

seattle floor service



## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT FINISH**

Seattle Floor Service offers two different types of floor finish for your wood floor. Each type has its advantages, and understanding the differences between the two will help you to make the best decision. Whichever you choose, it is important to note that the single most important factor in how long the finish will last is not what type of finish is used, but how much and what kind of traffic the floor will see.

### **SWEDISH FINISH**

Swedish finish was developed in the early 1950's in Scandinavia and quickly gained popularity in Europe. It has been the industry standard here in the Northwest for about 20 years, probably because it is a truly 'no wax' finish. The only maintenance required is light damp mopping, as opposed to the semi-annual waxing and buffing associated with sealer/ wax and polyurethane finish systems. Swedish finish also has a reputation for durability unmatched by all but a few heavy-duty commercial grade finishes.

The primary disadvantage of the Swedish finish is the powerful and unpleasant odor. We generally apply 2 coats of Swedish finish on successive days, and Seattle Floor Service always recommends vacating the premises while these coats of finish are being applied. Sensitivity to the solvents in the finish varies greatly from individual to individual, and some customers have reported a lingering odor for as long two weeks after the final coat is applied. The majority of our customers who choose Swedish finish, however, find that if the house can be aired out soon after the final coat is dry, they are able to move back in the next day.

### **WATERBORNE FINISH**

For many of our customers (almost half, in fact), the Swedish finish and the fumes and inconvenience associated with it prompt them to choose a waterborne finish. Waterborne floor finish technology has only been around for about ten years, so these finishes do not share the time-tested reputation for durability that Swedish finish enjoys. In spite of this, we have had great success with waterborne products for many years, and as the technology becomes more and more advanced, we expect waterborne floor finishes to ultimately eclipse Swedish finish in both popularity and availability.

Waterborne floor finishes do not contain the solvents that Swedish finishes do, and therefore do not emit the powerful fumes or necessitate vacating the premises. Most residential floors require three coats of waterborne finish, and upon completion of the final coat, normal foot traffic may resume after 24 hours. Ease of application also makes waterborne floor finishes the best choice for customers who anticipate doing maintenance coating themselves.

Waterborne finishes vary slightly in appearance from Swedish finish as well. There is a subtle difference in color which is difficult to characterize, so we generally encourage our customers to make an appointment to visit our showroom to look at samples. The waterborne finish can also appear 'rougher' or 'less smooth' than the Swedish finish. For customers who may not find the 'rougher' look acceptable, an additional coat of waterborne finish is recommended. There is an additional charge for additional coats of finish.

Whichever finish you choose, you can be confident that the products are of the highest quality, and we do not hesitate to recommend either type of finish. Regardless of finish type, the most important factors in determining the life of your floor's finish are the degree of wear and tear it will see and how fastidiously it is maintained. A home with two adults and no children or pets, for example, may not need its floors maintained beyond regular cleaning for as many as twelve years; a home with two adults, two children and a dog may need a maintenance coating within two years, or even sooner. If there is ever a question about when maintenance coating is needed, simply give us a call, and we will be happy to take a look and advise you accordingly. With proper cleaning and maintenance, your floors may never need to be sanded again.