

The Avignon Collection

Product Information

Inspired by the 19th century Arts & Crafts movement, Avignon marries the craft of Old World artisans and 21st century manufacturing technologies to create heirloom quality oak hardwood flooring. Using a variety of antiquing and aging techniques and finishing with natural oils to preserve the original beauty of the wood the distinctive character of each Avignon plank actualizes.

Avignon's natural oil finish provides a warmth and refinement to the floor that is unequalled to modern day acrylic or polyurethane finishes. The rich patina of each Avignon floor enhances with age and use – the more it is aged, the more beautiful it gets. The natural oils in Avignon floors penetrate the grain and become part of the floor, while acrylic and polyurethane surface coatings detract from the natural beauty of hardwood and degrade with age and use.

Avignon floors feature a distinctive and sophisticated range of distressed, smoked, and antiqued floors finished with either natural or pigmented oils. Meticulous attention to each Avignon floor ensures lasting beauty for generations to come. A solid oak hardwood top layer rests on a multi-layered, dimensionally stable core giving each Avignon floor the strength to withstand decades of use.

WHY OIL FINISH?

The popularly used acrylic, polyurethane, or aluminum oxide wood finishes cannot compare to a natural oil finish. These finishes protect the floor by forming a wear layer, in fact a plastic film on the surface of the floor. They scratch and get dull over time and cannot be spot repaired. Only a costly recoating of the entire floor is necessary every so often for complete rejuvenation.

An oil finish penetrates the wood fibers to harden them while not altering the natural beauty of the wood. With no visual film on the surface, oiled floors are distinguishable by their elegant patina. They are easy to care for and are repairable. An oiled floor never needs complete sanding; only regular applications of a **Maintenance Oil** are necessary to nourish the wood and bring the luster back.

Consider the following:

Natural-Oiled Floors vs. Polyurethanes

The use of natural oils to finish wood is a practice used for hundreds of years. Our natural oil finishes made with linseed oils is an old standby for finishing wood. Polyurethane is the new kid on the block, developed about 50 years ago and its primary design purpose is to make furniture shiny. Polyurethane is a plastic made from petroleum, a flammable liquid often used in chemical energy sources such as gasoline and diesel, and which gives polyurethane its distinct "chemical" scent.

Zero VOC vs. Low VOCs

Rejuvenating a 325 sq. ft of an Avignon floor project will require one liter of Revol 30 maintenance oil, which will emit zero VOCs and leave you without that harsh chemical scent. A typical polyurethane floor will require three gallons of finish, one gallon for the sealer coat and two more gallons of the top wear layers. VOCs from polyurethane evaporate into your home at the rate of about 4 lbs. per gallon, which means that 3 gallons of poly used to coat 325 sf equals 12 pounds of VOCs floating around in your home for your family to enjoy.

Bond and Strengthen vs. Surface Coatings

The natural oil used to finish Avignon oiled floors is not a surface coating; it is part of the wood by penetrating, bonding and hardening with the first layer of wood. When wood is finished with natural oil, it will dent; it will scratch, and is easily to repair. To bring your Avignon floor back to a fresh state: first, lightly

sand and clean the desired area of the floor with Clie-S intensive cleaner, then apply a new layer of Revol 30 maintenance oil. It is not necessary to treat the entire floor, only the effected area. Typically, only spot sanding on extreme wear marks and scratches would be necessary, and a total wall-to-wall sanding is no normally necessary.

It is a much more laborious and disruptive process with cured surface coatings such as polyurethane. Polyurethane is a plastic coating that sits on top of your wood, and acts as surface coating. The purpose of a surface coating is to separate wear and tear from the wood, which polyurethane can achieve, however, a polyurethane floor will never look better then the day of the final finish application. Immediately polyurethane finishes begin picking up small and large scratches - abrasions that defuse the light and pick up dirt - and quickly become visible from all angles. The end of the life of a polyurethane floor is not because of wearing out - it just becomes ugly. This process is accelerated when the floor is damaged by scratches that penetrate the surface coating and expose wood, which happens when dents penetrate the soft wood (NOTE: all wood is soft enough to dent and scratch). Unfortunately, all too often-polyurethane floors need a maintenance regimen by sanding repeatedly, eventually exposing nails that hold the floor in place. Recoating a polyurethane floor is the recommended maintenance option. It has to be a joint effort, as soon as you have a scar that penetrates the surface coating, or when the floor looks dirty after you wash the floor. This "dirty" look means there is an abundance of surface scratches holding dirt. Scuffing and recoating will remove most of the dirt and provide a smooth cleanable surface.

Living With vs. Living On

The vast majority of my polyurethane customers live on their floors. They take off their shoes at the door; they have floor protectors under all furniture, and care to have nothing foul left on the surface. A normal expectation of a polyurethane floor is that it is maintenance free. Homeowners with natural oil finished floors live with their floors. They seem to recognize that wood expands and contracts with the seasons. Some believe this movement is a sign the wood still thinks of itself as being a tree. Feeding wood natural oils supports the notion that you are living with your wood and in turn, the wood responds to appropriate care that is given.

Reparability vs. Durability

Wood is very durable on its own. Natural oils enhance the durable nature of wood, and allow the floor repairable if damaged. While polyurethanes provide a durable barrier, this barrier also consumes a layer of wood each time it is applied. At best, there are three to four sanding performances in a floor's life before the floor replacement. Over time, reparability is more important than durability.

Maintenance Products

USFloors offers a complete line of maintenance products for Avignon oil finished floors from cleaners for everyday maintenance to rejuvenating natural oils for extensive maintenance. See Oil Finish Maintenance Products for a complete listing of products available from USFloors.