

cer magazine

INTERNATIONAL 50

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Cersaie continues to engage with its visitors

MARKETS

How real estate markets are changing during the Covid-19 pandemic

TRENDS

Ceramic tile as a design element

SUSTAINABILITY

Transparency and Italian ceramic tiles

INTERVIEW

Labics, architecture at the service of human beings



www.cercoceramiche.it



ANDREA SERRI
EDITOR OF CER MAGAZINE
ITALIA AND INTERNATIONAL

“But ceramic...” arrives in Europe

“But ceramic... is a safe choice” (www.ceramica.info and Ceramica.info YouTube channel) went online in Italy at the end of July and is set to be introduced in key European markets in September. After being launched onto the Italian market in parallel with the introduction of tax incentives on energy efficiency and seismic upgrading of buildings, the third step in the communication campaign entitled “The Values of Ceramics” is now being unveiled in the rest of Europe with the aim of keeping the market informed throughout the current difficulties. Because knowledge, after all, is the first and most important step along the path that leads individuals to become consumers.

After describing the characteristics of the product and its numerous and in many cases unfamiliar applications in sixteen video clips, this next step in the campaign looks at everyday situations where ceramic surfaces provide superior performance to other floor and wall covering materials. Ceramic is the ideal choice for example when the temperature of a room rises, perhaps due to the sun’s rays streaming in through a window in summer; it does not facilitate the proliferation of fungi and bacteria; its exceptional hardness equates with outstanding scratch resistance; and thanks to its homogeneous composition it is easier to recycle as a secondary raw material. But perhaps most importantly of all, ceramic stands out for its fire behaviour, as it does not burn or release toxic fumes thanks to the absence of plastic. The videos adopt a humorous tone to describe the various situations, using clear and simple language to speak directly to the end consumer.

This part of the campaign is again brand-free in keeping with its general approach and the original idea of promoting knowledge of the characteristics and potential of ceramic according to objective criteria, thereby helping to increase its share of the world flooring materials market. This dialogue with all the world’s markets, already initiated in the first two steps of the campaign, enjoys the crucial support and collaboration of the Italian ceramic tile producer companies.

Cer magazine is an integral part of the new communication platform www.ceramica.info.

You will be able to access an extensive catalogue of multimedia content whenever you see these icons:



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“Ceramics of Italy”



cover

Be Open Primary School

Prague, Czech Republic - 2019

project: Opálka Design studio

photos: Filip Györe

ceramic surfaces:

Marca Corona

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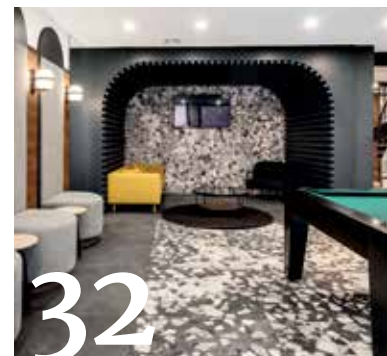
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PERLE D'ITALIA

collezioni e progetti in gres smaltato

collections and projects in glazed ceramic gres



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The ceramic promotional campaign continues

by Andrea Serri

“But ceramic... is a safe choice”, the third step in the promotional campaign entitled “The Values of Ceramics,” has been on air in Italy since the end of July with the aim of explaining the reasons why ceramic tile is preferable to other surface covering materials in certain everyday situations. It marks the latest step towards greater awareness and appreciation of ceramic tile and its potential residential applications amongst end users.

The humorous situation of a young couple

All seven new video clips feature a young couple who encounter a variety of situations in their daily lives, both in their home and in a clothing store. The humorous scenes exaggerate everyday problems to demonstrate the advantages of ceramic tile over other floor and wall covering materials, such as resistance to scratching (in this case by the couple’s pet dog), the ability to prevent the proliferation of fungi and bacteria, and durability and resistance to cleaning products. Further important characteristics include fire resistance and the fact that ceramic does not generate toxic fumes in the event of fire, as well as its ease of recycling thanks to its uniform nature. The videos also stress the importance of high-quality installation to ensure the stability and durability of a ceramic tiled floor.



Go to the website to watch the seven video clips





Europe-wide campaign launched in September “But ceramic... is a safe choice” is continuing the dialogue with end consumers that began in January 2019 when the campaign entitled “The values of ceramics” was first launched. The decision to engage with end consumers was largely dictated by the fact that they are becoming increasingly aware of their choices and are keen to understand the various options available to them. More and more often, they are the ones that make the final decisions about the materials that will be used in their homes after seeking the advice of professionals such as architects, distributors and installers. To further help them make these important decisions, consumers can visit the Italian ceramics website www.ceramica.info, which provides a wealth of detailed information along with the individual videos as part of a digital marketing strategy focused on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google Search as tools for building this direct relationship.

The launch of the campaign across Europe began in September with France, followed closely by Germany and finally the UK. In all three cases, the launch coincided with specific presentation events organised in collaboration with local distributors’

and/or installers’ associations and featured the participation of various market players. The European Ceramic Industry Association Cerame-Unie also took part in the campaign and organised special presentation meetings with the representatives of other member countries. Engaging with a potential target audience of more than 250 million European citizens located in Germany, France, the UK and other countries where French, German or English is spoken calls for a major communication effort, for which purpose Confindustria Ceramica works alongside Italian ceramic companies and their communications, social media, marketing and sales organisations. This is a very large market that registered more than 12 million views during the first two steps of the campaign, a particularly significant number considering that an average of between 3% and 5% of the population of the various countries carry out building renovation work each year.

Also see:

Why choose ceramic?

➤ www.ceramica.info/en/ceramic-a-safe-choice/

Point of surface.

unicomstarker.com



Brazilian Slate

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naturale, materica e vissuta.
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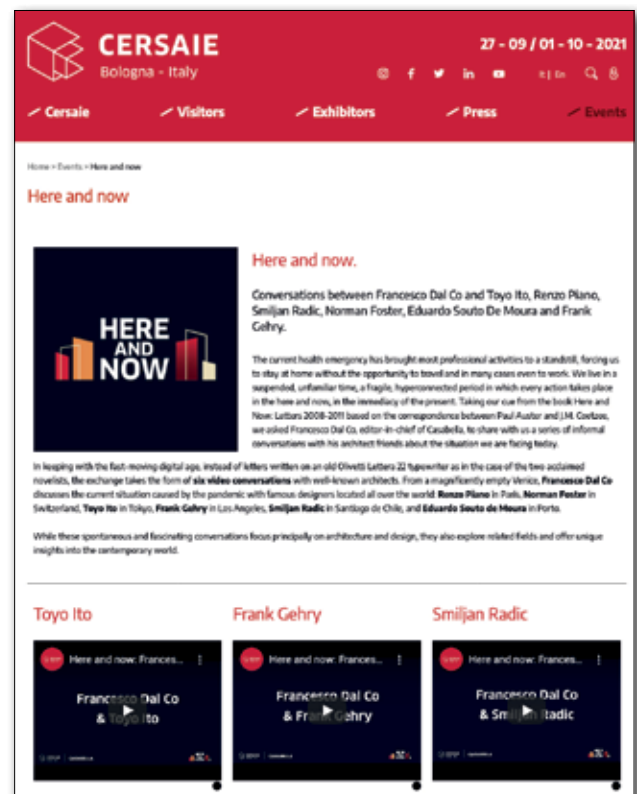


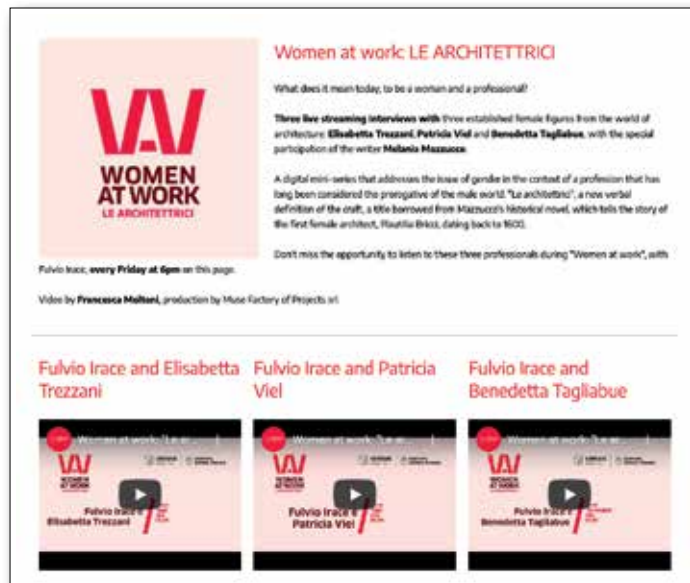
BOLOGNAFIERE NEW HALL 37 RENDERING
(© DI GREGORIO ASSOCIATI ARCHITETTI)

Cersaie continues to engage with its visitors

by Maria Teresa Rubbiani

The fact that **Cersaie, the International Exhibition of Ceramic Tile and Bathroom Furnishings**, could not be held in 2020 was a truly exceptional occurrence that affected both visitors and the hundreds of thousands of people who work at the show every year. The regular annual event suffered the same fate as all the other major international exhibitions attended by professionals from all over the world. But now that Cersaie 2020 has been cancelled, all eyes are on next year's show to be held in Bologna **from 27 September to 1 October 2021**, a time of year when participants will have a chance to enjoy Italy's pleasant late summer weather. In the meantime, Cersaie has continued to engage with its target audience and as early as the spring lockdown period began organising a series of online initiatives (these can still be accessed on the revamped Cersaie TV YouTube channel). Italian and international architects and designers who have taken part in the exhibition over the years accepted the invitation to connect from home and recount their experiences during this unprecedented period. This gave rise to a series of initiatives: **"Small Talks"** (ten conversations with Italian architects), **"Qui e ora. Here and now"** (with





Visit the Cersaie website

some of the top names in international architecture), **"Women at work: Architects"** (with three internationally renowned female Italian architects), **"The World's Best"** (video messages from some of the most famous visitors to the show) and finally the re-airing of 10 past conferences from the "building, dwelling, thinking" archives.

The programme of online initiatives to be held in the lead-up to Cersaie 2021 was resumed in the autumn with the **"Press Cafés"** organised by Cersaie in collaboration with major specialist magazines, an 18-part programme that will end in February 2021 and is also accessible on Cersaie TV.

This year's meetings are maintaining the same format and content that has been tried and tested at previous editions of Cersaie and are being held as Zoom webinars. They will feature a series of conversations between the magazine editors and guest experts on topical issues in the field of ceramics, bathroom furnishings and contract design.

The 18 magazines are: **Abitare**, **AD – Architectural Digest**, **Chiesa Oggi**, **L'Arca International**, **DDN – Design Diffusion News**, **Domus**, **Elle Decor**, **Guest**, **IFDM**, **Il Bagno Oggi e Domani**, **Interni**, **La Repubblica**, **Marie Claire Maison**, **NiiProgetti**, **Platform**, **QN**, **Suite** and **The Plan**.



