

Kem Eva Theilig on Layering Woods

WHEN OUR CLIENTS want to add richness and depth to a space, we always advise them to begin with wood. The challenge is how to successfully combine different types of wood in one room. The answer is to layer woods in the same tonal value, never matching them perfectly. Uniformly toned pieces lack the depth and character that give a space its personality. Look for woods in the same color family—cool or warm tones, for example—and choose a range of tones from dark to light. In other words, don't jump from green tones to red ones. The overall effect of a similar tonal range is that a space seems larger and more expansive.

When the wood tones—and grains—of the furnishings in a room are varied, the space itself takes on a pleasant patina, as if pieces were

collected over time. This living room is a good example: We mixed a warm, cherry-stained-walnut Frank Lloyd Wright coffee table from Cassina, a mahogany Paul McCobb credenza, a natural walnut Eames stool and an ebonized-maple George Nelson bench.

As for a wood floor, always go dark! Dark floors make even the most mundane furniture pop, they complement all wood tones, and when they contrast starkly with the walls, they make even a small or dark space come to life.

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