

## Consumers Have Affordable Options When It Comes To Floor Covering

(NAPSA)—Buttery-soft carpet, weathered hardwood and hard-as-diamonds surface treatments are some of the latest trends consumers will encounter the next time they shop for floor covering.

That's the word from scouts and experts attending one of the home market's top international flooring trade shows—Surfaces. The show is sponsored by the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA).

Reports from the show offer some insight on the latest products and trends in flooring.

### Less Is More

Companies are concentrating on products that are sensible, low maintenance and easy on the budget. The new products making headlines include supersoft carpets that clean up “good as new” with lifetime stain warranties; affordable vinyl mimicking genuine stone; hardwood with precision detailing; and hard-surface flooring that has built-in antimicrobial properties.

Vinyl flooring today offers the look of stone, ceramic tiles and hardwood—sometimes so closely that you have to get on your hands and knees to tell the difference. These products can put good looks at the feet of all homeowners at a fraction of the cost and with less maintenance than their higher-cost authentic cousins.

Prices have come down on many eco-friendly floors thanks to high demand in the commercial industry. As a result, more people can install top-quality hardwood, bamboo or cork for several dollars per square foot less than a year ago.

### High Style, Low Maintenance

A number of products across all flooring categories promise to cut maintenance, cleaning and care time.

For example, hardwood manu-



Photo Courtesy of Beaulieu/Bliss Everclean

**Products that come with lifetime “satisfaction-guaranteed” warranties and carpets that clean up “good as new” are among the latest trends in floor covering.**

facturers have introduced surface treatments that are as hard as diamonds. There are even new products said to have wear layers that can withstand just about any kind of wear and tear—large families, animals, dirt and grime.

Other surfaces, including laminate and vinyl, are touting easy-to-maintain wear-surface durability. Some are equipped with built-in antibacterial and antimicrobial properties, as well as stain resistance.

In the carpet category, new products have built-in stain resistance, odor reducers, air fresheners and luxuriously soft fibers that maintain their integrity for years.

### Weathered and Reclaimed

Weathered and distressed floors are taking hold across multiple categories. This finish increases sturdiness and allows the product to withstand the high traffic and heavy wear of large families and pets.

In addition to distressed looks, homeowners now have the option of “reclaimed” wood floors. These floors are recycled from dismantled buildings, disassembled furni-

ture, wood and agricultural scrap. Repurposing saves money, is green and offers unique, designer-quality looks.

### High Style and Durable Luxury

Manufacturers are also introducing flooring of all varieties with add-ons such as fur, tassels, 14K gold and Swarovski crystals.

Hard surfaces, including tile, are incorporating precious metals while soft surfaces, like carpet and area rugs, are showcasing jewelry-grade crystals, animal skins and metallic fibers in the final products.

“Consumer demands for durability, low maintenance and lower prices have led to innovation and variety across all categories,” said Tom Jennings of the WFCA.

Jennings says that consumers expect their purchases to withstand the test of time and be eco friendly. As a result, manufacturers have created a variety of low-maintenance, affordable options that meet the demand for comfort and style.

### Covering Consumer Interests

The WFCA is the floor covering industry's largest advocacy organization, representing floor covering retailers, contractors and allied service providers throughout North America.

The Association's website offers detailed information and practical tips on every flooring category available, including carpet, hardwood, laminate, ceramic, porcelain, resilient, vinyl, cork, stone, and area rugs. In addition, it provides answers to many common floor-covering questions.

It also offers a searchable database of reputable retail members across the country. All users need to do is enter their zip codes to receive a list of local retailers.

For more information, visit [www.WFCA.org](http://www.WFCA.org) and [www.WFCA-PRO.org](http://www.WFCA-PRO.org).