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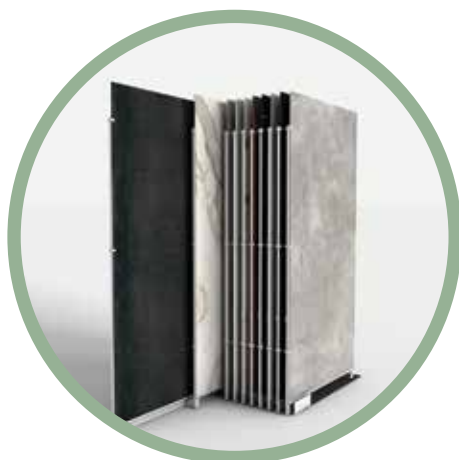
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A dream home

A VILLA WITH LARGE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES IN CAPITÓLIO, BRAZIL
FEATURES A SWIMMING POOL AND FULLY-EQUIPPED SPACES FOR RELAXATION AND COMFORT

by Benedetto Marzullo, LIVING

A “dream home” is the definition that immediately springs to mind at the sight of the photos of this splendid Brazilian residence in Capitólio, a municipality located in the State of Minas Gerais, part of the Sul e Sudoeste de Minas mesoregion and the Passos microregion. It is 280 km from Belo Horizonte – relatively close considering the distances typical of South America’s largest country – and 600 km north of Rio de Janeiro. The villa features a luxury swimming pool and large, stylish spaces. It even has two dining areas, one facing onto the open-plan kitchen, where one can easily imagine exclusive show-cooking

sessions to entertain guests (the main kitchen is in a more secluded position), and the other behind the living and conversation area, complete with large sofas facing onto the space where the home cinema TV screen has been installed. Although interconnected, these two areas (living/dining room and kitchen/dining room) can be separated when necessary by sliding glass partitions. The interior designers opted for the warmer feel of wood for the first space, using wood panelling to clad one corner of the living room, and a stone-effect surface for the walls in the second area. By contrast, the floors maintain a sense of continuity

LAKE HOUSE IS
A LUXURIOUS
RESIDENCE IN
CAPITÓLIO, BRAZIL.
THE INFINITY POOL
OVERLOOKS THE
LUSH LANDSCAPE
LIKE A “BALCONY
WITH A VIEW”.





LAKE HOUSE

PROJECT
VANESSA DINIZ
ARQUITETURA

PHOTOS
ÉLCIO JÚNIOR

CERAMIC SURFACES
FLOOR GRES
(MADE IN FLORIM)
WWW.FLORIM.COM

**YEAR OF
COMPLETION**
2019



 Go to the Project Gallery for other non-urban residential projects

LEFT: A NIGHT VIEW OF THE SWIMMING POOL. A LARGE PATIO WITH PALM TREES AND OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT FOR COMPLETE OPEN-AIR RELAXATION.

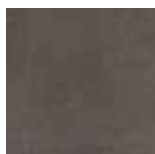


THE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR AREAS INTERCONNECT SEAMLESSLY: THE LARGE WINDOWS ALLOW THE LARGE LIVING ROOM TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE EXTERIOR AND OFFER A SPLENDID VIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE. THE CERAMIC FLOORING EXTENDS UNIFORMLY THROUGHOUT ALL THE SPACES.

SPACES
non-urban
residential

APPLICATIONS
interior floor coverings

ceramic surfaces
Floor Gres
(Made in Florim)
porcelain tile
Industrial
Plomb
Matte + RPTV
120x240 cm



Industrial
Plomb

technical characteristics
water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): 0.08%
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): 50 N/mm²
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): 140 mm³
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
frost resistance

(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance (ISO
10545-13): UA ULA UHA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 3-4
slip resistance (DIN 51130):
R9 Soft, R10 Natural,
R11 Bush-hammered

certifications
Ecolabel, LEED, ISO 14001



THE OPEN SPACE LIVING ROOM INCLUDES A CONVERSATION AREA WHERE WARM WOOD PANNELLING CONTRASTS WITH THE CEMENT-GREY CERAMIC FLOOR TILES. THE AREA FEATURES SOFAS, A GIANT TV SCREEN AND A LARGE DINING TABLE FOR 10 PEOPLE.

in terms of style and colour and consist of large anthracite grey slabs from the Industrial collection by Floor Gres. The purity and rigour of the concrete effect enhances the design of the rooms and gives them great personality. The surfaces were chosen in the Plomb colour and the Magnum Oversize 120x240 cm format, which adds a sense of depth to both the living area and the outdoor spaces and creates a pleasant sensation of seamless continuity between the interior and exterior of the house. The outdoor spaces are organised around the swimming pool and form a kind of open-air living area fully equipped to guarantee relaxation and comfort, from poolside sun loungers to a lounge area complete with sofas and chaise longues. And in the covered outdoor area there are also two king-size bamboo daybeds with lobster red mattresses. In short, there are no words to describe it other than a “dream home”.



RELATED ARTICLE

New uses for ceramic tiles in the home



WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/ARTICOLI/NEW-USES-FOR-CERAMIC-TILES-IN-THE-HOME/

Ceramic tile as a design element

by Antonia Solari

THE LATEST PORCELAIN TILE COLLECTIONS ARE NO LONGER ADOPTED EXCLUSIVELY AS FLOOR AND WALL COVERINGS BUT ARE INCREASINGLY BEING USED TO DEFINE AND DIVIDE UP SPACES BY MEANS OF THEIR COLOURS AND TEXTURES, AND THEY ARE EVEN TAKING ON A NEW ROLE AS FURNISHING AND INTERIOR DESIGN ELEMENTS

Porcelain tiles and slabs are now expanding their fields of application to include interior design, furnishings and architectural uses. Rather than just a simple and practical solution for floor and wall coverings, they are becoming essential compositional elements in their own right, ideal for architectural or interior design project. Tiles with alternating colours and finishes are capable of transforming walls into a kind of interior landscape, while porcelain surfaces are increasingly used for furnishing applications such as tables and kitchen countertops, shelves and seats. They have even become the canvases used by designers to create original ceramic carpets. And last but not least, coloured tiles – often chosen in dense, saturated tones – can be used as a means of separating spaces with different functions: the boundary between two different colours can signify the end of one functional area and the beginning of another. Mindful of these new roles of porcelain, manufacturers are proposing their collections in numerous versions to allow designers to give free rein to their creativity while

remaining within the confines of a single series. As a result, the latest tile collections no longer come solely in matching shades but also include contrasting colours, decorations and designs so that an entire project – even one with alternating colours and patterns – can be completed using products from a single supplier. Consequently, producers are continuing to include wood or marble effect porcelain, slabs recreating continuous surfaces and popular designs such as terrazzo in their ranges, often enhanced by new non-slip finishes or reduced thicknesses and equipped with new functions tailored to the different applications. In the bathroom for example, the shower area may feature tiles of one colour and the washbasin area another in a contrasting shade. In an open plan living space, the separation between the kitchen area and the living room may be marked by the choice of colour, size and finish of the wall tiles, or in another example, the tiled back of a bookcase may be chosen in a different colour to that of the remaining walls.

The **Victory** glazed porcelain tile collection from **Elios Ceramica** stands out for its vibrant, fragmented surface with gently undulating relief. It comes in ten colours and two decorations in the form of a 6.1x37 cm strip with a 6 mm thickness.

eliosceramica.com

Panaria Ceramica's Glam collection consists of porcelain surfaces that recreate the effect of wallpaper. Produced in a 3.5 mm thickness, it is available with 14 decorative themes ideal for rooms with a strong personality. panariagroup.it





Marazzi's StepWise technology produces tiles with high slip resistance combined with a soft-touch surface. The photo shows the **Crogiolo D_Segni Blend** porcelain collection inspired by 20x20 cm handmade cement tiles. Available in 7 colours and 18 designs to create a surface with a powerful graphic effect.

marazzigroup.com



Soapstone. Cercom's collection inspired by steatite, a stone widely used to make artistic and handcrafted objects, is available in the four different colours Ivory, Coffee, Grey and Black as well as five sizes, from 120x120 cm down to the classic 60x60 cm.

cercomceramiche.it



The **Totallook** series from **Emilceramica** includes resin-inspired versions such as TotalResin, ResinSoft, ResinNatural and Resin Tecnica designed to be used in conjunction with the TotalBrick majolica-effect line, available in 6x24 cm sizes and matt and lux finishes. The juxtaposition of the continuous surface effect and the multicoloured tiles creates a striking contrast.

emilgroup.it



Inspired by high-quality marble and granite, the various surfaces in the **Opulence** collection from **Ceramiche Piemme** are designed to be used in combination to decorate rooms with geometric effects. The collection consists of five colours, four sizes and three types of decoration: inlay, digital and third fire effect.

ceramichepiemme.it

The **Hub** collection from **Naxos** stands out for its bold colours and clear, often graphic designs. It was developed to create visually striking walls characterised by contrasts of materials and the various available finishes: satin, pearly grits and sugar effect.

naxos-ceramica.it



Blend from **ABK**, shown here in the colour Concrete Iron, is a concrete-look porcelain enhanced by graphic reproductions of tiny pebbles. A reworking of terrazzo, Blend comes in three finishes: natural, lapped and the innovative P-tech, which offers improved anti-slip performance on floors.

abk.it



Discover the new products from Ceramics of Italy



1.



2.



3.

1. **Lea Ceramiche's Anthology** collection features five completely different motifs inspired by materials such as marble and stone and produced using technologies specially designed to create a realistic and three-dimensional surface effect.
leaceramiche.it

2. The hexagon and rhombus are the two geometric shapes on which **Etruria Design's Spatial Concept** line is based, inspired by the work of Lucio Fontana and characterised by a high gloss level achieved by bell application of a large quantity of glaze.
etruriadesign.it

3. **LaFaenza's** range is being expanded with the addition of **Vis**, a surface covering available in a single 6.5 mm thickness and five sizes ranging from 120x240 cm to 60x60 cm. The collection comes in six colours: Verde Militare, Middle Grey, Argento, Bianco, Almond and Taupe.
ccimola.it



4.

4. With the new **Del Conca House** collection from **Ceramica Del Conca**, porcelain takes on a vital role in interior design projects. The collection consists of a system of indoor and outdoor furnishings made of porcelain (including washbasins, benches, seats, tables, kitchens and lamps) and allows for numerous combinations of surfaces and colours.
delconca.com

5. With its saturated colours and creative decorations, the **Spring** collection from **Ceramica Sant'Agostino** is designed to be used in combination with the company's other series. This results in vibrant spaces where colour and surface coverings take on the role of design and compositional elements.
ceramicasantagostino.it



6.

6. The **Verderame** finish is the latest addition to the **Laminam Ossido** collection of large, extra-thin porcelain surfaces with a finish inspired by the handcrafted textures of iron.
laminam.it



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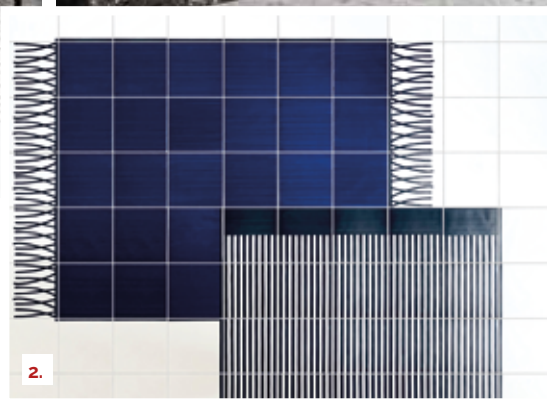
1.

1. The **Archimarble** collection by **Cerdisa** is devoted entirely to marble. It comes in six different marble versions, six rectified sizes and two surface finishes, natural and lux. In an artful play of contrasts, pure, luminous whites are juxtaposed with deep blacks with white veins.
ceramichecerdisa.it



3.

3. The **Macro Bianco** and **Macro Carnico** collections from **Casalgrande Padana** revisit the granite effect in four different colours (Bianco, Grigio, Moro and Carnico) and four sizes with natural or glossy surfaces. As can be seen in the photo, when laid side by side they create eye-catching effects while at the same time marking a visual separation between different functional areas.
casalgrandepadana.it



2.

2. The **Carpet** collection designed by Giuliano Andrea Dell'Uva for **Ceramica Francesco de Maio** consists of overlapping ceramic rugs in colours inspired by Mediterranean houses. The tiles are hand decorated and suitable for both indoor and outdoor use.
francescodemaio.it

4. The **Matter** collection from **Settecento** reinterprets ceramic as a plastic material. The photo shows the Rope version on the floor and Orange Stick on the wall.
settecento.com

5. The **Helite** collection from **Gambini** comes in the Himalaya and Bali versions inspired by different types of salt: salmon pink for Himalaya and grey for Bali. The collection includes five colours (also Guérande, Persia and Murray) and a series of decorations and trim pieces in cold and warm colours.
gambinigroup.it

6. Digital technology is used to create **NovaBell's Thermae** travertine-effect porcelain collection, which reproduces the original material's veins, bas-reliefs and colours on floors and walls. The collection comes in two sizes, 60x120 cm and 30x60 cm.
novabell.it



6.



