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NO. 28, 2011

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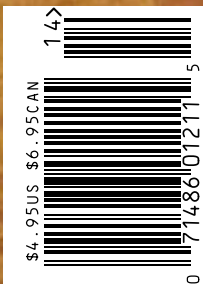
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Plus

**READER'S TOP
DESIGN PICKS OF 2010**



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Carpet featured: New Sensation, Horizon™ Collection. *Independent Brandware study, 2010

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Welcome to the Winter 2011 issue of
FABULOUS FLOORS, A Consumer Magazine

On the cover: Carlisle Cherry comes exclusively from Pennsylvania, where outstanding examples of this hardwood are sustainably harvested.

DEPARTMENTS

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New beginnings. What better place to start than with carpet? The trend is far from boring neutrals; rather, carpet's new beginnings are all about texture and pattern.

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Again, our readers have spoken! They love the flooring products we feature, along with the creative interiors derived from them. Their top picks of 2010.

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Want to know more about any type of flooring or get information about any advertiser? Let us know what you need. Plus, get your own subscription to FABULOUS FLOORS.

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Maison Oak from the Supreme Grande Collection by Kahrs.

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This passion begins with a mix of reverence for wood and for the heritage of wood flooring in America. Explore Carlisle Wide Plank Floors with us.

20 EXPRESS YOURSELF IN WOOD

Ever wanted a unique floor but were anxious about the cost or complication? From Mannington, new ideas in wood take shape with Earthly Elements.

28 WOOD LOOKS IN DURABLE PORCELAIN TILE

Wood Impressions in Porcelain Stone® Tile from Crossville® is a new twist on traditional wood flooring styles for residential and commercial applications

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What does it mean to be green? In flooring, "green" gets interesting because it means so many different things... natural, recyclable, recycled, long-lived...

62 NEW DIMENSIONS

After we've established the foundation of our décor with our floor, it's time to turn our attention to our walls, where things are always looking up.

66 LAMINATE AND ACOUSTICAL UNDERLAYMENT

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A new year. A new décor. Beautiful wool carpet makes a quality luxury choice that offers outstanding comfort and resilience and superb appearance retention.

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A wool-buyer's resource guide

80 DEBUNKING COMMON FLOOR CARE MISCONCEPTIONS

"There are a lot of misconceptions about floor care that lead to premature deterioration," says Tom Sullivan, founder of Lumber Liquidators.



It's that time of year when we all seem to reflect on the past and look forward to what the future will bring. We count our blessings: healthy families, food to nourish us, and homes that shelter us and bring us comfort in many ways. Our homes are where we gather together for the holidays, celebrate special occasions, and entertain family and friends. They are more than simple dwellings made up of various rooms; they are special places in which we have watched our children grow, listened to our parents share stories, learned of our heritage, and continue to make the memories that sustain us throughout our lives.



With your values, experiences, design tastes and creative touch, you create the home. But that's so much easier when the professionals you work with have the same values you do — and value your home as much as they do their own. Take Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, a 42-year-old family-owned company. Carlisle's promise? "One board at a time, one project at a time, one customer at a time." Isn't that the way service and products should be? **Take a look at the Carlisle story on Pages 18 and 19. I think you'll be impressed.**

Be sure to browse through our "Designer's Walk" section beginning on page 50 and see what our readers believe to be the top 2010 design picks. They chose based on what they feel would turn their houses into homes.

Consider what sustains us — and not only us in our special places, our individual homes — but also our planet. Think about what "green" means to you (natural, recycled, recyclable, easy-clean, long-lasting products?) as you read "Go Green" (Pages 56–61).

Many wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year from the Fabulous Floors Magazine team!

Kind regards,

Deborah Ann Funk

FABULOUS floors™

2011 No.28

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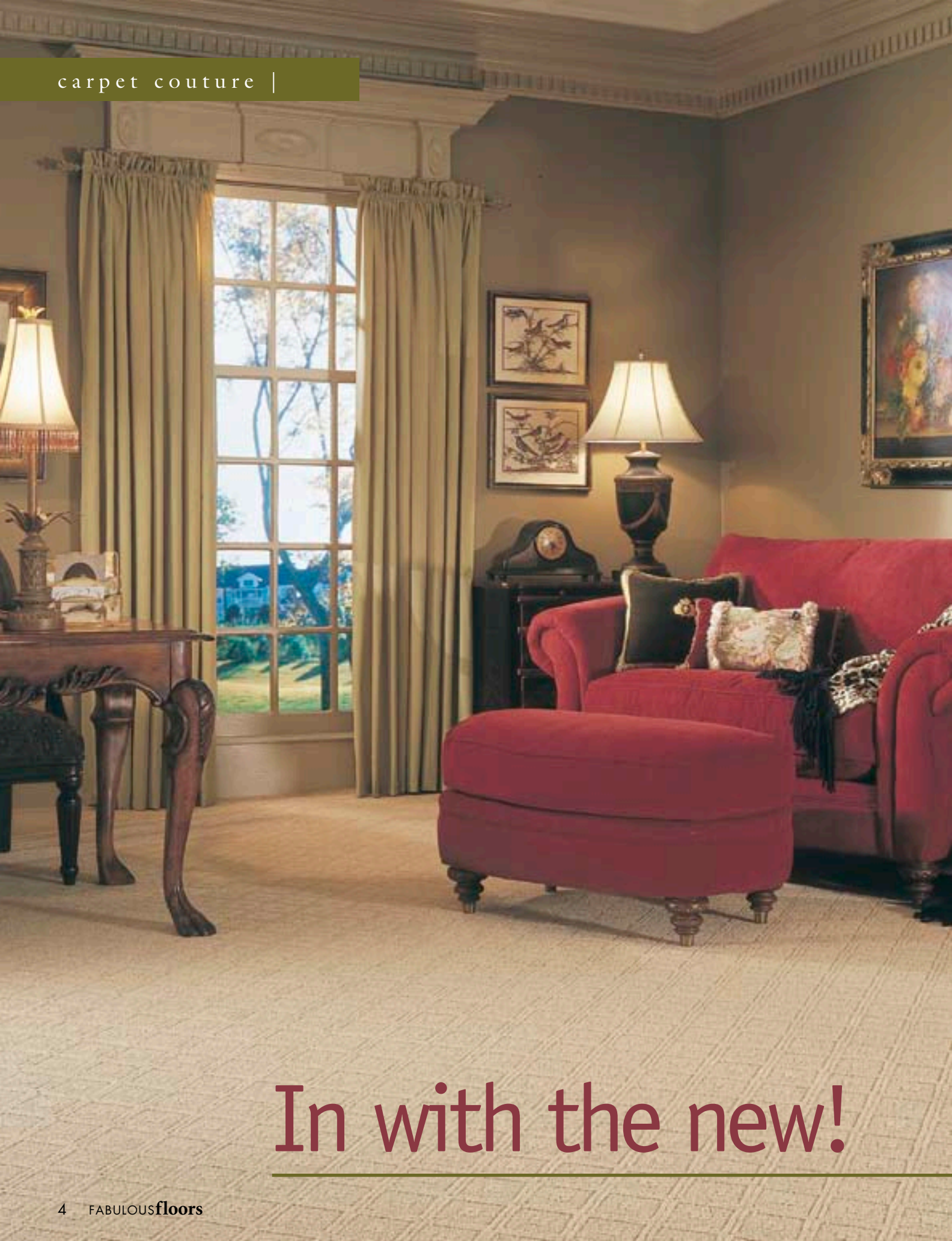


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In with the new!



BY LISBETH CALANDRINO



New Year. New England. New looks...

The one thing each has in common is that the new builds on the old, just as each year builds on the past. The theme of this issue is “new beginnings.” That implies a legacy, a past, an opportunity to move on to more and better things. New things....

When you think of it, flooring in general, and carpet specifically, illustrates that point. Just look at the fashions, colors and styles that constantly evolve, plus the evolutionary (if not revolutionary) advancements made in technologies like carpet fibers and yarns, backings, surface treatments and unsung but important carpet-related products like cushion. (For more on the importance of cushion, see Page 68).

Before you begin to explore the world of carpet, know this: The trend for the foreseeable future is not beige, and it's not boring. Today's carpet features far more texture and pattern.

This can be achieved both visually, as with color and weave, and actually, using yarn height and twist and sculpted effects for interest, or flecks or strands of color. (Even the traditional “neutrals” are going in for this look, which also provides subtle shadings across the room.)

>>

Good design begins from the floor up! Textured cut and loop geometric shapes combined with subtle color ways provide a strong foundation for these two gathering areas as shown opposite, Mackinac from Fabrica, and below, Details, Details from Shaw.



In with 2011 colors, too!

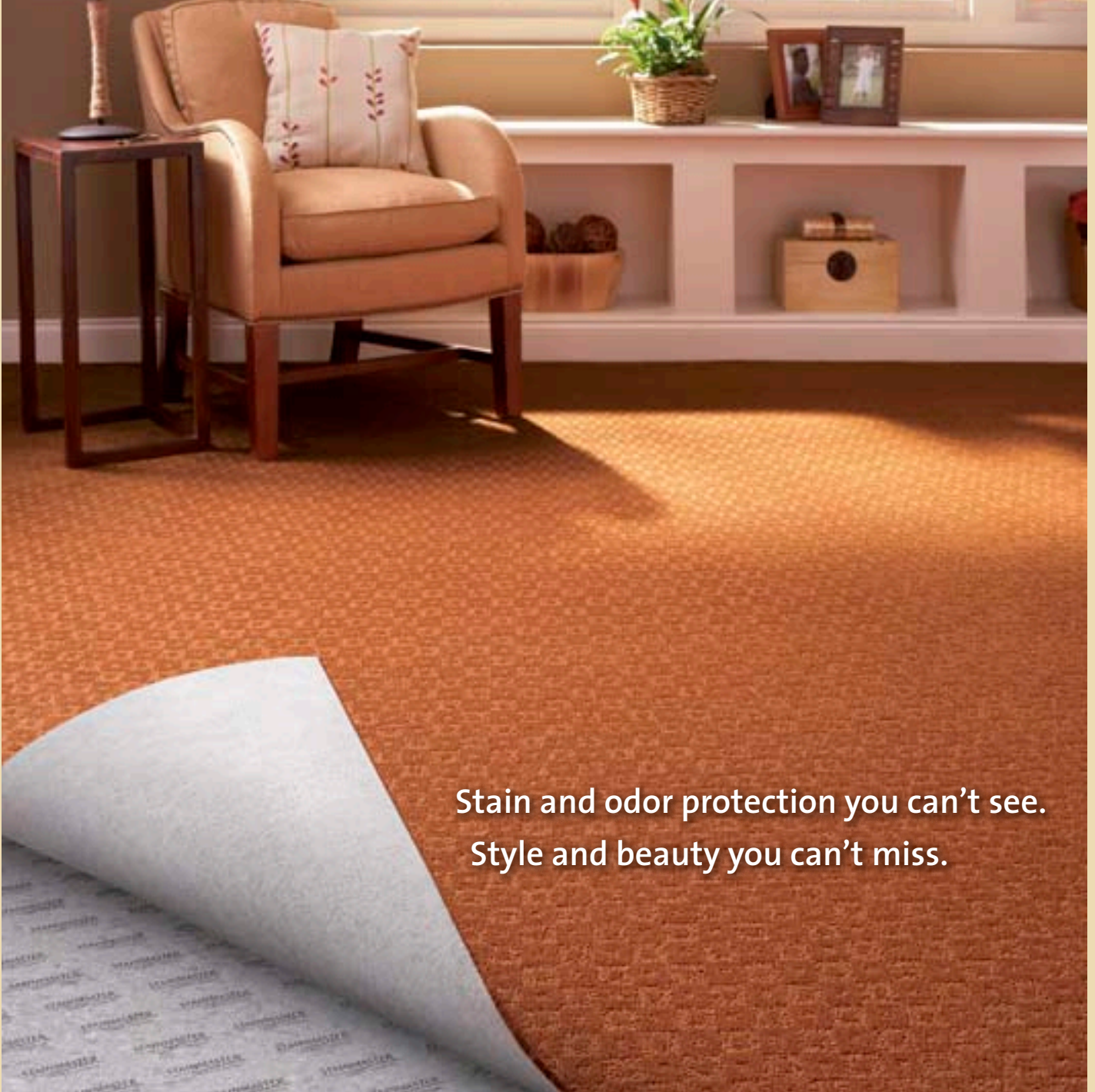
Speaking of neutral colors, they aren't what they used to be, boring beige. These days, and for 2011 going forward, neutrals are actually colors and variations which allow for extremely broad interior design interpretations. Start to think in subtle shades of icy or navy blue (yes, navy will work with colors ranging from cool yellows to warm oranges to grays). Or, there is universal khaki (khaki means sand or a dusty earth-color), soft yellows and creams, marble (featuring multiple, rich hues), soft and pewter grays, and a cottony, not glaring, white.

