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PQI

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Magazine

Spring 2000



Preserving
Nature's Handiwork with
CLEAR COATINGS

We kept the same address but built a new home with a lot more features.



We're still located at **www.paintquality.com**, but you won't recognize the place. Our PQI site has been completely redesigned. Now, contractors, paint specifiers, paint sellers and do-it-yourselfers who visit will find even more ways to access even more paint information. Paint professionals will discover valuable marketing tools and

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information links. Consumers will love the new Design Center 2000 interactive feature, which lets them create a room and "paint" it different colors to see what looks best. Other features include a Paint Encyclopedia and answers to hundreds of questions (Quick FAQ's). So drop by. We think you'll like our new home.

Editor's Note Contents



Not too many years ago, alkyds and oil-based paints were seen as the bedrock of the coatings industry. But times have changed. Today, advances in latex paint technology have firmly positioned water-based products at the cutting edge of the paints and coatings market.

In this issue of *PQI Magazine*, we take a look at one of the growth segments for latex paint: clear coatings, a niche where technologically improved latex coatings are making their mark.

Speaking of technology, the constant improvement of acrylic binders is one of the great drivers of today's paint market. The enhanced adhesion, flexibility and durability of these binders have prompted many professional painters to pursue jobs involving vinyl siding, aluminum siding, and other "alternative substrates." Get the details in our market research article.

We have had many requests to repeat the Prettiest Painted Places competition first conducted in 1997. Read about our plans to hold an expanded competition involving both the U.S. and Canada in 2000. The goal is to build greater top-of-mind awareness for exterior paint and painting.

Also included in this issue is a walk-through of some of the more interesting aspects of PQI's brand new Web site (www.paintquality.com). And our center spread on paint problems and solutions doubles as a point-of-sale piece — it's designed as a pullout to post in your store.

As we move into the new millennium, we are confident that advanced technology and informed selling will continue to provide growth for our industry, as they have in the past. And that promises a better future for us all.

Debbie Zimmer

Editor

Spring 2000

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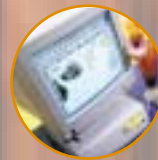
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ALL ABOUT CLEAR



COATINGS

If you are like most paint sellers, you probably get a lot of questions about clear coatings. . . and understandably so. Clears can be confusing, what with the many types of these coatings, and their use in a wide variety of applications, ranging from furniture finishing to fences to fishing boats.



What are the differences between varnishes, polyurethanes, lacquers and shellacs? Under what circumstances should you use a solvent-based clear rather than a water-based coating? What is the proper way to apply clear coatings?

If you hesitate when asked questions about clear coatings, it may be time to bone up on the subject. Here are some basics to get you started.

How Clears Differ From Paints

The very first thing to understand is how clear coatings differ from paints. In a word, paints contain pigment, while clears have none, or almost none. Otherwise, the ingredients in paints and clear coatings are the same: binder, additives and a liquid carrier.

Because they do not contain pigment, clear coatings form a film that is transparent, permitting the substrate — perhaps bare or painted wood — to be seen through the coating. Different types of clear coatings create different visual effects, ranging from a satiny sheen to plastic-like reflectivity. All provide some degree of protection to the substrate.

As with paints, clear coatings are available in water-based and solvent-based formulations. Many of these products are designed for interior use, while others are specially formulated for exterior applications. Because of differences in performance, it is very

important that you recommend the right type of product for the job your customer has in mind.

Interior Clear Coatings

Clear coatings are used most commonly for interior applications, where the products are typically applied over bare wood or stained wood surfaces, or over a previously applied clear coating. Places they are used include furniture, cabinets, doors, windows, trim, wood paneling, floors, countertops and toys. One, two or even three coats of the clear coating may be applied, depending upon the amount of protection needed, and the appearance desired.

There is a wide range of interior clear coatings to choose from today. Solvent-based interior clear coatings include oils, polyurethanes, lacquers, shellac and alkyd varnishes. Water-based varnishes are also available — binder types include acrylic, modified acrylic, urethane acrylic, and 100% urethane.

Natural Oil Interior Clears

As with oil-based paints, solvent-based natural oil finishes are made with vegetable oils — usually either linseed oil or tung oil — that “dry” or oxidize when exposed to the air. These products actually penetrate the wood to which they are applied and are suitable for most applications to bare or stained wood.



Clear coatings can protect and beautify the look of almost any interior wood surface — from furniture to stair treads, to banisters (above and right).

Natural oil interior clears are generally applied just like wiping stains — by brush or rag, then allowed to dry for a short period before the excess is removed with a clean cloth. Application of two or more coats will produce a rich, satiny finish on the wood.

Generally speaking, clear oil finishes should be allowed to dry for several hours between coats. When in doubt, be sure to recommend that your customers follow the manufacturer's suggestions for dry time.

One caveat to the use of natural oil finishes: They should not be recommended for areas that are subject to a great deal of abuse (e.g., floors), or where they would be exposed to water or alcohol (e.g., coffee tables or bar tops).

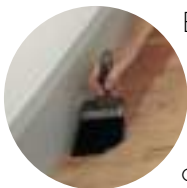
Solvent-based Alkyd and Polyurethane Varnishes

Alkyd and polyurethane (urethane-alkyd) varnishes are among the most versatile types of clear coatings. An "alkyd" is a modified drying oil that dries faster and harder than the straight oil; "polyurethane" is an alkyd that is modified for maximum toughness and abrasion resistance. These products are available in matte, semi-



gloss and gloss finishes. Some come with stain included in the formula in order to eliminate the separate staining step. Common uses range from floors and steps, to trim and furniture.

When working with an alkyd or polyurethane varnish, it is important that the product be stirred very gently — and never shaken — to avoid creating bubbles in the coating. If bubbles are formed, they may not burst promptly after the coating is applied, and may leave small rings or "craters" that can ruin the job.



Both of these types of varnishes are best applied with a high quality natural bristle or polyester brush,

although they can also be rolled, using a short nap roller to minimize foam. Brushing should be done very carefully, applying the coating in one direction only, without excessive brushing.

Allowing the proper dry time is very important when using polyurethane var-

nishes. If the dry time is too short (typically, less than a few hours), the second coat can attack the first coat, causing wrinkling or lifting; if the dry time is too long, the second coat may have inadequate adhesion to the first coat. In the latter case, if the first coat has been allowed to dry for more than 24 hours, light sanding will help the second coat adhere properly. Here again, it is critical that you advise customers to check the manufacturer's recommendations on re-coat time.

