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TOTAL HOME

Advertising feature of The Markham Economist & Sun/Stouffville Tribune

Fashions in flooring

Continued from page 17

Vinyl flooring has always been a practical floor covering choice. Whether you're looking for a high-gloss, no-wax appearance or a satin finish stone design, the patterns and colours of vinyl flooring are almost endless. Some of the new offerings include a charming stone-like design, cobblestone and warm, earthtone patterns.

Vinyl tiles not only look great, but they also cushion the feet more than tile, hardwood and laminate. Vinyl flooring is even available with a matte finish, as opposed to the traditional high gloss finish. The matte finish provides the elegance and sophistication of ceramic.

Aside from their many styles and patterns, the advantages of tiles are that they're easy to clean, mildew resistant and highly durable.

Cork flooring falls under the category of wood flooring, but it's not a traditional wood. Cork comes from the bark of the cork oak tree which grows in Portugal, Spain and other Mediterranean countries.

The advantages of cork flooring include thermal and acoustical properties because of its unique cellular structure. Half of the actual volume of the material is comprised of small pockets of air which act as natural shock absorbers. Thus, walking or standing on a cork floor produces less fatigue.

Cork flooring also blends in well with other decorations and furniture and comes in a wide range of colors, from its familiar honey tones to green, red, chocolate and black.

Ceramic tiles have been around for centuries and they continue to capture the imaginations of home owners and decorators. One of the big trends is towards larger size tiles - 12" x 12" or 13" or 13." "The advantages of larger tile sizes is that they're easy to keep clean, and can be installed in a kitchen, a hallway or a basement," says John Moncada, co-owner of Markham Ceramics in Markham. "If they are installed on a 45 degree angle, it gives a room more character and a unique appearance."

Recently there has been a shift towards porcelain floor tiles. Not only do porcelain tiles come in a variety of colours and patterns, but they adjust to room temperature.

"Ceramic tiles with etched finishes are popular now," says Moncada. "So are granite tiles, because of their elegance, durability and because they will complement granite counter tops."

Before you purchase any type of ceramic or porcelain tiles, it's important to find out about which tiles are best suited for your purposes. For instance, a glazed tile in a bathroom or entranceway would be less practical than a tile with a matte finish.



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