



Happily *ever* after...

Wood flooring is a homey look, for it appeals to all ages and cultures.

Woods like oak and maple, ash, beech, cherry, hickory and walnut, what we call American traditionals, continue to be popular partly because of that traditional look and partly because they are seen as practical, available and economical. However, new ways of creating wood floors, called engineered, and the arrival of exotic new species from around the world are changing that. You can have any species from anywhere in the world right at your feet, including bamboo in a broad array of colors and patterns.

Solid wood flooring is just that, one piece of wood usually 3/4-inch thick. Since it is installed by nailing or stapling to the floor joists, it adds to the stability of the floor. Solid wood is available in many finishes and colors in various grades, clear or with knots and imperfections.

continued on page 29>>



At left, BR-111's Antiquity Chianti Cherry.
At right, Bandera Hand Sculpted White Oak
Midnight from LM Flooring.

HAND-SCRAPED EXOTICS

Old World Elegance For New Age Taste

By STEVEN WAGNER

Sometimes old is new. Fashion is funny that way. Like classic wide planks. Custom sculpted surfaces. Today's hand-scraped floors are all the rage, bringing timeless warmth and character to any décor.

But wait. Just when you think you've seen it all, think again.

Get ready. Hand-scraped exotics are coming to a store near you. They may just turn out to be the latest trend in designer flooring.

Predating the industrial revolution and the advent of electricity and power sanders, hardwood flooring was hand-scraped out of simple necessity. Why? Excess "over-wood" from rough-hewn lumber had to be removed to make the flooring flat. Using hand-held metal scrapers, artisans would remove ribbons of wood fiber from each plank, leveling the floors and creating a unique, one-of-a-kind presentation.

Today the basic process remains relatively unchanged. Skilled craftsmen, armed with primitive hand tools, sculpt each plank to create non-repetitive patterns. Because each plank carries a unique signature, hand-scraped flooring appears naturally worn.

However rooted in the past, modern hand-scraped flooring carries with it some obvious modern advantages, ranging from precision tongue-and-groove milling, to durable aluminum oxide finishes.




Above, BR-111's Antiquity Shiraz Angelim.

continued on page 28 >>



Malbec Walnut

fashion under foot™ 

t i M e l e s s t r a n s g r e s s i o n s

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New as that flooring **fashion** may be to you,
there's something **emerging** that's
the **newest** of the new.
Hand-scraped exotic wood!

New as that flooring fashion may be to you, there's something emerging that's the newest of the new. Hand-scraped exotic wood!

Exotic hardwood flooring, with species originating from distant continents like South America, Africa and the Pacific Rim, has caught the eye of consumers and designers states-side. And why not? Unique grain patterns and rich natural color creates a beautiful overall mosaic.

Building on the popularity of those woods and the venerable look of hand-scraped, manufacturers have started offering hand-scraped exotics. A prime example is BR-111 Exotic Hardwood Flooring which recently introduced its Antiquity Hand-Scraped Collection, featuring a variety of exotic species, including Brazilian Cherry, Tiete Chestnut, Brazilian Walnut and Angelim. The collection features a five-inch-wide board width and the authentic, random hand-scraping technique. A crystal-clear aluminum oxide topcoat protects the flooring while letting the beautiful grain and color of each species shine through.

If you're thinking "hand-scraped," it's important to know that all hand-scraped floors are not created equal. First and foremost, make sure the flooring is really hand-scraped and not machine distressed or sculpted. Unique scraping patterns are key. Look for repetitive patterns which detract from the authentic timeless character and appearance of the floor.

Also, be sure to compare the level or depth of the flooring's sculpted surfaces which varies among several manufacturers. Choose a level of scraping that matches your taste. An overly sculpted floor may look good on a showroom sample but overpowering in your home.

Hand-scraped flooring can be at home in virtually any décor. Traditional and rustic environments are an obvious match. However, hand-sculpted floors are equally suited to eclectic or modern settings for they create an exceptional design contrast, too.

