



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131

(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

Cabinet Selection Guide

New cabinets can enhance your rooms' appearance, add value to your home and improve how your space functions. While cabinets can account for more than a third of the total cost of a remodel, this investment can transform your home into a stylish, highly efficient and organized multi-functional space. Selecting your cabinets may seem intimidating at first, given the large number of styles, types, materials and accessories to choose from. This buying guide will help you understand the many factors to consider so you can feel confident you're selecting the cabinets that best meet your individual style and storage needs.

First Steps

- Explore cabinet styles, become familiar with the different types and designs of cabinets available.
- Set a budget.

Stock, Semi-Stock or Custom

A good starting point in selecting your cabinets is to determine the options, availability and specialization your project timeframe and budget requires, then decide if stock, semi-stock or custom cabinets best suit your needs.

Stock – These cabinets offer economical pricing, a wide range of standard sizes, styles and finishes and are often available the same day or within a few days of purchase. Stock cabinets typically offer some options for specialty functions, and can be an ideal solution for projects with limited budgets. They are often built in widths of 3" increments ranging from 12" to 60" wide. Standard heights range from 30"-36" with above-stove cabinets in heights of 12"-18".

Semi-Custom – These cabinets offer more flexible options for storage, design and style as well as a wider selection of wood and finish choices. Semi-custom cabinets offer more functionality, with enhancements such as pull-out shelves, lazy susans and vertical dividers, to name just a few. They usually require a longer lead time for delivery and are priced in the mid-range. Available sizes are typically the same as those for stock cabinets.

Custom – These cabinets are constructed by hand to fit your kitchen to your specifications. Custom cabinets make use of all available space and are an ideal solution when non-standard sizes are needed to

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131

(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

fit irregular-shaped spaces. Delivery time can take up to nine or more weeks, depending on the cabinet maker's schedule. The most expensive of the three options, they typically feature high-quality materials and construction features. Custom cabinets can be built in increments up to 1/32". Price varies based on size, materials and options.

Construction

Understanding cabinet construction and knowing a few basic features to look for can go a long way in helping you match cabinets to your décor, lifestyle and budget.

Framed or Frameless

There are two basic styles of cabinets: framed and frameless. The difference lies primarily in their appearance and the amount of storage they provide.

Framed cabinets, also known as face-framed cabinets, have a frame on the front of the cabinet that makes the box highly stable and helps keep it square. Door hinges attach to the frame. Framed cabinets complement both traditional and contemporary décor.

Frameless cabinets, also known as European-style cabinets, have no frame around the face of the cabinet box. Thicker side panels lend stability, and drawers and hinges attach directly to the cabinet's side walls. Because drawers do not have to fit in a frame's opening, they can be as wide as the cabinet, providing more storage. Frameless cabinets are often used with contemporary décor.

Materials

While you might think cabinets are made solely of wood, they are often constructed from other materials or combinations of materials as well. These materials are often combined to provide cost-effective, high-quality durability for the parts of your cabinet that are typically unexposed or behind the scenes. Materials commonly used for cabinet boxes and shelves include:

Particleboard – This material is made of wood chips or shavings bonded together with resin and compressed into rigid sheets. An economical alternative to solid wood, particleboard is very stable and is often used in stock cabinets as an underlayment for plastic laminates and wood veneers in the panels for the box and shelving. Particleboard doesn't warp, shrink or swell due to humidity, but should be properly sealed to avoid moisture. Particleboard is assembled using glue or mechanical fasteners.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com
www.adesignsvcs.com

Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) – An engineered wood made from fine wood particles and glue formed into sheets, MDF is often used as a backing material for laminates and other finishes. MDF is very dense, resists warping and has a smooth surface suitable for veneers, laminates and paints. It is often used in mid-priced cabinetry. Strong and durable, MDF provides many effective benefits for limited budgets.

Plywood – This engineered wood is composed of layers of veneers stacked and glued together with alternate layers oriented at right angles, providing strength in its length and width. Furniture-grade plywood is used in custom cabinetry. Because heat and moisture cause wood to expand and contract in the direction of the grain, plywood's cross-grain pattern makes it more stable and stronger than solid wood. Plywood is often used for cabinet boxes and shelves in higher-priced cabinetry.

Wood Veneers & Laminates

Exposed areas of particleboard, MDF and plywood are typically covered with wood veneers or durable laminates and other synthetic materials.

Wood veneers are thin layers of wood sliced from trees that are adhered to plywood or particleboard and treated with a variety of stains, varnishes and other finishes. Factors to consider when choosing a veneer include grain, pattern, thickness and color. Popular choices include cherry, maple, oak, hickory, birch and pine.

Thermofoil is a flexible vinyl applied to engineered wood to cover cabinet boxes, doors and drawers. It has a smooth to slightly textured easy-care surface that resists chipping better than paint. High heat may cause some discoloration over time.

Laminates are thin, layered plastic coatings fused to the cabinet material with heat and pressure. They offer a wide range of options for colors, patterns and textures.

Melamine is similar to laminate and made of a durable plastic applied to cabinet frames, shelves and drawers with heat, pressure and adhesive. Melamine is durable, easy to clean and resists stains, chipping and fading.

In addition to synthetic laminates and wood veneers, stainless steel and enameled metals are popular choices for cabinets in kitchens with contemporary designs.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131

(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

Features to Look For

The features you don't see are the important ones that will keep your cabinets providing years of reliable use. Listed below are some construction details to look for that help assure you get the most out of your investment:

Box – Solid frames constructed of ½" - ¾" solid wood or furniture-grade plywood offer the highest quality. Medium-density fiberboard and particleboard are used in some instances, but should be above a 45 pound rating to avoid warping. The box should have a solid back.

