They are proactive and offer products with a safer solvent package
- HAPs free wood coatings can be just as user-friendly and durable as non-HAPs free products





# Fire Rated Coatings for Wood

- Not to be confused with fire retardant (intumescent)
- Tested for flame spread and smoke development
- CAN/ULC-S102 or ASTM E84-08a Surface Burn Ratings as tested by accredited laboratories
  - Class A(1) 0-25 Flame Spread 0-450 Smoke Development
  - Class B(2) 26-75 Flame Spread 0-450 Smoke Development
  - Class C(3) 76-200 Flame Spread 0-450 Smoke Development
- Increase in architects starting to spec fire rated coatings for commercial applications & condo developments



# In summary:

## Style

- Modern, contemporary European styling
- Painted finishes mixed with natural woods
- Whites, blues, greys

## Technology

- 2K Polyurethanes increasing in use
- Waterborne adoption still slow
- “greener” solvent options like formaldehyde free, HAPs free, low VOC



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# Any Questions?

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