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A Natural Fit

The look of hardwood flooring adds warmth to the kitchen

By Matthew Marin

Whether stained, whitewashed, distressed or hand-scraped, hardwood flooring offers a warm, inviting presence to any kitchen. But if wood is not quite what you're looking for, other materials abound, such as laminate, porcelain, bamboo and cork, which can also enrich a space and are just as durable. Along with hardwood, all of these products are at home in modern or traditional interiors.

[1] Cikel America's Vila Velha Series

As opposed to maple or oak species that are stained to look like Brazilian cherry, Vila Velha offers the real thing. This collection of exotic engineered Brazilian cherry hardwood flooring is scraped by hand. Available in 4-ft.-long planks, with a width of 5 in., the flooring can be floated or glued down directly on, above or below grade and comes in three colors: coffee, tobacco and caramel.



[2] Armstrong Flooring's Commercial Laminate

Two-and-a-half times more wear-resistant than most laminates, according to the company, the Commercial Laminate collection features the authentic look of natural filled-face hardwood, produced via an advanced technology that results in rich color and texture. The collection is offered in three distinct lines—traditional, premium and premium luster—and is available in 20 different colors and 5-in.-wide single planks.



[3] Teragren's Synergy Strand Bamboo Floating Floor

This line of durable and renewable bamboo flooring is created through a patented manufacturing process that fuses together bamboo strands with an environmentally friendly adhesive. Offered in planks measuring 7 11/16 in. in width and 72 in. in length, it is available in wheat, chestnut and java, as well as a new color, brindle—a blend of natural and caramelized bamboo strands.

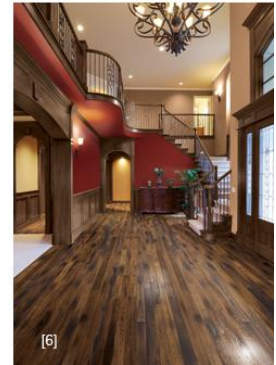
[4] Bruce Hardwood Floors' Rustics Lock & Fold Collection

Easy to install, the Rustics Lock & Fold Collection, which offers twice the locking strength of traditional locking laminate, features distressed surface treatments, highly defined grain patterns and wide planks. The 3/8-in.-thick engineered wood planks are 5 in. wide with square edges and ends. The line comes in two series: American Originals, which includes oaks, maple and hickory (shown), and American Vintage, comprised of cherry and walnut.



[5] Lumber Liquidators' Tranquility

From its wood-grain appearance to its texture, Tranquility, a line of resilient vinyl flooring, has the visual appeal of traditional wood flooring, yet is more water-resistant and easier to clean. The line is available in six colors, including south perry pine, African mahogany (shown), Charleston chestnut, Elgin oak, Mt. Mitchell cherry and new river mahogany.



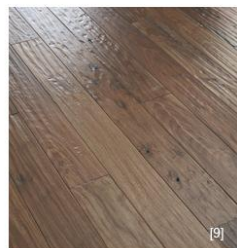
[6] HomerWood's Character Grade

HomerWood's hardwood flooring lines have been expanded to include Character with Color and Smoked Specialty, both offering a distinctive variety of hues and finishes. The Smoked colors include hickory smoked red saddle (shown), white oak smoked cinnamon and black walnut smoked bramble, while Character with Color is comprised of white oak butter rum, hard maple tea and white oak espresso. The collections are available in 3-, 4-, 5- and 6-in. widths.



[7] Armstrong Flooring's Grand Illusions

The Grand Illusions laminate flooring line now comprises exotic visuals and versatile color palettes, offered in 5-in. individual board widths that mimic actual installed hardwood. The collection offers subtle color variations, distinctive grain patterns and authentic textures. It includes Canadian maple (shown), Southern hickory, Eastern oak, American apple and heartwood walnut.



[8] ASI Flooring's VenCork Flooring

Combining the refined style of natural wood with the benefits of cork, VenCork combines a real wood veneer with a highly durable, anti-scratch, transparent polyvinyl chloride wear layer. Offered in a range of colors such as walnut, oak, mahogany and cherry, the planks contribute to LEED credits and measure 1/8 in. thick, 4 or 6 in. wide and 35 7/16 in. long.



[9] HomerWood's Amish Hand-Scraped Flooring

Hand-scraped by Pennsylvania Dutch artisans, each wood plank in this collection is individually hand-sculpted to create custom flooring with the look of old, reclaimed wood. The collection is available prefinished and unfinished in cherry, hickory, oak and black walnut. The plank widths range from 3 to 7 in. Some species are stained to further enhance the hand-scraped effect.

[10] Portobello's Ecodécor

Boasting a striking resemblance to oak, Ecodécor, a through-body glazed porcelain tile, is produced with the same pigments used to dye natural wood. Replicating the look of wide-format French wood with a wavy surface, the tile comes in five "aged-oak" colors, in multicolored pieces and in 4-in. x 48-in., 6-in. x 48-in. and 8-in. x 48-in. sizes.