

cer

magazine

INTERNATIONAL 51

■ EVENTS

Cersaie 2021 returns
as an in-person show

TRENDS

The goal?
Water savings!

MARKETS

High-quality products
and customer care

PROJECTS

Neomodernism
on the Côte d'Azur

INTERVIEW

Odile Decq: Creativity
beyond habit



BOOTH 1949
SOMETHING NEW IS COMING

Coverings | July 7-9 Orlando, Florida USA



ANDREA SERRI
EDITOR OF CER MAGAZINE
ITALIA AND INTERNATIONAL

A journey into the secrets of ceramics

A 30-month journey exploring the unique qualities of ceramic tile is about to reach its conclusion. The campaign has continued throughout the course of the pandemic and has been a challenging exercise despite the fact that ceramic tile is already used on almost 60% of the world's residential floors. While this is certainly a very high percentage, it can and must be increased further by promoting awareness and understanding of the product among consumers and users all over the world, with a special focus on the opportunity for new areas of use.

This journey of discovery of ceramic tile began with a scientific account of the product's many unique qualities, including durability, non-toxicity, inertness, resistance to frost, scratching and chemical and atmospheric agents, healthiness and sustainability. The next step was to illustrate all its possible uses, from traditional surface covering applications in the various rooms in the home through to heated floors, ventilated façades and furnishing accessories such as kitchen countertops and backsplashes, furniture doors, worktops and tables. The campaign culminated in a series of entertaining comparative videos explaining why ceramic tile is preferable to competitor materials in certain conditions and contexts. In Italy the campaign won no fewer than three awards in the "L'Italia che Comunica" competition promoted by the Italian federation of communication companies UNA.

In the two and a half years since they were first launched on air, the 23 videos making up the digital campaign on the values of ceramics entitled "Ceramics. A safe choice" have been viewed 14 million times on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram in markets around the world. The wide-ranging digital marketing campaign, organised around the respective landing pages on www.ceramica.info, has generated more than 312 million impressions from global consumers interested in renovating their homes or choosing surfaces, providing them with motivation as well as all the product information they need to enable them to make an informed choice.

By the time you read these lines, the end of the campaign "But ceramic... is a safe choice" will be just a few weeks away. But while the digital promotion activity will end, the universal values conveyed in the 23 videos – which, like ceramic itself, transcend time and space – will continue to be accessible on www.ceramica.info and its integrated multimedia communication system.

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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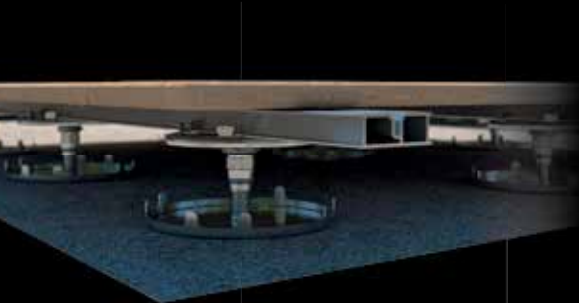


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 Reggio Emilia, Italy - 2020
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SENSI SIGNORIA collection ABK, brand of ABK GROUP Industrie Ceramiche S.p.A www.dbk.it

ABK

EMOZIONI IN SUPERFICIE

Cersaie 2021 returns as an in-person show

THE SHOW WILL BE BACK IN THE BOLOGNA EXHIBITION CENTRE COMPLETE WITH NEW PRODUCT CATEGORIES, THE CONTRACT HALL HOSTING 10 TOP ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS, AND THE THREE-WEEK ONLINE EVENT CERSAIE DIGITAL

by Andrea Serri

Cersaie will be back as an in-person show **from 27 September to 1 October 2021 in the Bologna Exhibition Centre**, where it will occupy all the available exhibit floor. More than 160 exhibitors will have stands larger than 200 square metres and some will have spaces as large as 400 square metres. The show will also see the participation of large numbers of foreign exhibitors and will feature an outstanding programme of initiatives and cultural events. This return to an in-person format has been eagerly awaited both by exhibitors, who have booked their spaces months in advance, and by visitors, who will find it easier to get to Bologna thanks to the vaccination campaigns currently underway in the various countries and the introduction of Green Cards for travel within the EU.

"The possibility of organising a world-leading event like Cersaie once again and giving our international clientele the opportunity to enjoy the Made in Italy experience directly and in-person is of vital importance for a sector that generates 85% of its turnover from exports," comments **Giovanni Savorani**, Chairman of Confindustria Ceramica. "The experience of being confined indoors for long periods of time during the various lockdowns has fuelled interest in home improvements amongst consumers all over the world, with a particular

focus on health and hygiene. This in turn has prompted growing interest in ceramic materials, bathroom furnishings, kitchens, outdoor furniture, lighting, wellness and interior finishes, all of which are product sectors that will be present at Cersaie 2021."

The safety of exhibitors and visitors will be the top priority for everyone involved and will be assured in particular by the progressive rollout of the vaccination programmes in Italy and worldwide. These programmes are the prerequisite for the European Green Card and for the creation of safe travel corridors on the main international routes. "Safety is our top priority," says **Gianpiero Calzolari**, chairman of BolognaFiere, "and for this reason we will be adopting protocols covering every aspect of health and safety both in the Exhibition Centre itself (from the entrances to the visitor routes, from catering to logistics) and in the city of Bologna in cooperation with the other players involved in the exhibition experience (airport, transport, hotels, etc.). We aim to create an environment where exhibitors and buyers can focus on business and build new commercial relationships with complete peace of mind." One particularly important aspect is the **agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Trade Agency ITA** regarding the participation of a

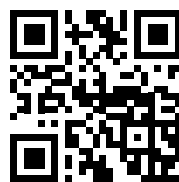




The Contract Hall at Cersaie 2021

contingent of 170 international buyers, architects and journalists, joined this year by a selection of real estate professionals. These visitors will come from Germany, France, the UK, North America and the Gulf region, all of which are areas where major international projects are under way. One of the major new attractions at this year's show will be the **Contract Hall**. Occupying the whole of Hall 18, it will host leading Italian companies operating in the new exhibition sectors introduced this year, namely kitchens, interior and exterior finishes, lighting technology, home automation, outdoor furnishing and wellness. Special attention will be devoted to the lounge area located at the centre of the space and to the overall exhibition layout, which will combine style and elegance with practicality to ensure that these new product areas offer a truly unique and informative visitor experience. The centrepiece of the Contract Hall will be **Archincont(r)act**, the exhibition format launched in 2019 which this year will host 10 internationally renowned architecture firms operating in the various areas of real estate. This entire hall will serve to create a new itinerary and expand the range of products of interest to designers, architects and the building profession in general, as well as retailers and other commercial players operating in the contract sector. It will also create a virtuous circle interconnecting products, projects and investors,

thereby cementing Cersaie's status as the largest temporary showroom in the world. The event will be a privileged venue where visitors will find selected leading companies and high-end products capable of meeting the increasingly complex requirements of design, marketing and use of ceramic materials and bathroom furnishings. The second entirely new feature of this 38th edition of the show is **Cersaie Digital**. Exhibitors taking part in the in-person event will also have the opportunity to participate via the web platform and harness the full potential of information technology, the dematerialisation of information and events and the global presence of target audiences. The platform, which will be **on line for three weeks from 20 September to 8 October**, is in no way intended to replace the in-person exhibition but rather to enhance its capability to bring together visitors and exhibitors and to consolidate the role, standing and prestige of **Cersaie, the International Exhibition of Ceramic Tile and Bathroom Furnishings**.



Visit the Cersaie website

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Neomodernism on the Côte d'Azur

IN ROQUEBRUNE-CAP-MARTIN, THREE ITALIAN ARCHITECTS HAVE FOLLOWED IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF EILEEN GRAY AND LE CORBUSIER IN THEIR DESIGN FOR A VILLA THAT STANDS AS A MANIFESTO FOR BOTH ESSENTIAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE USE OF CERAMIC MATERIALS

by Riccardo Bianchi



The municipality of Roquebrune-Cap-Martin on the Côte d'Azur is an ode to Modernist architecture and home to numerous buildings created by the great architects of the 20th century, most notably Villa E-27 designed by Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier's Cabanon. So it was hardly a coincidence that when architects Marco Calvi, Gaetano Ceschia and Andrea Viganò were commissioned to design a villa perched on the rugged hillside above the sea, they drew inspiration from Le Corbusier and openly quoted the words written by the great master in 1923 in his book *Towards a New Architecture*: "The Architect, by his arrangement of forms, realizes an order which is a pure creation of his spirit; by forms and shapes he affects our senses to an acute degree..." This connection is further underscored by the architects' focus on Corbusier's "Three Reminders": Mass, Surface and Plan, all three of which were conceived in the spirit of simplicity

and a quest for plastic emotions. According to the architects, partners in a well-established practice with branches in San Remo, Milan and Venice and projects spanning the Ligurian Riviera and the French Midi, the aptly-named Villa Blue Coast "was born of an essential gesture". The volume, a slender, elongated parallelepiped, is defined by just two large parallel beams, two horizontal lines that extend like an elegant walkway between two rocky outcrops immersed in the Mediterranean scrub. The entire structure is supported by a platform that also houses a spectacular ribbon-shaped swimming pool overlooking the intensely coloured and scented garden below, a green jewel designed by landscape architect Francesca Benza and located in one of the most beautiful stretches of the Côte d'Azur. "Inside it is a home, outside just sea and sky," comment the architects. The surface, the "skin" of the construction, encloses its linear geometry in an envelope that

VILLA BLUE COAST

PROJECT

CALVI CESCHIA VIGANÒ
ARCHITETTI ASSOCIATI
WWW.CALVICESCHIAVIGANO.IT

PHOTOS

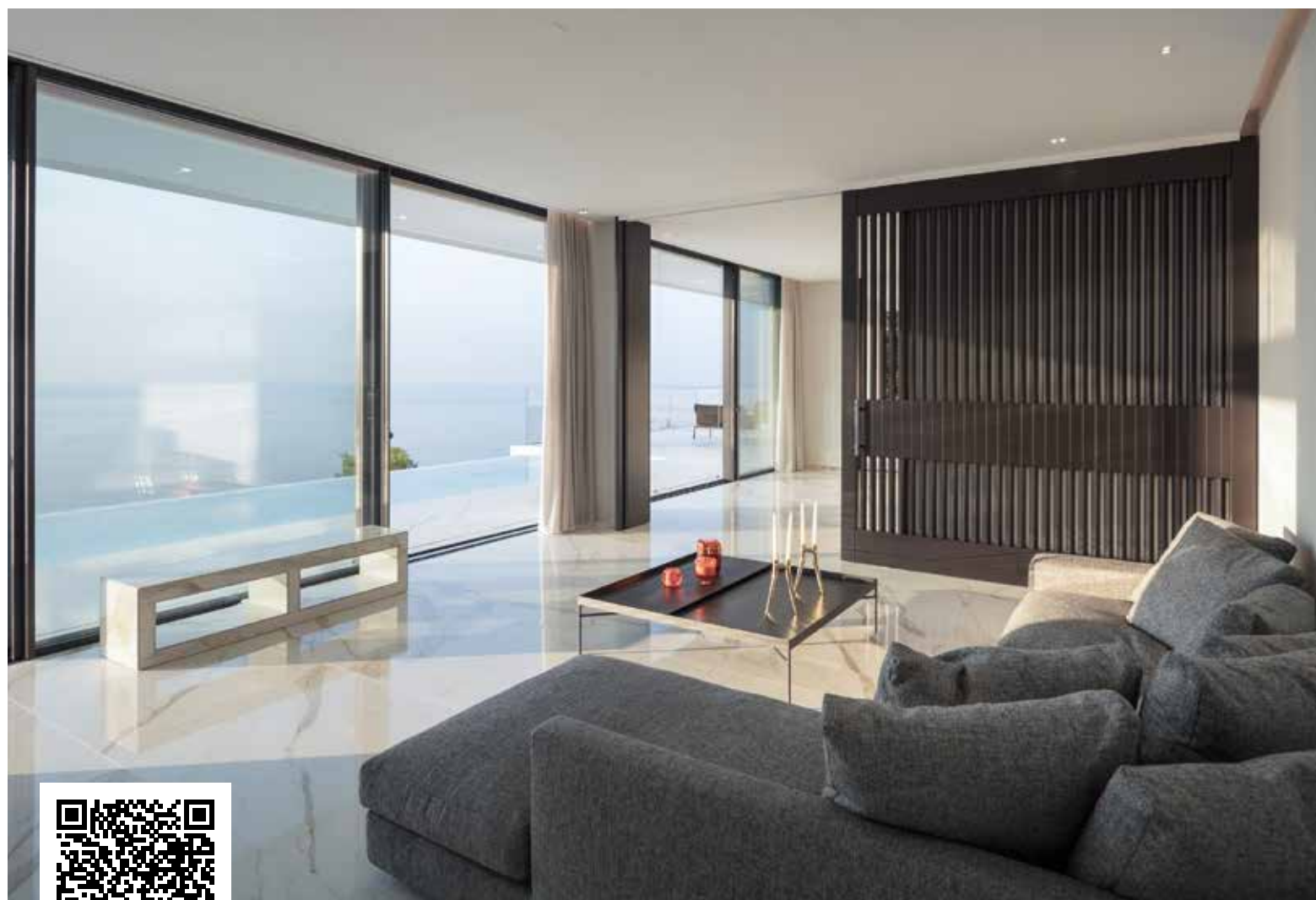
ALDO AMORETTI
WWW.ALDOAMORETTI.COM

CERAMIC SURFACES

LAMINAM
WWW.LAMINAM.COM

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2018



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is in osmotic harmony with the surroundings, emphasising its essentiality. The grey of the twin beams is complemented perfectly by the pale colours of the infill walls, while the reflections of the large sliding glass windows and the terrace glazing panels create an iridescent chiaroscuro effect that brings the surrounding landscape to life. The floor plan also contributes to the abstract lyricism of the villa. "The fluid, airy open spaces with their spectacular sea views and the double vertical distribution are designed to make the various sections of the building independent," explain Calvi, Ceschia and Viganò. "This allows the inhabitants to entertain friends in complete freedom and comfort while at the same time organising all kinds of social events."

The materials chosen to create a fresh, dynamic atmosphere play a very important role in this carefully designed neo-modernist setting. The choice of ceramic products from Laminam – the first company to develop king-size panels of very small thickness – for the horizontal and vertical surfaces of Villa Blue Coast was a key element in this approach. "The materials were chosen to be durable but above all visually stunning," say the architects. And indeed, the Laminam collections used in the villa create an astonishing "total look" aesthetic inspired by the texture of Carrara marble.

THE CONVERSATION AREA AND KITCHEN: THE LARGE CALACATTA MARBLE-EFFECT CERAMIC SLABS, WHICH ARE ALSO USED ON THE KITCHEN COOKTOP, CREATE A SENSE OF DEPTH, CONTINUITY AND ELEGANCE.

SPACES
non-urban residential

APPLICATIONS
interior and exterior floor, vertical and horizontal claddings of the kitchen, swimming pool claddings



Calacatta
Oro Venato

ceramic surfaces
Laminam
porcelain tile
I Naturali
Calacatta Oro Venato +
Oro Venato Lucidato
1000x3000 mm

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):
6.6 average value
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
frost resistance

(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance (ISO
10545-13): LA-LB HA-HB
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): min class 4
slip resistance
(DIN 51130): R9 (Natural)

certifications
UNI EN ISO 9001



Chosen in a large 1 metre by 3 metre size, the I Naturali – Calacatta Oro Venato, I Naturali – Calacatta Oro Venato Lucidato and Filo – Mercurio collections used in all the bathrooms except for the master ensuite are splendid porcelain panels inspired by the aesthetics of natural materials but far surpassing them in terms of their technical performance. They not only add elegance to all the surfaces but also ensure an engaging sense of visual and spatial continuity between decoration and context. A kind of “endless carpet” that creates an exciting, vivid combination of transparencies and reflections that glow in the sunlight during the day and shine like stars in the darkness of the night. They epitomise a work that expresses the design vision of Calvi, Ceschia and Viganò, in which architecture acts as a “generator of new, positive and in many cases unexpected relationships”. Les jeux sont faits!

