ASHEVILLE PAINT PROS · EST. BUNCOMBE COUNTY

THE 2026 EDITION

A FIELD GUIDE · VOL. 01

The Asheville Homeowner's *Painting* Guide

What every Asheville, Montford, Weaverville, and Hendersonville homeowner should know before hiring a painter.

PUBLISHED BY

Asheville Paint Pros

CALL US

(828) 826-1687

CREDENTIALS

NCLBGC Reg. · EPA Lead-Safe

Thirty-some pages of Asheville-specific painting truth, written by the crews who actually work here.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Published 2026 by Asheville Paint Pros All pricing reflects current 2026 Buncombe County market conditions. Climate data sourced from NOAA and local observation. North Carolina contractor registration procedures sourced from **portal.nclbgc.org**; EPA Lead-Safe procedures from **epa.gov**. No part of this guide is intended as legal advice. Verify contractor credentials independently before signing any contract.

A FEW THINGS TO EXPECT

- We don't make money if you don't hire us. The math here works no matter who you pick.
- Pricing is current as of 2026 and will drift over time.
- This is Asheville-specific. We didn't copy-paste a Seattle guide.
- We don't name competing contractors. We have working relationships with most of them.

CONTENTS

What's in this *guide.*

A NOTE FROM THE CREW

Before you read any *further.*

You're probably reading this because painting is on your mind. Maybe the trim has been peeling since last winter. Maybe the kitchen cabinets are dated and you want them white. Maybe you bought a place in Biltmore Forest and the builder-grade paint already looks tired. Whatever brought you here, you want to make a good decision.

This is our attempt to give you everything we know about painting in Asheville, Montford, Weaverville, Hendersonville, and the surrounding Buncombe County communities. The prices. The products. The contractor red flags. The Blue Ridge Mountains climate realities that don't apply anywhere else in the country. The neighborhood-specific things that only come up when you've been painting this market for a long time.

We wrote it because informed homeowners make better choices, and better choices mean better outcomes. The painters who can't survive informed customers go out of business, which is good for everyone left.

> A FEW EXPECTATIONS
>
> **We don't make money if you don't hire us.** The math, climate notes, and verification steps in here work no matter who you pick.
>
> **Pricing is current as of 2026.** Material costs and labor markets move; the ranges will drift.
>
> **This is Asheville-specific.** We didn't copy-paste advice from a Seattle or Portland guide.

> *"If you've ever wondered why your trim fails in four years when the can says seven, the answer is in here.*

— THE ASHEVILLE PAINT PROS CREW

CHAPTER 01

01

Why painting in Asheville is *different.*

Four Blue Ridge Mountains climate factors that don't apply anywhere else — and what they do to your paint.

CHAPTER 01 OF 15 · CLIMATE, COAST & CYCLE

begins overleaf

Paint companies test their products in standardized conditions. Their warranties are based on those conditions. The problem is that Asheville's climate looks nothing like a paint manufacturer's lab. Here are the four factors that determine how long your paint job actually lasts on a home in Buncombe County.

i. Persistent *marine moisture.*

Asheville averages 36 inches of rain across roughly 160 wet days a year, most of it between October and May. The bigger problem is what happens between storms: wood siding never gets fully dry. Paint applied to damp substrate doesn't bond properly, and the failure shows up in year three or four as edge-lift on trim and chalking on south-facing walls. The fix is patience – a moisture meter reading under 15% before primer, and a forecast with two dry days behind it and three ahead.

---

ii. Salt air off the *Blue Ridge Mountains.*

French Broad River homes in Kenilworth, Montford, and the Grove Park bluff sit inside a salt-laden marine envelope from May through September when the prevailing southwesterly carries sea spray inland. Salt deposits onto siding, hardware, and old paint film, then attracts moisture. Standard exterior paint isn't engineered for the chloride exposure. Bayfront homes need premium marine-rated systems with anti-corrosion primer on metal – not the standard exterior package.

---

iii. Algae and mildew on every *north face.*

The same constant damp that grows Buncombe County's evergreens grows algae on every north and east-facing wall in town. By year four on an unwashed surface, the green-black film is visible and starting to embed in the topcoat. Pressure-washing every two years buys real time; skipping it means you'll be sanding through algae-eaten paint at the next repaint. Premium products with active mildewcide hold up notably better.

---

iv. August *smoke season.*

Late July through early September has, since 2017, regularly brought regional wildfire smoke down from BC and the eastern Cascades. Smoke particulates settle into wet paint within 24 hours of application and embed in the film – you can't see it, but the long-term durability takes a measurable hit. Reputable contractors monitor AirNow.gov and stop exterior work when AQI rises above 100. If your contractor doesn't address smoke days in your contract, ask.