Shellac

Shellac is a unique clear coating that has been in common use for many years. It is formulated with a binder made from the secretion of the lac bug, which is harvested in India.

The film formed by shellac is quite transparent and glossy. It may be colorless, or have a distinct yellow cast. However, the color of shellac is stable; it will not tend to yellow with age.

Shellac is excellent at blocking stains, so much so that it is used for some

PQI Clear Coatings

stain blocking primers. Since the liquid carrier used in shellac is denatured alcohol, this type of clear coating is quick drying.

In terms of its applications, shellac should not be used for areas subject to alcohol (bar tops – liquor; dressing tables – perfume, cologne). Also, shellac will whiten when exposed to water and some other liquids, which should be taken into account when making recommendations to your customers. A high quality natural bristle brush is ideal for applying shellac.

Lacquer

Lacquer is a term generally used for quick-drying high gloss finishes with excellent clarity. Since lacquers have a low solids content, they typically must be applied in at least several coats. Lacquers are available in sprayable and brushable grades.

The binder most commonly used for lacquer is nitrocellulose, although some lacquers have solvent-based acrylic binders. Lacquers are made with their own type of thinner called "lacquer thinner," which is faster drying and more flammable than paint thinner or alcohol.

If applied over a stain, paint or other finish, there is a risk that a lacquer will craze, i.e., cause cracks, in the pre-existing coating. Due to stricter envi-

This oak floor (below) will hold up under the wear and tear of foot traffic due to regular applications of a clear coating. A unique chest-turned-vanity (right) also benefits from an interior clear.

ronmental regulations, lacquers are not as readily available today as in the past, but they are still used extensively by furniture makers.

Water-based Interior Clears

Over the past few years, paint manufacturers have made significant advances in water-based varnish technology. Today, water-based interior varnishes are available in a wide range of products using various binder technologies, including acrylic, modified acrylic, urethane-acrylic combinations, and all-water-dispersed urethane.

Water-based varnishes offer many of the same benefits that are associated with water-based paints, including soap and water cleanup, and low odor when compared to solvent-based products. However, in general, they are not quite the equal of solvent-based clears in terms of resistance properties and very high gloss potential.



Getting Perfect Results With a Water-based Clear Finish

When applying a water-based clear coating on oak, walnut or certain other types of bare wood, it is possible that the water in the coating can "raise the grain" of the wood, creating a rough, or "fuzzy" surface, sometimes referred to as "whiskers." But by properly planning the job, your customer can avoid this problem and get a perfect finish. Here are the steps to take:

- **First, sand the wood as smooth as possible.**
- **Next, deliberately raise the grain by pre-dampening the wood with clean water, using a wet rag or sponge.**
- **Allow the wood to dry for at least half an hour.**
- **Sand the wood with fine-grit sandpaper (garnet paper; 180-220 grit) in the direction of the wood grain.**
- **Dust off the surface.**
- **Apply the first coat of clear finish.**
- **If slight fuzzing still occurs, lightly sand and dust off the surface as described above.**
- **Apply additional coats of clear finish to achieve the desired result.**



Many water-based varnishes have a milky-white appearance, which is quite helpful in applying an even, uniform coat. However, the coating will dry to a perfectly clear finish. After application to wood, some water-based varnishes will be more clear and colorless than solvent-based varnishes, although the latter tend to provide more "warmth" and "depth" due to their amber tone, higher head-on gloss, and penetration, which accentuates wood grain.



Several coats of a quality exterior clear coating, with added UV absorber, will help protect this wood window box from the elements.

Exterior Clear Coatings

Clear coatings are also used on exterior applications, where they impart extra beauty to bare or stained wood. Some of the most common applications are on doors, trim, outdoor furniture, boats, and marine or aquatic equipment. Occasionally, exterior clear coatings are used as a top coat on painted objects to provide greater gloss and a measure of extra protection from the elements.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature is not kind to clear coatings. Without the protective effect of pigment, exterior clear finishes have a limited life expectancy.

The culprit is ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunshine. Because of the clarity of clear coatings, UV can penetrate down to the wood substrate and deteriorate surface fibers, resulting in

release of the coating in a relatively short time. This is particularly so with water-based clears, which are quite transparent to UV.

Solvent-based coatings, such as spar varnishes, are better able to absorb UV, which helps delay adhesion failure. However, this absorption of UV is "sacrificial," that is, the film itself is degraded, so the coating life is still short compared with an exterior paint job.

To help forestall deterioration of the substrate under clears, some manufacturers include an additive in these products called a "UV absorber." This type of additive can be quite expensive.

Spar varnish (also called marine varnish, due to its frequent use on boats) generally offers the best adhesion and durability properties of all exterior clear finishes.



sive and, unfortunately, the UV-absorber is used up over time.

In an effort to maximize UV protection, it is wise to recommend that your customers apply multiple coats of any exterior clear coating to give added film thickness. This will render the finish more durable and provide greater protection for the wood substrate.

Moreover, all exterior clear coatings should be reapplied frequently when used over wood — generally, every year or two — even if the coating has not failed significantly. A preventive maintenance coat in exterior applications will add to the life of the job without the need for total removal of the coating if some film failure should occur. Suggest that your customers follow the manufacturer's recommendations in this regard.

Solvent-based Exterior Clears

There are several different types of solvent-based exterior clear coatings.

Solvent-based exterior varnishes are typically alkyd or polyurethane products that are similar to the corresponding interior products, with one added ingredient: UV absorber. This additive affords these coatings greater durability and provides an extra measure of protection against adhesion failures on wood. It also helps account for the higher cost of these products compared to interior counterparts.

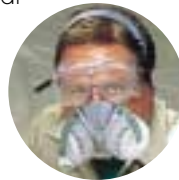
Spar varnishes, also called marine varnishes, are made with a tung oil and/or an alkyd binder. Out of all the clear coatings, they generally offer the best performance on outdoor furniture, wood planters and, of course, boats, oars, and the like. Spar varnishes also offer excellent resistance to cracking and peeling. In terms of appearance, they have a very high gloss.

Oil finishes are sometimes appropriate for exterior applications, but again, will have a limited life compared to interior use. Have your customers consult the manufacturer's guidelines about the suitability of using an oil finish for an exterior application.

Safety Considerations

To make sure your customers complete their clear coatings projects in a safe manner, it is wise to offer some guidance on the use and disposal of materials.

