

VANCOUVER PAINT CONTRACTORS

Colour Selection & Design

Paint colour selection, colour matching, accent walls, and design trends for Metro Vancouver homes and condos

20 Expert Answers from Paint IQ

vancouverpaintcontractors.com/construction-brain

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Q1

What paint colours work best for Vancouver homes that don't get a lot of natural light?

Vancouver's overcast skies and shorter winter days mean many homes struggle with natural light, so choosing the right paint colours is essential. Warm whites like creamy ivory or soft linen work beautifully because they reflect what light does come in without feeling sterile. Avoid cool greys or blue-toned whites — they can make rooms feel cold and cave-like on our typical grey days.

Soft warm neutrals like greige (a grey-beige blend), warm taupe, or pale golden tones help rooms feel open and inviting even in January. For accent walls, consider muted terracotta, warm sage, or dusty rose — these add personality without absorbing too much light.

The finish matters too. Eggshell or satin finishes reflect more light than flat or matte, which can make a noticeable difference in north-facing rooms. A professional colour consultation typically runs \$150 to \$350 in Metro Vancouver and is well worth it for light-challenged spaces.

One trick experienced Vancouver painters use is testing colours on the actual wall with large sample patches (at least 2 feet square) and observing them at different times of day, especially on overcast afternoons when the light is at its dullest. What looks perfect under showroom lighting can look completely different in your living room on a rainy November evening.

Consider booking a consultation with a local painter who understands Vancouver's unique light conditions and can bring fan decks to your home for accurate colour matching.

Q2

How much does a professional colour consultation cost in Vancouver and is it worth it?

Professional colour consultations in Metro Vancouver typically range from \$150 to \$400 depending on the scope. A single-room consultation usually falls around \$150 to \$200, while a whole-home colour plan with coordinated palettes for multiple rooms runs \$300 to \$400. Some painting contractors include a complimentary consultation when you book a full interior repaint, which can save you that cost entirely.

A colour consultant brings expertise that goes beyond picking pretty swatches. They assess your home's natural light exposure (critical in Vancouver where north-facing rooms can feel dramatically different from south-facing

ones), your existing finishes like flooring and countertops, and how colours will flow between rooms in open-concept layouts — which are extremely common in Vancouver condos and newer West Coast homes.

The investment pays for itself by preventing costly mistakes. A gallon of premium paint runs \$60 to \$85 in Vancouver, and if you pick the wrong colour for a large living area, you could waste \$200 to \$500 in paint alone, plus the labour to redo it. Many homeowners go through three or four "wrong" colours before finding the right one when they try to do it themselves.

Consultants also stay current on trends that suit our region — the earthy West Coast palette of forest greens, ocean blues, and natural wood tones that complement our mountain and water views rather than fight against them.

Ask your painting contractor if they offer colour consultation as part of their service package before hiring a separate consultant.

Q3

What exterior paint colours are popular for Vancouver homes right now?

The West Coast aesthetic continues to dominate Vancouver exterior colour trends, with nature-inspired palettes that complement our mountain backdrops and lush greenery. Deep charcoals and dark slate greys remain extremely popular for modern homes, especially paired with warm wood accents like cedar-toned stains on soffits or front doors.

Navy blue has emerged as a strong alternative to black or charcoal, offering drama without feeling too heavy. Forest green and deep olive are gaining traction, particularly in neighbourhoods like North Vancouver and the Westside where homes are surrounded by mature trees. These colours blend beautifully with the natural landscape rather than competing with it.

For more traditional Vancouver homes — Craftsman bungalows, character homes in Kitsilano or Mount Pleasant — classic combinations like sage green with cream trim, or warm grey with white accents and a bold-coloured front door continue to look timeless. A striking front door in deep red, teal, or mustard yellow adds curb appeal without overwhelming the overall scheme.

One important consideration specific to Vancouver is how colours look when wet. Our rainy climate means your exterior will be damp for much of the year, and colours shift significantly when wet. Medium tones tend to darken noticeably, so test your colour on a small section and spray it with water to see how it performs in typical Vancouver conditions.

