Although it is possible to purchase real wood doors or have them custom made, more and more kitchens have one form or another of plasticized doors, generally made of MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard, compressed wood fibres) and covered with various plastics, acrylics or polymers. Plastics were first introduced into kitchens with melamine covered countertops and flat square doors covered in melamine. Melamine is still an important kitchen product, available in renovation stores in strong thick sheets of plastic 4 feet by 8 feet in size with all kinds of colours, patterns and textures. But doors didn’t need the same protection as countertops so the kitchen door industry has migrated to other thinner photographic plastics, photographic meaning that they show real photography of real wood buried under a transparent protective plastic, acrylic or polymer. These new offerings are not burdened by the need to place melamine sheets on the face of the door and then matching plastic tapes on the sides of the door – tape which often peeled off. The new doors now have a continuous wrap of plastic protection all around the door. That said, I am often asked what is the difference between two types of modern kitchen doors that are not well explained anywhere on the web: Polyester and Polymer doors – two lines of products often offered by the same company.

Let me use the company Thermovision.ca as an example.

Most important is to find the look you want, but if you like the look of something in both lines, here are the differences between them. Do I recommend one over the other? I like things that last longer, but your budget may dictate otherwise. Real wood is expensive, but properly maintained can last 50 years. The 2 year warranty for Polyester and 5 year warranty for Polymer says a lot about durability.

Polyester doors
Made of 5 pieces – a frame built of 4 pieces of MDF wrapped in Polyester plus a ¼” MDF panel covered in melamine
Joints available in both 45 and 90 degree assemblage
Some models offer glass mullions in place of the MDF panel
Less expensive than Polymer because it is easier to build – 2 years guarantee

Polymer doors
Made of a single piece of MDF shaped by a router
Then covered with a sheet of Thermofoil – a plastic that form fits the shaped panel with one continuous sheet of plastic.
Can have flat panels with edge treatment or imitation framed doors with 90 or 45 degree frame joints.
Slightly more expensive than Polyester because of the more demanding manufacturing process, but 5 years guarantee because it is not made up of 5 glued up parts.

Keywords:
Types, Plastic, Glass, Patterns, Joints, Kitchen, Melamine, Doors, Frame, Colour, Financial, Router, Protection, MDF, Warranty, Acrylic