When your customers are applying solvent-based clear coatings, recommend that they wear proper eye protection; if they are applying these products indoors, also recommend that they work in an area with ample ventilation and suggest that they wear an appropriate respirator.



Be sure to warn your customers about the fire hazards associated with the use of flammable solvents. In this regard, rags and papers soaked with oil, alkyd, polyurethane or spar varnish should never be left in a wad or pile. Rather, they should be spread out to dry in a safe place away from children, pets and heat sources, and then disposed of. Since guidelines for disposal of hazardous materials vary widely, suggest that your customers check the procedures in their community.

Water-based clear coatings should never be poured down the drain. Not only is this practice illegal in many areas, but it can clog pipes. Instead, unwanted finish can be spilled onto scraps of cardboard and allowed to dry away from children and pets. At that point, the scraps can be discarded in the trash. •

Tips on Stretching the Life of Exterior Clear Coatings

Compared to top quality paints, exterior clear coatings have a relatively short life expectancy, due primarily to the effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunshine. But there are ways to prolong the life of these coatings. Here are some suggestions:

- **Use only exterior grade clear coatings for all outdoor applications. Exterior clears often contain special additives, called UV-absorbers, which help retard the deteriorating effects that the sun's ultraviolet rays can have on the substrate.**
- **Apply the clear coating to stained, rather than bare, wood. The exterior stain will provide an extra measure of protection against UV rays, resulting in a longer life for the entire job.**
- **Apply multiple coats of the clear coating. Applying three or four coats will build up the thickness of the clear coating, and with it, the strength of the coating system's UV protection.**
- **Periodically apply a new coat of the clear. Even if there is no visible failure of the coating, applying a new clear coat every year or two will help forestall failure by adding more UV protection.**

Paint Promotion
Campaign Widened
to U.S. and Canada

Search for “Prettiest Painted Places” Resumes

In an effort to focus attention on exterior painting, the Paint Quality Institute conducted a national competition in 1997 to find the “**Prettiest Painted Places in America.**”



Despite the fact that nearly three years have passed, we still

hear from officials in many of the participating towns. They report that our campaign had lasting effects.

In some places, ordinances have been adopted requiring more colorful paint schemes on new homes. In others, communities have instituted community improvement awards for those who

paint. And in still others, entire neighborhoods are undergoing steady restoration and repainting.

What’s especially encouraging is that in so many places, our competition helped ordinary citizens realize that freshly painted, well-maintained exteriors can have a

This colorful downtown building is in Philipsburg, Montana, one of the finalists from the 1997 competition.



positive effect on community pride. That sentiment was echoed by Chamber of Commerce executives from across the country.

While it is impossible to measure the precise effect our first **Prettiest Painted Places** competition may have had on sales of exterior paint, in an informal survey we took in 1998, many paint company marketing executives said they felt our campaign had "some positive effect." A few thought it had a "major effect" on paint sales.



One fact that is measurable: Our 1997 competition produced an avalanche of favorable publicity on exterior painting. We counted nearly 3,000 newspaper articles, dozens of magazine articles and hundreds of television and radio spots. Undoubtedly, there were many more of which we were unaware.



With so much evidence that Prettiest Painted Places is good, not only for the communities that participate, but also for the paint industry, PQI will hold two separate competitions this year: **"Prettiest Painted Places in America"** and **"Prettiest Painted Places in Canada."**

Editors from *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Architecture*, *Victorian Homes* and *American Painting Contractor* magazines will help judge the U.S. entries; editors from *Canadian Living* and *Canadian House and Home* will help evaluate Canadian entries.

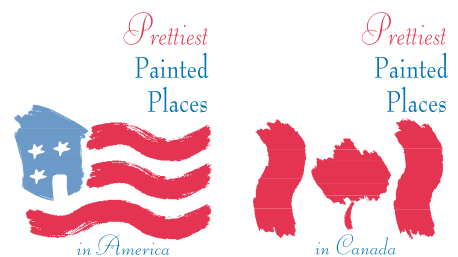


Top: Victorian architecture invites an interesting color scheme, as seen on this building from Ferndale, California, a 1997 winning town. Above: Press conferences were held with local media during many of PQI's visits to finalist towns.

Our goal in the 2000 Painted Places competition is to involve many more neighborhoods, historic districts and towns than we did in 1997. . .and to generate even more publicity on exterior painting. But we would also like to see greater involvement by paint companies and paint retailers.

If you followed our first competition, you may already have thought of some ways to tie into this one. However, we've also provided some suggestions in our "PQIdeas" column (page 21).

Whether or not you piggyback on this year's competition with your own promotional efforts, we hope that **"Prettiest Painted Places"** will have a positive effect on your sales of quality paints and coatings. •



Solving Common Interior

Even knowledgeable do-it-yourselfers and professional painters occasionally run into problems with their interior paint jobs. Some of these problems are immediately apparent; others develop over time.

This chart shows some of the more common interior paint problems. It offers suggestions on the possible causes of these troubles, and advice on how to correct them.



BLOCKING: The undesirable sticking together of two painted surfaces, such as a door sticking to the jamb, or a window sticking to its frame.

Possible Factors:

- putting a door, window, or other item into service before the freshly applied paint is adequately dry
- use of a lower quality paint
- use of semi-gloss or gloss paint, which may tend to block more than flat paints or those with eggshell or satin sheen
- use of a highly tinted paint, which is more likely to stick than a light-colored paint
- use of an exterior latex paint for an indoor application

Solution: Applying talcum powder to both surfaces can be an immediate way to reduce blocking. If repainting, consider using paint with a lower sheen, e.g., a flat or satin finish, rather than a semi-gloss or gloss; if possible, switch to a lighter-colored paint. Most important, be sure to allow adequate drying time when applying fresh paint.



STAIN BLEED-THROUGH: Discoloration of the paint due to migration of stains from the surface painted, or from the substrate underneath.

Possible Factors:

- painting over dirt, water stains, rust, etc., without proper surface preparation (cleaning/rinsing, application of stain-blocking primer)
- use of the wrong type of primer, i.e., one that is not sufficiently stain-resistant
- moisture coming from behind the wall or trim, and transporting stains to the surface

Solution: Eliminate any sources of excess moisture behind the wall or trim. Clean the surface and remove as much of the discoloration as possible. Apply one or two coats of a stain-blocking primer (a second coat enhances stain-blocking). On very severe stains, an oil-based or alcohol-based primer will work best.

