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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Most Stylish Floors of Tomorrow Today

Anaheim, CA – June 9, 2006 Linen textured tiles, century-old wood, bamboo rugs, buttery leather, and sponge are just some of the new looks that have donned the floors at the premium floor covering tradeshow, Surfaces.

The World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), official sponsor of Surfaces and the industry's largest advocacy organization representing specialty floor covering retailers and contractors, offers a top line overview of the fashionable looks that have made their way to the floors of homes and businesses across the country this year.

"What's Old is New"

The new trend now is "old". Rustic, weathered and antique looks are the hottest thing going in hardwood, ceramic and stone. The old-but-new look surfaces on many varieties of hardwood which display texture with hand carved grooves and knots; tiles, reminiscent of linen; and marble, limestone and travertine tumbled and distressed to appear antique. Some of the wood manufacturers are even hand beveling and distressing individual planks and then finishing them to achieve the appearance of a century old wood floor. This weathering technique assures no two floors look exactly alike.

"Palette of Colors and Patterns"

Earth tones and natural surfaces have been a dominant trend and are still popular but jewel tones and custom designs are making strides this year. Some of the hottest colors in carpet this year are jade, ruby, persimmon, jasmine and one called "stormy sky."

Hand painted tiles in custom colors and natural tones are popular as well as pre-fabricated and custom murals made of stone and ceramic. New laser technology creates a permanent, non-marring or fading image on the surface of ceramic tiles. Even personal photos can effortlessly and affordably be converted into bathroom tiles.

Bold geometrics are back on carpets. The southwest look has also resurfaced. New looms, creating as many as 30 different shades of color in a single design, provide rich texture and dimension.

Black walnut and cherry birch are some of the newer looks in the hardwood category. One birch manufacturer claims that its planks change color and grain pattern with the change of light.

"Green With Envy"

Great looking floor covering products that are also good for the environment are also big on the scene. Bamboo is one that has been growing quickly in popularity. It is available in a wide variety of shades and is the only hardwood that is suitable for bathrooms and under sinks in kitchens, as the tree naturally grows in water and will not warp or expand when wet. It is also usually less expensive than hardwood because it grows abundantly and quickly. Cork is an environmentally sound product, harvested straight from the bark of a Cork Oak leaving the tree unharmed. New cork products can be installed quickly and easily, requiring no glue and no wait time after installation. Cork comes in a wide variety of shades and textures. New to the market is a cream colored variety. In addition, a new introduction is rubber based flooring which proves to be extremely durable, easy to maintain and environmentally sensitive.

“Luxurious Looks at a Fraction of the Cost”

Through new technologies and innovations, companies are now able to give consumers what they have been wanting – affordable products that look “expensive”. Some hot looks for the budget-minded include solid bronze tiles that can be incorporated with ceramics on bathroom and kitchen floors and walls. Mini accent tiles made of gemstones such as opals and mother of pearl or exotic seashells in a variety of colors – lavender, pink, blue, gray and green – add classy touches when set with natural stone and porcelain. In addition, pieces of glass made to look like finely polished river stones make a stylish statement in black, white, and shade of gray.

Thanks to new advancements, high quality textured carpets are made more affordable with new technology. Relief patterns, combined densities and drop stitch finishes create textures that resemble expensive hand-carved wool rugs. The new rugs are inherently stain resistant and ultra dense for years of enjoyment. Modular carpet floors provide a quick affordable way to add carpet inside and out. They can be easily inserted into the base forming a single snap together unit.

Many of the new hardwood look alikes are very affordable. Bargain hunters seeking a real-hardwood look, right down to the wood grains, will find laminates—the “great imposters”—a great bet. They are low maintenance and long lasting.

“Custom Finish”

Floor covering products are becoming more versatile in response to demand that they be customized to suit individual tastes. Whether you are looking for that perfect shade of ecru or an antibacterial finish on your hardwood, the sky is the limit when it comes to customizing floor coverings. Carpets come in every color on the Pantone color scale and can also be hand dyed to perfectly match and décor. Loom woven carpets and rugs come in every color, style and pattern imaginable. There are even companies that will work with their customers to had design individual pieces.

Some of the new hardwood launches are divided into multiple layers which can be treated to regulate environmental factors including temperature, dryness and humidity. Only the imagination limits the versatility of stone and tile, which can be produced and assembled to achieve most any look.

For those really “going the distance” with customization, one company has launched a new flooring product comprised of millions of micro air bubbles that absorb impact, protecting athletes from injury.

“Textured Looks”

Whether your taste is natural fiber, the natural patina of vegetable tanned leather or distressed wood looks, texture of all kinds is in abundance in the floor covering launches at this year’s show.

Carpets combining wool, silk and cotton can be personalized through color and pattern or crazed with ripples and edges to add shadow and dimension. For a more casual look, other varieties offer chunky felted loops and pile which create a landscape of color and texture.

Natural fiber carpets—including sisal, sea grass and mountain grass—are very affordable, match most decors and come in a wide variety of colors and styles.

New technology replicates the gloss levels of stone and textures in glazed ceramic tiles, textured grout, slate or marble. New tiles offer glassy or matte finishes with one-of-a-kind rough-cut edges, random air bubbles, and crazing for an artisan inspired appearance.

New laminate products provide realistic looking wood patterns including walnut, cherry, alder, birch and beech. Synthetic ceramic counterparts offer genuine porcelain looks with naturally honed finishes and micro beveled edges. There is even a new man-made woven product that offers the easy-to-care-for properties of vinyl with a non-slip surface when wet.

“Whether you are building a home or renovating one, this is an ideal time to purchase floor coverings”, said Chris Davis, President and CEO of the World Floor Covering Association. “Manufacturers and retailers across the board have made a concerted effort to bring consumers the best quality products at the most reasonable prices. In these times, purchasing quality floor coverings is a sound investment. They will only add market value to your property.”

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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