



DECORATOR DATABASE CABINETRY

EVALUATING CABINETRY

Several of the top brands of cabinetry have been selected as Core Products for **Floor To Ceiling®** stores. Within each brand's product line will be a range of price levels. Select the brand that has the greatest number of features and benefits you want most. Choose a custom or semi-custom cabinet if you require special sizes (go to Dimensional Reference Guide) or expect an exceptional selection in wood species, color finishes or functional features.

Custom, Semi-Custom or Stock?

Manufactured cabinetry is by far the best choice, featuring finishes, options and warranties that small, so-called custom shops cannot offer. (Note: some manufacturers feature several lines including custom, semi-custom and stock within one brand family.) Within the broad category of manufactured cabinetry, there are three basic types:

- **Custom** manufacturers use the 3" increment system for most cabinets needed in the kitchen, but offer very broad leeway for special sizes and modifications of individual cabinets to fit spaces and functions exactly. A fine custom manufacturer usually features a wider range of wood species and door style choice and places top priority on quality in detail. If you seek exceptional selection and impeccable quality, ask your **Floor To Ceiling®** designer to show you custom cabinetry.
- **Semi-custom** is the largest category in manufactured cabinetry. Semi-custom manufacturers feature exhaustive features, options, finishes and decorative enhancements. With semi-custom cabinetry your cabinetry is manufactured to order, specifically for you. (What makes them semi-custom is some limitation on cabinet size modifications that are rarely needed, no matter what the design requirements are.)

The experienced, professional designers at **Floor To Ceiling®** can create fabulous kitchens, baths, fireplace surrounds, buffets, lockers and laundry rooms - whatever and wherever you want built-ins - with high quality semi-custom cabinetry - unquestionably the best value in cabinetry.

- **Stock** cabinets are manufactured in standard sizes, boxed and warehoused until ordered by the dealer. No size modifications are available. Wood species, door styles and functional or decorative options are limited. Stock cabinets may be outfitted with drawer glides and hinges with fewer functional and adjustment features. They typically offer fewer decorative options. Most stock cabinet manufacturers build value into these relatively limited lines by providing quality finishes not available from local shops, including



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wipe-clean interiors. For good performance, coupled with lower cost, stock cabinets can be an excellent choice. Your local **Floor To Ceiling®** designer can show you how imaginative planning with stock cabinets can provide the style and function you want when there are budget constraints.

Cost of the cabinetry will be impacted by these variables:

- Wood species and/or door style
- Color (traditional wood stains are usually less expensive than complex glazes or finishes with factory installed impressions to create a distressed or Old World look).
- Sizes specified. For instance, it is less expensive to purchase one 48" wide base cabinet than two 24" wide base cabinets. Keep in mind the functionality. If you prefer a large expanse of shelving or multiple slide-out shelves, select the 48" wide cabinet. If you need drawer space and storage for a large food processor, choose two 24" wide cabinets. Specialty decorative cabinets with open finished interiors, like a 24" china display cabinet, may cost more than a standard 24" cabinet with two doors and a standard interior.
- The functional features selected. If you selected the two 24" wide cabinets, keep in mind that an all-drawer cabinet will be higher priced than a door/drawer cabinet. The cabinet for the food processor will cost more if you add the pop-up shelf.
- The decorative features selected. Enhancing the design with appliqués, glass doors, columns, corbels or other extras will add to the bottom line.

Quality and value are important elements of the selection process. Quality means finesse and durability. Value equals ratio of the quality to the cost. Expect both quality and value at your local **Floor To Ceiling®** showroom.

Evaluate quality:

1. Touch displays. Run your fingers over the finish, especially along edges of frames and doors. The higher the quality of the finish, the more silky the feel. There should be no air bubbles or rough patches.
2. Ask about the chemistry of the clear finish (or read the details in the manufacturer's publications). Is it an oven-dried varnish finish? How many coats are applied? Is it sanded between coats? Quality finishes are always baked-on, which bonds them to the wood, making them much more impervious to surface damage from moisture or scratches. (This is one of the advantages of manufactured cabinetry when compared to cabinets built in small shops.



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Smaller shops usually use lacquer finishes that are considerably more vulnerable to moisture and temperature changes, and may absorb skin oils, creating gummy build-up around decorative hardware.)

3. High quality cabinet finishes typically have a matte or satin finish, like most high quality furniture. Glossy finishes tend to magnify grain and other variable characteristics in the wood, fingerprints of the user and small surface scratches. Manufacturers usually limit high gloss finishes to laminate styles which are bonded to smooth fiberboard.
4. Cabinet interiors may be laminated with wipe-clean vinyl or melamine surfaces. Others may have wood veneer interiors. Except for cabinets with glass doors or open cabinets, which interior treatment you choose is usually a matter of personal taste, not quality.
5. Ask to see the drawer slides by removing a drawer from a display. Higher quality cabinetry has drawer slides that are mounted on both sides of the drawer bottom. Slides should support at least 75 lbs. and glide smoothly. Many top brands feature slides with a self-closing or soft-closing feature.
6. Higher quality cabinetry features drawers joined using either a dovetail or glue and dowel method. Some brands may feature bottoms with wipe-clean surfaces. Drawer sides should be 5/8" or 3/4" thick. Take a close look at door hinges. Are they easily adjustable? Keep in mind that virtually ALL hinges will need an initial adjustment. The installer should plan to make this final adjustment when installation is complete. An additional adjustment may be needed after several months when the cabinetry has settled. (Hinges are usually NOT adjusted perfectly by the manufacturer because the doors may be removed during installation.)
7. All shelves should be adjustable. Higher quality cabinets may have 3/4" thick shelving or feature additional shelf supports attached to center stiles (vertical supports) in wider cabinets. Base cabinets may feature 1/2, 3/4 or full depth shelves. Some people prefer full depth for increased storage capacity, while others like the easier access provided by less deep shelves.

Some cabinetry is manufactured without the usual front frame and is often referred to as "frameless", fully accessible or Euro-style and is typically furnished with a white laminate interior. Full-access cabinetry always features larger, full-overlay doors, since they do not have front frames. This method of construction is available at all quality levels.



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The better the support system, the higher the cabinet quality. Since there is no frame, the best are held together with dowels firmly glued into receptive drillings. There may be braces across the top of the cabinet (sometimes called stretchers) for added support. Some **Floor To Ceiling®** showrooms feature both framed and full-access cabinetry.

8. Compare warranties. Some companies offer limited lifetime warranties. Others offer 5 or 10 years. Cabinet manufacturers' warranties typically cover materials and workmanship and do not compensate for labor costs that may be required for replacements. Your **Floor To Ceiling®** kitchen design specialist has information on the warranty offered by each manufacturer represented in the showroom.

Compare these features when considering "full-access cabinetry:

1. 5/8" or 3/4" thick, 45 lb., medium density fiberboard core (MDF) for sides and shelves.
2. Glue and dowel construction (backs may be rabbeted)
3. Thermofused melamine surfaces. (Standard interiors are white, with better brands offering melamine interiors to match door wood species.)
4. Full-depth, adjustable shelves for added support and functionality.
5. Avoid Euro-style cabinets constructed using staples.
6. Notice the precision of the edgebanding. (The laminate material applied to exposed edges of shelves and other component parts.) Check hinging, slides and other features of standard cabinets.

Cabinetry is the single most important selection for the kitchen. Your local **Floor To Ceiling®** showroom features a collection of respected name brands. **Floor To Ceiling®** designers are skilled professionals who will take time to show you all the features and options offered by each cabinet brand and help you select the one that is right for your new kitchen or bath or any room in your home.