Paint Problems

When correcting any paint problem, it is important to remember that top quality paints and coatings offer far better protection and performance than lower quality coatings. For that reason, they are generally the most cost-effective choice for doing any type of repainting.

MILDEW: Black, gray or brown spots or splotches on the surface of the paint.

Possible Factors:

- warm, moist, humid conditions, especially where there is little daylight, e.g., in bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms
- application of paint to a surface on which mildew had not been removed
- failing to prime a bare wood surface before applying paint
- use of an alkyd or oil-based paint, which is less mildew-resistant than latex paint

Solution: Treat the mildew with a 3:1 mixture of water and household bleach. Sponge the bleach mixture onto the mildew, allow it to remain on the surface for at least 20 minutes, and reapply as it dries. (Always wear goggles, rubber gloves and old clothes when working with bleach.) Rinse the area thoroughly with water, then wash it with a mild detergent, and rinse again. To protect against mildew, use a top quality latex paint, and clean when necessary with bleach/detergent solution. Consider installing an exhaust fan in high moisture areas. NOTE: Never combine bleach and ammonia, as this will release poisonous gas.



POOR HIDING: Failure of dry paint to obscure or “hide” the surface to which it is applied.

Possible Factors:

- use of a low quality paint
- application of the paint with a low quality brush or roller; or use of too short a roller nap
- application of a paint that is much lighter in color than the surface below
- use of a paint with low-hiding organic pigments (e.g., yellow)
- application of paint at a higher spread rate than recommended
- painting a surface that is very smooth or slick

Solution: When painting over a dark color or pattern, or when applying a low-hiding, organic-colored paint like yellow, prime the surface before painting. If possible, have the primer tinted toward the color of the paint, following the primer manufacturer’s recommendations. Use a top quality paint for best hiding.* Apply the paint with quality rollers or brushes, and be sure to use the recommended roller nap. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations on spread rate.

* Some low quality flat paints have good “dry hiding,” but their hiding will suffer if they become wet from water, cooking oil, etc.





Versatile New Web Site

Packed with

Features and Information

www.paintquality.com

What if there were a Web site that would: give you marketing tips to help increase traffic in your store...provide downloadable sell-sheets to help your contractor customers expand their businesses, and allow homeowners to “see” how their rooms would look with color combinations they input? Well, now there is. And those are just a few of the features **PAINT QUALITY**.COM on our brand new Web site at www.paintquality.com

Over the past several months, the Paint Quality Institute has developed a new Web site that is easy-to-navigate, interactive and, most important, full of useful information for anyone involved with paint and painting. All the information is generic — specific products or brands are never mentioned.

The Home Page

Like any home page, this one gives you a starting point from which to choose an appropriate pathway based on who you are and the type of information you need.

The user starts by clicking on the appropriate button: **Do-it-yourselfer, Painting Contractor, Paint Specifier, or Paint Seller.** You will want to become familiar with the information available for each of your customer categories.

Note that there are also **Links** and **Press Room** sections on the home page. Links will take you to a page of paint- and home improvement-related sites that are hot-linked... clicking on any one of them will automatically take you to that site. The Press Room contains back issues of *PQI Magazine* that can be printed in full color; reprints of paint articles appearing in various home, DIYer, contractor and specifier magazines; a list of informational and training videos that are available from PQI; and selected PQI newspaper articles on painting and related topics.

The home page also lists other features of the site: **Quick FAQ's**, **Steps to Success**, **Design Center 2000**, and **News & Special Items**. Most of these are interactive. Use them for your own reference, or to help out your customers.

Interactive Capabilities

Quick FAQ's lets you search by hundreds of keywords through a library of paint questions and answers. Just choose an interior or



The "FAQ" area of the site can provide quick answers to some of painting's most puzzling questions.

exterior painting topic, and a list of common questions and answers will come up. If you don't see what you're looking for, feel free to submit your own question — and you'll get our prompt reply!

Steps to Success offers detailed information on how to best accomplish the four steps to a successful paint job:

- proper surface preparation,
- use of quality tools,
- choice of a quality paint suitable for the application, and
- painting under the proper conditions.



"Steps to Success" can help determine the best way to tackle any project — interior or exterior.

For identifying the correct type of primer and finish coat for a given job, there is a user-friendly **Get Our Recommendation** database that asks questions about the nature of the job before making a specific generic recommendation. To share this information with your customers, consider printing out some of these recommendations and posting them on a bulletin board in your store.

The site's **Paint Encyclopedia** has an extensive glossary of paint and paint-related terms, and an extensive tutorial which is designed to be a training tool about the ingredients of paint and their impact on paint properties.

You may be familiar with our popular pocket fan deck, "Remedies for Common Paint Problems" (see back



Help your customers identify and solve their paint problems with the "Problem Solver."

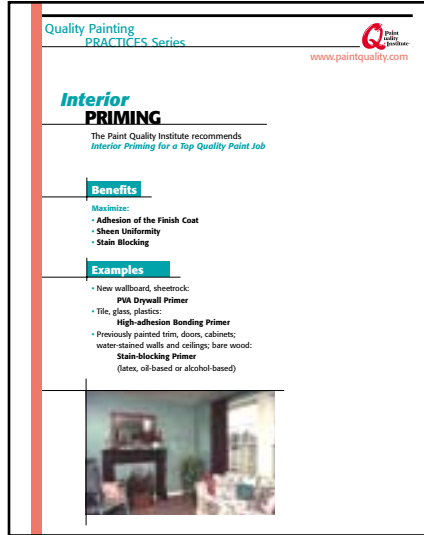
cover of *PQI Magazine*, Winter 1996/97). Well, all 44 interior and exterior paint problems and solutions from the deck are now available through the **Problem Solver** on the Web site. This can be used to help a customer identify a paint problem, and to understand what must be done to correct it. Just move the mouse over the list of failures to see the image of each quickly appear. Click on a "failure"



The site's "Cost Calculator" feature can determine how much paint will be needed for a job.

to move to a description of the problem, a list of possible causes, and suggested solutions.

And there is a **Paint Job Cost Calculator**: Input the price per gallon, size of the area to be painted, spread rate and expected life of the paint job, and instantly calculate the number of gallons needed and the cost per square foot – and even cost per square foot per year. You can even compare three sets of criteria, where you vary, for example,



An example of one of the site's helpful "sell sheets."

the price of the paint, or the expected life of the job, or spread rate, and see the impact on cost per square foot and cost per year.

