



Ceramic Tiles of Italy

SPRING TREND PREVIEW

Surface and Size Meets Sanitary and Sustainable

(Spring 2010, New York, NY) Ceramic Tiles of Italy will begin its US spring tradeshow circuit with a bang. Coverings (April 27-30, 2010 in Orlando, FL) is the first stop on the multi-show tour. Close to sixty different tile manufacturers will make up the Italian Pavilion. It's a feast (literally) for those enamored with Italian culture and is always a place for design innovation and inspiration. The International Contemporary Furniture Fair (May 15-18, 2010 in New York, NY), the AIA National Convention (June 10-12, 2010 in Miami, FL) and Dwell on Design (June 26-28, 2010 in Los Angeles, CA) are also on the upcoming schedule. While color, shape and pattern are always crowd-pleasers at the fairs, the Italian tile industry is also using these opportunities to promote tile's inherent sustainable and hygienic advantages.

Green Forum:

REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE are three key words that will be heard around the world. Thanks to advances in technology, new slim formats use less material and help to REDUCE the Italian tile industry's carbon footprint. Unlike previous years, the tendency is moving towards tiles that are 4-5mm thick as this size is strong enough for high-traffic floors and more sustainable to produce and ship. The compact thickness means it takes a smaller amount of energy and raw materials to produce and causes a lower level of harmful emissions to transport. In terms of installation, the slim format tiles can be laid over existing hard surfaces, therefore cutting down on construction costs and saving valuable time. This size is also an ideal surface solution for ventilated wall façade systems or radiant heating. In addition to innovative formats, the use of pre and post-consumer RECYCLED content is on the rise. Everything from raw waste to recycled glass from bottles and obsolete cathode ray tube (CRT) TV monitors is being REUSED and recycled back into the production process. Water, another key component in the process, is also being reused to preserve natural resources. Finally, manufacturers are moving towards packaging materials, including boxes, cardboards, plastics and crates that are completely recyclable.

Health and Wellness:

Sustainability is not the only issue deserving attention. Health, hygiene and sanitary needs are equally important topics in this era of green design. This is one of the many reasons why tile usage is moving far beyond the kitchen and the bath to spaces like living rooms and bedrooms. The hospitality industry is one of the first to recognize the potential of this building product. From floors to backboards, it is a clean, durable, hypoallergenic and easy-to-maintain solution. Wellness centers, hospitals and schools are other areas for continued growth. Besides tile's inherent characteristics, Italian tile manufacturers are raising the bar even higher. New introductions even include a patented ceramic product with antibacterial properties that can reduce the spread of four main bacteria.

FAUX Fabulous: Wood, Wallpaper & Stone Looks:

Thanks to ink-jet technology, tile surfaces mimic any look – from wood to wallpaper. From damask prints to wood grain, the patterns are so precise it is almost impossible to tell the difference. Plus porcelain's performance qualities including low water absorption, low

maintenance, and durability make it suitable for areas where other materials could not be used. Stone-looks continue their popularity. This season's selection of surfaces includes those inspired by marble, limestone, travertine and basalt. Another benefit of the faux-phenomenon is the ease of mixing and matching. Since it is all the same material (ceramic), it simplifies the installation process.

These are just a few of the trends visitors can expect to see on the market this season. New products and innovation is sure to be plentiful. To access a complete inventory of new products, including high-resolution images and descriptions, click on Ceramic Tiles of Italy's new link dedicated to products and trends: <http://products.italiatiles.com>.

For more information on Ceramic Tiles of Italy, visit their 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). Ceramic Tiles of Italy's "Project and Products" can now be found online at two new web galleries: <http://projects.italiatiles.com> and <http://products.italiatiles.com>.

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