



WINNER

Best Library/Office

# SIMPLY RADIANT

## BIRGER JUELL LTD.

### Chicago

When the Chicago owner of this mid-rise home decided to have his dream office designed, he left the job—from top to bottom—in the hands of Birger Juell Ltd. The legendary wood flooring company worked with designer Lawrence Jones and interior designer Phyllis Needleman to develop the architectural millwork plan. With that concept in place, Birger Juell's Chuck Crispin turned his attention to creating a spectacular floor fitting with the upscale home. He took his design cues from the owner's many pieces of Biedermeier-style furniture, which feature clean, classic lines and exquisite wood veneer in various matching patterns. "About the time we started

investigating floor materials, Kent Mcpherson [of Flame Figured Woods in Nashville, Ind.] called me up and said, 'I have 500 feet of curly cherry all 8 inches and wider out of the same tree,'" Crispin recalls. He took the wood immediately, then told Mcpherson that he also wanted to do a large oval medallion using eight pieces of matched cherry crotch wood.

With the unusual wood secured, Crispin worked with Birger Juell's Jennifer Alomia to create an autoCAD plan for the floor. While the homeowner was particular about approving the woods for the room, he left the actual design in the hands of the design team. "He had a little bit of a difficult time comprehending how we were going to make the floor look like his Biedermeier furniture in other parts of the house," Crispin says. "But he trusted our explanations and was confident that we could pull it off."

The simple-looking design was complicated in execution. Although the rays that radiate out from the starburst appear to be the same dimension, due to the odd size of the room and the oval medallion, the dimensions graduate from 1/8 to 3/16 of an inch, with narrow strips of sapele separating the radiating bands of curly cherry. Once the autoCAD design was finalized, Dan Antes of Nashville, Ind.-based Distinctive Hardwoods and Mcpherson worked together to build the floor in panels, resulting in a floor with a 3/16-inch thickness over 1/2-inch Baltic birch.

The Birger Juell crew then installed the floor, and Teles Floro Gonzales and Benjamin Martinez hand-scraped and waxed the floor on-site. "It is very difficult to scrape crotch material and not tear the grain," Crispin says. In typical Birger Juell style, the floor is not "distressed" in a typical manner. "We just try to make it look like it's been worn and cared for over a long, long period of time," Crispin explains.

Long before hand-scraped wood flooring was mainstream, it was the signature style for Birger Juell himself. "It's amazing how the industry has fallen in line with his aesthetic ... Birger has certainly been a leader in promoting that old-world, hand-hewn look," Crispin says. Today, at 89, Juell still comes into the office every day. "He's still very creative and active in developing new patterns—still dreaming at 89," Crispin says.

—K.M.W.



**Distributor:**  
Niles Color Center

**Flooring:**  
Distinctive Hardwoods

**Finish:**  
Dura Seal

**Filler:**  
Timbermate

**Adhesive:**  
Bostik Inc.

**Buffer:**  
Clarke American Sanders

**Saws:**  
Festool

Suppliers listed in **boldface** are **advertisers in this issue.**