Drive through your target neighbourhood to see which colour schemes appeal to you, then bring photos to your painting contractor for a tailored recommendation.

Q4

We're painting our open-concept main floor — how do we keep the colour flowing between kitchen, dining, and living areas?

Open-concept spaces are everywhere in Vancouver — from downtown condos to newer builds in Surrey and Langley — and they require a thoughtful colour strategy. The most reliable approach is choosing one cohesive neutral as your base colour throughout the entire open floor plan, then using accent colours strategically to define zones without walls.

Start with a warm neutral that works with your flooring and kitchen cabinetry. If you have the light-toned engineered hardwood that's popular in Vancouver condos, a soft warm white or pale greige creates a clean, contemporary base. From there, you can add depth by painting a feature wall in the living area a deeper complementary shade — perhaps a warm charcoal or muted blue-green.

The key rule is to stay within the same colour family and undertone. If your base colour has warm undertones, every accent colour should also lean warm. Mixing warm and cool tones in an open-concept space creates visual tension that makes the area feel disjointed.

For the kitchen specifically, consider keeping cabinets and walls in lighter tones to maximize the sense of space, while the living area can handle slightly deeper colours since it's typically where you want a cosier atmosphere. The dining zone can act as a transition — staying in the base colour keeps it feeling connected to both spaces.

Use no more than three colours total across the open floor plan: one dominant neutral, one secondary shade, and one accent. Request large brush-out samples from your painter so you can see all three colours together in your actual space before committing.

Q5

Should I paint an accent wall in my Vancouver condo or is that trend over?

Accent walls are definitely not dead — they've just evolved. The bold, random accent walls of the early 2010s (painting one wall bright red for no particular reason) have fallen out of favour, but intentional, well-placed accent walls remain a powerful design tool, especially in Vancouver condos where space is limited and you want maximum impact with minimal effort.

The modern approach is to use an accent wall to highlight an architectural feature: the wall behind a built-in shelving unit, a fireplace wall, or the wall your bed sits against. In many Vancouver condos, the living room wall with

the best mountain or water view is an excellent candidate — a deep, moody colour like navy, forest green, or charcoal draws the eye toward the window and frames the view beautifully.

Colour-blocking and two-tone walls (painting the lower third a darker shade) are trending right now and work exceptionally well in Vancouver condos with 8- or 9-foot ceilings. This technique adds visual interest and can make ceilings feel taller.

For a 10-by-12-foot accent wall in a Vancouver condo, expect to pay around \$250 to \$450 for professional painting including premium paint — far less than a full room repaint at \$800 to \$1,500. It's one of the most cost-effective ways to refresh a space.

The safest approach is choosing an accent colour that's three to four shades deeper than your main wall colour on the same paint chip card. This guarantees the tones will harmonize. Show your condo's layout to a local painter who can recommend which wall will have the most impact.

Q6

What colours boost curb appeal the most when selling a home in Vancouver?

In Vancouver's competitive real estate market, exterior paint colour can meaningfully affect buyer perception and curb appeal. Real estate professionals in Metro Vancouver consistently recommend neutral, sophisticated palettes that appeal to the broadest range of buyers.

The safest high-impact combination is a warm medium grey or greige body with crisp white trim and a front door in a statement colour — black, deep navy, or forest green all perform well. This palette feels contemporary without being polarizing and photographs beautifully for MLS listings, which is where most Vancouver buyers form their first impression.

Avoid anything too bold or personal on the main body — bright colours, unusual hues, or dated tones like salmon or mint green can turn buyers off before they even step inside. Studies from across North America suggest that homes with dark charcoal or deep blue-grey exteriors can sell for a small premium compared to those with beige or tan.

For Vancouver specifically, consider how your colour choice interacts with the landscape. Our city's green canopy and grey skies mean that homes in warm earthy tones — warm grey, taupe, muted olive — tend to look settled and intentional, while stark whites can feel washed out under overcast skies.

Don't overlook the front door. A freshly painted front door in a bold but tasteful colour is the single highest-return paint investment you can make. The cost is minimal — often under \$200 for a professional job — and the visual

impact is immediate.

Talk to your real estate agent and painting contractor together to choose colours that will resonate with buyers in your specific neighbourhood.

