To Find Lasting Beauty,
Look Below the Surface

Picking out new wood flooring can be both exciting and a bit daunting. After all, a beautiful new wood floor can add to the value of your home and provide the foundation of style for every room. At the same time, there are so many choices in styles, species, designs, finishes, quality, costs and more that it can seem almost impossible to reach a decision.

Fortunately, this guide can help narrow down the choices until you find exactly the right wood flooring for your needs. The key is to look beneath the surface of those lovely samples in the dealer showroom and examine each type of flooring based on the style, usage, wear, environmental factors, stability, durability, room and value. This is where the true, long-term beauty of your wood floor is determined.
## Table of Contents

Comparing Hardwood Flooring Types ........................................... 1
Know what’s underfoot before taking the next step

Environmentally Smart ............................................................... 2
The natural value of solid wood

Not all Wood is Alike ................................................................. 3
The hard facts on solid wood flooring

Wide Plank Floors ....................................................................... 5
Adding a different dimension to flooring design

Wood Species ............................................................................... 7
From ash to white oak, the beauty’s ingrained

Grades, Textures, Stains & Finishes ............................................. 9
The top options for the best looking floor

Pattern Floors ............................................................................. 14
Look at flooring design from a different angle

Installation .................................................................................... 15
Lay it down right to stand the test of time

Solid or Engineered Floors .......................................................... 16
It’s about options not restrictions
Comparing Hardwood Flooring Types

Know what’s underfoot before taking the next step

While every type of flooring material has certain advantages and disadvantages relative to your specific needs and usage, real wood holds a strong comparative edge in virtually every case.

Compared to carpet, vinyl or laminate, which may be cheaper to buy and install, sustainable wood delivers more long-term value with its superior strength, exceptional durability and natural beauty. Plus, unlike carpet, it doesn’t harbor dust or other allergens so people with allergies or respiratory problems can breathe easier.

When considered versus natural stone or tile, wood comes out on top because it has more give so it’s more comfortable to stand on for long periods. In addition, it’s warmer … both literally and figuratively, than stone or tile.

Finally, relative to other flooring types, wood can be refinished to re-discover its natural beauty and remove scratches or dents if desired. Other flooring types generally have to be replaced because they’re difficult to repair and can’t be refinished.

As you can see, when you look closely, the only real decision to make in flooring types is to choose between solid wood and engineered wood. Here’s a quick overview of the pros and cons of each.

SOLID WOOD

Pros: Wear-resistant; long-lasting; adds a warm look to any room; can be refinished multiple times; natural and sustainable

Cons: Must be acclimated to moisture levels of home before installation; changes in moisture content in the home will cause shrinkage and expansion; need to avoid pooling water

ENGINEERED WOOD

Pros: Natural wood layered for increased stability (generally shrinks and expands less than solid wood); can help reduce/resist movement and gapping; some “clickable” versions may be easier for DIY installation than solid wood

Cons: Typically can only be refinished once or twice; susceptible to issues in very dry conditions; only a few companies craft engineered floors that equal the appearance of solid; need to avoid pooling water.

A study conducted by the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) revealed that 99 percent of U.S. real estate agents asserted that homes with hardwood flooring are easier to sell; 90 percent said that homes with hardwood flooring sell for more money—up to 10 percent more in fact.

“Solid wood floors don’t only add value in the eyes of a property appraiser, but are also often highly sought after by home buyers.”

WiseGeek.com
The Natural Value of Wood

In addition to providing you with a beautiful floor and increasing the value of your home, choosing a wood floor offers natural environmental benefits.

Here are some additional environmental facts compiled by the National Wood Flooring Association:

• Average annual net growth for hardwoods is greater than average annual removals
  (Source: US Department of Agriculture Forest Service)

• Wood is a carbon neutral product that produces oxygen during its growth cycle and stores carbon during its service life (35 to 75+ years)
  (Source: University of Wisconsin Wood Products Program Solid Wood Flooring Life Cycle Analysis)

• Wood floors use less water and energy to produce than other flooring options
  (Source: University of Wisconsin Wood Products Program Solid Wood Flooring Life Cycle Analysis)

• Wood floors last hundreds of years, so won’t need to be replaced as often as other flooring options
  (Source: National Association of Home Builders)

• While it takes most hardwood trees 40-60 years to mature, the inventory planted today won’t be needed for 100-plus years
  (Source: National Wood Flooring Association)

While this would be enough for many companies, only a select few take their environmental stewardship to the next level. Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, for instance, is renowned for its commitment to sustainable operations. Chris Sy, their national sales director, explained the Carlisle philosophy.

