



Buyer's guide to
FLOORING

Designing a beautiful room starts with selecting a complementary floor. With many new materials and improvements to the old ones, you have a wide spectrum to choose from

Words/Malati Kallapur Vijay

Flooring designed with Bharat Flooring Tiles in a villa designed by Studio MoMo

As one of the most visible and permanent features of a space, flooring makes a lasting impression, while also lending a personality to it. It's a feature that has to last at least a decade and look good while bearing the wear and tear. And it has to set the right stage for changing interior trends.

Whether you're selecting flooring for a new space, or planning on replacing the old one, there are many options – traditional to modern, natural to engineered and synthetic. Many traditional products, like natural stones still hold forth. However, several new selections are almost edging them out. Each material, old or new, has its own features, visual appeal and functional features.

Whether you fancy your flooring to be glossy or matt, monochromatic or colourful, geometric or floral patterns, warm or cool... there is something to excite you. The selection should depend on the overall aesthetic you want to create, the space it is covering, and the weather conditions. So understand the character of the materials and the trends before taking the plunge.

If you are the kind who prefers to step on natural materials and experience its organic properties and features, then you have marble, granite, slate stone, limestone, kota, etc; or natural wood in the form of hardwood, laminates, or engineered wood, cork, bamboo. Leather is also a hot new option, though in India, it is mostly used in the form of rugs.

HARD WOOD The global Indian is fast embracing the classic beauty and exotic appeal of wooden flooring. While it was considered not the best option in tropical India with the high content of moisture in the air, technology has helped create many viable options. It comes in many attractive shades and finishes that can be re-buffed. In India, Mikasa has been one of the market leaders, providing solutions as per our climatic conditions. Constantly upgrading their collection, Mikasa's website is very helpful for those considering a change.

'Fumed wooden flooring and distressed finish are much sought after in India,' says Shruti Jalan of N+S Architects and Interior Designers. Hard wood has great reuse and resale value.

The UK-based flooring giant Haywoods, which launched in India last year, has also established itself as a wood-flooring expert by offering over 270 shades. They have just introduced the Design Collection comprising three of their most stunning patterns – Herringbone, Chevron and Versailles. Ideal for Indian weather, aesthetics and application, most of the tiles are in the range of 19mm-21mm sizes, in Prime, Rustic and Character grade.

MARBLE Traditionally one of the luxury options, marble is still sought after as a flooring for its timeless appearance. Its cooling properties make it an apt choice in a hot climate, and with advanced



Oak Stockholm + Oak Fume is the new addition at Mikasa for a two-tone herringbone pattern.



Mikasa, the Indian market leader has a range of Realwood and Engineered wood. They have recently introduced herringbone parquet options such as this in Oak

THINK GLASS MOSAIC TILES, AND THINK STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL LUMINOUS SURFACES



Nobon specialises in outdoor and deck flooring



Large sized herringbone options from Havwoods

MOSAIC-GLASS & STONE Nothing can match the scintillating beauty of glass mosaic floors. A versatile and sustainable material, they infuse effortless sophistication into a space. They come in solid or multi-colour tiles, which can be laid in interesting patterns to form exotic designs. Sicis and Bisazza mosaic tiles paint stunning imageries using tiny pieces of glass. Since glass is not porous, there is no fear of damage due to chemicals or dirt seeping into the tile. They are also resistant to mould and can be easily cleaned with a damp cloth. However, grime tends to show up easily on the transparent surface, requiring frequent cleaning. However, they are prone to scratches, so be mindful of pulling furniture across, or dropping heavy objects from a height. Also, if not installed with care, the adhesive may become visible. But, like all gorgeous things, they come at a high price.

Stone mosaic, as popularised by Keramos is another great option. One can also create a carpet pattern with the mosaic and add an unusual element in areas where one would least expect. The trick however, is in the laying of mosaic pieces.



Pebbled flooring for outdoors and patios from Keramos

Demand for engineered wood is rising



Parul Mittal, Director Greenlam Industries Limited

How has the demand for wooden flooring risen in India?

From a global flooring market perspective, India is still a growing market in wood flooring, but the current growth rate of about 20 per cent per annum is a good indicator.

Homes have become a place where you can express yourself, which has helped the wood flooring sector to grow. Wood floors have become a bit of a status symbol and are easily available. Their installation has also become simpler and faster, further increasing the demand. Aesthetically speaking, the Indian consumer has developed an upscale taste and has started exploring multiple contemporary options when it comes to wood flooring.

How suitable is wooden flooring in the Indian context?

As awareness about different products increases, customers want to move away from conventional materials like stone, mosaic, ceramic tiles, carpets, etc. to newer, more versatile material, such as engineered wood floorings. People abroad still prefer cold hard floors, but in India, the market for engineered wood flooring is slowly growing.

Mikasa, the first engineered flooring brand produced out of India, is made using ethically sourced raw materials from the world over. The HDF core conforms to E1 grade and all the lacquers and stains are water-based, making these floors practically VOC free and non-hazardous.

The average amount of moisture in the air in India makes regular hardwood floors bloat. However, Mikasa wooden flooring is stable in all climatic conditions. The product is carefully treated, engineered with locks for proper installations and the right expansion gaps that do not get damaged during weather changes.

What are the maintenance issues?

When it comes to cleaning, a regular vacuum cleaner will work just fine. Do not use a wet vacuum. A damp cloth is also enough. During the monsoon season, the moisture content in the air is already high, so a damp mop or even a dry one is enough to keep them good for years to come. Use a doormat at the entrance to prevent dust and water getting on the floor.