

**By Kris Linder**

Every house needs one, whether made of wood, stone, concrete, tile, carpet or any combination thereof. Next to the walls, the floor is the largest palette decision you will make for your home — so be sure you put some serious thought into it.

Wood is the most natural of all flooring material. Not only do you get a floor that is beautiful to look at and walk on, you also get a piece of authenticity created by

## **DESIGN FYI:** **Flooring 101**

nature itself. It used to be that your choices were oak, oak and oak. Not anymore — hickory, maple, ash, birch and bamboo are finding their way into every style and size of home.

Bamboo? Absolutely! It's one of the newest woods being used in flooring, and one of the most exotic and plentiful. It is as hard as maple, 50 percent more stable than oak and has a durability that is unrivaled. Grown to full maturity within just five years, bamboo's fast rejuvenation process is a great aid in helping preserve our forests.

Many other exotic woods may be used for flooring, most of which are from environmentally friendly forestry programs, so they won't damage protected rainforests. These include birdeye maple, curly maple, purple heart, Brazilian cherry, royal mahogany and Peruvian walnut.

One of the most fantastic things you can do with wood flooring is to incorporate architectural elements with them — marble, granite or limestone borders or accents can add great personality to your floor. Insets of brass, copper or glass tile are a stunning way to transition from room to room, either as thresholds or as sporadic design elements. Additionally, laser applications of decorative wood inlays can add drama, design and decoration to your floor.

How the wood is cut or sawn has a big effect on the look of the floor. Varying the length and width of each plank can provide myriad design options and put a signature touch on your floor.

*Kris Linder is proprietor of Interior Design Source in Los Gatos, which provides a full array of home design consulting and architectural planning services. Available online at [www.interior-design-source.com](http://www.interior-design-source.com)*