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VAIL VALLEY

REAL ESTATE & MOUNTAIN LIFESTYLES

MAY 2021

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In the Vail Valley, a sense of place
is integral to the design ethos

BOLD *Inclinations*

TILE'S LATEST TRENDS INCLUDE PATTERNS AND COLORS

BY KIMBERLY NICOLETTI

PHOTOS COURTESY DECORATIVE MATERIALS

After years of quiet grays in the home, tile trends are taking a turn into playful patterns.

“People have been cooped up, and they need to lift their spirits,” says Kirsten Schmit, president of Decorative Materials, adding that audacious, loud prints are coming our way. “I’m not sure that it’s quite hit Colorado yet, but it’s on its way. We’re all ready to branch out and be surrounded with playful patterns that evoke emotion and lift our spirit.”

The bolder patterns have been showing up through the use of mosaics and ceramics, according to Luxe Interiors + Design and Decorative Materials’ joint 2021 tile trends webinar.

Homeowners ready to jump in can start in entryways or master bath floors, while those who are a little shyer about pattern and color might want to begin with the laundry room, powder room or fireplace. One way to approach the trend a bit



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Interior Design Magazine's
Best of Year 2020 Wall
Coverings winner, *Geometrie
Componibili* by Elisa
Passino, is available at
Decorative Materials.

OPPOSITE
TOP: Bold pattern contrasted
with an understated
color palette creates a
sophisticated backsplash
by *Jazz Glass Fan Club*.

БОТТОМ: *Flora 1* from the *Rêve
d'Orient* Collection embodies
the essence of nature.



more subtly involves using different materials in geometric shapes. For example, you might combine glass and natural stone to fashion monochromatic flower petal shapes, or teardrop shapes on a backsplash. Decorative Materials was the first (and still only) dealer in the United States to carry designs by Elisa Passino. Passino's Basics Collection features nine tile shapes, from square and rectangular to triangular and diamond-shaped, in 18 colors.

"Do what your heart tells you to do. If color's not your thing, a pattern in a neutral can be the way to go," Schmit says. "In the last five years, tile patterns have been minimalist and monochromatic, but now we're getting back into movement."

That movement is showing up in the form of "statement stone," such as marbles and other natural stones that have more colorful veining, such as green or purple in marble.

"People are pushing the envelope, not only with ceramic and mosaics, but also with natural stone," she says.

Mary Jo Bowling, Luxe's home editor, says movement is appearing in tiles "because psychologically, people are there — they're ready for it."

Personal touches

Perfectly manufactured products have added a sleek consistency to homes, but as the world seems to grow more impersonal, many homeowners — especially younger ones — are turning back to handmade finishes.

"Handmade finishes took a back-burner for a while, but now they're back. People want this look, and they want it to be personal and more earthy," says Margot Hampleman, founder and CEO of Decorative Materials. "It's about your values. A lot of us want to go back in time and have these handmade materials



Chevron Pietra d'Avola is an evolution of texture. The design can be seen in Decorative Materials' Edwards showroom, designed by Noble Design Group.

because it makes you feel good."

"You can tell there's depth and character because it's been hand touched," Schmit says. "It's very authentic."

Handmade tiles add texture and dimension, as well as an artisanal aesthetic that especially suits rustic or nature-oriented spaces.

Some of Decorative Materials' new products are handmade ceramic and cement tiles made in Portugal by Elisa Passino.

"We can't keep these samples in the showroom," Schmit says. "She plays with color and patterns, and everything is hand-glazed. You can feel her creativity through these products."

Customize

Long gone are the days of looking like the Joneses. Instead, homeowners desire custom tiles.

"Now, people don't want what their neighbor has," Schmit says. "They want their own level of personalization."

“HANDMADE FINISHES TOOK A BACK-BURNER FOR A WHILE, BUT NOW THEY’RE BACK. PEOPLE WANT THIS LOOK, AND THEY WANT IT TO BE PERSONAL AND MORE EARTHY.”