One of the buzz phrases you may hear is "layered color," which means the combination of the visual and actual pattern and textures. If you are ever in doubt about the coming trendy colors in home decorating, see what's hot in women's clothing fashion. You can be sure those colors are en route to designer décor for your home.

For the past three years or so, texture and design have been making major strides in popularity. Look at the myriad carpet styles in florals, traditional and modern geometrics, even huge, flowing, contemporary designs. By now, you should be thinking garden shapes like leaves and flowers, butterflies and animal patterns, plus familiar looks like swirls, bows, plaids, pin dots, fleurs-de-lis and, yes, paisley (which is making a major comeback!). >>

Carpet is warm underfoot and invitingly quiet. It offers an array of sensations to the touch, as in this example called By The Sea, in color 713, a ComfortSoft® XL premium nylon and part of the UltraTouch® Collection, available only at CarpetsPlus Color Tile®. At right: Luxuriant Grounds in color Bittersweet from Custom Weave.





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CARPENTER

Why is this talk of pattern and texture so important?

With carpet as the foundation of your design, it's time to let the fun begin! Make a statement with bold patterns like Mystical Zebra from the Skins II Collection of Exotics from Helios, below, or the textured patternings of North Slope constructed of Stainmaster® nylon, part of the CarpetsPlus Color Tile® Stainmaster Design Gallery.

First, it means that you can have the look you want now. A personal statement in a floor that will make a statement either as a focal point or as a backdrop for your design scheme.

Second (and notice this yourself next time you are in someone's home featuring patterns and textures), the plain facts of the matter are that the look lends itself to a variety of looks and actually increases the perceived value of the carpet.

As the world gets smaller, we see the growing influence of other cultures on interior design. Think of carpet as an expression of multiculturalism. Look and you will find a fascinating world of competing influences in today's carpet. Look and touch and experience the feel of chenilles, damasks, jacquards and tapestries.

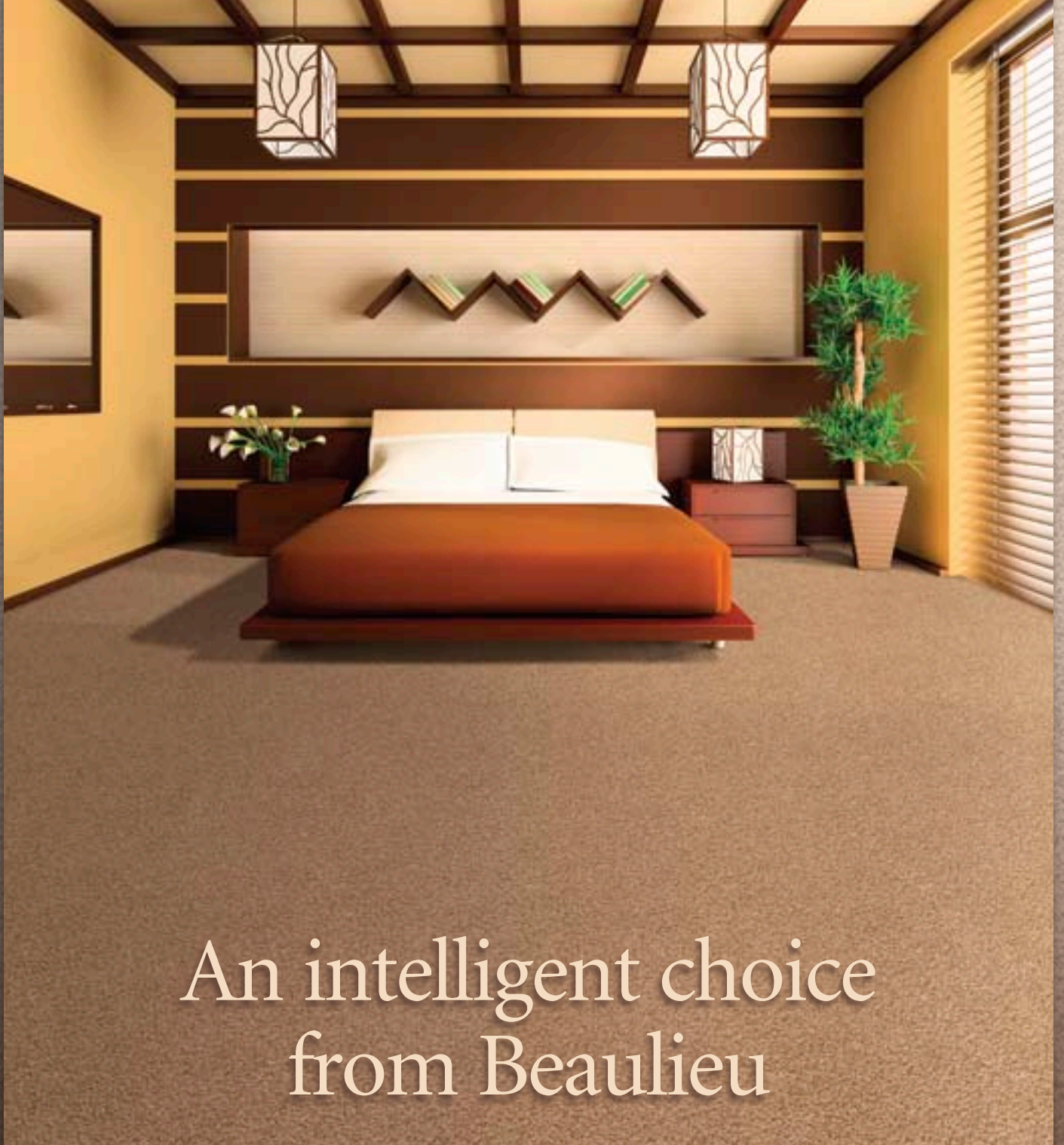
Beyond culture, we need to think of what appeals to us in terms of history. Carpet offers that, too. Victorian. Colonial. Contemporary. Primitive. Everything from Greek Revival retro looks ranging from early America to the 50s and 60s.

That's why, as we've said before...

"Carpet provides a sensuous and inviting design foundation, the perfect complement to today's design trends toward greater color, eclectic elements, cultural fusions, and the juxtaposition of deeply textured fabrics with sleek glass, polished stone and gleaming wood elements." >>



As the world gets smaller, we see the growing influence of other cultures on interior design.



An intelligent choice from Beaulieu

If you want a “blissfully-ever-after” look in carpet for your home, look at Bliss Tuscan from Beaulieu’s Bliss HealthyTouch™ Best Collection.

It’s stunning to look at. Pictures hardly do it justice. It comes in 12 designer colors. Plus, it’s seriously soft. And it comes with the Beaulieu® Lifetime “No Exclusions” Stain Warranty.

This carpet is made with Beaulieu’s 100 percent SoftSense™ polyester filament fiber. With it you get 20-year wear, texture retention, fade resistance and manufacturer’s defect warranties.

The best part is that with all these features and benefits, Beaulieu says that for 60 days you can “Love it, or we’ll take it back.”

From the Bliss HealthyTouch™ Collection: Bliss Tuscan.



Because designers and consumers are increasingly sensitive to visual texture, they often begin with carpet and its density or pattern, as seen in Style Creation in color Cashmere, a Weardated carpet from Wunda Weve's Stylish Choice Collection, at left. Below, in a classic trellis pattern, Longfellow's graceful details and watercolor shading invoke the charm of an English country estate. Made of a superior quality wool blend, Longfellow offers beauty and practicality in eight delightful colorways.



Let's talk carpet technology. Science has given us incredible new textures with unparalleled softness. Mixing fibers like high-end wools with accents of satiny nylon creates enhanced dimension and complex luster. Combined tufting and dyeing technologies have created uniquely elegant patterns, textures and patinas — all with astonishing softness.

Want to know more? In addition to incredibly soft yet durable fibers, manufacturers have created amazing new fibers and yarns from recycled materials, like Mohawk's EverStrand made from plastic soft drink bottles or super-tough SmartStrand® with DuPont™ Sorona® which will literally stand up to a herd of elephants.

Plus...let's not forget fiber treatments and systems like brawny, brainy Stainmaster™, which, as the name implies, keeps your favorite new carpet style looking, well...new. 🐾

Isn't that what's new is all about?



Backing 'green' with green carpet backing

We've written many times how carpet backing is critical to the life of your carpet because it's actually the carpet's foundation. And we've said so many times that going green is personal, because it's all about the ways in which you choose to go green.

From Southwind Carpet Mills in Dalton, GA, comes EnviroCel™ Home, carpet backing with a host of green attributes, any number of which should appeal to today's consumer. It's an eco-friendly polyurethane carpet backing available on select carpets. Proven in commercial and hospitality settings, it's now available for residential interiors.

According to the manufacturer, it's green because it...

- Extends the life of your carpet
- Reduces matting, raveling and snagging
- Improves air quality
- Reduces noise levels
- Features insulating properties
- Stands up to moisture

And it's...

- Made of renewable and recycled materials (more than 50% "green" by weight)
- Manufactured with post-consumer, recycled PET plastic
- Said to replace more than 90 percent of petro-based polymers with a bio-based polymer derived from domestically grown soybeans
- Based on a patent-pending fiber extrusion process that delivers increased flexibility and strength

For more information, visit www.southwindcarpet.com



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woodn't it be nice |

What's new with wood...? Everything!

Wood flooring is a natural choice for a new look whether you're building new or making over your home.

First there's the environment. From the day your floor starts as a tree to the day it re-enters the eco cycle some 200 years or so later, wood flooring is about as eco-friendly as you can get. >>

There is an increasing demand for the distinctive looks offered by exotic species with their sumptuous range of colors, grains and textures as featured in Kahrs Doussie Strip Studio Collection, shown at right. In the background is Columbia's Amelia hardwood, an enchanting 5"-wide hardwood resembling early plank flooring that was sculpted by hand. Available from CarpetsPlus Color Tile.



