

Wealth of products highlight today's handscraped

By Gary Glancy

A booth tour of the numerous hardwood flooring companies at Surfaces 2007 revealed that the handscraped style is alive and well and continuing the popularity it enjoyed in 2006. Now, it seems, almost everyone is jumping on board and putting their own spin on the sub-category, from various scraping and distressing techniques to a smorgasbord of species, colors and finishes, creating a wide spectrum of looks.

As with species, colors, length/widths and engineered vs. solid constructions, the preferred style of handscraped seems to vary from region to region and between individual tastes.

"The market started off with a pretty aggressive scrape that appealed to a certain type of customer," said Dewevai Buchanan, vice president of hardwood flooring, Mohawk. "What we see now is a smoothing out of that more pronounced handscraped to a softening of the scrape."

Following are some of the latest offerings in the ever-evolving world of handscraped:

Accord Flooring

What's new: The recently introduced Random Width Planks line, which is available primarily in engineered wood but also can be fabricated in solid. Either option features 3-, 5- and 7-inch plank widths, with a 5/8-inch thickness on the engineered and 3/4-inch on the solid, and five color options in either maple or exotic species. The overall look is similar to handscraped and French bleed, said Jack Eyal, president, but takes it one step further by combining the rough-hewn texture with the deep, dark staining between the planks and adding random widths.

The company line: "Random Width Planks has an elegant, vintage look," Eyal said. "Its warm tones lend a timeless, luxurious feeling to a room, and it is easily adaptable to any decorating style, whether it is contemporary or traditional. The most unique aspect of the flooring is that in one carton of wood, we



supply three different widths. This allows the designer, homeowner and installer room to create their own unique design."

Anderson Hardwood Floors

What's new: Casablanca, from Anderson's Appalachian line, and Chilean cherry, from the Virginia Vintage Collection. Anderson included handscraped in the biggest product launch in its 60-year history. The company added 7- and 5-inch widths to its handscraped collection this year, with Casablanca coming in a 3/8-inch-thick, 5-inch-wide, 5-ply engineered plank, handscraped out of exotic Spanish hickory with five color variations. The Chilean cherry comes in natural and dark color.

The company line: "It's been a

big hit," said Don Finkell, president and CEO. "It took off faster than we imagined."

Armstrong Hardwood Flooring

What's new: The Century Farm and Locking Hardwood engineered collections within the Armstrong brand, as well as the solid Gatsby Hand-Sculpted Collection from the Robbins Hardwood Flooring division. With five species and 20 colorations, Armstrong calls Century Farm one of the broadest collections of handsculpted products in the industry. Locking Hardwood, with handcrafted exotic or traditional options including 10 species and 32 designs, features the Armstrong NextGen technology for quick and easy installation. The Gatsby line is a 3/4-inch solid available in birch and

several oak colorations, 5-inch width and random lengths (from 10 to 72 inches) with a handscraped or distressed surface. Most of the products within these lines come with a 25-year residential finish warranty.

The company line: With a 16-percent increase in engineered products coming out of China, Armstrong's big launches will capitalize on what should be a changing market toward domestically produced engineered flooring — particularly so in a Chinese import-heavy area like California, where handscraped is hugely popular, said Dick Quinlan, general manager, product management engineered wood.

BR-111 Exotic Hardwood Flooring
What's new: Colonist and Fazen-

da. Rough sawn and burnished to a splinter-free surface, Colonist features a rustic appearance in 7 3/4-inch board widths and lengths up to 12 feet. It is available in Brazilian cherry and Brazilian walnut. Fazenda is lightly distressed and handscraped in 7 3/4-inch board widths and lengths up to 12 feet. It features an authentic time-worn, smooth surface, and is available in Brazilian cherry, Brazilian walnut and tiete chestnut.

The company line: "In addition to our Antiquity handscraped products, BR-111 is unveiling a new D&A (design and architectural series) commercial line of exotics that includes several high-end handscraped and distressed products," said Jason Strong, vice president of sales.

HomerWood Hardwood Flooring

What's new: HomerWood has announced the unveiling of its first line of engineered wood floors: Character Grade. Within this line is a special collection called Amish Hand-Scraped, where each plank is individually handscraped — and personally signed — by Pennsylvania Dutch craftsmen (see sidebar on page 18). Character Grade is available in either the handscraped or a smooth, satin finish. Planks come in a 5/8-inch thickness and random lengths between 1 and 7 feet. Standard widths are 4 and 5 inches, and a custom 3- and 6-inch width also is available through special order. The Hand-Scraped Collection is available in prefinished and unfinished wood that includes cherry, hickory, black walnut and red oak. Some species are stained to further enhance and deepen the effect of the handscraping.

The company line: "As far as we know, we are the only manufacturer using artisans to handcraft a truly custom floor," said Tyrone Johnson, general manager. "Unlike most of today's machine-scraped flooring, no two planks are alike."

Mannington

What's new: Mannington's Inverness Collection (6 SKUs, 5-inch

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