A DREAM MADE REALITY

By Burt Bollinger

Moving into a new home offers a unique opportunity to start fresh, but for Eric Herman, CEO of State of the Art Wood Floor Gallery in New York City, it allowed him the chance to install his dream floor.

“The project is actually in my home, as we moved into a new house in the suburbs. It was a beautiful spec home in which I loved all of the finishes, except for the floor. I wanted to take this house to another level with something gorgeous,” says Herman. “I always wanted to use the pattern, called “Mansion weave.” I knew that I would use it at some point in one of my personal projects because I loved it so much. I love the angles, the way everything meets.”
Herman closed on his new house on November 30, and by December 1, he already had a dozen people from a demolition company in his new home removing the existing floors.

“Normally, I would have one or two of my guys work on an area, but the way the demo company worked was different. It was an amazing and powerful chain of guys going from room to room in a line,” explains Herman. “It took them six days to get the flooring out, pull out the staples, and scrape a good percentage of the glue off the plywood subfloor.”

Herman’s personal team then came in to scrape the remainder of the glue and skim-coated any voids left in the plywood with a cement patching compound, as some of the plywood was sheared during the removal of the flooring.

“Once the subfloor was ready, I glued down 5mm Pliteq GenieMat throughout the home for soundproofing. We used Bona R851 on both the bottom and the top of the rubber mat, then started installing the flooring,” explains Herman. “Because the weave pattern was too overwhelming to do throughout the full home, I decided on doing the pattern in the entrance foyer and hallway, and using 8” wide flooring elsewhere.”

Wood for the pattern was engineered pre-finished European oak. Herman says that he worked directly with the manufacturer to produce a color that matched his vision.

“The flooring was first wire brushed and then smoked for two days, which is called ‘thermo treating,’ where we put the wood under extreme heat to darken it,” explains Herman. “Once we had the base color where we wanted it, we lightened it back up using a stain and then applied Osmo hardwax oil on top.”

Installing the intricate pattern in the 350-square-foot entry foyer took two of Herman’s extremely skilled master installers three weeks.

“I didn’t think it would take that long. In hindsight, it looks easy in theory, but to keep everything tight and keep angles lined up and lines straight is time-consuming, delicate work,” explains Herman. “All the pieces were pre-cut to the proper sizes, but even with that work done, laying everything out properly and keeping everything tight required an extreme amount of care and patience. We then had to cut in the border, which was not an easy task.”

For the border design, Herman first determined the linear footage he would be laying and pre-routered all the border pieces in his shop to accept a ¼” brass bar inlay.

“Doing the routering at the shop allowed us to avoid doing it on-site in a less-controlled environment. I think this approach worked out very well as it was a time-saver and allowed for a cleaner, more-precise cut,” says Herman.

Brass is a theme throughout the house, which has a modern farmhouse look. In addition to adding brass to the floor, Herman used brass creatively on a staircase in the home.

“Going up the stairs, we have wainscoting on the left side of the stairway that also happened to have a ¼” reveal in each line,” says Herman. “I took that same brass and installed it in the wainscoting, and it’s a tremendous detail that really adds to the look of the home.”

A final detail that Herman is proud of is the wood flooring that sits at the bottom of the staircase.

“To create the border around the radius of the staircase, I found three boards that were all rift sawn so that they each had straight grain,” he explains. “We glued those together to create one wider board. Then, we set up a template and routed it. Doing this allowed the grain to look continuous.”

With the new floors installed in his new home, Herman says that the results surpassed his highest hopes and are a dream come true.

“I couldn’t be happier with how the floors turned out in this home. As someone in the hardwood flooring industry, I’m thrilled to be able to look at it every day,” he says. “It brings joy to me and my home.”