

WALK THE TALK

Transform your home or workplace with these innovative flooring products from our team of experts.

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Barrow Flooring

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Cemcrete

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

At the moment we are busy finalising the wood specification for Katherine & West luxury apartments in Sandton together with Facets Designs. Our most exciting project this year was the revamp of our showroom in Cape Town. Leon Saven was the designer and he has done a great job including all our new designs for 2010. Another project we are working on is the Ipanema apartment building in Houghton Estate. M Architects has specified 2 000m² of Pergo for this project. Commercially, we continue supplying various retailers and hospitality groups, including Cell C, Volkswagen (worldwide), Woolworths, Planet Fitness, Vida e Caffè, The Grillhouse, Truworths, Protea Hotels, Hilton Hotels, Radisson Blu and Southern Sun.

What advice would you give readers who are tempted to turn flooring their home into a DIY job?

Our products are developed for the European market, and in Europe most people install DIY. So if they can do it, so can you. If you choose a floor from Pergo, remember that higher-graded products are easier to fit because the core material is of better quality and produced as high-pressure laminate. Always remember to read the manual and use good tools. Our engineered floors are as easy to install – there is no difference. All our floors carry the same guarantee, whether installed DIY or professionally.

Tell us about some of your bestsellers.

That's a difficult question. Barrow Flooring keeps hundreds of different designs on hand in SA. Our philosophy is to offer the best and biggest range in Africa. We have a floor for everybody – we offer everything from stripy and gold floors to charcoal, grey and white. All our floors are trendy, long lasting and quick to install. In 2010 we introduced the Magnum Wood Range to our portfolio. The designs from Magnum are absolutely fabulous and cannot be copied – perfect if you are looking for something different.

What would you tell customers who are concerned about their carbon footprint?

Unless you own a heritage home, there is no need for solid timbers. The lifespan of engineered timbers are generally also better. So if you want wood, choose an engineered floor rather than a solid floor.

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

We recently completed Benguerra Lodge's Villa Mombasa and Villa Beleia in Benguerra Island, Mozambique. These two villas were constructed together, and various Cemcrete products were used throughout, from PoolCrete in the swimming pools to CemWash, SatinCrete and Cemcote on the walls and Colour Hardener on the expansive floors. Using Cemcrete's cement-based products throughout the lodge makes sense in this harsh, remote environment; cement is hardy and resistant to the salty air and annual monsoon rains.

What's the latest and greatest in flooring technology and innovation?

Renovating has been on the rise lately, and with it the need for products that are easy and quick to apply and easy to maintain. Cemcrete launched CreteCote, a 1,5mm floor coating that can be skimmed (trowelled) onto old, tired concrete or cement floors, even after the removal of carpets (correct and thorough surface preparation is essential). Another beautiful innovation is the permanent staining of patterns or company logos onto cement or concrete floors. Cemcrete's ModelloDecor stencil designs used in conjunction with Cemcrete's CreteStain achieve just this. With many designs to choose from already, or your own design easily made up for you, it is a simple process to get your desired pattern onto your floors or walls.

Tell us about some of your bestsellers.

Colour Hardener has been used on more than 150 000m² each year for the past several years. It is a dry-shake powder that is wood floated into a damp screed or concrete floor to produce a coloured floor finish. This can also be imprinted with various mats to produce a patterned floor, such as tiles, and can be stained and coloured in different ways to produce really unique, one-off floors. CreteCote is another one of our bestsellers, even though it has only been on the market since the beginning of 2010.

Are your flooring solutions eco-friendly?

Cemcrete products are all cement based, so they have no VOCs that could harm you or the environment. The manufacturing process is also very environmentally friendly compared with other product manufacturing.



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William Combrink

Forest Flooring

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

Currently we are doing an upmarket home in Cape Town, and have imported from Austria a very specific product – the first of its kind, never been seen in the country before: solid French. The stability of this floor is proven in its ability to facilitate underfloor heating in the screed. It's exceptionally good quality. We are also doing two exclusive penthouse apartments in the Regent with Leighton Clapton of SOdesigns. Here we're using imported, solid, selected walnut in a basket weave pattern, oiled and finished with Rubio MonoCoat oil. In addition to this we are using BurmaTeak Decking to create a driftwood silvery grey external look. The design of the decking uses our clip system. This type of panel parquet was installed in the Appartement du Roi in the Palace of Versailles as early as 1658, and many people consider it the jewel in the crown of all parquet designs.

What's the latest and greatest in flooring technology and innovation?

Forest Flooring's innovation is that we're able to outsource, manufacture and hand lay floors using various overseas products. We manufacture locally and use different tropical species of timber for various projects. Forest Flooring pioneered the clip decking system and developed it to where it is today. We also introduced inspiring colours for internal and external uses with a product called Rubio MonoCoat. The first range of wooden treatment of products, comprising water-based colour stain with warm colours, was launched in 1962, and provides a nice gloss and antique look.

Tell us about some of your bestsellers.

Our bestseller is French oak engineered flooring finished with a range of Rubio MonoCoat oil colours as well as Red Balau decking finished with Rubio MonoCoat decking oil and sun primer. It's priced from R580/m² and is popular with our clients in the residential and commercial markets in South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles and Namibia.

What advice would you give readers who are tempted to turn flooring their home into a DIY job?

I would seek the professional advice of a reputable, long-standing flooring company, the reason being that it has the knowledge and experience to advise you correctly.



