



## Artisan Upgrades Bring Beauty and Value to Your Home

### Refinish Your Home's Existing Investments in Cabinets and Furnishings with One-of-a-Kind Gorgeous Finishes

THE 100-YEAR-OLD FARM HOUSE IN Bull Valley had old, red barn wood cabinets in the kitchen and laundry room. The homeowner wanted an update, but loved the farmhouse feel—she wanted some of the original barn wood cabinets, but the barn red was not the desired color. Spraying a paint or lacquer would not work due to the heavy wood texture, and the homeowner knew it needed to be brushed, but brushing regular paint gave it an undesirable shiny plastic look. After several samples using a variety of products, we ended up using a combination of three different exterior house stains brushed on at the same time to create the desired weathered-wood look.

After finishing the cabinetry, new appliances were added, as well as some new cabinetry where the old washer and dryer were located. The mixing of the barn wood cabinets, brick floor, and antique light fixtures with some new cabinetry and new stainless appliances was beautiful.

Another project was a Barrington Hills home that was going through a transformation, but

without completely gutting the kitchen. The perimeter's honed counters were re-honed and made to look like they were new again. A new backsplash and range hood were added, and the island top was replaced with quartz. The homeowner and the designer, Natalie Kirkpatrick Designs, had a different plan for the cabinetry; they not only wanted a new brighter, cleaner color on their cabinets, but they also wanted the cabinets to have a soft, hand-brushed look. The challenge was not to get the usual smooth factory type finish, but to create a beautiful, hand-brushed finish

without the necessary layers of paint building up on the cabinets. This was done by changing up the products and using a combination of spraying, as well as hand-brushing to give the desired elegant, high-end, softly brushed look. The perimeter cabinets were painted in a soft white color and then the island was painted a beige-taupe with a soft glaze, which complimented the colors in the veining on the quartz.

#### Faux Finishing for Furniture

Another recent furniture project is a dining room set which started out as a pickled oak finish table, eight chairs, leaves, and a china cabinet. The client had a photo of what she wanted, a distressed grey finish with areas being rubbed back to a more charcoal grey color. This was again a project that required several samples, as well as combining different products. This was done with milk paints, wax, lacquers, and a lot of elbow grease with dry and wet sanding, then finishing it off with a black glaze and topcoat. The challenge with furniture, especially chairs, is dealing with all the details and





different surface angles unlike the surfaces of kitchen cabinets.

The secret to the success of these and other projects is to listen to the homeowner and designers, create samples until all are happy with the color and finish, and pay specific attention to detail. When we finish a project, our goal is to find any issues and fix or touch up before we leave. We have very few call backs to fix errors or things we missed. We like to think that we look at your cabinetry or furniture project as if it were our own. We have both completed our own kitchens using the same process we are using with our clients, and we hear the compliments all the time.

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*Tina Engel and Heidi Sutherland met while volunteering and helping on murals and faux finishes for a children's charity home in River Forest. Both had been teachers until they decided to stay home after the birth of their children. Tina was an elementary art teacher and Heidi was a Jr. High health teacher. Once they met, a friendship was formed and progressed easily into a business partnership in faux finishing. Although their business was started in 2005 focusing on faux finishes, murals, and painted accents, in 2007 due to rising demand, they began to focus on furniture and cabinetry refinishing. As they gained experience and honed their craft, they were able to give their clients not only a beautiful cabinetry finish, but also a quality, durable finish that would last. To learn more, call 815-861-1660 (Tina) or 847-347-4940 (Heidi).* 