

# FLOOR FORUM INTERNATIONAL

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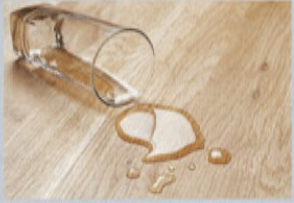
## industry news

Overview of the German Parquet Industry

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## London-based restaurant **Ottolenghi** chooses oak boards for flooring

*How to create a warm and natural environment for eating and enjoying delicious food? The owners of Ottolenghi, which is based in trendy Islington, North London, found the answer: installing a real solid oak floor consisting of boards that were distressed and hand battered and finished to look worn and traditional. The 105 m<sup>2</sup> flooring in Ottolenghi is the result of a good cooperation between different international parties. Floor Forum International spoke to the Dutch suppliers based in Notting Hill, the Israeli architect and to the Polish contractors.*

### **Supplier Solid Floor London**

The supplier of the solid oak floor is Solid Floor, a successful chain of 8 flooring shops in the UK of which the head office is based in Notting Hill. Solid Floor was founded in Amsterdam in 1990 to supply wooden floors to one of the most experienced and discerning markets in Europe. Having developed an extensive range of

flooring and finishes previously unobtainable in the UK, the company moved to London to further develop and grow. They have extensive knowledge of the timber flooring market designing and producing their own floors and do not sell branded products, but prefer to work alongside their clients to bespoke a floor to their individual style. The options are endless

from the most traditional Panels de Versailles through to Oak planks 30cms wide (1 foot) Solid Floor have an ideal floor for all locations and styles. With 600 product lines of solid wood, this UK based company has the largest selection available. Dutch founder Eelke Jan Bles moved to London with the plan to become an integral part of the fast changing flooring marking in the UK. Fifteen years later we can say that Mr. Bles ran his business quite successfully thanks to his growing network of showrooms and shops in the London area and Scotland.

### **Wide solid distressed oak floor**

We asked Mr. Bles to specify the type of floor Ottolenghi had bought: "The flooring is solid oak with boards of 17 cm wide. The size and finish of the floor creates a raw and chic aesthetic atmosphere. Another element that makes the floor look rough and worn is the fact that the oak was manipulated by distressing, hand scraping and finishing." Floor Forum International was also curious about the origin of the oak floor. Mr Bles told

us that the oak comes from a European mill, however the special finish has been done in house.

#### **Contractors ARCO Contraction Co.**

Contractors for this job were ARCO Contraction Co. Floor Forum International interviewed the Polish fitter Darek Prystasz from ARCO. About the Ottolenghi floor, he says the following: "As preparation for the floor, we had to level the floor as the concrete sub-floors were not even. We solved this problem by using 18mm ply wood. Normally, this installation would have been quite straightforward, but the levelling was harder as we also had to deal with the pipes and electric power cables that were in place underneath."

Mr. Prystasz tells us about the excellent state of the floor as it was delivered on site: "The installation of the floor was quite easy for us as it was pre-finished by the supplier Solid Floor. We didn't need to sand, oil or varnish the oak floor because it was impregnated beforehand by the supplier and we left the floor just like that. As fitter of this flooring, I felt very much privileged installing this kind of floor and I even want to lay this wide distressed oak floor in my own house."

#### **Nailing and gluing**

Mr. Prystasz continues about the actual installation of the oak floor: "Regarding the installation of the solid oak boards, we used the combination of both gluing and secret nailing. For this type of solid distressed oak floor, this seemed the right

way to do. This combined use of adhesive with nailing makes the floor stronger and should guarantee a longer life to the restaurant floor considering the hard-wearing character of it. About the nailing, there are two things I would like to tell: First, when you face sub-floors with pipes and electrical cables, you have to be very careful with where you place your nails. We paid a lot of attention to where to nail our parquet to the ply wood underneath. Secondly, we also had to hide the nails with gum. The result was a beautiful floor that we think fits perfectly in this trendy restaurant. Special and striking about this floor are the wide size and the distressed look of it."

#### **Architect Meitlis**

Ottolenghi is the ideal place to relax, it is not just an Indian restaurant, but combines/mixes Mediterranean with middle eastern food and the owners are Israeli. The service is casual.

We asked Israeli architect Alex Meitlis about how he became member of this international team of people involved in this project. Mr. Meitlis says: "They saw my work and asked me to design the first Restaurant in Ledbury Road in London and the rest is history..."

Floor Forum International asked whose idea it was to install the oak plank floor. Mr. Meitlis responds: "It was my idea as the architect of the interior of the restaurant. The reason why I chose this solid oak floor was the look, colour and texture that created this fresh yet warm look we wanted."



#### **Benefits of the floor**

When asked to list the benefits of this type of floor, Mr. Meitlis answers: "Knowing that it would age very well and only improve with use."

Assessing the success of this floor, we asked whether Mr. Meitlis installed this type of floor somewhere else: "As a result of our experience in Ottolenghi in Islington, we are now changing the floors in the Ledbury Road to the one used in Islington." Floor Forum International wanted to know why his clients should choose this type of flooring, he adds: "The choice of a particular type of floor depends on the project of course, but according to me, oak is a classic choice. I am satisfied with this choice, but remember that it would be easier to convince clients if it wasn't such an expensive choice, too bad. Still, this type of flooring is worth all of its money."

#### **Advice from the fitter**

We asked contractor Mr. Prystasz for hints when dealing with similar installations. He says: "In order to get an easy installation, one has to have a well pre-finished floor so that sanding, oiling or varnishing becomes unnecessary. Only gluing and nailing was required and this was straightforward. As fitter, I would like to stress that levelling is another important part of the installation. This needs to be done very carefully and saves annoying work afterwards. One recognises a good floor by the energy the contractor put into levelling. My advise is to do the work well only once so that the customer is saved from more works a second time."

