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UP IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA, RECLAIMED WOOD FLOORS GAIN CELEBRITY STATUS



A 26-month labor of love up in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, has resulted in a spectacular, mountain chalet-style house designed mostly by the owner and painstakingly filled with materials that celebrate the natural world. Conrad Poirier set out to break the mold for today's houses. Inspired by the author Sarah Susanka who wrote "The Not So Big House," Conrad decided to focus on the details, rather than on a massive size, when it was time for he and his wife to build a new home. The end result was a home of 3,100 square feet. "Ours is the smallest house in the neighborhood, but it's the most unique," he says now about his home that sits in an upscale neighborhood within the city on the North Saskatchewan River.

"Thinking about the details got me to thinking about what was one of the most important details in a house, and that was the floor, which led me to wonder what I could do that would be different from what everyone else is doing," Conrad said.



Conrad is a Senior Radiation Therapist at the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton, and his wife, Carla, is a food scientist and runs her own company, Nutriview. The couple purchased the land for the house in 2004 and began the building process in 2007. In between, Conrad and Carla spent a lot of time designing and researching what they wanted in their custom-built home. When they chose Peter Amerongen of [Habitat Studio and Workshop, Ltd.](#) in Edmonton as their builder and architect, Conrad became the general contractor and designer, working alongside Peter in the process. Conrad doesn't have a background in building or architecture or design, he just thinks of it all as "kind of a hobby." (*We'll bring you more about Peter in another blog post in the near future.*)

Conrad began touring other custom-built homes in their area, often traveling to Calgary where there was more of them to see. None of the floors he saw excited him very much. He also scoured magazines for ideas. He believes it was in one of them that he saw an ad for Carlisle floors. He had also been visiting home shows and hearing a lot about reclaimed wood, which piqued his interest. Peter had him visit a home where a reclaimed gymnasium floor had been installed, which Conrad said intrigued him.

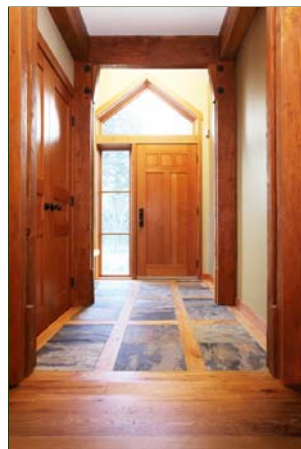


Photo at left: Tammy Mackay, an interior designer from Go Design Group in Edmonton, worked with Conrad throughout the home and she had the idea of using the oak floors in combination with heated slate in the Poirier home's entryway._

So, he put in a call to Carlisle headquarters and ultimately reached Dan O'Neil in our Los Angeles Design Center. Dan ended up sending Conrad a package of materials that included videos and photos of all the various wood and stain combinations. Ultimately, Dan, Peter and Conrad settled together on [Northern Red and White Oak](#) that was to be reclaimed from an original 1800s saw mill on Route 2 in Hollywood, West Virginia. Conrad ordered up 1,200 square feet of it.

The floor was destined to be laid throughout the main floor of the Poirier home—in the kitchen, the bathroom, the office, the den, the main living room, the entry way and a stairway. However, when it arrived, Conrad and

Peter were worried. The boards seemed a little too rough. Dan O'Neil assured them it would be fine, with the Tung oil applied as planned. He also recommended putting the roughest boards in areas where there would be no foot traffic. Still, Dan sent them another 300 square feet after Conrad had painstakingly sorted and sifted through the various widths and lengths that had come in the original shipment. When all was done, however, Conrad had nearly 200 square feet of surplus boards, now safely stored in his garage. "I know we'll never find that exact wood again," he said.



The Poirier Family

Now, Conrad says he knows every board and its history. He knows where the characteristic nail marks are, the saw marks, the worn parts. He also knows how impressed Bruce Belik, the man who installed the floor with Conrad, was with the end result.

Belik owns the local installation company Hardwood Design. "He told me, after 30 years in the business, it's the most beautiful floor he's ever seen," Conrad said, "It was nice to see Bruce get excited about this project. I assume it gets boring for him doing the same old thing all the time."

Bruce had just finished a few other floors in new homes, but he still sent his past customers over to Conrad's house to see the end result there. "We get people stopping by all the time now to see our house and the floors," Conrad said.

Below: Running the floor boards underneath the French Doors in the same pattern lent continuity and openness to the home office.



Home interior photos taken by photographer Blaise van Malsen and provided to Carlisle by Peter Amerongen of Habitat Studio, Edmonton. Family photo courtesy of Poirier family

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