



# A Century of Service

**Kashian Bros. Flooring first opened their doors in 1910. One hundred years later, they're the oldest game in town and they still manage to be at the forefront of their field.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JON CANCELINO

It's generally considered a bad thing if people are walking all over you. But generations of North Shore families have walked all over the hardwood of Kashian Bros. Flooring, and President Doug Stein couldn't be more pleased. "This is our 100-year anniversary," he says with a smile. "We started celebrating at the beginning of the year, but we'll probably have a big celebration in September, which was the actual month that the business was started."

When Haig Kashian and his brother opened Kashian Bros. in 1910, it was as a carpet-cleaning service. Today, the showroom stands in the exact same location in Wilmette, but the services they offer have expanded tremendously. No matter what the current fashion in floors is, Kashian Bros. can cover it.

"Flooring is a very fashion-forward business. It does follow a lot of trends," says Doug. "A few years ago, the big trend in floors was bamboo. For a while, everybody was putting carpet down over wood floors, then everybody was tearing the carpet up and going back to wood floors."

The hottest trend in wood floors right now is called hand-scraped flooring. It's the only method of flooring that has the organic feel of an artisan's

touch. Each floorboard is scraped by hand to smooth and finish it so that when the entire floor is assembled, every floorboard is unique. This method was used to finish all hardwood floors before the invention of modern sanding techniques, but now it's the stylish alternative to machine-made flooring, and the preferred technique for getting a one-of-a-kind floor ingrained with the genuine texture of the craftsman's hand. While some companies offer machined flooring with a hand-scraped look, Kashian Bros. actually scrapes each floorboard by hand.

Interior designers know the startling effect a floor can have on the appearance of a room. That's why the floor has come to be known as the "fifth wall." As the color palettes of décor shift and darker tones return to center stage, suddenly, the golden oak floorboards contrast with the decoration in a space. Revitalizing your existing floor can be as easy as restaining the wood to a darker color, and with Kashian Bros.'s dust-free sanding system, it's never made more sense. "The way it was done prior to dust-free sanding was by putting a bag on the back of the machine, but that bag had to breathe. So all the really fine dust particles went airborne; you had to wear masks, you had to tape everything. Today, it's a completely clean system," says Doug. "We were the first ones on the North Shore really to introduce dust-free sanding and refinishing." And they hand-mix the new stain on-site to verify that it's the exact shade you're looking for.

Sometimes refinishing hard-

wood floors is simply about longevity. Over time, the normal wear and tear that comes from walking on a floor wears through the protective layer of polyurethane that keeps the wood from getting damaged. Once you've worn through the layer in a few spots, those sections will start to discolor and the entire floor needs to be stripped down to the wood, resanded, and refinished. However, if you catch it before the protective layer has worn through, all it needs is a simple "screen and coat," where they buff the scratches out of the top layer and add another coat of protection. With simple preventative maintenance every few years, your hardwood floors will last forever and never require any major refurbishment.

Although hardwood is hot right now, carpet is still a vital part of the industry. Finished basements, bedrooms, and stairways are still routinely receiving the carpet treatment all across the North Shore. Kashian Bros. has spent years compiling the select group of mills that they buy from to provide us with more styles, shades, and values than can easily be imagined.

They also carry a vast variety of area rugs. The traditional choice would be one of their many oriental rugs, but if you're looking for something specific, custom-designed rugs are a specialty of Kashian Bros. Whether you just want to pick a style for the main body and choose another style and shade as a border, or you're trying to achieve something as specific as getting an area rug with the family crest emblem—*Kashian Bros.* continued on page 127