

"Manufactured" vs. "local shop-built" cabinetry

*A Comparison from
Combest Cabinets*

“Manufactured” vs. “Local Shop-built” Cabinetry

Many people are under the false assumption that “custom” cabinets mean they have to come from a local shop and can’t be done in a factory. Customers must not be fooled by superficial similarities and should understand how high quality box work materials and construction can make a major difference in the overall quality, performance, and value of their cabinetry

What’s the difference in the finish?

SEMI CUSTOM

Finishes are done in a dedicated finish area with positive airflow (to keep dust out) and drying ovens vs air dried. This creates a much more durable and ultra-smooth finish. Plants are humidity controlled with misters so that there is always optimal moisture content in the air/wood. Multiple steps are used for the finishes. Paints for example have a wood sealer, two coats of pigmented primer, 2 coats of paint and a sealer coat, then oven baked using halogen drying ovens. Doors are meticulously sanded using different equipment and hand techniques creating the smoothest possible surface.

LOCAL SHOP

A typical shop either finishes in a small room in their shop which is exposed to all of the dust in the air or it is finished by a painter on the job site (even worse). By finishing this way not only is there more foreign debris in the finish but there is a real good opportunity for too much/or little moisture in the wood prior to finish. Shops use hand painter sprayers. The typical shop built cabinet has a primer and maybe a combined top coat/pigment coat, and has nowhere near the depth or durability. Shops use orbital hand sanders. Most local shops do not have the technology to offer environmentally friendly finishes.

What are differences in materials & quality?

SEMI CUSTOM

Construction and manufacturing methods, the hardwood plywood used is the best in the cabinet industry, featuring high end panels and high-grade face veneers and is American-made. Particleboard and MDF are also extremely durable and local shops do not take advantage of this. Purchasing departments have access to the finest materials which are all quality inspected upon arrival. Doors are made in their custom shop with any wood and finish that you want. Wood is measured for moisture content before it is received. Humidity is monitored throughout the plant around the clock.

LOCAL SHOP

Shops use more multipurpose materials which are often lower grade because they cannot buy enough for specific purposes to be profitable. In most cases, shops buy their doors to put on their cabinet boxes. For example on painted products, a lot of shops will paint on birch veneer plywood which causes a wavy or uneven surface. Most local shops will not do inset cabinetry because they cannot control the moisture content well enough and if they do, they tend to undersize the doors which gives a lower quality look.

What if I need help with my design?

SEMI CUSTOM

Combest Cabinets Design Center offers you our creative talents and designing abilities. Giving you the cutting edge of custom cabinetry available. We offer a wealth of resources on products from designing hundreds of kitchens. We have the ability to make many more decorative, custom pieces. Our showroom is filled with displays, samples, and brochures to help you through the design process. You will be getting detailed 3D renderings from us.

LOCAL SHOPS

Local shop has a very limited experience and training in design capability. The local shop typically doesn't have an array of displays, samples, etc to look at. Brochures are generally limited to a couple of looks and designs. They only offer basic drawings by a woodworker without training in these areas.

How long does it take to get my cabinets?

SEMI CUSTOM

We can take an order for 1 kitchen or 10 kitchens and give you the same lead time. Three to Four weeks for most of our lines. Our lead times are guaranteed at time of order and do not fluctuate.

LOCAL SHOPS

What happens if one of the shops employees gets in a car accident or has the flu for a week? Your cabinets are delayed. Suppose they get a “must have” order from one of their regular customers? They can only do one or two jobs at a time so your job (since you’re a one time customer) will be moved. Many times the local shop will promise a lead time to get the business but then not be able to meet their deadlines. Often times, cabinets are delivered without doors and drawer fronts and then they have to come back later to finish up.

What if I have an issue once my cabinets are installed?

SEMI CUSTOM

Most of the lines we represent offer a Lifetime Warranty. Should you need additional parts this is handled without having to wait for the shop to stop making their next job and address yours. Look at a job done today, versus 12 months ago and it will be identical. Because of the computer equipment that is calibrated for their finishing systems. If a replacement door or part is needed it can be produced and will be an exact match.

LOCAL SHOPS

What warranty does the shop have (especially on finish) and how long have they been in business. Many shops are going out of business. What happens with the shop? If they need to match the finish do they have computer equipment on site that is calibrated to their finish system that can do this? A local shop will not have this technology to produce such a match.

I’m concerned for the environment and want “green”cabinetry?

SEMI CUSTOM

The cabinet companies we represent have documented policies for making decisions with regard to reducing waste, recycling waste and manufacturing by-products, conserving energy, and using recycled or rapidly-renewable materials in their products and processes. It is their intent to continue pursuing all avenues to 'green' until it truly becomes a way of life. They have a strategic objective to be a leader in green, both in terms of our product offerings and our manufacturing processes. The use of low-emitting composite wood products also make them eligible.

LOCAL SHOPS

Most local shops will not have such strict policies in place or have the ability to maintain and qualify for these green Certifications. Most local shops would not have the resources and expertise to develop and offer a full line of green cabinetry.