> **INSIDER NOTE**
>
> The combined effect compresses the practical exterior repaint cycle. The brochure says 7-to-10 years. In Asheville, plan on 6-to-8 for most exposures, 4-to-6 for unshaded bayfront south and west walls. A caulk-and-touch-up pass at year three buys you years. Skip it and you'll pay double at year seven.

CHAPTER 02

The 2026 *pricing truth.*

The national average for interior painting is published as $200 to $2,700, which is so wide it's useless. Here's what painting actually costs in the Buncombe County market in 2026, and the five factors that move your number up or down.

SERVICE	TYPICAL RANGE	UNIT	TOP PRICE DRIVER
Interior painting	$3,500 - $8,500	3-bedroom home	Prep work and ceiling / trim inclusion
Exterior painting	$3,800 - $8,500	Average home	Siding type, stories, bayfront prep
Cabinet refinishing	$3,500 - $8,000	Average kitchen	Door count, substrate, grain-fill
Deck staining	$750 - $2,500	Standard deck	Square footage, wood condition
Commercial painting	$2 - $6 / sqft	Office / retail	After-hours work, color count
Pressure washing	$350 - $750	Average exterior	Stories, mildew severity

The five factors that move your *number.*

i. **Scope.**
Walls only is cheapest. Adding ceilings adds roughly $1,200–$1,800 on a 3-bedroom home. Adding trim adds another $800–$1,500.

ii. **Square footage.**
Per-square-foot pricing stays roughly constant, so a 2,800-sqft home runs ~40% more than a 2,000-sqft home, all else equal.

iii. **Surface condition and prep.**
The biggest swing factor. Textured ceilings, wood-stove smoke damage, ice-dam water damage, and lead paint on pre-1978 homes all add prep cost.

iv. **Paint grade.**
Builder grade saves $200–$400 but lasts 3–5 years. Premium adds $400–$800 but lasts 10–15.

v. **Logistics and access.**
Empty house with full access is cheapest. Bayfront access at Kenilworth, steep Grove Park view lots, and gated Arden properties all add cost.

COST SAVER

The fastest way to save on a paint job is to do your own prep. Wash the siding, prune trees back from the house, declutter the interior. A typical homeowner can save $300–$800 by handling the prep that contractors would otherwise need to do.

A NOTE ON THE CHEAP QUOTE

The painter $800 cheaper than everyone else has only two ways to make that math work: *skip prep*, or *use cheaper paint*. Both fail in 18 months.

BUILDER GRADE

3–5 yr life. Rentals, flips, temporary fixes only.

MID-GRADE

7–10 yr life. Right tier for most Asheville rooms.

PREMIUM

10–15 yr life. Worth it on kitchens, baths, all bayfront exteriors.

CHAPTER 03

03

A neighborhood-by-neighborhood *guide.*

Painting realities for the ten Asheville-area neighborhoods we work in most: home styles, climate microenvironments, HOA notes, and typical costs.

CHAPTER 03 OF 15 · TEN NEIGHBORHOODS, FOUR CLIMATES

begins overleaf

Every Asheville-area neighborhood has its own painting playbook. The home styles, the HOA realities, the climate microenvironment, and the typical project mix vary more than you'd expect for a city this size. Here's the cheat sheet.

Lettered *Streets*

Asheville's original residential grid, north of downtown.

HOME STYLES
1900s–30s Craftsman bungalows, Victorian-era frame houses, post-war Cape Cods, occasional historic-fit infill.

COMMON PROJECTS
Exterior repaints with historic color matching, original-wood window restoration, porch and trim refresh, pre-war kitchen cabinet refinishing.

CLIMATE NOTE
Sits inside the downtown moisture envelope – spring and fall dry windows matter. Best exterior work late May through September.

Typical: $3,500-$8,500 (interior) · $5,800-$13,500 (exterior, lead-safe prep)

---

*Mont*ford

Historic district on the south bay.

HOME STYLES
1890s–1910s Victorians, Craftsman cottages, 1920s bungalows, recent walk-to-village customs.

COMMON PROJECTS
Period-correct historic exterior repaints, multi-color Victorian schemes, original window restoration, lead-safe prep on every project.

CLIMATE NOTE
Real bay-air exposure. Salt humidity year-round. Marine-rated paint systems and primer protocol matter more than the brand you pick.

Typical: $6,500-$16,000 (bayside exterior) · $3,800-$9,500 (interior)

South *Hill*

Mid-century view homes south of downtown.

HOME STYLES
1940s–60s view homes, mid-century moderns, split-levels, contemporary infill on bluff lots.

COMMON PROJECTS
Whole-home exterior repaints with bay-view color matching, large window-trim refresh, cabinet refinishing in mid-century kitchens.

CLIMATE NOTE
High bluff exposure to southwest weather. South-facing siding fades faster than spec; bluff wind drives moisture into any caulk failure.

Typical: $3,800-$8,500 (interior) · $6,200-$13,500 (exterior)

---

*Kenil*worth

Bayfront estates on Blue Ridge Parkway.