THE EXTERIORS JUTTING OUT OVER THE LANDSCAPE OF THE CÔTE D'AZUR. THE PAVING IS THE SAME AS IN THE INTERIOR, CREATING AN ELEGANT SENSE OF CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF THE VILLA.

ALSO SEE

Italian porcelain tiles are an outstanding example of an environmentally sustainable material.

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/SUSTAINABILITY-VIDEO



Eclectic styles

A RURAL PROPERTY IN THE PROVINCE OF REGGIO EMILIA HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE IN A PAINSTAKING INTERIOR DESIGN PROJECT THAT RECONCILES PAST AND PRESENT WITH A SKILFUL BLEND OF SOLUTIONS AND MATERIALS

by Claudia Capperucci



PRIVATE RESIDENCE

INTERIOR DESIGNER
ELENA STORTI
ELENASTORTI.IT

PHOTOS
DAVIDE GALLI
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YEAR OF COMPLETION
2020

ABOVE, THE LIVING AREA OF ONE OF THE APARTMENTS IN THE VILLA WITH CERAMIC SURFACES INSPIRED BY THE TEXTURE OF CONCRETE.

The term “renovation” is almost always used for projects that are not created from scratch but involve rebuilding old, disused structures, and it applies perfectly to this farmhouse in the town of Reggio, in the province of Reggio Emilia. However, a more accurate term to describe the project would be “restoration”. Firstly, because the structure of the house was left unaltered in accordance with the environmental constraints, and secondly because the sensibility of interior designer Elena Storti enabled her to recreate the original spirit of the farmhouse while adopting an eclectic contemporary style, both inside and out. This austere farmhouse typical of the province of Reggio Emilia, with on one side the stable and

on the other the service areas with their cellars, is brought back to life in a new and unexpected form. The result is a charmingly elegant residence that pays tribute to its ancient origins while using a unique blend of styles to convey the idea of something new. “The interior design project aimed to make the living spaces functional and contemporary while remaining true to their essence and at the same time maintaining a sense of harmony with their rural location,” explains the interior designer. “The project had to cater for the needs of three families while reconciling different tastes, from modern to classic.” The interior was converted into two large apartments and a spa area, while the exterior is dominated by a stunning



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SPACES

non-urban residential

APPLICATIONS

interior floor and wall coverings
swimming pool and exterior pavings



Costruire
Argilla mix verde



Abitare La Terra
corbezzolo



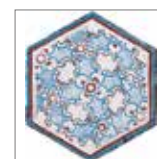
Square
grey rock



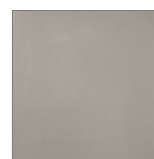
Square
rope rock



Via Emilia
Rivalta grigio



New Orleans
Mardi Gras



To Be
Concrete grey



I Cotti fatti a mano
Cotto argento

ceramic surfaces

SERENISSIMA CERAMICHE
Costruire, Riabita il Cotto,
Thaoe

CERASARDA
Abitare la Terra,
I Cotti fatti a mano

CERCOM CERAMICHE
To be, Gravity, Square

CIR MANIFATTURE
CERAMICHE
Via Emilia, New Orleans,
Reggio Emilia



geometrically-shaped swimming pool that reflects the harmonious façade on sunny days. The work focused above all on the choice of materials and combined terracotta, ceramic, wood, resin, glass and metal while striving to achieve a balance between furniture, structure and surface coverings. The coverings are a key element of the project and play a vital role in giving different personalities to the various spaces: the material essence of concrete in the Gravity line and the metropolitan spirit of Square, both from Cercom Ceramiche; the warmth and musicality of the exquisite New Orleans collection from Cir Manifatture Ceramiche, a carefully chosen aesthetic for the bathroom area; the material appeal of Thae from Serenissima, inspired by salvaged wooden planks; and the Riabita il Cotto collection, also from Serenissima.

This patchwork of ideas, materials, textures, tones and cultural references creates a composite yet harmonious overall effect. “The furnishings are a balanced mix of modern and bourgeois forms in a rural context,” explains Storti. “They are bespoke solutions in which every form and finish is designed to blend in with the distinctive structural volumes. The materials were also carefully researched and selected according to the same criteria. The choice of leading Italian design companies, such as Baxter and Tooy for the lighting design, further contributed to the finished result.” Reflecting on the two stages in the life of this building and looking at it today in its newfound harmony, one is reminded of the image of a butterfly emerging from its cocoon.

ABOVE, THE RESORT'S WELLNESS AREA, WHICH LOOKS OUT OVER THE ENTRANCE WITH THE LARGE SWIMMING POOL AND SYMMETRIC, RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.

ALSO SEE

Five ways Italian tile can improve the value and safety of your home

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/FIVE-WAYS-ITALIAN-TILE-CAN-IMPROVE-THE-VALUE-AND-SAFETY-OF-YOUR-HOME/

New surfaces for comfortable spaces

by Elena Cattaneo

Change is underway. There's no denying it: over the last year we have all had to make minor or major adjustments to the way we use our living spaces, and the tile producers' proposals for the coming months could hardly fail to take these transformations into account. As architects are well aware, the needs of people looking to renovate or build a new house today are different from those of a year ago. The primary concern today is to be able to live and work in environments that are healthy and easy to clean but also versatile and comfortable. We need to feel safe and at the same time be able to relax in both our living and working spaces - not forgetting that for many people the two spaces are one and the same. In this context,

porcelain stoneware has become extremely popular this year as a practical, hygienic and versatile floor and wall covering material. So let's take a look at the decorative solutions that architects and producer companies are proposing for 2021.

Inspired by nature

For many people, nature - with all its colours and positive effects - has been a distant dream over the past year due to travel restrictions, while many others have discovered or rediscovered natural spots close to home and learned to appreciate aspects of nature that they may previously have overlooked. In any case, the appeal of nature in the home is a strongly felt and widely expressed need.

The **Green Wood** porcelain tile collection from **Blustyle by Cotto d'Este** brings the experience of nature to life through a meticulous selection of the finest varieties of oak. It comes in three colours and a large 20x120 cm size with a thickness of 9.5 mm. www.blustyle.it





See the latest trends
in the Product Gallery



1. The new **Aurum** collection from **Century** (Fincibec) is inspired by classic travertine marble. Its characteristics include a sophisticated ivory colour and natural cross-cut surface reminiscent of traditional Mediterranean architecture that blends harmoniously into the local landscape. The Aurum porcelain tile collection allows for numerous installation solutions, both indoors and outdoors. www.century-ceramica.it

3. The **Eterna** stone-effect collection from **Ragno** stands out for its uniform surface broken up by textures reminiscent of seashells or, in the Mix version, by darker marble inserts. It is available with innovative CleanOut technology capable of inhibiting the growth and proliferation of harmful microorganisms. Eterna is produced using 40% recycled material. www.ragno.it

2. Collaboration between **Casa dolce casa - casamood** (Made in Florim) and the Matteo Thun & Partners architecture and design firm has led to the **Sensi** large-size ceramic tile collection, developed with special attention to energy and the environment. The project invites users to discover the unique ability of ceramic materials' to combine nature, creativity and technology. www.florim.com/casadolcecasa-casamood

4. **Unique Travertine**, the new collection from the brand **Provenza**, offers an up-to-date and original reinterpretation of classic travertine. A perfect blend of craftsmanship and contemporary design, the collection consists of numerous floor and wall tiles in four different colours: White, Cream, Silver and Chocolate. www.emilgroup.it/provenza/

Wallbrick Collection — ●



Shellstone Collection — ●

NEW COLLECTIONS IN PORCELAIN STONEWARE



Origin Collection — ●

Tongass Collection — ●

The power of neutral tones

Less saturated colours, whether warmer shades such as beige and sand or cooler tones with the unlimited potential of greys, are ideal for customising projects without overburdening the floors and walls.



1.



2.

1. Civico 38 from **Polis Ceramiche** is a contemporary porcelain tile collection that transforms concrete into a creative, versatile material ideal for customising any type of space. The series comes in 4 sizes for indoor use and a 90x90 cm size for outdoors. White-body wall tiles, mosaics and trim pieces round off the collection.

www.polis.it

2. Tonalite proposes the **Natura** glazed porcelain tile collection, with a non-uniform, gently undulating polished surface that creates pleasing plays of light. Along with the classic 10x20 cm size, a 10x40 cm element is now available to further increase design potential.

www.tonalite.it



3.



4.

3. FAP designed the **Lumina Sand Art** collection by taking inspiration from the simple and spontaneous activity of drawing shapes in the sand. The collection is available in an original wall tile size of 50x120 cm in two versions: White Gloss and White Extra Matt.

www.fapceramiche.com

4. The Graniti collection from **Cipa gres** stands out for its timeless, understated aesthetics and delicate colours ranging from neutral to pastel tones. Moreover, the possibility of choosing the surface and matching it with the required level of slip resistance means that the product is safe and suitable for every situation.

www.cipagres.it



5.

5. Borgo Italiano, the latest collection from **Verde 1999**, is an eclectic yet sophisticated mixture of reclaimed stone. It is a porcelain stoneware with a rustic edge in a 100x100 cm size, also available in a version with a rectified edge. It comes in four neutral colours (Ecrú, Pearl, Grey and Graphite) and other sizes (60x60 cm and 60x120 cm with tumbled edge only).

www.verde1999.com

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Make way for imagination

Thanks to new materials, technologies and tile sizes, it is now possible to achieve all kinds of decorations. The latest trends include geometric patterns, in many cases with three-dimensional effects, ideal for creating customised backgrounds, and macro designs that create a focal point in a room.



1.



2.

1. Designed for eclectic projects, the **Pastelli Pro** collection from **Alfalux** transforms the most refined colours into a versatile ceramic surface, a starting point for the transformation of any kind of space. The range of 8 colours is designed to coordinate with wood, marble or concrete effect ranges and create harmonious spaces. www.alfa-lux.it

2. This solution is from **Appiani's Custom Create** catalogue, which offers ideas and inspiration on how to exploit the product's unlimited potential for customisation. In this case, the ceramic mosaic (made up of 1.2x1.2 cm pieces pre-mounted on a 30x30 cm mesh backing) is part of the My Mix series (Anthologia collection). www.appiani.it



3.



4.

3. The **Bonbon** collection designed by Paola Navone for **Decoratori Bassanesi** consists of irregularly shaped lozenges in dusty colours ideal for creating original mosaics. The full-body porcelain lozenges are mounted on 30.5x30.5 cm modules with a thickness of 5 mm. www.decoratoribassanesi.it

4. The base of the wall is clad with porcelain slabs from the **Anima** collection, which embodies the natural effect of stone. Above, an original composition obtained with the **Tropicale** decoration from the **Luce** collection, full-body porcelain stoneware and white-body tiles in a 60x120 cm size and 9 mm thickness. The entire concept is from **Ariana**. www.ariana.it



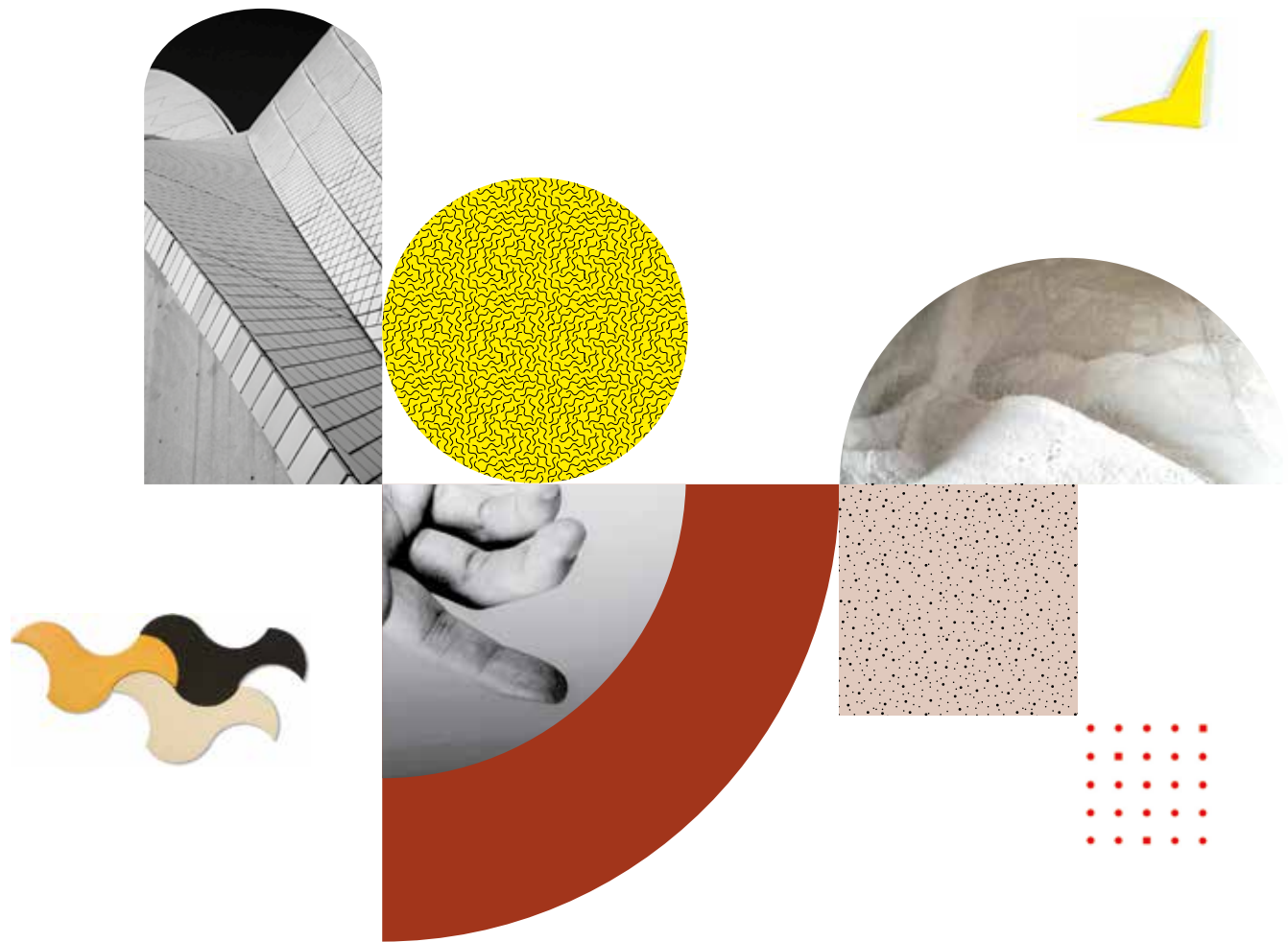
5.



6.

5. The exclusive colour palette of **Cerasarda's OT070026** collection highlights the connection with Sardinia and ranges from the raw, warm hues of the island's interior to the bright, marine tones of the coast. This red body double fired tile collection stands out for its handmade decorations. www.cerasarda.it

6. The **Shanghai** collection from **Ceramica Colli di Sassuolo** is a series of small sizes in three different colour tones that allow for different installation patterns. It stands out for the way in which the compositions can be interspersed and customised with rounded liners, an old-fashioned format that has been reinterpreted in a modern vein. www.colli.it



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1.

REDUCING WATER CONSUMPTION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS OF A SUSTAINABLE BATHROOM. THIS IS THE IDEA BEHIND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT'S "WATER BONUS" INCENTIVE AIMED AT ENCOURAGING THE REPLACEMENT OF BATHROOM FIXTURES AND TAPS WITH NEW-GENERATION MODELS

by Antonia Solari

A

A useful starting point for any discussion of sustainability in the bathroom, especially one that concerns water consumption, is to take a look at the figures. We each consume on average 200 litres of water per day, including 75 to 80 litres of water for a 5-minute shower – corresponding to an average consumption of 12 to 16 litres per minute in the case of older shower systems. However, new generation taps are capable of reducing water consumption to 9 litres per minute, resulting in considerable savings. Similarly, modern low-flush toilets reduce water usage to less than 6 litres per flush compared to the 6–12 litres of older WC models.