Drawers – High-quality drawers have solid wood sides, dovetail joints and plywood or hardwood bottoms set in grooves on all four sides.

Drawer hardware – Drawers that extend to three-quarters or full extension offer easy access to the back of the drawer. Soft-close features keep drawers from slamming shut and pinching fingers, a feature to consider for families with small children.

Doors – High-quality doors have a solid wood frame surrounding a solid wood or plywood panel. The next step in selecting your cabinets is to determine the types of cabinets you need.

Door Styles

Cabinet doors are the ideal vehicle for defining your personal style in your kitchen. Think of them as decorations and accents that improve the look and feel of your kitchen by combining four essential elements: Overlay, Wood Types, Design and Finish.

Overlays

The overlay is the manner in which the door rests on the face of the cabinet and a key design element that can dramatically change the door's style from traditional to contemporary.

The two types of overlays are standard and full.



Standard overlays, also known as traditional overlays, leave the face of the cabinet box visible around doors and drawers, creating a type of "frame". Called the reveal, this frame can

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

range from ½"-1" around doors and drawers. Standard overlays are the most common type in cabinets and used in traditional design installations.



Full overlays have the cabinet doors mounted so they completely cover the cabinet box with virtually no cabinet frame showing around doors and drawer fronts. Doors may be separated by as little as 1/8". This style of overlay offers a sleek, sophisticated and seamless look often used in more contemporary design installations. Full overlays can affect the cost of your cabinets because more material is used in their construction.

While full overlays are used on all frameless cabinets, they work well with framed cabinets as well. In addition, framed cabinets offer several other options for how the door lays on or within the cabinet's openings. These designs include:

- **Inset** – The door rests within the frame and is flush with the cabinet box. It is opened using a knob or handle.
- **Lipped** – The door has a groove, called a rabbet, cut completely around the back edge of the door's perimeter, leaving a lip on the front side. This back edge rests flush within the cabinet box while the lip rests on the front of the cabinet.

Wood Types

Another key ingredient in creating the ideal cabinet door for your cabinets is the type of wood the door is made of. Each species of wood varies widely in how it absorbs stains and glazes, providing a wide range of options for individual colors and finishes.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com
www.adesignsvcs.com

Wood Types and Characteristics				
Features				
	Cherry	Maple	Oak	Hickory
Grain	Fine to Medium	Fine	Coarse	Coarse
Hardness	Hard	Very Hard	Very Hard	Very Hard
Color	Mid-Dark	Light	Light	Varies Greatly
Unique Attributes	Pin Knots	Wavy Variations	Streaks & Pin Knots	Specks, Burls & Streaks

Other Wood Types:

Birch

One of the strongest cabinet hardwoods, birch has a close grain and a light tone similar to maple with curly, straight and wavy patterns. Birch has a satiny texture and is classified as White, Yellow, Red, and Black.

Pine

A soft, knotty wood, pine is a favorite for country or rustic styles. It has a close, uniform grain with a light yellow color with few markings. Pine knots will vary from door to door.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

Door Design

Once you've selected the wood type for your doors, you can choose the design from literally hundreds of styles. While manufacturers offer a wide variety from which to choose, below are some of the most popular. Door designs can be further enhanced by replacing wood panels with decorative glass, turning storage into displays when paired with in-cabinet lighting. Manufacturers offer a variety of clear, textured and frosted glass from which to choose, with options for vertical and horizontal strips on the glass, called mullions, which divide the glass into panes.



Slab offers a flat, clean canvas for hardware with a streamlined and minimalistic style ideal for contemporary designs.



Recessed Panel is similar to the slab with a minimal style that adds depth and interest. It is versatile enough to go with country or modern designs.



Raised Panel is a classic style that blends well with formal classic traditional looks.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com



Shaker is known for its simplicity and favored for its warm casual feel. The shaker style is ideal for understated looks.



Cape Cod is reminiscent of bead-board and ideal for a cottage look with a casual, timeless style that blends well with informal kitchens.



Arch adds sweeping elegance to most kitchens. Styles include a raised panel topped with an "eyebrow" arch or a "cathedral" arch.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131

(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

Finishes

Finishes bring out the beauty of your cabinets and showcase your own distinctive style. From traditional natural wood tones to bold, contemporary colors, there's a finish to complement virtually any design and décor.

Wood Tone finishes range from natural to dark, bringing out the natural beauty of wood species by showcasing their individual characteristics.

Color Casts adds vivid punch to kitchens with varying shades that include reds, yellows, blues and greens. Casts are typically opaque rather than translucent.

Glazed Finishes adds richness, texture and warmth to cabinets, creating soft highlights in corners and recesses.

Heirlooming is an enhanced finish that emulates natural wear with selective sanding that exposes underlying layers.

Distressing a finish achieves the rustic look of a gently-aged antique with imperfections that emulate dents, wormholes and chisel marks. This process adds warmth and depth, creating variation by material.

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."



AUSTIN DESIGN SERVICES

Phoenix, MD 21131
(443) 212-8571

eaustin@adesignsvcs.com

www.adesignsvcs.com

Accessories and Add-Ons

Get the most out of your kitchen cabinets with accessories that help maximize storage, provide easy access to cabinet contents and reduce clutter on countertops.



Pull-Out Shelves:

Offer the convenience of quick access to everything on the shelf.



Two-tiered Cutlery/Flatware Dividers:

Store nearly twice as many utensils and flatware.



The Lazy Susan:

Makes items in corner cabinets accessible with one- and two-tiered spinning shelves.



Pegged Plate Organizers:

Slides out for easy access to plates with adjustable pegs for flexible storage

"Designs to meet your needs, and budget."