Unique... Unmistakable...
Subtly beautiful. Midnight Embers Vintage Crossfire™ from Anderson is all this and more. The rich maple colors, wide width and subtle cross-grain sculpted texture add dimension and depth to your room while flowing across lifestyles to look perfect with any décor.



Most important, however, is the look of wood.

woodn't it be nice |



Wood represents the timeless beauty of nature. The detail is exquisite and the sophistication is incomparable, as shown in Armstrong's Locking Hardwood Merbau Natural.

From traditional American hardwoods like oak and maple to “American exotics” like hickory, to international exotics like ipe, African wenge and Brazilian cherry arriving at our shores every day, wood floors continue to expand our palette options.

As you plan your new look, consider that wood isn't just a boring brown foundation for your home. Explore a very broad range of wood colors — reds, blues, yellows, oranges and browns — which span the three décor moods of cool, warm and neutral.

Because wood floors are available as solid or engineered and in a host of widths and thicknesses, colors and super-tough finishes — even new snap-together varieties — there just has to be a floor for you. >>



Hardwood floors are a timeless treasure. They can add beauty and character to any room of your home, as shown above in Pebble Hill Hickory from Shaw. Hickory, with its inherent strength and durability, warms rooms with its rich grain and hand-scraped texture. Below: Defy your expectations with the distinct look that comes from woods like Bellawood Select Brazilian Cherry Prefinished Solid Flooring with 50-year warranty.



Most of us know solid wood flooring; individual planks formed precisely from a single piece of selected species. Engineered, on the other hand, is fabricated using multiple plies of wood. The layers provide incredible strength and broaden the application of your wood floor into areas not hospitable to many solids. The fact that the top layer is comprised of the species of your choice means two things: first, that some unusual looks can be at home anywhere in YOUR home; and second, that each piece of raw material yields far more square feet of wood flooring.

Wood floors can last 100 years or more, with proper care. Talk about a long-term, environmentally friendly investment! Below: Bruce Hardwood American Treasures 3¼" Plank — Frontier Shadow.



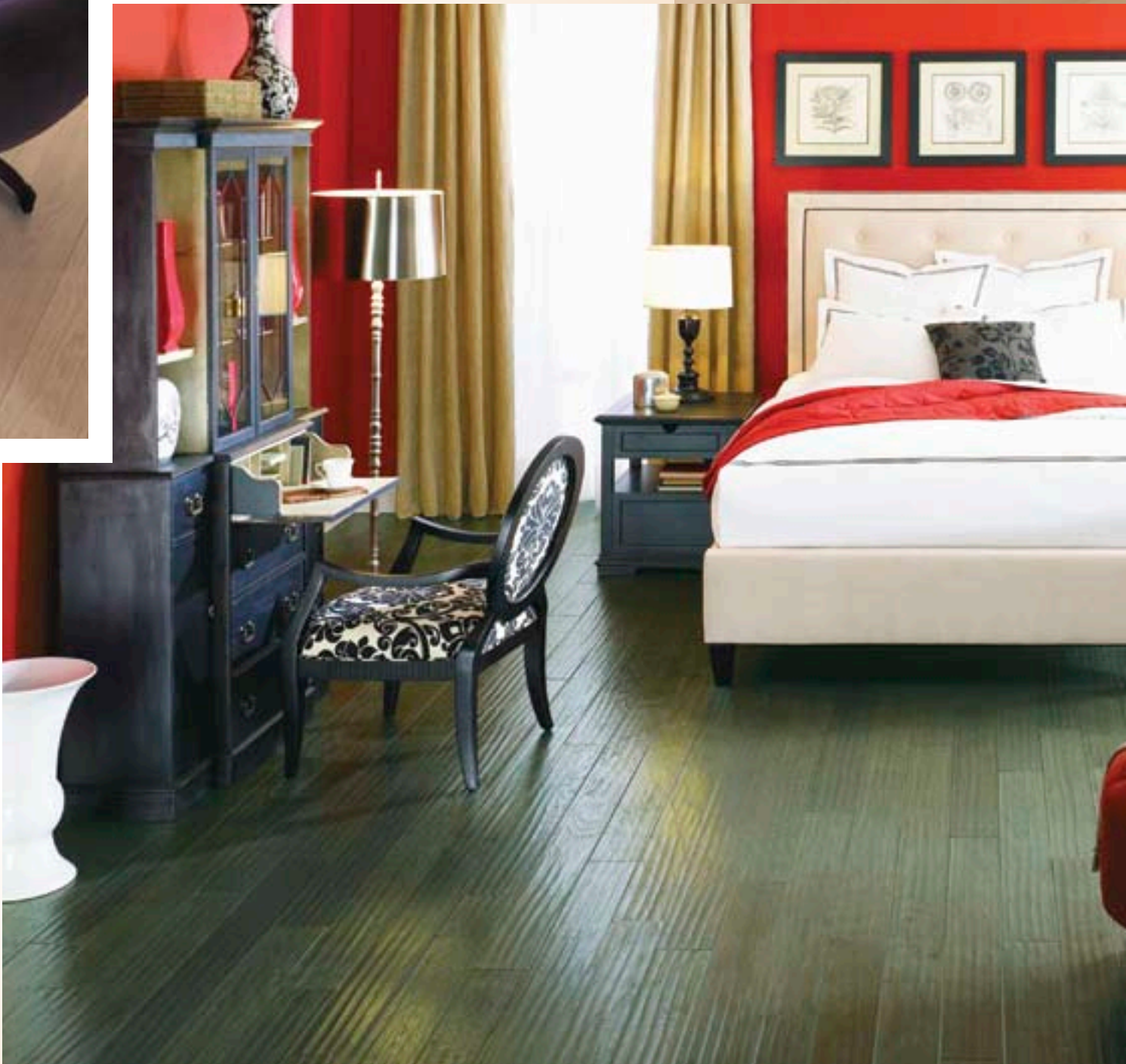
Red Oak Isla from the Alive Series from Mirage as a lightly brushed and textured surface.



Want a unique as well as a new look? Because wood is a natural product, no two pieces ever look the same; it just can't happen. Combine that with the fact that wood can be fabricated into different widths and shapes and the many ways in which you can install your floor, not to mention that it can be refinished and re-colored, and it's no wonder that as old as wood is as a flooring, it's always new. 🍷

Below: BrandyMill in color Hickory Charcoal from Mohawk offers plenty of personality to match your own style.

Explore a very broad range of wood colors — reds, blues, yellows, oranges and browns . . .



Below: Antique Heart Pine's classic, rich, orange, amber and pumpkin hues are complemented by occasional nail holes, worm-holes, saw kerfs and watermarks to create a gorgeous one-of-a-kind floor. This is the wood that built America, and is today reclaimed from factories, warehouses and other old buildings throughout the East and Southeast.



BY SAMANTHA LUEDER

“It all begins with a passion for the wood...”

Carlisle FSC Antique Reclaimed Oak Flooring (www.wideplankflooring.com/our-wood-our-craft/detail/fsc-antique-reclaimed-oak/), Tongue and Groove.

There's far more to Carlisle Wide Plank Wood Floors than a passion for wood.

The story begins nearly a half century ago when founder Dale Carlisle, builder of classic homes (those old New England center-chimney colonials, saltboxes and traditional capes), found a common thread among America's early homes. Wide plank wood floors! Wanting them for the homes he built and restored, Dale wanted to recreate the authentic wide plank floors of our heritage.

That was the beginning of a Carlisle family business. Since that time Carlisle has produced some of the finest restoration and reproduction wood floors in the world, including what's believed to be the oldest home still standing in America, the Jethro Coffin house on Nantucket off the coast of Massachusetts.

The family takes pride in two things. There is the science of the trees, knowing to select only the best wood from the center of the tree for flooring. Then, of course, there is the art of crafting such floors. At Carlisle, each plank is actually handcrafted individually. That way, these floors are destined from birth to become not only a custom, one-of-a-kind floor but also a treasured family heirloom capable of lasting 200 years or more.

As far as respecting nature goes, it needs to be said that Carlisle has been living the "green" life far before it was fashionable, from practicing fully sustainable forest management practices to reclaiming used wood products to recycling byproducts to its own custom-created stains and topcoats which use virtually no VOCs. The company is devoted to state-of-the-art milling tools designed to create minimal waste and to keeping smaller family mills open and running to ensure a true, all-American flooring product. The Carlisle company says, "Each board we recycle has been procured, manufactured and distributed in accordance with the highest internationally accepted standards."

In pine, you can find Eastern White Pine flooring from 6 to 20 inches wide and Longleaf Heart Pine from Alabama from 4 to 17 inches, both in lengths up to 11 feet. From the small sawmills of New England, the upper Midwest, the Ohio River Valley and portions of the Appalachians where trees grow slowly to their maximum heights and circumferences and make for tighter, denser grains, come some of America's finest hardwoods for flooring: Ash, Birch, Cherry, Hickory, Maple, Walnut, Red Oak and White Oak. And the reclaimed woods make you proud to be an American....

You can visit the Carlisle Design Centers at company headquarters in Stoddard, NH, or at designer centers in Chicago, Denver, Washington DC and West Hollywood. Or, visit www.wideplankflooring.com for other outlets and to experience Carlisle's passion for wood. 🏡

Top right: Hickory is one of Nature's toughest woods with a tensile strength that rivals steel. It is also one of nature's most beautiful woods. Cabinetmakers in particular have long admired its striking, contrasting patterns of clear yellow and rich brown heartwood. These same qualities also make a natural hickory floor nothing short of breathtaking — a bold one-of-a-kind statement that commands attention in any formal or informal setting.



Prized by woodworkers for centuries, there is no other wood quite like walnut. Its rich, dark chocolate color, purplish overtones and complex, swirling grain patterns make it a rare and spectacular flooring choice whether left natural or stained. The fluid nature of walnut's grain makes a dynamic statement that seems to be ever-changing.

New ways to truly “express yourself” in wood

Who says you have to follow some rule or other when it comes to wood flooring for your home?

Why not express your unique, personal sense of style and self? Try this. It's called “Earthly Elements” from Mannington, and it's a whole new idea in hardwood flooring that's taking shape, literally and figuratively.

Simply stated, this innovative concept lets you design your wood floor with endless artistic freedom by using two new shapes, squares and rectangles, along with traditional planks. It's the step-by-step process that yields the ultimate in personal design flexibility.

Here's how it works.

- **Step 1.** Start as a designer would, by mixing and/or matching from a palette of eight nature-inspired colors in textures of oak or hickory.
- **Step 2.** Choose a pattern, one of five layouts that will achieve that custom look you crave.
- **Step 3.** Using squares, rectangles and coordinating planks, create the wood floor of your dreams.

From the energetic look of a pinwheel design to the sophisticated modern look of a hand-fabricated subway tile look, Earthly Elements means you can not only dream, but also do.