These figures demonstrate that it is possible to reduce levels of consumption and make an active contribution to water savings in the bathroom, one of the areas of the home where action on sustainability is most urgent.

To incentivise water savings, the Italian government is introducing a new tax concession with its 2021 Budget Law. The implementation decree has not yet been passed, but when approved the new legislation will offer a €1,000 bonus to individuals resident in Italy who replace ceramic WCs with new low-flush appliances and old taps with new low-flow models.

1. Thanks to its rimless system, the **NoLita** toilet from **Kerisan** reduces water usage to just 4.5/3 litres per flush. It is available in free-standing and wall-hung versions, in glossy or matt white ceramic and in 7 satin shades: moss green, brown, hazelnut, grey, iron, burgundy and black.
www.kerisan.it

2. The **Smyle** line of sanitary fixtures from **Geberit** includes wall-hung and free-standing WCs with concealed wall fixing and Rimfree technology. The flush system uses 4.5 litres of water in accordance with standard EN 997, so it meets the criteria of the Water Bonus incentive.
www.geberit.it

3. **Velis** from **Nobili** is a single-lever mixer tap that opens directly to cold water, reducing unintentional water heater activation and helping to reduce energy consumption. The recessed aerator also reduces the water flow, guaranteeing a flow rate of 5 litres per minute.
www.grupponobili.it

4. The **Flag** sanitaryware collection from **Ceramica Flaminia** stands out for its distinctive colour contrasts. The photo shows the version with Stripes finish in the colours Fango/Carbone. These class 1 sanitary fixtures have a maximum flush volume of 6 litres.
www.ceramicaflaminia.it

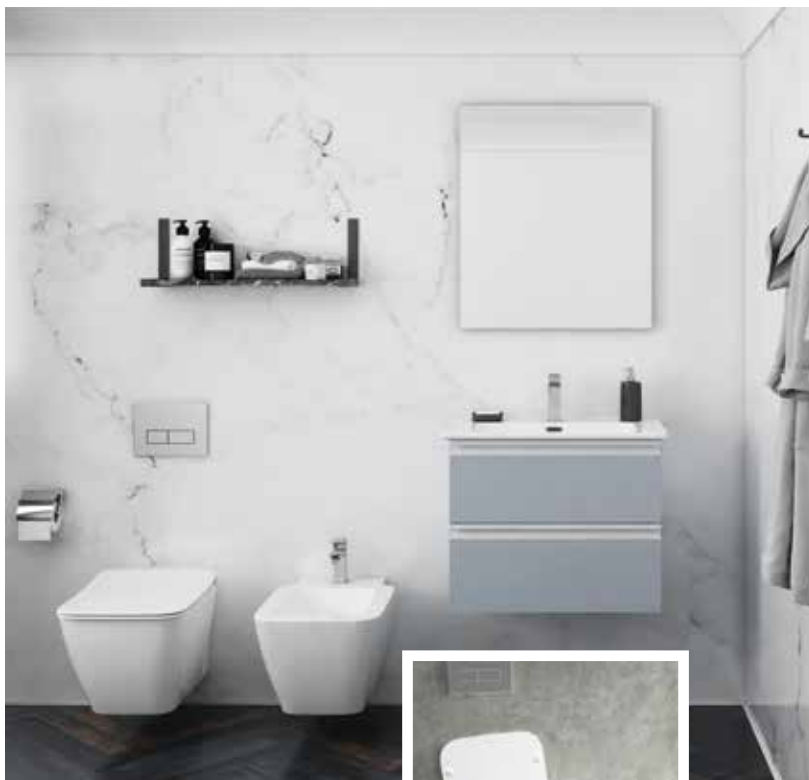




The **LFT Spazio** collection from **Simas** includes back-to-wall toilets with a rimless system and 4.5 litre flush in both wall-hung and freestanding versions. The series also features the Renovate System consisting of an intelligent offset waste outlet for ease of installation in renovation projects. www.simas.it



Nook, from **Fiora**, is a solid surface shower tray that stands out for its asymmetric design. Thanks to its constituent material, it is resistant, non-porous, easy to clean and antibacterial. It comes in 120x80 cm and 200x100 cm sizes. www.fiorabath.com



The **Strada II** series of sanitaryware from **Ideal Standard** features AquaBlade technology on all WCs to ensure more effective cleaning. They have hidden fixings that do not affect the shapes of the sanitaryware units along with a softer design created by Studio Levien. The WCs consume 3-4.5 litres of water per flush. www.idealstandard.it



Arblu is presenting its **Livingstone** marble powder radiant panels, an ideal solution for eco-friendly bathroom heating. The marble powder is a by-product of the marble cutting process and is bonded to the basic components of the panel in a low-temperature process that uses less energy and emits less CO₂ into the environment. The catalogue includes 11 models available in 7 sizes. www.arblu.it

With specific reference to sanitaryware, the so-called Water Bonus applies to the “supply and installation of ceramic WCs with a maximum flush volume of 6 litres or less and the associated waste systems, including plumbing and building work and the dismantling and removal of existing systems”.

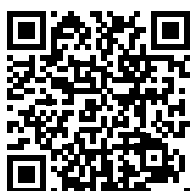
The Water Bonus will be available until 31 December 2021 and has been welcomed by industry players who, as Confindustria Ceramica's vice chairman Augusto Ciarrocchi points out, are already highly attentive to the issue of sustainability: “In keeping with their focus on technological innovation, Italian ceramic companies have already launched a number of products that comply with these limits. Passing the implementation decree for the Water Bonus would speed up the replacement of old WCs and give Italian families an additional opportunity to save water and preserve this essential resource.”

Efforts to improve sustainability in the bathroom have been extended to include water-saving solutions; low-impact and certified production processes; the use of recycled and recyclable materials such as glass and aluminium; and the application of finishes that are not only based on research into eco-friendly materials and processes but are also capable of extending the product's lifetime as part of a philosophy of sustainability. In the majority of cases, high quality materials and processes equate with a longer lifetime, which in turn means less consumption of resources, materials and energy.

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Italian ceramic sanitaryware: design, sustainability and cost savings

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See the latest trends in ceramic sanitaryware in the Product Gallery



1. The **4ALL** range of WCs from **Ceramica Globo** is designed to facilitate the replacement of old-generation models without the need for building work. It is installed back to wall and also meets the criteria for the Water Bonus incentives as the flush volume is less than 4 litres of water.
www.ceramicaglobo.com

2. **Ardeco's Industrial Collection** features an eco-mortar coating, a durable and environmentally friendly material consisting of 40% recycled aggregate that is applied by hand and makes for tougher and more durable surfaces. The cabinet and vanity top are made of metal and are available in 11 colours.
www.ardeco-it.com

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YEAR OF COMPLETION

2020



Drink & stay at home

IN A STUNNING HOME BAR IN LONDON, PORCELAIN TILES RECREATE A FUTURISTIC, CURVED AND EDGELESS SPACE. THE CHOSEN DARK TONE ADDS A TOUCH OF COLOUR THAT COMPLEMENTS THE GOLD DETAILING OF THE STOOL SUPPORTS. THE METAL GRILLES AND THE DISPLAY CASE

by Elisa Montalti

Created by Astounding Interiors, a London-based firm specialising in bespoke design and hospitality, this home bar is intended to be both original and intriguing. The design brief was for an innovative, luxury interior where the clients would be able to relax and enjoy a cocktail without having to go out to a pub. Since completing this project, the London-based firm has received other similar requests and has established itself as a leading player in the UK home bar market. Its aim was to satisfy the clients' tastes and personality, to go beyond their imagination and create exclusive spaces by using a combination of different materials, such as copper, mirror, leather mosaics

and porcelain stoneware. "These days people are spending a lot of time at home, so they need spaces filled with atmosphere and design where they can enjoy quality time with family and friends," explain the designers.

Custom-designed glass panes are used to create a fragmented roof that follows the slope of the existing ceiling above the bar counter, helping to create a cave-like ambience. In this futuristic space, the sinuous shapes, soft roof and rounded edges all help to create a mellow, seductive atmosphere. The surfaces reveal a fascinating Lemurian blue granite colour with shades of indigo, Prussian blue and peacock blue.



THE BAR CORNER IS ENVELOPED IN A FRAGMENTED GLASS PANEL ROOF, CREATING A SPACE WITH AN APPEALING CAVE-LIKE ATMOSPHERE.



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PROJECT

THE FLOOR AND BAR
COUNTER STAND
OUT FOR THEIR
INDIGO, PRUSSIAN
BLUE AND PEACOCK
BLUE TONES AND
STONE VEINS.

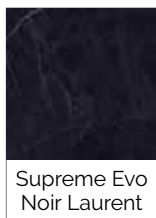


Large 120x120 cm slabs from Flaviker's Supreme Evo collection create a reflective surface with marble-inspired veining and colours. The chosen dark tone, Noir Laurent, adds a touch of colour that complements the gold detailing of the stool supports, the metal grilles and the display case. The bar counter itself was created using this marble-effect porcelain stoneware. For exclusive projects of this kind, Flaviker recently expanded its range of materials with a selection of six new surfaces, each inspired by a different variety of marble. The designers explain that they "chose ceramic tiles because they come in the form of very thin panels with outstanding technical performance, low maintenance and much higher strength than authentic marble. Porcelain's slip resistance and the fact that it can be used with underfloor heating also contributed to our decision."

A mosaic composed of small 5x5 mm pieces creates a dramatic backdrop on one wall of the home bar, a cascade of coloured tiles that emphasise shapes and furnishings. All the furniture was handmade by Italian, Portuguese and Spanish companies and combines a high level of manufacturing expertise with a tailor-made service. The lighting fixtures, with their golden, shimmering surfaces, create luminous shapes and spatial geometries. The bar counter and bottle display case glow with a cold, diffuse blue light, while the connecting staircase and sofas and upholstered armchairs stand out for their warm artificial lighting with angled beams.

SPACES residential

APPLICATIONS interior floor and wall coverings



Supreme Evo
Noir Laurent

ceramic surfaces

Flaviker
porcelain tile
Supreme Evo
Noir Laurent
120x120 cm

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.5\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): $\geq 40 \text{ N/mm}^2$
surface abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-7): compliant

thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
crazing resistance
(ISO 10545-12): compliant
chemical resistance
(ISO 10545-13): compliant
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): compliant
slip resistance (DIN 51130):
R10

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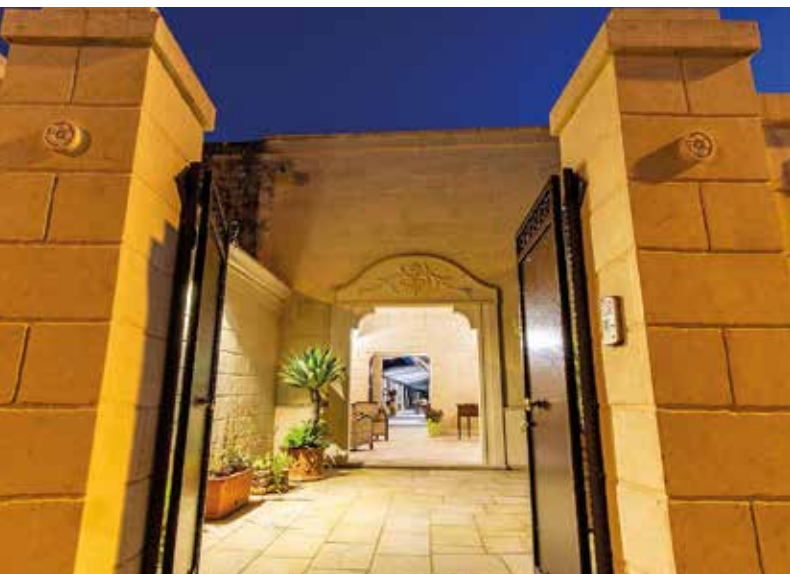
GEOMETRIES, GRIDS
AND GILDED VOLUMES
INTERSECT, PLAYING
WITH LIGHT AND
CREATING LUXURIOUS
FURNISHINGS.



Relaxation amongst ancient olive trees

TRADITION AND MODERNITY COME TOGETHER IN THE BED & BREAKFAST LA CORTE DI EDOARDO IN VERNOLE, A TOWN IN THE HEART OF THE SALENTO REGION NEAR LECCE. PORCELAIN TILES, LECCE STONE, EARTH TONES, THE NATURAL LOOK OF SAND AND DELICATE COLOURS ARE THE MAIN DESIGN FEATURES

by Santino Limonta



**BED & BREAKFAST
LA CORTE DI EDOARDO**

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PANARIA CERAMICA
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YEAR OF COMPLETION
2019

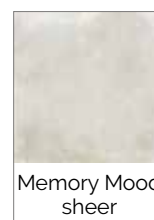
Driving south from Lecce along Provincial Road 1, after just 12 kilometres one arrives in Vernole, a municipality of great historical, cultural and environmental interest in the Salento region. Its large municipal area includes five well-populated villages and a stretch of Adriatic coastline encompassing the marinas of Torre Specchia and San Cataldo, as well as the Le Cesine nature reserve. Here, immersed in nature yet within the urban perimeter of Vernole, is the Bed and Breakfast La Corte di Edoardo. The property consists of just three apartments where every detail has been meticulously planned to ensure the maximum comfort and tranquillity for guests. The building's layout extends longitudinally, a choice that was almost inevitable given the long, narrow rectangular shape of the site. The first architectural element guests encounter on arrival is the striking entrance hall with its star-shaped vaulted ceiling made of Lecce stone, a traditional material widely used in the Salento



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PORCELAIN PLANKS
COMBINE THE WARMTH
OF NATURE-INSPIRED
MATERIALS WHILE
GUARANTEEING
HIGH ABRASION AND
WEAR RESISTANCE.



SPACES
hospitality facilities

APPLICATIONS
interior and exterior
floor coverings

ceramic surfaces
Panaria Ceramica
porcelain tile
Cross Wood, 20x121,5 cm
Memory Mood, 20x20 cm
UrbaNature, 60x60 cm

technical characteristics
water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): 0.05 %
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): compliant
deep abrasion resistance

(ISO 10545-6): 145 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):
R10 (Cross Wood, Memory
Mood), R11 (UrbaNature)

certifications
LEED, EMAS, ISO 14001,
NF-UPEC



region due to its intrinsic beauty and workability. The choice of leaving the stone blocks unplastered allows visitors to admire the infinite colour tones and the unique construction technique that has been handed down over the centuries through the oral tradition. In contrast to the lobby, the rest of the building is distinguished by its discreet modernity, mitigated solely by the furnishings with their stylistic references to past times. The architecture stands out for its formal simplicity, while ceramic tiles bring a touch of colour and continuity to all the rooms. Guests are greeted at the entrance by 45x45 cm porcelain floor tiles from Panaria Ceramica's Ethos Vogue collection, which extend as far as the arcade running alongside the contemporary building and from there to the guest rooms and the garden. In the bathrooms, the sheer variety of decorations available for the Memory Mood porcelain tile collection from Panaria Ceramica meant that the designers were able to experiment with designs and colours and create intriguing classical settings revisited in a modern style. The 20x20 cm size tile in the colour Sheer shade was used on both the floors and walls interspersed with cement tile effect decorations 9 and 4, creating a look reminiscent of the wall tiles in vogue in the first half of the 20th century. The stylistically diverse yet comfortable rooms and the kitchen area were paved with parquet-effect porcelain tiles in a 20x121.5 cm size and Cinder colour from the CrossWood collection. For the outdoor area, the choice fell on 60x60 cm size tiles in the colour Concrete and with a Strutturato high slip resistance surface from the Urbanature collection. But the real highlight of the B&B La Corte di Edoardo is the neatly maintained and welcoming garden that the rooms look out onto. Here, guests can make use of a series of well-equipped relaxation, play and solarium areas set amongst the ancient olive trees and vegetation.



