



store of  
the year  
Nintendo World, New York

# Fabulous Floors

Luxury flooring emerges as hot new trend



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**KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GROUND. AS LUXURY HAS** emerged as a look in contract design, many retailers are adding premium materials to their floors to reinforce their unique brand images.

Flooring companies such as The Mohawk Group (Kennesaw, Ga.) have responded to this trend with a variety of new elegant products. "Our newest designs reflect the upscale qualities and characteristics that help to define luxury," says Tom Lape, president of The Mohawk Group. "Yet they still are practical and purposeful for commercial applications."

Lape says all the company's brands – Karastan Contract, Durkan, Mohawk and Bigelow Commercial – are reacting to this trend. The new styles from Durkan Commercial were created in response to the request of contract interior designers for functionality and luxury in flooring designs. "To satisfy these standards, Etchings (top left) was released as the embodiment of high-end luxury," says Lape. The carpet features a decorative pattern with dimensionality in the texture and tone-on-tone nuances in the coloration.

Lees Carpets (Kennesaw, Ga.) has also come up with a sophisticated carpet line to reference the luxury trend. Lees partnered with Robert Cox, principal and director of interiors for HOK (the Washington, D.C.-based design firm) to create the Propositions Collection (bottom right).

"Our goal was to introduce a product that offers both fine craftsmanship and superior design, yet is available to a variety of budgets," says Greg Wittlinger, Lees' executive vp and

general manager of broadloom carpeting for Lees. "Luxury floorcoverings are more accessible than ever." The collection provides a luxurious aesthetic, which echoes the natural imperfections of wool- and silk-like textiles.

Architectural Systems Inc. (ASI, New York), international supplier of architectural materials for the retail industry, follows flooring trends closely. According to president Nancy Jackson, environmentally friendly flooring, custom colors, authentic wood floors and luxury vinyl tiles have become popular in design to help meet the demand for luxury flooring.

"Premium materials used in design reinforce the upscale boutique trend in the retail marketplace," says Jackson. "Luxury materials can also mean products customized to reflect a brand image and fit in a variety of project budgets."

Architectural Systems offers bamboo flooring in color stains to address the custom color trend that is also environmentally friendly. High-end retailers such as Barneys New York have used bamboo flooring to reinforce its bridal boutique, while featuring ASI's End Grain Wood Block flooring in its Tokyo store (bottom left). And for retailers looking to add texture and dimension to demanding environments, ASI's Perla Mosaic vinyl collection (top right) features pearlescent commercial luxury vinyl tiles in jewel-inspired colors.

Colors and materials are being used in imaginative ways to tell a whole range of visual stories. Following are some new flooring materials available to retailers and designers that help create a statement within their stores.