

HOUSING The Portland Observer

Today's Laminates Combine Easy Care And Fine Design

Hard-wearing, easy-care laminate is still a favorite for busy countertops, but these days its fashion value is so high that it's at home in just about every room in the house.

In the contemporary kitchen, laminate in a luxuriously pale color is what gives the cabinets their sleek lines, and in the dining room the table's granite top is actually an affordable laminate look-alike. In the media room, the cabinetry that brings law and order to audio-visual paraphernalia is darkly luminous with myriads of tiny metallic glints, a suitably futuristic look created by a unique new laminate design called Galaxy.

The home office, too, is likely to sport easy-care laminate, either in one of today's great solid colors, or faux wood. Lacquer-look laminates add formal notes to the living room's coffee and end tables, and, of course, nothing could make more sense for dressers, wardrobes and vanities in bedrooms than laminate.

Eco-Friendly Products

Westinghouse Micarta is a company that's on the cutting edge of laminate innovation, and Holbrook Platts, the firm's design director, is convinced that no other product suits today's consumer climate better than decorative laminate.

"More than ever, the consumer wants value and style, and the newest factor is environmental consciousness," he explains. "Decorative laminate fits right in. It comes in myriad colors, patterns, textures and finishes, and it has emerged as a high-style alternative to granite, marble and other costly materials. In addition, we can offer laminates that create the warmth of beautiful wood for cabinetry, counters, doors, and furniture, but without felling a single endangered tree."

According to Platts, laminates can duplicate the beauty of the world's rarest woods with such realism that even environmentalists could be fooled. Micarta wood designs include teak, mahogany and rosewood, all species that come from the world's endangered forests, but they are actually produced from readily replaceable and fast-growing trees.

Fantasy Woods

Ironically, designers once frowned on wood-look laminates. They didn't like products that pretended to be something

they were not. But today that's considered a virtue, for nobody wants to fell rare trees.

Platts adds that laminates are also at an advantage when it comes to such special and costly looks as burls and birdseyes. "They are replicated perfectly," he says. "And yet they are eminently affordable."

Interestingly, laminate manufacturers also go in the opposite direction, producing wood designs in fantasy colors and finishes. Pearlwood is such a design. It combines an authentic woodgrain with pearlescent lustre for an excellent look for tub surrounds, vanities, and bedroom furniture.

Lacewood is another fantasy design. It features metallic copper striations, and Platts calls it an especially beautiful look for fine cabinetry in contemporary and transitional settings.

Commitment To Design

Clearly, laminate has come a long way since its gold-flecked sheen covered countertops in diners and gas stations from New York to California back in the 1950s, and designers credit the industry for its enterprising spirit.

By the 1970s, extensive laminate palettes of solid colors were de rigueur, and ever since, the design community has specified them happily for cabinets, furniture and more. But, of course, it's no accident that each year's new laminate colors go so well in, with other home furnishing elements. Much research precedes each year's selections.

"The new colors must complement appliances, bath fixtures, carpeting, and other home furnishings," explains Platts. "This year, there's a trend towards nature hues like firethorn and terracotta, and warm neutrals in the beige, gray, and taupe families. Blues and greens have both become basics, and there's a lot of call for purple for children's furniture."

Platts is especially enthusiastic about several groups of new designs that mix colors in soft, abstract patterns.

"They're very interesting and even more versatile than the solid colors," notes Platts. "It's a lot easier to find coordinates for a design that blends many hues than for one solid color." You're not likely to find a wide



Stylish and easy-care, laminate is the perfect surfacing material for furniture for children's rooms. Here, Micarta laminate creates efficient storage and work space in a teenage girl's room designed by Feincraft. Best of all, the units are sophisticated enough to some day move along with their owner to her own home.

choice of laminates at lumberyards or home centers. Architects, designers, kitchen and bath showrooms, and manufacturer's distributors are better

bets, but to make sure you get a full view of what's available, it's smart to contact manufacturers.