THE ROOMS LOOK OUT
ONTO THE NEATLY
MAINTAINED
AND WELCOMING
GARDEN, THE REAL
HIGHLIGHT OF THE B&B.

ALSO SEE

The "Ceramics of Italy" mark is reserved
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> WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/CERAMICS-MADE-ITALY

High-quality products and customer care

by Roberta Chionne

"RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, OUR PHILOSOPHY WAS TO LOOK AFTER OUR CUSTOMERS IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED OURSELVES," SAYS BARTOSZ SZABLEWSKI, DIRECTOR AND CO-OWNER OF THE POLISH **PASTE GROUP**, WHICH HE RUNS TOGETHER WITH HIS MOTHER BEATA SZABLEWSKA. THE COMPANY, FOUNDED IN 1993 IN POZNAN, DEALS MAINLY WITH ARCHITECTS AND PRIVATE CUSTOMERS AND OFFERS THEM THE VERY BEST ITALIAN PRODUCTS



Beata and Bartosz Szablewski.

Mr. Szablewski, could you outline the key steps in the Paste Group's development?

The Group was founded in April 1993 by three owners based in Poznan. At that time Poland was beginning to open up to a free market economy after years of communist rule. It was also a time when Polish ceramic manufactures were just starting up or reinventing their production activities, so there was plenty of demand for tile imports. Italy was the natural place to look, but we also began cooperating with German and Dutch producers. Two years later, only one owner remained at the company and that was my father Andrzej Szablewski. Things were pretty hard at the beginning and at the time he was renting a small building with a warehouse. But there was such strong demand for good quality products that we were able to sell almost everything we imported.

Our philosophy right from the beginning was to offer our customers high-quality products and service. We looked after our customers in the same way that we would like to be treated ourselves and continue to do so today. We also pride ourselves in taking care of our employees. We have always had a team of around 5-7 people, which makes us feel like we are all part of a family. Two of our colleagues have been with us for over 20 years! We are very proud of our workers and do our best to maintain the highest standard of customer service. After 12 years in a small, rented building, in



2005 we moved to a much larger new showroom in Poznań, where we could display our beautiful products much more effectively. But selling is not the only thing we do. We also support projects to help people restore or build their homes and last year we also provided support to Hotel Emocja in the North of Poland.


What are the most important products imported by your company?

Paste Group distributes tiles and bathroom equipment, with a particular focus on ceramic products. Today's tile production technology is highly advanced thanks to digital printing, which offers many advantages and makes products look extremely realistic. I often hear from my customers that wood or marble imitation tiles look so perfect that it's really hard to tell them apart from natural materials. And thanks to the production of large slabs, we can cover walls or floors in sizes of up to 160x320 cm, creating an almost joint-free covered surface that looks very natural, beautiful and convincing. Porcelain tiles in particular offer architects a lot of potential to create the most ambitious projects, but at the same time we offer a wide range of more traditional ceramic tiles and regular sizes. We work with smaller manufacturers who focus on shapes, 3-dimensional



The Paste Group showroom in Poznań.



 Read other interviews with Italian tile distributors worldwide

products and original forms and structures. I would say that the only limit is our imagination. Working with the best Italian manufacturers gives us a lot of pleasure and satisfaction and enables us to offer the most innovative and well-designed products.

What kind of clientele do you cater for?

We deal with all types of clientele. We sell a lot to private customers but also work with clients involved in large projects such as hotels and shopping malls. Our portfolio includes projects for hotels, schools, restaurants, shopping malls, etc. After years of working closely with manufacturers, we have gained a lot of trust and a great deal of knowledge. Today I consider it a privilege to be able to work directly with the world's largest producers. This also enables us

to prepare wholesale offers for regional showrooms in western Poland. Our team is highly flexible, so we are able to satisfy even the most demanding customers and projects. Our Polish customers live and do business all over the world, so we deliver tiles globally, especially to different European countries. The furthest our tiles travel is to the Bahamas, where we will definitely open a showroom one day.



Could you tell us something about your collaboration with designers?

Architects and designers are very important for us. Half of our team is responsible for working directly with them and we are still improving our offerings and services. We deliver samples, catalogues, products, offers, textures and everything else needed to complete a project. Our showroom is also mostly geared to architects, so we have a large library of tiles, many single pieces, decors and mosaics for creating patchworks and choosing the best options. We would like to begin organising training sessions to educate architects about social media channels and websites and find customers through the web. We are also thinking about holding a course with a highly experienced labour psychologist which might

be useful in everyday work. We also think about the young architects of the future. We teach young people about certain basic aspects of ceramic tiles that are important when it comes to carrying out a new project. We are always willing to provide information and are very happy when architects visit us.

What are the most important aspects of your customer service?

In my opinion, the most important thing is to offer the highest possible standard of customer care and to be able to adapt to our customers' specific needs. For example, this may involve proper product presentation complete with all important details and assigning dedicated staff to each customer/architect so we can really understand their expectations. For some customers delivery time is very important and in some cases materials need to be delivered within a week. Our strength lies in the fact that we deliver directly and can ship materials from Italy on a weekly basis.

Another key point is that we offer a wide range of different products, which is why we frequently change our showroom display. We have 2 floors with a surface area of 500 square metres where we showcase products in a library, including tiles on display racks, as well as kits for architects. The showroom was designed around 15 years ago but still looks very fresh and modern. We have a nice open space made of wood, metal, glass and concrete. It's important to have a good quality space when you are offering high quality products. Every factor is important to make the best impression.

How are you dealing with Covid?

Covid-19 has impacted many Polish companies. In some sectors, having to stop means losing business very rapidly. When Covid first broke out in Poland, I sent all my employees home for a couple of weeks to protect them and their families. I worked in the office on my own and tried to look after everything. Of course we had a smaller number of orders and customers, so I could handle it. It wasn't easy and there were many things we couldn't deliver on time, but I never closed our doors to customers who were looking for products or wanted to place an order. I know Italian companies were struggling, but throughout almost the entire period we were able

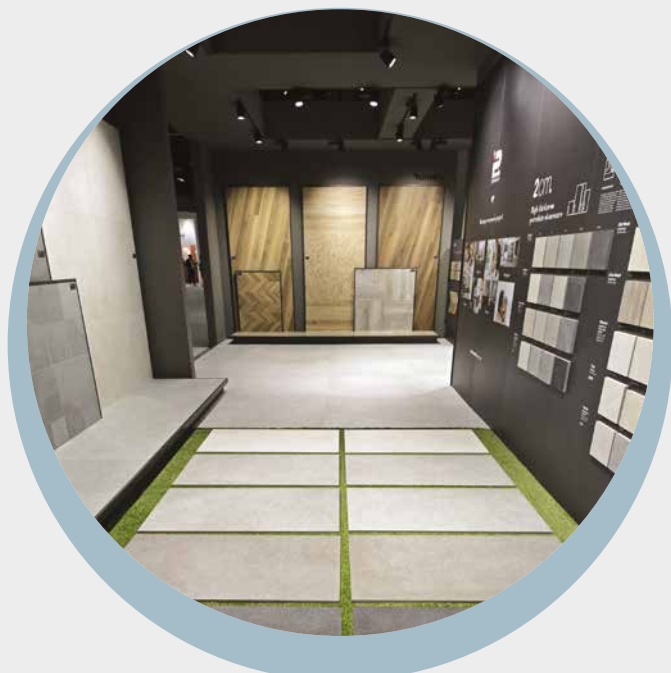


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to ship products without major problems. If I can't deliver to my customers, there's no point in receiving orders. I really appreciate the close cooperation we have with many Italian sales representatives and factory owners.

What's the current state of the Polish construction industry?

In my opinion, the Polish construction industry is not in a bad situation. You can see many new buildings such as hotels, large apartment buildings and private buildings in the south of Poland, where we have mountain resorts, as well as in the north at the seaside, although colleagues who travel a lot throughout Poland tell me that they don't see many new projects starting up. So on the one hand the current situation is quite good, but on the other hand we can't be sure about how new projects will develop in the future.

What are the main ceramic tile trends in Poland?

Polish customers love wood imitation products and I would say this is the best-selling category. For a number of years, imitation concrete tiles were very popular. I think that over 50% of the products in our range are grey or similar. Now I see that we are becoming more and more open to colours, different structures with a 3D effect or surfaces that look just like sand, wood, minerals or quartz. Another major trend is that of large slabs, which can be used as floor or wall coverings, ventilated façades or tabletops. I think this kind of product can compete strongly with natural stone and marble. Our customers are becoming increasingly aware of beauty and devote greater attention to new interior design. I see more and more customers cooperating with architects, which I think is a very positive development.

Why do people choose Italian ceramic tiles?

Italy has the largest number of ceramic tile manufacturers, some of the best designers and the highest quality machines. If you think about the world of design, for example fashion, cars, furniture or lighting, many of the best companies are Italian. At Paste Group we mainly work with architects and private customers and offer them the very best Italian tiles. It's true that on projects we also sell Polish and Ukrainian products, but we mostly focus on Italian tiles because of the wider range of colours, patterns, sizes, special decors and extra elements. Italian tiles are well-designed products that look almost entirely natural. So if you want to deliver the best solutions to your most demanding customers, you have to choose Italian.

What should Italian companies do to raise their approval level within your country's distribution system?

Many Italian companies are well known in Poland, partly because it is easy to meet them at trade fairs like Cersaie and they are also willing to organise direct meetings at their factories. To raise their levels of approval, I think they should focus on product presentation. It's also sometimes important to have product in stock. Perhaps it would be good to have warehouses in Poland to be able to deliver to the end customer within 24-48 hours and also to try to compete on a certain price level. Poland is an emerging market with a lot of potential for new projects.



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World production falls, but Europe holds its ground

THE PANDEMIC LED TO AN 8.7% CONTRACTION IN THE GLOBAL TILE MARKET IN 2020. ANALYSIS OF CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN THE WORLD'S MAIN COUNTRIES

by Giorgio Costa

The figures compiled by Prometeia in its December 2020 forecasting report for the world ceramic tile industry speak for themselves: amidst an 8.7% decline in global production to 11,349 million square metres, Italy was the worst hit of the world's top five producers with an 18% contraction compared to the -12.6% of India, the -9% of Brazil, the -8.4% of China and the 4.9% of Spain. One of the factors responsible for this decline in production was the factory shutdowns imposed in May last year, which were longest in Italy (5 weeks), shorter in Spain (2 weeks) and entirely absent in Turkey. In Spain and Italy, the second quarter losses had already been largely absorbed by July, and following the boom in production in August (plants continued to operate at full capacity in what is normally the slowest month of the year) by September the production index had returned to similar levels to those of 2019. The overall result was a full-year decline in sales for Italy of -4%.

The impact on world trade

The slowdown in production led to a 5.8% drop in world trade and a generalised fall in purchases by importing countries (USA -8.4%, France -2.3%). The sole exception was Germany, which saw a 9.4% increase in its purchases on the global tile market. The Far East, which accounts for 24.6% of world consumption, recorded a significant drop in tile consumption (648 million square metres less, or -8.6%). This downturn was in line with the trend in residential building investments. The large contractions in France (-13.8%) and Italy (-9.2%) were matched by a decline in tile consumption of 3.4% and 11.7% respectively; in the USA building investments grew by 3.7% but tile consumption fell by 5.6%; and in Germany investments grew by 2.8% and tile consumption increased by 10.8%, fuelling a corresponding increase in imports from Italy. The fact that the tile market was much more dynamic than construction investments in France and Germany reflects the growth in popularity of ceramic tiles.

The figures for Italy

Returning to Italy, tile sales in 2020 totalled 390.6 million square metres, down 4% but a significant improvement on the -16.8% recorded in May. The situation would have been far worse if it had not been for exports, which fell by just 1.9%, limiting losses to 6.2 million square metres. This was attributable to the trend in the third and fourth quarters of the year, which offset the negative performance in the second quarter (-19.6%). It is worth noting that sales to the German market played an important role in propping up the Italian tile industry in 2020. The situation further improved in the first quarter of 2021, when the upturn – averaging between 6% and 8% depending on the region – made it possible to fully recover the losses of 2020.

A return to pre-Covid levels in 2022

The growth in construction investments will fuel a recovery in sales in almost all markets, resulting in a return to pre-Covid levels in 2022. As for Italy, the 110% Superbonus tax incentive may boost domestic sales by a further 1.6 million square metres compared to the forecast 10.8 million square metres. The pandemic has resulted in global market losses of 2.2 billion square metres in the two-year period 2020–2021, equivalent to half of China's total annual consumption. As for Italy, this means that 32 million square metres of potential domestic and export sales have been lost to Covid, a value equivalent to the entire consumption of a country like Greece. It is interesting to take a look at the global trends in tile demand.



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Western Europe

In Western Europe, the health emergency led to construction sites being shut down and fewer building permits issued in the first half of 2020, in turn resulting in a significant drop in construction investment as a yearly average. While this affected all areas of activity, it was more pronounced in the residential construction segment. However, the situation varied significantly between the different countries in the region, from a sharp decline in investment in Spain, the UK and France to growth in Germany. The expansionary phase in German construction is expected to continue through 2021–2022, albeit at a more moderate pace, while construction investments appear likely to return to positive territory in Spain, the UK and France. In 2021 tile consumption in the region will increase by 4.8%, fuelling 3.1% growth in exports and pushing Italy's market share up to 34.1% compared to 33% in 2018.

Italy

Unlike what happened after the 2018 crisis, residential construction investments and tile consumption are both expected to pick up in 2021 (when GDP is forecast to increase by +5%), largely as a result of the government's expansionary policies such as the 110% Superbonus tax incentive. This will benefit both domestic producers (who can expect to see an approximately 8 million sqm increase in sales) and foreign importers. Although a slowdown may occur in 2022, by the end of the year Italian domestic sales will have exceeded the 2019 levels.

Spain

The double-digit decline in residential construction investments had a negative impact on the Spanish tile market and consequently on imports from Italy, which fell by more than 0.5 million square metres in 2020. But the expected recovery (in 2021 GDP is forecast to increase by 6.6% and tile consumption by 8.6% to 151 million sqm) will enable Italy to make up the ground it lost in 2020 by the end of 2022.

France

The renovation market propped up demand for tiles and compensated for the sharp decline in the new build market (consumption fell by just 3.4% in 2020). The rebound in GDP (+7.3% in 2021) will drive strong growth in construction investments (+14.1%), in turn boosting tile consumption by 2.5%. This will also benefit Italian exports, which are expected to grow by 3.3%.

Germany

Despite the recession in 2020, when GDP fell by 6%, investments in construction are estimated to remain in positive territory (+2.5%) and tile consumption is expected to see a small increase. This trend will benefit Italian exports, which are estimated to have grown by 10.1% in 2020 to 59.9 million euros. Even better figures are expected for 2021 with sales of 62.3 million euros, up 4%.

United Kingdom

GDP is estimated to have fallen by 12.5% in 2020, with a sharp contraction in building investments (-13.4%) and a 17.8% drop in Italian tile exports (bear in mind however that sales totalled just 8.1 million square metres, less than one seventh of the volume sold to Germany). The outlook for the two-year period 2021-2022 is more encouraging, with GDP recovering and imports from Italy and Spain remaining stationary or decreasing slightly.

Austria

Together with Germany, Austria remains a reliable export market for Italian tile manufacturers. GDP is forecast to grow by 5.3% in 2021 and construction investments by 2.6%. In this context, tile consumption will reach 22.1 million sqm, with Italian exports accounting for more than 50% of total consumption at 12.7 million sqm (up 1.6%). In 2022, sales will be close to 13 million sqm, a level not seen since the early 2000s.