4.



5.

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INDOORS - **100x100x0,85 cm**
OUTDOORS - **100x100x2,0 cm**

Luxurious modernity and the Salento hospitality tradition

A NEW LUXURY RESORT STANDS AMONGST THE GREEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN MAQUIS CLOSE TO THE SANDY COAST KNOWN AS THE "MALDIVES OF SALENTO"

by Santino Limonta



THE THREE BUILDINGS EACH CONSIST OF TWO SMALL GROUND-FLOOR APARTMENTS WITH GARDENS AND AN OPEN-SPACE PENTHOUSE ABOVE.

Located almost at the end of the Salento peninsula, the beaches of Torre Pali and Pescoluse face onto a stretch of sea often referred to as the "Maldives of Salento". Behind them lies the fertile Apulian countryside dotted with old farmhouses. Here, just 300 metres from the sandy coast, stands the new Perla Saracena Luxury Resort, a tourist complex built by the land owners with financial backing from a group of local private investors. The architectural project consists of nine independent units including six small villas with gardens and three penthouse suites immersed in the greenery of the Mediterranean maquis. "The suites are part of a larger overall project that will be completed within the next two years and will include the construction of a central hotel building with 18 rooms, reception, panoramic restaurant and roof garden with infinity pool, as well as a traditional Salentine "pajara" or rural house converted into a Hyper Luxury Suite with private wellness spa and a main house containing five other mini-apartments," explains creative director Francesco Maglie. The entire project stands out for the high level of excellence achieved at every stage while ensuring compatibility of the spaces with the external environment and respect for traditional building techniques. The three buildings constructed to date each consist of two small ground-floor villas with gardens and an open-plan penthouse suite on the first floor.



**PERLA SARACENA
LUXURY SUITES**

PROJECT
STUDIO ASSOCIATO
ING. LUIGI VERARDI
& EFFKEY DI
FRANCESCO MAGLIE

PHOTOS
RICCARDO SCHIRINZI

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2019



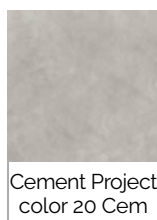
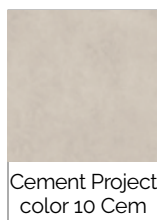
 Go to the Project Gallery for other
hospitality facilities in Italy and worldwide



SPACES
hospitality facilities

APPLICATIONS
interior floor and
wall coverings

ceramic surfaces
Cotto d'Este Kerlite5plus
Cement Project
Cem, 10 and 20 colors
300x100 cm



technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): 0.1%
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): 50 N/mm²
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): 175 mm³
coefficient of linear
thermal expansion
(ISO 10545-8):
 $\alpha \leq 7 \times 10^{-6} \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
crazing resistance
(ISO 10545-11): compliant
frost resistance
(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13): LA HA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 5
slip resistance (DIN 51130):
Rg (Cem), R10 (Work)

certifications

LEED, EMAS, ISO 14001,
NF-UPEC





“The three volumes have soundproof walls and hand-split local stone cladding,” continues Francesco Maglie. “The result is a structure in which the use of stone, delicate and natural colours and earth and sand tones recalls the solidity and strength of the traditional country homes known as “pajare”. This contrasts with the hi-tech plaster finish used on the first floors, which was specially developed to be natural, breathable and highly resistant to the harsh atmosphere of the marine environment.” From a functional point of view, the ground-floor villas adopt a classic layout with a living area equipped with a concealed kitchenette, a bathroom with emotional showers, and a bedroom. The penthouses have an open space with a private spa in the bedroom and a bathroom area featuring chromotherapy, nebulisation and an ionised water blade for cervical massage, all enclosed in a glossy white lacquered crystal cube.

The ultra-thin porcelain laminate surfaces in a 100x300 cm size from Cotto d’Este’s Kerlite 5plus Cement Project collection proved the ideal choice for this context and are laid on the floor in two tone-on-tone shades. Custom-made hand-painted sliding panels from Fuoriformato (Target Group) serve as the screen concealing the kitchenette. Air conditioning is provided by a ducted system that also ensures uniform air dehumidification and purification in all the rooms. The intriguing lighting design, created by designer Giuliana De Matteis, uses lighting fixtures inspired by traditional Salento materials and utensils.

RELATED ARTICLE

Ceramic tiles for healthy buildings and high indoor living quality



WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/ARTICOLI/CERAMIC-TILES-FOR-HEALTHY-BUILDINGS/



THE HAND-CRAFTED LOCAL STONE STRUCTURE AND NATURAL COLOURS ARE INSPIRED BY THE TRADITIONAL COUNTRY HOUSES KNOWN AS PAJARE.

The bathroom and the environment, an important relationship

by Elena Cattaneo

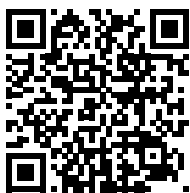


RENOVATING A HOME OR PURCHASING SANITARY FIXTURES FOR A NEW PROPERTY ARE ACTIONS THAT INEVITABLY HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES. THIS IS WHY IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY URGENT TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN COST, AESTHETICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

In recent years, sustainability and care for the environment have become frequently-used catchphrases, but they risk remaining empty words if we fail to back them up with concrete actions. At the same time, we are aware how important they are for maintaining a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. To make an effective contribution to protection of the environment, we can make small changes to our behaviour in our daily lives or, even more importantly, big changes to our long-term decisions. When renovating our homes, for example, we can opt for furnishings such as bathroom fixtures that have a low impact in terms of the use of natural resources. This is why, before we choose one product rather than another, it is worth doing some research into the different companies in the market and their product characteristics to determine whether their production technology is designed with a view to lower environmental impact. As is to be expected, there is no single, simple way of overcoming problems of pollution and the inexorable depletion of environmental resources. Nonetheless manufacturers have plenty of opportunities to search for and introduce appropriate solutions according to their supply chains, habitats, corporate philosophies and resources.

Sustainability begins upstream

A number of companies have upgraded their production chains or physically transformed their plants over the years with a view to improving their eco-sustainability. During building renovation and the management of a manufacturing process, the key issues that need to be addressed are energy saving, the reduction of emissions, the elimination (or at least reduction) of product waste and the adoption



See the latest trends in ceramic sanitaryware in the Products Gallery



1. The **Senzabrida**® rimless WC and 48 cm wall-hung bidet expand the 4All collection by **Ceramica Globo**, designed to fit harmoniously into any style of bathroom. The 4All WC, like many of the company's other products, features the new Globo Water Saving system which drastically reduces water wastage with an average combined flush of less than 3 litres.
ceramicaglobo.com

2. The **Geberit One** collection by **Geberit** is an integrated bathroom solution that includes the washbasin, WC, bidet, shower and furnishing accessories. The wall-hung WC in particular features TurboFlush technology designed to save water and the Keratect surface treatment which reduces the need to use polluting cleaning products.
www.geberit.it

Facing page: the **NoLita** line of WCs from **Kerasan**, equipped with the Norim flush system, meets the need for environmental sustainability. The mechanism cleans the WC pan with a powerful jet of water that is distributed uniformly, quietly and without splashing. The rimless technology also facilitates cleaning, ensuring that the WC remains functional for a longer period of time.
www.kerasan.it



1. The **Joy** collection of mixer taps from **Ideal Standard** stands out for its slim, timeless shape and has been available in a chrome plated version since April 2020. Joy adapts to any kind of ceramic product and includes an eco-friendly 5 litre per minute aerator that reduces water consumption. The company has long been committed to reducing waste and introduced the first ceramic cartridge back in 1968.
www.idealstandard.it

2. Created by Angeletti Ruzza Design for **Cristina Rubinetterie**, the **Tabula** mixer tap is inspired by the austere beauty and sense of lightness typical of Japanese aesthetics. To achieve this effect, the designers adopted a subtractive approach and eliminated the neck normally attached to the lever. Tabula is equipped with a 5 litre/minute water-saving aerator.
www.cristinarubinetterie.com

3. A 100% Italian-made collection, **Vignoni** by **Simas** has an essential design that is reflected in the extremely thin edge of the washbasins, even in the larger versions. The WC is designed to save water and has a flush of just 4.5 litres. It also features an adjustable outlet to facilitate installation in renovation projects and an ultra-thin lid with soft-close and quick-release hinges.
www.simas.it

4. **Ceramica Flaminia** uses colour as an intrinsic component of its projects, and its new intense matt black **Carbone** version introduces a powerful, magnetic presence into the bathroom. The production process water is treated and purified, then fed back into the manufacturing cycle.
www.ceramicaflaminia.it

and reuse of locally-sourced raw materials. Some companies have set up systems for recycling process water so that it can be filtered and then fed back into the production cycle. Collaboration with local artisans is another green choice because it means making the best use of local resources and avoiding expensive and polluting transportation of materials.

Forward-looking products

Individual products can also contribute to environmental sustainability through a suitable choice of materials and technology. In the world of ceramics, for example, it is interesting to find out more about the ways in which companies have adapted their production processes, the research they have carried out into materials and the methods they use to recycle ceramic waste. Certifications serve to define the characteristics of a product and are the main tool used by companies to inform consumers about their commitment to sustainable growth in terms of the environment and ethics. Ceramics of Italy is the institutional trademark designed to safeguard and promote awareness of the tradition, quality, innovation and creativity of companies with 100% Italian-made products. Further certifications include ISO 9001-2015 for production process quality, voluntary ISO 14001-2015 certification demonstrating that a company has adopted an appropriate, sustainable and legally-compliant environmental system, and OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) for the health and safety of employees.

All-round beauty

Shower enclosure producers can choose recycled and recyclable glass and aluminium for their production processes. They can also perform a final treatment to ensure that their products are extremely easy to clean without the need for excessive quantities of cleaning agents, and even make them resistant to limescale damage. And last but not least, water savings can be achieved through the use of increasingly sophisticated technology in mixer taps and toilet flush mechanisms.

RELATED ARTICLES:

A new unified water label

> WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/UNIFIED-WATER-LABEL/



The **Lama** shower column from **Geromin** stands out for its essential design and is coated with **Alulife®**, a material made from 100% recycled aluminium. Innovative technologies are used to give the metal a complex, iridescent texture that is pleasing to both the eye and the touch.

www.gruppogeromin.com



The **Estro** soft shower head features a diagonal water jet designed to optimise the water flow. It was designed by ZeTae Studio for **Relax Design** and is made of **Luxolid®** solid surface in a range of 16 colours to allow it to blend in perfectly with any bathroom design.

www.relaxdesign.it

Brownstone 2.0

THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING AT 426 TOMPKINS AVENUE SUCCESSFULLY COMBINES PAST AND PRESENT AND IS INSPIRED BY THE CLASSIC RED BRICK HOUSES THAT POPULATE THE HISTORIC NEIGHBOURHOODS OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, WHILE ADOPTING A CONTEMPORARY DESIGN BASED ON INNOVATIVE FORMAL AND MATERIAL CHOICES

by Laura Ragazzola



Stepping out from the Fulton Street subway station in the heart of Brooklyn after travelling from Manhattan, you can't help but feel you're in an entirely different city. The gravity-defying skyscrapers of modern New York have given way to lower red brick buildings with a distinctly retro feel. Known as "brownstones", these famous reddish-brown sandstone townhouses were built during the various waves of mass immigration to New York, particularly the Brooklyn area, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The building we look at in this article is located in Bedford-Stuyvesant, one of Brooklyn's largest and most central neighbourhoods usually referred to by locals as Bed-Stuy. Lively, multi-ethnic and with plenty of atmosphere, Bed-Stuy is becoming the testing ground for many young architects looking to combine the old and the new in their future-looking projects. One such example is StudioSC, a practice based in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighbourhood not far from Bed-Stuy. "We breathe new life to old buildings for our adaptive re-use projects, while respecting their context and character, designing the new face of Brooklyn," explains architect Stephen Conte, who was born here and knows the neighbourhood well. Together with Carolina Escobar, he leads a "small creative team" which despite its youth has already designed major award-winning projects for offices, showrooms and commercial and residential spaces, all located in Brooklyn. The multi-family building at 426 Tompkins Avenue, situated in a rapidly developing area of Bed-Stuy, is a new construction where "we wanted to look at the context but revisit the classic brick building in a modern vein", explains the architect. This began with the scale of the project, which is larger than that of the brownstone townhouses but does not exceed 4 storeys in height to avoid disturbing



