



# Going Large

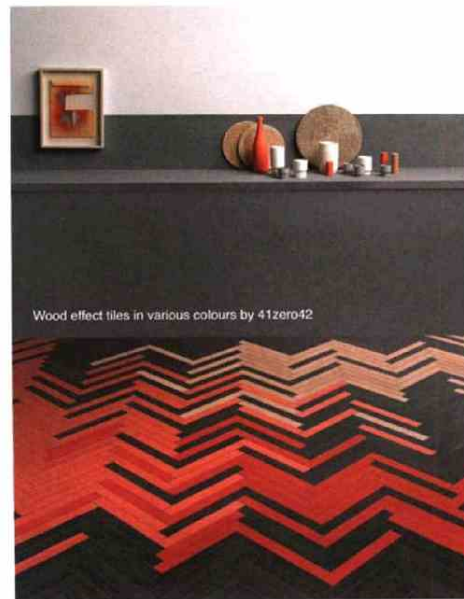
PETER VANN, DIRECTOR OF CERAMIQUE INTERNATIONALE, OFFERS HIS TAKE ON SOME OF THE (FIGURATIVELY AND LITERALLY) BIG TILE TRENDS FROM THE HUGE CERSAIE TILE AND BATHROOM FAIR IN BOLOGNA, ITALY...



Mixed materials/finishes on one tile (textile, stone and concrete) from the Palladiana range by Ceramica Bardelli

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Cersaie 2017 was, as ever, packed to the rafters with new ideas, innovations and products. However, there was one trend that dominated the halls – the extra-large format slab. It appears size really does matter for 2018 with these enormous porcelain slabs (typically sized between 1.2m x 2.4m and 1.6m x 3.2m) featuring on literally dozens of stands.

The emergence of these large-format, ultra-thin porcelain stoneware tiles slabs – many of which accurately replicate Statuario - the chic white Italian marble with darker but sparser veining – is a natural extension of the large format trend that has grown in recent years.

Now, many European factories (particularly the Italians) have invested in the new continual feed press technology to create the huge sheets that meet the demand for minimalist and seamless floors in kitchens and other large open spaces. And already we could see at Cersaie that manufacturers are looking for alternative uses for these large formats, such as backing on kitchen walls, sink surrounds and even worktops.

Casalgrande Padana claims its Kontinua collection, which includes 120x260 cm, 120x240 cm sizes and is just 6.5 mm thick, takes the concept of ceramic cladding to the next level, one where the beautiful textures and marble or

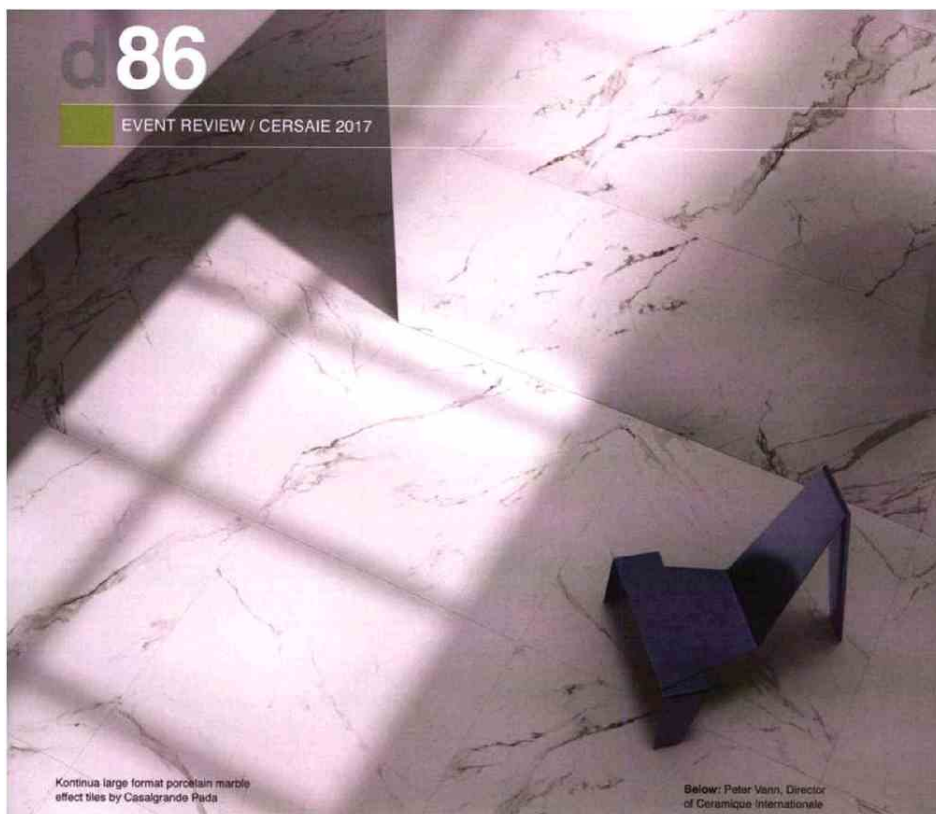
stone effect finishes can be incorporated into cutting-edge architectural projects.

In our opinion, this extra-large format will create its own market because it is going to be so widely available. In the UK for the short and medium term however it will almost certainly be more suited to contract and commercial projects, and there are several reasons for this. Firstly, the majority of UK homes are not big enough to accommodate such large tiles, and secondly, there are a range of practical challenges that need to be addressed. Transporting, lifting and packing these tiles will require specialist training and equipment – they are heavy, and despite being made of a very strong material need to be handled like large panes of glass. They will also require specialised fixing. It goes without saying that we're currently working with our suppliers to pull together a tailored specification guide and delivery package.

Away from the large format trends, there were a couple of other interesting developments. After a few years of wood effect and other natural materials dominating the stands at Cersaie, at this year's exhibition we saw an increase in the use of textile and fabric finishes. Several of our key suppliers displayed collections reminiscent of hessian, although with a softer milder texture and designed for use on both walls and floors. Italian manufacturer Ceramica Bardelli's stand offered the visually impactful



► 1 novembre 2017



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EVENT REVIEW / CERSAIE 2017

Kontinus large format porcelain marble effect tiles by Casalgrande Padra

Below: Peter Vanni, Director of Ceramique Internationale

Palladiana collection for both wall and floor. The matt porcelain tiles feature a combination of material, stone and concrete finishes. Using special manufacturing techniques and leading-edge glazes, with some areas of the surface enriched by fine cross-hatching, the tiles are tactile with a unique look.

Wood effect tiles might not have been at the top of the agenda this year but they certainly still had a presence and a couple of exhibitors were keen to talk about their new developments – one even displayed a collection inspired by a Venetian

Gondola pole, which we think might be niche!

Italian designer 41zero42 (named after their postcode) had one of the most visually impactful stands, showcasing the new Technicolour collection – a small format wood effect tile available in a rainbow of colours.

The trend for geometric patterns is not abating with monochromatic tiles featuring heavily with a lot of new products introducing small amounts of soft colour to create a worn-out effect. This is exemplified by the Pobles series by Spanish

manufacturer Saloni, which mixes artisan aesthetics with cutting-edge technology.

2017 has seen the rise of the chevron tile for floors and so it was only a matter of time before chevron wall tiles emerged. We were particularly enamoured with the glossy pre-formed chevron wall tile – almost boomerang shaped – by French factory, Bati-Orient.

After meetings with more than 50 different manufacturers and designers at the show we now face the task of reviewing the products and ideas they presented to us. Watch this



space to see how many of the ideas and innovations born at Cersaie 2017 achieve cut-through into the UK's domestic and commercial markets in 2018. **d**

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