HOME STYLES
1920s craftsman estates, mid-century moderns, recent bayfront customs, occasional carriage-house ADUs.

COMMON PROJECTS
Bay-facing exterior repaints with marine-grade systems, premium primer protocols on bare cedar, cabinet refinishing, deck refinishing.

CLIMATE NOTE
Maximum salt-air exposure in the county. 4–6 year exterior cycle on south and west walls. Anti-corrosion primer on every iron fitting.

Typical: $7,500-$18,000 (bayfront exterior) · $4,500-$10,500 (interior)

West Asheville

Tree-lined family streets north of the canal.

HOME STYLES
1920s–50s bungalows, 1960s ranchers, some 90s infill, occasional Foursquares.

COMMON PROJECTS
Whole-home interior repaints post move-in, kitchen and bath refresh, exterior repaints on older bungalows, trim and door updates.

CLIMATE NOTE
More tree cover than most neighborhoods means more shade-side mildew. Pressure-wash every couple years to keep finishes intact.

Typical: $3,500-$7,800 (interior) · $5,500-$12,500 (exterior)

North Asheville

University-adjacent, hill-and-forest pocket.

HOME STYLES
1970s–80s contemporaries, daylight ranches, 90s two-stories, an active rental supply on the lower slope.

COMMON PROJECTS
Rental turnover interiors (cost-sensitive timelines), exterior repaints on aging 80s contemporaries, deck staining, garage refresh.

CLIMATE NOTE
Heavy forest canopy traps moisture. North-facing siding grows algae quickly – mildewcide primers are non-negotiable.

Typical: $3,200-$7,200 (interior) · $5,500-$11,500 (exterior)

Cornwall *Park*

Family neighborhood west of the park.

HOME STYLES
1940s–70s ranchers, post-war bungalows, occasional 90s infill, some Craftsman-inspired remodels.

COMMON PROJECTS
Interior refreshes for growing families, exterior repaints on older ranchers, garage door refresh, cabinet updates.

CLIMATE NOTE
Standard inland exposure. North-facing siding grows mildew; freeze-thaw still gets your trim if you skip a year.

Typical: $3,500-$7,500 (interior) · $5,500-$12,000 (exterior)

Biltmore Forest

Newer planned village on the east hill.

HOME STYLES
2000s+ Craftsman builds, new traditional, two-story builders with stone-and-siding mix, townhomes.

COMMON PROJECTS
Cabinet refinishing (builder-grade to custom), trim refresh, accent wall and interior color updates, HOA-compliant exterior.

CLIMATE NOTE
Elevation adds wind exposure and dries paint fast – helpful in summer, harsh on south-facing trim. HOA color approval required.

Typical: $3,500-$7,800 (interior) · $3,500-$8,000 (cabinet refinishing)

Silver *Beach*

Beaver Lake shoreline community.

HOME STYLES
1940s lake cottages, mid-century lake homes, recent lakefront customs, some carriage-house ADUs.

COMMON PROJECTS
Lake-facing exterior repaints with anti-mildew systems, deck staining and sealing (3-yr cycle), interior color updates.

CLIMATE NOTE
Real lake humidity, slow drying in shoulder seasons. June through September is the only reliable exterior window.

Typical: $6,500-$15,500 (lakefront exterior) · $3,800-$9,000 (interior)

Sudden *Valley* & Weaverville / Hendersonville

Lakeside community and the outlying agricultural towns.

HOME STYLES
Arden: 1970s–80s gated-community cabins. Weaverville / Hendersonville: weathered farmhouses, 90s suburban, recent rural customs.

COMMON PROJECTS
Arden HOA-compliant exteriors, lakefront cabin systems, dairy-corridor weathered exteriors, large-footprint rural homes.

CLIMATE NOTE
Arden: pine cover means slow drying. Weaverville: open prairie wind dries fast but throws dust – schedule around it.

Typical: $1,200-$2,800 (deck staining) · $6,500-$15,000 (Arden exterior)

CHAPTER 04

How to verify your painter in *five minutes.*

NORTH CAROLINA LAW

Under **NC §87-1**, any contractor doing work over $500 in North Carolina must be registered with the State Department of North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors (NCLBGC). Registration requires a bond and proof of liability insurance. Operating without it is a misdemeanor – and a deal-breaker for you as a homeowner.

The *five-minute* verification.

Before you sign anything, do this.

i. Go to **portal.nclbgc.org/Public/Search** and search by business name or NCLBGC contractor registration number.

ii. Confirm registration status shows **Active** – not Expired, Suspended, or Revoked.

iii. Confirm both **bond and liability insurance** are listed as currently in effect.

iv. Check the NCLBGC complaints / infractions section. A couple of resolved complaints on a 10-year business: fine. Multiple unresolved or pattern infractions: **walk away.**

v. Cross-reference the registered business name with the name on the quote. Mismatches mean the contractor is operating under an unregistered DBA.