Q7

How do I pick exterior colours that look good against the green trees and mountains in North Van?

Living in North Vancouver means your home is framed by some of the most stunning natural scenery in Canada — the Coast Mountains, towering Douglas firs, and lush West Coast rainforest. The best exterior colour choices work with that backdrop rather than competing against it.

Earthy, nature-derived colours perform beautifully in North Van. Deep olive green, warm charcoal, rich brown, and slate blue all complement the forested setting. These tones let your home feel like a natural extension of the landscape, which is the essence of West Coast residential design. Many of the most admired homes on the North Shore use dark, muted exteriors with natural wood or stone accents.

Avoid colours that clash with the evergreen backdrop — bright whites can look stark and institutional against dark forests, while warm beiges or yellows can feel out of place. If you prefer a lighter palette, opt for a soft sage green or warm stone grey that echoes the natural tones around you.

Material pairing matters too. Cedar shingle siding with a semi-transparent stain in a natural wood tone is quintessential North Vancouver. If your home has a mix of materials — hardie board and wood, for instance — choose colours that create contrast without conflict. A dark body with lighter trim and natural wood accents is a proven combination on the North Shore.

Take photos of your home at different times of day and in different weather conditions, then bring them to a painting contractor familiar with North Van properties. The interplay of tree shadow, mountain light, and overcast skies creates unique lighting that affects colour perception significantly.

Schedule your colour selection appointment for a typical overcast day to see how your choices truly perform in everyday conditions.

Q8

What's the best way to match paint colour to my existing kitchen cabinets and countertops?

Colour matching to existing finishes is one of the most common challenges Vancouver homeowners face, especially during partial kitchen renovations where you're updating the walls but keeping the cabinetry and countertops. The key is identifying the undertone of your fixed elements and choosing wall colours that share that

same undertone.

If your cabinets are the popular white-shaker style found in many Vancouver homes, look carefully at whether they lean warm (creamy, yellowish) or cool (bright, bluish). Warm white cabinets pair beautifully with walls in soft greige, warm sage, or pale gold. Cool white cabinets work better with blue-grey, clean white, or soft blue-green walls.

For the darker-toned wood cabinetry common in older Vancouver character homes — walnut, cherry, or espresso-stained maple — lighter wall colours create necessary contrast. Warm whites, pale taupe, or soft mushroom tones prevent the kitchen from feeling heavy and dark, which is especially important during our grey winter months.

Granite and quartz countertops contain multiple colour flecks. Pull your wall colour from one of the secondary tones in the stone rather than the dominant colour — this creates a subtle, sophisticated connection. Many Vancouver paint stores offer digital colour matching where they can scan your countertop sample and suggest complementary wall colours.

Bring physical samples to the paint store whenever possible. A cabinet door, a countertop offcut, or even a backsplash tile gives the colour specialist something tangible to match against, which is far more accurate than relying on photos taken under variable lighting.

Start with three sample pots in your shortlisted colours and paint large swatches on the kitchen wall near both the cabinets and countertops before making a final decision.

Q9

Are dark paint colours a bad idea for Vancouver homes since it's already so grey and rainy here?

This is one of the biggest misconceptions Vancouver homeowners have, and the answer might surprise you — dark colours can actually work wonderfully in Vancouver homes when used strategically. The key is understanding the difference between dark and dreary.

Deep, saturated colours like navy blue, forest green, rich charcoal, or even black-brown create a sense of warmth, intimacy, and sophistication that can make grey, rainy days feel cosy rather than depressing. Think of a den or bedroom painted in deep midnight blue with warm lighting — on a rainy November evening, that room feels like a warm cocoon rather than a dark cave.

The trick is pairing dark walls with the right elements. Ample warm-toned lighting (2700K to 3000K bulbs), lighter furniture and textiles, and reflective surfaces like mirrors or metallic accents prevent the space from feeling closed

in. Rooms with good-sized windows facing south or west can handle darker colours more easily because they still get meaningful natural light during the day.

Where dark colours don't work well in Vancouver: small north-facing rooms with limited windows, narrow hallways, or basement suites with small window wells. In these spaces, stick with light, warm tones to maximize whatever light is available.

