



ALL ABOUT *wall* TILES

There's no better way to beautify a wall than by installing ceramic tiles. Kitchens, bathrooms, counter splash-backs, feature walls and elegant reception rooms are all areas where wall tiles excel – and these tiles are often the most practical choice, too. In this newsletter, we discuss the particular characteristics of wall tiles, and how to use them to achieve gorgeous results.

CERAMIC NEWS • ALL ABOUT WALL TILES



**WALL
TILES**



What makes a tile a wall tile?

Probably the first issue to clear up is the difference between wall tiles and floor tiles. While essentially made of the same materials with the same techniques, there are certain differences in production, which take into account the tile's application. Firstly, wall tiles are usually not as heavy or dense as floor tiles, making them more suitable for attaching to walls (although, with the right adhesive, floor tiles can be installed on walls). Secondly, because wall tiles are seen from closer up than floor tiles, imperfections are more noticeable. As a result, quality control for wall tiles has to be particularly stringent.

Here are typical characteristics of wall tiles:

Weight

Wall tiles must be light to ensure they adhere easily to vertical surfaces. In addition, they have better bonding characteristics than floor tiles, which helps contractors to save on adhesive. They should be faster to install, since they're easier to drill through and cut. Finally, their weight helps reduce the load on the floor for large building projects, while saving on transport costs.

Minimal size variation

Wall tiles experience minimal shrinkage (1%) during firing. This smaller size variation means narrower grouting gaps can be used in installation for a more uninterrupted finish.

Quality finish:

Since wall tiles are seen from a shorter distance, they're rejected more easily for minor defects. As a result, wall tile factories employ more stringent quality control. Higher quality and higher quantities of glaze are applied to wall tiles, giving a more uniform finish, and crisp, clean colours are more easily achieved thanks to lighter-coloured clay body

Wide selection

These fashionable tiles are available in a wide range of formats and creative designs, including rectangular tiles, listellos, spotters, panels and highly decorated tiles for feature walls,

wall tiles

SUMMARY

Summary of the features of wall tiles, as compared to floor tiles

WALL TILES	FLOOR TILES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not need to withstand foot traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be able to withstand foot traffic, heavy furniture, impact from falling objects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually have PEI rating of 0 or 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEI ratings between 2 and 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighter than floor tiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavier than wall tiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually more porous than floor tiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually denser than wall tiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen from a distance of 30 to 50cm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen from a distance of 150cm – 3 to 5 times further away than wall tiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't be used on floors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used on walls, with the right adhesive and tiling technique

Why are wall tiles often more **expensive**?

There are a number of reasons, related to both market and production requirements, that wall tiles are often pricier than floor tiles. Wall tiles are sold and manufactured in smaller quantities – this makes the production cost per tile more expensive. Because they're fashion items, customers expect more designs and options on the shop floor, which means higher design costs. The fashionable

nature of the product also means manufacturers must be ready to accommodate changing market needs, so smaller runs are necessary. In producing wall tiles, expensive glazes and larger quantities of glaze per m² must be used. Finally, as we noted earlier, stringent quality control is necessary for wall tiles, which requires a bigger, more skilled workforce.



Why to **avoid** using floor tiles on walls

Floor tiles can be used on walls, but not the other way around. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to avoid doing so:

- More expensive installation costs – strong adhesive is required, it's more labour-intensive, and a longer installation time is needed
- More expensive transport costs for heavier tiles
- Wider grouting gaps needed than for wall tiles – these are aesthetically undesirable, and grouting gaps are prone to cracking
- Square, large formats can look outdated and unfashionable on walls
- Limited range of decorative trims like borders (listellos) available to beautify the wall installation
- No complementary feature wall tiles are available for floor tiles, as there are for many wall tile ranges
- Makes for old-fashioned, monotonous, uninspired interiors



Tiling walls and floors **together**

There are a few things to be aware of when tiling both the walls and floor in a room.

1. Wall tiles are usually a shade lighter than floor tiles. Typically, a tile on the horizontal plane (floor) will look lighter than one on the vertical plane (wall). Decorating guidelines usually recommend using lighter colours for walls, since they make spaces appear wider.
2. Perfect alignment of grouting lines between wall tiles and floor tiles is often very difficult because of differences in grouting gaps and tile calibration.
3. A tile's format is no indication of possible application – rather, the technical specification in terms of glaze strength and scratch resistance should guide the choice of tile for your application, whether it's for a wall or floor.