Beyond NCLBGC: *three more* verifications.

i.

EPA *Lead-Safe* certification (pre-1978 homes only).

Required by federal law for any home built before 1978 where you're disturbing painted surfaces. Five Points, West Asheville, Montford, Grove Park, and much of Weaverville's older stock all fall under this. Verify at **epa.gov** using the certified firm lookup. If your home is pre-1978 and your contractor isn't Lead-Safe certified, that's a deal-breaker. Federal fines for lead-safe violations run $37,500 per violation, and as the property owner you can be co-liable.

ii.

Certificate of Insurance *(COI)*.

NCLBGC confirms insurance at the moment of registration. Coverage can lapse between annual renewals. Ask for a current COI showing both general liability and workers comp in effect for your project dates. Reputable contractors send these without being asked.

iii.

Three *local references.*

Ask for three completed projects in your specific neighborhood. Call all three. Ask what went well, what didn't, and whether they'd hire the contractor again. A painter with a real Buncombe County book of work can produce three names in fifteen minutes.

WATCH OUT — STORM CHASERS

The biggest red flag is the storm-chaser pattern: out-of-state contractor shows up after a windstorm or weather event, doesn't have a North Carolina NCLBGC registration, offers a deep discount for cash, and disappears the next week. This happens in Buncombe County every spring. Verify the NCLBGC registration before you sign anything. Always.

CHAPTER 05

Seven questions to ask *before you sign.*

01 Are you currently registered with North Carolina NCLBGC, and what's your contractor registration number?

GOOD ANSWER
"Yes, registration BELLIP**123BJ, verify at portal.nclbgc.org/Public/Search."

BAD ANSWER
"We're licensed in Oregon," or anything that doesn't produce a specific North Carolina NCLBGC number.

02 Will I get a Certificate of Insurance showing general liability and workers comp current for my project dates?

GOOD ANSWER
"Yes, I'll email it before the start date."

BAD ANSWER
"We're fully insured" without producing the document.

03 What's your prep process specifically for my situation?

GOOD ANSWER
Exterior: power wash, scrape, sand, caulk gaps, prime bare wood. Cabinets: doors off, degloss, prime, two coats catalyzed acrylic enamel.

BAD ANSWER
No specific steps. If they don't describe it, they're not doing it.

04 What products will you use, by brand and line?

GOOD ANSWER
"Sherwin-Williams Duration for exteriors, Benjamin Moore Aura for interiors."

BAD ANSWER
"We use premium paint" without specifying brand and line.

05 How long is your workmanship warranty?

GOOD ANSWER
2–5 years on workmanship covering peeling, bubbling, and flaking.

BAD ANSWER
"We don't do warranties." Worse: a lifetime warranty from a contractor in business 18 months.

06 Will you provide three local references in my neighborhood?

GOOD ANSWER
Three specific Buncombe County projects you can call. Ideally in your neighborhood.

BAD ANSWER
"We have lots of customers" without producing three specific contacts.

07 What's your payment schedule?

GOOD ANSWER
0–10% up front, progress payments during, balance on completion.

BAD ANSWER
50% up front. Worst: cash only.

> *"The contractors who do this work right answer all seven questions in under three minutes and produce documents on request. The ones who can't are usually trying to hide something.*

— FIELD OBSERVATION, EIGHT YEARS ON BUNCOMBE COUNTY PORCHES

CHAPTER 06

Ten red flags that should stop you *cold.*

If you see any of these, walk away. There are plenty of legitimate painters in Buncombe County.

01 **No North Carolina NCLBGC registration.**

Operating illegally under NC §87-1. End of discussion.

02 **Asks for 50%+ up front.**

Industry norm is 0–10%. Anyone asking for half is planning to disappear.

03 **Cash only, no contract.**

Combined with no NCLBGC, this is a fraud preset. No paper trail, no recourse.

04 **Out-of-state license they keep talking about.**

Oregon CCB and BC licenses don't cover North Carolina work. Storm chasers love this trick.

05 **Pressure to sign today.**

"Special price if you sign right now" is a tactic, not a deal. Real quotes hold 30+ days.

06 **No physical address or local references.**

A contractor who can't produce three Buncombe County references doesn't have them.

07 **Verbal warranty.**

If it's not in writing, it doesn't exist. Workmanship warranty belongs in the contract.

08 **Vague product brands.**

"Premium paint" without naming brand and line means they're using whatever's cheapest that day.

09 **Skips the prep conversation.**

Not describing wash, scrape, sand, caulk, prime? They're not doing it. Prep is 80% of how long a finish lasts.

10 **No COI on request.**

If they can't produce a current Certificate of Insurance, they're either uninsured or hoping you won't ask. Either way: walk.

