



Ceramic Tiles of Italy

**CERAMIC TILES OF ITALY RECOGNIZES
CONESTOGA TILE
AS A LEADING DISTRIBUTOR OF ITALIAN CERAMIC TILE**

(Spring 2008) After an extensive selection process, Conestoga Ceramic Tile Distributors has been named the 2008 recipient of the *Confindustria Ceramica North American Distributor Award*. Presented annually at Coverings, this award recognizes a US or Canadian distributor for their dedication to the promotion and use of Italian ceramic tiles in the marketplace.

As in past years, a Supervisory Committee, made up of members of the Confindustria Ceramica Board of Directors, compiled a list of criteria based on recommendations from the Italian ceramic tile manufacturers. Number of votes expressed by the companies; competence and skill over the years as an importer and distributor of Italian ceramic tiles; preference for Ceramic Tiles of Italy for their unique aesthetic and technical qualities; fair-trade practices in the commercial relationship undertaken with the Italian manufacturers; and best showroom and corporate image were all taken into consideration during the judging. Conestoga Tile exemplified each of the rigorous standards set forth by the Italian ceramic tile industry.

Conestoga Ceramic Tile Distributors, Inc., is a major wholesale distributor and importer of ceramic tile and allied products representing approximately 50 domestic and foreign manufacturers. They carry an extensive collection of Italian ceramic tile including: Edilgres Sirio, EmilCeramica, Ceramiche Ricchetti, Mediterranea, Cerim, Rex, Rondine, Tagina, Impronta Ceramiche, Dolce Vita, and Pastorelli.

At the time of its establishment in 1958, Conestoga Tile was the humble operation of Jack Vogel, along with his brother-in-law Bob Banta, who worked out of a 2,500 square foot warehouse. Vogel acted as a jack-of-all trades, performing the roles of general manager, salesman, deliveryman, and bookkeeper, among other tasks. The company really took off in the 1980s, so Jack's wife Susan Vogel joined the family business as the Executive Vice President and head of the Sales and Marketing department. It was under Ms. Vogel's leadership that the architectural services program was developed, introducing Conestoga into a whole new market. It was also in the early '80s that ConestogaTile began representing its first Italian manufacturer, Marazzi. The Vogels' sons Jim and Steve Vogel started lending their innovative thinking to the company in the early 1990s. When Jack and Susan retired in 1998, their sons took over the reigns.

Now celebrating their momentous 50th anniversary, the family-run company continues to uphold its legacy of integrity, teamwork, enthusiastic professionalism, pride and family values. These wholesome qualities translate into meaningful and effective customer relations. Conestoga Tile's main customer base is comprised of hundreds of tile contractors and floor covering dealers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, DC. However, they also work with some clients outside the local service area. Although Conestoga Tile does not sell directly to the consumer, their four showrooms with thousands of samples and installations in Harrisburg, PA; Linthicum, MD; Dulles, VA and Troy, VA, are open to the public for the selection of ceramic tile for their projects. Purchases are made through their local tile contractor or dealer. In addition, in 2005

Conestoga Tile opened a 100,000 square foot warehouse in Hanover, PA to be able to significantly increase their ability to stock material and deliver on a timely basis.

Conestoga Tile values their special distributor-manufacturer relationship with the Italian ceramic tile industry. The fruitful partnership has led to many successes. According to company president Jim Vogel, "The leading quality that we associate with Italian tile is design. The Italian manufacturers are the leaders in new innovative ceramic tile designs. We also recognize Italian manufacturers' excellence in the development of high quality porcelain tile. Once the Italians began to switch over to a porcelain body, we began to see an emergence of porcelain tile; both glazed and unglazed, as a demanded product type. Conestoga Tile is honored to receive this award. We have had many great years working with the Italian manufacturers and are looking forward to many more."

On April 30th, 2008 members of Conestoga Tile will be on hand to accept their award. Confindustria Ceramica President Alfonso Panzani will present the prize during the Ceramic Tiles of Italy annual party at Coverings. The firm will also receive an all-expense paid trip to Bologna, Italy to attend CERSAIE 2008, September 30 – October 4, 2008, the world's largest exhibition of ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings.

For more information on Ceramic Tiles of Italy visit the new gateway www.italiantiles.com - with links to four key industry sites: www.italiatiles.com (the official website of Confindustria Ceramica), www.italytile.com (the official website for the Ceramic Tile Department of the Italian Trade Commission), www.s-tiles.it (a tool that tracks the Italian tile industry's commitment to sustainable design) and www.tilecompetition.com (a digital guide to the Ceramic Tiles of Italy Design Competition).

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