

KITCHEN

Cabinet makeover choices are many

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to using color in the kitchen. Dark, dark reds and vibrant yellows are the most popular right now. But you still get some who prefer the off-whites,” said Vincent, a Ferris State graphic arts major. “Woodgraining is one technique, simple to do and economical, that can be used to achieve the look of real wood grain on pressed board or metal.” Vincent suggested that Behr Enamel Laminate Primer is good for pressed board cupboards, as well as Glidden Gripper and Kilz Premium Primers. He said that a two-and-a-half inch brush or small detail roller is good to apply the product to cabinets.

The next step in achieving a faux wood grain finish is to decide on a base-color. For the desired effect, Vincent said that choosing an earthy tone such as cherry, oak or pine bases are best. You could also use a gel-stain. Working in a three foot section, a woodgraining tool is worked over the wet surface, removing some paint, leaving behind a wood grain pattern. The tool itself costs under \$10. “Working with faux finishing takes patience. Most of the time is spent taping off the hardware,” he said. Vincent added that if they choose to use a flat paint to wood grain with, the surface must be coated with a water-based polyurethane sealer. Customers who choose to pickle their cabinets can buy a stain pre-mixed to the correct consistency, which will allow the wood’s natural grain to show through. Vincent said that white-

washing is done by coating a surface with a watered down coat of paint to create a softer, muted effect. Home Depot offers free classes to customers who want to learn woodgraining, sponging, white-washing and pickling techniques on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. on a walk-in basis. The classes are free. Stenciling Mary Brown’s kitchen is her work of art. Decorated to complement the wooded area where she and her family live in Long Lake Township, she stenciled in borders to warm up her home. Brown said that she likes stenciling because she finds it cheaper and easier to use than wallpapering. “If you don’t like it, you can just paint over it,” added the mother of three. “My sister-in-law got me started. I stenciled our previous house. We actually had to move so I could do some more stenciling,”



Photo by Michelle Arntz

Mary Brown of Traverse City stenciled her kitchen recently.

joked Brown. She orders most of her stencils from catalogs and finds them in other craft stores. The lodge-style stencil she recently used to freshen her current kitchen was her own creation. Not restricting herself to manufactured patterns, she modified a stencil she liked, adding a checked border to match a window treatment that framed her sliding glass door. “I bought a piece of plastic and cut out the border of squares. Then I enlarged the pattern on the computer,” she said. She is a self-professed perfectionist who measures everything accurately. To keep the stencil firmly in place while painting a design, Mary uses masking tape, which easily lifts when she is ready to move along to the next section of the wall. A stenciling brush is used to pat the color on within the design. She varies the amount of paint she uses in any one area to achieve the color values that give her art a three-

dimensional quality. The only hard thing about stenciling is the complementary aches and pains she can feel after doing it for a few hours at a time. “I do get sore from climbing up and down the ladder. My neck gets tender from looking up, too. But other than that, it is pretty easy and fast.” She stenciled her kitchen and dining room in the evenings, completing the project in about two weeks time. Mary uses Delta acrylic paints, which cost around 99 cents a bottle but any brand works. She figures her kitchen stenciling project cost under \$20. Supplies can be found at most craft stores, department stores, home improvement centers catalogs and on the Web. Her favorite stencil brush has been used to pounce on paint so often that its bristles are about an eighth the size of the original length. And then there is the noise. “My family says that my

stenciling sounds like there is a woodpecker in the house,” she said with a laugh. Michelle Arntz is a local freelance writer.



Photo by Michelle Arntz

Carl Vincent, an associate at Traverse City’s Home Depot helps Donna Merriman of Interlochen select products for a faux finishing project.

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