



Ceramic tile and marble offer unique dimensions of color, texture and shape that make for distinct architectural statements

Long a popular choice of commercial establishments, such as restaurants and shopping malls, ceramic tile, marble, and granite have found favor in the American home. Today's homeowners appreciate the easy care and durability of these materials. Also inviting is the wide selection of products available. Ceramic tile, marble, and granite are a real value in terms of their appearance and longevity. Ceramic tile offers a variety of shapes, colors, and patterns. Marble creates elegance with its distinctive lines, colors, and polished surface. Granite provides unique, inviting textures and shades. All three add variety and individuality to any home.

Styles

There are many different types, sizes, and styles of tile available. Because of their longevity, ceramic tile, marble, and granite are more expensive than their alternatives. For this reason it is important to select the correct materials for the job in the style, color, and pattern that is right for you.

Some ceramic tile has a finish that strongly resembles marble or granite. This tile gives you both the beautiful look of stone and the durability of ceramic tile.

Selection

If you want to explore the possibility of installing one of these elegant materials in your home, visit a few distributor showrooms in your area. Choose showrooms that deal exclusively with these materials so you can receive expert advice. Design assistance is usually available and most distributors can recommend a qualified tile contractor if you need one.

Take with you a list of the areas to be tiled, a rough sketch of the room's dimensions, and samples of nearby carpeting, wallpaper or

other materials if you have them. If you have an idea of a design you might like, bring along a rough sketch of it.

Since these types of tile can be expected to last the life of your home, proper installation is critical to the success of the project. New tile is only as good as the sub-floor beneath it. A successful installation means there can be no flex of the surface which receives the new tile. A properly installed floor can survive as long as the home does.

Care and Maintenance

Ceramic tile, marble, and granite require only periodic maintenance to remain looking their best. Always buy a little extra tile as insurance against any future problem which may require tile replacement.

Use a silicone sealer to seal the grout after 30 days. Sealing is

highly recommended for natural stone tiles. To keep ceramic tile clean, sweep, then damp mop it with warm water and a disinfecting agent such as one cup of ammonia to one gallon of water. A nylon scrub pad will remove stubborn stains. Never wax glazed tile or use a soapy solution on it.

To keep marble or granite looking its best, it is important to frequently remove any dust with a soft brush. Occasionally damp mop it with a neutral (pH-7) cleaner, available from your local ceramic tile dealer. After it has fully dried, apply a marble polish to protect the finish.

For enduring beauty with minimal care, ceramic tile, marble, or granite may be just what you need for your floors, countertops, or walls. Their ageless appeal adds to any decor.