“We’re focused on building beautiful floors that last forever without causing any detriment to our forests. Therefore, we never contract with clear-cutters. Instead, we work exclusively with a small, carefully selected group of timber growers who uphold the highest standards of sustainability. Plus, due to our exacting standards, only one tree in every five acres passes our inspection, which ensures that we’ll never clear a whole tree stand, allowing younger trees to mature.”

Beautiful, durable and sustainable... it’s easy to see the natural value of wood floors.

According to a recent Forest Service study of lifecycle analysis, it was determined that using wood yielded lower air emissions, including greenhouse gases, than the processes of using other traditional building materials.

–www.fs.fed.us
Not all Wood is Alike

The hard facts on wood flooring

You Have to Know Its Roots

All solid wood flooring comes from trees, but that’s where the similarity ends and the differences begin. While many tree species are widely distributed throughout the country, certain geographic areas offer optimum growing conditions for each species. For example, the best hickory is found in the upper regions of the Appalachian forests, where the short summers and cool climate provide for its substantial heartwood content.

Under these conditions, the trees age patiently and reach a richer level of maturity, which provides the wood with tighter, tougher grain lines. “This makes the wood more durable than others of the same species,” says Carlisle’s Chris Sy. “That’s why we select only mature trees from the optimum growing areas for each species.”

The Best Wood Comes From the Heart

Earlier, we mentioned a tree’s heartwood content. Heartwood is the older, harder nonliving central wood of trees. Usually darker, denser, less permeable, and more durable than the surrounding sapwood, it has long been known for its superior beauty, strength and long-term stability.

The early New England settlers, for instance, cut boards from the center, or heart, of the tree because they would be less likely to warp or shrink. Floors made from these boards would also be harder and more durable to stand up to heavy use with large, busy families of that era.

Very few floors today are comprised of heartwood. However Carlisle Wide Plank Floors are an exception. In his top-rated Building Blox Blog, contractor Todd Vendituoli notes on Bob Vila Nation, “Just as the early settlers used the heart of the tree for their flooring, so too does Carlisle. As a result, the boards are less likely to curl and warp and will stand up to years of constant use.”

“It’s Not Ready If It’s Wet Behind the Ears … Or Anywhere Else

Natural wood is organic. It breathes and has the ability to absorb or give off moisture depending on the environment. As it seeks to achieve its equilibrium moisture content, wood with higher moisture content is subject to significant shrinkage, which can also lead to splitting, cracking and warping. That’s why wood that’s green or improperly dried should be avoided, especially when it comes to installing over radiant heat systems or concrete surfaces.
Not all Wood is Alike

While every floor manufacturer has its own approach to eliminating moisture issues, there are few, if any, that come close to Carlisle’s three-pronged approach. First, Carlisle uses heartwood from mature trees to create its wide plank flooring. The density and stability of old growth heartwood in a wide plank minimizes expansion and contraction. Second, Carlisle air-dries all of its wood for up to one year. This slow, long-term drying helps avoid splitting and cracking while further enhancing stability. Third, as a final step, the wood is then kiln-dried in small batches to maximize strength and stability.

The Carlisle process is so thorough and time-tested; they’ve been able to install their solid wood flooring over every type of radiant heat system and concrete surface for over forty years.

There Are No Shortcuts To Lasting Beauty

In a world of computers, assembly lines and “I want it yesterday” demands, some things are still best not rushed.

Take your flooring, for instance. You’re going to be walking on it, looking at it and living with it for a long time, so you want it to be as beautiful as possible—now and for years to come. It should be a work of art, with each board carefully nurtured and crafted until they all come together in a singularly captivating masterpiece that will endure the test of time. That doesn’t happen by taking shortcuts.

According to Chris Sy at Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, that’s why they handcraft each board. “We look at each plank individually to ensure that it achieves its full potential, while at the same time considering how it fits in the total look of the floor we’re trying to create.”

At Carlisle, artisan woodworkers scrutinize every board to determine which side represents its full potential and carefully shepherd it through the milling and other processes. Along the way it’s re-inspected after each process to assure it’s nothing less than the best, because your home deserves a floor with lasting beauty.

Maybe that’s why Carlisle Wide Plank Floors is a Storybook Homes preferred vendor and recommended by Affluent Homes magazine.

The Carlisle process is so thorough and time-tested; they’ve been able to install their solid wood flooring over every type of radiant heat system and concrete surface for over forty years.
Adding a different dimension to flooring design

For Strength and Stability, Strips Don’t Measure Up
In the early days of this country, folks built things to last. A starter home was something to which they added rooms as your family grew. They didn’t trade up. And, they just simply didn’t have the time or the money to waste in constantly repairing their homes.

That’s why the early New England settlers used the longest, widest boards available for their floors. Cut from the heart of old growth trees, these boards were far less likely to warp or shrink than narrower and shorter boards.

