



Grant and Amy Chappell discuss the finishing touches on their home in Briarcliff Acres from their 2nd story porch with Steven Quikery (left). "Steven was the only one we considered, because we just felt he was the right one for our house. We felt comfortable working with him. Steven is so even-keeled with coordinating everything. He's an extremely likable person and I think that carries over to his subs", says Amy.

Custom Homes Consulting understands the importance of good relationships – it is part of their core values, and they are keen on vetting for a good customer fit to ensure a successful outcome for everyone. Steven takes the same approach with other relationships, "One of the things

I do when I'm meeting a potential subcontractor is find out if they are a member of the Home Builders Association. It's important to me knowing that they're giving back to the community and supporting the homebuilding industry. One of my

strong beliefs is in building partnerships with my subcontractors. A partnership forms when both sides win. I'm not always looking for the cheapest labor. I'm looking more for workmanship, communication and professionalism." ■



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FLOOR COVERING

Choosing the Right Floor Covering

Choosing the right floor covering is essential to the interior of any new or existing home. The representatives from three respected local companies that have established solid relationships in this area over the past couple of decades were interviewed to learn about several of the latest trends in the industry & products that are popular in today's market with both builders and homeowners.

Waccamaw Floor Covering General Manager, Bryan Squires, has grown up in the business, literally, since he was a toddler when his father Charles started Waccamaw Floor Covering. Bryan has 15 years of hands-on



Charles Squires (left) & Bryan Squires (right) in their showroom in Conway, SC.

experience, and is now responsible for daily business operations. Their guiding principal has remained steady during the past three decades. Bryan said, "We try to do quality work – not the cheapest work. Our installers have a lot of years under their belt. We try to do our best and keep everything local and keep it competitive." They have the largest in-stock flooring selection in the Conway area for laminate, carpet, vinyl tiles, and vinyl planks in their 12,000 square foot warehouse and showroom. Waccamaw Floor Covering has established solid relationships with

builders such as River City Builders, Howell Homes Inc., C & R Builders & ARE Construction. They have received the Reader's Choice Award from the Horry Independent & the Carolina Forest Chronicle for the last three



Bryan Squires outside of the Waccamaw Floor Covering showroom & warehouse located @ 1717 Fourth Ave. in Conway.

years. Bryan is quick to credit others for their longevity and achievements. He said they value and take pride in their highly skilled tradesmen and guarantee their work.

Tarkett is a large flooring manufacturer of vinyl tile and plank products that Waccamaw Floor Covering carries; it is a Canadian Company, though they do a lot of manufacturing in the states. "Tarkett recently launched a new product called Pro Gen. This is a rigid core vinyl

plank product with a 5000 PSI rating, which offers increased durability", says Bryan.

Bryan has noticed that the standard popular hardwood of years past, is not selling as much now. More people are using hard surface floors now, whether it is laminate, tile or some higher end hardwood. "I think it's due to a lot more pets in the home and a lot more allergy issues. We seem to be selling a lot more vinyl plank than in years past", says Bryan.



Waccamaw Floor Covering has a 12,000 square foot warehouse & showroom to better accommodate their retail and builder customers.

Another product that has become popular is waterproof core flooring, which can survive everything from every day spills to significant flooding. This core board product locks together like laminate, but is 100% waterproof. Wide planks that measure 10" wide and 54" long have also become popular. Similarly, more installation

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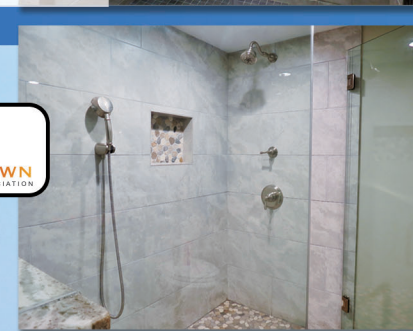
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"Waccamaw Floor Covering has been handling the whole house flooring installations in my homes for nearly 15 years. This includes the tile backsplash and the tile in the showers. They have high quality installers who do a great job. I feel extremely comfortable sending my homeowners to Bryan and Charles Squires and I would highly recommend Waccamaw Floor Covering to any residential or commercial building contractor, as well as homeowners looking for quality and professionalism."

Mickey Howell - Howell Homes, Inc.

patterns have evolved, especially for rectangular tiles that lend themselves to herringbone patterns and staggered grout layouts.

J & S Flooring owner, Gregg Pierce, is candid about the fact that there is a lot of crossover in the products that flooring companies offer. Despite this, he has found a niche. As Gregg said, "One thing I do that not many flooring dealers do any more – maybe only about 10-percent – is that I stock material, a lot of companies are just a showroom and if you need something they're going to order it for you. I have a couple hundred thousand dollars' worth of inventory in stock, so if somebody needs something, they can cut it, load it up, and take it with them." Stocked in their 10,000 square foot



J & S Flooring owner, Gregg Pierce in his showroom in Georgetown, SC.

showroom / warehouse are wood, carpet, ceramic, and vinyl products. For this reason, as well as the integrity & professionalism Gregg exhibits, J & S Flooring is widely regarded as 'The Premier Flooring Company in Georgetown' by many building contractors & homeowners alike.