For exteriors, dark colours are actually trending strongly in Vancouver and perform well visually. A dark-bodied home stands out beautifully against our green landscape and grey skies, looking dramatic and contemporary. Just be aware that dark exteriors absorb more heat and may require repainting slightly sooner — though Vancouver's mild UV exposure means this is less of a concern here than in sunnier climates.

Test a dark colour on one wall as a trial before committing to an entire room, and evaluate it during both daytime and evening hours.

Q10

We want a West Coast modern look for our new home in Squamish — what colour palette should we go with?

The West Coast modern aesthetic is perfectly suited to Squamish, where your home sits between the dramatic Stawamus Chief, Howe Sound, and dense coastal forest. This style celebrates the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, and your colour palette should reflect that philosophy.

The foundation of a West Coast modern palette is a sophisticated neutral base — think warm concrete grey, soft charcoal, or pale stone. These tones echo the granite cliffs and overcast skies of the Sea-to-Sky corridor without feeling cold. For walls, a warm greige or soft mushroom tone creates a quiet backdrop that lets your windows and views do the talking.

Accent colours should be pulled directly from the Squamish landscape: deep forest green inspired by the old-growth cedars, ocean-inspired blue-greens reminiscent of Howe Sound, warm wood tones that reference exposed timber beams, and earthy rusts and terracottas that nod to autumn in the Squamish Valley.

Exteriors for West Coast modern homes typically feature a dark, recessive body colour — deep charcoal, black, or dark brown — paired with natural wood siding or cedar cladding in a warm stain. This combination is everywhere in new Squamish developments and the Sea-to-Sky corridor for good reason: it looks stunning against the mountains and ages gracefully in our wet climate.

Budget for a whole-home colour consultation at \$300 to \$400 from a painter experienced with West Coast modern design. This investment ensures every room, hallway, and exterior element works together as a cohesive package that suits both the architecture and the extraordinary natural setting.

Gather inspiration photos from completed homes in Squamish and Whistler, then share them with your painting contractor to establish a clear visual direction before selecting specific colours.

Q11

What are the best paint colours for staging a Vancouver home before selling?

In Metro Vancouver's competitive real estate market, staging colours can make or break a sale. Buyers here tend to gravitate toward light, airy palettes that maximize the natural light we get between our grey, overcast days. The top-performing staging colours right now are soft warm whites like Benjamin Moore's Simply White or Cloud White, light warm greys such as Revere Pewter, and greige tones like Edgecomb Gray. These neutrals photograph beautifully

for MLS listings and appeal to the broadest range of buyers.

Avoid anything too bold or personal. That deep burgundy accent wall in your dining room might feel cozy to you, but it signals "work to do" for buyers. A professional staging repaint for a typical Vancouver townhome or condo runs between \$2,500 and \$5,500 depending on square footage, but realtors consistently report that staged homes with fresh neutral paint sell 5-15% higher than comparable unstaged listings.

For West Coast contemporary homes, a slightly warmer white with undertones of taupe works better than stark cool whites, which can feel clinical under our overcast skies. If your home has an open floor plan — common in newer Burnaby and Richmond builds — use one consistent colour throughout to make the space feel larger and more cohesive.

Consider booking a colour consultation with your painter before listing. A professional can walk through each room and recommend the exact palette that will appeal to buyers in your specific neighbourhood and price bracket.

Q12

Are there bylaws or HOA rules about what colours I can paint my house exterior in Vancouver?

Yes, and it catches many homeowners off guard. If you live in a strata property anywhere in Metro Vancouver, your strata council almost certainly has guidelines or outright restrictions on exterior colour changes. Most strata bylaws require written approval before any exterior painting, even if you're repainting the same colour. Fines for unauthorized changes can range from \$200 to \$1,000 per infraction, and some councils can require you to repaint at your own expense.

For detached homes, the City of Vancouver doesn't have specific paint colour bylaws, but heritage-designated homes in areas like Strathcona, Kitsilano, or Shaughnessy may fall under heritage conservation guidelines that restrict your palette. If your home is on the Vancouver Heritage Register, you'll need to consult with the city's heritage planning department before making changes.

