

Campagne flagstones,  
Fired Earth, 0845 293  
8798, firedearth.com



# Precious STONES

Bring splendour to your rooms with the natural beauty of marble and limestone

If you want your period house to have the 'wow factor' then stone flooring can make a dramatic statement. It might be ideal for a new family room or kitchen and can bring a spa-like feel to the bathroom. Stone is the world's oldest flooring, formed millions of years ago.

Marble is the queen bee of stone and if it is covered with a stain resistant sealant ten years can pass before resealing is required. It's not the most practical choice for the kitchen as it is more porous than granite and acidic ingredients like lemon juice and vinegar can corrode it.

Travertine is another option but it can be slippery and it is also prone to damage from acid. But it is stunning to look at and can be quite durable if it is polished and sealed properly. Marble and travertine's

little sister is limestone, which is low maintenance and stain resistant. It is increasingly popular and comes in a range of hues from ivory and soft creams to taupe and dark grey.

Look for stones from your area or further afield to get an idea of the rich variety available. "Cotswold stone is acknowledged throughout the world for its natural durability and charm when used as a building medium. The dense limestone embodies a sense of tradition unsurpassed by modern alternatives and is the ideal choice for a period property," says Connie Surtees, at Downs Stone Company

## Perfect planning

"It is always advisable to consult a stone flooring specialist when you're in the early planning stages of your project," says Simon Brown of Simali Stone. "He or she will be able to open your eyes to all sorts of design possibilities. For example, slate is available in a range of shades from light green to mottled purple and dark red. There is always something new to discover with natural materials and slate can look very dramatic."

All natural stone is porous to some extent and you need to match the right stone to your needs. Marble can actually be softer than some ceramic tiles so make sure you work out how much traffic you think your room will get and take a look at the floor in one of your favourite shops and eateries for inspiration. Engineered stone, a hybrid of natural stone and resin, is also worth considering if you would like a more colourful option. Charles Stone can replicate the look and feel of any other material so



Atlas limestone, Stone Age,  
020 7384 9090, stone-age.co.uk



Belgian Blue limestone, Fired Earth,  
0845 293 8798, firedearth.com

you could have a wooden parquet tile outside or a silk tile in a shower cubicle (see charlesstone.co.uk for more details).

## Play with pattern

"There are many different ways to add interest and personality to your flooring scheme," says Dan Wilson of Lincolnshire Limestone Flooring. "For example, you can use a random length pattern for a more homely, eclectic feel in a kitchen and dining area. The Burghley pattern is also very pleasing to the eye with its mixture of large and small squares and rectangles. An expert will be able to help you establish which pattern will work best with your selection of stones, your lifestyle and the size of your room. A honed stone often sits well with a slightly more contemporary home where as our range of hand aged flagstones complement a more traditional kitchen/living space".



Jaipur Limestone, Floors of Stone,  
01509 234 000, floorsofstone.com

"Make sure you are aware of all the costs involved in laying a new floor and consider how labour intensive the job will be," advises Adrian Wills at Castle Reclamation. "Our reproduction flagstones in Purbeck, Blue Lias, Hamstone or Portland are two inches thick and although they are heavy, they are half the weight of original pieces which makes them easier to lay. We will draw a laying pattern if you require and we can offer sizes up to 48" by 30" if you want a super-size effect."

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- CASTLE RECLAMATION 01935 826 483, castlereclamation.com
- DOWNS STONE, 01608 658 357, downstone.com
- LINCOLNSHIRE LIMESTONE FLOORING 01780 740 852, lincolnshirlimestoneflooring.co.uk
- SIMALI STONE 01747 852557, stoneflooringonline.co.uk

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