Approximately a third of J & S Flooring's business comes from well-known contractors such as Carolina Homes By Lane, Bob McCarley with Coastal Builders & Dickie Chapman to name a few. Coastal Structures is a general contractor that has a broad portfolio of commercial buildings up and down the Grand Strand. Greg Dumont, with Dumont Brothers Inc., does not recommend many companies,



The J & S Flooring warehouse & showroom is located @ 2104 S. Fraser St. in Georgetown, SC.

however he is quick to recommend J & S Flooring & Gregg Pierce. "I have been doing business with J & S Flooring for the last 20 years & will continue to for the next 20 years", says Greg. Regardless of need, every retail customer can expect the same dependable service as contractors. Design consultant Andie Sanford joined the team a few years ago, and customers can benefit from her design assistance.

J & S Flooring's tag line is, "Nothing looks quite as beautiful as value." Gregg explained, "A lot of people will go to a home improvement center and see 'free installation' that's really not free. When it's all said and done the price is

actually more, and customers aren't getting the service." This is due to the use of subcontractors who use other subs. With J & S Flooring, Gregg said, "My installation people are there for me every day, and customers appreciate that." A special service that J & S Flooring offers is Credit Connect. Gregg said, "It's a consumer financing program where we can do 12 months same as cash – no interest for customers." Another economic benefit to customers is that J & S is a local Abbey Carpet & Flooring outlet, which means it is aligned with a national buying group

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to get the best pricing, special products, and enhanced warranties from flooring manufacturers.

Of flooring products Gregg noted, "There's a product that's been out for a few years, but now it's really starting to take off; it's called WPC (wood polymer composite). It is a waterproof floating floor that snaps together like laminate. The inventor and patent holder is COREtec®." WPC is a realistic-looking product made to look like wood or ceramic but it is quieter and softer than wood or ceramic. Superior HD imaging provides much better pattern visuals, further enhancing the appeal of the WPC product. Another product called Solid Polymer Composite (SPC) is also now offered in today's industry. SPC is a vinyl faced product with a closed cell core. Gregg noted that he has noticed a larger demand for the high end designer carpet over the last couple of years. "I am definitely selling more of that now than the standard or lower end carpet", says Gregg.

Jaime Pando, owner of **The Flooring Depot**, has announced a name change to Flooring Panda. Jaime said, "We wanted to have a much larger footprint on the Internet. We felt by having a catchy different name, we could achieve this. Today's consumers are savvier, they are more educated and they are seeking a



Flooring Panda owner, Jaime Pando in his showroom located @ 864 Kingswood Dr. in Conway, SC (behind Suds Car Wash on Hwy. 544).

different experience by searching in the comfort of their own homes." Flooring Panda serves Horry, Georgetown and Brunswick Counties. The company has more than 30 years of experience in the industry to assist homeowners, property managers and contractors. They can count on Jaime and his staff to give credible guidance. Jaime said, "I never sell by price – I'm a stickler for what I consider the best value, providing people with what they need and want."

Flooring Panda keeps up with industry changes and home design trends. Jaime said, "There are new styles coming to the market place almost daily – prints, colors, shapes, textures – and so it is a very, very exciting time to be in this industry." Luxury Vinyl Plank and

tile (LVP and LVT) continue to be floor covering buzzwords. As Jaime said, "This is what is practical and it's priced correctly. It's less expensive than hardwood or tile, it's easier and takes less time to install, and the maintenance requirement is minimal." Jaime noted that the LVT that looks like wood tends to be more popular than the stone look with one exception: "The LVT that looks like Travertine is so realistic it is hard to tell the difference between the real stone and LVT." A new entry to the Luxury Vinyl product line is cork (LVC). Besides the particular look of cork, people are drawn to it because it is waterproof, quiet underfoot, and warm.



The Flooring Panda staff from left to right: Jake Rider (Territory Manager), Tracy Hancock (General Manager), Mindy Berry (Inside Sales), Jaime Pando (President), Suzie Hancock (Office Manager) & Thomas Jackson (Warehouse Leader).

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With all the focus on LV products, hardwood, and tile, it would seem that carpet has been pushed to the side, but there have been big advances in the carpet industry too. Jaime said, "The carpet industry is producing longer lasting fibers that are far more resistant to staining and ripping than before. It is still one of the most economical products to use in your home. It's one of the most comfortable, and the durability and clean ability of today's carpet is unbelievable." Flooring Panda carries several carpet lines, including fibers that are waterproofed against pet soiling. Flooring Panda supports green initiatives and has an onsite

container to recycle carpet pads, which gets collected monthly, cleaned, and recycled into new padding. Carpet also gets recycled so that very little ends up in landfills.

Besides residential customers – new construction and remodels – Flooring Panda has seen an increase in commercial work, especially with student housing at CCU. "We are very encouraged by it," Jaime said.

Between the Myrtle Beach and Shallotte locations, Flooring Panda has 5,000 square feet of showroom. Jaime said, "I am extremely grateful to the people who work at Flooring Panda. They are so helpful to the customer." ■

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