

Decorator's Notebook



When It Comes To Flooring, The Bottom Line Is Value

(NAPSA)—Homeowners seeking an affordable way to significantly increase the value of their homes should glance down beneath their feet. Floors are among the largest surfaces in a home and have a dramatic effect on the look and feel of each room.

Fortunately, fine floors don't have to pull the rug out from under your budget. That's because unsurpassed durability and ultra-realistic designs and textures are available with laminate flooring at lower prices than traditional solid wood and stone tiles.

"Laminate flooring is one of the best, easiest and most affordable ways to update and upgrade a home," says home improvement expert Ron Hazelton, host of "Ron Hazelton's HouseCalls." It can be installed directly over nearly any existing floor and is very DIY-friendly, requiring no glue, nails or staples to install. Maintenance is also a snap, as laminate flooring requires no refinishing and can easily be cleaned with just a damp mop.

He offers the following "lessons" for finding the best value in laminate floors:

Lesson No. 1: Value Is More Important Than Price

To get the most for your home-improvement dollars, consider everything from product quality and features to the extent of the manufacturer's warranty coverage, the store's return policy, installation assistance and access to ongoing customer service if needed. Offers that seem too good to be true may mean closeout, excess product or flooring manufactured from offshore resources, risking the warranty protection.



A durable and beautiful new floor is a great way to increase the value of a home. Laminate flooring is an easy, price-conscious choice.

Lesson No. 2: Know What You Buy

While all laminate flooring brands promise durability and installation ease, for the best overall value, Hazelton advises shoppers to go with established brands known for quality and innovation. "Pergo, for example, invented laminate flooring and has been leading the industry for years," Hazelton explains. The company offers scratch protection; fold-down joints for faster, easier installation; and multilayered, embossed in-register texturing for ultra-realistic designs that look and feel remarkably like real wood.

**Lesson No. 3:
Think Beyond The Boards**
Choose a retailer with a wide

selection of décors, products and prices. If you're not planning to install the floor yourself, make sure you deal with a store that provides the installation services of a professional contractor and will guarantee the quality of the work.

"Your best bet for home improvement products is a national home center like Lowe's," says Hazelton. "It also offers professional installation services and hassle-free returns, and you know they are going to be around for years to come in case you need service or want to order more product."

For more information, visit <http://na.pergo.com/pergoadvantages>.

Or you can visit either www.Lowes.com or www.RonHazelton.com.