CHAPTER 07

Paint products: what to use *where.*

Builder grade, mid-grade, and premium. The right tier for the right application, with specific brand recommendations for the Asheville climate.

TIER 01 — BUILDER

Builder *grade.*

$30-$45 / gallon

SW ProMar, Behr Premium, Glidden Premium.

Lasts 3–5 years on interior walls; less on exteriors. Useful for rentals, flips, or temporary fixes. **Not recommended** for any surface where you want the paint to outlast the next sale.

TIER 02 — MID

Mid-*grade.*

$55-$75 / gallon

SW SuperPaint, Benjamin Moore Regal Select, Behr Marquee.

7–10 years interior, 5–7 exterior. The right tier for most rooms in a Buncombe County home. Good coverage, washable, hides minor imperfections.

TIER 03 — PREMIUM

Premium.

$85-$110 / gallon

SW Emerald (int) / Duration (ext), Benjamin Moore Aura / Aura Exterior.

10–15 years interior, 7–10 exterior. Dramatically better UV stability, mildew resistance, and washability. Worth the upgrade in kitchens, baths, and on all bayfront exteriors.

A NOTE ON PREMIUM

In a Asheville climate, premium isn't a luxury — it's the only tier whose mildewcide package and binder chemistry survive the marine moisture cycle. We won't quote a bayfront or lake-facing exterior in anything below Tier 03 because we've watched the result fail at year four. Inland walls have more latitude.

The application *cheat sheet.*

The tier that earns its keep on each surface in a Buncombe County home.

APPLICATION	TIER	SPECIFIC PRODUCT
Interior walls (bedrooms)	**Mid**	SW SuperPaint or BM Regal Select
Interior walls (kitchen / bath)	**Premium**	SW Emerald or BM Aura Bath & Spa
Ceilings	**Mid**	SW Ceiling Paint or BM Waterborne Ceiling
Trim and doors	**Premium**	SW Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel or BM Advance
Cabinet refinishing	**Premium**	Catalyzed acrylic enamel (BM Advance, ML Campbell Aqualente)
Exterior siding (inland)	**Mid**	SW SuperPaint Exterior or BM Regal Exterior
Exterior siding (bayfront)	**Premium**	SW Duration or BM Aura Exterior
Exterior trim	**Premium**	SW Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel
Deck stain (semi-transparent)	**Premium**	TWP 1500 or Cabot Australian Timber Oil
Pressure-wash pre-treatment	–	30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner (mildew / algae)
Bare cedar primer	**Premium**	SW Extreme Bond or BM Stix
Metal & iron (bayfront)	**Premium**	Rust-Oleum Stops Rust or SW Pro Industrial

> **A REAL COST SAVER**
>
> If you're choosing between premium paint and an extra coat of mid-grade, choose the premium. A two-coat premium job lasts longer than a three-coat mid-grade job, every time, on the same wall.

CHAPTER 08

The Asheville *painting calendar.*

Month by month: when to schedule exterior, when to wait, when to do interior, and the optimal window.

FEB — MARCH	**Get your free quote.** Lock your contractor for your preferred summer window. The best painters get booked early; by April the calendar is half full.
APRIL	**Pre-project prep.** Clean gutters, do minor carpentry, prune trees and shrubs that touch the house. Finalize color decisions on real boards in your actual light.
MAY (EARLY)	**Pressure washing** can begin as soon as overnight temps stay above 40°F. Exterior painting is still risky – moisture readings rarely cooperate.
MAY 20 — JUNE 15	**Shoulder window.** Watch overnight lows and a 5-day dry forecast. Workable but not ideal – mornings still wet most of June.
JUNE 15 — SEPT 10	***Optimal exterior window.*** *Reliable warm days, manageable overnight lows, low humidity by Blue Ridge Mountains standards, minimal smoke risk before mid-July.*
MID-JUL — MID-AUG	**Watch AirNow.gov for smoke.** AQI above 100, exterior work pauses. Smoke embeds in fresh paint within 24 hours.
SEPT 15 — OCT 5	**Shoulder window.** Workable if forecast cooperates. Hard stop on any forecast below 40°F within 72 hours.
OCT 15 +	**Exterior season over.** Interior projects start. Cabinet shops fill up first.
NOV — APRIL	**Interior prime time.** Cabinet refinishing benefits from warmer indoor temps but works year-round. Schedule kitchen and bath remodels around the wet exterior season.

FOR ABSENTEE OWNERS

Beaver Lake or Arden cabin owners who don't live in Asheville full-time: we do remote walk-throughs in March/April from photos and video calls, schedule for your specific summer window, and send daily photo updates while you're away.