For example, Micarta's 40-page, full-

color brochure is free to consumers. Write Westinghouse Micarta, 304 Hoover Street North, Hampton, SC 29924. Or call 1 800 MICARTA.

Bank Locks Home Equity Interest Rate

In the wake of the latest and largest of recent Federal Reserve interest rate hikes, Bank of America is allowing consumers to lock in an attractive home equity line of credit rate of 8.5 percent for six months.

The Equity Maximizer line of credit is available through Jan. 31, 1995 to customers with a Bank of America checking account. By visiting or calling any of the bank's branch offices, customers can lock in the introductory rate until June 31.

"The Equity Maximizer line of credit is well-timed for holiday shoppers, but even consumers who are too busy to buy in December can take their time and still count on a good rate," said Rich Weissman, bank senior vice president. "I know of no other bank prepared to make this kind of offer."


No points or fees are required to open the account, which also features a 30 day funding guarantee based on tax-assessed value. A Bank of America checking account is required for the special interest rate, which reverts after June 31 to a variable rate, adjusted monthly.

*New & used books on
Business, Music, &
African-American Studies*

POWEL'S CITY OF BOOKS

9 AM - 11 PM Monday through Saturday
9 AM - 9 PM Sundays
Used books bought every day till 8:30 PM
On the #20 Bus line • One hour free parking
1005 West Burnside Street
228-4651

LICENSED IN OREGON SINCE 1975
Singles & Seniors, I can help you!
"1st Class Guarantee"
A-ZEBRA
RMLS Realty Inc.
300 NE Multnomah, Suite #16
Portland, Oregon 97232
(503) 230-1390 • (Res.) 287-6837



George A. Hendrix
MBA, GRI, Broker

\$5 OFF
SHOES - SWEAT SUITS
VH's Ten Na Shoes
3532 N.E. MLK Jr. Blvd.





BALLOONS GALORE & MORE
Complete Decorating Service
For All Occasions And Events
- WEDDINGS - GRAND OPENINGS - CORPORATE -
- FUNCTIONS - BANQUETS - BIRTHDAYS -
- FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL -
Celebrate Christmas and New Years with Balloons
ALSO: BALLOON BANQUETS AND DELIVERY,
BALLOONS AVAILABLE IN LATEX & MYLAR
BULK BALLOONS, JUST \$47 PER 50 (MINIMUM 50 BALLOONS BULK)
OPEN: MON THRU SAT; 10AM - 6PM • (503) 331-1101



ENROLL NOW FOR FALL
PROVIDENCE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
Ages 2½ to 6
Monday - Friday • 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.
NEW! Morning Half-day Montessori Class
• Experienced staff • Nutritious lunch/snacks • RN
• Diversity among children & staff • Creative Movement Class
872-2400
Providence Child Center • 830 N.E. 47th Avenue

J.L.S. Lawn Service
office: 503-335-0263
pager: 503-940-7721
Estimates

Al Hotchkins
Painter
249-1719 or 778-9360
4712 NE 66th Ave
Portland OR 97218



Bank Locks Home Equity Interest Rate

In the wake of the latest and largest of recent Federal Reserve interest rate hikes, Bank of America is allowing consumers to lock in an attractive home equity line of credit rate of 8.5 percent for six months.

The Equity Maximizer line of credit is available through Jan. 31, 1995 to customers with a Bank of America checking account. By visiting or calling any of the bank's branch offices, customers can lock in the introductory rate until June 31.

"The Equity Maximizer line of credit is well-timed for holiday shoppers, but even consumers who are too busy to buy in December can take their time and still count on a good rate," said Rich Weissman, bank senior vice president. "I know of no other bank prepared to make this kind of offer."

No points or fees are required to open the account, which also features a 30 day funding guarantee based on tax-assessed value. A Bank of America checking account is required for the special interest rate, which reverts after June 31 to a variable rate, adjusted monthly.

The Portland Observer

25th ANNIVERSARY

Beginning With Our Martin Luther King Jr. Issue On Jan. 11, 1995