Russia

The direct and indirect effects of the pandemic (including the fall in oil prices) led to a sharp contraction in Russia's GDP in 2020 (-6.25%) and a corresponding decline in construction investments. Tile consumption has consequently decreased (-6.6%) and Italian companies are struggling to penetrate the market (Italian exports amount to just 1.8 million sqm). This is not expected to improve in the next two years given the competition from producers in India and Eastern Europe.

United States

Although residential construction continued to expand in 2020 (+3.7%), it was a poor year for tiles with a 5.6% decline in sales by volume. With import duties imposed on products from China, tile sales are expected to see a strong recovery in 2021 and this should also benefit Italian exports (33.6 million sqm, up 3.2%).

Gulf Region

The fall in crude oil production in Saudi Arabia, Iran and the UAE led to a contraction in the region's GDP in 2020 (-3.7%) and a consequent decline in construction investment (-7.3%). The outlook for 2021-2022 is more favourable with construction recovering by more than 3%. Italian tile exports are also expected to see a recovery (+6.9% in 2021 after the -10% in 2020) and reach 8.6 million sqm out of the region's total consumption of about 760 million sqm.

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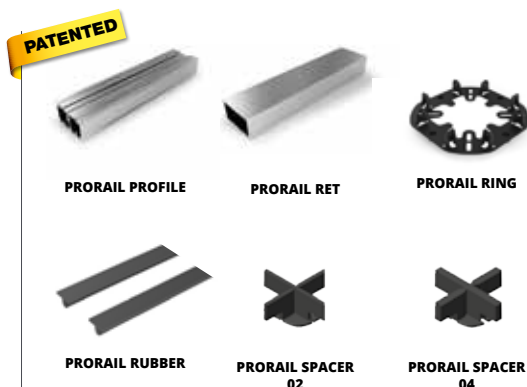
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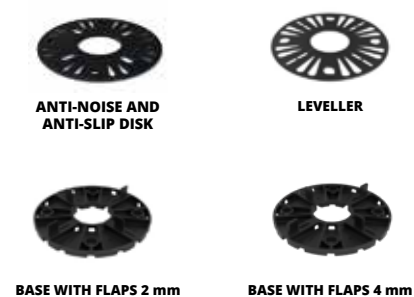
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The future of homes in the post-Covid era

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE MEASURES TAKEN TO COMBAT IT HAVE BROUGHT PROFOUND CHANGES TO OUR LIFESTYLES. ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY MILAN POLYTECHNIC'S DESIGN DEPARTMENT, THE NEW RESIDENTIAL CONTEXTS ARE CREATING FRESH OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNERS

by Valentina Poli

The Covid-19 pandemic and the measures taken to combat it have brought profound changes to our behaviour and lifestyles, while the lockdowns in particular have forced a significant portion of the population to stay indoors. This has influenced not only the way we use living spaces but also the distribution of the spaces and the functions traditionally associated with them.

Milan Polytechnic's Design Department sent out a questionnaire to 337 people (290 living in Italy, 47 in other parts of the world) to analyse their desires and

needs. It constructed seven possible design scenarios for the future of homes in the post-Covid era and identified new opportunities for designers (Source: *"Home bridges the World. Promising domestic scenarios in response to the Covid crisis"* - Creative Industries Lab, Design Department, Politecnico di Milano). The survey mainly considered residential spaces given that 75.6% of people worked from home during the lockdown and spent almost all of their time in their own homes.

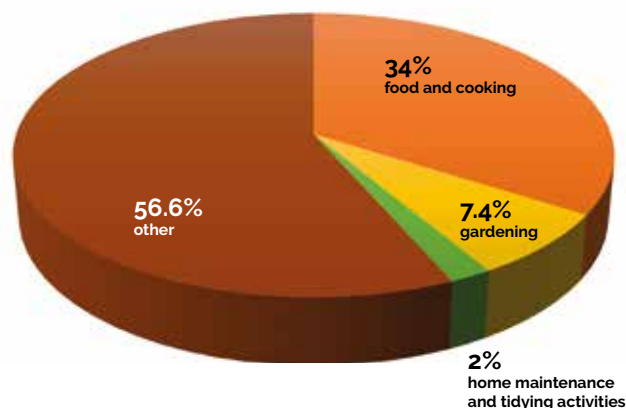
Working from home as normal. Adapting spaces, furniture and lighting to cope with the new needs. The fear of not having a suitable place for working in the home has fuelled a need for design solutions for dividing up spaces, such as modular work islands.

Practical activities. During lockdown, 33% of people spent more time on their hobbies: 34% on food-related activities, 7.4% on gardening and 2% on home maintenance and reorganisation. This led to the creation of easy-to-clean, adaptable and convertible rooms with modular furniture and spaces set aside for DIY activities.

Collective entertainment at home. People used physical and digital media to keep in touch with others, while television and digital content played an increasingly important role.

It is important to find a good balance between digital networking and physical interaction, for example by organising home parties where participants connect digitally or meet in-person in small groups.

HOBBIES

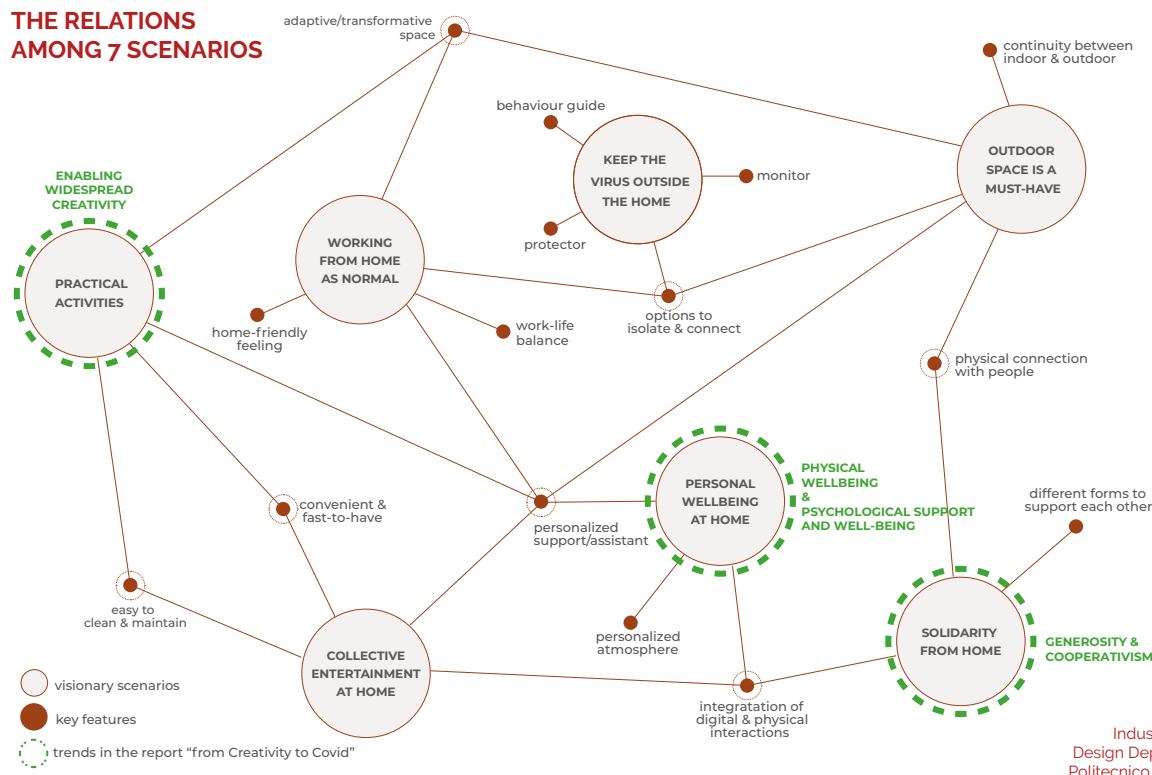


Source: Creative Industries Lab, Design Department, Politecnico di Milano



Download the research project carried out by the Milan Polytechnic's Design Department

MAPPING OF THE RELATIONS AMONG 7 SCENARIOS



Personal wellbeing at home. 54.3% of respondents began exercising at home; 22.2% devoted more time to looking after themselves and the people close to them. It is important to create the right atmosphere and to seek support from a smart assistant during physical exercise and mental training.

Keep the virus outside the home. 90% of respondents wash their hands as soon as they return home; 51.9% leave their shoes outside the door; 35.5% sanitise everything they had with them outside the home. There is a need for ideas that help to maintain a high level of hygiene in the home and allow domestic spaces to be divided up if someone becomes positive for the virus. Design solutions might include hygiene monitoring systems and systems to facilitate living in quarantine at home with the rest of the family.

Outdoor space is a must-have. The lockdown has brought a greater desire for contact with nature. 45% of respondents reported a greater appreciation of outdoor spaces and places for relaxing and socialising. This has led to efforts to bring outdoor spaces into the home, to design systems that allow people to interact with others while maintaining physical distancing.

Solidarity from home. 32% of people bought food in neighbourhood shops to support local businesses and 8.6% shopped for other people who were unable to do so themselves. This helps people build information and communication networks within their local neighbourhoods and devise various ways of helping each other.

The conditions created by the pandemic have certainly accelerated changes in society. In all seven scenarios, the most relevant industrial sectors were furniture, interior design, real estate, household appliances and, in some cases, entertainment and food. The diffusion of technology and digitalisation has served to expand services, to support and facilitate activities, to aid interaction with other people and to sanitise environments and make them safer. In addition, rapid changes have proved necessary to improve work-life balance, expand home working and reconnect with nature.

All of this has brought opportunities for innovation, both for individuals and for bodies or governments willing to play an active role in the "new normal".

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by Roberta Chionne



AN EXTERNAL VIEW OF THE GROUNDS, WITH THE "SLOW RIVER" PATHS AND COVERED RELAXATION AREAS.



AQUARDENS THERMAL WATER PARK

PROJECT

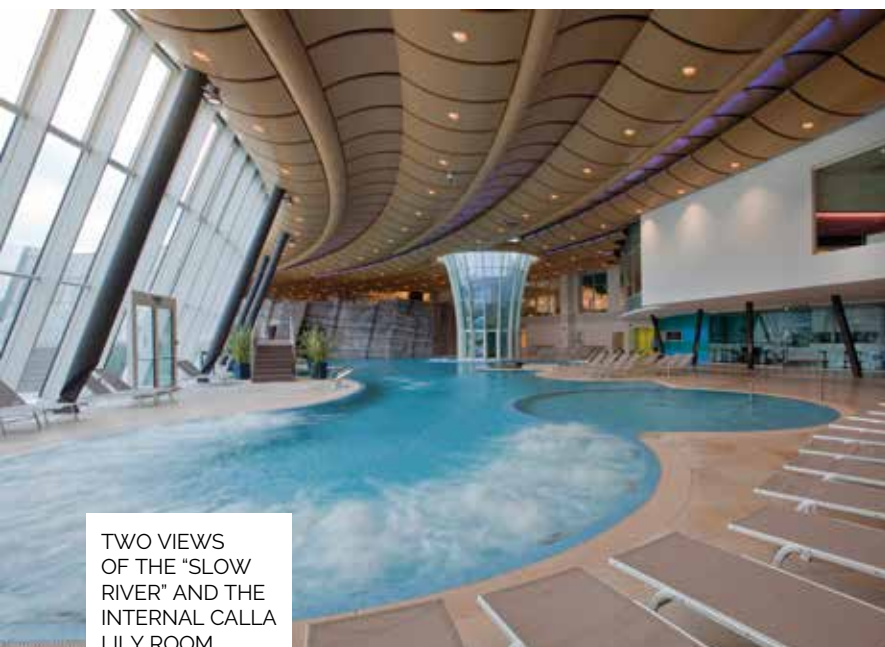
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TWO VIEWS
OF THE "SLOW
RIVER" AND THE
INTERNAL CALLA
LILY ROOM.

Opened in 2012 among the rolling hills of Valpolicella, the Aquardens spa park is now one of the largest thermal spa centres in Europe. Over the years it expanded from its initial size of 65,000 square metres to the current 110,000 square metres and acquired a growing number of functions, the next step being the construction of a hotel. Designed to offer an escape from reality with the benefits of thermal spa therapy, Aquardens is "an oasis where visitors should feel emotionally, visually and physically satiated, both inside and out", says Giancarlo Marzorati, who designed the architecture and is also involved in the project for the future San Siro spa centre housed in the former De Montel stables in Milan.

An oasis of tranquillity on the outskirts of Verona, the spa park is designed to respect and enhance the surrounding environment, as evidenced by the wall inspired by local stone from Cavaion complete with a scenic waterfall at the entrance to the park, a clear statement of the important role played by water. This invitation to leave the outside world behind is underscored by a red gateway which visitors pass through to enter the main building with its spectacular glazed façade looking out onto the park. This space houses the large reception hall and the interior spa areas, including the large calla lily feature with steam baths, a bar where guests can enjoy a drink seated in the water, and the spa area itself. Further attractions include a cavern swimming pool, Turkish baths, a relaxation area and one of the three wells with water that emerges at 47°C and is used at 36°C (the temperature difference is used to generate electricity). The park

also features several types of saunas, including a landscaped sauna which doubles as a show venue, and a Russian banya built from Swedish timber.



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SPACES

healthcare/recreation facilities

APPLICATIONS

interior floor and wall coverings
external floors



ceramic surfaces

Mirage
porcelain tile
Lemmy, Glocal, Norr 2.0,
Silverlake
60x60 - 60x120 cm

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): 0.5 %
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): 46-65 N/mm²
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): ≤ 147 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): compliant
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 5
slip resistance (DIN 51130): R9

certifications

ISO 14001

ABOVE, THE RECEPTION
AND SALES COUNTER IN
THE SPA AREA;
BELOW, THE INTERIOR OF
ONE OF THE SAUNAS.



Every space is specially designed “to guarantee users the timeless pleasure of immersing themselves in water”, says Marzorati, whether this is spring water, jets of water, salt water, cold or hot water or flowing water, as in the case of the so-called “slow river” which runs from the main building into the outside area. This channelled waterway flows gently towards the two lakes, one hot and one cold, set in the green grounds dotted with airy structures housing saunas and relaxation areas. Different atmospheres and sensory effects are created through the use of colours, lights and finishes that stimulate the whole body, from the eyes down to the soles of the feet. Thermal spas have always been the realm of ceramics, a material that today guarantees the highest levels of technical performance coupled with unique versatility in terms of aesthetics, material and functionality. Mirage supplied tiles from several different collections for the various areas: outside, the Glocal collection for all the walls delimiting the slow river, the lakes and the green islands; inside, the dreamy, metallic effect of Lemmy, which guides visitors to the reception and sales counter of the spa area; the quartzite look of Silverlake for the sauna floors; and the special effect of Norr 2.0 in the changing room toilets, inspired by Ceppo di Gré, a sedimentary stone typical of the Lake Iseo region.

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THE INTERIOR
OF ONE OF THE
CHANGING ROOM
AND TOILET AREAS.



Ceramic as the face of science

MILAN UNIVERSITY'S NEW IT HUB AND SERVICE CENTRE, DESIGNED BY ISOLARCHITETTI, WAS THE INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY WINNER IN THE 2020 CERAMICS AND DESIGN COMPETITION

by Virginio Briatore



THE SPECTACULAR TRIANGULAR ACCESS AREA TO THE OFFICES, THE IT DEPARTMENT AND THE LIBRARY RECREATE THE SENSATION OF A LANDING PLACE AT THE "PORT OF SCIENCE".

In his award acceptance speech, Aimaro Isola – the distinguished architect born in 1928 – described the values and the material used in the project in a simple yet profound way. "Ceramic is not just the skin of the building, it is its face," he said. "It is the face that expresses a person's character, their mood, their intelligence. The exterior expresses what resides within: the soul. The ceramic face of the building not only announces what lies behind it, like a mask in a theatrical performance, but also creates an atmosphere. Those who enter not only look at a building but in turn feel observed by it. They forge a dialogue with its contents and become participants in the work that is done there."