CHAPTER 09

Waterfront & bayfront *considerations.*

If you own a home on French Broad River, Beaver Lake, or one of the gated-community waterfront lots in Arden, your painting math is different. The 7-to-10 year cycle from generic painting blogs is for inland homes. Bayfront and lakefront properties in Buncombe County run a 5-to-7 year cycle for most exposures, and unshaded south/west walls in Kenilworth or on the Montford bluff often need touch-ups inside of four years.

THE WATERFRONT LIFECYCLE

Year 0–3	**First touch-up window.** Walk your exterior every spring. Look for caulk failure around windows, doors, and trim joints. A small caulk-and-touch-up pass at year three buys you 2–3 more years.	SPEND $450-$750
Year 4–5	**Mid-cycle reassessment.** By year four on a south or west exposure, expect chalking on the dominant siding color. Run your hand across the wall in afternoon light – if your palm comes away powdery, the topcoat is breaking down.	SPEND $0 / observe
Year 6–7	**Full repaint.** Plan on $7,500–$11,000 for an average 1,800 sqft Montford cottage. Kenilworth or Haw Creek homes at 3,000+ sqft can hit $12,000–$18,000 once you factor access, marine prep, and aggressive substrate repair.	SPEND $7,500-$18,000

What "marine-grade" *actually* means.

"Marine-grade" gets used loosely. Strictly speaking, true marine paint is for boats and dock structures. For a home thirty feet from the waterline, what you actually need is premium exterior formulated for high-moisture environments with active mildewcide and UV-blocking pigments. Sherwin-Williams Duration, Benjamin Moore Aura Exterior, and SW Emerald Urethane Trim Enamel all qualify.

CHAPTER 10

Color selection for *Blue Ridge Mountains light.*

Asheville's flat, diffused marine light cools every color you put on your walls. A "warm white" from a Phoenix paint store can read cold-gray on a North Asheville wall by 3pm. Outside is the opposite problem: the rare clear summer afternoon flattens everything into the same washed-out tone. Buy your samples locally, and at minimum view them on your actual walls at three times of day before committing.

Exterior palettes that *work.*

***Blue Ridge* Sage**
BM Saybrook Sage · SW Evergreen Fog

Weathered *Cedar*
SW Anonymous · BM Revere Pewter

***Bay*side Gray**
BM Gettysburg Gray · SW Iron Ore (light)

Modern *Lodge*
SW Iron Ore · BM Wrought Iron

Interior palettes that *work.*

Warm *White*
BM Swiss Coffee · SW Alabaster

***White* Dove**
BM White Dove · SW Pure White

Lodge *Neutral*
SW Accessible Beige · BM Manchester Tan

***Bay*view Navy**
SW Naval · BM Hale Navy

How to sample *correctly.*

Don't paint sample squares on your wall — the existing color contaminates how your eye reads the new one. Instead, paint your samples on a 2×2 foot piece of foam-core poster board ($5 at the hardware store) and move that board around the room. View at morning, noon, and late afternoon. For exteriors, paint a 2×2 sample on a board you can hold against the wall in three different exposures — north, south, and west. View Saturday morning, Saturday at 2 pm, and Sunday at 6 pm. The color that survives all three is the color you want.

COLORS TO AVOID IN ASHEVILLE

Cool grays. Read depressing seven months a year under our flat marine light.

Bright primary colors. Fade fast in the rare clear UV; muddy fast under cloud cover.

Stark pure whites. Read ice-cold from October through April. We don't recommend them outside of trim work.

Dark fullbody on unshaded bayfront walls. Heat absorption plus reflective UV off the water surface compounds stress. Hold dark for protected exposures.

INSIDER NOTE — THE ASHEVILLE DEFAULT

For homeowners who want a safe, broadly-loved starting point: warm white walls (BM Swiss Coffee or White Dove), pure-white trim that's just a half-step lighter (BM Chantilly Lace), and a deep sage or navy accent on one feature wall. Works in Five Points craftsmans, Biltmore Forest new builds, and Grove Park ranchers alike.

CHAPTER 11

Pre-painter *prep checklist.*

Fourteen things every Asheville homeowner should do before our crew shows up. Saves you money and keeps the project on schedule.

Exterior *project.*

- [ ] Trim back trees and shrubs touching siding (need 18″ clearance).
- [ ] Move outdoor furniture, planters, grills, and decorations at least 10′ from the house.
- [ ] Remove items hanging on the exterior (wind chimes, hose reels, flag brackets).
- [ ] Identify and mark inground sprinkler heads near the foundation.
- [ ] Clean gutters of debris – falling leaves settle into wet paint.
- [ ] Park vehicles in the garage or at the curb (not the driveway).
- [ ] Walk the exterior with us at start to flag rot, cracks, or moisture.
- [ ] Confirm color choices in writing before we open the first can.

