

Tony Stalion wanted to install a hardwood floor in his south Boulder town-home. He told me so during a road-bike ride from Boulder to Carter Lake and back. He had finally decided to make the not insignificant financial investment in his home. Like any good Boulderite, Tony is equally acquainted with a pneumatic nail-gun as he is with the ancient Tibetan art of sand mandala creation, and he planned on doing the installation himself. Tony reasoned that by doing so, he could rope a few friends into helping, and minus the beer expense for said alcoholic friends, the cost of the wood would be the major expense, between \$6 and \$7 a square foot.

When we separated at the end of our ride, me heading north and Tony south, I decided to spin through a local neighborhood where construction activity is high. I now live what can only be described as a comfortable suburban life, but I still derive great pleasure from dumpster diving, and this particular neighborhood had been good to me. On one of the neighborhood's public streets in front of a newly constructed home sat a construction dumpster. As I rode by, I noticed a long piece of hardwood flooring poking out of the top. "Funny"

I said to no one in particular, "Tony and I were just discussing hardwood flooring." I wearily dismounted my bicycle and scoped out the dumpster, which was filled with.....hardwood flooring.

The flooring had been installed and removed, though it was obviously new. It was riddled with nails and had a dark finish. Perhaps someone, upon entering their newly constructed home, didn't like the color. Maybe the flooring was installed in the wrong direction. Maybe that style of flooring was no longer prominently featured in Mega-Mansion Living and just "had to go." All of these thoughts went through my mind as I greedily concocted plans to abscond with the flooring. I didn't need any hardwood flooring myself, my home uses only the most environmentally friendly flooring which is currently a complex amalgam of soda cans, sawdust and spent chewing gum, but Tony did mention...

When I got home I called up Stalion. "Tony, you're not going to believe what I found, a dumpster full of hardwood flooring." Tony, being equally cheap, I mean resource conserving and thrifty, was excited. "Is it any good"

he asked. "Not sure, let's meet at the dumpster at sixteen-hundred hours and assess."

The first pieces we picked up were heavy, surprisingly so. "Looks to be a select maple, maybe birch or giant Congolese water lily, they used a 3 gauge tempered magnesium nail with an iron plated head" said Tony, "the finish smells like a mix of linseed oil, Chapstick and buttermilk. These installers were pros." We spent the next hour removing any and all pieces of hardwood from the dumpster. Yes there were diapers, bags of dog waste, but we were mining, mining the urban construction site on a vein of pure flooring- with a prospector's obsessive focus we mined that dumpster clean.

After transporting the flooring to Tony's house, we brought a piece to the local hardwood store. "Select maple, best there is" said the floor guy, "you've got between 500 and 600 square feet."

We spent a few hours the following weekend pulling nails out of the flooring. It's going to make a beautiful floor, but better than the floor, it's makes a beautiful story.

**Nova North, Inc**  
Solar Hot Water Systems  
Design - Installation - Repair



*Serving Colorado's  
Front Range*

720-207-7722  
www.novanorth.com

Thanks to Clif Bar for supporting  
the Center for ReSource  
Conservation



Proud sponsor of the **EARTH DAY** 5kilometer run/walk

5

A Benefit for...   
www.conservationcenter.org

April 23rd 2006  
www.active.com