TOP RIGHT: The Primal Collection re-imagines the exotic texture of reptilian skin in a ceramic tile crafted in Spain.

ABOVE: Rue Des Rosiers 3, a hand-painted terracotta color field, has some slight color variations and small imperfections that make it one of a kind.

Vendors are now producing Pantone color matches in tile. The customizable bespoke InLine Collection features ceramics by Belle Iskowitz and Anthony Asch; the line offers 12 patterns to mix and match

for the perfect combination in glossy or matte.

Materials that carry stories are also popular; for example, marble sourced from Marble, Colorado.

Mixing materials like metal, glass, stone and/or ceramic in a mosaic piece is another way to personalize anything from a backsplash to an entryway. The Reve d’Orient collection, inspired by Eastern Asian culture, delivers a chic look with slight irregularities of nature within its stone, metal and glass mosaics.

“Mixing materials is really where we can customize,” Hampleman says. “It’s almost like, if you can dream it, we can make it.”

The only thing Schmit cautions against is using a less durable material on heavily used surfaces, like a steam shower floor.

Terrazzo

Another trend involves terrazzo; Terrazzo blends marble chips in a cement mix, which is traditionally poured and ground in place.

“Terrazzo is a classic that has reinvented itself,” Bowling says.

Many interior designers are using Terrazzo tiles measuring 12 feet to minimize grout joints. Lilac or green marble tends to create a soft palette.

“The larger the expanse, the softer the pattern becomes,” Schmit says.

Modern rhythm and updated styles come together in Geotzzo, a contemporary spin on classic terrazzo. Geotzzo enhances the regular background of terrazzo while presenting modern shapes. For instance, Geotzzo squares aren’t uniform in size, but they are artistically placed equidistantly.

Breccia Capraia combines color, movement and character to create a timeless aesthetic.



Texture

Textured stone is also becoming more and more popular, Bowling says. Italian manufacturers collaborate with architects and designers to create three-dimensional wall tiles or patterns cut into stone, such as travertine. For instance, Artistic Tile partnered with artist Alison Rose to inlay stylishly curved brass lines into natural stone.

Textured tiles are perfect for feature walls and fireplace.

“It adds extra depth and character,” Schmit says. “It’s a new edge on natural stone.”

Lighting is often an essential element of textured tiles, so it’s important to design lighting so that it plays off the textures,

resulting in interesting shadows and highlights.

Textured tiles also offer many indoor/outdoor applications; outdoor tiles are textured with grip finishes, while indoor tiles may remain smooth.

“We are doing more and more of that every day,” Hampleman says.

Schmit encourages homeowners to move the color trend outdoors:

“Let’s get that color outside and have fun with our outdoor living.”

Material mimics

Large slabs of tile that mimic surfaces of stones, fabrics and leathers are also finding their way onto walls — from living rooms to bathrooms. The tile may look like wicker or metal,

and the most sophisticated comes from Italy and Spain, where companies have perfected the craft through many years of research and development.

The tiles tend to push boundaries by employing color. For example, a wicker pattern might blend pinks, greens and whites in tiles measuring 11.71” x 39”. Complementary floor tiles make room designs flow seamlessly; for example, homeowners might place stripes on the wall and checkers on the floor. Cohesion comes from staying with the same color schemes, rather than the same pattern.

Tiles can also mimic patinaed metal. While original versions simply reproduced one “rusted out” look, new patinaed tiles

combine several patinas, resulting in colors ranging from rust, green, copper and more.

Indeed, tile has come a long way since Hampleman started Decorative Materials 34 years ago.

“It’s so different than when we started. These tile artisans and manufacturers are getting more and more creative and thinking, ‘What are we going to show next?’” she says. “Tile is modeled after fashion and color trends (but) to me, it has been the most creative surface that has ever been. There’s dimension, there’s color, there’s all these materials that can be used.”

So, go ahead: Experiment. Dip into a passion for tile and express your unique vision.