Interior *project.*

- [ ] Take down all wall art, mirrors, shelves, curtains, and curtain rods.
- [ ] Pull furniture toward room center (we cover; you keep valuables safe).
- [ ] Remove items from floors that will be drop-clothed.
- [ ] Flag wallpaper, textured walls, or surfaces needing special prep.
- [ ] Plan kid and pet logistics – rooms off-limits 24–48 hours.
- [ ] Stock up on coffee. We bring our own but appreciate the gesture.

WHAT THIS SAVES YOU

A typical Asheville homeowner saves **$300–$800** by completing this checklist before the crew arrives. The bigger benefit: the project finishes on schedule, which matters in our compressed summer window.

CHAPTER 12

Interior room-by-room *planning.*

What to think about before painting each room of a Buncombe County home.

HIGH-MOISTURE, HIGH-TRAFFIC

Kitchen.

Use premium washable paint (SW Emerald Satin or BM Aura Bath & Spa). Two coats minimum. If you're doing cabinets too, sequence cabinets first, then walls. Allow 4–7 days combined. Grease residue near the stove needs degreaser pre-wash or paint won't adhere.

VENTILATION MATTERS

Bathroom.

Open windows or run fan during and 24 hours after. Use premium bath paint with mildewcide. Caulk around tub and sink before painting. In Beaver Lake and Arden cabins, baths get extra humidity in shoulder seasons — prep accordingly.

LARGEST, MOST VISIBLE

Living / *Great Room.*

Worth mid-grade to premium investment. Fireplace surrounds need heat-tolerant paint within 36″ of firebox. Watch for wood-stove smoke residue (very common in older Buncombe homes) — clean and seal before painting or the finish fails in months.

LOWER TRAFFIC

Bedrooms.

Mid-grade is the right call (SW SuperPaint or BM Regal Select). Eggshell or matte. Consider an accent wall behind the bed for depth without committing to whole-room dark colors.

SCUFF-PRONE

Hallways & *stairwells.*

Use premium for washability. Tall stairwells need scaffolding or extension equipment — confirm the contractor can access without damaging carpet. Hallways often get cut from quotes; explicitly include them.

OPTIONAL BUT WORTH IT

Garage.

Use exterior-grade or industrial paint (handles temperature swings better than interior). Concrete floor coatings are a separate project from wall painting.

CHAPTER 13

Cabinet refinishing *deep dive.*

The highest-ROI improvement for most Buncombe County kitchens. Done right, it lasts 8–12 years. Most new-construction homes going up in Biltmore Forest, Biltmore Park, and the newer Weaverville subdivisions came with builder-grade maple or oak cabinets. Five to eight years later, the orange undertone has yellowed and the kitchen looks dated. Refinishing gets you the custom-cabinet look for $3,500–$8,000 — a fraction of the $15,000–$40,000 full replacement.

TIER 01

Brush & *roll.*

$1,200-$1,800

Doors stay on. Trim enamel applied with brush and roller. Looks acceptable for 18 months, then chips and yellows. **We don't quote this work** — the result doesn't last.

TIER 02

Spray-finish *refinishing.*

$3,500-$8,000

Doors and drawer fronts come off. Boxes are sanded, deglossed, sprayed in place. Doors sprayed in a controlled environment. Hard, smooth, factory-grade finish. **8–12 year life.** This is what most customers actually want.

TIER 03

Full *replacement.*

$15,000-$40,000

Custom cabinets, new layout, new countertops. The right answer only if your boxes are water-damaged particle-board or you want a different floor plan.

What drives price *within Tier 02.*

Cabinet count. Biltmore Forest kitchens typically have 25–38 doors and drawer fronts; older Cornwall Park homes 18–25. **Door style.** Flat shaker spray faster than raised-panel. **Wood species.** Maple sprays beautifully with one prime coat; oak has open grain needing filler for a smooth finish. **Finish color.** Whites need three coats minimum; mid-tones and darks need two. **Hardware.** Reusing is included; new hinges and pulls add $200–$800.

THREE MISTAKES TO AVOID

i. Hiring Tier 01 thinking it's Tier 02. Always ask if they're using catalyzed acrylic enamel and whether boxes are sprayed in place.

ii. Skipping the substrate check. Thermofoil cabinets (common in older Asheville builds) can't be sanded and painted like wood. Wrong process on wrong substrate is the biggest reason cabinet jobs fail.

iii. Picking color without testing. Cabinet doors look completely different in our marine light than they did in the showroom. Sample on a single door before committing.

CHAPTER 14

The *quote comparison* worksheet.

Fill this in for each contractor you're considering. Compare apples to apples.

QUESTION	CONTRACTOR A	CONTRACTOR B
Company name		
NCLBGC registration number (verify at portal.nclbgc.org)		
Years in business		
EPA Lead-Safe certified? (pre-1978 only)		
Three local references provided?		
Project total (written)		
Surface prep specifically described?		
Paint brand and line specified?		
Coats specified (minimum 2)?		
Workmanship warranty length (years)		
Up-front payment requested		
COI provided?		
Start date / completion date		
Cleanup and damage policy in writing?		

