

TILE Files

The latest news on transforming spaces with the best in ceramic, glass, stone, and more

By Tanya Zager Chisholm

MAKING A SPLASH: This pool room features MaxFine porcelain stoneware made in Italy. It's the only tile available in such a large size with reduced thickness (6 mm) and a fully polished surface. Available at Ciot, Troy.

Tile. It can totally transform the look and feel of a space. Whether muted and matte or shiny and colorful, tile adds punch, texture, style, and more. Considered a manufactured piece of hardwearing material such as ceramic, stone, metal, or glass, tile generally is used for covering floors, walls, showers, tabletops — you name it. It can show up in tiny mosaic form or in large, stately shapes.

There are several metro Detroit tile makers, experts, designers, distributors, installers, and retail outlets that can share worthwhile advice on what works best in which type of space. Here, a handful of professionals provide us with an update on tile trends, along with insights on some of their favorite installations.



MOTOR CITY'S MARK: Artists create tiles in the Pewabic studio. Its designs are embedded in Detroit's most iconic institutions, from the Detroit Zoo to the Detroit Institute of Arts to Comerica Park. "Our work is part of the fabric of Detroit," says Pewabic's Christina Devlin.

PEWABIC

Detroit

OLD AND NEW: "The process used to create our tile still starts the same way it did in 1903, and we create all of our own glazes," says Christina Devlin, Pewabic's senior director of product development and operations. "We fire our tile in gas and electric kilns; in the last two years, we've upgraded two kilns."

Fabrication methods are always evolving. "We're exploring 3-D modeling and printing, (and working) to understand its challenges and opportunities."

WHAT'S NOW: Complex geometric shapes like hexagon and harlequin are trending strong. "We're also adding a more contemporary line of tile focused on patterning, dimensionality, and shapes," Devlin says. Even with a modern spin, there's an inherent organic element to the tile.

GOOD NEWS: "We're partners with the Belle Isle Conservancy, (and remaking) the tile for the Scott Fountain. We're also anticipating the start of a

new mural with the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation," she reports. In other news, a mural created by Pewabic depicting Detroit's street map was purchased for the University of Michigan's Sociology Department. And if that isn't enough, the company has released a new Belle Isle tile as part of their architectural gift tile collection.

MOTOWN MAGIC: Pewabic is excited to have worked with such celebrities/Detroit natives as musician and Third Man Records (Nashville and Detroit) owner Jack White (black 3 by 3's for his home in Nashville). "It's always fun to work with someone of his stature."

UNUSUAL PROJECT: "A Texas client had an affinity for dragons. We used our fish scale tiles with a custom purple glaze, as well as harlequin tiles with an iridescent glaze. We created a design with a medieval effect," Devlin says.

INFORMATION: 313-626-2000, pewabic.org.

ANN SACKS

Michigan Design Center, Troy

TRENDING: "Super-large formats are starting to change," says DeeDee Gundberg, Ann Sacks' director of product development. "We're seeing smaller formats for flooring again, with a range of shapes to add visual interest — including chevron and hex motifs." She further notes that encaustic tiles are extremely popular right now, in both traditional designs as well as more modern options. Porcelain tiles continue to be the favorite.

COLOR CUES: There's a steady trend toward all shades of grey, in addition to white with pops of metallic for color.

FLOORED BY TILE: "With the popularity of porcelain tiles on the rise, we're seeing whole houses clad with porcelain tiles in lieu of wood floors," Gundberg

says. "The cost is comparable and the maintenance is minimal. That's the perfect combination for active families with kids and animals."

ON (AND OFF) THE WALL: "We had a very unusual installation once, where a client ordered 50 Wilshire soap dishes and installed them as a piece of artwork on the wall. I thought it was genius!"

INFORMATION: 248-643-3393, annsacks.com.

PATTERNS PLUS:

What's your fancy? Blues, blacks, circle themes, and more all adorn Ann Sacks tiles. For a glimpse of the company's Moroccan-style works, check out this issue's *Furnishings* department.



