

popular choice is the Character Oak presealed flooring (width 11cm). It costs £49.95 a square metre.

Legacy Floors supply beautiful solid wood floors and offer excellent advice on choice and finish, while on the high street B&Q and Wickes have a selection of wood effect flooring to suit most budgets.

### *Vinyl, Lino & Laminate*

Vinyl and lino, once the poor man's flooring choice, is now anything but. They've bounced back because designers have seized on them and given them brilliant make-overs style wise. They're softer under foot than stone, particularly suitable if you have young children, and visually it's difficult to tell apart from the material it mimics, such as stone or wood.

Amtico's earned a well-deserved reputation for its flooring and its new range, Fossil Stones adds to its Stone collection. Each of the new stone designs depict an image of time-trapped fossil fragments, and are in neutral shades such as Limestone Malt, Jura yellow and Fossil Limestone at £55 per square metre.

Meanwhile, B&Q's flooring comes in a range of effects from stone to wood.

### *Eco Floors*

Green chic is all the rage and using natural materials for flooring that don't harm the environment is easy if you chose from Crucial Trading's range.

It has flooring in wool, sisal, coir, jute, seagrass, paper and bamboo that could suit looks ranging from a simple, seaside beach house style through to sleek retro contemporary.

Sisal starts from £25.35 per square metre, and the Coir starts from £11 per square metre.

Designer wool carpets and a complete selection of flooring in natural fibres and materials are also on offer at the Alternative Flooring Company.

### *Carpets & Rugs*

Carpet - decide what type you require - wool, twist, shag pile, linen, cotton, nylon or tufted. Always take a sample home, don't skimp on underlay, and ideally invest in a stain inhibiting treatment. The Carpet Foundation offers expert advice on choosing and buying.

Rugs are booming in popularity as they're the ideal top dressing for hard flooring and add softness, texture and most importantly colour.

Those at companies like The Rug Company are such works of art by leading designers, it seems almost a sacrilege to walk on them, and they make a dazzling statement in any room.

There are excellent rug selections at Laura Ashley and Marks & Spencer and for further barefoot appeal check out ranges at John Lewis.

Don't miss the latter's unexpected best seller, Bill's Rug. £295. Originally created by Bill, the supplier, to show his entire range of colours complete with serial numbers, it has over 100 multi-coloured panels.

Spoil a first time uni student with a funky rug for their room from Dutch company Arte Espina. Its Denim Flare rug, which resembles a section of jeans with a pocket, comes in a variety of sizes and costs £107. ■



■ **Floor examples** - Fired Earth's encaustic tiles add opulence to any bathroom (above) and opposite, their Character Oak wood flooring. (main picture). Laura Ashley's Dylan rug and runner.

## Floor Sources

### **The Alternative Flooring Company:**

01264 335111/[www.alternativeflooring.com](http://www.alternativeflooring.com)

**Amtico:** 0870 3504090/[www.amtico.com](http://www.amtico.com)

**Arte Espina:** 0044 78 41 817 707/[www.arteespina.com](http://www.arteespina.com)

**B&Q:** [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)

**Bisazza:** 020 7584 8837/[www.bisazza.com](http://www.bisazza.com)

**The Carpet Foundation:** [www.comebacktocarpet.com](http://www.comebacktocarpet.com)

**Checkalow:** 020 8441 7070/[www.checkalow.com](http://www.checkalow.com)

**Crucial Trading:** 01562 743747/[www.crucial-trading.com](http://www.crucial-trading.com)

**Fired Earth:** 0845 366 0400/[www.firedearth.com](http://www.firedearth.com)

**John Lewis:** 08456 049 049/[www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)

**Laura Ashley:** 0871 230 2301/[www.lauraashley.com](http://www.lauraashley.com)

**Legacy Floors:** [www.legacyfloors.com](http://www.legacyfloors.com)

**Marks & Spencer:** 0845 603 1603/[www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

**The Rug Company:** [www.therugcompany.co.uk](http://www.therugcompany.co.uk)