How to *use* this worksheet.

Print two copies (back-to-back) for each quote and take notes during the walk-through. The contractor who answers everything clearly without hesitation is usually the one who's done this work right for a long time.

> A FEW PATTERNS WE'VE SEEN
>
> A $1,000 gap between two reasonable quotes often comes down to **paint grade** (mid vs. premium) and **number of coats**. Both matter for longevity.
>
> A $3,000+ gap usually means one contractor is skipping prep, using cheaper paint, or both. Ask specifically what's different.
>
> A 50% lower-than-everyone-else quote means they're **not painting the same project**. Walk.

A FIELD NOTE

Three quotes is the right number. Two leaves you guessing. *Four wastes everyone's time.*

CHAPTER 15

Painting terminology, *decoded.*

A glossary of the terms contractors throw around without explaining.

Catalyzed acrylic enamel. The standard for cabinet refinishing. A two-part finish that cures harder than standard enamel. Resists chips and yellowing for 8–12 years.

Caulk failure. When the flexible sealant between siding and trim breaks down. The first sign of an aging exterior. Fixable at year 3 for $450–$750. Ignored, it leads to $7,500+ at year 7.

Chalking. White powdery residue on aged exterior paint. Run your palm across a south-facing wall in afternoon light – if it comes back chalky, the topcoat is breaking down.

COI. Certificate of Insurance. Document showing the contractor's current general liability and workers comp coverage. Should be in effect for your project dates.

Coverage. The square footage one gallon of paint covers. Most paints rate 350–400 sqft/gal, but actual coverage on textured or porous surfaces can drop to 250.

Cut-in. The careful brushwork at edges where rolling can't reach. The quality of cut-in lines tells you everything about a painter's skill.

Drop cloth. Cloth or plastic sheeting that protects floors and furniture during a project. Canvas is better than plastic – less slippery, reusable.

EPA Lead-Safe. Federal certification required for any contractor disturbing painted surfaces in pre-1978 homes. Verify at **epa.gov**.

Grain filler. A paste applied before priming on oak or other open-grained woods to fill grain texture and create a smooth painted surface. Adds $300–$500 to a cabinet project but produces a glass-smooth finish.

NCLBGC Registration. North Carolina Department of North Carolina Licensing Board for General Contractors contractor registration. Required under NC §87-1 for any work over $500. Verify at **portal.nclbgc.org/Public/Search**.

Marine-grade paint. Loosely used term. Strictly: paints designed for direct water exposure (boats, docks). For lakefront and bayfront homes, what you actually need is premium exterior with active mildewcide.

Mil thickness. The thickness of dried paint film. Manufacturers spec optimal mils (typically 4–6 mils dry for premium exteriors). Too thin: poor coverage. Too thick: cracking.

Mildewcide. An additive that inhibits mold and algae growth on the paint film. Critical in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Premium exteriors include it; builder grade typically doesn't.

Primer. The first coat that bonds to the surface and gives the paint something to adhere to. Bonding primer (SW Extreme Bond, BM Stix) is non-negotiable on bare wood and challenging substrates.

NC §87-1. The Revised Code of North Carolina chapter that requires contractor registration with NCLBGC. Knowing your contractor's status under it is the homeowner's primary protection.

Sheen. How shiny the paint surface is. Flat (no shine, hides imperfections), eggshell (slight shine, washable), satin (more shine), semi-gloss (kitchens, baths, trim), gloss (rarely used outside doors).

Spray finish. Paint applied with a sprayer rather than brush or roller. Produces a smooth, factory-grade finish. Essential for high-quality cabinet refinishing.

Substrate. The surface being painted — wood, drywall, metal, thermofoil. The wrong process on the wrong substrate is the most common cause of paint failure.

Topcoat. The final coat that provides UV, moisture, and stain protection. Quality and thickness here determine how long your paint job lasts.

Workmanship warranty. The contractor's guarantee on the labor (not the paint manufacturer's product warranty). Industry standard is 2–5 years covering peeling, bubbling, and flaking.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

> *"Painters who can't survive informed customers go out of business, which is good for everyone left.*

— THE ASHEVILLE PAINT PROS CREW

WHEN YOU'RE READY

Get a *free* quote.

No pressure. No high-sell. Just an honest walk-through and a detailed line-item estimate from people who paint Asheville for a living.

PHONE

(828) 826-1687

WEBSITE

asheville-nc-painters.vercel.app

SERVICE AREA

Asheville, Montford, Weaverville, Hendersonville & surrounding *Buncombe County.*

HOURS

Mon – Sat · 7am to 6pm

CREDENTIALS

NCLBGC registered · EPA Lead-Safe certified · Bonded & fully insured.

RESPONSE TIME

Most quote requests answered within *15 minutes* during business hours.