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Stuart Berry

Kenzan Tiles

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

We've supplied to a number of exciting projects across a vast range of environments. The high-traffic commercial projects, such as Tembisa Mall, Chris Hani Mall and the new revamped cinema area in Killarney Mall have all utilised premium-quality products necessary for the application. Other exciting new projects include the Planet Fitness gym in Roodepoort, the newly designed Hi-Fi Corporation store in Clearwater Mall and the Radisson Hotel in Maputo. One of the most recent projects still in progress is the new Nestlé head office in Bryanston.

What's the latest and greatest in flooring technology and innovation?

I was overseas recently and was shown a 3mm thick porcelain sheet with a special fibreglass backing. The 3mm product has been used as wall cladding before in this country, however the innovation is actually in the fibreglass backing of the tile, which allows flexibility and play in the tile, creating an extremely impact-resistant surface. Besides the fact that it is light, simple to install and reduces transportation costs by 50%, the most compelling feature is that it can be installed without adhesive directly onto a basic rubber or plastic floor covering. This allows for a very speedy (and clean!) installation.

What advice would you give a reader who's tempted to turn flooring their home into a DIY job?

It's not a simple process, so if you plan to install ceramic or porcelain tiles yourself, ensure you buy 50% more than you think you'll need!

Tell us about some of your bestsellers.

We have some excellent high-quality European ranges that are very affordable at the current exchange rate, namely: Meteor, Soft, Marte, Etrusche and others. These range in price from R200/m² to R350/m². We also have some very popular top-end decorative features in the R400/m² to R550/m² price range.

What would you tell customers who are concerned about their carbon footprint?

We supply a German imported range that actually absorbs odours and carbon dioxide and releases oxygen into the environment! There are now also products available that utilise up to 40% recycled material. Our wood-looking porcelain tiles are also trendy and popular – and save trees!



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Munroe Swirsky

Rhoms Timberworld

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

Rhoms sells over 30 000m² of laminate a month, so our floors are almost everywhere. We treat every project, whether high profile or for the man in the street's spare bedroom, as equally exciting and important.

What's the latest and greatest in flooring technology and innovation?

The trend in laminate flooring today is more and more towards a natural look and feel, and the latest German technological improvements allow for this. The authentic, embossed, deep-brushed matt and gloss surface structure technology that we stock faithfully reproduces the most exquisite features of real timber. Extra-wide boards (327mm as compared with the standard 189mm) with V-groove sides combine in some of the range with the magic of endless beauty to create a luxurious and spacious interior to enhance any room at a fraction of the price of real wood. We have been dealing in floors for 14 years, and these are the best we have ever seen.

What advice would you give readers who are tempted to turn flooring their home into a DIY job?

Laminate has always been sold as a DIY product in Europe. It's only in South Africa where this trend is not popular. By following simple rules to the letter, you can achieve a great effect. In our stores we demonstrate how it's done, and our technical people are always willing to share their little tricks. But the biggest factor is a flat screed – get this right and the infamous 'click-clack' sound is gone.

Tell us about some of your bestsellers.

The XL Long Island boards of the Castello (327mm) range and the Castle Oak of our Super Natural range are the hottest product in our stores. We have added more exciting decors to these now famous colours. At R230/m² for the XL and R189,99/m² for a Super Natural (including VAT), they are winners in all categories, as they are affordable and trendy. We import directly via our international group trading company to keep the prices down. As soon as the stock arrives from Germany, it flies out the stores, but we have shipments coming in monthly.



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Rose Kin

Rhoms Timberworld

Tell us about some of the most exciting projects you've worked on recently.

Rhoms believes that every project is important. We do it all, from one-room refurbishments to large commercial projects. Working with SA's top designers and architects means that we are always exposed to the latest trends, and we add the latest products and technology. Our brag book includes Morukuru Farmhouse, Fairview wine estate, Millvale Estate, Londolozzi, the Akani hotels, Hush Puppy, The Michelangelo hotel and other prominent homes. Our referral rate of 80% speaks for itself.

What's the latest and greatest in flooring technology and innovation?

The most exciting developments in wood flooring technology and innovation are in the finishes. Our flooring range is pre-finished, meaning the colouring, oiling and smoking does not just sit on the surface, but goes all the way through the timber. Oiled surfaces, which bring out the real wood colours and feel, are the way to go today. No messy traditional sanding and sealing is required ever again – a simple, yearly maintenance programme consisting of a deep clean and oiling makes the floor look brand new. Another exciting development is the ability to mix finishes on the floor. You are no longer limited to the distressed look – we now offer wire-brushed, hand-cobbled, and even fine-sawn wood. Our exclusive Vintage and Lifestyle ranges offer unprecedented possible combinations of these finishes. Herringbone is back, but is now offered in white oil or natural finish. We have added Walnut to our extensive and famous Vintage Oak range. Low maintenance is the key to our floors.

What eco-friendly flooring solutions does your company offer?

We were the first flooring company in SA to achieve international FSC certification (SGS-COC-002403). We are committed to products that come from sustainable and renewable resources and, most importantly, are manufactured in a socially responsible manner. It's the whole process that must be correct. Our engineered flooring follows the age-old tradition of using blockboard with FSC timbers, with the rare resource as a top layer. This allows us not only to be Green Responsible, but to also produce a superior product.



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