

hardwood flooring

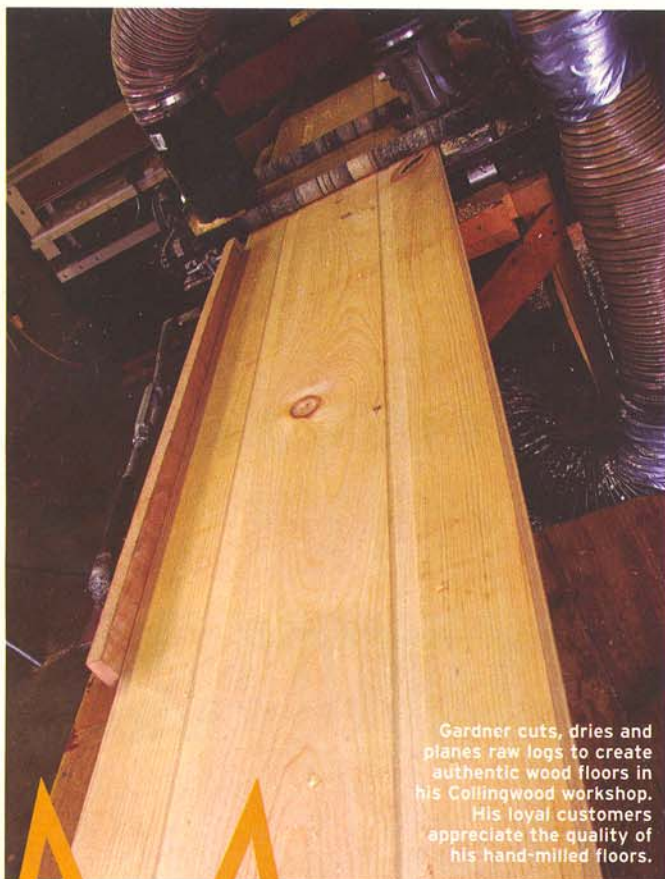
FEATURING

MERV GARDNER

DEAN'S RUGLAND

GEORGIAN BAY CLUB

FLOORED BY MERV

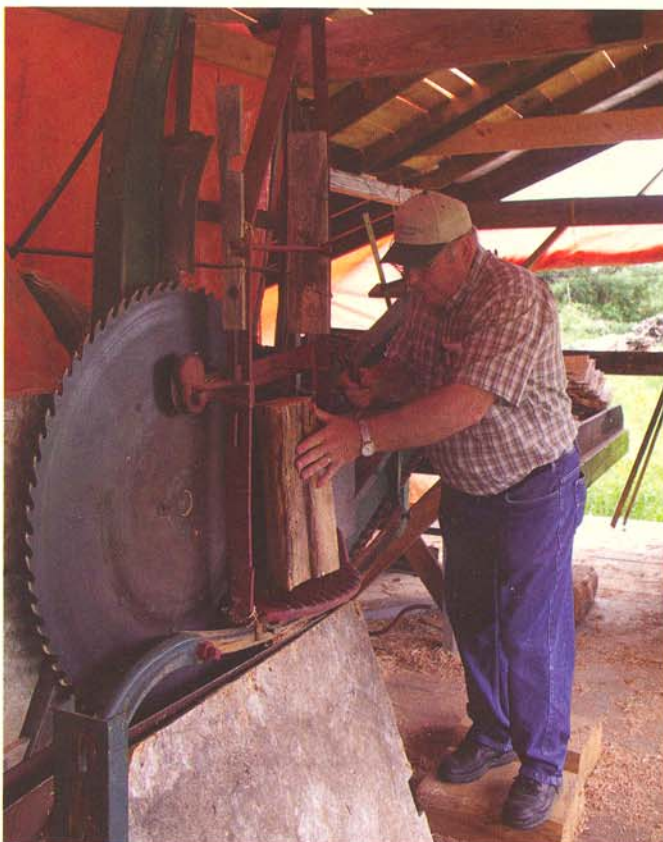


Gardner cuts, dries and planes raw logs to create authentic wood floors in his Collingwood workshop. His loyal customers appreciate the quality of his hand-milled floors.

Merv Gardner greets guests with a warm smile and a firm handshake, welcoming them into the converted barn, his main workshop. Gardner wears an earthy green and brown ball-cap emblazoned with the name of his manufacturing company—**Colling-Wood Specialist**. Pointing to his hat he says, “I like puns.”

The spacious woodworking shop has a sign on the wall that reads: NO SWEARING ALLOWED. Another sign proclaims, SPITTING ON FLOOR AND WALLS PROHIBITED. The honest humour of the signage makes sense when you experience the genuine affection with which Gardner, with his ready smile and infectious laugh, talks about the raw logs that his company cuts, dries, planes and fashions into authentic wood floors—a durable symbol of a simpler, more straightforward time a century ago, when pioneers created homes of their own from local materials. A unique aspect of Gardner's hand-milled flooring is that it comes in various lengths and widths. (Popular

BY JIM FOX
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE FOX



Special man with a heart for wood

pine flooring with original knots and character—natural imperfections—comes in anything from six- to 16-inch widths. While hardwoods—oak, maple, butternut, ash and beech—are cut into five- and seven-inch widths.)

Another unique feature of Gardner's product is that after the raw logs measuring up to 36 inches in diameter are cut, they are kiln-dried on site—two weeks for pine and up to a month for hardwoods—until they reach a moisture content of exactly six per cent. That's important, notes Gardner, adding that his first experiment with installing floors dried to this degree occurred 14 years ago, when he began his business. Today, those same floors are as solid and beautiful as the day they were laid. Merv says there is no shrinkage or cracking due to moisture.

“The flooring is glued directly to the plywood under-floor and nailed to provide a snug tongue-in-groove fit that will last a lifetime,” he says.

Southern Georgian Bay has no shortage of manufacturers of fine wood floors. Take, for example, Meaford-based Stanley Knight Ltd., a wholesale flooring manufacturer whose customers include dealers, contractors and individual homeowners.

For Stanley Knight Ltd., business has been strong since 1937, allowing them to provide an array of hardwood flooring—maple, red/white oak, cherry, ash, hickory and black walnut. Offering