For more information, visit www.mannington.com and click on Earthly Elements. 🏡





Opposite: Using coordinating planks as a border, this checkerboard layout forms a "rug" that creates a sitting area and adds color to the room. Shown in Ebony and Pearl. This page: A fresh take on a traditional pattern, the weave layout is popular in textiles with its never-goes-out-of-style look. The weave is perfectly at home in any room; combine colors to add dimension and visual interest to any space. Shown in Cumin. For more information, visit www.mannington.com or call the customer service phone at 1-800-FLOOR-US.

How personal!

Whether it's ceramic, porcelain, stone, glass or mosaic, tile is a beautiful, durable, practical and elegant product. (You can also find tile in metal like aluminum, rubber and other materials, too.)

When installed in your home, a tile motif can become the quintessential custom design element for floors, walls, counters and more. Why? Because tile comes in an endless variety of textures, patterns and glazes in numerous sizes. Thus, combinations are as mind-boggling as they are inspiring! Simply changing some accent tiles can create an all-new look.

If you've made up your mind to buy or to at least explore tile because it appeals to your sense of style and lifestyle, learn what makes this a unique décor element for your floor. >>

Below: Experience the timeless beauty of Travertine tile and stone in looks from Shaw that range from rustic to contemporary. The Fortaleza collection will make your home the height of fashion with stunning styles. Background: Wood Impressions in Black Walnut from Crossville.



Create comfort with an urban charm!
Downtown from Villeroy and Boch features
slate-look tiles in gray and anthracite that are
made of polished vitrified porcelain stone-
ware with a sleek metal look.



First, as we've said, tile delivers tremendous flexibility of design, especially when you factor in trim and accent pieces and the fact that you can mix tile with any other flooring media. Use carpet as an inset to tile, or vice versa. Mixed media is very trendy in flooring.

Designers and pros in the tile industry will advise you to focus on the space you want to use tile. Discuss with your dealer the application of the type of tile in which you are interested.

Not all tile is created equal. For example, wall tile is not always made to stand up to the rigors of life on the floor. Similarly and generally speaking, porcelain tile can be used indoors and out and in virtually any environment, making it an ideal solution if you want your space to flow to an outdoor patio. Standard ceramic tile cannot. >>



Bathing in details! From American Olean is Alysse in Blanc 13" x 13" field tile shown in a diamond pattern on this floor, 10" x 13" wall field tile shown with Designer Elegance Botticino 3½" x 8" shelf rail and 3" x 12" spiral swag accent.



Far left: This unique ceramic mosaic 8" x 12" tile called Trento Damasco from Porcelanosa provides an abstract addition to any room. Used best as an accent piece, this tile comes in several colors: moka, nacar, naranja, oceano and marmol. Left: TAU draws on the splendour and magnificence of the past in its Colonna marble collection. The Colonna collection is timeless, majestic, beautiful and as eternal as the material by which it is directly inspired: the noble material used in the piazza of the same name in Rome, best-known for the majestic column of Marcus Aurelius which towers over it.

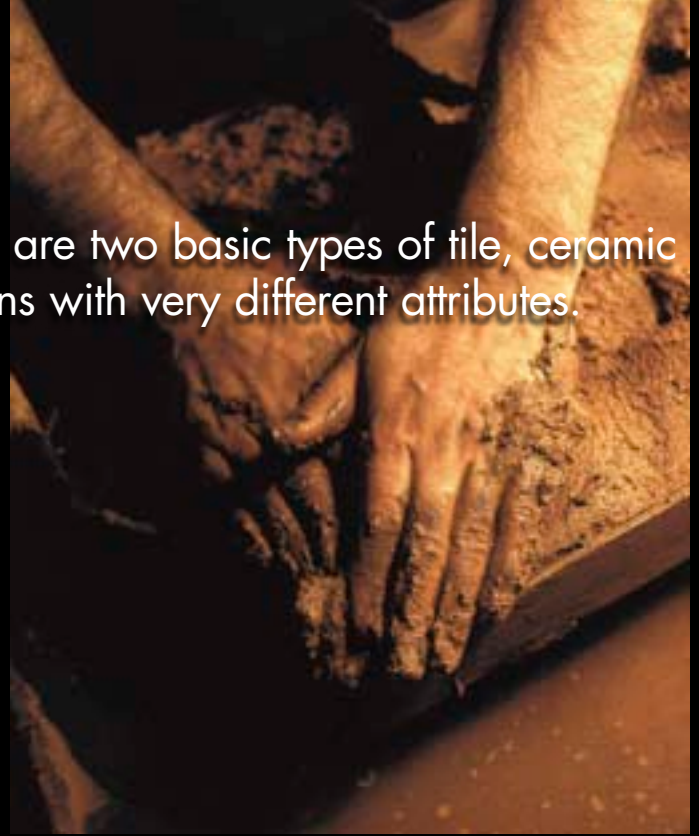


Paying attention to detail, this sitting area from Daltille reflects a retreat full of luxury and soothing moments.

At this point, you need to know there are two basic types of tile, ceramic and porcelain. They're actually cousins with very different attributes.

Ceramic tile is defined broadly as a formed and baked clay product, usually finished with a decorative glass glazed surface. The technique has been in use for thousands of years.

Porcelain tiles are a modernized version, typically made from different, denser clay materials and baked at very high temperatures and lower water absorption rates than traditional ceramic tile, making them tougher and generally frost resistant, though not always. There also are some non-porcelain tiles that can be used in freeze-thaw environments. There are both glazed and unglazed porcelain tiles. Some people favor glazed versions, stating that they are a tad easier to clean. Others say porcelain tiles may be more slip resistant. >>



Through-Body Porcelain Floor & Wall Formations, a new line by Florida Tile, combines modern style with an impeccable eye for detail. The color palette lends itself well to a transitional or contemporary decorating style. Formations includes a complete selection of mosaics, listellos and inserts. Formations is so durable, it is ADA compliant and can be used for both residential and commercial settings.



Guess Who's Coming To Dinner.

Florida Tile invites you to take the time to sit back and reflect on your space; interior or exterior and admire the beauty and the possibilities that can be. We offer a full line of floor and wall tiles as well as natural stone and decorative elements to complete any look. As a leader in the production of environmentally conscious ceramic wall and porcelain floor products, we recycle millions of gallons of water and tons of material a year in our Lawrenceburg, KY factory. All in all, we produce a finished product that is both beautiful and responsible. Visit one of our Florida Tile locations for more information.

PRISTINE BY
floridatile
www.floridatile.com

Check with your retailer or the manufacturer. Another thing you may need to know is the expression "through-body porcelain tile." This merely means that the tile's main color goes all the way through the tile, which tends not to show wear.

There is a new process called High Definition Porcelain, which uses a proprietary digital glaze printing to deliver incredible visual interest to each tile piece, and other mechanical techniques which deliver the look of true stone, complete with shade variations and a sense of movement in porcelain, only generally much tougher and more cost-effective.

*Designer
hint:
large
spaces
beg for
large tile.*

Introducing... Wood Impressions in Porcelain Stone® Tile

There's a new twist on the traditional appeal of wood flooring fashions for both residential and commercial applications.

From Crossville® comes Wood Impressions, which combines the look and popular dimensions of wood with the superior durability of Porcelain Stone® tile.

Crossville offers Wood Impressions in six wood-inspired hues (Willow, Birch, Barnwood Gray, Gunstock, Brazilian Cherry and Black Walnut) and a variety of designable sizes and shapes — 6" x 36", 6" x 18", 3" x 18" and 6" x 12" planks, 6" x 6" field tiles plus 3" x 3" mosaics and a 3" x 18" bullnose — which add to design flexibility and one's personal expression.-

For more information, visit www.crossvilleinc.com.



At right: Wood Impressions from Crossville in Barnwood Gray makes it hard to believe it's not Wood! Pictured here, close-up, Wood Impressions in Black Walnut from Crossville.

Once you know the basics, next, of course, it's all about the **WHAT** of tile, then its color and shade, texture and size.

Here's the truly fun, personal part. Work with a designer or dream a bit about a layout or pattern, factoring in trim and decorative patterns plus grout, which can be matching, coordinating or contrasting. Designer hint: Large spaces beg for large tile. If you like a tailored look, explore "rectified" tile, that is, pieces with near-perfect edges which allow for grout-free, butted edges. >>

Mixing it up with, at right, Cardenas from Mohawk, and below, VitraArt Harmony & Tranquil, a new series of glass tile mosaics by Florida Tile. Featuring some of the hottest color trends that are out today, combined in a variety of size and shape combinations that truly epitomize modern style with an impeccable eye for detail. The color palette lends itself well to transitional or contemporary decorating tastes.



Much of today's ceramic and porcelain tile offerings are designed with the look and feel of natural stone in mind, and along with that color and textures which further expand your design-ability with tile. As you explore "your look," check the tile to see what the shade variation is. It can be a consistent color yet with shade and texture variations from low to very high.

Glazed Porcelain called Parasio from Daltile provides a solid and elegant foundation for this sunny gathering place.



If green, or environmental responsibility, is an issue, tile can fit the bill, and in the way YOU define it. First, most ceramic tile is made of natural materials, like clay and silica for the glass glazing. It is easy to clean and keep healthy, making tile a longstanding choice in medical facilities. And top-name manufacturers are adding increasing amounts of recycled content to their ceramic and glass tile products. 🌱



Above: Egyptian Stone from Mohawk in this grid pattern gives a feeling of upscale chic in this modern kitchen setting. At right: Metals collage from Crossville.



At Left: The Pedralbes series from Tile of Spain branded manufacturer Ticsa Ceramica creates the lines and feel of yesteryear with unique and inspiring designs that give way to an enchanting grand entrance. This authentic, rustic 24" x 24" tile accentuates areas demanding classic Spanish Colonial style. The Polis series by Tile of Spain branded manufacturer Pamesa offers a range of red body ceramic floor and wall tiles in formats 12.4" x 17.5", 12.4" x 23.6", 17.7" x 17.7", 12.4" x 12.4".





High-style design and premium performance — Elegant Expressions by Pergo has it all. Featuring AccuWood Textures™, satin gloss finishes and narrow format, with the look and feel of authentic hardwood. With new ScratchGard Advanced™ surface protection and thicker premium core, the Elegant Expressions collection is entirely worry free.

BY RICHARD HOWLAND

Something old...



At Right:
Jatoba Rustic
Natural from
the American
Home
Elite Plank
Collection from
Bruce Laminate
adds a touch
of charm to this
busy country
kitchen!

Laminate flooring is a bit like a good marriage. In this case we are talking of the marriage of fashion and technology. And like a truly good marriage, things get better and more durable over time.

Today's laminate looks and construction are a far cry from the early days (only 15 years ago!) when this new flooring type called laminate found its way to the US from Europe, where it had gained a following among homeowners and designers looking for practical, fashionable solutions.

Laminate flooring, now celebrating its Silver Anniversary as a mainstream flooring type, is first and foremost about the look. Next, it is about durability. Then it is the technology, the lamination technique, which gives this floor covering its strength.

Laminate is a manufactured product in the true image of hardwood flooring, natural stone, tile and many other types of flooring. The amazing resemblances are due to how laminate is made.

>>

something new...

The World Floor Covering Association says about laminate flooring, “think of a four-layer cake.”

The bottom layer, usually of melamine plastic, provides dimensional stability to the planks and protects against moisture from the subfloor. Next is a core board, generally made from high-density fiber board or particle board, often from recycled or what was formerly considered to be materials like wood fibers. Then comes the image or decorative layer which provides the fashion look of wood, tile, stone, etc. On top is the wear layer for durability and stain resistance.