As Professor Isola noted, ceramic is an age-old material, born of earth and fire and widely used by populations all over the planet. It is a legendary material that has also become hyper-technological, durable and sustainable and is therefore ideal for use in a place devoted to research and science.

The area is part of the historic campus of Milan's University and Polytechnic and consists of a collection of buildings whose style, form and layout bear witness to the passage of time, to construction techniques and to the changing needs of science and students. Behind these stratifications lie the beauty and uniqueness of a scattered university campus devoid of clearly defined perimeters and fences and considered a kind of neighbourhood. Commonly referred to as "Città Studi" (Study City), it is an outstanding example of the Italian tradition of universities coexisting with a living and ever-changing urban fabric.

**NEW IT HUB
UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**

PROJECT
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YEAR OF COMPLETION
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SPACES
educational buildings

APPLICATIONS
exterior ventilated facade



Pietre di Sardegna
Porto Rotondo



Pietre di Sardegna
Porto Cervo



Pietre Etrusche
Tuscania

ceramic surfaces
Casalgrande Padana
Linea Pietre Native
Serie Pietre di Sardegna
Porto Rotondo + Porto Cervo;
Pietre Etrusche Tuscania;
30x60, 60x120 cm

technical characteristics
water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.1\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): $> 45 \text{ N/mm}^2$
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): compliant
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 5
slip resistance (DIN 51130):
R10 Naturale, R11 Grip

certifications
LEED, EMAS, ISO 14001



The triangular shaped access area is crucial to the relationship between the entire Scientific Area complex and connects the three external roads that lead there, together with the various internal routes connecting the IT Hub with the Science Campus.

The project opens up a residual space that had been neglected for many years, creating a wedge-shaped plaza delineated by large metal screens that divide up the open spaces and alternate with the built volumes. The striking visual effect is achieved by the use of white painted expanded sheet metal cladding.

Entering the plaza one feels a sense of perspective and warmth, as though embraced by the bright, transparent library on the left and the tower-shaped building emerging from a paler coloured base. As architect Flavio Bruna explains: "The ceramic tiles are arranged in a chequerboard pattern and are fixed to the façade using micro-ventilation technology. The roofs of the base building are landscaped so that as you ascend the tower from one floor to the next, you look out onto a surface that is not left to chance but instead is a green, living space."

The building consists of a base section housing classrooms, study rooms and service areas on two levels and an eight-storey tower with offices and research laboratories. The ceramic tiles play a vital role in the project and consist of two collections from Casalgrande Padana: Pietre di Sardegna (in colours Porto Rotondo and Porto Cervo) and Pietre Etrusche (colour Tuscania), in 30x60 cm and 60x120 cm sizes. Last but not least, the building is topped by a functional and aesthetically appealing roof reminiscent of a "flying carpet" which accommodates the technical spaces and photovoltaic panels.

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TWIST, OFFICE BUILDING IN PARIS, CLICHY-BATIGNOLLES, FRANCE, 2019.

Creativity beyond habit

by Alessandra Coppa

BEST KNOWN IN ITALY FOR THE MACRO PROJECT IN ROME, ODILE DECQ SEES ARCHITECTURE AS A PROFESSION OPEN TO OTHER AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE, A DISCIPLINE THAT MUST BE CONSTANTLY RENEWED IN ORDER TO KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES. SHE TEACHES THIS APPROACH TO HER STUDENTS AT THE CONFLUENCE INSTITUTE IN PARIS.

What role should architecture play today? What themes are you currently working on?

I believe that architecture plays the same role today as it did in the past and will continue to do in the future, namely to provide an effective shelter for human beings and to help society to be well organised through the organism of cities and the structure of buildings. I realise this is a very generic answer, but while architecture is a human way of thinking and could be entirely different, its most important impact is on the lives of human beings. I am currently working on office buildings, and as a consequence of the Covid pandemic we are trying to propose different ways of organising workspaces with fewer people present given that offices are now generally used only for meetings. At the same time we are rethinking workplaces as more attractive spaces designed to foster well-being.

How can architecture be more “comfortable” for people, both today and in the future?

Today people seem to be asking for more nature, they want more exterior spaces for sharing and mixed usage in the same place but not always at the same time. This is what I referred to twenty years ago as “nomadic living,” where a space is sufficiently flexible to enable you to do whatever you want and need to do over the course of a day or a week.

But although some of these projects have not been implemented, I have never considered them to be utopian ideas. They were inspired by what I observed around me, especially considering the needs of the new generations.

Today, when I observe my students or younger people working at my practice, I continue to think that this nomadic way of living in interiors is still present. But as cheap apartments are very few and far between, young people tend to live in very small spaces and use the city as a nomadic place. They don't cook at home but mostly order ready-made meals and do sport outside the home. However, since the Covid lockdown they have been forced to go back to working from home. This has created problems due to the fact that their apartments are simply too small to spend much time in them. This in turn has fuelled new desires for living spaces, such as having usable outdoor areas like balconies, terraces or a garden. Families with children have begun to feel a need to move out of metropolises and find a home a reasonable distance from their

“We mustn't confuse nature and bio-architecture. What used to be called “green architecture” all too often only added a few greenish aspects or techniques to a building. In my view the need for nature means the need for quality, for sufficient space to enable us to move around. It is a question of breathing, smelling, energy and feeling.”



Odile Decq

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Laval in 1955, **Odile Decq** is a French architect and urban planner. In 1985, she and Benoît Cornette (1953-1998) set up the **ODBC** architecture firm, whose name is an acronym of their initials.

ODBC attracted international critical attention for the headquarters of Apple Computer France in Nantes (1990); the headquarters of Banque Populaire de l'Ouest in Rennes (1990, with Peter Rice, winner of the *Andrea Palladio International Architecture Award*, the *9th International Prize for Architecture*, London, and the *Prix Architecture et Travail*, Rennes); the Motorway Control Centre in Nanterre (1996); the port of Osaka, Japan (1997); and expansion of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin (1997). The Saint Gobain Research Centre project in Aubervilliers (1999) and renovation of the industrial port at Gennevilliers (2001) were completed following Cornette's premature death. The practice won the *Benedictus Prize*, Washington (1994) and the *Golden Lion* at the 6th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 1996.

Director of the École Spéciale d'Architecture, Paris since 2007, in recent decades Odile Decq and her architecture studio have undertaken numerous projects such as the Phantom Restaurant at the Opéra Garnier, Paris (2011); the Frac Bretagne Museum of Contemporary Art, Rennes (2012); the Fangshan Tangshan National Geopark Museum, Nanjing, China (2015); GL Events executive complex, Lyon (2014); and the Saint-Ange Residence, Seyssins (2015). In Italy, Odile Decq is best known for the expansion of MACRO, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome (2010). She also works in the field of design and has created lighting and furniture projects, in some cases specifically for her architectural works. In 2013, Odile Decq was named “Designer of the Year” by Maison & Objet. She has also been a member of the French Academy of Architecture since 1997, Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres since 2001 and Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur since 2003.



Read other interviews with architects and designers

RIGHT: SAINT-ANGE RESIDENCE, SEYSSINS, FRANCE, 2015.

BELOW: EXPERIMENTAL GLASS HOUSE, CARANTEC (BRITTANY), FRANCE, 2006.



city workplaces from where they can travel in by high-speed train. And of course health has become a major consideration.

That's true, due to the Covid emergency there's a greater "need for nature". What meaning does the term "green architecture" have today?

We mustn't confuse nature and bio-architecture. What used to be called "green architecture" all too often only added a few greenish aspects or techniques to a building. In my view the need for nature means the need for quality, for sufficient space to enable us to move around rather than being static, as is usually the case in the places where we live and work. It is a question of breathing, smelling, energy and feeling; it's different for everyone and is very difficult to standardise. More and more people are saying they want to live in the countryside as a reaction to their current situation of being confined to their homes due to Covid. But the issue of nature can't be resolved simply by living in the countryside because there are other constraints and limitations there, it's not the ideal dream location.

What should be the function of a building's "skin" and the relation between interior/exterior? What are your favourite materials? What do you think of ceramics?

As in the human body, the "skin" is a place of exchange, where the relationship between interior and exterior needs to be thought out, proposed and developed according to the culture where you are, the usage you assign to it and the definition you give to interior and exterior. So the question of the choice of "skin" is a relative, not absolute notion. I like to play with ambiguous conditions to provide multiple interpretations for this relationship. My favourite materials are mostly glass and steel, but I always adapt my aesthetic sense and architectural proposal to the conditions of a project and am willing to use any material. Ceramic is an interesting material when used without preconceptions. I know there are a lot of exciting innovations taking place in the field of ceramics. For example, this material is used to protect spaceships from burning on re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. Ceramics can be moulded, so in theory this material has plenty of scope for experimentation. But as it is mainly an industrial

product, I think this limits our creativity, which most of the time is focused solely on colours and sizes. Can I dare to dream about on-demand ceramics thanks to the capabilities of robotic tools?

Colours establish solid relationships and leave a powerful mark in your projects. Could you give us some examples of the way you use colour?

Everybody talks about the use of red and black in my projects, but since the mid-nineties I have also been using a lot of bright colours. Examples include the Nantes university library and the Little Italy restaurant in Paris.

The Confluence Institute, the innovative Bauhaus-style school you designed in Lyon, offers new approaches to teaching and creative strategies for architecture. New perspectives on the 21st century are explored through the interdisciplinary contributions of makers, philosophers, sociologists, writers and architects. What is the aim in terms of training?

The Confluence Institute is no longer located in Lyon, we moved the school to Paris in 2019. The training objective is to help today's students develop and gain awareness of the way they will use architecture in the future. They don't necessarily have to become architects as there are plenty of ways to help the world with architecture! There are so many factors that will modify the profession; robotics and artificial intelligence will take over much of the work we already do. So schools need to evolve to rethink what is the added value of architecture studies. I firmly believe that architecture is necessary for the construction of the world, but I am not convinced that the world needs our profession in the way we understand it today. This is why we cannot continue to teach architecture the same way we did a hundred years ago. Mixing thinkers and doers will bring added value. We must train students to integrate their architectural thinking with other disciplines, to pursue their ideas whatever the complexity of the project they are tackling and take the risk of pushing their creativity beyond the usual way of thinking. This is architecture.



ANTARES RESIDENTIAL TOWER, BARCELONA, SPAIN, 2020.

The sustainability of Ceramics of Italy

AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY ANALYSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL PROFILES OF ITALIAN CERAMICS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARKET

by Andrea Serri

The Italian ceramic industry has always been the global benchmark for design, living quality and technological and product innovation in the fields of ceramic tiles and slabs, sanitaryware, tableware and heavy clay. But the truly distinctive feature of Italian companies is their environmental and social sustainability in terms of choice of raw materials, installations, relations with employees and external stakeholders, the manufacturing process and the way in which products are used for different applications. The industry has demonstrated enormous commitment and innovation in its response to the new economic, environmental and social challenges, but there is still considerable room for improvement and greater appreciation on the part of the market, whether this consists of end consumers or design and construction professionals in Italy and abroad.

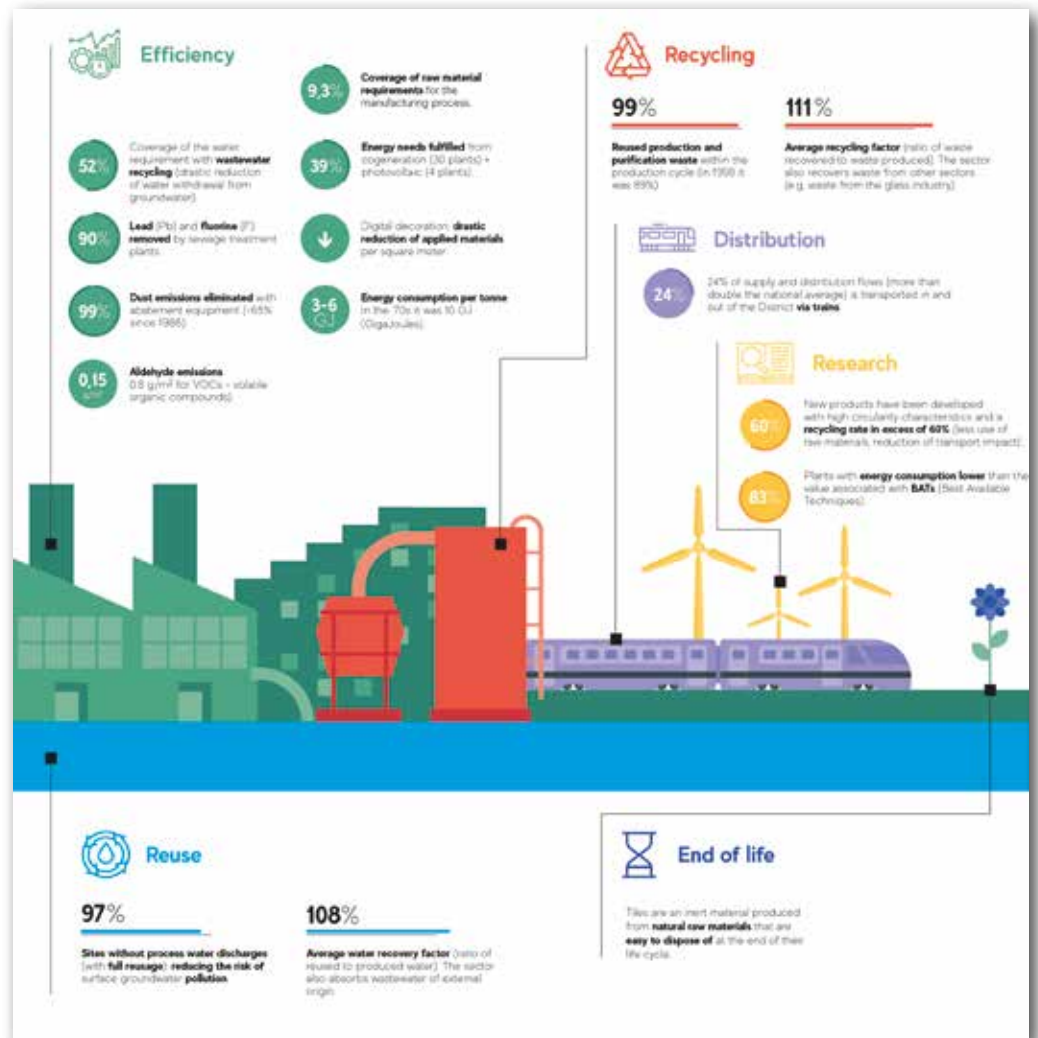
Ceramics of Italy for Sustainability is the name of a project which aims to determine the Italian ceramic industry's new sustainability profile in terms of both environmental (product and process) and social aspects (quality of work and community). Promoted by Confindustria Ceramica and organised by Edi.Cer. Spa and Cersaie in collaboration with Focus Lab and with the support of the Italian Trade Agency ITA and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the project set out to investigate and rationalise knowledge of the current trends within

the sector and its manufacturing companies, as well as the current and future perception of Ceramics of Italy products and solutions on the part of the market. An in-depth analysis of this kind had never been carried out before in the Italian ceramic industry and it provides a clear call to action for the immediate future: know, inform and promote.

The investigation was conducted in several stages, beginning with an in-depth study of the technical, communication and promotional tools available to the manufacturing and marketing departments of ceramic companies, followed by a process of consultation and engagement with the various key players in the ceramic supply chain, from architects and designers to distributors, retailers, installers and the foodservice and hotel industries in Italy and abroad.

