

Would you ever...

Use basketball court flooring in your home?

With NBA season officially underway, here's a question for true sports fans: Instead of beautiful heartpine or oak across your living room floor, would you be brave enough to use a reclaimed basketball court? That was the idea in a home on Palatine Avenue from design-build firm Latitude 38. The team took floor boards from a recently demolished North Philadelphia high school (you can find options locally at architectural salvage spots like Salvagewrights in Orange and Caravati's in Richmond) and installed them throughout the house to beautiful and unique results. The eventual homeowners weren't phased by the unusual choice.

"We weren't sure what to expect ahead of time, but we liked the idea of it," said Emily Sohr. "It's cool that it has a history."

But the maple floor wasn't without its quirks during installation. "It created an extremely uneven surface, so we decided to sand off most of the finish and get back



SISAN KALERGIS

to a smooth floor," Latitude co-owner Jeff Erkelens wrote of the project on the company's blog. They ended up leaving a "rug" of it in the upstairs hallway and closets to hint at its origins.

"I think new construction can sometimes lack those sorts of elements—things that give a house character," said Sohr. In fact, Erkelens and Latitude co-owner Joey Conover (who are married) liked the unexpected court floor so much they used it in their guest apartment (*above*), and a neighbor took some for her own home renovation.

If you're thinking of including such an element in your own home, though, Conover warns that it's not a project for the casual DIY-er. The process involves a flooring sander (for inevitable bumps and uneven boards) and a manual (or, ideally, pneumatic) nailer. "Beware of old nails and bunched up tongue-and-grooves," she said.

"With a house full of dogs and cats, it's nice to know that it's durable," Sohr said. "Surely we can't treat it worse than years and years of high school students did!"

Sounds like a slam dunk.—C.W.

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