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Deep, rich tones show off contemporary designs

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When Linda Tack set out to remodel her kitchen in her ranch style home, she wanted flooring with pizzazz. So she selected a dark walnut wood by Lauzon, with the deep brown wood complementing her contemporary style kitchen with cherry cabinetry.

“I wanted something different,” says Tack, 49, of Brighton. “I think (the floor) really opens up the place.”

Dark brown, deep reddish brown and even black hardwood flooring are currently the rage in home design, with homeowners opting rich tones that provide contrast to colors.

The movement toward dark wood flooring in home design started about five years ago and continues to be hot, says Jason Longo, who owns JDL Interiors in Rochester. Colors such as espresso, a rich coffee tone and ebony work well with contemporary design for that clean modern look.

“It defines your space,” Longo says.

For decorator Leslie Brown of Colefield Farm in Mendon, dark wood flooring evokes a sense of serenity.

“There’s something very soothing about dark wood,” she says.

Brown helped her sister, Linda Tack, select the flooring for her kitchen and paid about \$3,500 for the new flooring and installation from Messner Carpeting in Pittsford. The darker brown tone of the floor offers a nice contrast to colors that are in vogue, such as sage greens and sky blues, Brown says.

Design trends have definitely shifted to using darker woods, says Greg Messner, vice president at Messner Carpeting. Brazilian cherry and bamboo are currently very popular with homeowners.

Darker stained wood floors in wide planks are the current rage, says Rodney Cook, owner of CCM Flooring in Rochester. But home decorators in Rochester tend to go for more of a medium- to dark-

colored wood than the ebony-colored flooring, he says.

The Teragren bamboo floor is very popular and homeowners can expect to pay \$6 to \$8 a square foot installed, Cook says. But if you are the type of person who likes to redecorate regularly and may think about updating your floor in a few years, Armstrong has a line of entry level laminate flooring that looks like wood for about \$4.50 a square foot installed, he says.

Imported exotic dark woods such as Brazilian cherry, acacia and Tigerwood flooring are popular with consumers, says Larry Merlo, salesman at Rochester Linoleum Carpet One in Henrietta. These woods come from South America and Australia and are often stained in a rich red brown tone.

None of the woods sold at Messner are from endangered species in rainforests, Messner says. Trade laws prohibit the import of such woods.

Trends all have cycles and in flooring, hardwood is still very much in, Cook says, noting that homeowners usually prefer to invest in hardwood no matter what the price range of their home.

But even hardwood flooring has its trend cycles. The parquet wood that was popular in the 1970s isn't being installed in current designs and you can tell that a home was built in the 1980s if there is liberal use of oak not only on the floors, but all over in cabinetry and walls as well, Longo says.