Feature walls

Feature walls

Sometimes tiling an entire room in the same colour can leave you with a sterile, boring space. Feature walls are the perfect way to liven up a room, creating variety and a focal point in the room.

Thanks to the latest technology, Ceramic Industries is able to produce new, exciting feature wall tiles with attractive special effects.

Our innovative inks and glaze technology can give tiles striking surface effects, while 3D profiles can transform a room by adding texture. Going beyond visual beauty, these tiles encourage interaction and leave a lasting impression. Ceramic Industries also develops plain tiles to complement the feature tiles in our range, making it easy to decorate a room tastefully.

Guidelines for creating feature walls

To create a feature wall is to create a focal point in a room. Start by identifying an area in the room you want to draw attention to, keeping in mind the room's layout. Usually the first area in the room you look at as you enter is the one to choose for the focal point. Alternatively, choose an area that has special features you'd like to highlight, like a bath, a fireplace or a special piece of furniture. Finally, pair your feature tile with the matching plain tile or white tiles for inspirational contrast.

Bathroom

This is an opportunity to show off designer sanitaryware or other beautiful features in the bathroom.

- Behind a bath
Whether it's a built-in or freestanding bath, as the most glamorous sanitaryware item in the bathroom, it's usually the focal point in the room. Let it sparkle with an eye-catching feature wall behind it.
- Behind a toilet and bidet
This works especially well in a guest bathroom. Wow visitors by creating a special feature wall that leaves an impression.

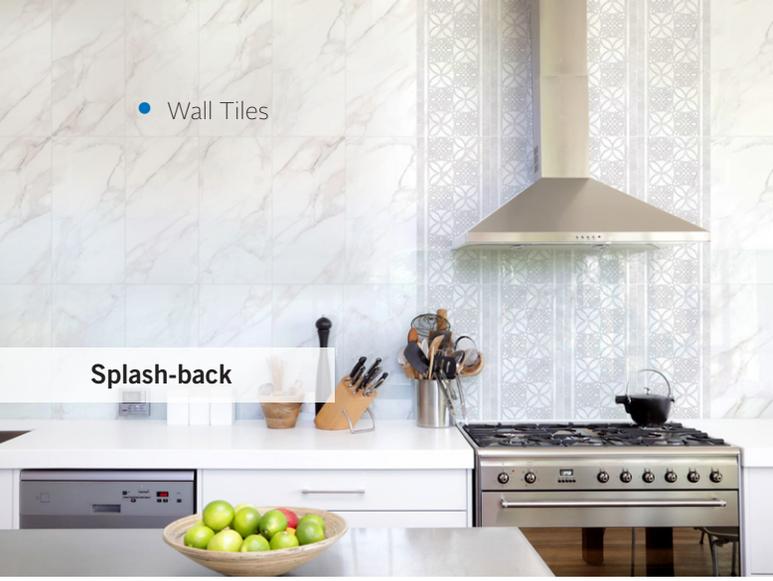


Behind a bath



Behind a toilet and bidet

Splash-back



- Behind a vanity unit or basin
Tile behind the vanity unit or basin, from floor to ceiling. But don't be restricted by the width of the bathroom furniture – extend the feature wall beyond the outer lines of the vanity or basin to create a dramatic effect.

- In a shower
Feature tiles work perfectly for the entire shower space. Alternatively, use feature tiles just on the wall with the shower head, and pair with plain tiles to create further emphasis.

Kitchen

- Splash-back areas behind sinks or counters can add colour, texture and character to a kitchen.
- A single, entire large wall is also good to turn into a feature wall, and works especially well for open-plan living, where it gives the kitchen area a feel of its own.

Lounge

- Behind the couch
Use the feature wall to create a cosy space behind the couch with a feature wall tile that complements the rest of the room's décor .
- Behind the TV unit
A feature wall can help to harmonise a hi-tech entertainment system with the other, natural elements in the room.
- Around the fireplace
Highlight an existing feature like a beautiful fireplace, and let its real character shine.

Bedroom

- Behind the bed
Add depth to a small room, create intimacy, or bring a little jazz to a boring bedroom.