Today, Carlisle Wide Plank Floors is widely recognized for using wide planks cut with maximum heartwood content from carefully selected mature trees to assure the same qualities of strength and stability that are inherent in a dense grain pattern. Then the planks undergo a proprietary, extended drying process to further minimize any chances of cupping, splitting, shrinking or warping. The result is a floor that stands the test for strength any way you measure it.

It’s Simple Math … Fewer Seams Equal More Beauty
Seams interrupt the flow of your floor, which takes away from its attractiveness. That’s because the eye looks for continuity. Smooth, unbroken lines are considered signs of beauty. Wide, long planks, like those from Carlisle, put the focus on the grain and character of the floor itself rather than the seams.

In fact, with Carlisle wide planks you can reduce the number of seams in your floor by up to 500%. And that can make a dramatic impact on the look of the room, including creating a sense of clean, open space, which helps any room feel bigger.

No Restrictions… Wide Plank Has A Wide Range of Uses
The key to versatility is strength under a variety of conditions. And, again, that goes back to dense grain pattern, careful drying and handcrafted attention. It’s no wonder Carlisle floors have proven that they are the most adaptive floors on the market today.

Made from old growth heartwood or reclaimed flooring to assure a tight, dense grain pattern for strength, Carlisle wide plank floors combine a proprietary extended drying process, along with strict attention to detail from artisan woodworkers. This assures their flooring is the ideal choice for every application—radiant heat, installing over a concrete slab and more.

“[Wide plank floors] offer a more natural appearance and have a much clearer style across the floor, which also makes rooms look bigger.”

News Alloy article

“Wide plank flooring offers a few distinct advantages. For one, there are fewer seams, so Carlisle’s wide planks have a striking look when compared to the common 3” variety of flooring planks.”

Building Blox Blog
Continuity—Let The Style Flow

As mentioned earlier, when it comes to floors, the eye likes continuity in lines and grain patterns. Again, wide plank floors, like those from Carlisle, create a natural flow from one room to the next with their lack of seams due to the long and wide planks. This is especially important in homes with a lot of open living space.

Mark T. White, of Kitchen Encounters in Annapolis (MD), chose wood flooring for a kitchen remodel where the floor flowed into a formal dining room and casual family room. According to White, “If we’d switched to tile or some other surface, the floor would’ve become an awkward interruption. And people prefer hardwood to tile or other kitchen flooring materials.”

Area Rugs Over Wood—A Smart Cover-up

Area rugs are an excellent way to expand your decorating options with wood floors. Together with strategic furniture placement, area rugs let you create defined living and entertaining areas within larger open rooms with wide plank wood floors. The wide planks tie all the areas together, while the color and texture of the area rugs makes them distinctive.

And, while the wide plank floors are made for lasting beauty, area rugs are easily changeable when you want a fresh décor style. However, it is vitally important to use a proper pad under the rug to protect the floor.

“Area rugs offer unlimited combinations of color, texture, pattern and placement.”

World Floor Covering Association (wfca.org)

“The addition of area rugs and rug pads for hardwood floors serve both an ornamental and practical purpose. Area rugs make a room cozier, they look nice, and they help protect the floor in certain situations.”

how-to-hardwood-floors.com
From ash to white oak, the beauty’s ingrained Rustic. Modern. Elegant. Every Wood Has A Unique Style.

With so many species to choose from, wood floors offer an endless combination of grain patterns, color and hardness to suit your tastes. Darker woods with tighter grain patterns tend to create an elegant, more formal atmosphere, while lighter woods with more open grain spacing provide a more casual look. At the same time, a lighter color wood with a tight grain pattern may blend well in a contemporary setting.

Another aspect to consider is the way a floor wears over time. For example, while Eastern White Pine makes a strong, durable floor, it will acquire dents and other characteristics of wear and age that give it a unique appeal which reflects its surroundings. It’s almost like a piece of folk art. Conversely, a very hard wood like hickory never changes. It maintains the same consistent beauty from start to finish.

Finally, reclaimed wood brings home a unique character with rich warmth behind its imperfections. There’s a unique charm in knowing that your floor is part of history.

Of course, as in many aspects of decorating and design, your personal sense of style should be the deciding factor in choosing the flooring for your home.

White Oak Hard to Beat

Hard and resilient, White Oak is a light, nutty brown wood with dramatic grain features that range from simple and sleek to intricate swirls. The dense fibers of this popular wood make for a durable floor with a versatile look—casual, formal, or contemporary.

Rift & Quartersawn White Oak A Cut Above

Radiating elegance and traditional beauty, Rift & Quartersawn White Oak is cut at a 90-degree angle from the log’s growth rings. This creates a uniform vertical pattern of tight, straight parallel lines running the length of the plank.