Paint sellers and painting contractors have selling aids available through the **Down to Business** section: Clicking on Selling Your

Services takes you to a selection of "sell sheets" that may be printed out in color for use with customers. These include two series, one called "Quality Painting Practices" that summarizes the benefits of one practice or another, such as interior priming.

The other series is "Quality Painting Opportunities." Here, you will find items such as a sell sheet on painting aluminum siding, which you and your contractor customers can use with homeowners and building managers.

New Business Opportunity sheets will be added to the collection from time to time.

Design Time

One of the most exciting features of the site is an interactive tool in the **Design Center 2000** section. It

Decorate a "virtual" room, using Design Center 2000, to help customers visualize what their finished project might look like.



will help you and your customers “see” what a room might look like when they apply their own color scheme.

Here’s how it works. Go to the **Visualize It** section. Choose and place appropriate pieces of furniture, doors, trim and windows in the room. Then select colors from an extensive palette and “apply” them to the room to see what it would look like as a completed paint job. In addition to coloring each wall, the ceiling and the floor, the user can apply colors to each piece of furniture, and to the trim, doors, window drapes, even the bedspread. You can use this tool to help customers who are unsure of their color choice, or who simply want to experiment before deciding on a purchase.

The Design Center offers other helpful color and decorating advice such as: decorative painting techniques; using color to create the illusion of space; and the psychology of color.

Check It Out!

There’s much more to see at www.paintquality.com. But the best way to discover its capabilities is to check it out for yourself. Look up information you’ve been wondering about, ask a question, experiment with the Design Center. . . get comfortable with the site. And the next time a customer comes in, try going to the site to support your own sales advice. Using www.paintquality.com can help you win additional sales, and build customer loyalty as well. •

A Selection of “Frequently Asked Questions”

Question:

I have heard about people, particularly medical and dental professionals, who have developed serious allergic reactions to latex gloves that they use in their work. Can I get a similar reaction because of the latex used in latex paint?

Answer:

No, the reaction that comes with use of the gloves is related to a substance in the natural latex used in making the gloves; whereas with latex paint, the “latex” is a synthetic material unrelated to the natural material except that both have a milky-white appearance.

Question:

What is the difference between linseed oil and boiled linseed oil?

Answer:

Linseed oil is the general term for the oil extracted from flax seed. Raw linseed oil has not been treated, and dries very slowly. “Boiled” linseed oil has additives called “driers” which make it dry faster.

Question:

Why do elastomeric wall coatings have to be applied in such heavy coats? What are some other important things to know about these coatings?

Answer:

A function of an elastomeric wall coating (EWC) is to bridge cracks as they form in the masonry over which they are applied. These cracks result from changes in temperature. (Falling temperatures cause cracks to open, and vice versa.) With EWCs, wind-driven rain can be kept from penetrating the masonry, and a good appearance is maintained, as well.

The crack-bridging capability is related to film thickness. Even though the coating is tough and elastic, it cannot exhibit optimum crack-bridging capability unless the total dry film thickness is at least about 14 mils (0.014 inches). The thickness is of course much greater than with a conventional paint, and this leads to significantly higher initial cost vs. the cost of a regular paint. It is essential that water not be allowed behind the EWC, so all caulking must be in good shape, chimneys must have rain caps, wall tops must be waterproof, etc. EWCs should not be applied to surfaces where water normally gets behind them, like soil-retaining walls.

PQI's Latest Survey of **PROFESSIONAL PAINTERS:**

An Investigation into Opinions,
Attitudes and Practices on Exterior Paint





Every time we answer one question about the market for paints and coatings, it seems that another springs up in

its place. So it was with PQI's 1998 research study, which surveyed more than 500 professional painters on their opinions, attitudes and practices regarding interior paint (see "The Inside Story on Interior Paint," Spring 1999 issue of *PQI Magazine*).

The findings in that study were very informative, but we, and many readers, then wondered: What would we learn from a similar study focusing on exterior paint?

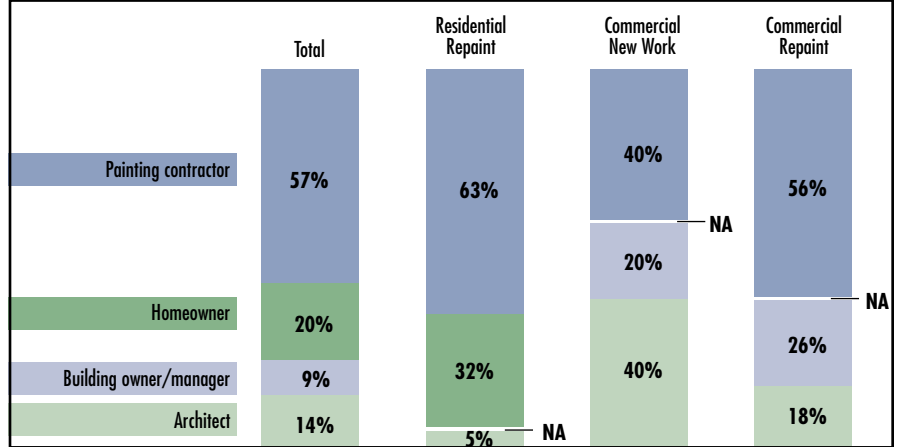
Our curiosity got the better of us and, this past fall, we set out to explore that subject in a companion survey of more than 300 professional painters in five regions of the United States, and in Canada.

Again, the method we employed was the telephone interview, and names of the contractors were randomly selected from a Dun and Bradstreet database. As in the prior survey, **we focused on contractors who do primarily residential repaint or commercial work.**

Profile of Respondents

Generally speaking, the contractors in our exterior painting survey were of modest size. Median annual revenue was \$208,000, but 40 percent had an annual revenue of less than

Exhibit 1: Brand Decision Makers Unaided



NA = Not applicable.

\$100,000. Only five percent had an annual revenue in excess of \$1,000,000.

Those firms interviewed that handle mostly commercial work, either new or repaint, generated more than four times the revenue of those doing mostly residential repainting, \$461,000 and \$423,000 versus \$94,000, respectively.

Revenue also varied greatly by region. Contractors in the Southwest, for example, reported the highest median revenue, \$300,000; those in the Northwest reported the lowest annual revenue, \$96,000.

