

ALL ABOUT FLOORS

The floors are finally “happening”. Downstairs, the acid stain went on, and apart from a few areas of less-than-perfect results, the overall effect is exactly what we were looking for.

Acid stain is not a paint or a dye, but rather a difficult to predict chemical reaction between the stain and the concrete, and as Bryan Lucay from Groundworks who did the acid stain said “anything you don’t like about your concrete will be magnified by stain”. Sure enough! The dark spot with the 2×4 is still a bit dark, and the few areas of lumpy trowel marks are now in high relief, and the cracks are nicely outlined in stain, but the overall effect is really nice. It is not the mirror-smooth high gloss effect I had imagined, but Paul pointed out to me, if the floor had been perfectly smooth with a high gloss, we’d have to sweep and mop a lot more than we are ever realistically going to do to keep it from looking grungy... with a lower sheen, it won’t show the dirt quite so much 😊



The urethane sealer going on over the acid stain



The view into the kitchen showing the mottled floor.

Upstairs, the reclaimed walnut flooring is going in. There was a bit of angst over the flooring too, as our contractors for the floor install, California Wood Floors, checked the moisture of the sub floor and the moisture of the wood that had been acclimating, and said the moisture levels were a bit on the high side, and we should close up the house, but the heat on, and put in a dehumidifier in anticipation of putting the floor in. Well... we don't have any heat upstairs outside of the bathrooms, so there won't be dry hot air from a forced air heating system drying out the floor in the winter. Heat upstairs will flow up the stairwell from the downstairs radiant floor heating and be distributed by the HRV (heat recovery ventilation system), so I called the guys and we discussed our somewhat unconventional heating, and what that would mean for moisture balance in the house, and we agreed that although our moisture levels were a bit high, we were as likely to induce problems like cupping by drying the wood out to an artificial level than we were to prevent problems like gapping – especially since there wouldn't be any forced air heating. So in the end we decided to go forward with the wood as is. The one thing strongly in our favor is that since this wood is salvaged, it is probably something like 100 years old, and it has had plenty of time to finish moving around and adjusting. We're hoping!



The wood flooring goes in! You can see many of the knot holes, nail holes, cracks, insect damage and other "character marks" that come with reclaimed wood. The walnut will be bleached to a lighter tone



The stair railing is also in now. Glued in place and held with about 150 clamps while gluing, the railing is also walnut to match the floor and the treads

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