Hickory Tough, but Handsome

Think of hickory as the movie hero—tough as nails, yet incredibly handsome. With a tensile strength rivaling steel, Hickory makes one of the most durable floors available. Carlisle sources its Hickory exclusively from the upper reaches of the Appalachian Forest for its substantial heartwood content. Its very interesting patterns make it versatile enough for the most modern California homes and the most rustic lake-side retreats.

Walnut Absolutely Sumptuous

There is no other wood quite like Walnut. With rich, chocolate hues, surprising auburn undertones, and complex grain patterns, it creates a spectacular floor with or without stain.

It’s also one of the most attractive yet resilient woods available. Carlisle’s handcrafted planks are particularly striking due to their exceptional lengths, widths and heartwood content - the result of ideal Midwestern growing conditions for Walnut.

Eastern White Pine A Piece of Americana

Regarded as America’s most time-honored wood for wide plank floors, Eastern White Pine turns up everywhere, from early American colonial homes to contemporary urban lofts. Hand selected from the heart of the region’s most mature pines, each board has a dense, signature grain with subtle knots. While strong and durable, Eastern White Pine wears in over time, enhancing the unique character of a home. A true piece of Americana.

Heart Pine Return of a Classic

Heralded for its use during the American Industrial Revolution, Longleaf Heart Pine is cut from the heart of the timber. Hard as oak, with a warm patina and rich colors ranging from pumpkin and amber to darker, more modern hues, it’s available in a variety of grades. From the formal Heirloom with its tight knots and vertical grains to the rustic Original with wider lines, extravagant knots, and cathedral wood patterns, it’s perfectly at home in any setting.
Wood Species

Ash
Simply Striking
Amazingly dense and durable with unique elasticity, American Ash is prized for its interesting grain patterns and striking hues, from very light blonde to cream-colored to a rich nutty brown. You can choose grades with consistently lighter tones or more variation. It can also be stained for dramatic results in a range of settings... traditional homes... beachside cottages... refurbished urban lofts and more.

Birch
Dramatic Beauty
Birch makes a unique, captivating floor in which each board has an intriguing combination of blonde outer edges and warm amber portions. Its varying grain patterns range from subtle swirls to highly figured flame. Birch from Carlisle Wide Plank Floors typically contains more dramatic heartwood because it is sawn from fully mature trees grown and sustainably harvested in northern New England.

Cherry
Rich, Inviting Warmth
Nothing compares to the deep, glowing red color of polished Cherry flooring. It’s also unique in that its lustrous hues will darken a bit more than other hardwoods as it ages. Ultimately, a beautiful Cherry wood floor will mature to a rich, burnished auburn color. Together with the subtle but distinctive flowing grain patterns and uniquely inviting warmth, this has helped make Cherry one of the most popular floors.

White & Brown Maple
From Gyms To Grand Mansions
Dense, with clear, hard flowing grain and occasional swirls, White Maple is in high demand as a fashionable flooring choice in a variety of traditional and contemporary settings. Cut from the same tree as White Maple, Brown Maple has been tapped for maple syrup, so the inside of the tree develops rich, brown streaks and heartwood, which can create striking variations in color and character.

Reclaimed Heart Pine
Reclaiming America
A staple in the history of American architecture, Carlisle Reclaimed Heart Pine comes from beams and floor joists of old, soon-to-be-demolished mills and factories around New England, built during the Industrial Revolution. This antique flooring can add a classic look to any environment with its rich patina of deep amber and pumpkin hues, strong grain, and the ability to customize the grade to achieve the desired rustic appeal.

Reclaimed Oak
New World History, Old World Style
Discover a bright future in the past. With its remarkable color, which ranges from gold to amber to rich, nutty browns, plus a strong, prominent grain and eclectic figuring, Reclaimed Oak creates a distinguished Old World look from New World use. In its quest to find the best Antique Oak, Carlisle reclaims theirs from a variety of old buildings along the Ohio River Valley and western Pennsylvania.

Reclaimed Chestnut
A Rare Beauty
Reclaimed Chestnut is one of the most special reclaimed woods available from Carlisle. The prominent Chestnut grain and other markings complement the rich light brown and darker cocoa colors. A renowned American hardwood, this giant of the forest was all but wiped out by a tragic blight in the early 1900s. However, the reclaimed wood offers a unique wormhole character caused by bugs that ate the dying trees after the blight.

Milled Barn Wood
Rustic Charm
Unlike many other materials, time adds a sense of character and warmth to wood. Carlisle helps you bring it home with rustic Milled Barn Wood reclaimed floors. A mix of several different woods, including Red and White Pine, Hemlock and Spruce, it offers a rich, warm comfort in its varying hues—rich, nutty browns to auburns and yellows—and imperfections. Every nail hole, stain, knot and split reflects an enduring memory that commands genuine admiration.

