

2010 Cersaie Trend Report

(**New York, NY – November 2010**) What are the latest trends in tile? Asking the 83,000+ international attendees who attended the **28th edition of Cersaie** – the international exhibition of ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings – is likely to yield a thousand different answers. This annual platform for design-driven products and state-of-the-art architectural solutions was held in Bologna, Italy from **September 28 – October 2, 2010**. With over 510 tile manufacturers present, the majority of which were Italian, the fair gave visitors a preview of the hottest, most innovative ceramic and porcelain collections before they hit the marketplace. On the style front, interesting cutouts, lace, oversized flowers, skinny stripes and 3-D surfaces stood out on the tile runway. In line with the times, visitors experienced a bounty of organic influences ranging from rustic wood-looks to natural stone and concrete. And who can forget about sustainable design and technological innovation? New slim formats, digital printing and tiles with antibacterial properties and photovoltaic panels were introduced by numerous companies at the show and will surely make a big impact on the A&D community throughout the year.

Designer Labels

A roster of big names in design appeared in person or in the product pages of catalogs throughout the show. **Mutina** hit it out of the park with three designer collaborations that demonstrate the juxtaposition of fragile and industrial. The delicate-seeming “Folded” collection, designed by Yael Mer and Shay Alkalay from UK-based Raw-Edges Design Studio, takes its cue from origami folded paper. Continuing its collaboration with Patricia Urquiola, Mutina introduced two new lines of soft-looking ceramics. “Bas-Relief” expresses the theme of different depths of bas-relief in four unique patterns while two new textures developed for “Dechirer” recall the appearance of wool and netting. Japanese design superstar, Tokujin Yoshioko, also made an appearance at Cersaie to personally explain the creative process behind his new geometric and textured “Phenomenon” collection.

Like a perfectly tailored suit, “Lines” by **Lea** is backed by a designer label (Patrick Norguet) and features crisp, clean stripes of varying heights. Along with “Waves,” the two series are big (3m x 1m), bold (3mm thick) and beautiful. Lea also introduced “Gouche.10” by Diego Grandi that explores chromatic and tactile applications for ceramic. **Cisa**’s “Ume” line by Japanese designer Kaori Shiina presents an elegant wallpaper motif. The young and talented designer, Luca Nichetto, designed the “Kaos” collection for **Refin** that is based on the molecular structure of ceramic itself. Meanwhile, Refin’s creative lab, **DesignTaleStudio**, worked with designer Massimiliano Adami to create the “Terraviva” collection that plays with the idea of cracks in a floor. In addition, **Bardelli** continued its relationship with Marcel Wanders to produce a popping grey and white 3-D tile that will be available in the spring.

*Industry First: “Wire” developed by Simone Micheli and **Tagina** is a full ceramic system of tiles and special pieces appropriate for interior and exterior spaces. Addressing difficult applications in ceramic, like corners, it was designed specifically for architectural fluidity.*

Style: Delicate to Industrial

Good ideas often evolve from outside inspiration, which was very apparent at this year's show. From urban influences to textiles and centuries-old motifs, Italian companies are taking a strong poetic approach towards their new collections this season.

Reflecting the design industry's fascination with industrial spaces, the chromatic shades and irregular patterns of raw cement and concrete were seen in nearly every corner of the show. Standouts include: "Concreta" by **Marazzi**, "Eclipse" by **Marca Corona**, "Transit Slim" by **Ragno**, "Urban_Touch" by **Fioranese**, "Frisia" by **La Faenza**, "Must" by **Novabell** and "Graffiti" by **Refin**. **Mirage's** "Oxy" and **Leonardo's** "Word Up" are two other lines influenced by the world of heavy industry and urban grit.

At the other extreme, the application of hand-made motifs was evident in the numerous textile-inspired collections. **Elios** caught the attention of attendees with its "La Dolce Vita" collection, featuring patchworks of quilt-like tiles in bold and muted colors. **Fioranese** took cues from lace and macramé with the decorative tiles of its "BeautyColors" collection and **Gabbianelli** took textile inspiration literally with its new line of tile prototypes from iconic tie designer E. Marinelli.

