

THE ADVANTAGES OF PREFINISHED VS. SITE-FINISHED FLOORING

BY: SOMERSET FLOORING CO.

Prefinished hardwood flooring, also known as factory-finished hardwood flooring, has become the most popular hardwood flooring of choice, surpassing traditional site sand and finish flooring. There are several common-sense reasons for this, which you'll likely conclude when you understand the difference between the two.

Prefinished Flooring

Prefinished flooring is flooring that is milled and finished in a manufacturer's factory-controlled environment. The finishing process is a multi-step process in which the individual floor boards are sanded, stained, sealed and protected. Many of today's high-tech finishes include a UV-curing stage that hardens the finish, to make it more resistant to scratches and scuffing. The factory-controlled environment includes stringent quality-control steps that must be adhered to, resulting in a uniform, consistent application. Some manufacturers, including Somerset Hardwood Flooring include an extra step in their finishing process called a "full face fill"—this attention to detail seals the pores of the wood enabling the manufacturer to produce an ultra-smooth, even, beautiful sheen that cannot be duplicated on-site.

Here are some of the benefits of installing a prefinished floor:

- Consistent quality of finish
- Clean—no sanding required in the home
- No odor
- Relatively quick process—minimizes inconvenience to the homeowner
- Furniture can be placed in the room as soon as installation is complete
- Manufacturers offer finish wear warranties

Site Finished Flooring

Site sanded and finished flooring is unfinished tongue-and-groove flooring that is installed and finished on site. Equipment is brought into the home to sand the flooring smooth (equipment can be noisy during this process). Sawdust generated is removed, the flooring is stained, and a polyurethane finish is applied to the prepared floor. The process can take several days while the stain dries before sealing, and the topcoat(s) are allowed to dry before moving furniture back into the room. There are some installers that use an advanced system designed to minimize sawdust in the home—but you can see that there is a

potential for mess. Also, the stain and polyurethane give off odors that dissipate over time, but can be annoying. One of the benefits of a custom finished flooring has been that if you demand a very specific species and/or stain color(s), custom finishing can accommodate that.

Today's prefinished flooring is available in many colors, species, and textures. With all the options available today, a homeowner can achieve a very unique, custom-looking floor right out of the carton.