The methodology used was also highly innovative for the Italian and international ceramic industries and involved a process of stakeholder engagement based on online focus groups, surveys and targeted interviews with architects, retailers/distributors and installers working in Italy and in the French, German and English-speaking markets. The aim was to determine the level of knowledge and perception amongst these key professionals of the sustainability of Italian ceramics, the industry's unique strengths compared to those of its competitors and alternative materials, and the areas of sustainability that need to

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS OF ITALIAN CERAMICS IS CIRCULAR AND VIRTUOUS



be developed further in the near future. This overview of the sector's positioning and of the various potential interventions will allow the industry to develop a communication and promotion strategy with appropriate content and tools for use both at an institutional level and by Italian ceramic companies and their customers and stakeholders in the various markets. This in turn will help promote awareness of the social and environmental sustainability of the Italian ceramic industry and its products, both at Cersaie and in the various target markets. This factor of excellence will become a hallmark of Italian ceramics and is sure to attract even greater global interest over the coming months.

RELATED ARTICLES:

Overview of the EPD

➤ www.ceramica.info/en/sustainability/epd

The Italian ceramic industry embraces CSR and UN Global Goals

➤ www.ceramica.info/en/the-italian-ceramic-industry-embraces-csr-and-un-global-goals/



➤ Read about the Italian ceramic industry's other sustainability factors

What is BIM and how is it used?

CONFINDUSTRIA CERAMICA HAS PRESENTED THE DISCIPLINARY MODEL FOR CERAMIC TILES DEVELOPED DURING 18 MONTHS OF WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH COMPANIES, DESIGNERS AND INDUSTRY EXPERTS

by Thomas Foschini

A BIM (*Building Information Modelling*) object is a kind of virtual twin of a physical object, and likewise has a shape, dimensions and function. And just like in the real world, BIM architecture displays behaviour that evolves over time and is capable of interacting with other objects belonging to the same digital architecture. A working group set up by Confindustria Ceramica with the participation of member companies, scientific and research institutions, designers and industry experts developed a solution that can be applied to the Italian ceramic tile industry.

Ceramic BIM objects

Ostensibly, a BIM object is a graphic model that can be built in two different ways. Confindustria Ceramica chose to adopt the non-proprietary, standardised open IFC (Industry Foundation Classes) format of buildingSMART, the international community that promotes the creation and development of digital and open working methods for developing the built environment. This way it is possible to guarantee adequate interoperability and durability of the systems over time and compliance with the provisions of Ministerial Decree 560, 1 December 2017, which imposes the obligation to make the digital model available in an open format.

BIM objects are legally obligatory for architectural projects of a certain value and complexity. At the same time, these digital objects may add significant value to the production, promotion and marketing of

high-quality products, provided each product sector adopts specific rules and develops disciplinary models capable of raising awareness of the characteristics and points of excellence of its products.

A BIM object must have a shared and accessible structure. When searching for information, the user (architecture firm, engineer, interior designer, maintenance engineer or end customer) must know what to look for and where to find it. It is also important for the BIM object to contain a “property set”, which includes the name of the product, its function and its dimensions, as well as the object’s



technical properties and other fundamental characteristics such as environmental sustainability (these properties are an important consideration for both standards and the market). The property set therefore includes the on-site installation manual, maintenance procedures over the product's entire life cycle, and so on.

After resolving the most critical issue, namely the absence of a precise international standard for ceramic tiles on how such objects should be built and classified in BIM environments, the Confindustria Ceramica working group decided to develop a disciplinary model based on the IFC language (in particular version 4.0 add. 2) while at the same time drawing from the British experience of NBS and creating as faithful a correspondence as possible between the identified property sets, the specific characteristics of the tile object, and the national and international regulations in force. One further aim was to make this model dynamic and usable over time by adapting to the evolving needs of users and above all to the ever-changing product qualities for which Italian tiles are renowned all over the world.

The disciplinary model

The proposed model has four characteristics: strict compliance with national and international regulatory standards (with the possibility of integrating new standards over time); flexibility and adaptability to the needs of individual companies and/or users; interoperability and ease of application (IFC standards); and last but not least, a model that is intended to perform an "identifying" rather than a "standardising" function for the sector.

In practice, the development levels defined by the Association's working group led to the publication of a specific template containing the property sets required by the IFC framework as well as three additional worksheets, *DoP* And *Product Certification*, *Environmental Sustainability* and *Other Technical Features*. This enables manufacturers to highlight specific product properties that cannot be summarised in other categories. One particularly notable feature of the proposed model is COBie, in practice a subset of information that is useful for facility management (use and maintenance over time), an optional field that is in fact mandatory in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth countries and the United States, so it needs to be taken into consideration when exporting to these countries.

A significant portion of the working group's efforts were aimed at establishing a precise definition of the different "levels of compulsoriness". Only some IFC property sets are obligatory when proposing a BIM digital product image. Everything else represents an opportunity that the company itself can choose whether and how to exploit and with what level of detail according to an approach that is modular, scalable and adaptable over time.

The future

After being submitted to the UNI sub-committee working on this subject, the template will evolve over time on the basis of feedback from Italian ceramic companies and the market, while a similar disciplinary model for the brick industry is currently under development.

One of the specific challenges facing the Italian market concerns renovation of existing buildings. This theme is already at the centre of the e-BIM project, co-financed by the ERDF Regional Operational Programme, with the Centro Ceramico di Bologna as one of the partners. This wide-ranging field (which includes restoration, energy efficiency and earthquake-proofing of built assets and in particular of historic buildings) may open up further opportunities for the development of high-quality Italian ceramic tiles within the BIM environment.



Read the other technical articles

The façade module meets porcelain

DESIGN2CURTAIN IS THE NEW CERAMIC SOLUTION FROM FLORIM AND SCHÜCO ITALIA THAT GOES BEYOND CLASSIC VENTILATED FAÇADES

by Thomas Foschini

In modern architecture, especially urban architecture with its constraints of large heights, confined spaces and a rationalised approach to living and building, the concept of the “cell” or elementary module has found a new ally in ceramic slabs. One example is the **Design2Curtain** collaboration between **Florim** and **Schüco Italia**, the Italian subsidiary of the well-known multinational window, door and façade solutions manufacturer.

“We have been engaging with the world of architectural design and installation techniques for several years now,” explains **Adriano Obino**, head of Florim’s Projects Division. The result is a system patented by Florim that combines chemical fixing

with mechanical anchoring onto aluminium profiles, “the only system on the market with European ETA certification for mechanical fixing of 6 mm slabs”. So what are the advantages? Above all **durability and safety** thanks to the mechanical anchoring system and the greater flexibility of the 6 mm slab, “produced by continuous pressing and endowed with an unexpectedly wider elastic range than a conventional 10 mm slab” (one of the latest tests carried out by Florim was the seismic action test for the S1 Magnum ventilated façade system on a “vibrating table” conducted at ENEA in Rome. The S1 system with 6 mm Magnum slab withstood ground accelerations up to the maximum permissible value of 2.5 g without any damage to the structure or the slab).

Design2Curtain draws from Florim’s experience in supplying and installing façade solutions based on **very large slabs** (currently **160x320 cm**), a system that is fully guaranteed by the company thanks to the use of qualified and selected installers. The aim is to combine traditional ventilated façades with a new concept in the use of slabs as an “organic” element in a modular structure that forms the envelope of a building in large-scale modern architectural projects. “The idea developed in collaboration with Schüco Italia is based on the assumption that the increasingly stringent energy consumption regulations for buildings make it necessary to increase the opaque portion of the envelope in place of glass. In order to comply with environmental, construction and energy parameters, it is necessary to use several layers of high-performance glass, which has an obvious impact on the costs and sustainability of the interventions.”



Until now, the options available for the opaque portions of the envelope have mostly consisted of aluminium panels, which limit the architect's creative freedom due to their homogeneity. In practice, with Design2Curtain the **architectural cell** consists of three elements: an **aluminium frame system** assembled on all four sides, the **various layers** of glass, or alternatively the "slab package", one for the outer and one for the inner cladding. Once the porcelain slabs have been industrially mounted and secured to the aluminium frame, the cavity is filled with **suitable insulation to increase the energy efficiency of the system**.

"In this approach, the two materials glass and porcelain are completely interchangeable," explains Florim's Project Manager. The solution also expands the opportunities available to the architect, as the interior and exterior slabs can be aesthetically coordinated or entirely different. As for the interior cladding, "it is possible to opt for a mechanical fastening solution that allows for future slab replacement; finally, the interior of the cell can be left free so that the architect or interior designer can choose which product to use at a later time". Simple and elegant, Design2Curtain can be described as a concealed solution in terms of interior design. All that remains visible is the frame profile or, in the case of glazed modules, the flush-mounted glazing. So how competitive is this solution from an engineering perspective given that it is clearly more expensive than a traditional facade? The first and most obvious aspect is the fact that **traditional infills are eliminated** and the entire envelope package is replaced with the Design2Curtain cell (resulting in zero plastering, etc.). The second factor is **performance**: "Opaque surfaces offer enormous advantages in terms of thermal efficiency and consequently lower energy consumption." The third but not least important aspect is the **simplicity of the production, logistics and on-site installation processes**, especially in urban contexts with confined spaces and large heights where the cost of time and space is a major component of the construction budget. And finally safety, given the two companies' shared experience in the use of anchoring and fixing systems.

"This project marks the culmination of a process that has allowed us to introduce ceramics into a culturally sophisticated market", that of avant-garde architecture, "where mass production makes a positive contribution in terms of savings and quality, where space and time are limited and where the industrialisation of the construction process is taken to the highest levels permitted by modern technology."




In short, as of today **porcelain becomes an essential element and not just an accessory of the architectural cell**, an "elementary original matrix" that allows for unlimited opportunities in terms of assembly and modularity. "We feel it is natural – inevitable even – that an idea of this kind should have originated in Italy as a partnership between our ceramic district and the Italian branch of the multinational Schüco."

And despite the fact that it is mass-produced, it is of course a highly customisable solution, notes Florim's project manager. There are two reasons for this, one structural and the other market-related. The first concerns the aluminium frame cell itself, which is built to order by Schüco for each specific project based on the various structural, energy and aesthetic requirements. As for the slabs, alongside the numerous customisation options present in the catalogue, there is a strictly commercial aspect to consider: "These kinds of projects typically involve quantities of 5,000, 10,000 or even 20,000 square metres." As one can easily imagine, with volumes like these any requests for customisation of the ceramic surface are justified.

Despite having only recently been launched on the market, the solution has already attracted keen interest from international architects. The recommended thickness for this type of solution remains 6 mm, while sizes up to a maximum of 160x320 cm can be used.

Last but not least, the solution offers extremely versatile and customisable aesthetics thanks to a vast array of surfaces inspired by the most varied designs, including marble, stone, solid colours, wood and concrete.

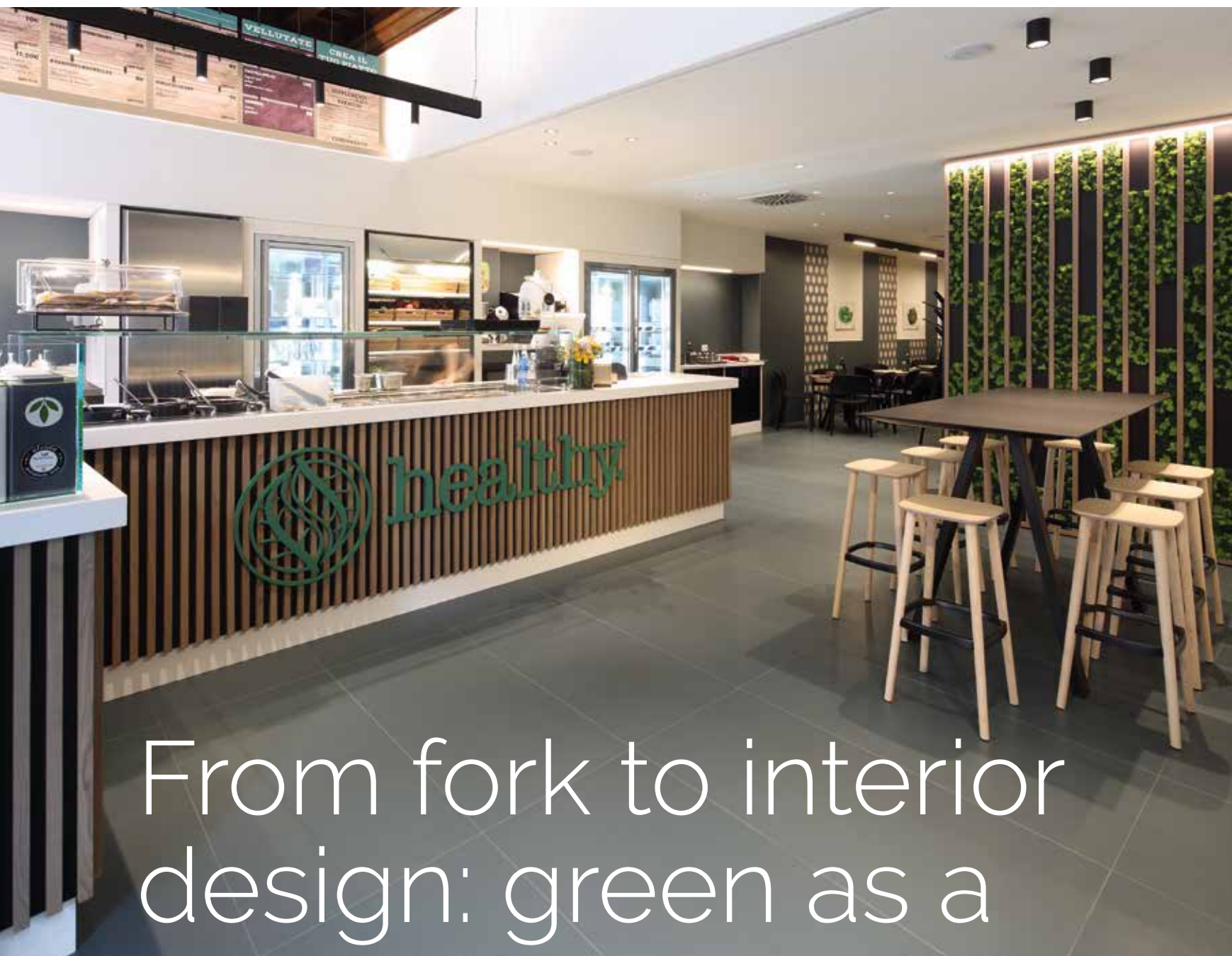


 Read the other technical articles

RELATED ARTICLES:

Ventilated façades: the evolution of anchoring systems

 www.ceramica.info/en/ventilated-facades-evolution-anchoring-systems/



From fork to interior design: green as a cross-cutting concept

THE DESIRE TO CREATE A NEW SPACE DEVOTED TO HEALTHY AND WELL-BALANCED DINING IS FULFILLED IN AN ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN PROJECT INSPIRED BY NATURE

by Antonia Solari



HEALTHY RESTAURANT

PROJECT

ESPRIT ARCHITETTURA
WWW.ESPRITARCHITETTURA.COM

CERAMIC SURFACES

CASA DOLCE CASA - CASAMOOD
(MADE IN FLORIM)
WWW.FLORIM.COM

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2019

“The interior of Healthy reflects the owners’ philosophy and contains powerful references to nature, healthy living and sustainable thinking,” is how architects Pietro Cabrini and Stefano Camolese from Bergamo-based practice Esprit Architettura begin their description of the project. But Healthy is more than just a restaurant, it is the manifestation of a concept proposed by the owners and developed in collaboration with the

architects: a philosophy inspired by respect for nature in every detail. “The guiding principle behind the project was the owners’ desire to offer a valid alternative to Bergamo’s traditional restaurants with a menu that is as balanced and healthy as possible,” continued Cabrini. “The idea stems from the desire to bring together a community of people who appreciate food grown with passion and dedication by local farmers using



A DETAIL OF HEALTHY'S DINING AREA, WHERE PORCELAIN TILES MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF FUNCTIONALITY COUPLED WITH A LONG LIFETIME AND SUSTAINABILITY.



