

Consider installing a floor that looks luxurious within a small area and where you could put a matching pattern on one or more walls. Century marble in Azrock Luxury Vinyl Floor Tile, shown here, could create some excitement among your visitors.

Shopper's guide to vinyl flooring

If you're in the market for vinyl flooring, here are some facts to keep in mind when shopping. The information comes from Armstrong, a leading manufacturer of this kind of flooring.

• Construction

Some vinyl floors have their designs printed on, while others use a more durable inlaid process where the design extends through the entire thickness of the wear layer. In general, inlaid floors are tougher and more resistant to cutting and tearing.

• Wear Surfaces

You'll see a lot of manufacturers' brand names for wear surfaces, but there are really only two types: urethane and vinyl. As you read on, you'll see why it's important to distinguish between them.

• No-Wax

Of all the terms associated with flooring, this is perhaps the most confusing to consumers. Years ago, all resilient floors needed waxing to protect the pattern and color against wear. Today, most floors are "no-wax" in the sense that they no longer require this protection.

However, if you buy a no-wax floor, be sure to ask the dealer if it's vinyl no-wax or urethane no-wax. This is important if you want to keep a shine on your floor. Although both types need regular cleaning, vinyl no-wax must also be polished or buffed to maintain a shine. Urethane-surfaced floors require neither of these steps.

• Stain Resistance

The point to remember here is that all floors can be stained. So quick cleanup of accidental spills is important, especially with harmful substances like hair dye, ink, mercurochrome

and nail polish.

Vinyl-surfaced floors have a light edge over urethane for stain resistance. But common sense and good maintenance practices are your best protection, no matter what type of flooring you select.

• Floors and Asphalt Driveways

Many people are unaware that tracked-in residue from asphalt driveways and driveway sealers can lead to discoloration of floors over a period of time. White or very light-colored materials are especially susceptible. You can minimize this by using walk-off mats at entrances — and perhaps choosing a darker shade of flooring if there's to be frequent traffic directly from the outside.

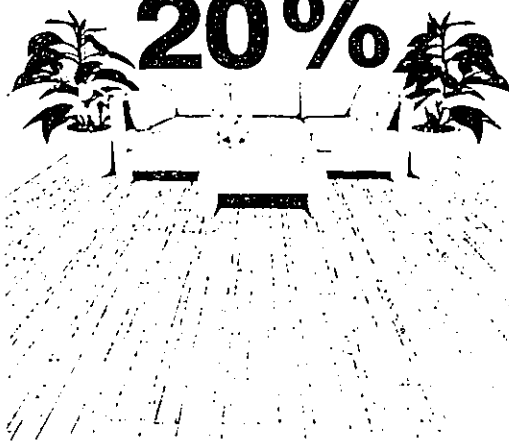
• Warranties

Reputable brands of flooring are warranted against manufacturing defects for a period of up to five years from date of purchase. You should get this in writing from the dealers who sell you the floor, and become familiar with its provisions.

Bear in mind that a manufacturer's warranty covers material only. It doesn't cover problems caused by improper installation. This is the responsibility of the dealer who installs your floor. So choose a dealer who's experienced and enjoys a good local reputation.

For a free information folder on vinyl flooring, write to Armstrong Consumer Services, Attn: Floors, P.O. Box 30001, Lancaster, Pa. 17604. Or call toll-free: 800-233-3823. The folder contains color brochures showing various patterns and styles, a shopping planner, warranty information, and more tips on selection.

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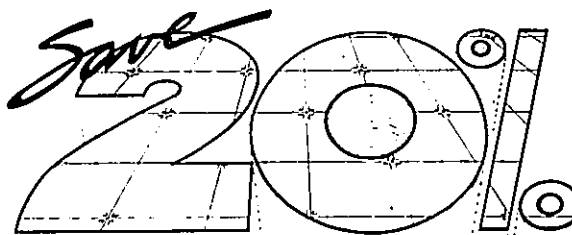
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