Municipalities like West Vancouver, North Vancouver, and the District of North Vancouver also have design guidelines for certain neighbourhoods, particularly in areas with character home protections. Surrey, Burnaby, and Coquitlam are generally more flexible for detached homes, but always check your specific zoning.

For strata properties, request a copy of the bylaws and any design guidelines before choosing colours. Many painters experienced with Metro Vancouver strata projects can help you navigate the approval process and suggest colours that typically get approved without pushback.

Start by contacting your strata manager or municipal planning office to confirm what approvals you need before committing to a colour.

Q13

How do I match paint colour to my existing walls when doing a partial repaint?

Colour matching in Vancouver homes can be tricky, especially because our diffused natural light changes how colours appear compared to sunnier climates. Even with the original paint code, walls that have been up for a few years will have faded or yellowed, so a fresh coat of the "same" colour often looks noticeably different beside the old paint.

The most reliable approach is to cut a small chip — about the size of a loonie — from an inconspicuous spot like behind a door or inside a closet. Your painter can bring this to a paint supplier with a spectrophotometer for colour matching. Most Vancouver paint stores offer this service for free or a nominal \$5-\$10 fee. Digital colour-matching apps on your phone are not accurate enough for a seamless result.

Even with a perfect match, you need to paint full walls corner to corner, not just patch sections. Our coastal light — which shifts dramatically between our grey winter skies and bright summer sun — will expose any mid-wall colour breaks. If you're only touching up a hallway, paint from the nearest natural break point like a doorway or corner.

For homes with flat or matte finishes, matching is more forgiving. Eggshell and satin sheens are harder because they reflect light differently when new versus aged. If the original paint is more than five years old, it's usually worth repainting the entire room rather than chasing a match.

Ask your painter to do a test patch and let it dry fully for 24 hours before committing to the full job.

Q14

Does paint colour really affect mood? What colours should I use for different rooms?

Colour psychology is well-documented, and it's especially relevant in Vancouver where we spend more time indoors during our long rainy season. The colours on your walls genuinely affect how a space feels to live in.

For bedrooms, soft blues, muted greens, and warm lavenders promote relaxation and better sleep. These cool tones work beautifully with the natural West Coast light filtering through our typically overcast skies. Think dusty sage, soft slate blue, or warm grey with blue undertones.

Kitchens and dining areas benefit from warmer tones — soft yellows, warm whites, or light terracotta — that stimulate appetite and conversation. In Vancouver's open-concept condos, where the kitchen flows into living space, a warm white with creamy undertones ties everything together without feeling choppy.

Home offices, which became essential for many Vancouver professionals during the shift to remote work, perform best in muted greens or soft blue-greys. These colours reduce eye strain during screen work and promote focus without feeling sterile.

Bathrooms can handle bolder choices — deep navy, forest green, or charcoal — because you spend shorter periods there. These dramatic colours create a spa-like atmosphere that complements the West Coast wellness aesthetic many Vancouver homeowners favour.

For living rooms, consider your room's orientation. North-facing rooms common in many East Vancouver row houses benefit from warmer tones to counteract the cool light, while south-facing rooms can handle cooler palettes.

Bring home large paint samples and live with them for a few days in different light conditions before deciding.

Q15

I have a small Vancouver condo — will dark paint colours make it feel even smaller?

This is one of the most common misconceptions in interior painting. Dark colours don't automatically shrink a space — and in many Vancouver condos, they can actually make a room feel more sophisticated and intentional. The key is how you use them.

In a typical 500-700 square foot Vancouver condo, a deep charcoal or navy accent wall can add dramatic depth and make the room feel like it extends beyond that wall. The trick is pairing one dark wall with lighter adjacent surfaces and ensuring good lighting. Vancouver's abundant grey-sky ambient light actually complements darker interiors beautifully — it creates a moody, cocooning atmosphere that many West Coast designers favour.

What does make small spaces feel cramped is using too many competing colours or heavy contrasts. A monochromatic approach — say, varying shades of the same deep green from walls to trim — creates a seamless envelope effect that makes boundaries disappear. This technique is popular in Coal Harbour and Yaletown condos where square footage is tight but finishes need to feel upscale.