Grandpa’s Floor
Wood Reborn
For something totally unique with a decidedly rustic charm, Carlisle offers a “reborn” floor whose original primitive beauty was covered up by dirt, debris and years of abuse. These old floorboards or structural floor joists are carefully cleaned, inspected and preserved with minimal milling. The result is Grandpa’s Floor -- the aged blend of rich pumpkin and deep charcoal color tones is amplified by the original stains, watermarks and saw kerfs.
Grades, Textures, Stains & Finishes

The top options for the best looking floor

Once you’ve selected the perfect species of wood for your floor, you need to choose the right grade, texture, stain and finish to complete the look you want. These decisions really can mean the difference between a floor that’s a lasting work of art, which enhances the beauty of your home, or just some boards under your feet.

With so many options to choose from, it’s also very important to deal with a floor company that listens to your needs, understands how to bring out the best attributes of each wood species and never compromises on its commitment. And few, if any, can match the reputation of Carlisle Wide Plank Floors when it comes to helping customers achieve the exact look they want.

“Carlisle is a valued Crocker Homes partner,” according to Craig Norleen, project consultant and manager at Crocker Homes Inc. in the San Francisco Bay area. “Carlisle was there at each step in the process helping our architect, owner and installers. Their expertise, ability to listen and ask questions helped our team realize the vision we were trying to create.”

Grades—It’s All About Style So Every Grade Passes

In addition to the characteristics of each species, wood flooring is also divided into grades, which reflect the aesthetics or look of the wood, not the quality. In Carlisle’s unique artistic grading process, they start and end with only the finest quality wood, which is available in two distinct grades—Heirloom and Original.

With its cleaner, more refined appearance, Heirloom has a formal appeal. On the other hand, Original offers a natural look that maintains more of the true character from the original timber.

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Craig Norleen, Project consultant and manager Crocker Homes Inc. San Francisco Bay area
Textures—An Edge In Style
From Hand-Scraped To Footworn

One of the big keys to any successful design project is the relationship of color, pattern and texture. With solid wood flooring, there are numerous texture options that can be combined with the different species patterns and stain colors to create any look you want. Generally, the texturing creates a distressed look that reflects a sense of heritage and craftsmanship. It’s also one of the most popular flooring trends today.

The World Floor Covering Association cites in its Top 10 Flooring Trends that “authenticity is behind a desire for floors that take inspiration from the past, charms us, or help us live lives more attuned to nature.” This trend for authenticity is showing up in flooring showrooms in the form of “wide plank, hand-scraped, distressed floors. These replicate historical flooring, going back to early America.”

World Floor Covering Association (wfca.org)

Of course, as with any aspect of choosing a new floor, you need to understand that capabilities and results will vary among flooring companies. Chris Sy, National Sales Director for Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, explains that textures, and how they’re created, vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

“Every one of our floors is individually crafted by hand in our Custom Shop,” says Sy, “many are looking to recreate the authentic, centuries old distressed appearances that some of today’s popular design trends call for.” He goes on to say that Carlisle offers six hand-crafting options to give your floor its own unique personality. Some are wide spread among flooring companies, while several are unique to Carlisle.

**Hand-Scraped Edges**

To achieve this look, Carlisle’s craftsmen gently hand-sculpt the edges of each board, a practice started over 200 years ago with the first pine floors in America, to straighten the boards when machinery was not available to do so. The scraped edge is the most affordable way to give each board a perfectly aged feel. This distressing technique is popular for restoration projects or to tone down the formal look of more refined floors.

**Hit Or Miss**

More deliberate than it sounds, this treatment is reserved only for Eastern White Pine floors. Boards from early saw mills contained saw swirl marking or kerfs, which have become the most sought after distressing technique used to recreate an antique-looking floor at a fraction of the cost.

**Watermill**

Until modern milling techniques were developed, boards from early riverside sawmills contained saw marks or “kerfs”. Carlisle experts authentically recreate this look with a unique milling technique and then enhance it with their Brushed Surface to deliver the most authentic, subtly worn surface. The entire floor appears as though it was “worn in” from years of existence. The kerf marks will absorb stain differently and create striking contrasts.

**Brushed**

Unique to Carlisle, this is a very subtle surface treatment which can have a dramatic impact on the look of a floor. Their craftsmen use brushes specifically designed for Carlisle, to subtly soften and contour boards in order give them a gently worn appearance with very fine brush markings. Accentuating the most desirable characteristics of the wood, this texture can be combined with any other surface treatment for stunning results.

