

Fabulous FURNITURE 2001

Tiles bring excitement to room

BY CORINNE ADAM
SPECIAL WRITER

Choosing tile for your home can be an awesome task.

The good news is there's lots of exciting tile out there and plenty of experts willing to help you make wise choices.

Michigan boasts a strong tile tradition, due in large part to the influence of the historic Pewabic Pottery of Detroit. Today, many tile showrooms are located in the areas of Wayne and Oakland counties, offering everything from tumbled marble and slate to highly glazed ceramic tile.

Nancy Coucke, showroom manager for Virginia Tile in Farmington Hills, said there are "no rules" on what you can mix. "We're seeing a lot of mixing of materials - metal with slate, glass with slate, ceramic or tumbled marble with slate," Coucke said.

"In the kitchen, tumbled mar-

ble for the backsplash can be combined with granite countertops and a tile-covered center island." The tile island in the showroom display is topped in a brilliant, indigo blue, edged in white with a small green motif running through it.

"There's tile to fit every lifestyle, French country, contemporary - any period," Coucke said. "There's also a trend toward using larger size tiles, even for backslashes. These require less grouting and the larger the tile you use, the larger the space will look, especially on the floor."

Many tiles come in multiple sizes. Customers may even design their own tile floor "rugs" for a particular area. Choose plain tile for the background, edge the rug in a coordinating color and design a center medallion or deep border. There are some stunning examples to start your creative juices flowing.

Popular produce

While scenes of fruits and vegetables for kitchens remain popular, people are always thinking about resale in this area, she added. "The Midwest is conservative, much more so than the West Coast, for instance," Coucke said.

The wholesale-only Beaver Tile showroom in Farmington Hills will, if your builder or contractor sends you there, make you feel like a kid in a huge candy store.

Linda Fawkes said the showroom is arranged by color. Fawkes likes to ascertain a customer's taste and style before touring them through what is truly a dazzling array of products. There are more than 80 drawers of still life and figurative designs, if you decide to go with pictures on tile.

"Right now stone and nostalgia are big," Fawkes said. "The stone

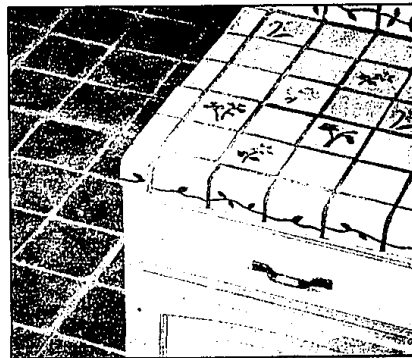
look is classical.

"People like color, but are afraid of it. Anything with nature is very popular, especially in Michigan."

For those with summer and/or retirement homes up north, tiles with pine branch motifs, acorns, Michigan fish, birds and flowers are golden.

Whatever period your home and decor, it's there, with retro among the most requested. Want to recreate the look of small black and white mosaic tile in a turn-of-the-century house? It's there. Love the look of Florida Art Deco from the '20s and '30s? No problem.

Fawkes said many customers come prepared with paint samples, swatches of fabric or wall covering and pictures. These narrow down the choices and help you find tile to fit your home and your personality.



A spring look: Create an indoor garden on a kitchen countertop with the a la carte Floral Collection and Border Trail. The coral pink floor is from the Sandstone Collection and available at Beaver Tile and the Michigan Design Center of Troy.

It's natural: Thinking retro? Florida Tile's Ankara Portfolio provides lots of options for creating the look of the past.



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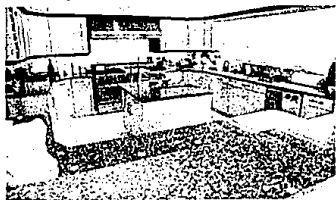
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