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## The Dirt on Vacuums

Find the machine that works best on your types of flooring  
by **Sandy John**

Vacuums have become fashionable, sporting bright colors and more accessories than you'd find on a runway model. But don't get carried away with looks; a vacuum's job is to clean and prolong the life of your flooring, and the best vacuum is one that can handle different surfaces.

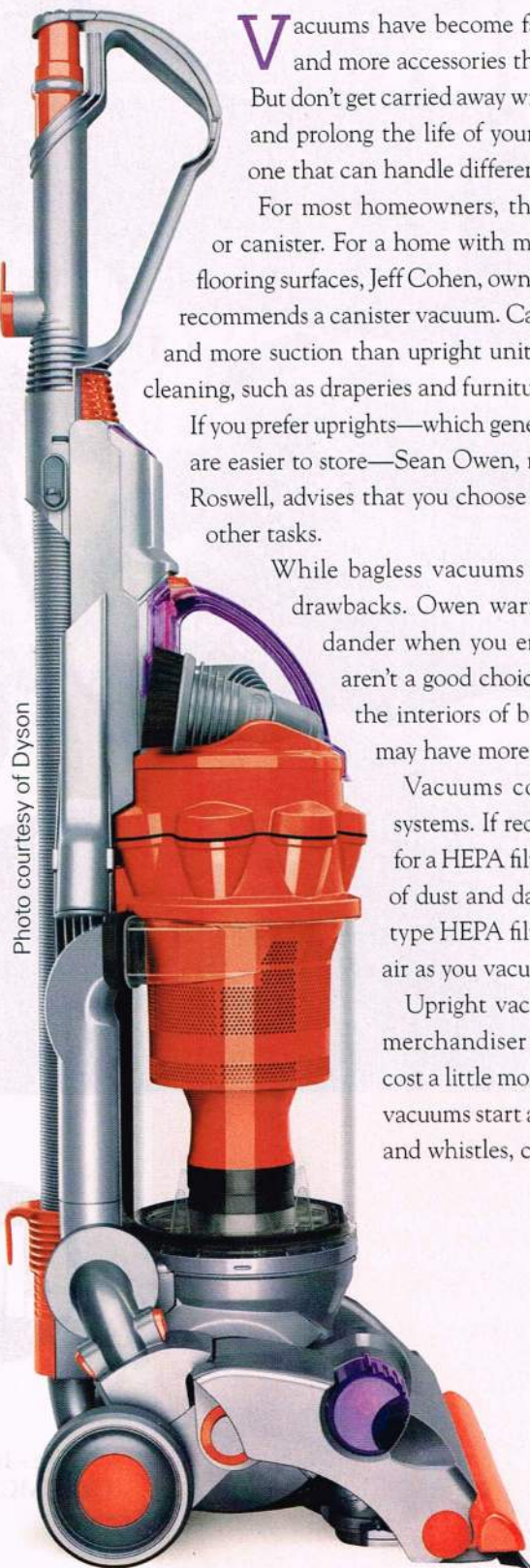
For most homeowners, the choice comes down to upright or canister. For a home with more than one story or a variety of flooring surfaces, Jeff Cohen, owner of Buckhead-Midtown Vacuum, recommends a canister vacuum. Canisters usually have a larger motor and more suction than upright units, and they are better for off-floor cleaning, such as draperies and furniture.

If you prefer uprights—which generally weigh less than canisters and are easier to store—Sean Owen, manager of Vacupro Floor Care in Roswell, advises that you choose a model that has attachments for other tasks.

While bagless vacuums are all the rage, there are some drawbacks. Owen warns that you can inhale dust and dander when you empty the dirt receptacle, so they aren't a good choice for someone with allergies. Plus, the interiors of bagless machines get dirtier, so you may have more frequent repairs.

Vacuums come with a variety of filtration systems. If reducing dust is important to you, go for a HEPA filter, which will filter out 99.9 percent of dust and dander. According to Cohen, an S-type HEPA filter is sealed and actually cleans the air as you vacuum.

Upright vacuums can be purchased at a mass merchandiser starting at about \$70. Canisters cost a little more, and start at about \$100. Upscale vacuums start at about \$250 and, with all the bells and whistles, can cost more than \$1,000.



Vacuum specialists agree that with a vacuum, "you get what you pay for." The specialty store brands—such as Miele, Lindhaus, Simplicity and Sanitaire—come with better warranties and longer life spans. Both stores have repair shops that handle all brands, and they see plenty of budget machines come in for repairs that cost more the machine is worth.