**Footworn**

As floors are walked on, each board wears differently so they begin to develop distinctive undulating patterns, which vary due to the wood type, heartwood and softwood from board to board. Machine-scraped floors that are on the market today can’t come anywhere close to duplicating this look authentically. That’s why Carlisle craftsmen use specialized tools to hand-sculpt each board in recreating these subtle patterns literally one board at a time.
Prefinished or on-site finishing

The Advantage is Yours
Where you choose to have your floors finished can make a big difference in total cost, installation time and your stress level. It’s important to understand the benefits and drawbacks of both prefinishing and on-site finishing. It’s also critical to understand that the choice of flooring company makes a huge impact.

In general, prefinished flooring is exactly what it implies. As defined by the World Floor Covering Association, “prefinished hardwood floors come already sanded, screened and stained from highly efficient manufacturing plants.” On-site or “finish in place” as the WFCA lists it, “refers to having unfinished hardwood installed, sanded, stained and then finished with 2-3 coats of urethane right there in your home.”

Traditionally, prefinished floors make every project easier to complete and less expensive by avoiding the labor intensive, time-consuming and extremely messy process of sanding and applying stains and finishes. However, prefinished is sometimes associated with a cheap looking floor. And there have been people who have had the unfortunate experience of not being able to touch up a prefinished floor or refinish them so they feel like the floors do not last as long.

Fortunately, there is at least one key exception to these general perceptions. Carlisle has developed a unique prefinishing process designed to bring out the beauty of the wood and avoid a plastic look. Their prefinished floors can be cleaned and touched up with ease over the years.

The secret is two different yet equally remarkable prefinishing solutions—Carlisle Custom Coat™ stains and finishes, and Carlisle Naturals finishes. Chris Sy, Carlisle’s National Sales Director, says they are “totally unlike anything else in prefinished flooring, from the way they’re formulated to the way they’re applied.”

Combining time-honored techniques with modern technology, Carlisle has created a superior prefinishing process. Each board displays a deep hand-rubbed appearance rather than one that is painted on. Also, unlike most prefinished floors which arrive with the bottom unfinished, Carlisle coats their floors on four sides to slow moisture absorption.

If you want the ready-to-install ease of a no-mess prefinished floor plus the superior beauty of an on-site, hand-finished floor, a Carlisle prefinished floor gives you all of the advantages of both without any of the drawbacks.

Traditional Stains—In The End,
It’s All About Complementing The Wood

There are an almost infinite number of possibilities when it comes to picking the best stain for your wood floor. And, it seems like every flooring company has a different line-up of choices.

Since there’s no way we could cover all the options in this guide, we chose to use the offerings from Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, in part because of their reputation, but also because of their approach to stains.

To quote Carlisle’s web site, “We love the natural beauty of a freshly sawn wide plank board, and find nothing more offensive than a stain unbecoming to a particular piece of wood, or one that obscures the subtle details and delicate grain patterns of the wood under layers of paint.” It’s hard to argue with that kind of attitude.

The key is a commitment to matching each piece of wood with the proper stain for the particular piece of wood, or one that obscures the subtle details and delicate grain patterns of the wood under layers of paint.” It’s hard to argue with that kind of attitude.

The key is a commitment to matching each piece of wood with the proper stain for the particular species, while also taking into account your specific design scheme. That’s why it’s important to work closely with a floor company that understands how to create the perfect solution, including one-of-a-kind custom stain colors.
Carlisle Traditional Stains

Whitewash Fence
This stain is well loved and well traveled across a variety of settings: a formal Chicago high-rise; a beach house in Rhode Island; and the Park Hyatt Hotel in DC. It’s formulated with fine pigments that allow the color to transform the wood, without covering up the grain and character. Works well with White Oak, Hickory and Eastern White Pine.

Concord Honey
Most often used on traditional Eastern White Pine and Long Leaf Heart Pine floors, this stain adds just the right aged look. It’s especially popular for restoration style projects when the natural color of the wood isn’t quite dark enough.

Gingerbread
This is a beautiful stain that gives a warm feel to pine or hardwood floors without creating a very dark look. The color allows the natural variation and character of the wood to come through. It’s recommended for White Oak, Hickory, Eastern White Pine and Heart Pine.

Bradford Umber
Valued for its rich hues and warmth, this stain has been used to add a vintage feel to a pine floor, or to create a more formal look in a wide plank hardwood, including White Oak and Hickory.

Copper Mine
Inspired by the rich “pumpkin pine” patina associated with vintage White Pine and Heart Pine floor boards, this color is hard to replicate by most stains available today. Carlisle’s stain is specially formulated to soak into the wood, so it can recreate centuries-old colors, which also makes it quite popular for White Oak, Hickory and Maple floors.

Tobacco Leaf
Inspired by historical staining methods using tobacco soaked in turpentine, Carlisle’s Tobacco Leaf stain adds a rich, warm tone to many different wood species, including White Oak, Hickory, Eastern White Pine and Longleaf Heart Pine.

