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A fresh coat of paint does wonders for a house – it can make it look as good as new, create a great first impression and increase the house's value too. It's also a relatively simple way of brightening your home's exterior.

Painting a house might sound relatively straightforward, but there's actually more to it than choosing the colour and picking up a brush. For a new coat of paint to last, for example, the house walls must be thoroughly clean before the new paint is applied. This is because old paint oxidizes over time, which combined with usual wear and tear, plus mould and mildew, doesn't create a stable base for new paint.

Pressure cleaning is the best option, which isn't easy to do without the proper equipment! That's v many homeowners choose to hire a contracted exterior painting service to do the job for them.

Professional exterior residential painters will make sure the house walls are primed and in good condition before going anywhere near a paint brush. This involves not only cleaning, but repairing cracks to ensure the walls are an effective humidity and wind barrier.

A professional home-painter will also prepare the surrounding area, protecting windows and door frames with sealant to ensure water doesn't filter through them, and applying primer to the walls as a base coat. These steps will help the paint spread evenly and maintain a rich colour throughout.

Few people would want to take on this kind of job themselves, but how can you be sure of getting good value for money when you hire an exterior painting service? These few tips can help you get the most out of your investment.

First off, ask for references. A reputable contractor should be able to point you in the direction of several satisfied customers who can vouch for the job they do.

Next, beware of home-painters who provide quotes that are vague or unrealistically low. This may mean that they have missed crucial steps in the process that ensures a paint job lasts properly.

Some contractors increase their rates after a given time frame. If they put you under pressure to hire them within a certain period, steer clear of them.

So is it worth hiring a professional painting service? It may be more expensive than doing the job yourself, but unless you own the requisite (and expensive) tools and have a shed load of experience, you'd be wise to leave it to the professionals.

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