Cohen says a good vacuum should last for 15 years, and in the long run it will cost less than buying a cheaper model every three years.

To prolong the life of your vacuum, change the belt every six months and have it serviced annually. A technician will take the vacuum apart, clean it and replace worn parts. An annual tuneup typically costs \$30 to \$40—more for a bagless because it gets dirtier.

## KNOW YOUR Options

While upright and canister vacuums are the choices for most people, there are other types available:

- Steamer vacuums can wash carpets with hot water and cleaning solution.
- Handheld vacs are small and usually cordless. They are best for spot-cleaning or reaching spaces a larger vacuum can't.
- Robotic vacs clean the floor without you leading the brush. Reviews of the relatively new gadgets suggest they are best for bare floors or low-pile carpet, and tend to be flummoxed by scatter rugs, fringe and stray items left on the floor.
- Central vacuum systems include motor units installed in the basement or garage, outlets throughout the house where attachments can be plugged in and PVC piping to deliver suction to carry dirt to the receptacle. They usually are installed during construction or a major renovation, when the walls will be open anyway. ▶

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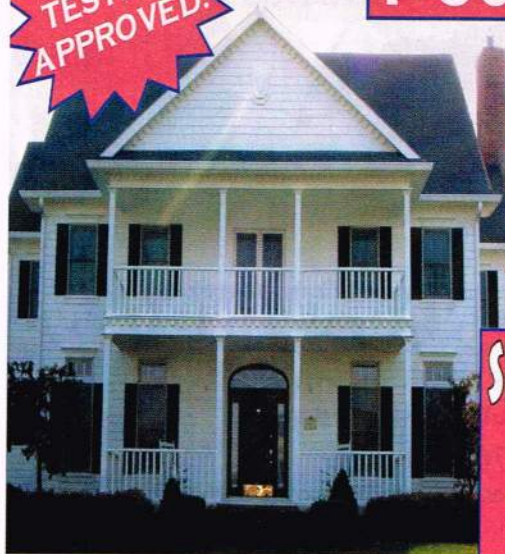
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## A Variety of Vacuums

If you're having a hard time choosing a vacuum cleaner, check out the latest models from a few of the best manufacturers in the business.

### Dyson DC14 Low Reach

Dyson's latest bagless vacuum has an ergonomic, easy-to-carry design that makes it easier to clean under furniture and all around the house. It won't lose suction, is easy to empty and contains a lifetime HEPA filter, making it approved for allergy sufferers. Dyson, (866) 693-9766 or [www.dyson.com](http://www.dyson.com); \$479.94



### Lindhaus Diamante 380

The newest model of Lindhaus upright bagged vacuum is lightweight and has a low noise level and a hospital-quality filtration system. It's designed to clean on all surfaces, and it has a one-of-a-kind dry carpet cleaning feature to help prevent mold in the home. Lindhaus, (952) 707-1131 or [www.lindhaus.com](http://www.lindhaus.com); check dealers for pricing



### Hoover Telios

If you're looking for a bagged canister vacuum that's easy to maneuver, try the Telios. It has large wheels, a swivel canister, a telescoping wand and automatic cord rewind, and its convenient controls will help you match motor speed and suction to the task at hand. Hoover, (330) 499-9499 or [www.hoover.com](http://www.hoover.com); \$99-\$129



### Oreck XL Ultra

Weighing in at only 8 lbs, this upright also has a hypoallergenic filtration system and a special Saniseal bag that locks away dirt and dust. It will lay flat to fit under furniture and has an ergonomically designed handle, making it easy to use. Oreck, (800) 289-5888 or [www.oreck.com](http://www.oreck.com); \$499.95



### Miele Red Velvet

This durable bagged canister vacuum features a versatile powerbrush that can be adjusted to work on any size pile carpeting, a headlamp to light your path and easy-to-use controls located at the top of the hose handle. It boasts the world's first certificate of HEPA certification. Miele, (800) 843-7231 or [www.miele.com](http://www.miele.com); \$1,299



### Simplicity Synergy Upright

This is the first vacuum to use a Tandem Air system, meaning that it uses advanced HEPA filtration in addition to a direct air motor system, ensuring that you will get the best suction possible. This durable bagged vacuum can also lay flat for cleaning under beds or couches. Simplicity, (888) 974-6759 or [www.simplicityvac.com](http://www.simplicityvac.com); \$699



*Editorial Resources begin on page 172.*