

Wall and Floor Tiles



Cersaie 2011 – ceramic diversity without borders

In autumn 2011, 113,000 visitors from around the world flocked to the world's largest ceramics fair in Bologna, where 965 companies in 18 exhibition halls exhibited a variety of innovations (fig. 1).

"It looks like wood, it feels like wood, but in actual fact it's ceramic", says the Villeroy & Boch representative, as he runs his fingers over the company's new "Nature Side" collection. "And it has all the advantages of ceramic ware, such as water-resistance, abrasion-resistance, slip-resistance and most important of all, easy cleaning", he adds. Villeroy & Boch have indeed succeeded in creating a product that comes very close to the real thing. The design is inspired by oak and elm, and the striking surface structure with a matt relief contributes to the natural appearance of the tile. The slender 22.5 x 90 and 11.25 x 90 cm tile sizes, which can be used to create authentic-looking "parquet" floors, accentuate this effect further (fig. 2).

"Nature Side" is just one of many new surfaces to be presented at the Cersaie in Bologna. 965 ceramic specialists, including 264 companies from abroad used the fair to promote their new formats, installation tech-

niques and surfaces. "Cersaie is always good for surprises", says a Swiss architect, explaining why he visits the fair each year. Possibly what surprised and inspired him most this year on the exhibition were the new large sizes on display.

Fabrica Marmi e Graniti's new extra-large collection, available in sizes up to 300 x 150 cm, is called "Maxfine" (fig. 3), and is available in six different designs with polished surfaces. Graniti Fiandre too has created a new "Maximum" large-size collection. It includes three different designs in different sizes. The most astounding thing about both collections, besides their size, is their extraordinary thinness, being just 3 or 6 mm thick. While sizes are becoming increasingly larger therefore, material thickness is constantly decreasing, with optimized production processes allowing increasingly thinner tiles to be produced. This in turn increases their range of uses, allowing them to be used, for example, for renovation purposes.

Which brings us to the third apparent trend at this year's fair in Bologna: versatility. More and more ceramic manufacturers are designing their ranges for use in a variety of different areas. The previous straightforward division into wall, floor and facade tiles no

longer applies. Improved formulations, new manufacturing processes and innovative coatings are turning tiles into all-round talents. An example is the new "Mars" range by Vitra, a ceramics manufacturer belonging to the Turkish Eczacıbaşı Group. The tile with a non-slip surface can be used both for floors and as facade cladding in all kinds of settings, from private homes to factories (fig. 4).

With so many new products on display, some visitors may well be asking how the 30th Cersaie, to be held next year between 25 and 29 September, could possibly trump it? No need to worry - the ceramic manufacturers are bound to come up with another set of surprises.

www.cersaie.it
www.villeroy-boch.com
www.irisfmg.com
www.granitifiandre.com
www.vitra-bad.de

