

Decorator's Notebook



Decorative Home Additions That Are Right Underfoot

(NAPSA)—One of the best ways to improve the value of your home may be the addition of new flooring—but remember there are a few things to consider when choosing the floor that best fits your needs.

The choice of a floor should encompass practical considerations, such as cost and extent of use in different areas, as well as personal style preferences.

For example, each family's criteria is a bit different. Will kids or pets increase wear and tear? Is underfoot comfort imperative? Is noise a consideration? Your floor should be tailored to the people who use it.

The World Floor Covering Association's Web site, www.wfca.org, offers these suggestions to help consumers find the flooring that's right for them:

- Learn about the pros and cons of each different type of floor covering before you buy.

- Consider the classics—remember, trendy floors can be very pricey and may go out of style quickly.

- Are there high-volume traffic patterns to consider? Flooring choices should be tailored to the way you use each space.

- The amount of day-to-day maintenance you are willing to undertake may influence your floor choice. Some materials require more care.

- Under-floor heating (radiant heat) is compatible with most types



Photo courtesy of Crossville Porcelain Stone/USA

There are a number of factors to consider before you purchase flooring for the home.

of hard flooring, particularly ceramic, stone and well-seasoned hardwood.

- Busy or large-scale floor patterns may overpower the rest of the room, especially if the room is small and the furniture is simple.

Along with these tips, the WFCA Web site provides a number of useful guides for consumers, including a material-by-material summary of flooring choices, with pros, cons and cost per square foot. This and other charts found on the site can be useful tools when planning a purchase. Simply print them out and bring them with you to your neighborhood flooring store. Not sure where that is? The WFCA site can help you find that, too!

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.wfca.org.

Finding Your Style

Personal tastes may change with the times, or last for years. Before you redecorate, it's a good idea to determine what you like, and how to go about bringing that sort of look into your home. Here are a few places to start:

- **Model Homes, Friend's Homes and Department Stores.** Walk around in model homes to see some of the newest and most popular floor coverings on the market. Friend's homes and department store showrooms are also a great place to see where you feel the most comfortable. Consider bringing a camera with you to capture the looks that appeal to you.

- **Your closet.** Your clothes tend to reflect your decorative and color preferences. You may prefer more formal or traditional styles and shades. If your clothes are casual, your decor should be too.

- **Magazines and catalogs.** Find pictures of rooms that appeal to you. Be sure to look at cabinetry, flooring and furniture styles.

- **Your home.** Walk into your house or apartment as if it were your first time there. What sort of feeling do you get? What sort of feeling would you like to convey to your guests?

Once you find your own style, you'll be able to express yourself through the environment you create.