**426 TOMPKINS AVE
RESIDENTIAL BUILDING**

PROJECT

STEPHEN CONTE
CAROLINA ESCOBAR
STUDIO SC
WWW.STUDIO SC.NET

PHOTOS

HEIDI SOLANDER
HEIDISOLANDER.COM

CERAMIC SURFACES

FIORANESE CERAMICA
WWW.FIORANESE.IT

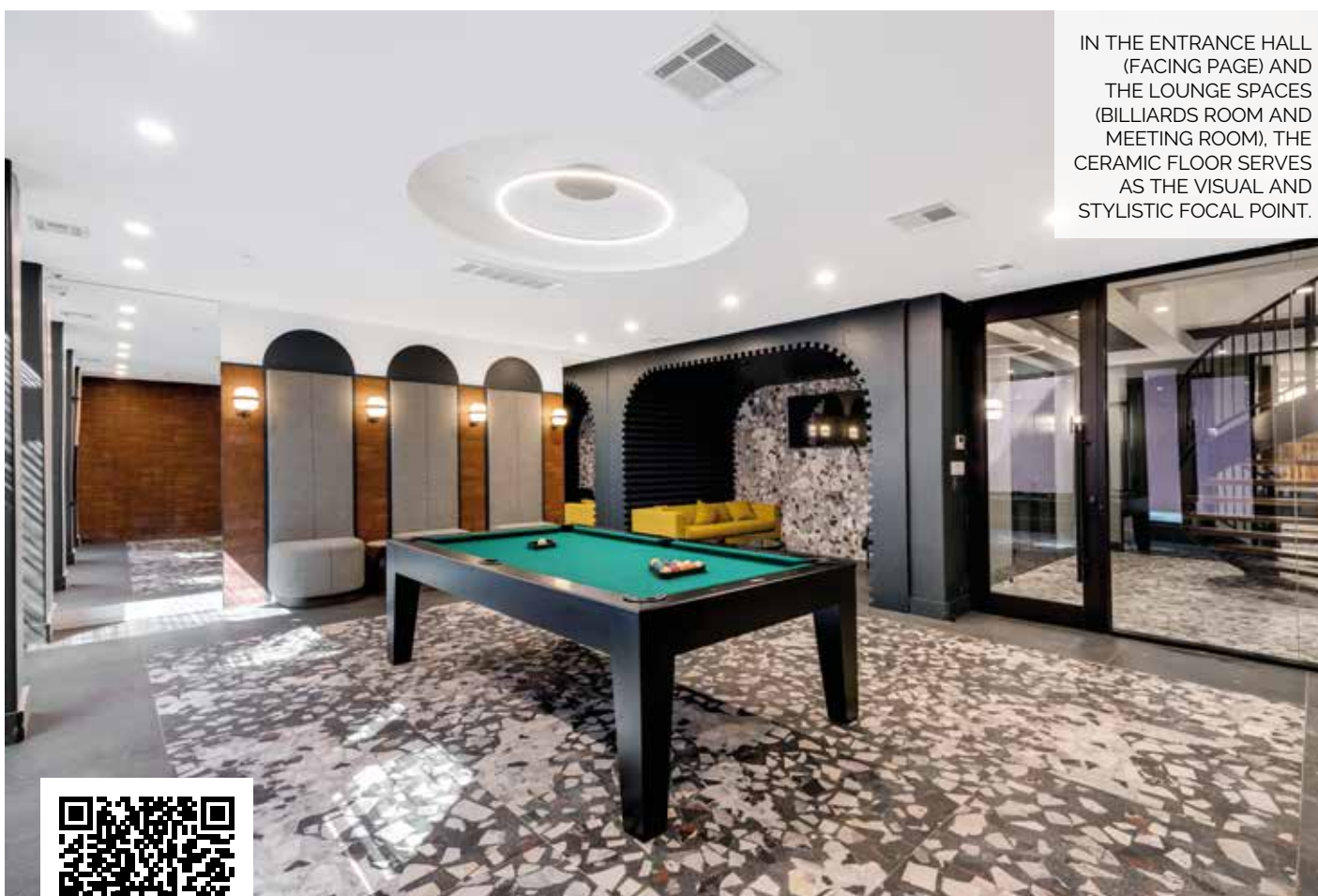
CERAMICHE REFIN
WWW.REFIN.IT

DISTRIBUTOR

HIGHSTYLE STONE AND TILE
HSTILE.COM

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2019



IN THE ENTRANCE HALL
(FACING PAGE) AND
THE LOUNGE SPACES
(BILLIARDS ROOM AND
MEETING ROOM), THE
CERAMIC FLOOR SERVES
AS THE VISUAL AND
STYLISTIC FOCAL POINT.



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urban residential projects

PROJECT

RIGHT AND BELOW,
FURTHER DETAILS
OF THE LOUNGE
SHOWING THE FLOOR
AND THE GRAVEL
DESIGN OF EARLY
TWENTIETH CENTURY
TERRAZZO.



SPACES
urban residential

APPLICATIONS
interior floor
and wall coverings

ceramic surfaces
Fioranese Ceramica
porcelain tile
I Cocci - Calce, Cenere,
Cemento, Grafite
90x90 cm

Ceramiche Refin
porcelain tile
Fossil - Grey
60x60 cm
Wide - Steel
60x120 cm



THE IRON AND WOOD SPIRAL STAIRCASE LEADING TO THE FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR. RIGHT, THE BATHROOM IN ONE OF THE APARTMENTS FEATURING CERAMIC TILES WITH A PLAY OF TEXTURES AND SHADES OF GREY.

the urban fabric of the neighbourhood. The street front side of the building has the classic texture of sandstone brick but an asymmetric arrangement of the windows (which are also present on the corners) and a large vaulted entrance that completely alter its appearance, giving it an almost metaphysical quality. The inside of the building adopts a more contemporary design in terms of both the spatial organisation, which allows ample visual permeability and plenty of light, and the choice of materials. Alongside the classic sandstone and wood, an important role is played by ceramic tile, which was chosen in its most innovative form in terms of design and technical solutions with the aim of giving the project its own more personal and above all contemporary identity (for this reason, the building won a mention in the residential category of the North American award Tile Competition 2020). So despite the spectacular double height of the entrance hall, it is the floor that immediately attracts attention and serves as the visual reference point for the project, thanks to the use of a ceramic tile with a strong personality reminiscent of the terrazzo design typical of the early twentieth-century. The chosen collection is 'I Cocci' from Fioranese Ceramica, in the "spaccato" terrazzo version alternating with the monochromatic fine grain surface (both in a 90x90 cm square size). The same tiles are used in the sophisticated lounge area, where the terrazzo floor takes on the appearance of a large carpet and extends up the walls like wood panelling, evidencing the exceptional multifunctional qualities of ceramic tile. The apartments themselves, almost all of which are small in size to cater for the young clients, also feature porcelain tiles in the bathrooms and shower enclosures (Refin's Fossil collection, chosen in the colour Grey and a 60x60 cm size, replaced by the mini 10x10 cm size in the shower), as well as all the balcony floors (in this case Refin's Wide collection in a 60x120 cm size).

RELATED ARTICLE

Comparing the environmental performance of ceramic tiles

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/ARTICOLI/CERAMIC-TILES-ENVIRONMENTAL-PERFORMANCE/





BERGERSEN FLIS

Italian tile brings a touch of warmth to Northern Europe

THE DECISION TO DISTRIBUTE ITALIAN TILES HAS UNDERPINNED THE MORE THAN THIRTY-YEAR SUCCESS OF A MAJOR NORWEGIAN DISTRIBUTOR

by Elena Pasoli





Read other interviews with
Italian tile distributors worldwide

The Norwegian company **Bergersen Flis** is one of the most interesting and successful tile and bathroom furniture distributors in Northern Europe as well as one of the brightest stars in the Saint Gobain universe. Founded by the Bergersen family in the 1980s, the company focused right from the start on product quality and customer service, and now has several branches located throughout the country. To find out more about this success story, we interviewed **Viggo Rangnes**, Sales & Marketing Director.

When was Bergersen Flis founded and who are your target clientele?

The company was founded in Oslo in 1996, although the Bergersen family had already gained plenty of experience in importing quality tiles into Norway since the 1970s. Right from the start the business focused primarily on professionals, designers and contractors, who are still our key customers. The first store featured a large





showroom where professionals could send their clients, and at the same time had a showroom for architects, a warehouse and even a training centre for tile laying.

How is your company organised today?

We have six branches scattered across Norway: two in Oslo and the others in Trondheim, Hamar, Bergen and Tromsø in the north of the country. They all have a showroom for private clients, one reserved for architects and a training centre for installers. We also have a network of partners and franchise retailers who market our products throughout Norway.

What other products do you sell besides ceramic tiles?

We sell bathroom furniture, showers, sanitary fixtures and microcement. Our main suppliers for these products are Scandinavian firms such as Dansani, INR and Tapwell.

How and when did you get to know Italian tiles? What is their most distinctive feature?

We have worked with Italian suppliers since the very beginning as we have found they offer the very best in terms of design and quality. We firmly believe that Italy is the leader in innovation. Moreover, the excellent logistics make it simple and highly cost-effective for us to purchase products from Italian ceramic producers.

What is the state of the construction market in Norway? And how is the ceramic tile market performing?

In recent years, the construction market has been performing very well and the tile market has remained fairly stable. But due to the Covid-19 situation we certainly expect to face some major challenges over the next two years. From this year's statistics we are already observing a big drop in tile imports and we are also seeing greater competition from prefabricated bathrooms and products such as vinyl and laminate. Laminate bathroom panels in particular have established a strong presence in the Norwegian market. But we expect to see greater use of ceramic tiles in other



Cool Collection



Boston Collection



NEW SIZE
30×90 cm ± 8mm
12"×36" ± 0.31" PORCELAIN STONEWARE

Absolute Collection



ITALIAN BRANDS DISTRIBUTED BY BERGERSEN FLIS

Casa dolce casa
Coem
FAP
Fioranese
Isla Tiles
Mosaico +
Novabell
Pastorelli
Refin
Saime

potential applications such as exterior façades due to their considerable advantages in terms of installation costs, durability and energy efficiency.

Are your sales focused more on the new construction or renovation segments, private homes or public buildings?

We sell products for both segments, although our main focus now is on large-scale projects and public buildings. In any case, 30-40% of our turnover is generated from supplies for private homes.

How many employees do you have? What are their professional skills?

There are 65 of us, consisting of interior architects, engineers, construction managers, salespeople and logistics, purchasing and administration staff.

How are your customer services organised?

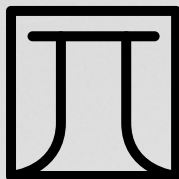
In the case of large-scale projects, we personally go out to the architects' premises to assess their specific needs and propose the most suitable product. We have specialist technical staff who work alongside the contractors right through to delivery, and we train the installers who will lay the tiles. As for homeowners, we also provide interior design services with 3D bathroom design and support customers from the moment they enter our shop through to the handover of the finished interior.

How often do you change your showroom layout?

We usually make a partial change once a year, between January and February, according to the latest trends seen at Cersaie.

What is your turnover?

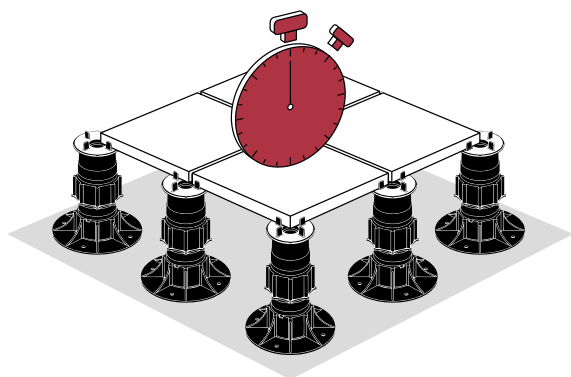
We have pre-tax sales of 24 million euros per year. ■



PEDESTAL



WOODECK



Installation speed thanks to the support for elevated floors.