*Industry First: Using black clay from Austria and a special Raku technique traditionally used in pottery, **Ceramica di Treviso** is about to introduce a shimmering, lace-inspired line called "Raku."*

Multiple Shades of Green

This ever-expanding and ever-important category deserves much attention. First, consider tile's inherently green attributes like its durability, lifespan and resistance to extreme weather conditions, fire, water and moisture. Then think about it in terms of indoor air quality, maintenance and hygiene. It scores quite high as a clean, durable, hypoallergenic and low-maintenance covering solution. This is one of the many reasons why tile is moving far beyond the kitchen and bath to spaces like living rooms and bedrooms in the home. A city dwellers' dream, it's also the ideal flooring for apartment rentals.

Tile also allows for easy, nontoxic cleaning, which is why hotels, wellness centers, hospitals and schools are areas experiencing continued growth. Understanding the importance of this issue, the **Panaria Group** (which includes Panaria, Lea, Fiordo and Cotto d'Este) and **Casalgrande Padana** both introduced new anti-microbial tiles that eliminate up to 99% of bacteria. Since the antibacterial modules are embedded in the body of the tile, the technology does not affect the properties of the tile and offers long-lasting protection.

Another revolutionary and rapidly expanding area for Italian manufacturers is solar energy. Last year, **Area** was the first to introduce ceramic roof tiles with fitted photovoltaic modules that collect sunlight and use it to generate electricity. At the 2010 show, **Laminam** announced its partnership with the photovoltaic panel producer, System Photonics, to make solar panel "slabs" for roofs as well as building façades.

Besides its innate eco-friendly characteristics, Italian tile producers are continually rethinking the entire production process. Many manufacturers are using a closed-loop system that recycles 100% of raw material and water wastes back into the production cycle. In fact, **Ceramica Vogue** has revamped its entire production process so that 100% of the unfired waste from all of the factories in the Altaeco group is reused. And shipping? Tiles made in Italy are generally sent to the U.S. by sea, which, according to a recent study analyzing transportation methods including container ships, trucks and planes, results in less greenhouse emissions. Plus the packaging is recyclable.

From 100% recyclable packaging to tiles made with recycled content, the Italian tile industry is making a commitment to the environment. The **Finicibec Group**, which includes Monocibec, Naxos and Century, offers 22 collections that contain over 40% recycled material. Emilceramica, which includes Emilceramica and Ergon, produces 21 collections that contain this portion or higher. **Novabell's**

“Tuscania,” **Verde1999**’s “TT120,” **Marca Corona**’s “Marmo Ecologico” and **Fioranese**’s “Eco_Alabaster” are just a few of the many new introductions containing a percentage of recycled content. Continuing the trend of putting electronic waste to good use, **Refin** used the fair to show off “Murcia,” which contains 20% of post-consumer glass derived from the recycling of cathode ray tube TV sets. In terms of grout and adhesives, **Mapei** is a proud innovator of environmentally responsible solutions and manufactures more than 110 LEED-compliant products.

*Industry First: **Laminam** and **Imola** have both developed systems that make life easier for designers and installers. Laminam’s “Emoziona” is comprised of 20”x60” ceramic tiles with interlocking back panels made of 40% recycled material. It uses 50% less adhesive on walls and requires none for flooring. Similarly, Imola’s “Cliptile” features an innovative plastic support with a precision automatic clip that allows state-of-the-art tile laying in only a few, simple steps.*

Slimming Down

More and more manufacturers are adding a new slimmer format to their offerings. In fact, the Italian tile industry is chairing the committee on thin tiles to develop an international standard for these slim products and their installation. The industry sees this sustainable solution as an important area for growth in the flooring and wall-covering sector. The ceramic tile’s slim size means less environmental impact due to the reduction in energy consumption, raw materials and transport costs.