You may ask yourself, “Why laminate?” The answers are many. The most important thing to remember as you explore the new world of laminate is that there is something new coming all the time.

Laminate flooring accommodates virtually any look in your home and can be used in virtually any room, too! Even below grade. Think of where you’d want the surprising, quality look of authentic wood or natural stone or ageless tile.

Laminate flooring can cost less than other types, but not always, given some specialty items. Where the value comes in, other than the look and durability of laminate, is the speed and ease of snap-together installation, even if you want a custom look, such as a herringbone pattern or the look of mixed media, such as wood with tile. >>

At right: A floor with character is the first step to a beautiful home. Sierra Oak 2757, from the Formica Flooring Special Value 12mm line, fits the bill and comes with a 20-year warranty. Far right top: Past and present meet: Can you believe it’s not wood? Look again — it’s laminate. Carrolton in color Wheat Oak Strip from Mohawk.





This refined look is achieved with Exotics Santos Mahogany from Armstrong Laminate.



It's laminate, but the look of wood never goes out of style. Notice how Fountain Head Lake in Center Hill Walnut from Shaw gives a feeling of solitude to this gathering space.

From a design standpoint, laminate works well in new construction or home makeovers because it goes with so many styles and colors.



Laminate can even be installed over many existing floors. Think of what you can do with the warm, cool or neutral tones offered by laminate.

Just like carpet and other forms of flooring, laminate delivers texture in two ways. First, there the visual texture of the laminate design. Next, there is the actual texture in some cases of laminates that have the look of hand-scraped wood, for example, or the dimpled surface of quarried stone. Finally, there is the texture of the actual laminate pieces themselves, achieved by plank, tile, even parquet looks.

Laminate is practical, too. The fact that it is a hard surface makes it easy to clean and maintain with sweeping, dusting and a simple damp mop or manufacturer-approved cleaner. Laminate flooring doesn't need to be waxed or refinished, ever, and it is not prone to fading in strong sunlight like wood floors and carpet or rugs. It will stand up to tremendous abuse, even from the most active families, but if your floor is ever damaged (we've seen one hit by a falling refrigerator!), it's simple to take up the floor, snap in a new piece and go on living. 🌱

Left: Nature can be at home in a variety of intriguing ways, shown, for example, in this stunning Brazilian Cherry wood look from Mannington. Also note the beautiful natural looks of concrete, ceramic, slate or stone tiles featuring authentic textured surfaces from Quick Step UF1020, Indian Autumn Tiles, available at CarpetsPlus Color Tile, below.



always resilient |

The hand-scraped look of Autumn Oak, from the Oak Royale Collection from Karndean, is sure to give you a feel that is unsurpassed in luxury vinyl flooring. The oak planks are 7" wide and 48" long and come in four glorious colors.

A new generation of designers has turned a new fashion eye to a new generation of innovative resilient flooring options.

A new generation

BY DEBORAH ANN FUNK, PUBLISHER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nature-inspired patterns and colors add style and comfort to any room. The latest vinyl and linoleum floor designs range from clean, contemporary motifs, including metallics and stained concrete, to classic looks, including handsome and realistic weathered stones, textured leather and gorgeous hand-scraped hardwoods.

And you thought you knew resilient as the linoleum or vinyl in your mother's or grandmother's house!

Combine those new features with a wide and exciting array of new colors and textures plus designs and formats ranging from sheets (6 and 12 feet wide) to tiles and even planks, and the custom design possibilities should spark your imagination. >>



Unleash the eco-friendly designer within! Marmoleum is a product made from only natural ingredients and offers the most comprehensive choice in color and design variety in its category. Pictured here, this sitting area is created with the Neutral Color Collaborators collection.

always resilient |

Something old is new again. This 9" classic checkerboard pattern has been re-invented. Featured in a classic coloration, Checkpoint from Mannington can create a playful atmosphere in any room.



Resilient flooring is much more than “vinyl,” although that’s a major aspect. (See *the luxury side of vinyl* on Pages 42–45.) As the name suggests, resilient “gives” and bounces back underfoot. It’s a broad term for flooring that includes vinyl, linoleum and other types such as rubber and even cork flooring, which is a wood product.

These floors are as tough as they are attractive and exceedingly more durable and stain resistant as the days go on. That’s why you’re beginning to see the new generations of resilient flooring in the more design-centered areas of your home as well as those with high traffic. And that’s why a stunning resilient floor can flow from the kitchen to the dining room and do everything you need it to do, including look great!

As durable as it is stylish, Canvas® from IVC offers a sophisticated flooring option for residential and light commercial applications. Its sleek, modern look is complemented by subtle texture. The collection offers 14 color choices in rich earth tones. Backed by a 15-year guarantee — how fabulous is that?

Mixed media is in! Imagine resilient sheets or tiles that offer the high-end looks (textures, colors and patterns) of glass, marble, slate, leather and wood, all at affordable prices. Resilient flooring tile, plank or sheet products allows you to be as creative as possible by blending the look of stone, wood and metal along borders or inlays. And remember that installation of those all-important borders, medallions and other custom accessories not only complete your design, they also add value to your home's décor as well.

Centiva's Event Series Cinnamon Olivet, Custom Design Victory Series, Coral Reef and Magics are used to create this interesting floor. Using commercial-grade products in residences is a growing trend. Centiva works as well in the home as it does at the office. Managers of apartment, housing and assisted living facilities appreciate the value of Centiva, as well. With the durability of this product, you will want a change of style before replacement is necessary. What else around the home can make that statement?

Like to save money? One of the benefits of selecting resilient, even for a custom design, is that installation is usually easier and faster and thus less costly. Prep work can be minimal or nonexistent because resilient flooring can be applied over a variety of surfaces, including plywood sub-floors and concrete. As long as the surface is flat and sound, in most cases resilient also may be applied over existing wood or other resilient flooring. 🙌

What's this new generation of resilient coming to!

always resilient |

What's Luxury Vinyl Tile all about?



LVT is different from the outset.

An exquisite Butternut wood pattern from Mannington's Adura features the first variable-width vinyl plank in the industry. Provence brings the rustic and antique beauty of the Mediterranean coast to life. This pattern offers unique plank widths in 3", 4½" and 6", creating a look that is both original and fashionable.

Luxury vinyl tile, or LVT, is a premium, designer-quality vinyl resilient flooring with features, benefits and looks that are sometimes very difficult to comprehend. It's that good.

In the early days of vinyl resilient flooring, the primary emphasis was on function, durability and economy. Design-ability was a bit limited, although traditional resilient flooring has come a long way as you see from the previous pages.

The advent of LVT established a primary focus on high fashion for this flooring category, opening wide the doors to styling. >>



Above: Moduleo, shown here in Prince from IVC, introduces stunning wood and stone designs that have been created to appeal to your sense of style and performance, with that unique feel only possessed by the very best Luxury Vinyl Tile products.



Left: A rough timber style with outstanding detail, Lined Grey Wood from the Treated Woods Collection from Amtico brings the fashion for grey to floors without a hint of industry. The warm, smoky tones bring a touch of salvage chic to black furnishings. The overall look combines a sleek and sophisticated feel with a soft, rustic charm, especially in the specifically designed XL Stripwood size, which truly mimics reclaimed oak boards.

always resilient |



LVT composition is also different.

Believe it or not.... this is NOT tile and stone! It is Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT)! CK26 Java from Karndean luxury vinyl design flooring gives the appearance of a genuine tile and stone installation.

Typically, luxury vinyl offers colors, looks and shapes, like stone planks and real-wood-length LVT planks of three to four feet that you can't find in traditional resilient flooring, and often not in other categories, and, thus, greater installation flexibility.

LVT is different from the outset. Even when you first see it, you can't help but note that it looks and feels very much like real stone or wood or tile. (There are versions that can be installed with or without grout for very tailored, trendy looks.)

LVT composition is also different. The top or protective wear layer (sometimes more than one) is incredibly rugged, enough to defend against not only everyday scratches but also tears and gouges, while the bottom layers are far more dimensionally stable. Hence, we now have LVT with lifetime warranties and versions that are engineered for commercial spaces. 🏠

The name says it all.

At right: Soft and comfortable underfoot, Alterna luxury vinyl tile from Armstrong, pictured here in Durango in the color Clay, has the most natural and realistic look of any vinyl tile on the market today. It can be installed with grout or without grout, for a true stone or ceramic look. Alterna comes in popular 16" x 16" tile and is eco-friendly, with 75 percent limestone composite. Protected by an extremely durable wear layer, Alterna has a lifetime warranty.





This lush, textured area rug is a trend-setting success for any décor... *and* it feels great under your feet! My, My, My area rugs are available in sensational colors and different sizes and shapes and are constructed from 100 percent Durasoft Weardated Nylon and backed with Shaw's patented SoftBac Platinum backing system.

Make your own “new beginning” an easy one

Though rugs are probably the oldest known floor covering, they continue to be new in their design.

Better yet, what the area rug really does is to provide instant, new and do-it-yourself makeovers!

Area rugs are as diverse as they are versatile: knotted, woven, hooked or braided, machine-made or hand-tufted, synthetic or natural fiber.... with looks and designs running from traditional to contemporary to modern, Oriental to abstract to floral and subtle to bold.



Geometrics go hip with the Shaw Modern Works Collection “Parallel” 800 Cranberry. Shades of cranberry and taupe add elegance to this contemporary rug woven of EverTouch® recyclable nylon, resulting in a chic update that’s easy on the environment.

Like carpet, area rugs are a matter of style, color and fashion, plus pattern and texture.

(If you are really into texture, the continuing trend in interior design is layering, the same as with clothing fashion. With rugs, you can layer rug on rug, rug on carpet, wood, laminate or tile, but you also can layer rugs with pillows and other decorative items for a highly “textured” lifestyle.)

As with today’s rule that things don’t have to match, neither do rugs. Rugs let you be creative, personally contemporary, by mixing elements of your décor and the elements of the rug and thus create custom, individual looks.

Consider the many different shapes there are in rugs (thinking all along about how those shapes add to pattern and texture of your room) as well as sizes. Ask yourself if your rug will be a focal point over wall-to-wall carpet or create a private or intimate space within a larger setting

Even though there is a growing movement toward more open and, cleaner, uncluttered space, think what effect you can create and what mood you can set simply with a rug. With that in mind, it’s easy to see the value in a true quality, designer rug.

Next, think of rugs as part of your home’s “wardrobe.” Some can be changed seasonally. Some rolled out for special occasions or switched to other rooms. Others can be keepsakes to share with the family and to hand down.

What’s important to remember about rugs, new or old, using your creativity always presents a new opportunity for your rug to play a new role as you begin that makeover. 🍷



As diverse as they are versatile, area rugs help us celebrate individuality. Above: Lanai Contemporary from Sphinx offers textured geometrics with a solid border, while Busy As A Bee from Homespice Décor, below left, displays playful flower baskets and bumble bees for a cozy country setting, and Torreon from Fabrica sets the stage for this game room.





Bistro from the Studio-Artworks collection from Karastan is a treat for the eye with a sunny and cheery color palette and a charming patchwork composition of calico-like floral designs. The fine details of the artwork are accentuated by the careful hand carving that adds definition... a rug that is easily imaginable in a casual décor. Made from 100 percent New Zealand Wool. Background: Veranda Porcelain from Shaw.