On average, the contractors in the survey said that about 50% of the paint they use is for exterior applications, and 50% for interior use. But there were significant regional differences. Contractors in the Northwest used the greatest proportion of paint for exterior work (57%), while those in the Northeast used only 46% for exterior surfaces. Canadian contractors reported using only 42% on exteriors, perhaps reflecting the shorter exterior painting season there.

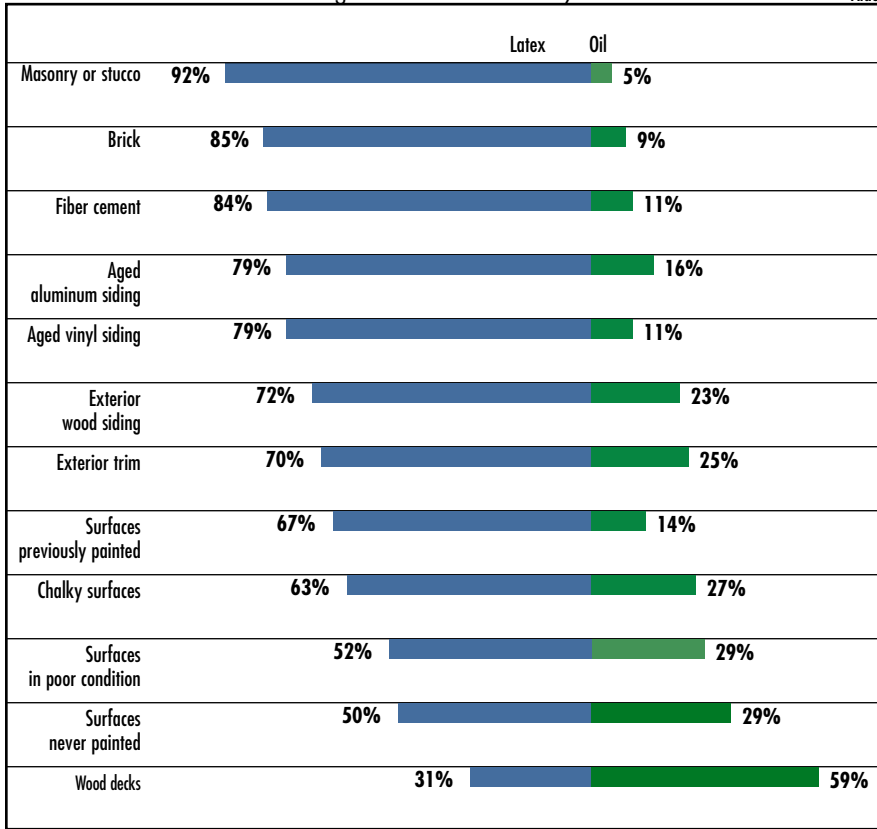
Paint Brand Specifier

One of the intriguing questions we asked in our 1998 survey on interior painting was, **"Who selects the brand of paint that you use?"** To gain comparative data, we repeated the question in our exterior painting survey.

We learned that, **for exterior work, the painting contractor is a more important paint brand specifier — on average making the decision 57% of the time (see Exhibit 1) versus 53% of the time on interior painting projects.** Respondents doing mainly new commercial work, however, reported that the architect specifies the paint brand just as often as the contractor, each doing so 40% of the time. (By way of contrast, when it came to commercial exterior repaint work, the architect specified the paint only 18% of the time, the contractor 56%.)

In terms of residential repaint work, the contractors said that the homeowner specified the brand of paint on 32% of exterior jobs. On interior projects, the figure was only 27%, according to our earlier survey. Likewise, building owners and man-

Exhibit 2: Paint Usage: Latex vs. Oil-based by Surface Aided



Latex
Oil

agers make the brand decision more often on exterior painting than on interior painting, whether it is new commercial work or commercial repainting.



There are some rather significant regional differences in these numbers. Within the U.S., the greatest preference for latex paint is in the Northwest, where the figure is 84%; in the Central region, however, the preference for latex paint is somewhat lower, at 74%. And in Canada, it is 67%.

We delved further into this subject by asking the contractors on which surfaces they preferred to use latex or oil (see Exhibit 2).

The great majority of contractors preferred to use latex on all but one surface. . . wood decks, where 59% of the respondents favored oil-based products. Contractors showed their greatest affinity for latex paint when painting masonry

surfaces such as stucco, fiber cement and brick.

Reasons for Brand Preference

We also investigated why professional painters favor a particular brand of exterior paint, be it latex or oil.

Just as in our interior paint survey, the reason cited most frequently was the quality of the product, mentioned by 51% of the contractors for latex paint, and cited by 49% for oil-based.

The next-most-common reasons for using a particular brand of paint were the same for latex and oil-based, although there is less price sensitivity concerning oil-based paints. For latex, the reasons, and the percentage of respondents who mentioned them, are: good price (21%), past experience with the paint (20%), durability (18%) and coverage (16%). For oil-based, the order of importance is: durability (19%), past experience with the paint (18%), coverage (16%) and good price (12%).

Other factors of far lesser importance in brand preference are availability, ease of application, end-user familiarity with the brand, flow, good appearance, and color selection (see Exhibit 3).

Latex versus Oil

Another area that we explored in depth is the contractors' use of latex paint versus oil-based paint.

In general, 77% of the exterior paint purchased by the respondents is latex paint. On residential repaint jobs, the preference for latex paint jumps to 80%, whereas on new commercial work, the preference for latex drops to 68%. In commercial repaint, the preference for latex is 76%.

Price of Paint

Another area of inquiry is the price that contractors pay for their exterior paint. The U.S. contractors surveyed reported that they pay a mean price of \$18.11 per gallon for latex paint, and \$20.25 per gallon for oil-based paint. In Canada, the

mean prices are \$18.53 for latex, and \$18.47 for oil-based, in U.S. dollars.

Our survey shows, however, that there is wide divergence in the prices contractors pay for paint depending upon the type of work they are doing. Painters doing mainly residential repaint reported the highest average prices: \$18.96 for latex and \$21.57 for oil-based. Contractors doing new commercial work indicated the lowest prices: \$16.53 for latex and \$17.54 for oil-based.

"Atypical" Surfaces

With our survey, we also wanted to explore **contractors' attitudes about painting atypical substrates, that is, materials other than traditional surfaces like exterior wood.**

On this score, **we found that many contractors (13%) are actively**

trying to expand their business by aggressively going after work involving other surfaces. Most commonly, respondents mentioned masonry in this regard, and specifically mentioned cinder block, stucco, vinyl siding, aluminum siding, brick and stone.

