



Hardwood floors  
are not only  
beautiful and  
durable, advances  
in wood finishes  
mean they're  
easier to care for

**W**ith the popular resurgence of hardwood flooring, you may be pleasantly surprised to find the work of craftsmen from previous generations in your new home. Whether refinished or new, hardwood floors add beauty and warmth to any room. Given proper care, they will last a lifetime.

Should your floor set the stage or steal it? If you have a lot of emphasis on décor at eye level you may want some neutral space at ground level. On the other hand if you are in need of more visual interest, your floor can be just the place to add it. This can be achieved with a pleasing mixture of pattern and color.

### New

Wood is a wise investment in the future, especially when you consider it may never have to be replaced. Tough finishes and easy installation have made new hardwood flooring more accessible than ever. Hallways and foyers, living rooms, dining rooms, and even kitchens, are most often its beneficiaries. Hardwood flooring has a timelessness that endures despite changing trends in floor fashion.

### Refinishing

Wood floors can be restored to their original beauty by machine sanding. Sanding removes the old finish and exposes the original wood. After the application of a sealer and two coats of polyurethane finish, the floor will look new again.

Unless you are experienced in wood floor refinishing, it is best to have a professional do the work. If used improperly, a sander can damage the wood. Often the cost of refinishing is comparable to that of new carpeting.

### Finishing

The most popular finish used on hardwood floors today is the surface finish. Surface finishes include polyurethane finishes and Swedish finishes. They never need waxing and can be recoated without sanding.

You can apply additional coats whenever you wish to extend wear. Recoating involves screening the top layer and applying new polyurethane to the surface. Typically, recoats are done when the floor loses its sheen, especially in high traffic areas.

### Laminate

Laminate flooring is the great innovator in home decorating. It can simulate hardwoods like oak, maple, mahogany and cherry. The variety of formats and designs are equally at home in country, traditional and contemporary spaces. And because laminates are avail-

able in so many patterns, textures, and colors, you can easily find the perfect compliment to your décor.

Widely used on kitchen countertops, laminates were first introduced into the U.S. market in 1994 by Pergo and have been popular ever since.

Laminate flooring is installed as a "floating floor." Planks or tiles are affixed to each other, rather than nailed or glued to the sub-floor, so that the floor floats, adjusting naturally to change's in a home's temperature and humidity.

Some laminates have interlocking planks that snap together, making them even easier to install.

To keep your floors in good condition remember to wipe up spills promptly, use clean walk-off mats at entrances, felt protectors on furniture legs and keep high heels in good repair.