DESIGNER'S WALK

BY JOAN GARDINA

Readers' TOP PICKS of '10

In the Winter 2010 issue of FABULOUS FLOORS, we set a precedent by highlighting what readers felt were the most “fabulous” flooring products from the prior year. This year we continue the tradition.

Usually, our Designers Walk section features unusual settings from which anyone with a passion for design can draw ideas. In this issue, Designers Walk is not what WE think is forward-thinking design, but what our readers said was best.

What you see on the following pages reflects what our readers felt were their favorites for 2010, based on their comments to us which we tracked throughout the year.

Not only do we present those settings and the manufacturer again, we also list the manufacturer's website where you can get more information fast and also find a retailer near you. 🏠





<< Readers' Choice: **Resilient**

From Karndean's Oak Royal Collection, a distinctive grainy, realistic wood look in Evening Oak reveals a new level of sophistication in Luxury Vinyl Tile resilient. It's worldly and timeless.

Love what you see? Want to know more?
Visit www.karndean.com

^ Readers' Choice: **Wood**

The timeless beauty and detail inherent in wood flooring can inspire rooms that reflect your mood, needs and lifestyle, as shown by Birch Twilight from the Reflections Collection by Anderson.

Love what you see? Want to know more?
Visit www.andersonfloors.com



Readers' Choice: **Rugs**

An area rug can virtually constitute a renovation, as in this contemporary geometric design called Bombay from Masland.

Love what you see? Want to know more? **Visit www.maslandcarpets.com**





<< Readers' Choice: **Tile**

Bringing the outdoors in! The look of Natural Stone never goes out of style. Looking to personalize your space? How about the dramatic, yet welcoming, display of Slate Ledger Stone from Florida Tile?

Love what you see? Want to know more?

Visit www.floridatile.com



Readers' Choice: **Carpet >>**

Carpet means texture and pattern and, of course, color! A great example is the exotic subtlety of Aberdale from the Skins II Collection from Helios. Carpet lets you set the tone or strike a mood.

Love what you see? Want to know more?

Visit www.helioscarpet.com

<< Readers' Choice: **Laminate**

Consumers who want the height of style plus durability have discovered the possibilities presented by laminate flooring, as shown in this refined Natural Merbau called Georgetown from Mohawk.

Love what you see? Want to know more?

Visit www.mohawkind.com



<< Readers' Choice: **Bamboo**

Designers celebrate the nature of bamboo by integrating its many new looks plus traditional earthy classics in today's popular looks. Take, for example, this contemporary setting featuring Morning Star Qing Dragon Strand Stained Bamboo from Lumber Liquidators.

Love what you see? Want to know more?
Visit www.lumberliquidators.com

Pattern creating texture is beautifully displayed in the SmartStrand carpet from Mohawk called Guided Path in color Thatched Straw.

Love what you see? Want to know more?
Visit www.mohawkind.com

Readers' Choice: **Green** 





Designers' Notebook: Paint (mythic)



We recently discovered Mythic® Paint, offering lasting color without lingering toxins. It's promoted as being safe for people, pets and Mother Earth.

Mythic is said to be the first of its kind and right now the only high-performance premium paint with no volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), no toxins and no carcinogens, thus meeting or exceeding all current green and environmental standards.

Unlike so many past "safe" products, Mythic offers not a mere handful of paints; rather, one can select from more than 1,200 vibrant colors. For designers, that's the best part. And the folks at Mythic say they can match just about any color from any competitor.

Mythic is available starting with multipurpose and drywall primers, and in gloss levels from flat and eggshell to semi- and high gloss for the interior, and for the exterior, low-luster satin or exterior semi-gloss.

Love what you see? Want to know more?

Visit www.mythicpaint.com

Readers' Choice: **Walls**

Tiles adapted from a concrete textile block design by Frank Lloyd Wright for the John Storer Residence in Hollywood designed in 1923. Recreated here in this Textile Block System from Motawi Tile, shown in Rothwell Gray Glaze.

Love what you see? Want to know more?

Visit www.motawitile.com



Readers' Choice: **Wool**

Plaid Beautiful — Abbotsford ivory Kilgour by Bringtons (image courtesy of Spike Powell/Country Homes & Interiors).

Love what you see?
Want to know more?

Visit www.britishwool.org.uk



Go “green” from the start...



The “green” movement is here to stay.

BY MARSHA HOWLAND, SENIOR EDITOR

An experiment in the 1970s and at times a political as well as a lifestyle statement, the trend toward environmental responsibility has morphed to become part of every fiber in the fabric of modern living. Every element of interior design is touched by it. Floors are no exception.

But what does it mean to be green?

Here is where it gets interesting, because being green means so many different things to different people.

Some want natural products such as wood, stone or wool.

Others want products that are recyclable or recycled, including carpet and linoleum.

Some want products that last a very, very long time and take the pressure off the demand for raw materials, such as ceramic and porcelain tile.

Some want products that are easy to care for, use little by way of harsh cleaners and make for a healthy home; for example, a flooring product like resilient.

>>

Opposite: Tai Shan Mist from Lumber Liquidators, shown here in a whitewash color, continuing a trend toward more colors and finishes in bamboo flooring. This addition to the Morning Star brand measures $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick by $3\frac{3}{4}$ " inches wide. The 38-inch-long planks can be nailed down or glued in place. In the background: Pedras from Natural Cork.

As you think about all of this, you will come to note that many products have multiple green attributes. Take wood as just one example.

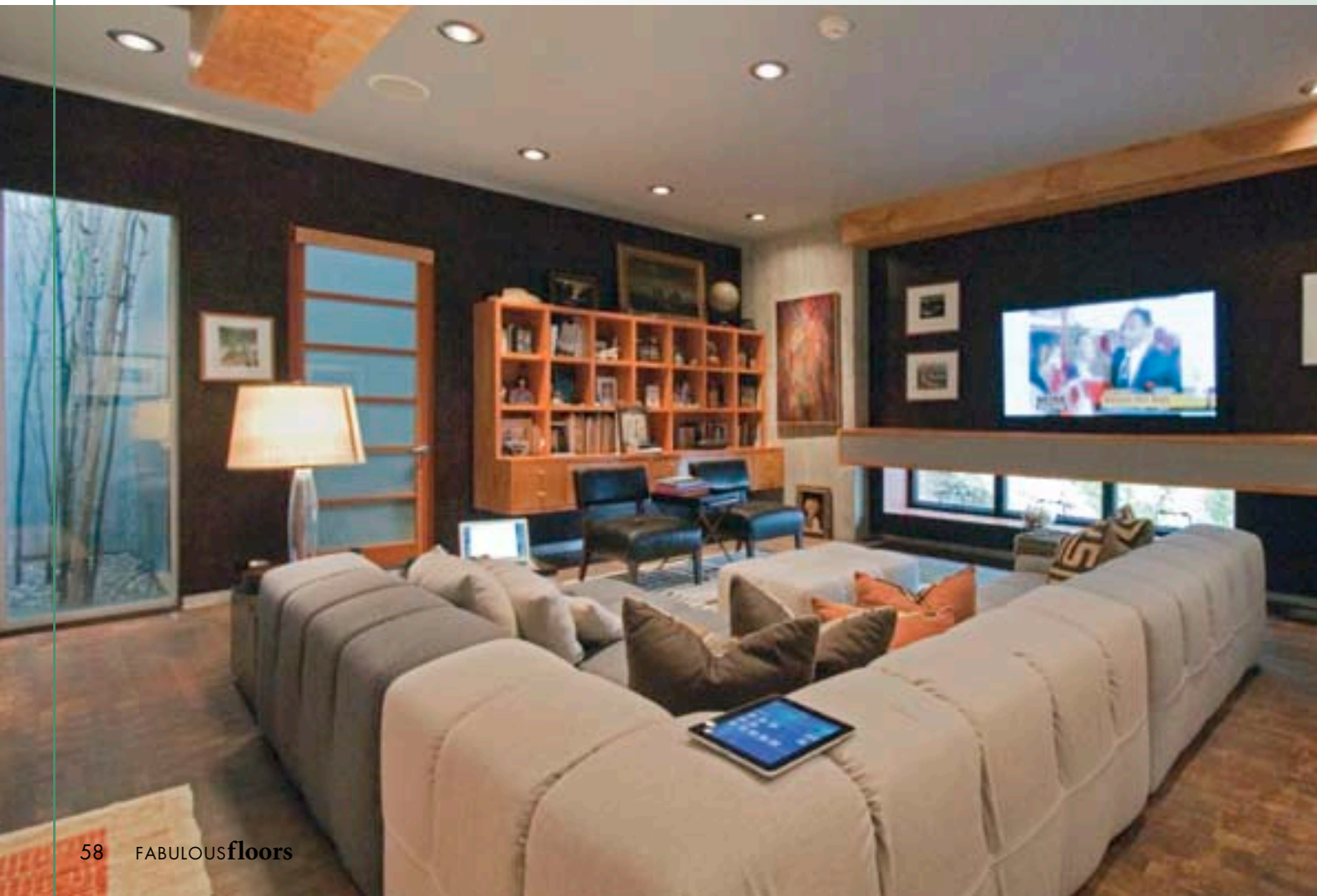
Wood is naturally derived; it's readily replenishable; it can last a very long time (300 years or more with care); and at the end of its life, it can be recycled into other wood flooring or wood products, turned to mulch or left to compost to start the cycle over again.

The international movement leading to aggressive forestry stewardship has resulted in sustainable harvesting practices; in fact, we in the US now have more trees "in production" than a half century ago.

Milling and cutting techniques have yielded far more usable wood for flooring than in years past, and precision milling reduces waste as it increases quality. Add to that techniques such as tough topcoats for durability and cleanability and it is easy to recognize the deep "greenness" of wood.

Wood flooring is far from the only standout in the new world of green living.

Ceramic and porcelain tile are made from natural, inert minerals. They last a very long time (Roman tiles are still in service after more than 2,000 years) and are virtually 100 percent recyclable thanks to new technologies. >>



At left: EcoChoice® made from Anso® nylon is not only beautiful, it is recyclable and contains recyclable content. Shown here, Rousseau is available from CarpetsPlus Color Tile. Opposite page bottom: If you're prone to leather guilt, here's one solution that will please your eco-conscience. EcoDomo recycled leather floor tiles come from scrap batches from tanneries, furniture, even shoe manufacturers, giving gorgeous and usable leather a new life underneath your feet and in this installation on the walls of this media room!



The deliciously subtle shading... that only comes from walnut. Knotty Walnut from Boa-Franc is a wood with moderate hardness. The color difference between its sapwood and heartwood is very pronounced, which results in significant variations in color and grain between boards. Walnut shows minimal color variation when exposed to intense light. Unlike other species, walnut tends to lighten over time.



VitraArt from Florida Tile. Did you know that glass has been a part of human history for at least 5,000 years? The ancient Egyptian name for glass was "stone that flows." So delicate, yet so strong. Once a luxury reserved only for royalty and the very rich, Florida Tile is proud to offer this exceptional material in solid and mesh mounted mosaic dots as well as two sizes and styles of listellos to grace your living spaces.



