

Floor the Competition

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When people enter your home they usually look down before up, so that first step is vital for attracting a homebuyer and making a great first impression. This is one reason why more people are installing hardwood floors in their homes.

Hardwood flooring enhances the look of any room and can create a classic ambiance that will beautify the interior design of your home. Residential real estate agents agree that homes with wood floors hold their value better, sell faster and fetch higher prices.

Last year, 99 percent of real estate agents responding to a national survey conducted by the National Wood Flooring Association agreed that homes with hardwood floors are easier to sell. The survey also found that 82 percent believe that homes with hardwood floors sell faster and 90 percent said they would sell for more money.

The American Hardwood Information Center adds that restoring hardwood flooring in the home is one of the best long-term investments to be made.

“Hardwood floors are environmentally friendly, forever fashionable, and will last for generations,” said Pembroke Jacobs, president of the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. “Plus, with an expected life span of up to 100 years for certain premium hardwood flooring, you can be assured that that the hardwood really is a one-time investment with a very long-term payoff.”

Real estate agents also agree that carpeting does not impress potential buyers, but hardwood floors are always a draw. Engineered wood floors impart warmth, depth and

richness to a home's decor that cannot be matched by carpeting, tile or vinyl flooring.

Despite the existence of modern architectural trends in flooring, hardwood can still compete with floor tiles and other artificial materials. It comes in a variety of colors and grains; light, medium, or dark shades; and a variety of sizes, styles, finishes and species.

Maple, mahogany and oak are the most popular woods, but some homeowners are investing in exotics such as Brazilian herry and Purpleheart.

The Environmental Protection Agency has said that indoor air quality is one of the top health threats and wood floors can help contribute to a healthy living environment. In fact, a recent EPA study found that pesticides used in gardens and homes accumulate on floors and other surfaces in the home, but that wood floors greatly reduce the accumulation of such toxins. Hardwood floors also do not trap or harbor dust mites or molds.

Though wood floors will probably need to be refinished at some point, when properly taken care of they are much easier to maintain than other floor surfaces.

The NWFA recommends regular sweeping of hardwood floors with a soft-bristle broom or dust mop to remove surface dirt and debris. If your floor contains beveled edges, it recommends using a vacuum with a soft bristle brush attachment to remove dirt and debris from between the floorboards.

Having hardwood floors could be the difference between selling your home or watching a potential buyer walk out the door on a less-appealing type of flooring.

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