

# FROM House TO HOME®

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IT'S TIME TO  
**Rethink**  
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**UNDERFOOT**  
Fabulous Flooring Options

THE HOME & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE OF YAKIMA AND CENTRAL WASHINGTON

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TEXT ELYSE GLICKMAN

**A**lthough we step all over it every day, the kitchen floor is something that should not be taken for granted. Given that the purpose of the kitchen has shifted in recent years from a preparation, storage, and breakfast room to a home's epicenter for entertaining and relaxing, homeowners are well served to rethink what goes on the floor. Kitchen design and flooring professionals certainly have, not only presenting innovations in laminate, natural wood, and vinyl flooring but also in once nontraditional options such as cork and concrete.

1

# IN THEIR Footsteps

Today's kitchen flooring is not just practical and resilient. According to interior designers and flooring experts, it lays the groundwork needed to make the kitchen the heart of one's home.



2



3





"The floor is worth investing in because the kitchen is the one room in every home that everybody lives in," affirms Ryan Brown, one of the stars of Bravo's *Flipping Out*. "Kitchens have evolved from small, utilitarian spaces to larger family room-type settings where people gather. How many people have hosted a party [only] to find that their guests have all migrated to the kitchen?"

Brown adds that when you contemplate the type of flooring you intend to install, you should take into account whether you will be living in the home long-term or renting the property. If you are renting or selling, he

1 Bamboo not only makes a beautiful statement, but because it is an abundant renewable resource, it's also a green alternative to other types of wood.

Courtesy of Allure

2 Terrazzo, a highly polished mosaic flooring, is another beautiful option.

Courtesy of Michael McCreary

3 A luxurious, rich chocolate-brown color is the signature of this natural American walnut prefinished flooring by Bellawood.

Courtesy of Lumber Liquidators

4 Lino, from Ann Sacks, is a stone-inspired porcelain material.

Courtesy of Alex Vanagas and Augusta Quirk

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recommends innovative new stone-inspired porcelains, including Lino from Ann Sacks and Xilo from Walker Zanger. Households with kids or large amounts of traffic may want to consider a wood or one of the new engineered flooring formats that have an intentionally distressed look. Kids rolling their toys over the surface or riding their bikes through the space adds to the patina rather than ruining it.



▲ From left to right, Bali teak, bamboo, and river oak are great flooring choices for people who love natural wood.  
Courtesy of Süddekor

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**WHPB**

Though New York City-based designer Gerald Charles Tolomeo gets a lot of requests from clients for bamboo and exotic wood flooring, he notes that a new generation of tile floors and metallic materials is changing people's attitudes towards materials they thought they were familiar with.

"Today's tiles are not your grandma's linoleum," says Tolomeo. "They're available in fabulous saturated colors and surfaces resistant to dings and scratches. Stainless steel, copper, polished chrome, and brass tiles, meanwhile, are being used as rich accents in polished concrete floors. Metal is also enhancing floors from underneath as part of radiant heat systems. The flat, easy-to-install system underneath the floor, powered electrically or with a hot water system, is eco-friendly, turns on and off with a switch, and heats up the kitchen evenly. As it prevents need for external heaters, it is more economical and safer for homes with kids."

Gary Drake, a Los Angeles-area contractor who has improved the homes of Madonna and Sting, notes that—like classic pop music styles—trends that have been around for a long time are coming back, but in new, fresh formats. As many of his clients are going green, they are embracing the look of hardwood floors in eco-friendly engineered woods and



laminates. Hand-tossed recycled tiles, made from crushed glass, ceramic, and old tiles, blend an arty, antique look with the current popularity of green chic.

"Floor design is now focused on tying the kitchen and the family room together because entertaining has become so popular," assesses Drake. "You want these rooms to flow together into one great room, and flooring helps you accomplish this."

Although this great-room concept is gaining in popularity, a vintage twist can pull the look together in a warm and familiar way. Shaw Floors' hottest sellers include hand-scraped hardwoods, wider planks like those found in old cabins, and narrower planks like those found in old mills. Shaw's laminate collection, meanwhile, mimics exotic hardwoods without the risk of purchasing illegally harvested wood taken from rainforests and other protected areas.

At the bottom of it all, one could think of flooring as shoes for the kitchen. There are many fashionable styles, but it is important to see which one will best fit your lifestyle and the architecture of your property. ■

## MATERIAL ISSUE

John Lee, managing partner of Santa Monica, California-based Lee Capital Partners LLC, a home-building company specializing in green construction, details the many ways to go green with your flooring.

- Natural-stone floors are low maintenance, durable, cleanable, and beautiful. With granite, marble, and limestone, however, it is important to remember to seal the floor and steer clear of glossy finishes.
- Thanks to stronger varnishes and finishes, wood can stand the test of spills and cleaning. To stay green when shopping for wood flooring, try to go with certified sustainably harvested woods.
- With the return in popularity of mid-century architecture, there is a growing demand for vinyl floors. Many vinyl floors now use recycled materials, so you can be retro-hip and green at the same time.
- Cork and bamboo are renewable materials that are abundant in supply. With the proper factory finishes, these materials provide the durability needed for kitchens while providing the warmth of wood.
- Instead of adding a layer of material over an existing slab, finish a concrete floor in one of many ways: paint it, acid stain it, or simply apply a clear coat over it. Like tile and stone, concrete will retain and conduct the earth's thermal consistency, thus helping to cool or heat a room.



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