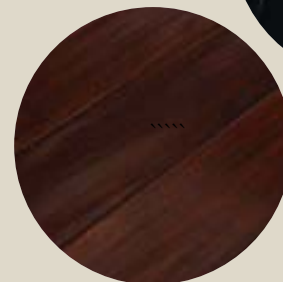
A wide variety of color choices are available. Typically, darker colors will accentuate the visual drama of the hand-scraping. If you're working with exotic flooring, some species, like Brazilian Cherry, will darken over time with exposure to light. The process enhances the natural hues and hand-sculpted surfaces of the floor.

If you're looking for a truly custom flooring presentation, hand-sculpted floors may be just the ticket. While you're at it, be sure to check out the new exotic hand-scraped offerings. Unique grain and color variation coupled with authentic hand-scraping makes exotic hardwood distinctive, original, and guaranteed to be a conversation point in your home.

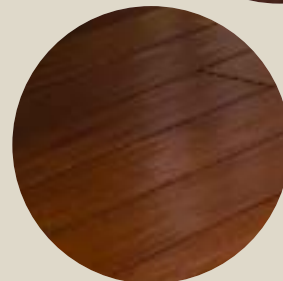
Best of all. They're on their way to a store near you right now! 🏠



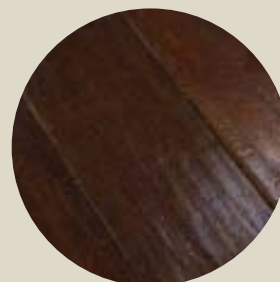
Armagnac Angelim



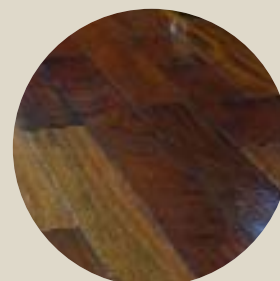
Beaujolais Cherry



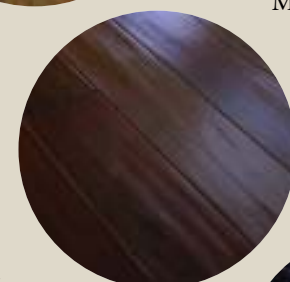
Chianti Cherry



Cognac Angelim



Dolcetto Chestnut.



Malbec Walnut



Shiraz Angelim



FRENCH ACCENTS?

What's the next hot trend for floors, now that we've begun to get used to dark wood flooring again? Sara M. Babinski, principal designer for Armstrong Floor Products, says, "From a visual standpoint, we are beginning to see an emerging trend related to burnt/charred effects. As it relates to flooring and hardwood, it is often called French bleed." The process enables manufacturers to create a new type of distressing with an almost smoky look. Dark and dramatic on dark woods, it is soft and subtle on light, natural woods like yellow birch and maple. The effect may be a brown wash versus black tone. Micro beveled edges pickup the color for a noted delineation from board to board.

▶ Armstrong will debut the Artesian Color-Wash Collection this fall as part of the Robbins® Fine Hardwood Flooring line.

▶ Another more current trend, she says, is "ultra-artisan," and it reflects the resurgence in demand for hand-made and unique. It's a form of sculpting woods, but more subtle. Ends and edges have a soft, pillowed effect with delicate areas of chisel created by hand for a rustic yet refined look. You can find these later this year in the Century Farm Hand-sculpted Collection from Armstrong™ Hardwood Flooring by Hartco®.

▶ "Exotics also continue to be an important interior look, but we as consumers are discovering domestic species other than oak and maple. We like to call these domestic exotics," she said. This would include cherry, yellow birch, walnut and hickory launched just weeks ago as Turlington American Exotics by Bruce® Hardwood Flooring.

Above, Bruce Hardwood Flooring Turlington American Exotics in Walnut 3" Autumn Brown.

<< continued from page 25

Engineered flooring features a top layer of premium wood species bonded to layers of less costly wood backing which reduces the amount of expensive wood needed for the look, and the bonded layering makes it stronger than solid, natural wood. Furthermore, multiple layers make engineered wood more dimensionally stable and less likely to suffer from humidity caused expansion and contraction, so engineered wood can be used in kitchens, bathrooms and below grade installations.

Fall is a wonderful time to think about bringing in some of that outdoor coloring — or choosing a wood floor from amongst all those fall colors — cool yellows, warm reds and neutral umbers.

In addition to remembering that wood has color, it has texture, and that's changing, too.

