

CAMPBELL & CO HARDWOOD FLOORS

The mat is approximately 22" x 36". It's made up of maple, santos mahogany and wenge.

To get the woven-mat look and make it manageable for cutting and assembly, the blocks should be cut square. Each small block has 6 pieces of wood, and there are 4,420 blocks with six pieces in each for a total of 25,000 pieces of wood. Don't panic—it's easier than it sounds!

Ripping and gluing

5/16"-thick wood is glued to a 1/2" plywood to be inserted later into 3/4" iroko flooring, similar to any medallion installation. 5/16" x 2" pieces of santos mahogany, maple and wenge were purchased. These were cut in 2' lengths and then ripped in 1/16" strips. The 2' lengths are a manageable size for gluing up and cutting later. A simple jig, as shown in the slideshow on *Hardwood Floors'* website, is lined with wax paper to prevent the strips from being glued to the jig. The backer part of the jig is also 5/16" high so that the small pieces can be pressed down even during clamping. You can make several of the jigs depending on how many you want to glue up in one day. After they dry, the 2' long strips of 6 pieces of wood are roughly hand-scraped to remove most of the glue and wax paper.

Cutting the small blocks

A table saw jig is set up with a small clamp to hold the strips in the jig during cutting. This is time-consuming and does not need to be exact. *Small variations in the sizes actually help to achieve the "woven" trompe l'oeil look during assembly.*

Assembly

Precision is *not* the key here! Do the perimeter first. As you get into the body of the mat, past the Greek key area, don't be afraid to skew the blocks and give a random look to the gaps. This irregularity is the key to the loose woven look. It will really jump out after filling. I used the small white plastic notched trowels from the hardware store and cut them in half to apply the adhesive. You'll go through a lot of these during the days of gluing up. Don't use too much adhesive so that it pushes up between the blocks. You want to make sure there is room for filler to get the shadow effect. Remember to alter the direction of every other block just like a woven fabric.

You now have the mat ready for installation. Since this example is laid on an angle and rolls up onto the base under the tub, the mat was installed prior to the flooring and the 3/4" thick trim board under the tub. The filler is wenge. The dark color is important so that it reads as shadows in the "weave of the fabric" of the mat.

The floor is filled, sanded and sealed only. The tassels are then hand-painted along with the shadows along the edges of the mat. Use water-based acrylic paint. The perimeter shadows are very important to give the 3D effect of the mat sitting on top of the floor. The final aid for a realistic look is to finish the floor with a satin sheen but the "mat" with a matte sheen.

You'll enjoy watching people try to kick it or pick it up to lay it square on the floor!