

TRIANGLE URBAN

HOME

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CELEBRATING INSPIRATIONAL DESIGN AND PERSONAL STYLE





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Distinguishing between quality and speculative online purchases is one area in which a professional kitchen designer can help.

Custom Cabinet Confusion

When it comes to kitchen cabinets, there is a huge difference between custom built and custom quality. Most homeowners don't realize this fact, which may cost them time and money in selecting the appropriate cabinets for their kitchen renovation projects. Many people also don't realize the broad range of products that exist within the product categories "semi-custom cabinets" and "custom cabinets" and how those descriptive terms are not mutually exclusive. We hope to share a few details to ensure your search for the perfect cabinetry is productive and stress-free.

First, the term "custom built" can be misleading. Custom cabinetry doesn't necessarily have to be built on site; in fact, the finish often is much nicer if completed in a manufacturing facility that has space set aside as a clean room. By

removing unwanted particles in the air, such as bugs, pet hair, or dust, a clean room environment ensures cabinetry is free of trapped matter that mars finishes. These particles are impossible to remove in an on-site custom job in a home environment.

Some homeowners think that unless a local cabinetmaker builds their cabinetry on site in their kitchen, it is not a custom product. We have sold many different lines of cabinetry, some of which are custom and are built and finished in a controlled environment. Not only are finishes superior, but a large company has the freedom to reject materials, such as a piece of green wood, that would not lead to a high quality outcome. Smaller shops may not have the ability to pick and choose from the wood delivery slated for building your cabinets, as the amount of wood





ordered is usually just enough to complete that particular job with minimal waste.

Second, the quality of a semi-custom product can be as good as a custom product. The only difference between the two categories is the number of options available for customization. Most homeowners are well served by a semi-custom cabinetry product line, as they still will be able to add features for a custom flair. If they desire to attain an unusual texture, an extra deep drawer, or some special feature, then it may be time to move into a full custom product. Custom enables more choices and more functionality that are unique and especially appropriate for the space.

We spend as much time educating homeowners as we do designing kitchens. There is a perception that custom cabinetry is always better, but good quality in a lower priced line is yours for the

taking if you can accept a few material limitations. You may find your dream cabinets are available in an affordable semi-custom line using exactly the type of wood, trim, and features you wanted to specify in the first place. Look to your kitchen designer to open up the possibilities for you.❖

Max Isley, Certified Master Kitchen & Bath Designer, has owned Hampton Kitchens of Raleigh since 1974. For your next project contact him at Max@HamptonKitchens.com or 919-554-2227. Hampton Kitchens is located at 6320-B Angus Drive in Raleigh. For more information, visit www.HamptonKitchens.com. Mary Liebhold, Certified Kitchen Designer, founded The Kitchen Specialist in 1989, after having designed kitchens in Los Angeles since 1978. Contact her at Mary@thekitchenspecialist.com or 919-490-4922. The showroom is located at 3407 University Drive in Durham. For more information visit www.thekitchenspecialist.com.