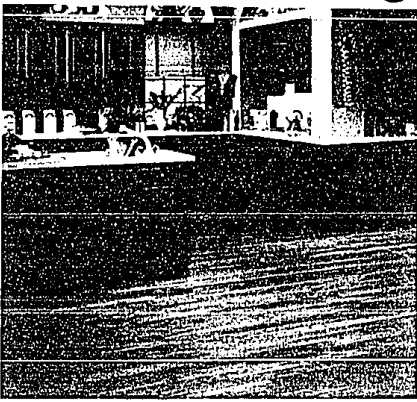


Wood showing up in kitchens



Sterling Prestige Plank floor from Bruce.

You have the right to a warm and comfortable kitchen. Anything you want to do with your kitchen cannot be held against you in a court of design. You are entitled to select a designer who knows and understands materials. If you do not have one, you have the right to investigate and determine what is best for your kitchen.

It used to be that one of the rules of kitchen design was to stay away from wood for flooring and countertops. The unwritten law said that solid hardwood wouldn't be practical because moisture and everyday traffic would be too much for wood to withstand.

"Design laws were made to be broken, says award-winning kitchen designer Vicki Trigona Edwards.

"The kitchen should be livable. Hardwood is practical in the kitchen and it makes you feel comfortable, especially when it's combined with soft, pastel colors."

In one of Edwards' designs, she broke from conventional wisdom and installed solid oak countertops and flooring. Cherry cabinets with a light finish combine with maple accents to complete the hardwood elements in the kitchen.

But are wood countertops practical? Scratches

and cut marks in a solid hardwood counter can be sanded out and refinished. What about moisture, glass rings and household detergents? Won't they mark up the counters?

Not according to James Reichart of Bally Block, who said the counters in the Edwards-designed kitchen were treated with a new finish called Durakryl 102.

"It repels everything from household solvents to glass marks," Reichart said.

He added that Durakryl 102 eliminates the penetration of bacteria into wood.

"The fact is that bacteria will grow on any surface that is not kept clean. Cleanup after each use are essential no matter what type of countertop you own."

Defenders of hardwood flooring point to the parquet floor at the Boston Garden and gym floors in old schools that have withstood years of abuse.

Edwards said that her kitchen features and oak strip floor that was treated with a strong polyurethane finish, which withstands spills.

More information on the use of hardwoods in the kitchen can be obtained by writing: The Heart of the Home, Hardwood Manufacturers Association, 4240 Greensburg Pike, Suite 103, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221 or by calling 1-800-747-WOOD.

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