 Go to the Projects Gallery for other socialization places in Italy and worldwide

SPACES

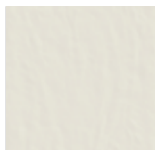
leisure and socialization

APPLICATIONS

interior floor and wall coverings



Neutra 6.0
shades decor 01



Neutra 6.0
bianco



Neutra 6.0
petrolio

ceramic surfaces

Casa dolce casa -
Casamood (Florim)
porcelain tile

Neutra 6.0
bianco, petrolio,
shades decor 01
60x120 - 70.8x61.4 cm

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 ULB UHB
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): class 3
slip resistance (DIN 51130):
R11 grip

certifications

LEED

THE BERGAMO-BASED
PRACTICE ESPRIT
ARCHITETTURA CHOSE
THE ALTERNATION
OF PORCELAIN
STONEWARE AND
WOOD TO EXPRESS
HEALTHY'S GREEN
PHILOSOPHY.



age-old cultivation techniques and without the use of additives. The restaurant integrates perfectly into its surroundings and we made every effort to preserve the original structure of the building in order to minimise its environmental impact.”

The result is a location dominated by minimalist choices that at the same time makes a powerful statement: open kitchens to convey a sense of transparency; wood as a natural material; and porcelain tiles for surface coverings with a long lifetime – in itself a synonym of sustainability – produced using low-impact industrial processes. While the choice of materials, light and colours – particularly green – helped to achieve the primary goal of communicating a concept linked to nature, the design process also pursued other objectives. “The client had three equally important demands: to successfully combine aesthetics with functionality; to carefully control the costs of implementation; and last but not least to complete the project within a tight deadline,” explained Pietro Cabrini.

The choice of surface coverings fulfilled all three requirements, as the porcelain slabs from Casa dolce casa – Casamood’s Neutra 6.0 series (Made in Florim) guarantee durability even in public spaces, while ensuring speed and simplicity of installation and contributing to an eco-friendly aesthetic. Their texture, defined by the architects as an “emotional surface”, and their colour, with its strong green component, create a sense of uniformity and continuity of design.

The architects were delighted with the finished results: “We worked with top brands for the finishes, the furniture and the lighting, and the results fully met our expectations.”

ALSO SEE

But ceramic... is a safe choice.

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/BUT-CERAMIC-IS-A-SAFE-CHOICE

THE BATHROOMS AND THEIR 'EMOTIONAL SURFACES': THE TILES ALSO SERVE TO COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS AND CREATE A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE.





Shapes and colours inspired by the ice cream cone

IN THE ARTISANAL ICE CREAM PARLOUR GIÀ GELATO IN ROME, LOZENGE-SHAPED TILES FROM TONALITE PROVED THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR THE CREATIVE CONCEPT BASED ON THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE TRIANGLE AND THE CIRCLE, TWO PURE GEOMETRIC FORMS THAT RECALL THE SHAPES OF AN ICE CREAM CONE AND A MILK DROPLET

by Elisa Montalti

The aim of this project was to make an artisanal ice cream parlour stand out from the dense urban fabric of its surroundings, a busy street filled with fast-flowing traffic and crowds of pedestrians close to Rome's Tiburtina Station. To achieve this goal, the firm Caleidoscopio designed the store window as a kind of stage set, a showcase that can be readily perceived at both short and medium distances so as to capture the gaze of passers-by and lure them inside.

Già Gelato was opened in Rome by a master ice cream maker with many years of experience both in Italy and abroad. The aim of the interior design project was to convey the fresh, natural sensation associated with ice cream and to use a cool, bright colour palette with a prevalence of cold tones to express the quality and wholesome experience



GIÀ GELATO ICE CREAM PARLOUR

PROJECT

CALEIDOSCOPIO ARCHITETTURA
WWW.CALEIDOSCOPIOARCHITETTURA.COM

PHOTOS

MORENA VALENTE
WWW.MORENAVALENTE.COM

CERAMIC SURFACES

TONALITE
WWW.TONALITE.IT

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2019



 Go to the Project Gallery for other shopping venues in Italy and worldwide



THE LOZENGE-SHAPED TILE TRACES OUT A ZIGZAG LINE ALONG THE WALL AT TWO DIFFERENT HEIGHTS.

SPACES

shopping/recreation

APPLICATIONS

interior wall coverings

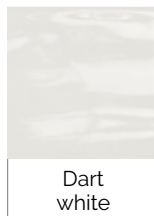
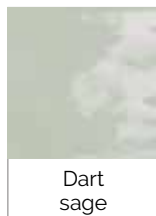
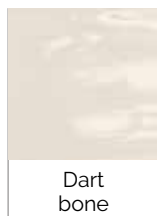
ceramic surfaces

Tonalite
glazed single-fired tile
Dart
lozenge 7x28 cm

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $3\% < E_p < 6\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength (ISO
10545-4): $\geq 22 \text{ N/mm}^2$
surface abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-7): compliant

coefficient of linear
thermal expansion
(ISO 10545-8): compliant
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
crazing resistance
(ISO 10545-11): compliant
staining resistance
(ISO 10545-14): compliant



of a healthy artisanal product made with natural ingredients. Ceramic tile is the dominant material in the retail area. The tiled surface underscores the artisanal nature of the business, while its reflections and colours are the perfect complement to the textures and flavours of the ice cream itself. The choice fell on white, bone and sage coloured tiles from the Dart collection by Tonalite, a brand renowned for its wide range of sizes, colours and finishes. The architects commented: “We chose this ceramic tile because it has the right combination of materials and colours to capture the gaze of passers-by and allow the small store to stand out from the busy shopping street. The bright space conveys the sensations of freshness, cleanliness and authenticity associated with the popular image of an artisanal ice cream parlour. The tips of the tiles contrast with the perforations in the white metal surfaces of the access door leading to the workshop, creating a playful contrast between triangular and circular shapes. The cool colours of the tiles were chosen to balance the warmer colour of the copper detailing.” With its lozenge shape typical of the Italian ceramic tradition, the tile proved perfect for the concept based on the combination of two pure geometric forms, the triangle and the circle, which bring to mind an ice cream cone and a milk droplet. The pointed ends of the tiles trace out a zigzag line at two different heights along the wall. The cool, bright tones of the ceramic tiles complement the visually-striking presence of the copper-clad refrigerated display counter and the metallic box-like structure that leads into the workshop. Made of painted perforated sheet metal, some of the sections are filled with green metallic panels to create a play of light, shadow, depth and perspective. The circular holes in the metal sheet complete the concept: the circle recalls the outline of a stylised ice cream and contrasts with the pointed form of the lozenge-shaped tiles.



THE ICE CREAM CONE
AND THE DROP OF MILK
INSPIRE THE DESIGN OF
THE CERAMIC TILES WITH
THEIR SOFT COLOURS.

SEE ALSO

Ceramic is suitable for any application, whether on floors, walls, countertops or tables

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/ARTICOLO-CAMPAGNA-19/VERSATILE/

A new Asian dining experience

THE FIFTH RESTAURANT IN THE SUSHI CLUB CHAIN IN CESANO MADERNO HAS WON THE COMMERCIAL CATEGORY OF THE "CERAMICS AND DESIGN" AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF ITS ROLE IN PIONEERING A NEW ASIAN CULINARY EXPERIENCE WITHIN A NEW AESTHETIC AND FORMAL CONTEXT

by Donatella Bollani

The interior design project for the Sushi Club restaurant, a collaboration between a young food entrepreneur and Maurizio Lai from Maurizio Lai Architects, envisages design not just as a means of generating an experience, forms and atmospheres but also a tool that contributes to the creation of a distinctive brand.

An architect, scenographer and designer, Maurizio Lai is a highly original artist renowned for his visually stunning restaurant, retail and hospitality spaces. At the beginning of his career he worked in television and fashion design, but soon branched off into the commercial and tourism sectors.

Winner of the *Restaurant & Bar Design Award* for Best Lighting Design International, he was nominated for the *Dezeen Awards 2020* for Best Interior Design Studio of the Year.

With locations in Cesano Maderno, Saronno, Corbetta, Castellanza and Lipomo (Como), Lai's restaurant format has transformed the concept of

the Asian dining experience by placing it within a completely novel aesthetic and formal context.

The restaurants are conceived as a kind of scenic backdrop, with a compositional language that is expressed through the materials, the design of the volumes and the diffused lighting that culminates in the large central light installation.

In Lai's creations, the movable furniture, the light fixtures and the scenery are all designed and built by hand.

The restaurant extends over an approximately 1,000 square metre area on two levels.

The interiors follow a continuous colour scheme that makes preferential use of warm and dark tones and contrasts effectively with the dramatic lighting design.

The light inserts on the vertical surfaces are arranged in a precise pattern that is enhanced by the ceiling installations and further amplified by the wall-mounted mirrors in the main hall.





SUSHI CLUB RESTAURANT

PROJECT

MAURIZIO LAI ARCHITECTS
WWW.LAISTUDIO.COM

PHOTOS

ANDREA MARTIRADONNA
WWW.MARTIRADONNA.IT

CERAMIC SURFACES

CERAMICA SANT'AGOSTINO
[WWW.CERAMICA
SANTAGOSTINO.IT](http://WWW.CERAMICA
SANTAGOSTINO.IT)
DSG CERAMICHE
WWW.DSGCERAMICHE.IT

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2016



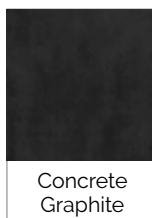
 Go to the Project Gallery for other
socialisation facilities in Italy and worldwide



ABOVE: THE MAIN DINING ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

SPACES
recreation/
socialisation

APPLICATIONS
interior floor
coverings



ceramic surfaces

CERAMICA
SANT'AGOSTINO
porcelain tile
Blendart Grey
90x90 cm

DSG CERAMICHE
Concrete Graphite
60x120, 120x120 cm
12 mm thickness

technical characteristics

water absorption
(ISO 10545-3): $\leq 0.1\%$
modulus of rupture and
breaking strength
(ISO 10545-4): 40 N/mm²
deep abrasion resistance
(ISO 10545-6): ≤ 145 mm³

coefficient of linear thermal
expansion (ISO 10545-8):
compliant
thermal shock resistance
(ISO 10545-9): compliant
crazing resistance
(ISO 10545-11): 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):
R10

certifications
LEED (Blendart)



The dialogue between materials and light is clearly evident in all the rooms, including the stairs and passageways which maintain the same immersive atmosphere as the rest of the restaurant. Ceramic tiles play an important role due to their functional characteristics as well as their ability to contrast with and enhance the original lighting design through compositional and colour choices. The porcelain floor and wall tiles echo the location's warm, dark tones. This applies equally to the aged wood-effect tiles from Ceramica Sant'Agostino's Blendart Grey collection, which recreate a varnished effect superimposed on the wood grain, and to the Concrete collection slabs from DSG Ceramiche – the porcelain stoneware division of Decoratori Bassanesi – chosen in a large format for the walls of the staircases and landings.

ALSO SEE

"Ceramics of Italy – Ahead of our Time" tells the story of Italian tile

➤ WWW.CERAMICA.INFO/EN/CERAMICS-OF-ITALY-AHEAD-OF-OUR-TIME/



ABOVE: THE UPPER-FLOOR DINING ROOM
LEFT: THE WINERY

A senses-based model of modernity

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGN AND ITALIAN IDENTITY WAS DISCUSSED DURING THE OFFICIAL ONLINE PRESENTATION OF THE ATLAS OF CERAMICS

by Maria Teresa Rubbiani

We Italians have grown used to living with two different narratives of our identity and culture: on the one hand an awareness of being part of an age-old culture that has created unique works of beauty; on the other, a negative perception of ourselves and of our cultural, organisational and social systems. But as soon as we leave Italy, we realise how we are seen by other countries. Admired, desired, sought after: what do Italian-made products actually represent in the contemporary world? Is the so-called “made in Italy” label merely an empty slogan, a worn-out stereotype, or does it represent something more?

These themes were discussed in an online conversation held last December entitled “**The Italian Way. Stories of heritage, brand and marketing**”.

In his presentation of the recently-published *Atlas of Ceramics. Surfaces for Architecture and Urban Space from 1945 to 2018*, the work's editor **Fulvio Irace** referred to another book published to great acclaim in 2012, “a documentary novel by American journalist Katherine Boo whose title I found particularly intriguing: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. A dramatic, sometimes surreal story, it is set in an Indian slum against the backdrop of a large advertising billboard bearing the words “Belle per sempre” written in Italian. An advertising slogan for Italian floor tiles, the billboard inhabits the narrow border zone between the slum and Mumbai airport, as though promising a world of happiness accessible to everyone,” said Irace.

This observation was the starting point for an interesting online discussion in which the participants concluded that the “made in Italy” label represents a distinctive “Italian way” of understanding modernity, an alternative approach to the Anglo-Saxon model based on mass production. Ultimately, this widely recognised and appreciated “Italian Way” is the contemporary expression of Italian culture and identity.

The following excerpts are taken from the conversation between **Fulvio Irace**, **Andrea Cancellato**, former Director of the Triennale Design Museum in Milan and now Director of the ADI Compasso d'Oro Museum, and **Daniele Balicco**, a researcher at Roma Tre University.

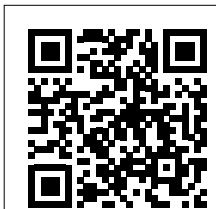
Fulvio Irace: *Is there an “Italian way” that can be seen to influence the world of design?*

Andrea Cancellato: “I think it is appropriate to talk about the “Italian way” together with “made in Italy” for the simple reason that Italian design is more than just design that happens to be made in Italy. It is the result of a set of skills relating to design, construction, communication and marketing, a complex system of activities and materials expertise that ultimately enables us to create products that fulfil very important needs in people’s daily lives.”

Daniele Balicco: “Reflecting on the relationship between design and Italian identity becomes much easier when you’re outside Italy. I spent a period



Watch the recording of the conference “**Modo Italiano. The Italian Way. Story of heritage, brand and marketing**”





of time doing research in New York, and although I was working on something entirely different, while living in New York I was strongly aware of the physical presence of Italy. I was struck by the fact that Italy was far more present than other European cultures: more present in objects, more present even in words. The key issue in my opinion is that, as a system of objects, Italian design has built up a very strong identity in recent decades, particularly abroad. In Italy, we are naturally aware of all of this but at the same time we are confronted by a kind of permanent counter-narrative of a country in a state of perennial crisis. When you're living in Italy the two narratives coexist, although the negative counter-narrative is dominant. But as soon as you leave the country you can't help being struck by the power and impact of a certain Italian "way of being", which today is condensed into a set of objects, a model of consumption. This model has very distinctive characteristics that stand in opposition – albeit not radically – to the idea of standardisation and uniform mass consumption typical of the previous culture, the American and Anglo-French forms of modernisation. By contrast, the "Italian way" is a kind of anti-modern modernity that returns to the spirit of craftsmanship and focuses on the senses and a series of elements regarding everyday life, tastes, flavours, senses and colours. The result is an ideal and idealised image of modern Italy that, while often full of stereotypes, in my opinion succeeds in defining a different kind of modernity, an Italian modernity. We could describe it as the Italian approach to modernity, and it is certainly not in the minority outside Italy."

The characteristics of this Italian way can be observed in contemporary Italian products, including those of the ceramic sector, and its origins and growth are documented through the historical research conducted for publications such as the "Atlas of Ceramics" and ceramic company museums. Next to speak was **Maria Canella**, author of a focus section devoted to the collaboration between fashion designers and the ceramic sector.

Fulvio Irace: When and why did fashion begin to play a role in the world of surface coverings?

Maria Canella: "The designer revolution and the birth of "made in Italy" in connection with the development of industrial design has prompted a rethink of all industrial-level production, so it is hardly a surprise that this should also have involved the world of ceramics and tiles. What I find particularly interesting is the fact that the arrival of fashion designers has also spurred a revolution within the world of production by leading to the creation of more expensive lines. The advent of this figurative approach has resulted in a renewal of colours and of production techniques, creating tiles that are more complex in terms of their processing and even sizes."

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