For a 600 square foot one-bedroom condo, expect to pay between \$1,800 and \$3,200 for a full interior repaint, whether you go light or dark. Dark colours typically require better-quality paint and more coats for even coverage, which can add 10-15% to material costs.

Ceiling colour matters too — keep ceilings white or very light to maintain the sense of height. High-gloss dark paint on a feature wall reflects light and prevents that closed-in feeling.

Consider having your painter do a large sample section first so you can see how the colour reads in your specific unit's light.

Q16

Is the all-white interior trend still popular in Vancouver? Should I go white-on-white?

White-on-white interiors remain popular in Metro Vancouver, particularly in newer builds and renovated homes going for that West Coast minimalist aesthetic. You'll see it extensively in real estate listings across Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant, and the North Shore. But executing it well is harder than it looks.

The biggest mistake homeowners make is assuming all whites are the same. There are hundreds of white paint colours, and choosing the wrong undertone can make your space look dingy, pink, green, or cold. Under Vancouver's predominantly overcast skies, cool whites with blue or grey undertones can feel sterile and unwelcoming. Warmer whites with yellow, cream, or pink undertones tend to feel more natural in our light conditions.

A successful white-on-white scheme requires varying the sheen levels to create visual interest. Flat or matte on ceilings, eggshell on walls, and semi-gloss on trim and millwork gives the eye subtle texture changes even within the same colour family. This approach costs the same as any other paint job but requires a painter who understands the technique.

The downside of all-white is maintenance. Scuffs, marks, and everyday wear show immediately, especially in high-traffic areas. If you have children or pets, consider a washable eggshell or satin finish and budget for touch-ups once or twice a year. Keep a spare litre of each white you use — batch colours can vary, and touch-ups with a different batch will show.

If pure white feels too stark, consider the "warm minimalist" approach with soft off-whites and natural wood tones that's trending heavily in Vancouver right now. Ask your painter for fan deck comparisons in your specific space before choosing.

Q17

We're thinking about a two-tone exterior for our house — what works well in Vancouver?

Two-tone exteriors are a strong choice in Metro Vancouver and suit the architectural diversity you see from Craftsman bungalows in East Van to modern West Coast builds in the British Properties. The most successful two-tone schemes use a darker colour for the main body and a lighter complementary shade for trim, fascia, and architectural details — or vice versa.

For Vancouver specifically, earthy and nature-inspired combinations work best with the surrounding landscape. Deep forest green with warm cream trim is a classic West Coast look. Charcoal grey with white accents suits contemporary homes. Warm taupe with darker brown trim blends with the natural environment in North Vancouver and Burnaby Mountain neighbourhoods.

The ratio matters: aim for roughly 60-70% primary colour and 30-40% secondary. Too close to 50/50 creates visual confusion about which colour is dominant. Use architectural features to guide the split — siding in one colour, shingle accents and trim in another.

A full two-tone exterior repaint on a standard Vancouver two-storey home typically runs between \$8,000 and \$15,000 depending on the home's size, condition, and accessibility. West Coast weather means proper prep — scraping, priming, and moisture-sealing — is essential for longevity. Expect a quality exterior job to last 7-10 years before needing a refresh.

Be mindful of your street context. Look at the neighbouring homes and choose a palette that complements rather than clashes. Drive through neighbourhoods with homes similar to yours to see what combinations appeal to you in person, not just on a screen.

Have your painter apply test swatches on two different elevations of your home and evaluate them over several days in sun, cloud, and rain.

Q18

How much does front door colour matter for curb appeal in Vancouver?

Your front door colour has an outsized impact on curb appeal — it's one of the first things visitors and potential buyers notice. In Vancouver's real estate market, where first impressions drive bidding wars, a well-chosen front door colour is one of the most cost-effective upgrades you can make. Repainting a front door typically costs between \$250 and \$500 professionally, yet realtors estimate it can add perceived value far beyond that investment.