Left: Marmoleum Click is a natural product made primarily from renewable resources, including linseed oil, wood flour and pine rosins. The flooring "clicks" together for an easy, glueless installation so there are no chemicals or coatings with fumes and gases. Marmoleum Click is the first flooring product to be awarded the Asthma & Allergy Friendly™ Certification Mark! Available in 24 colors ranging from soothing neutrals to vibrant bolds. Featured here, Eternity and Caribbean.



Carpet and rugs feature fibers like wool, which is natural and renewable and features some unexpected ecological attributes. Today's carpet also features synthetic fibers which are super-soft and incredibly tough. You can even find fibers and blended fibers using renewable sources such as corn! Plus, more carpet is being made with reclaimed materials like plastics from soft drink bottles. Combine that with soil- and stain-fighting technologies plus natural methods of mold, mildew and bacteria fighting in the carpet and that all-important cushion, and you now have a green carpet "system" that helps make for a healthy home.

The stories go on and on. Much of laminate uses a core made from what used to be wood waste. Resilient and luxury vinyl are made to last a very long time. Both categories promote longer-lasting surfaces. Because they, like wood and tile, are hard surfaces, they are easy to clean and help keep a low-allergy, healthy household.

Manufacturers and retailers are geared up more than ever to make and provide you with flooring products which are easy on the environment, make for healthier environments when installed, and can lower costs from heating and other operating costs to cleaning, maintenance and long-term durability. 🌱

Opposite left, kitchen: Flux from Orchid Ceramics offers an eco-modern fusion of rich earth tones and metallic glazes. Perfect for commercial or residential installation, Flux adds a touch of pizzazz and urbane elegance to any space. Flux decoratives provide a striking contrast of glass and metallic for a touch of panache in any space.



Enlightened Décor from Mohawk offers a distinct pattern which adds character to this gathering spot. This is 100 percent Smartstrand Triexta filament.



Can it be both art and canvas? Intricate glass mosaics from Daltile's Sonterra Collection of Iridescent 1 x 1 Glass Mosaic Tiles add modern elegance to this sitting area.

What's new with walls...?

BY NANCY WILSON STEVENS

There's an old joke about a conversation between a floor and the walls of a room.
Floor: "What's new?"
Walls: "Let's talk about it— I'll meet you at the corner."

The richness of this little exchange is that each has a unique and new perspective on the other.

For us as designers, after we've established the foundation of our décor with our floor, it's time to turn our attention to our walls where, if you have a passion for design, things are always looking up.

A truly good floor décor will allow you to re-do any space over and over at a fraction of what you'd expect for a complete makeover. Sometimes it's as simple as a few accessories like a throw or a pillow, even the layered looks of rugs. Sometimes, it's re-doing one of those four surfaces, the walls, which can quickly change the mood of a room for little cost.

Designers tell us to approach wall décor as a painter would a canvas. With texture such a driving force in clothing and home couture, think about texture for your walls, too. This can be achieved with papers and paints and also with the simple addition of wainscot or paneling.

>>



These days, just about any look can be achieved with tile, like the look of stone pebbles from Ann Sacks shown above, or in the background, the angular design in Veranda Tones from Daltille.



Add to that texture with what you apply to those walls. Think about whether this will be a two-dimensional piece, usually with flattish objects like photos or paintings, or three, with favored treasures presented for all to see. Will the wall itself be a background foundation for your vertical creations, or, with the use of wallpaper, glazing or wood paneling, for example, do you want it to be the focal point?

Each wall needs to be planned, of course. So, start with a theme. Perhaps you want to reflect your lifestyle by adding photos, paintings, souvenirs, antiques and personal objects.

Before you do anything, STOP. Now might be a very good time to spend a small amount of money to gain the support and direction of a designer who can help you plan where each piece will go and assess your color choices. A designer can help with the flow of your wall décor. Not everything has to be hung on the walls. Those vertical spaces in and among the bookcases and tables against the walls need to be taken into consideration, too.

If nothing else, take a moment to sketch where you want to place things. There's nothing wrong with taking a few quick photos with your cell phone or digital camera, printing out the image and temporarily placing it on your wall. That's a lot easier on you and your walls than nailing up something and then deciding it isn't what you'd expected. 🏡



Tile magic! It is more than just a large format, grid-patterned wall design; Moonlight is an elegant canvas for the room design. From Villeroy and Boch.



Above: Border designs made from Crossville's Venetian Glass tile Citrine Series. At right: A faithful interpretation of the characteristics of natural slate, Serengefi Slate from Mannington is a through body porcelain that combines the dramatic color play, clefting and ledging of natural stone with extreme, eye-catching variation.





Why underlayment for laminate and engineered wood flooring?

BY RAE ANNE CORDICK

*President, Canadian Manufacturers of Carpet Cushion;
Member, Carpet Cushion Council of North America*

Considering laminate or a floating engineered floor for your home? If so, you'll need to add acoustical underlayment to your installation. Most people don't know how important this is and how underlayment contributes to a "fabulous" floor.

First, know that acoustical underlayment is installed under wood or laminate floors to provide a foundation that helps, first, to even out the subfloor for a smooth surface. Second, and more important, underlayment absorbs sound, so you can enjoy indoor living to the fullest.

Why is noise reduction so important? Depending on the home's and product's constructions, that new floor can sound noisy, or even hollow. Lower-cost floors can sound quite noisy from one floor to another in multistory buildings.

There are many acoustical underlayments on the market. Like all products, you get what you pay for. So...buyer beware.

Premium underlayments are usually tested in accredited laboratories and are noise-reduction rated. A premium underlayment costs only pennies per foot more, but in the end will deliver more years of a much quieter environment. Inexpensive underlayments add little to no value to your installation. Discuss underlayment with your flooring pro. If possible, do "walk tests" to try out different products.

Many premium underlayments also offer a moisture barrier and a lip-and-tape seam sealer to provide moisture protection from both moisture below, as from concrete, and spills that will occur from above. Like oil and water, moisture and wood or wood-based laminate products are not good companions. Many underlayments also are treated for mold and mildew resistance.

Look for quality underlayments that are "green;" for example, made from recycled materials like rubber tires and high-density, rubber-based and frothed polyurethanes, all of which would be Carpet and Rug Institute Green Label tested and approved for low volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Such underlayments are easily purchased and installed by either a do-it-yourselfer or a professional installer.

Your flooring investment, even a modest one, can be a big one and important to you and your family. So, whether you want to make an inexpensive floor sound expensive or prevent a top-quality floor from sounding like a low end floor, know that an acoustical underlayment is one big factor that can ensure your total satisfaction for the long life of this type of flooring. 🧑🏻‍🔧

Rae Anne Cordick is President of Fabricushion, Ltd., a manufacturer of rubber carpet cushions and acoustical underlayments and President of Fabri-Zyme, the patented Odor-Ace enzyme odor control technology found in Stainmaster™ Carpet Cushions, ForeverFresh Carpets, Odor-Eaters®, Arm & Hammer® Carpet Cushions and other products.

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Shopping for a new floor couldn't get any easier thanks to Armstrong's new Web site. The refreshed site offers shoppers a dynamic and vibrant place to discover flooring and explore décor options, plus a direct link to flooring retailers. Look for your old site favorites, like Armstrong's popular "Design a Room," which has been refreshed, and exclusive new tools like "Project Estimator." "Project Estimator" helps you estimate the cost of your flooring project by answering a few simple questions. The site also showcases extensive new photo galleries offering more variety and larger room scene photos highlighting trends in flooring and home décor. Save your favorite room scenes in "My Project" along with inspiring photos you upload to help you visualize what flooring styles and designs best suit your wants and needs. Explore sections like "Flooring 101" and "Flooring Ideas" that help bring your flooring design ideas come to life. Not sure of the right floor? Go to Armstrong's "Floor Finder" tool which provides recommended options based on questions about your lifestyle, budget and installation preferences. Don't miss the new "DIY Flooring" section!

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Publisher's Notebook

Design by Designers

2011 has arrived and we have big plans for Fabulous Floors this year. We plan to build on our relationship with ASID to provide you with the latest design tips and creative ideas, all coming from top designers.

We are attending and participating in "Surfaces," the largest North American flooring show held every year, and we can't wait to report back to you on what's new and exciting for the coming year. Don't miss our Spring issue — you will find the latest trends, patterns and colors in flooring today. Stop by and see us at the Floor Covering Weekly Booth and pick up your winter edition of Fabulous Floors Magazine!

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Classic Shades with Aquarius from the Aurora Collection in British Wool by Penthouse Carpets. (Image courtesy of British Wool.)