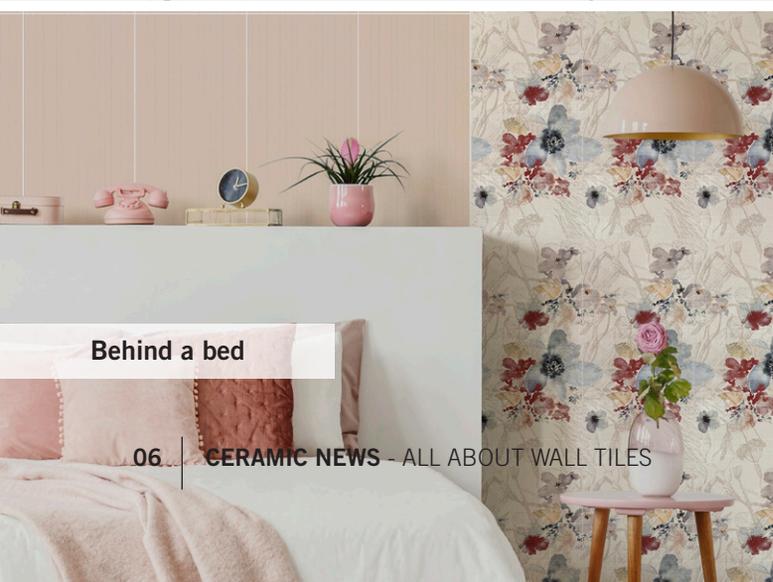
Behind a couch



Wallpaper



Behind a bed



DIFFERENT CONFIGURATIONS

feature walls



1

As a linear vertical panel



4

Listello and double listello effect

These strips can provide a visual break in a wide expanse. Double listellos can also help to frame certain features on the wall, like a niche shelf in a bathroom or a kitchen splashback made up of plain tiles.



2

Two vertical panels



3

The wallpaper effect – one entire wall in a room.



5

Random

Create a modern, striking feature wall with offset tiles that differ from each other but share a colour palette or a design element. It's a sure way to command attention.

Special-effect inks and glazes

Ceramic Industries is constantly innovating to create attractive new finishes for our wall tiles. Some of our new applications have been developed in collaboration with international partners, and use technology that's unique to South Africa.

Here are a few of the latest special effects that are being added to wall tile ranges from our SAMCA Wall and Gryphon factories:

Deep Etch

Also known as affondante (Italian for 'sinking'), this special-effect ink creates indentations in the areas to which it's applied. It's used mainly to create texture, or to outline a design pattern for greater emphasis. The Love, Atelier, Esagonetta ranges all make use of this ink effect.

Lumina

The Lumina effect is achieved by applying a lustrous, pearly type of ink to selected areas of the design. This special ink is used in the Flow Silver, Love and Ophelia ranges.

Nebula

This special ink is applied to selected areas on a shiny glazed surface. It can be used to create a 'lappato' effect (a honed or semi-polished surface) for a design pattern, or to emphasise wood-grain on a glossy wood-look tile.

Organic

This effect is achieved by applying Lustre ink to selected areas of the design, followed by a thick top-coat of hard, matt, grainy material. The ink reacts with the topcoat to create soft indentations and textures on the surface of the tile. It's ideal for reproducing the natural irregularities of stone, weathered cement and antique terracotta.



Stardust

The Stardust effect uses a very fine, sugary, crystal-like type of grit, which, when applied in different ways, produces a range of effects. By applying it with digital glue and a combination of Lumina and matt ink, it creates reliefs on selected areas of the designs that can be glossy, matt or metallic. It may be applied on a glossy glaze base and with digital glue on selected areas of the design to create a glossy relief, as on the Venato Silver Ribbon Feature. Or it may be used with on a matt ink for matt reliefs, as in the Mikado, Baroque, Graffiti, and Network feature tiles. The Venus range uses Stardust in the satin glaze and the digital glue with a combination of matt and Lumina inks to create both glossy and matt relief patterns.

Wall tiles are the high-fashion items of the ceramic tile world. They show off the most creative designs, and make use of innovative, precision production techniques. We hope that next time you look at a beautiful wall tile, you'll be able to appreciate the thought, care and technology that went into making it.

