



Ceramic Tiles of Italy

CERAMIC TILES OF ITALY HONORS ARIZONA TILE WITH THE NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR AWARD

(Spring 2010) After reviewing hundreds of leading tile distributors across the continent, Ceramic Tiles of Italy is pleased to announce Arizona Tile as the 2010 recipient of the *Confindustria Ceramica North American Distributor Award*. Each year, this award is presented to a prominent U.S. or Canadian distributor at Coverings for their dedication to the promotion and use of Italian ceramic tiles in the marketplace. In recognizing the excellence of Arizona Tile, Ceramic Tiles of Italy also bestows an unprecedented honor onto the distributor – the first ever to receive the recognition for a second time in the program’s history. This significant event confers prestige to the distributor, truly in a category all its own. Highly respected as an industry leader, Arizona Tile has over 30 years of operation and experience in residential and commercial tile sales, with more than 25 locations spread out across 7 states in the Southwestern U.S.

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. Based on these criteria, Arizona Tile emerged as the clear winner, standing out in each of the rigorous standards set forth by the Italian ceramic tile industry.

Founded in 1977, Arizona Tile has grown into a nationally recognized distributor with 24 locations in 7 different states. It has built its reputation thanks to an outstanding list of leaders starting with company founders John and Eileen Huarte. John Huarte, was a former NFL player and Heisman Trophy winner that was introduced to the tile business by Jim Palm, owner of Del Piso Tile on a trip to Italy in the mid 70’s. He immediately responded to the style, fashion, quality and design of the Italian tile industry and the satisfaction of working with something tangible.

Today the veteran Arizona Tile executive team is directed by Bob Traxler – President (30+ years with AZT), Gary Skarsten – Vice President (20+ years with AZT), Beth Gaughan – V.P. Sales (20 + years with AZT), Randy Morreim – V.P. Stone Division (25+ years with AZT) and the Huarte family. Arizona Tile’s inventory features a long list of Italian manufacturers including: Panaria, ACIF, Casalgrande Padana, Castel Vetro, Magica, Sant’ Agostino, Naxos, Refin, and Unicom.

According to VP of Operatons, Mark Huarte, “We began importing tile from Italy in the early 80’s and continue today. We have developed a comfort level with our Italian manufacturers built on years of business. The comfort level has improved with direct communication and a greater understanding of each partner’s strengths. Italy makes fashionable, design oriented and quality material with average prices higher than most other countries. Arizona Tile is capable of promoting and selling Italian products because of our willingness to invest in companies centered around quality. Our locations are highly visible and strategically present in marquee

cities; our showrooms have a décor of style capable of marketing a quality product; our staff is knowledgeable; and the inventory is stocked. Arizona has a strong image and successful brand which makes it well positioned to sell Italian products.”

On April 28nd, 2010, members of Arizona Tile will be on hand to accept the *North American Distributor Award*. Vittorio Borelli, vice president of promotional activities for Confindustria Ceramica, will present the prize during Aperitiva Italiana – Ceramic Tiles of Italy’s annual party at Coverings. The company will also receive an all-expense paid trip to Bologna, Italy to attend CERSAIE September 28th – October 2nd, 2010 – the world’s largest exhibition of ceramic tile and bathroom furnishings.

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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