The installation of the supports of the **PEDESTAL** and **WOODECK** lines by **Eterno Ivica** is extremely easy and requires very few steps, guaranteeing **considerable advantages** in the management of the building site, and generating **considerable economic savings**.

www.eternoivica.com

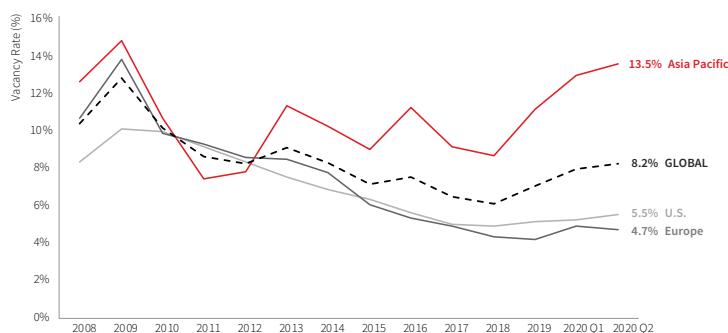
PADOVA · ITALY

How real estate markets are changing during the Covid-19 pandemic

by Alessandra Ferretti

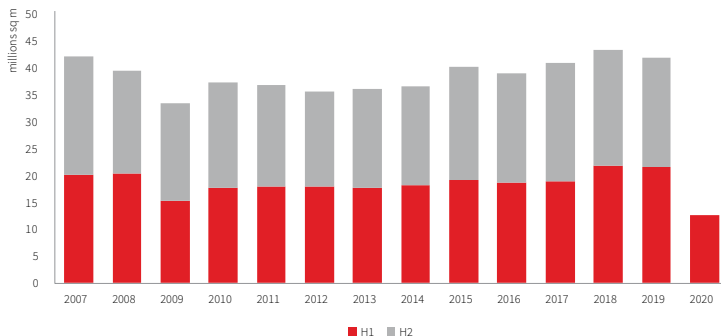
THE MARKET PROSPECTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
AMID LOW INTEREST RATES, DECLINING CONFIDENCE AND
THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Logistics Space, Vacancy Rates, 2008 - Q2 2020



Source: JLL, July 2020

Global office gross leasing volumes, 2007 - 2020



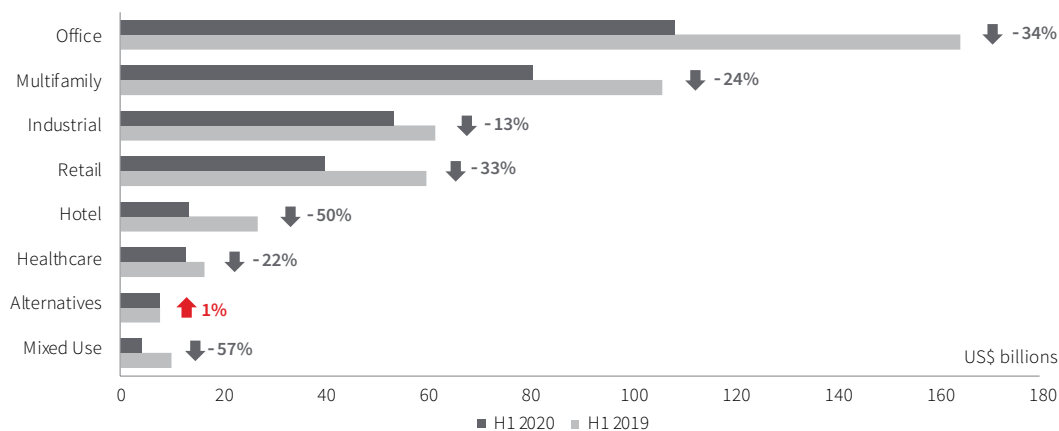
24 markets in Europe; 50 markets in the U.S.; 22 markets in Asia Pacific
Source: JLL, July 2020

According to the report **Global Real Estate Perspective - Highlights** by Jones Lang Lasalle published on 7 August 2020, all real estate markets are facing a sharp but brief recession amid the pandemic. The company's analysts investigated market trends during the second quarter of 2020, noting widespread uncertainty which in turn is leading to longer decision-making processes. The global economy contracted during Q1 2020 for the first time in 11 years, with global GDP expected to decline by roughly 5% in 2020. Global commercial real estate investment in Q2 2020 dropped 55% year-on-year to US \$107 billion, equating to a 29% decline in H1 2020, as the impact of the pandemic became evident. The Americas and Asia Pacific saw activity decrease by 37% and 32% respectively during H1, while Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) contributed to a more muted fall of 13%. Investor strategies are currently focused on defensive strategies and portfolio expansion. But let's take a look at how the private, professional and logistics real estate markets have developed across the various continents.

Residential market

The living sector continues to be the most liquid commercial real estate sector in the United

Global transaction volumes by sector, H1 2019 & H1 2020



Source: JLL, July 2020

States. Investor demand in Europe also remains high. There are some concerns regarding modest downward pressure on rents, reflecting the potential impact of the ending of various government support schemes and increased unemployment.

Stronger sales performance was evident in the Asia Pacific residential market in the second quarter. In Mainland China, home sales rebounded in Beijing and Shanghai as temporarily discounted prices encouraged cautious buyers.

The hotel and hospitality sector

The hospitality sector has been hit hard by the pandemic with the ongoing pullback in both leisure and business travel continuing to flow through to the sector. Hotel markets across the globe have started to reopen, but revenue per available room is significantly down on last year. Heightened uncertainty has impacted investor appetite for hotels, with asset valuations becoming more challenging. Acquisitions are largely on hold, with the exception of several transactions well underway at the onset of the pandemic or which involved the conversion of hotels to an alternative use.

The professional sector


The resumption of industrial production following the gradual lifting of lockdown restrictions helped to ease supply chain disruption. Sectors such as medical supplies, grocery and online sales proved resilient and have boosted demand.

Developers have quickly re-started construction projects amid future demand projections.

Momentum in the rental market has eased due to stalling rents in all three regions (Asia Pacific, Europe and the Americas).

Office markets witnessed a sharp fall in activity across all regions: -65% in the Americas, -61% in Asia Pacific and -49% in Europe. Numerous measures have been adopted in offices including some level of de-densification in compliance with social distancing requirements. Analysts confirm that offices will remain a fundamental part of corporate culture.



 See other articles on the real estate business

MAST.

IN KEEPING WITH ITS VISION AS A
LABORATORY OF IDEAS DEVOTED TO
RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION,
THE ROME-BASED PRACTICE LABICS
CARRIES OUT PROJECTS THAT
ADDRESS THE COMPLEX AND
HIGHLY TOPICAL ISSUES
OF COMFORT AND
SUSTAINABILITY, THEMES
THAT ARE NOW MORE
URGENT THAN
EVER DUE TO
THE COVID-19
HEALTH
CRISIS.

Architecture at the service of human beings

by Alessandra Coppa



Watch the video
interview with Labics

In December 2003, just a year after Labics was founded in Rome, the Design Vanguard issue of the American magazine *Architectural Record* named the practice one of the most important new architectural talents to emerge in recent years. Labics, consisting of architects **Maria Claudia Clemente** and **Francesco Isidori**, have entirely lived up to these expectations and continue to explore the theory and practice of architecture with the same enthusiasm as ever. They experiment with projects spanning a wide range of scales and contexts with a special focus on the contemporary city and the relationship between architecture, urban structure and public space. They have frequently taken part in Cersaie's "building, dwelling, thinking" cultural programme, and are well known for projects such as the MAST foundation in Bologna and the "Città del Sole" in Rome. One of their most significant new projects is the Feel UpTown residential complex located in the UpTown smart district of the Cascina Merlata area of Milan, which stands out for its attention to sustainability and personal services during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic, a time when people have been re-evaluating the concept of home and discovering the limitations of their own dwellings.

How did you come to set up your practice and why did you choose the name Labics?

We founded our practice in 2002 with the idea of following a shared architectural research path. We attempted to describe the principles and values behind our work in our recent monograph entitled *Structures*, published by Park Books. The name Labics, made up of the prefix "Lab" for "laboratory" and the initials of the three founding partners, reflects this approach: a practice as a laboratory of ideas for pursuing research and experimentation.



ABOVE: LA CITTÀ DEL SOLE,
ROME (2007 – 2016).
FACING PAGE: MAST,
BOLOGNA (2006–2013).

© Marco Cappelletti

On your website you offer an interesting interpretation of your projects in terms of "conceptual categories": Circulation, Context, Background Figure, Frames, Geometry, Gravity, Patterns, Public Domain, Structures, Territories and Voids. Could you tell us which of your projects are associated with each of these categories and explain the deeper significance of this relationship, which you discuss in the monograph "Structures" presented at MAXXI?

The website explains our points of reference. It is a conceptual map – a kind of genealogy – of our field of research, both theoretical and figurative. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to associate a project with each category. Firstly, the references are rarely used directly, but are often only hinted at while remaining in the background; and secondly almost all our projects encompass different conceptual categories. In reality, the set of categories and images make up a field of action within which we develop our projects.



FEEL UPTOWN HOUSING, CASCINA MERLATA, MILAN (2016).

“Structures” refers precisely to this field of action. All the categories and references to be found on the website are in fact structures, obviously understood in terms of the meanings we attribute to this term. These include circulation, public space, load-bearing structures and geometry, namely the categories we discuss in the book in four specific essays, although in reality there is no direct relationship between the essays and the projects. As with the website, the book is a hypertext, a territory through which it is possible to pursue a line of research.

One of the Patterns is the maze featured in Kubrick’s film The Shining. Why did you choose it?

The maze is a very old spatial structure, perhaps one of mankind’s first such inventions. Designed to be a space where one can easily lose all sense of direction, the maze is by its nature a structure devoid of hierarchy and direction, an abstract space or figure. From this point of view, a maze can be considered a pattern: it is based on a recurring geometric design that is locally variable but always identical to itself when viewed from a distance. In any case, the figure of the maze is interesting due to its polysemic nature: its complexity and ambiguity are open to multiple interpretations.

One of my favourite projects of yours is MAST in Bologna (2006–2013), a kind of citadel emerging from the transformation of a disused industrial area. What kind of complexities did you have to overcome in this project?

To appreciate the complexity of the project, we should first mention some of the main aims of the call for tenders and its programmatic complexity. The client wanted MAST to represent an extremely innovative

experiment in interaction – both theoretical and programmatic – between the typically exclusive industrial context and the inclusive and open nature of the city. In this respect, MAST can be considered a frontier building. The fact that it encompasses public and private, open and closed, was one of the biggest challenges we faced, not just in terms of flow management and the relationship between the individual parts but also in the definition of the site layout. The second element of complexity concerned the internal functional programme. As we had to cater for different users and activities, some of which were reserved mainly – but not exclusively – for internal staff (such as the company restaurant, the company club, the wellness area and the nursery school), while others were entirely open to the public (the gallery, the auditorium and the cafeteria, for example), we found ourselves having to invent a completely new kind of building. We tried to adopt a suitably complex approach in response to this programmatic complexity. Rather than organising the different functions analytically, we chose to consider the building as a kind of micro-city where all the different activities are held together by the structure of the paths and public spaces. MAST is a collection of many different buildings, each with its own unique characteristics: it is easy to imagine the resulting complexity in terms of structure and plant engineering.

Feel UpTown, a new site in the UpTown smart district in Milan’s Cascina Merlata neighbourhood, was launched on the real estate market on 15 June 2020. This project was developed by EuroMilano together with your architectural firm, SIO Engineering and landscape designer Valerio


Cozzi. The project, which began in 2016, consists of 317 apartments that were placed on the market immediately after the Covid-19 emergency. Do these homes meet the new housing and health requirements?