Bold colours work best because the door is a small surface that can handle drama without overwhelming the facade. In Metro Vancouver, the most popular high-impact choices right now are deep navy blue, black, rich burgundy, and forest green. These all complement the earthy West Coast palette common on Vancouver exteriors and look striking against both dark and light siding.

Yellow and red doors remain classic choices that pop against grey and white exteriors — particularly effective given how many grey days we have when curb appeal needs all the help it can get. A bright door becomes a focal point that draws the eye and gives your home personality on an overcast afternoon.

Consider your home's overall colour scheme. The door should contrast with your siding but coordinate with other accent elements like shutters, planters, or house numbers. A door that matches your trim colour exactly tends to blend in rather than stand out.

Gloss or semi-gloss finish is standard for front doors — it's durable, easy to clean, and the sheen catches light beautifully. In our damp climate, use a high-quality exterior paint rated for moisture resistance.

Take a photo of your home's exterior and use a digital colour visualizer to test options before committing, then confirm with a physical swatch.

Q19

What exterior paint colours hold up best in Vancouver's rainy climate?

Vancouver's climate is tough on exterior paint. The combination of heavy rainfall, high humidity, limited UV exposure in winter, and intense summer sun creates unique challenges. Colour choice plays a real role in how well your paint job ages.

Lighter colours generally hold up better in our climate because they show less fading from UV exposure and don't absorb as much heat, which reduces expansion and contraction cracking. Earth tones — warm greys, taupe, sage green, and muted blues — are popular across Metro Vancouver for good reason. They complement the natural landscape and age gracefully.

Dark colours like black and deep charcoal are trendy on modern builds in areas like South Surrey and the Westside, but they require higher-quality paint and more frequent maintenance. Dark exteriors absorb more heat, which accelerates paint film breakdown. If you go dark, invest in premium 100% acrylic paint with strong UV inhibitors and mildew resistance. Expect to repaint 1-2 years sooner than you would with lighter colours.

The biggest enemy in Vancouver isn't actually rain — it's the combination of moisture and limited drying time. North-facing walls stay damp longest and are most prone to mildew and algae staining. Green and grey-green algae can make light-coloured north walls look grimy within a couple of years. Medium-toned colours in green or grey families hide this better between cleanings.

Regardless of colour, proper preparation is everything. Moisture trapped under paint causes peeling faster than any colour-related factor. Your painter should check moisture levels, repair any damaged caulking, and apply appropriate primer before topcoats.

Schedule your exterior paint job for our dry season between June and September for the best adhesion and curing conditions.

Q20

Can you match paint colours from a photo or fabric sample for my Vancouver home renovation?

Yes, but the accuracy depends heavily on the method used. If you've found a paint colour you love in a magazine photo, Instagram post, or fabric swatch, there are several ways to translate that into a wall colour for your home — with varying degrees of reliability.

Fabric and material samples give the best results. A physical swatch can be taken to any paint retailer in Metro Vancouver with a spectrophotometer — Benjamin Moore, Sherwin-Williams, and most independent paint shops offer this service. The machine reads the exact colour wavelengths and produces a custom-mixed match. This typically costs nothing or a small fee of \$5-\$15 per colour. Keep in mind that paint on a wall looks different from fabric due to texture and light reflection, so the match will be close but not identical.

Photo-based matching is less reliable because camera settings, screen calibration, and lighting all distort colour. That beautiful sage green you saw on a Houzz photo of a Dunbar renovation may look completely different in your Burnaby townhouse because of different window orientation and light quality. Phone apps that claim to match colours from photos should be treated as rough starting points only.

The most reliable approach for renovation projects is to work with your painter on selecting colours from a physical fan deck in your actual space. View samples at different times of day and under both natural and artificial lighting. Vancouver's north-facing rooms read colours very differently than south-facing ones, and our characteristically soft grey daylight shifts colours cooler than the harsh spotlights in a paint store.

For large renovation projects, consider investing in peel-and-stick paint samples — large swatches you can move around the room for about \$5-\$8 each. Test at least three options before committing.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Vancouver Paint Contractors. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any basement finishing project. Information is current as of March 15, 2026 and may change. Visit vancouverpaintcontractors.com for the latest answers.