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### **What's on the Floor?**

**Anaheim, CA – June 12, 2006** – Linen tiles disguised as ceramics, hardwood engineered for your region of the country, and rugs you can wash with a garden hose are just some of the innovations that have shown up at Surfaces – the largest floor covering tradeshow, held annually in Las Vegas.

The World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), official sponsor of Surfaces and the industry's largest advocacy organization representing specialty floor covering retailers and contractors, has provided a showcase for many new, stylish floor coverings launched at the tradeshow. Here is a sampling of the fashionable looks that are making their way to the floors of homes and business across the country.

#### **"Gorgeous Glistening Tiles Made from Old Bottles"**

Glass tiles have been popular for years, only now some manufacturers are catching on to consumer demands for "environment-friendly" products. One company promises their products are made from 100% recycled glass. Don't worry – a few decades existing as a Coke bottle takes nothing away from the ability of glass tiles to reflect, refract and twist light like no other product on the market.

Other companies have focused on the old-but-new look with many varieties of stone, ceramic and porcelain tiles. You'll find ceramics reminiscent of marble, limestone and travertine tumbled and distressed to appear antique. You'll also discover tiles that you'd swear are linen, but are really porcelain with a faux, but very believable veneer. Also for the first time in the U.S., one company launched polished stone in the shape of planks instead of square tiles.

When it comes to mosaics, the sky's the limit. Totally customized mosaic collages, designed in any image, any color and any size, are now available that's to new image-producing and stone-cutting technology. Whether you want to recreate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel on your kitchen floor, or blow-up a portrait of the family pet, there are no limits on how far you can go with these hand-made looking high-tech pieces.

#### **"Floor Inspired by and Created by Amish Craftsmen"**

You don't need to drive a horse and buggy to enjoy the pleasures of Amish craftsmanship. One company has partnered with the Pennsylvania Dutch set to create a "hand-scraped", distressed hardwood look for your home. Each individual plank, which comes in a variety of sizes, is hand-sculpted to create a unique custom flooring of timeless originality and distinction. In a similar vein, another company is debuting "reclaimed" pine flooring from age-old Kentucky distilleries. Yet another company has gone so far as to add "faux wormholes" and darkened saw-blade and nail marks to their hardwood floorboards. Each plank is imperfectly beveled, blackened and speckled with authentic knots, press-dried cracks and dark heartwood – assuring that no two pieces look exactly alike.

Another recent technology gaining popularity in the hardwood category is flooring that is engineered based on the region of the country where you live. Seasonal changes and differing moisture levels can create unnecessary wear and tear on wood that is not treated for particular environments. Some of the new hardwood launches are divided into multiple layers which can be treated to regulate environmental factors, including temperature, dryness and humidity.

#### **"Carpets With Culture"**

No question about it, carpets and rugs of tomorrow exude class from end to end. Some even come pedigreed with Andy Warhol's signature touch. Proceeds from each of the rugs sold in the Andy Warhol collection benefit the Andy Warhol Foundation which supports organizations that foster artistic expression. Whether you want to match an heirloom Tiffany lamp, or your new piece of modern art, you can have a gorgeous handmade rug designed in any pattern and color in the pantone scale you desire. There's no stopping with soft weaves, either. You can have a rug made of one of mother nature's most plentiful and durable "green" materials, bamboo. The classic water-resistant rugs come in a wide variety of sizes and shades to suit any setting.

A rug you can clean with your garden hose? One company, renown for cotton weaves, promises stains and caked dirt will wash out effortlessly and quickly with pressurized water. Throw it in the washing machine for a rinse or spread it out on your driveway and put that hose to good use.

Another product that made its debut at Surfaces was Cheena ®, the newest member of the "green" floor covering family. One hundred percent natural, Cheena consists primarily of reeds native to India. Cheena, like cork, grows back within a few months when cut. But unlike cork, Cheena grows back very quickly and flourishes on its own in the wild. Cheena woven rugs and mats come in a variety of styles and sizes.

Cork, another resilient product, is holding its own in terms of consumer demand. It is a environmentally-sound product, harvested straight from the bark of the Cork Oak leaving the tree unharmed. New cork products on the market can be installed quickly and easily, requiring no glue and no time wait after installation. Cork comes in a wide variety of shades and textures.

**"Engineered Weathered Wood Floors Complete with Knots and Grain Textures That Will Fool Even the Best Trained Eye"**

New laminate products provide realistic looking wood patterns right down to the individual grains, knots, burls and grooves. There is no limit to the variety of looks – either from hardwood, including walnut, cherry, alder, birch and beech – to stone, including marble and travertine. Many of the new hardwood look alikes are very affordable. Bargain hunters seeking a real-hardwood look, will find low maintenance and long-lasting laminates a great deal.

A new entry into the category is the "Supergloss" laminate. The only thing to compare to the shine of this product is the surface of a pool. The new highly durable product comes in a wide variety of stunning and realistic timber & stone finishes.

"New flooring is always a sound investment to make in your home," said Chris Davis, President and CEO of the World Floor Covering Association. "Studies have shown that new flooring adds considerable market value to a home and many homeowners can expect a complete return on their investment when it comes time to sell. Right now, companies across the country are making a concerted effort to bring consumers the best quality products at the most reasonable prices."

The World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), based in Anaheim, California, is the industry's largest advocacy organization representing specialty floor covering retailers, manufacturers and distributors across the globe. The organization focuses on education and certification programs, industry conventions and trade shows, providing effective tools for business management and offering a strong governmental affairs program to its members.

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