Sturbridge Brown
For a darker look without the red tones that can appear in some stains, Sturbridge Brown is the perfect choice. It’s recommended for White Oak, Hickory and Walnut floors.

Oatmeal Stout
This stain creates a very rich chocolate brown hue, which is often used on White Oak and Hickory as an alternative to Walnut. Whether you want an old, worn look from an Irish Pub, or an upscale, contemporary floor, this is a great choice. In addition to White Oak and Hickory, it’s also recommended for Eastern White Pine and Longleaf Heart Pine.

Vermont Coffee Bean
When it comes to brewing a rich, roasted color, this stain is the strong choice for waking up a hardwood floor. It’s a sure way to enhance the bold, natural appeal of select wood flooring, especially White Oak.

Antique Farmhouse
This stain is an excellent choice for anyone who loves the inviting reddish-brown tones of Tobacco Leaf but wants something a bit darker. Made with the same fine pigments as the other Carlisle stains, it creates an appealing color for both Pine and Hardwood floors.

Blacksmith
As the name implies, this stain is designed to give floors a smoky look, with the darkest tones possible. It’s been used to recreate time-worn Pine floors in a variety of applications, from New England breweries to the most upscale Long Island Mansions.
Grades, Textures, Stains & Finishes

Carlisle Finishes

Custom Coat™ Finishes—The Final Touch For Lasting Beauty

To bring out the true beauty of the wood and protect it, Carlisle Custom Coat™ uses a high quality, UV-cured urethane to prefinish the floors. Exceptionally durable, the finishes are easy to clean and easy to touch up. Carlisle does not use Aluminum Oxide. In fact, they discourage customers from using aluminum oxide because long term repair and refinishing can be more difficult.

Amber

Specifically designed to replicate the hand-rubbed oils and waxes that were used on the first floors in America, this finish is designed to be far more scuff resistant, easy to clean and touch up over the years. Available in a variety of sheens—Satin, Matte or Extra Matte—it’s recommended for White Oak, Hickory, Walnut, Longleaf Heart Pine, Ash, Birch, Cherry and Maple floors.

Clear

Clearer, and more flexible than most water-based polyurethanes that create build up and give the floor a plastic feel, these Clear finishes are just as durable as the Amber finishes, and just as easy to touch up. Carlisle Clear Finishes come in a variety of sheens—Satin, Matte or Extra Matte.

Natural Finishes—There’s No Substitute For The Natural Beauty Of Wood

Carlisle Naturals represent a revolutionary advance in wood floor finishes. All-natural, plant-based oil finishes, they are the ultimate “green” choice for bringing out the inherent beauty of the grain and patina of each of Carlisle’s wide plank floor species. They also add organic color variations that further individualize your floor as a unique and striking work of art.

And, while design trends change, the natural environmental palette of Carlisle Natural Finishes is always fresh because there’s no substitute for the natural beauty of wood. Grain pattern and color variation is enhanced when Carlisle Natural Finishes are applied to the wood surface and bring out the true beauty of the wood itself, creating a truly unique floor for your home.

According to Chris Sy from Carlisle, “The non-plastic, natural oils hide life’s little accidents and the special bonding action also makes touch ups and spot repairs easy and virtually undetectable since the oil will only bond with the damaged areas. Apply the natural finish, wait 10 minutes and wipe up what isn’t absorbed. It’s really that simple.”

Colors and finishes shown on White Oak or Pine as indicated. Appearance will change depending on wood species.
Pattern Floors

Look at flooring design from a different angle

A Custom Approach To A Unique Floor Design

Tired of straight lines? Carlisle understands. That’s why they’ve taken a new angle on wood flooring with their custom parquet floors. An exercise in tailored luxury, these floors are built to specifications in Carlisle’s Custom Shop.

Available pre-assembled in sections or individual pieces, these floors are offered in a variety of woods and patterns, including Chevron, Herringbone and Versailles. You can also create your own unique designs.

Chevron

Herringbone

Versailles

Custom Pattern
Installation

Lay it down right to stand the test of time

Installing a wood floor is a significant investment with a long-term impact on your home’s value. Needless to say, it should be approached carefully at all stages, especially installation. Unless you have extensive experience, all the right tools and lots of free time, it is strongly recommended that you have your wood floors professionally installed.

If you are still seriously considering installing your solid wood floor yourself, Carlisle’s Chris Sy warns, “most performance issues are driven by environmental factors and improper installation.”

Typically, floor companies such as Carlisle have a network of qualified, independent installers in virtually every area of the country that you can contract with for a professional installation. These installers are experienced in the nuances of what it takes to achieve a successful installation, from moisture acclimation to proper spacing of gaps, to assure that your new floor will look good now and for years to come.

“Installing hardwood floors is an art. Why hire anyone to install yours but a seasoned artist with skills developed through years of experience? Go with a professional who can guarantee a beautiful, efficient and correct installation. You’ll be glad you did.”

