

**StarTribune.com** | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Last update: April 23, 2006 – 12:28 AM

## Scraping past painting season

Need help finding the right paint and painter for the spring or summer sprucing? Here's a primer.

**John Ewoldt**, Star Tribune

We're approaching the busiest time of year for painting in Minnesota. Low humidity, moderate temperatures and few skeeters and flies. Before you're off to the paint store, here are some hints on choosing a paint and a painter.

A good paint can add another three to six years between jobs, according to Consumer Reports. In a report last year, CR rated paints after three, six and nine years. Its top-rated paints cost \$27 to \$35 per gallon: California Fresh Coat Velvet (flat, available at Abbott Paint), Glidden Endurance (semigloss, Home Depot) and Pratt & Lambert Accolade (eggshell, Hirshfield's). The magazine rated Glidden Spred-Dura in all finishes as a best buy (\$15 to \$20 per gallon at Home Depot).

For interior paints, Consumer Reports liked the following flats: Behr Premium Plus Enamel (Home Depot), Kilz Casual Colors (Wal-Mart), Benjamin Moore Regal Matte (Abbott, Hirshfield's). Low-luster: Behr Premium Plus Satin (Home Depot), Valspar American Tradition Satin (Lowe's and [www.valspar.com](http://www.valspar.com) for dealers) and Kilz Casual Colors Satin (Wal-Mart). Semigloss: Behr Premium Plus (Home Depot) and Kilz Casual Colors (Wal-Mart).

### Cheap and free paint

Expensive paint might be overkill in the garage, basement or dog house. Or maybe you're on a budget and you've relegated yourself to the shelves of mistints and recycled paints.

Paint Liquidators (3869 Minnehaha Av. S., Minneapolis, 612-310-1302) sells Behr, Sherwin Williams, Glidden, Ralph Lauren and others for \$5 per gallon and \$1 to \$2 per quart. A lot of 5-gallon buckets are available for \$25 to \$30. The store also stocks primers, sealers, faux finishes, Venetian plasters and floor paint. Supplies might be inconsistent. All paints are dabbed on the lid to show color. Open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, except Wednesdays until 4:30 p.m. and Thursdays until 6 p.m. Closed Sundays. Most of the paint comes from the "oops" shelf at local hardware stores.

Other budget options include Abbott Paint (gallons \$10, quarts \$3 at 1808 Grand Av., St. Paul, 651-698-5518), ReUse Center (gallons \$3 to \$4 and quarts \$2 to \$3 at 2801 21st Av. S., Minneapolis, 612-724-2608), Hirshfield's locations (gallons and quarts \$5 or less) and Sherwin Williams locations

(gallons \$2 to \$3 and quarts 50 cents to \$1). Amazon Environmental (1732 Terrace Dr., Roseville, 651-636-5486, [www.amazonpaint.com](http://www.amazonpaint.com)) recycles latex paint and creates five standard colors in white, beige and brown. Five-gallon buckets are \$20 to \$32.

For free paint, try your county environmental recycling center. Check the blue pages in the phone book under a county's "environmental services."

### **Top painters**

Angie's List subscribers rate local service providers in hundreds of categories. Four painters that have gotten an overall "A" rating from at least 25 Twin Cities consumers include Shelton Painting (Richfield, 612-798-0350), Varsity Painters (Edina, 952-938-3886), Magic Painting Co. (Golden Valley, 612-384-1148) and Home Transformations (Woodbury, 651-210-1289). To subscribe to Angie's List for one year (\$55), call 612-339-6600 or go to [www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com).

Consumers should ask for at least three references. Ask for customers whose paint job was done more than five years ago to see how it's holding up. Good painters might not be available for a couple of months, but beware of requests for a deposit larger than 10 or 20 percent. Confirm how many painters will be working on your job and how long the preparation will take.

A thorough surface preparation will add years to the life of the paint job, said Consumer Reports. If you or the painter is power-washing before painting (highly recommended), allow several days for the surface to dry thoroughly or the paint might not adhere properly. Have the painter estimate the amount of time spent scraping, sanding, caulking and priming to judge the quality of the prep work.

John Ewoldt • 612-673-7633. His articles are online at [www.startribune.com/dollars](http://www.startribune.com/dollars).

©2006 Star Tribune. All rights reserved.