We also were interested to learn what type of paint the contractors used on these substrates. When asked about painting atypical surfaces, a full three-quarters (75%) said that they ordinarily use a specialized exterior paint designed for the surface, rather than a conventional exterior coating.

Improvements in Paint

As a guide for our own technical research, **we invited the contractors to comment on improvements**

they would like to see in exterior paints. This was asked in an open-ended, unaided fashion, without suggesting possible improvements.

Interestingly, **39% of the respondents indicated that no improvements were needed.** Others offered a variety of suggestions, but the most frequent responses were better coverage and greater durability, both mentioned by 9% of those surveyed. The next-most-frequent responses, and the percentage of contractors suggesting them, were:

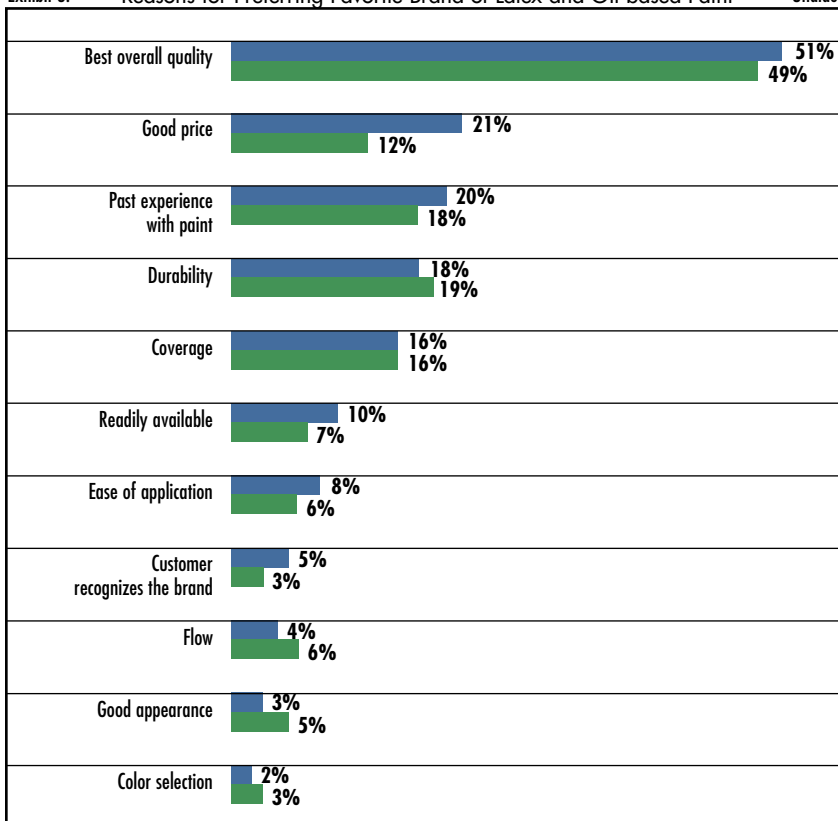
- better flow (6%)
- shorter dry time (6%)
- lower cost (5%)
- higher overall quality (4%)
- better texture/body (4%)
- better mildew resistance/stain resistance (3%)

Postscript

As with earlier studies that we have conducted, our effort to learn more about professional painters' opinions, attitudes and practices concerning exterior paint answered some questions, and raised many others.

Still, **every insight into the minds of those who use or specify paints makes us better equipped to address our customers' needs, respond to marketplace challenges, and help grow the market for paints and coatings.** Our study on exterior paint takes us one step closer to achieving those goals. •

Exhibit 3: Reasons for Preferring Favorite Brand of Latex and Oil-based Paint Unaided



Factors rated less than 1% include: can-to-can consistency; drying time; easy clean-up; hide, and stain blocker.



Another Reason to Favor Top Quality Exterior Acrylic Latex Paint

Better Long-term VALUE

Looking for the best long-term value in exterior house paint? According to the experts, you can find it in a top quality acrylic latex paint.

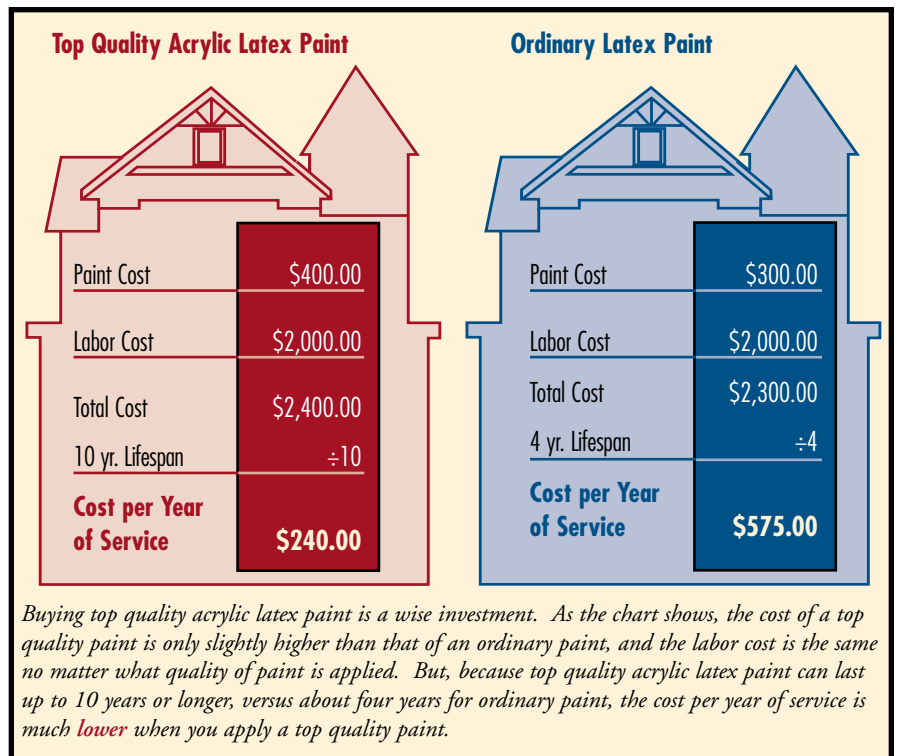
This type of coating initially costs more than ordinary paint and contains higher performance ingredients. And when it comes to paint, better performance means higher value.