The Feel UpTown homes fully meet post-Covid housing requirements because they are designed to ensure the well-being of their inhabitants. Viewed from this perspective, it is an innovative project that offers a series of common services, greenery and outdoor spaces to ensure that the houses are highly liveable even during a lockdown. Along with an extensive series of accommodation solutions, Feel UpTown also offers a range of services for residents, including a co-working area, a children's play area, a small squash court, a cinema room and a wellness space with swimming pool. In addition, Feel UpTown offers a variety of green spaces and outdoor areas, some of which are communal while others are reserved exclusively for individual housing units. The starting point is the green space at the centre of the project, a large public garden inside the complex which serves as a meeting place for the new community. Then there are the private gardens of the houses located on the ground floor of the courtyard and finally the system of spacious loggias, terraces and balconies provided with each apartment. In this respect, the Feel UpTown project is part of a research tradition dating back to the twentieth century in which residential buildings not only consist of dwellings but offer a complete range of services for the community, the most famous example being Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation*. At the same time, the Feel UpTown project offers new perspectives onto the relationship between building and city. For too many years our cities have been developed through the construction of isolated, decontextualised and often walled-off residential buildings lacking collective spaces. They are buildings where one feels alone. To reverse this trend, one of the first goals we set ourselves when we took on the Feel UpTown project was to recreate a strong relationship between the building and the urban context. Unlike many recent examples of residential construction, Feel UpTown is part of an extensive urban project designed to give a complete form to a portion of the city, a city that consists not of isolated objects but of structured systems: the system of the built environment, the natural system and the system of collective spaces.

I remember you taking part in Cersaie's "building, dwelling, thinking" cultural programme in 2016, then in April 2020 I followed your conversation as part of the Cersaie Small Talks. What is your view of the

aesthetic potential of ceramic materials? Do you use ceramics in your projects?

Feel UpTown is the first project in which we will make extensive use of ceramic materials. As for their aesthetic potential, we have decided to use them for what they are, exploiting their true nature as artificial materials rather than their ability to imitate other materials. We see that as a more interesting approach.

 www.labics.it

BIOGRAPHY

Labics is an architectural and urban planning practice founded in Rome in 2002 by Maria Claudia Clemente and Francesco Isidori. Combining a theoretical approach with applied research, the field of interest of the practice encompasses a wide range of project scales and complexities, from urban design to interior spaces.

They have won numerous competitions, including MAST in Bologna (2006-2013) and the Città del Sole in Rome (2007-2016). Recent projects include the design of residential buildings as part of the "Cascina Merlata" Masterplan in Milan (2018), the restoration of Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara (2018) and the Masterplan for the new Bio-Medical Campus in Rome (2019). Labics have exhibited their work at a number of exhibitions including the 11th, 12th and 14th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibitions. In 2015, the Stefania Miscetti gallery hosted a monographic exhibition devoted to them entitled "Structures", subsequently held at MAXXI in Rome in 2018-2019. Labics have won numerous international awards and recognitions. Their first monograph, entitled "Structures" and edited by Stefano Casciani, was published by Park Books in 2018.



Where beauty and education go hand in hand

A RECENTLY
RENOVATED
NINETEENTH-
CENTURY CASTLE
IN PRAGUE IS HOME
TO A MONTESSORI
PRIMARY SCHOOL

by Elena Pasoli

It's not every day that one encounters a primary school with adjoining kindergarten housed in a nineteenth-century Renaissance Revival-style castle, surrounded by beautiful large grounds and old trees. Located in Prague's historic Hostavice neighbourhood, the building has been used as an educational institution since the Second World War and was recently remodelled by the Opalka Design architecture firm, which proposed a splendid project incorporating the principles of the Montessori method adopted by the school. The teaching system developed by the great Italian educationalist is used successfully in more than 60,000 schools worldwide and aims to nurture talent in all disciplines by giving children the freedom to develop their own personal creativity (famous alumni include Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the great Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, and the award-winning queen of contemporary pop Beyoncé). A child-friendly school environment and contact with nature are two particularly important aspects of the method.



**BE OPEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

PROJECT

OPÁLKA DESIGN STUDIO
WWW.OPALKADESIGN.COM

PHOTOS

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CERAMIC SURFACES


MARCA CORONA
WWW.MARCACORONA.IT

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2019

THE CLASSICAL MOTIFS
OF THE DECORATIVE
PORCELAIN TILES
REFLECT THE TIMELESS
ATMOSPHERE CREATED
BY THE ORIGAMI BIRDS
SUSPENDED FROM
THE CEILING.



 Go to the Project Gallery for other
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SPACES
educational
establishments

APPLICATIONS
interior floor and
wall coverings

ceramic surfaces

Marca Corona
porcelain tile
1741 Line, Terra
Grigio, Nero,
Mix vers. F
25x21.6 - 20x20 cm

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.1\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): $\geq 45 \text{ N/mm}^2$
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): $\leq 150 \text{ mm}^3$
coefficient of linear
thermal expansion
(ISO 10545-8): compliant
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
frost resistance

(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13): A LA HA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): compliant
slip resistance
(DIN 51130): R9

certifications

LEED, ISO 14001

PLAIN GREY FLOOR TILE WAS
THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR A
FUNCTIONAL SPACE LIKE THE
GYM CHANGING ROOMS.



The Be Open school is a perfect example. Extending over two floors, its spaces are furnished with unusual elements intended to foster a sense of freedom and energy and to encourage children to develop their creativity and playfulness in close contact with the surrounding natural environment. “The intention of this project was to connect these magnificent exteriors and their life force with the interior spaces where the children learn and play,” explains the architect Matúš Opálka. “Moreover, we wanted to highlight the original features so we maintained and restored the doors, the granite staircases, the parquet floors in the classrooms, the vaults and some of the decorative elements, while we installed new stucco mouldings on the entrance walls to complete the building and give it a new look.”

The renovation project returned the castle to its original state, eliminating the subdivision into numerous small rooms and creating an airy, functional space with soft, natural colours and minimalist furnishings along with original features such as origami birds suspended from the ceiling and scattered clouds designed to lower the visual perception of the high ceilings. Standing out from the harmony and playfulness of the project as a whole is the Terra series, small size floor and wall tiles by Marca Corona, inspired by classical motifs reinterpreted according to contemporary design trends. The Terra series of highly decorative porcelain cement tiles welcomes the children at the entrance with the playful Geometria decoration, which blends in with the colourful armchairs and is framed to great effect by the elegant grey and black backgrounds. The Terra collection also proved ideal for the functional spaces. In the canteen and kitchen area, characterised by a minimalist design, wooden furniture and fresh touches of colour, the Cubo decoration was used to create original decorated carpets that delimit the various areas of the large open space. The designers instead opted for simplicity in the gym changing rooms with the choice of a plain grey floor tile, but allowed themselves greater creativity in the bathrooms where they chose the playful Mix Decori for both the floors and walls.

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Combating Covid with the beauty of ceramics

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A SELECTION OF PLAYFULLY DECORATIVE PORCELAIN CEMENT TILES MAKES FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONTRAST WITH THE MINIMALISM OF THE SERVICE AREAS.

Sydney's new urban beach appeal

THE MELBOURNE-BASED PRACTICE *IN DESIGN INTERNATIONAL* HAS RENOVATED AN AGEING HOSPITALITY STRUCTURE AND TRANSFORMED IT INTO A WATERFRONT BOUTIQUE HOTEL. KEYWORDS: SUSTAINABILITY, CHIC INTERIORS AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN DETAILS

by Laura Milan

The Sebel Sydney Manly Beach Hotel enjoys an enviable waterfront location in the New South Wales capital, on the south side of the popular long sandy beach in the suburb of Manly to the north of the city. The hotel is managed by the Accor Vacation Club, part of the French multinational hotel group Accor, and has been completely renovated by In Design International (IDI), a Melbourne-based interior design firm headed by founder and lead creative designer Penny del Castillo. The project marks the continuation of a longstanding collaboration between the practice and the client, whose portfolio of properties includes the Novotel and Mercure

brands for which del Castillo has previously worked in Bali and Brisbane.

The new Sebel Sydney Manly Beach is a boutique hotel which reopened in 2019 following the complete upgrade of an outdated property originally built more than 35 years ago. In Design International's meticulous project focused in particular on the interiors, transforming the property into Accor Vacation Club's new flagship hotel in this region of Australia. With its redesigned, customised and entirely renovated interiors, the hotel now offers accommodation solutions ranging from single rooms to mini-apartments and suites complete with





**THE SEBEL
SYDNEY MANLY
BEACH HOTEL**

PROJECT
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PALE NEUTRAL COLOURS CREATE APARTMENTS WITH BRIGHT, COSY AND MODERN LIVING AREAS.

SPACES
hospitality facilities

APPLICATIONS
interior wall coverings



Powder Bone Groove

ceramic surfaces
Ceramiche Piemme
porcelain tile
Bits&Pieces by
Gordon Guillaumier
Powder Bone Groove
30x60 cm

technical characteristics
water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.5\%$

modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): $\geq 35 \text{ N/mm}^2$
surface abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-7): class 4
coefficient of linear
thermal expansion
(ISO 10545-8): compliant
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant

chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13):
UA ULA UHA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14):
compliant

certifications
LEED, NF-UPEC, ISO 14001

kitchenettes. IDI also redefined the identity of all the common areas, the ground floor sea view restaurant and the outdoor swimming pool, located to the rear of the property with respect to the entrance.

However, in addition to its renovated interior design, the new Sebel Sydney Manly Beach Hotel has also undergone a sustainability upgrade in compliance with the Accor group's Planet 21 programme, which sets out important environmental goals for 2020 based on 4 key strategies. While promoting the active involvement of employees and customers in saving the planet's resources, a further two key environmental challenges focus on food and the new and renovated building stock.

In accordance with the philosophy and recommendations of the Planet 21 programme, the designers were also extremely attentive to the choice of materials used to refresh the hotel's outdated image. The new interior design makes extensive use of timber to give this sea-view city hotel a new and sophisticated urban beach appeal.

This natural and sustainable material has been made even more eco-friendly thanks to design choices that involve the use of 100% recycled products. Biowood, composed of wood and plastic, is used extensively on the walls and ceilings and to create elegant details, while the exterior areas feature ModWood decking produced from recycled plastic milk bottles and reclaimed pine wood dust.

Italian ceramic tiles produced by Ceramiche Piemme proved the perfect match for Accor's eco-sustainable philosophy and also blend in well with the chic and sophisticated interior design elements, such as the original Tatroo Dezin carpets and the Phillip Jeffries wallpaper. 3D rectangular tiles created by designer Gordon Guillaumier take pride of place in the lobby, where they coordinate perfectly with the Biowood panelling, and were also chosen for the kitchenettes in the apartments and suites thanks to their pale ivory colour and the visual depth of their parallel groove relief surfaces (Bits&Pieces collection, Powder Bone Groove colour).

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THE MINIMALIST,
ELEGANTLY DESIGNED
ROOMS OFFER
COASTAL VIEWS OF
THE SEA AND THE
LONG BEACH.



HANDLING



SCORE CUTTING



WET AND DRY 90° AND 45° BEVEL CUT



WET AND DRY 45° BEVEL CUT



VIBRATION (AIR REMOVAL)



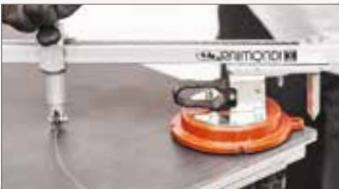
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TILE INSTALLATION

Installation of large ceramic slabs

by Simone Ricci

LARGE-SIZE TILES AND SLABS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR FOR BOTH INDOOR AND OUTDOOR APPLICATIONS BUT MUST BE INSTALLED BY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS KNOWN AS SLAB LAYERS

Annual ceramic tile production in Italy amounts to approximately 400 million square metres, more than 80% of which is produced in the Sassuolo ceramic district in the province of Modena. One third of these are large-size tiles, in other words tiles with side lengths greater than 60 cm. Today's high-end products consist of ceramic tiles or slabs measuring up to 120x360 cm or 160x320 cm and with thicknesses ranging from 3 mm to 20 mm, a product category that is gaining ever-greater shares of all the world's major markets.

