

Hardwood Flooring - How To Choose The Right One For Your Floor

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by LucianaGialuisi

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The first criterion is whether to elect to get pre-finished or unfinished hardwood.

In days past, unfinished was definitely the way to go. It was easier to select a type of hardwood, install it and stain or finish it with stain or lacquer to optimize appearance and wear.

It was also generally less expensive to get unfinished hardwood flooring, even adding in the cost of staining or lacquering. The price difference was so great that getting unfinished hardwood, then exerting a little effort was a bargain on balance. No more. Unfinished is still often less expensive, but the difference is smaller than in the past.

Since the cost differences have been reduced, there are also a number of attractive advantages to pre-finished hardwood floors. You don't have to deal with mess and smell - a big bonus if you're re-flooring an existing room or adding a room. All you have to do is install the floor - much safer and healthier in the long run.

The choice comes down to your budget, personal preferences, and how much skill and time you're able to devote to your floor.

But, you still have to select the specific hardwood desired. What's available? Today, the choices of hardwood are legion. They come from around the world - Brazil, China, Australia, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Bamboo is one of the more interesting options. Not technically a wood, it's still woody and very hard, when correctly processed. It has a delicate yellow-brown color that is perfect for certain decorating schemes. It's also on the lower end of per square foot hardwood flooring prices - typically around \$5 per sq ft.

Of course, on the opposite end of the cost spectrum you'll find Brazilian walnut. It can cost up to thirteen dollars a square foot, and it offers a range of colors, from light to dark. This is an extremely hard type of hardwood, making installation tricky, but your floor will last for years to come.

In the middle of the cost scale is mahogany, which offers a rich, beautiful look. It's reddish brown with a dark, luxurious looking grain, and is strong enough to last for decades. This is a rain forest wood, and has the associated environmental and woodworking challenges.

Red Oak is a favorite with many do-it-yourselfers. It comes in a variety of widths and is available at the lower end of the price scale. Yet it yields an extremely strong and durable surface. Finished properly, it will create a floor that is as beautiful as any.

Ash is a good choice if you prefer a lighter color and a less costly wood. Starting around three dollars a square foot, this wood is knotty and attractive. However, it's softer than other woods. Rustic ash is a particularly good choice for a more natural look.

In addition to new flooring, you can also buy many hardwood types in salvaged and pre-distressed types. That allows you to add yet another dimension of appearance to your flooring, giving you a lived in look but allowing you to maintain a durable floor.

About the Author:

Before you choose hardwood flooring, take a look at Bamboo Floors from Bamboozle. They're Western Australia's premier manufacturer of quality bamboo floor products that are suited for the harsh Australian temperatures. Their website can be found at bamboozle.com.au