One form of texturing is called hand-scraped, popular in the traditional species and now showing up in the exotics. (See Page 26.) >>

*Where thou
art, that is
home.*

– Emily Dickinson

woodn't it be nice |



From one end of the spectrum to the other, wood is a fall fashion, from the dark, tailored look of Cassis by Kahrs to the unexpected and delightful mood shift presented by Natural Cork.



Hand-scraped means just that, giving the floor a hand-tooled, personalized look. No two hand-scraped floors can ever look alike; every one will be unique just as if a craftsman had come into your home and carved out the floors for your house.

There's one wood we all know and see every day but rarely, if ever, think of as wood. It's cork. It's new to some, but it's actually a traditional flooring that's been updated with new styles.

Like solid wood, cork can be finished and re-finished, stained, bleached, pickled, painted, etched, inlaid and installed with a border or in any number of patterns. It's available in tile, generally glue-down, or in planks in which cork designs are laminated over a rigid core board, then installed as a floating floor, much like laminate.

Cork is warm and comfortable underfoot, naturally anti-microbial and non-absorbent. It absorbs sound and impact, it's durable and repairable with wood filler. Because cork is flexible, it adjusts for many floor and subfloor imperfections and is flame retardant. >>




CELEBRATE LIFE WITH CORK

Retro yet new

Unexpected yet welcome

Sensuous yet sensible

What could be More NATURAL...
...than the look of CORK or WOOD for your floors?



EXPLORE THE WORLD OF WOOD

Classic to custom

Casual to contemporary

Looks to love

Antique, Distressed, Vintage,
Handscraped

ELEGANCE IN COLOR.

TEXTURE. DESIGN.

Courtesy of Mother Nature with inspira-
tions by Natural Cork and Natural Floors

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woodn't it be nice |

Cork flooring is in the early stages of a renaissance that includes new colors and design stylings the likes of which we've not seen before.

If you want to warm up your home's floors, consider adding a medallion to the room. When adding medallions, the secret lies in the size and placement. Installation these days is quite simple; look for a medallion that can be dropped in one pre-assembled piece into the existing floor, many times in less than an hour. A pattern outline of the medallion is applied to the floor, the section routed out and the new medallion is dropped into the space. Ask for a printed pattern for the floor or create your own, lay it on the floor and see how it looks. Check the dimensions of the inset pieces. Are they pleasing to the eye or are they too small or too large? Small medallions can be obtained for corners; the small sizes are referred to as "trim pieces" and can be used in corners, in the hall, maybe on the edge of your carpet runner. 🍷



Today's wood means thinking outside the box. Top right is bamboo by Teragren in a clean, contemporary setting. At right, this room takes on a whole new personality simply by dropping in Anderson Hardwood Floors' Treasure Chest Della Medallion, above.



FINISHING TOUCHES MAKE A HOUSE A HOME

Pretty much every element of flooring has found its way into the light of fashion, including those formerly utilitarian and so easily overlooked necessities we called floor registers.

We know what they're for, now we know what they can be, now that they've gone upscale.

From Decor Grates® Incorporated headquartered in Toronto comes a fashion palette of registers for the floor (and walls and ceilings, too, if you wish). They're intended to replace virtually any standard-size utility type originally installed by a contractor and to give the fashionable floor some extra style.

The line includes materials like oak, maple, bamboo, cherry and birch, and architectural metals such as solid brass, painted and plated steel, brushed nickel, chrome and oil rubbed bronze. Styles include traditional louvers, scrollwork, geometrics, art deco even the arts-and-crafts look.

The damper boxes are rust proof and faceplates are oversized to help ensure immediate, do-it-yourself installation and complete coverage. Products all have a lifetime warranty, and an average home installation of 15 registers is about \$300.

As with the company's metal Art Craft-Tiles for floor and backsplash accents, Decor Grates are intended as coordinating fashions to bring together often overlooked design opportunities like coordinating with cabinetry and furniture hardware. 🏠



Complete the look. Accessorize! ...with Decor Grates®

For the best-dressed, style is all about accessorizing.

Same goes for the well-dressed floor.

Why hide those floor registers? Dress them up with Decor Grates®! Fine woods and architectural metals. In 12 patterns, 30 finishes and all standard sizes.

Think of them as jewelry to complement your floor's new outfit.

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