Adequate training is essential for the installation of these innovative products as they are very different from traditional tiles and require the use of special equipment and procedures. In Italy, the national tile layers' association Assoposa organises training courses for XXL slab layers, i.e. professional tile layers specialising in the installation of large ceramic slabs and panels.

When preparing to install large indoor slabs, it is essential to start out with a thorough inspection of the site to check the project data and above all to prepare the necessary working spaces. Collaboration between the architect, the tile layer and the site manager is essential. The overall dimensions of the slabs must be taken into consideration, particularly if the building site is located in an old town centre or for example on the mezzanine floor of a building.



Watch the video
"XXL, the future is now"

Ceramic slabs leave the factory packed in wooden crates, which must subsequently be unloaded using special cranes or lift trucks equipped with long forks.

After opening the crate and checking the integrity and suitability of the product, the next step is to proceed with handling. An 11 mm thick slab weighs about 80 kg and must be transported by several people using a dedicated trolley and then carried up to the relevant floor of the building using a frame with suction cups.

An adequate logistical space must also be prepared in the area where the slabs are to be installed. Then, after tracing out the installation layout, the slabs need to be cut.

This can be done using a tile cutter with guides and pliers or a wet saw. To cut circular holes for plumbing, diamond hole saws of various diameters are used, whereas to cut a square hole for electrical systems, round holes must first be cut out at each corner.

When installing the slab, adhesive is applied to both the substrate and the back of the slab to ensure

perfect contact without air gaps. Once the slab is positioned, a tile vibrator is used to facilitate the release of trapped air.

Levelling spacers are then inserted (the minimum joint required by standards is 2 mm) and must be left in place for about 24 hours before being removed to allow the adhesive to dry completely. The final step is grouting and cleaning of the surfaces.

Large slabs are also ideal for use as kitchen countertops and islands, in which case the slab is cut at 45° using special devices. Paper tape is then used to ensure perfect alignment of the individual sections.

Ceramic tile can be used to cover any surface and create an elegant, durable, healthy and safe environment. Large slabs are suitable for countless different applications, from external building façades to indoor and outdoor floors in residential and commercial spaces.

Ceramic tile is a long-lasting and indestructible product provided it is installed by a skilled and adequately qualified professional.

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TILE INSTALLATION

The opportunities and advantages of interlocking dry installation

by Thomas Foschini


ARSRATIO FROM CASALGRANDE PADANA
IS A NEW INTERIOR FLOORING SOLUTION
THAT SIMPLIFIES RENOVATION WORK
AND INTEGRATES SERVICE UTILITIES
AS PART OF A NEW HOME
AUTOMATION CONCEPT

The idea of using interlocking floor tiles in renovation projects to avoid demolition costs and make installation quicker and simpler has long been on the agendas of leading Italian ceramic tile manufacturers. The ArsRatio system from Casalgrande Padana aims to overcome the limitations normally associated with this kind of project and offers unique opportunities in terms of integration between the flooring and the service utilities.

From a technical and structural standpoint, ceramic tiles intended for dry interlocking installation are complete systems made up of several layers: the tile itself, the polyurethane edge support and, if required, a layer of fibre-reinforced gypsum (calcium sulphate), a material with excellent thermal conductivity.

“The tiles are prepared in the factory according to the customer’s specifications, with a choice of three different configurations,” explains Mirko Castagnetti, from Casalgrande Padana’s Engineering Division. “The first, AR18, consists of a 10 mm thick tile coupled with a substrate to make a total thickness of 18 mm.” This is the ideal solution for indoor flooring situations where heavy dynamic loads are not present, notes Castagnetti. The other two versions, AR28 and AR30, are intended for different kinds of application.



 Read the other
technical articles



As for sizes, Casalgrande Padana offers the **AR18** and **AR28** installation systems in a **60x60 cm** size in the various collections in the catalogue. More options are available for the **AR30** system, ranging from **60x60 cm** to **60x120 cm**, **90x90 cm** and **30x60 cm**. While a **standard 3 mm joint** can be used with 10 mm thick tiles, a **4 mm joint** is required with extra-thick floors (2 cm) designed to meet special requirements in terms of load resistance and/or anti-slip properties.

All the solutions in the company's range use an interlocking system to facilitate installation and avoid the need for adhesives or complex preparation work on the substrate (screed or existing floor). But it is the AR30 version that offers the greatest opportunities in terms of structural integration between the ceramic floor covering and the services. In practice, the AR30 configuration combines a conventional 10 mm tile thickness with a multilayer substrate (fibre-reinforced gypsum along with polyurethane for support and for the edges, interlocks and joints), which can be suitably hollowed out to create conduits for electrical and data cables. "In this case, the client supplies the layout of service conduits, which are subsequently formed by milling the reverse side of the tiles," explains Castagnetti. Dedicated columns will house the electrical and data sockets, thereby providing "varying degrees of integration and home automation according to the client's choices". Car dealerships, supermarkets and large retail spaces in general are the main areas of use of this solution, which is notable for its energy efficiency, durability and ease of maintenance. In particular, it combines the good thermal conductivity of fibre-reinforced plaster (an important factor when installing modern low-temperature radiant heating systems) with ease of maintenance and replacement

of individual elements over time at no additional cost due to the absence of adhesives. And compared to alternative solutions on the market, the ArsRatio system also guarantees good waterproofing of the substrate (which is sealed to prevent infiltration of water and other liquids into the underlying layers), making the surfaces suitable for frequent cleaning and sanitisation.

The final version of the system, AR28, consists of a 20 mm thick tile which is ideal for commercial applications with special requirements in terms of load-bearing capacity and/or surface characteristics, for example anti-slip properties. This version is not suitable for integration with services due to the large thickness of the tiles.

Simplicity of installation is a key aspect of Casalgrande Padana's "ArsRatio package". But it is important to remember one thing: "In its complete configuration, our flooring solution is composed of up to three materials: ceramic, plaster and polyurethane. This means that cutting to create sub-sizes or inserts must be performed using suitable water-cooled discs."

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ENVIRONMENT

Transparency and Italian ceramic tiles

by Andrea Contri



Increasingly at the centre of international debate, sustainability is not just a political issue but a major driver of behaviour and lifestyle changes amongst citizens.

Recent surveys reveal growing awareness of consumption choices and demonstrate that the public is increasingly well informed about the issue of environmental sustainability. Recent research has shown that millennials in particular feel the need to verify corporate statements and that there is greater public trust and loyalty towards brands that promote transparent communication.

The Italian ceramic tile industry has long invested in issues of sustainability, declaring its performance as early as 2016 through the publication of an industry-average EPD. With the aim of developing tools to facilitate communication and understanding of these issues, the Italian ceramic industry has adopted a transparency document. The so-called Transparency Summary is a document that summarises the industry-average EPD and provides a clear and intuitive guide to the environmental impact of Italian ceramic tiles over their entire life cycle, from cradle to grave. It highlights their characteristics of hygiene, health and absence of volatile organic compounds harmful for indoor environments and provides information on energy, origins of the raw materials used, reuse of materials and production waste, and end-of-life product recyclability.

The Transparency Summary was created for the American market and is available in English from the [UL SPOT library](http://spot.ul.com) (spot.ul.com).



FIGURE 1: LIFECYCLE IMPACT CATEGORIES FOR CERAMIC TILES (taken from the EPD Transparency Summary)

LIFECYCLE IMPACT CATEGORIES						
The environmental impacts listed below were assessed through the product's entire life cycle (cradle to grave impacts).						
ATMOSPHERE			WATER		EARTH	
Global Warming Potential refers to long-term changes in global weather patterns that are caused by increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.	Ozone Depletion Potential is the destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer, which shields the earth from ultraviolet radiation that's harmful to life, caused by human-made air pollution.	Photochemical Ozone Creation Potential happens when sunlight reacts with hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds, to produce air pollution known as smog.	Acidification Potential is the result of human-made emissions and refers to the decrease in pH and increase in acidity of oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams – polluting groundwater and harming aquatic life.	Eutrophication Potential occurs when excessive nutrients cause increased algae growth in lakes, blocking the underwater penetration of sunlight needed to produce oxygen and resulting in the loss of aquatic life.	Depletion of Abiotic Resources (Elements) refers to the reduction of available non-renewable resources, such as metals, that are found on the periodic table of elements, due to human activity.	Depletion of Abiotic Resources (Fossil Fuels) refers to the decreasing availability of non-renewable carbon-based compounds, such as oil and coal, due to human activity.
TRACI 1.34E+01 kg CO ₂ -Equiv.	1.45E-09 kg CFC 11-Equiv.	1.51E+00 kg O ₃ -Equiv.	7.25E-02 kg SO ₂ -Equiv.	9.56E-03 kg N-Equiv.	* kg Sb-Equiv.	* MJ
CML 1.38E+01 kg CO ₂ -Equiv.	5.43E-10 kg R11-Equiv.	2.86E-03 kg Ethene-Equiv.	3.49E-02 kg SO ₂ -Equiv.	4.33E-03 kg PO ₄ -Equiv.	1.07E-04 kg Sb-Equiv.	1.82E+02 MJ

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Watch the video about the sustainability of Italian tiles

Inclusive exclusivity

A HISTORIC SHOPPING MALL HAS BEEN GIVEN A NEW LEASE OF LIFE THANKS TO A CAREFULLY DESIGNED RENOVATION PROJECT THAT EXPLORES NATURAL THEMES AND A FLOORING SYSTEM WITH A WELL-BALANCED COMBINATION OF SIZES AND COLOURS

by Mariano Amato

Winnipeg, capital of the Canadian province of Manitoba, has the unique appeal of a city standing at the edge of the world. Blanketed in snow from November to March, it has grown up around The Forks, a historic site that has undergone redevelopment in recent years and now offers a range of shops, restaurants and concert and exhibition venues. It is close to the iconic Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), designed by American architect Antoine Predock, and surrounded by a densely-knit urban fabric consisting of small single-family residences as well as a series of places and “non-places” that

serve as centres of social aggregation. One of these is the Garden City Shopping Centre complex, a city landmark originally opened back in 1970 with over 35,000 square metres of covered area housing more than 75 shops and 11 restaurants. But it is more than just a shopping mall, as during the harsh winter season it combines its retail function with that of a hub for much of the social life of the community.

The complex recently underwent radical renovation work carried out by Ruscio Studio, a Montreal-based full-service interior design firm which specialises in this kind of project.

TO COORDINATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE INDIVIDUAL BRANDS' STORE DESIGNS, SOFT, UNIFORM FLOORS WERE CHOSEN FOR THE RETAIL SPACES. THE CONCOURSE HAS A 4-COLOUR PATTERN TO UNDERSCORE ITS ROLE AS THE CENTRAL HUB OF THE ENTIRE SHOPPING CENTRE.





GARDEN CITY SHOPPING CENTRE

PROJECT

ROBERT RUSCIO
WWW.RUSCIOSTUDIO.COM

PHOTOS

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MART DESIGN COMPANY
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 Read the interview with the
designer Robert Ruscio



PROJECT

THE SPACES REFLECT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATURAL AND BUILT LANDSCAPES, COMBINING MARBLE-EFFECT CERAMIC FLOORING, CANADIAN OAK WALL COVERINGS, FLORAL MOTIFS AND AN ELABORATE LIGHTING SYSTEM INSPIRED BY CASCADING PLANTS.



