

FCW

FLOOR COVERING WEEKLY

Pushing Boundaries

Industry craftsmen are not only known for restoring the old into new, but also for applying and experimenting with modern colors, textures and techniques to a timeless floor covering. Plus, many of today's hot trends, such as cerusing and multi-tone stains, Miller first saw as a WFOY entry or award winner.

There's a lot that you can do to manipulate the look of wood. According to Eric Herman, president of New York-based [State of the Art Wood Floor Gallery](#), which specializes in custom finishing, installations and materials sourcing, "The fact that you can stain wood essentially any color from white to black, and can use a multitude of finishes from a raw look to high sheen," is one of the main reasons why wood has more design flexibility over other floor coverings. And, he said, "I believe wire-brushing brings out the natural beauty of wood along with using penetrating oil finishes which absorb into fibers of wood and leave a very natural look."



In just four days, a team from State of the Art Wood Floor Gallery refinished 5,000 square feet of herringbone flooring in the Prince George Hotel's ballroom located in New York's Madison Square neighborhood. It was built in 1904.

For Duvenjian — who has worked on everything from the restaurants of famous chef David Bouley, to the bar and dining rooms of Tavern on the Green, a historic landmark in Central Park — it's about approaching each job as a new opportunity to create. He prides himself in providing floors that can only be crafted once.

"What everyone [in the industry] does is walk into people's homes to sell floors by showing a customer the colors in style, or saying chevron is in style, but that's so opposite of the way we should think," Duvenjian argued. "What's in style means it's being repeated, it's being copied."

Duvenjian listed three elements important to creating original colors: the type of environment the floor is going to be installed in; the surrounding décor (the curtains, the furniture, the styles); and, most importantly, the lighting. Questions he addresses include how the light is being filtered into the room — are there a lot of glass windows? Is your décor focused on being lit naturally or artificially? What type of bulb is the room's light source?

Changing the shape of the plank itself is also a timeless way to approach a novel wood design. A new launch from PID Floors this year included Angles. In collaboration with Caleb Anderson, co-founder of interior design studio Drake/Anderson, the collection was born out of an idea spurred by a project's remaining chevron planks. But the company's true bread and butter, explained Skutelsky, is reactive staining.

"We use cocoa beans and vinegar. My family came from old-school Russian life so, when we moved to America, they brought over that craftsmen knowledge," he continued, adding there's a lot of trial and error happening at one of the company's warehouses in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Right now, though, PID Floors is focused on supporting its installers — the people who assemble these floors and bring designs to life. "Our industry is going through a lot," admitted Skutelsky, but shared he believes the industry will come back more inspired than before.

Top Techniques

Eric Herman, president of the State of the Art Wood Floor Gallery, shared a few techniques with *FCW* that are both aesthetically pleasing and promise to yield great results:

- Fuming – Wood gets exposed to ammonia in an enclosed facility and through osmosis wood ages and darkens to a beautiful rich color. One of our most popular floors, Tobacco, is fumed European Oak with a clear zero VOC oil. The fuming process goes deep into the wood and if you do chip or scratch the color remains.
- Torching – Also known as "shou sugi ban," a Japanese technique, we burn the face of wood with torches, then wire-brush to a clean surface. Can be finished clear or with different colors which creates a very unique, "one-of-a-kind" look.
- Wire-Brushing – The face of the wood gets brushed with a metal wheel, soft grain gets removed and creates great dimension. Colors can be layered on and the floor will have a two-tone color theme.
- Tumbling – Wood goes in a large barrel that rotates and contains bricks and stones. Wood gets dented and worn to create a distressed look.