BY BRIDGETTE KELLY

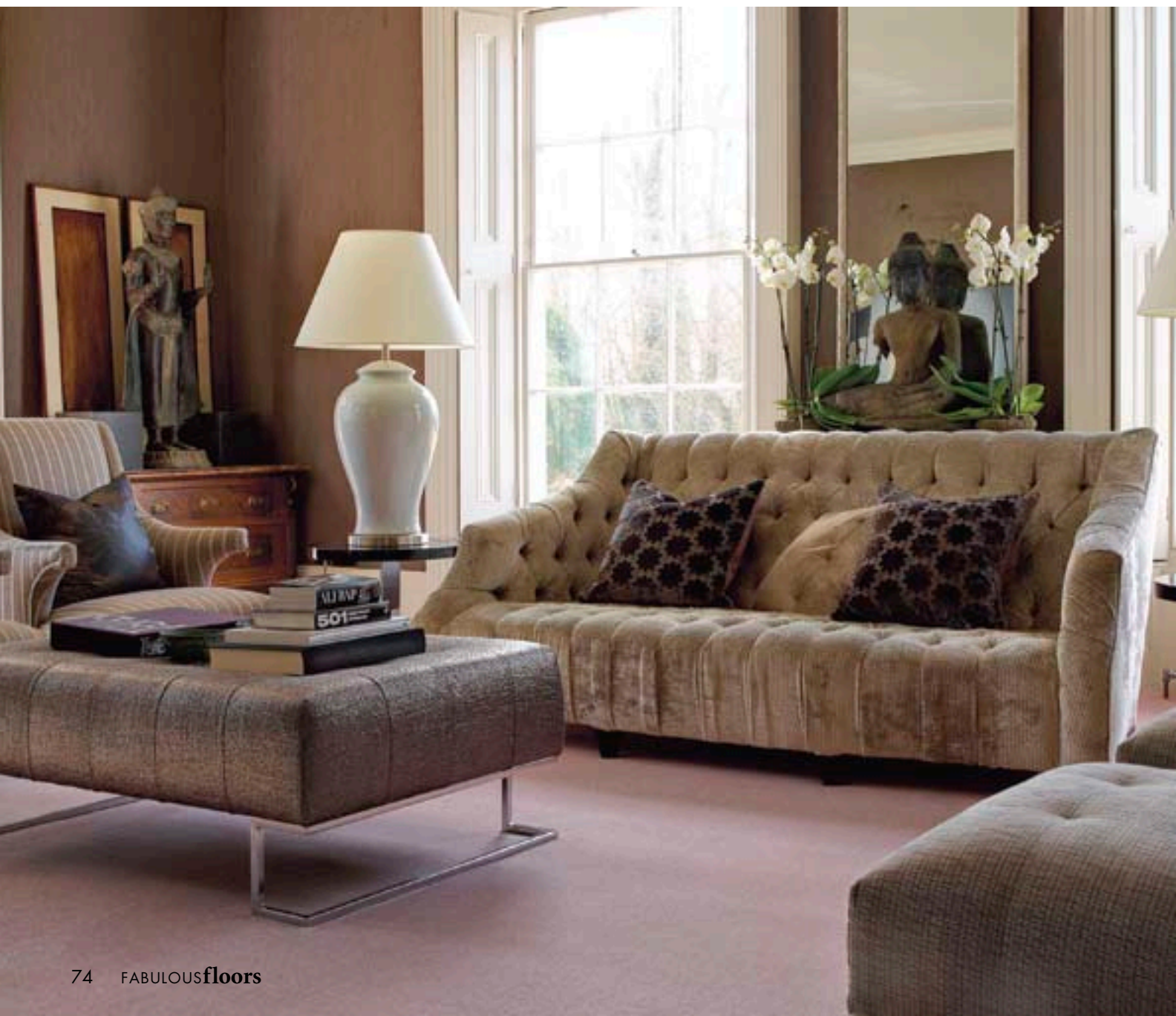
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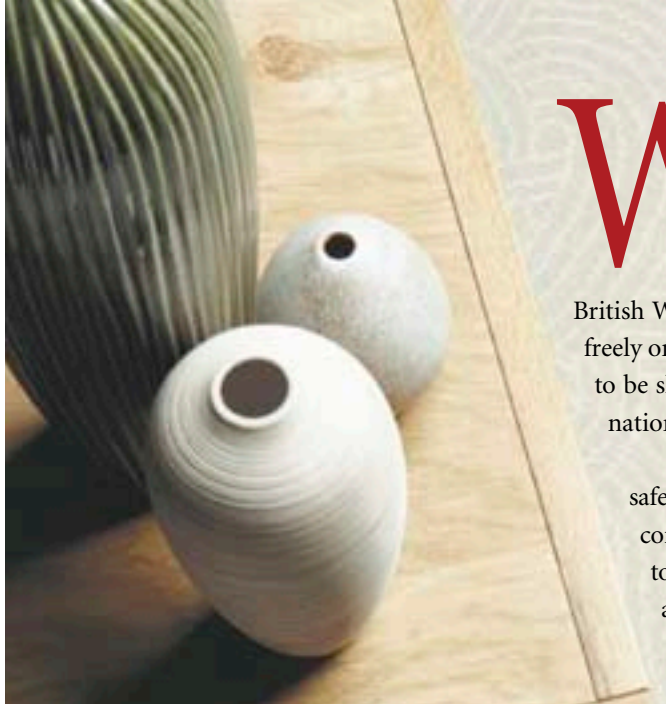
New Year and the promise of new beginnings... hopes, dreams, ambitions... all come to the fore, demanding attention for that brief moment in time when we all believe that this year we will make something good happen... change that job... take that journey... write that book... and of course redesign our rooms... >>

Choosing décor for the home should be truly creative (think colour, pattern and texture), but we should always remember the mantra of interior designers, that practicalities must always prevail. This is most important when we consider our flooring and remember that flooring should be your first décor choice. Why? Well, it has to be the backdrop against which all your other fittings will blend. It also has to be practical and durable — so that it will not wear and become unsightly.

Quality carpet is incredibly important to the home and should be seen as an investment purchase. A beautiful wool carpet is the luxury choice that offers outstanding comfort and brings long-lasting resilience to footfall and superb appearance retention to the home.

Below: Warm Tones with Mars from the Aurora Collection in British Wool by Penthouse Carpets. (Image courtesy of British Wool). At right: Pastel Perfect with Panache from Axminster Carpets in British Wool. (Image courtesy of Axminster Carpets.)





Wool is the simple wonder of nature that has become one of the extraordinary stories of the “green” age. More and more people are looking for the eco solutions that fulfill their design requirements and offer reassurance that they are making a planet-friendly choice.

British Wool is a natural, sustainable fibre, which grows on sheep that graze freely on the hills and lowlands of the United Kingdom. As wool grows, it has to be shorn, and so every year there is a fresh supply of wool for the international textile industry.

What about those other practical benefits? Wool is known to be a very safe fibre; it has naturally unique resistance to flame due to a complex bio-core which is high in water and nitrogen and will not emit toxic fumes in to the home. Fire departments recognise that wool offers superior safety and recommend it for public buildings. It is also known to be particularly good at reducing floating dust in the air; as each fibre has microscopic scales, it can capture floating dust, hold it and then release it to the power of the vacuum cleaner. This of course is a serious benefit to those who suffer from dust-related allergy.

And what about appearance? It is so important that we have time to enjoy our homes and not spend hours cleaning and working.

Here wool carpet is a dream come true; you vacuum and the pile lifts and your home looks instantly refreshed. This is easy care at its finest!

Wool does not absorb spills that are promptly blotted; the structure will initially resist any liquid penetration, giving you time to act. Smarter still is the fact that wool carpet breathes just like a good wool suit does, absorbing excess humidity in the home and adjusting to the temperature of the day and the season as your home does.

>>



THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL...AND A ROYAL PATRON

The Campaign for Wool is a unique promotion launched by HRH The Prince of Wales. The future King of England is a staunch environmentalist, and his passion for natural sustainability led him to become Patron of this unique global wool campaign.

Already active in the United Kingdom, the Campaign has attracted interest from all over the world. The main aim is to ensure that wool and its multi-capable attributes are better understood and appreciated and future generations appreciate the importance of choosing wool and in doing so helping maintain our valuable eco-infrastructure.

HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron of the Campaign for Wool.





But it is the robust nature of wool that makes it such fabulous flooring for the home — the unique bounce-back will help to minimise flattening and tracking pathways throughout the home. British Wool is the strongest carpet wool for footfall and is perfect for those through-rooms — living areas, hallways and stairs. It enjoys a “crisp crimp” — put simply, it does not flatten under pressure — which is why almost every quality carpet will have some British Wool within the blend.

Once you have decided wool carpet is right for you, you can move on to the more interesting creative design aspect. And here you have more choice than in almost any other flooring. Colour is a refreshing feature of homes as we carefully steer away from too many neutrals, be bold, choose something that will make a style statement and look at the lovely seasonal hues that can really bring warmth and tone to your living landscape. Maybe the black and white look captures you or perhaps it is the cool shades of gray that offer the right backdrop.

Wonderful floor patterns can be simple or intricate; geometrics, florals, scrolls and edgy new designs can provide interest and character to suit your own personality. Matched with borders and runners in coordinated shades, you can have a stylish whole-house floor design that changes subtly throughout the home. >>

Opposite page: Home is where the Hearth is... Natural Berber Twist in British Wool by Cormar Carpets and scroll rug by Fleetwood Fox. (Image courtesy of IPC Media and British Wool.) Below: A crafty corner — Cawdor Rug by Anta in British Wool. (Image courtesy of IPC Media and British Wool.) Background: Stylish chic — Simplicity from Axminster Carpets in British Wool. (Image courtesy of Axminster Carpets.)





Mix and Match — Sweet Pea from the RHS Collection in British Wool by Brintons Carpets. (Image courtesy of Brintons carpets.)

What type of carpet suits your design? Choose axminsters and Wilton carpets for their ability to bring grand design and several different shades; their strong woven structure is a reason that these carpets last so well. Cut and loop wool carpet will add visual texture and feel fabulous too; they are often used to replicate sisals but are far easier on the bare foot! Twists provide a smoother look, but still this can vary according to the yarn and type of twist; some are soft and others are more crunchy. However, if you want something luxurious, velvets bring smooth decadence, which is perfect for bedrooms and special rooms.

The “floor-good-factor” with wool is not just about how wool looks and how it feels but also the fact that it is a naturally renewable fibre – one for the New Year wish list, almost certainly! 🐏

SHEEP AND THE GRAZE GRAZE

There are more than 60 different breeds of sheep in the United Kingdom and many more half, cross and rare breeds. Many sheep live up on the hills and are considered guardians of the UK countryside, because their continuous grazing keeps the landscape neatly trimmed. It is this ability to graze that makes them a popular choice for the grounds around historic houses — they are a natural, living lawnmower that keeps everything looking beautiful!



Custodians of the Countryside — the Swaledale breed, which grazes freely in the UK.

British Wool Member Guide

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www.abingdonflooring.co.uk

Adam Carpets Ltd

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www.adamcarpets.com

Abu Dhabi National

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
www.adnipcarpet.com

Tapibel N.V.

BELGIUM
www.tapibel.be

Associated Weavers UK

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01422 341221
www.associatedweavers.net

Axminster Carpets Ltd

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www.axminster-carpets.co.uk

Bajong Carpets N.V.

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www.bajong.be

Balta Industries N.V.

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www.baltagroup.com

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www.bondworth.co.uk

Brintons USA

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www.brintons.net

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www.agnella.com.pl

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Wei Hai Haima Carpet Co.

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www.haimacarpet.com

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ICBM Global bvba

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Debunking Common Floor Care Misconceptions

Whether it's the dog tracking in mud or the kids carrying in dirt and leaves, there are a lot of ways floors can become dirty and unattractive. Unfortunately for many, the process they use to clean their wood flooring might be causing more harm than good.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about floor care that lead to premature deterioration," said Tom Sullivan, founder of Lumber Liquidators, the largest retailer of specialty hardwood flooring.

Among the cleaning techniques to avoid because they can damage hardwood flooring are:

- **Vacuuming.** Contrary to the belief that vacuuming is the best way to rid wood flooring of dust and debris, the rotating brush's hard bristles can scratch the wood. Small amounts of damage to the wood over time will make the surface look worn and uneven.
- **Damp mopping.** Even though a lot of people think that damp mopping is a quick way to clean wood flooring, the water in the mop causes deterioration of both the wood and the floor's finish. This increases the likelihood that the wood will warp or squeak in the future.
- **Cleaning with vinegar and water.** While many people clean wood flooring with a homemade solution of vinegar and water, the acidic nature of the solution actually eats away at the wood finish. Corrosion of the wood finish detracts from its healthy appearance and increases vulnerability, making the wood more prone to wear and tear.
- **Applying oil soaps.** Although oil soaps are a typical way to clean wood flooring, these soaps and detergents can leave a harmful film. Eventually, this film causes the wood finish to yellow, "alligator" or crack, requiring refinishing.

Instead of using one of the above methods to clean hardwood floors, it is recommended that homeowners follow a few simple cleaning guidelines.

First, lightly sweep wood flooring with a soft-bristled broom twice a week. This is a quick and easy way to clear away debris particles so that they do not build up.

Second, clean wood flooring once a week with a terry-cloth mop and a cleaner specifically made for wood flooring, like Bellawood's hardwood floor cleaner. This will get rid of the heavier dirt build-up that can cause a dull appearance.

"Hardwood floor cleaning products clean and shine hardwood without being harsh on the finish and without producing harsh fumes that can irritate your family and pets," says Sullivan. "It doesn't take a lot of effort to give your floors the maintenance they deserve, and in doing so you'll not only improve the look of your home, but extend the lifespan of the flooring."

Left: BELLAWOOD Select Brazilian Cherry pre-finished solid flooring with 50-year warranty. Right: Brazilian Chestnut from Lumber Liquidators.



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British Wool... origin is everything



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