Laminam pioneered this impressive technology. Part of the System Group, it was the first to create the largest and thinnest ceramic surface ever: 3m² and just 3mm thick. “Filo,” the company’s latest advancement, combines material innovation with a 3-D textured metallic surface. **Cotto D’Este**, another technological leader, has expanded Kerlite’s offerings to include “Black-White,” a series of contrasting light and dark tiles that are just 3.5mm thick. Meanwhile, **Appiani**’s “Appiani Light” tile is only 4mm thick, making it the thinnest glazed tile in the world.

Slim is now also turning smaller and taking shape. Continuing a long-running collaboration with the Italian architect Diego Grandi, **Lea** used the fair to launch two new collections of thin-format tiles at a reduced size. Finding that 3mm allows for precision, the new iteration of the trapezoid-shaped “Mauk” collection represents the first time the company has cut large, thin format panels into modular pieces. Similarly, the décor element of “Gouache” features small, triangular tiles that can generate endless pattern combinations.

New slender formats were also spotted in **Ragno**’s “Transit Slim”, **Del Conca**’s “ThermoTile,” **Casa Dolce Casa**’s “Black & White Slim/4” and **Marazzi**’s “Stonevision.” Besides what’s brand new, best-selling archives have slimmed down and will be reintroduced in their new size. Examples include: **Panaria**’s “ZERO.3 Aisthesis,” **Emilceramica**’s “Alabastro” and **Imola**’s “Vogue5.”

Industry first: Cotto d’Este has developed “Kerlite Kilowatt,” a photovoltaic slab that is only 8mm thick.

Mother Nature as Muse

The natural environment continues to excite artists, designers and manufacturers alike. With the aid of technology and increasing perfection of inkjet printing, Italian companies are reinventing natural materials as old as the world. Introductions mirroring the aesthetic charm of natural stone, luxurious marble, and antiqued wood rocked the 2010 show.

Monocibec, **Century** and **Naxos** all use Digital Jet System technology to recreate the shades and patterns of natural stone. **Naxos**’ “Sand Rose” collection is inspired by natural formations known as “desert roses” while its brand new “Skyline” series is inspired by eight different precious marbles. **Casalgrande Padana** uses special micronized spray-dried powders mixed at the time of pressing to produce a near-replica of marble known as “Marmogres.” **Fondovalle** lends pure elegance to

residential spaces with its natural stone-inspired “Nebula” collection. Meanwhile, “Geotech” and “Walks/1.0” by **Floor Gres** recall the look of Madeira stone and Quartzite, respectively.

On the faux wood side of things, flowers and foliage were spotted in nearly every size, shape, and color. **Coem** introduced its first wood-inspired collection called “Axis,” which consists of 47” long tile “planks.” The Graffito version is especially interesting for its “scratched” interpretation of saw-cut wood. “Bellique” by **Casa Dolce Casa** and “Greenwood” by **Cerim** stood out for their worn, antiqued look. Meanwhile, **Maison Sichenia**’s “Jardin” series is dusted with delicate forms of barely-there flowers and interlaced brushstrokes that reveal a contemporary romanticism.

Companies are also drawing on unique shapes and textures generated from nature – the hexagon being a prime example. **Etruria design**, known for its beveled tiles, has added four new sizes to its “Hex” collection, which bring to life compositions that were typical in the early 20th century. Similarly, “Diamonte” by **Casalgrande Padana** and “Light” by **Sant’Agostino** harness the power of light with changing angles in the surface of the tile.

Other collections inspired by the wonders of Mother Nature include “Tracce” by **FAP**, “I Marmi di Rex” by **Rex**, “Sierra” by **La Faenza**, “Midtown” by **Imola**, “Desert Light” by **Cerim** and “W-Age” by **Provenza**.

These are just a few of the trends seen at Cersaie 2010. With a show this size and so many Italian tile producers under one roof, it was hard to cover them all. To access and download more new products, visit www.italiantiles.com. For more information on Cersaie, visit www.cersaie.it.

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