World Floor Covering Association (wfca.org)

Installers are experienced in the nuances of successful installation
Solid or Engineered Floors

It’s about options not restrictions

At the core of the debate

The National Wood Flooring Association guidelines recommend against using solid wood flooring in certain applications, where high moisture may be an issue, such as installing below grade or over a concrete slab. This make sense for most traditional wood flooring, where narrow strips, high moisture absorption and other issues can lead to warping and shrinkage. That’s why engineered wood flooring is traditionally recommended in these applications. The cross-layering in engineered wood is supposed to significantly improve dimensional stability.

Carlisle offers solid advantages

Unlike most traditional solid wood flooring, Carlisle wide plank flooring offers several advantages that make it suitable for all applications. It’s made from old growth heartwood to assure a tight, dense grain pattern for strength. Plus, it undergoes a proprietary, extended drying process. In addition, unlike most flooring, the traditional Carlisle Custom Coat™ prefinishing is coated on all sides to delay moisture absorption. As a result, they’ve been able to install their solid wood flooring over every type of radiant heat system and concrete surface for over forty years.

Taking the right stand

With all of their success using solid wood wide plank flooring in non-standard applications, some might question the decision to introduce Carlisle premium engineered wood flooring. First, they recognized that some installers are just more comfortable with engineered flooring in certain applications. And, second, they wanted to make a premium engineered floor that was worthy of the Carlisle name... and customer trust.

Unlimited options by design

Carlisle premium engineered wood floors are not limited to a few patterns or species and they are made to order just like their solid wood floors. This enables you to focus on the right look for your overall design without worrying about anything else. Above grade... below grade... bathrooms... kitchens... it doesn’t matter—you find the right look and they’ll provide it in the floor you need—solid wood or premium engineered wood. The choice is yours. The beauty is Carlisle.

Premium Engineered Construction

1. Wear Layer: A 3/16” wear layer compared to an industry standard of 1/12” to 1/8” offering the same thickness of sanding available as a solid floor without sacrificing the stability in an engineered platform.

2. Stabilicore™: Stability and floor longevity are enhanced by 11 layers of Baltic Birch backing.

Solid Construction

1. Solid Flooring: Solid hardwood flooring is milled from a single solid piece of hardwood featuring a 3/16” wear layer.
Solid or Engineered Floors

Engineered with strong core values
Carlisle has built a legend for crafting beautiful floors that will last forever by not taking shortcuts. That’s why they use only heartwood from carefully selected trees. The denser grain pattern gives each solid wood wide plank superior strength, durability and beauty that cannot be matched. They brought that same commitment to creating legendary engineered wood floors with their exclusive Stabilicore™ construction.

Layered with deep inner strength
The unrivalled Stabilicore center of every Carlisle engineered wood floor consists of 11-ply Baltic birch premium hardwood plywood, while typical American hardwood plywood is usually only 7-ply. These extra plies give Stabilicore a significant advantage in strength and stability. In addition, the dimensional stability is further compounded by layering each ply so that the grain runs at a 90° angle to the grain pattern of the previous ply.

Authentic Baltic birch... no substitutes allowed
Although some Baltic birch trees are grown domestically, the best climate for healthy growth is along the Baltic Sea in Finland and Russia. Here under optimum growing conditions, there is far less chance of wood bugs and other ailments creating voids or gaps. Because it’s void-free, their premium engineered construction makes rock solid joints from plank to plank for a floor that just won’t move.

It’s a Carlisle wide plank floor at heart
The Stabilicore provides Carlisle wide plank premium engineered wood floors with a moisture tolerance that’s far superior to traditional solid or engineered wood floors, so they can be installed anywhere in the home. In fact, under virtually any conditions, Carlisle wide plank premium engineered wood floors will outperform any other engineered wood (and most traditional solid wood) floors. And that makes it a Carlisle floor at heart.

Choose to look pretty... and smart
There are no trade-offs in choosing between Carlisle solid and engineered wood floors. Their premium engineered floors are hand crafted and made to order for the same level of customization you expect from Carlisle. And, unlike many engineered floors, theirs look just as beautiful as their solid wood floors. In the end, your flooring choice is a matter of what best fits your needs and those of your installer. But as long as you choose an attractive Carlisle solid or premium engineered wide plank wood floor, you’re making a smart decision you can stand on for years to come.

Request A Personalized Design Consultation
Carlisle Wide Plank Floors crafts custom floors, specific to the needs of our customers. Do you want some assistance with making informed design decisions? Interested in seeing what the finest floors, made from the best cuts of wood can do to transform your living space? Our team of sales professionals has the experience to answer all your questions regarding Carlisle floors.

Call Today 800.595.9663