An important ingredient in top quality acrylic latex paint is the acrylic binder, which is key to durability. A 100% acrylic binder provides superior adhesion, so the paint will maintain a tight “grip” on exterior surfaces. It also helps form a tough, but flexible, paint film that expands and contracts as outside temperatures rise and fall.

Top quality acrylic latex paints also contain higher quality pigments. These cost more than those in ordinary paints, but they provide better “hiding” of the surface being painted, and better color retention.

And top quality acrylic latex paints contain special additives

Top Quality Exterior Paint Is Cheaper in the Long Run



that make the paint go on in an easy-to-apply, thick, smooth coat that enhances appearance, as well as durability. Some additives even help the paint maintain its long-term appearance. An example is mildewcide, which helps prevent the formation of unsightly mold and mildew.

The combined effect of these quality ingredients is a paint job

that can last years longer. In fact, field tests show that when applied to a properly prepared surface, top quality acrylic latex paint can last 10 years or more, compared to only three or four years for ordinary latex paint.

So, for the best long-term value in house paint, follow the experts' recommendation. Choose a top quality acrylic latex coating! •

How You Can Piggyback on “Prettiest Painted Places”

- **Check our Web site (www.paintquality.com) to see if any place in your area has been nominated in the competition.** Names of nominees, finalists and winners will be updated from time to time, often with photographs.

- **If a nearby place has been nominated, alert your local newspapers and radio stations, and urge them to report on the nomination.** The positive publicity about paint could produce more business for your store.



The positive publicity about paint could produce more business for your store.

- If your **local newspapers publish an article on the competition, consider running an ad in the same issue.**

- When **articles mentioning a local nominee are published, cut them out and post them on your bulletin board.**

- Create your own **“Prettiest Painted Places” poster with photos of attractively painted homes from your area.** Invite proud homeowners, business

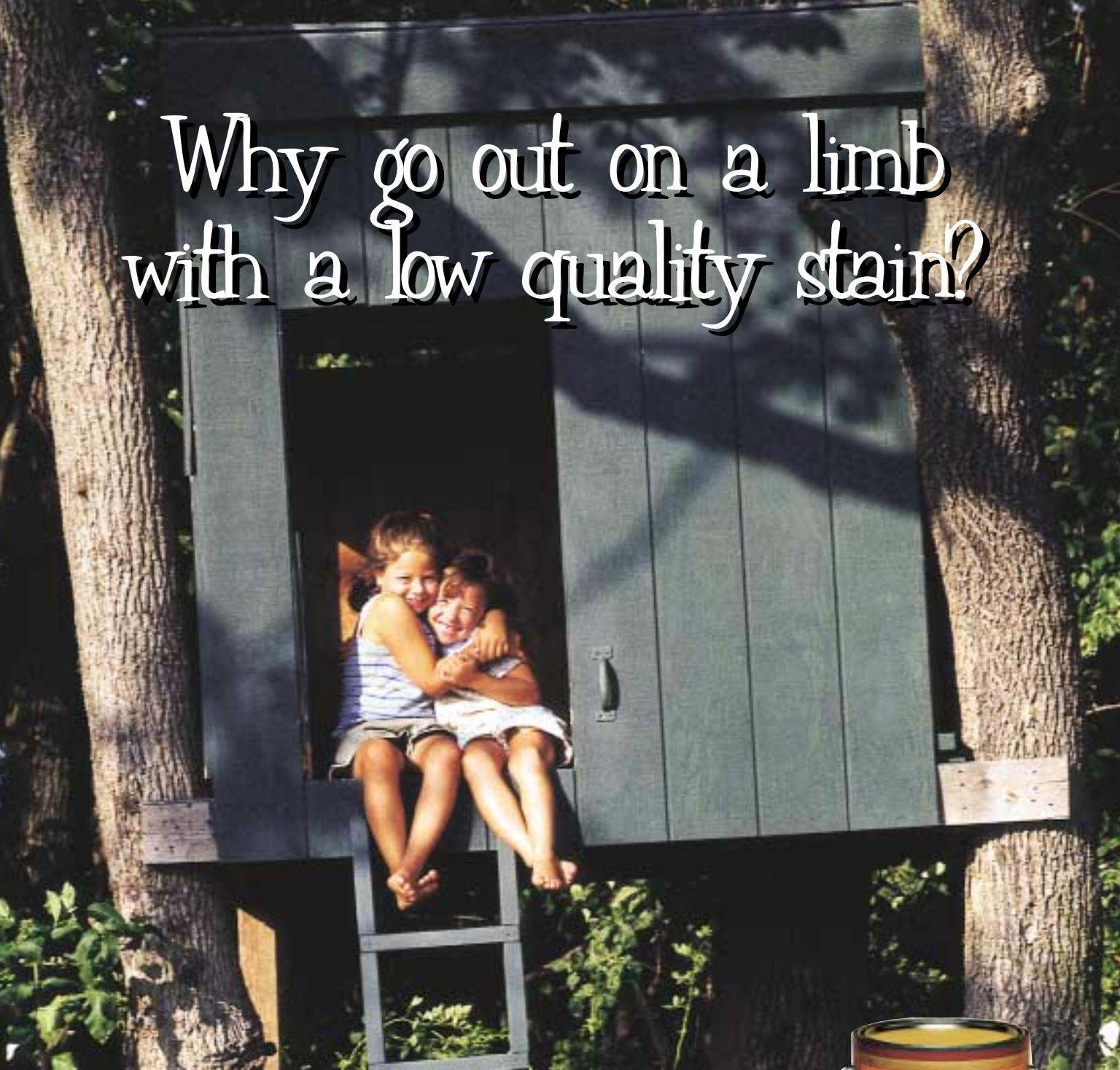
owners and contractors to submit photos for your in-store display.

- **Consider running a special “Prettiest Painted Places” sales promotion during the course of the competition.** Promote it with advertising and point-of-sale offers.

- Whether or not a local nominee wins, **inspire your customers to paint their home exteriors by displaying color images of the winning places.** These can be downloaded from our Web site at the end of the contest.



Why go out on a limb with a low quality stain?



The beauty of stain is that it can reveal the natural texture of bare wood, while adding color and character. But constant exposure to weather and ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunshine can cause that beauty to fade quickly if anything but a top quality stain is used.

That's why a top quality 100% acrylic latex exterior stain is best for outdoor applications. It provides greater resistance to cracking, flaking and mildew growth.

When it comes to stains, don't risk your reputation recommending anything but a top quality acrylic latex product. It's the stain that will give your customers the protection they need.