SPACES
commercial spaces
and shopping centres

APPLICATIONS
interior floor coverings

ceramic surfaces
Alfalux
porcelain tile Hills
Cerreto, Busana,
Toano, Villa
15x90, 22.5x90, 45x90 cm

Casalgrande Padana
porcelain tile Marte
Nero Acapulco
30x60 cm

technical characteristics
water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.1\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): 45 N/mm²
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): $\leq 150 \text{ mm}^3$
coefficient of linear thermal
expansion (ISO 10545-8):
compliant

frost resistance
(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13):
UA ULA UHA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): compliant
slip resistance
(DIN 51130): R9



As Robert Ruscio explains: “Our approach was to create a sleek contemporary design that played upon the name “Garden”. We put together some key finishes or elements such as floral patent patterns, and we had good old Canadian oak wood. We had various lounge seating areas, different seating types and arrangements throughout the mall, and of course we had this ceiling suspended light fixture which was made up of these round geometrically shaped wooden balls suspended in clusters throughout the mall.”

Porcelain floor tiles played an important role in the project, which combined different sizes and colours by using products from two Italian brands: AlfaLux (Hills series) and Casalgrande Padana (Marte series). A soft, uniform floor tile shade was chosen for the retail spaces so as to be able to adapt easily to the individual store designs. At the same time, by installing tiles with the same length but different widths it was possible to create an elegant and contemporary fractal pattern. A more intense tone was chosen for the distribution routes and entrance corridors, creating a subtle colour contrast with the retail spaces. The central court has a more vibrant design and consists of the juxtaposition of 4 different colours. “A kind of artistic installation with a pattern that emphasises its role as the central hub of the mall,” was how Robert Ruscio described it. “A pattern that dissolves without a clear boundary and offers maximum flexibility for organising events and installations of various kinds.” This flooring project combines inclusiveness and exclusivity for its specific area of application and won first prize in the commercial category of the North American Ceramic Tiles of Italy Competition 2020 for its ability to exploit the potential of ceramic with creativity and appropriateness.

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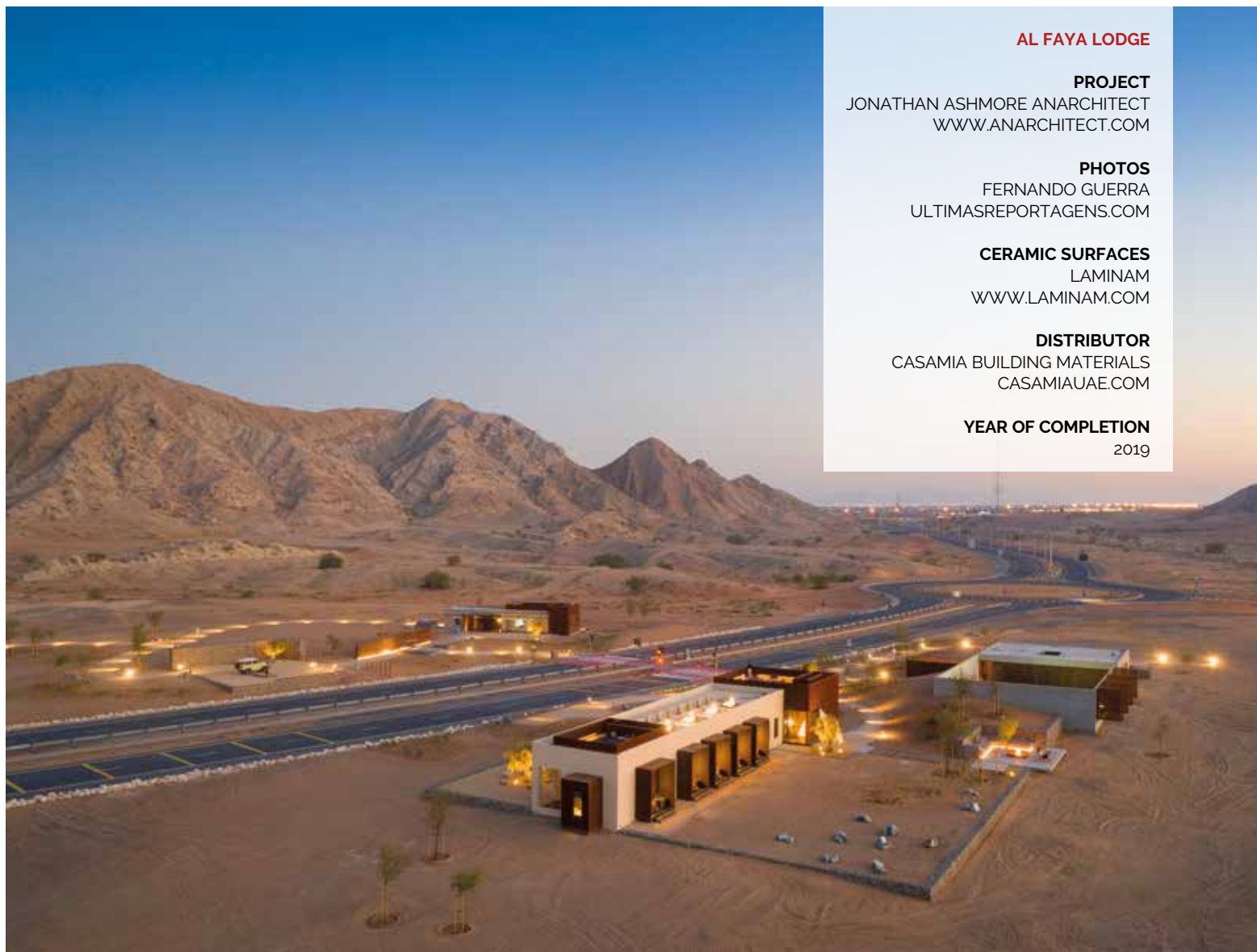


Even in the desert, less is more

THE PERFECT MINIMALISM OF AN ECO-RETREAT
SET AMONGST THE STARS AND SAND OF THE
CRIMSON DESERT IN THE EMIRATE OF SHARJAH

by Elena Pasoli





AL FAYA LODGE

PROJECT

JONATHAN ASHMORE ANARCHITECT
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YEAR OF COMPLETION

2019

Of the seven emirates that make up the UAE, Sharjah is the one responsible for preserving the traditions and culture of the young nation and for guiding its cultural development policies and actions. Named Cultural Capital of the Arab World by UNESCO in 1998 and World Book Capital in 2019, this tiny jewel at the edge of Rub' al-Khl, the second largest sandy desert in the world, strikes a judicious balance between the preservation and restoration of the past and the relentless pursuit of growth and internationalisation typical of the country as a whole.

Located just a twenty-minute drive from Dubai, the Emirate of Sharjah has a very different skyline to its more populous neighbour that reflects its intention to protect its traditional desert architecture, often

combining it with cutting-edge technology and in some cases even the highest levels of luxury.

One example is the Al Faya Lodge, the latest pearl in the Sharjah Collection, a series of boutique hotels and eco-retreats built in key locations across the emirate. Immersed in the desert landscape at the foot of Mount Alvaah in close proximity to the country's first petrol pump, the lodge was reimagined from two single-storey stone buildings from the 1960s, previously occupied by a clinic and later a grocery store. This elegant modern hotel and restaurant together with a newly built saltwater spa building was designed by architect Jonathan Ashmore, director of Anarchitect Studio, with offices in Dubai and London. "Desert conditions



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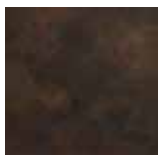
PROJECT

SPACES

hospitality facilities

APPLICATIONS

interior floor and
wall coverings



Ossido
Bruno

ceramic surfaces

Laminam
porcelain tile
Ossido
Bruno
300x100 cm
3 mm thickness

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.3\%$
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): 175 mm³
coefficient of linear
thermal expansion
(ISO 10545-8): compliant
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
frost resistance
(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13):
UA ULA UHA
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 5
slip resistance
(DIN 51130): R9

certifications

LEED, NF-UPEC

THE CLOSE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE
INTERIORS AND THE
BEAUTIFUL SCENERY
OF THE CRIMSON
DESERT HELPS TO
GIVE AL FAYA LODGE
ITS UNIQUE CHARM.



present extreme heat in summer with intense and prolonged sun exposure, so it is important to consider these factors when first designing the form and mass of the building and to select suitable and robust materials,” he explained. “Desert sites are exposed to all the elements and not just sunlight. The elements also include driving rain, sandstorms and low temperatures at night. Locally sourced stone or concrete construction provide heavy thermal mass to deal with these extremes with regards to temperature fluctuations. Surface materials like Corten steel and secondary structure materials like robust hardwoods and aluminum were also explored to add refinement and precision to the design, particularly for over-sailing roofs, shading elements and also terrace decks raised above the level of the sands.”

These solutions, together with sections of plastered render walls, offer a subtle tonal change and texture to the buildings which are intended to mature with timeless longevity in response to the impact of the climate.

The lodge offers five rooms conceived as havens to escape the hectic pace of urban living. Each room has a feature skylight for stargazing, while the luxe room has the added experience of a private roof terrace. The open-air saltwater pool, three salt spa experiences, library and dining room with enormous windows looking out onto the desert landscape complete the offerings.

The interior walls are covered with Ossido collection porcelain tiles from Laminam chosen in the Bruno finish, which fit in well with the perfect geometry and minimalist style of the lodge. “For the interiors we wanted to recreate the essence of the colour and texture of the CorTen steel used outside while also creating a 3 metre high ceiling, particularly in the hotel building, that would give the rooms relaxing proportions,” explains the architect. “Given the limited room for manoeuvre due to the shell of the existing building, the colour, large dimensions (3x1 m) and thin profile (3 mm) of Laminam surfaces proved ideal for this exciting redevelopment and renovation project.”

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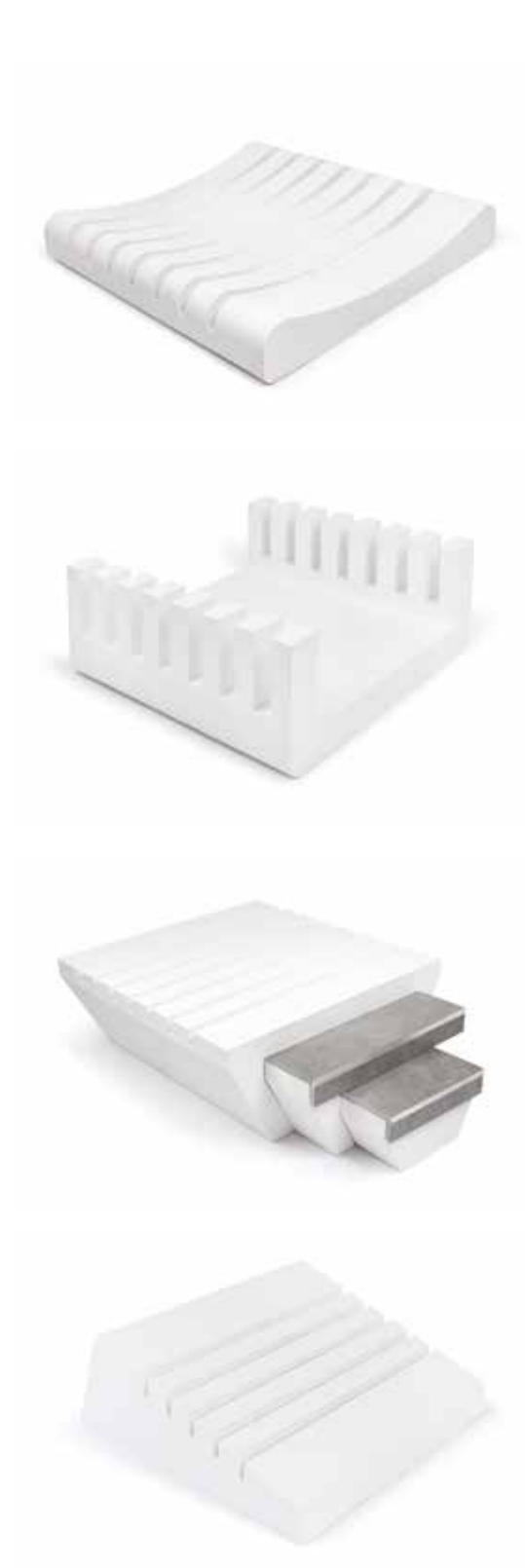
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