PEBBLE PRETTY — TAKE A LOOK

For a fresh tile idea in Clarkston, go to page 47 of this issue. The homeowners' master bath floor is a pebble motif, while the walls are Colonial White "wood" tile planks

from Genesee Tile in Burton. A relative newcomer, pebble tiles are said to have begun in Indonesia using pebbles found in various locales in the country. Today, the tiles use stones and pebbles from around the world.

STUDY UP — GO GREEN!

The gothic-style Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University) Union opened in 1925, and featured the works of tilemakers from Pewabic — most of the fireplaces in the

building were lined with Pewabic tiles. Also of interest: From 1965 to 1981, Pewabic was part of the university and was run as an outreach arm. MSU's involvement enabled Pewabic to save its historic building.



WHITE HOT: Auburn Hills-based Potawatomi Tile Works is turning out more and more lighter and brighter colors (above), like "whiter whites," says studio owner Kelly Schwanitz. Below, porcelain slabs from Grosse Pointe Stone Works complement an elegant bathroom.

POTAWATOMI TILE WORKS

Auburn Hills

ON THE EDGE: "We're creating handmade tiles with cleaner edges; they don't have to be rounded. This provides a completely different aesthetic feel," says Potawatomi Tile Works owner and lead artisan Kelly Schwanitz, whose studio is based in Auburn Hills. Further, "brighter whites give handmade tile an up-to-date look and offer endless possibilities in color blends," she says.

HISTORY LESSON: The company is seeing an

interest in tiles with historical design elements and repeating relief tile. Representatives also are noticing that handmade and commercial tiles are being used in combination, in ways they haven't seen before.

COLOR STORY: Handmade tile seems to be trending away from muted matte colors to lighter and brighter colors — like whiter whites.

BEYOND THE BATH: Tile is finding its way to specialty rooms, like potting sheds.

CATALOG COUP: The Sundance Catalog Company, owned by Robert Redford and known for its appreciation of handmade products, is in the process of opening two retail stores in Minnesota. Potawatomi's sales representative, Midtown Interior Finishes, connected them with JGA (the design firm working on the project) to develop a custom glaze palette and supply tile for part of the floor in the store.

"This is very exciting," Schwanitz says. "Tiles similar to those being installed at Sundance will be available for purchase through our distributors."

MEMORABLE INSTALLATION: A custom order for a historical home, which required the company to hand-mold the field and relief tile around the newel post of a stairway. The stair tread featured a custom-fitted radius tile that wrapped around the newel post. "The homeowner told us how thrilled she is every morning when she steps on that tile," Schwanitz says.

INFORMATION: Flooring Design Distributors, Michigan Design Center, Troy, 248-885-7725, and Midtown Interior Finishes, Detroit, 313-656-4300. potawatomitileworks.com.

GROSSE POINTE STONE WORKS

Grosse Pointe Woods

FIT FOR LIFE: Thin body porcelain slabs are fashionable 4' x 8' sheets of porcelain used on walls and countertops. This product resembles genuine marble and is easily installed without grout lines. "The beauty of this material," says showroom manager Karen MacLachlan, "is that the size gives you a slab look without the maintenance of real stone."

SIZING IT UP: 12" x 24" porcelain tiles, used on walls or as flooring, can make spaces look bigger. "The larger the tile, the less the grout lines, the bigger the space looks," she says. "You can also lay these tiles vertical, horizontal, or staggered like a wood plank look."

CROSSOVER COLOR: A popular color is "greige," she reports, "a cross between beige and grey; it's a very neutral palette to go along with all the vibrant accent colors."

BACK TO THE FUTURE: "Everything that was old style is coming back," MacLachlan observes. "What was an old pattern is reinvented just by making the pattern larger or mixing the materials. A classic basket weave that was once black-and-white marble may now be made with glass or crystal tiles, to update the look."

INFORMATION: 313-469-1125, grossepointestoneworks.com.



KIDS' ART

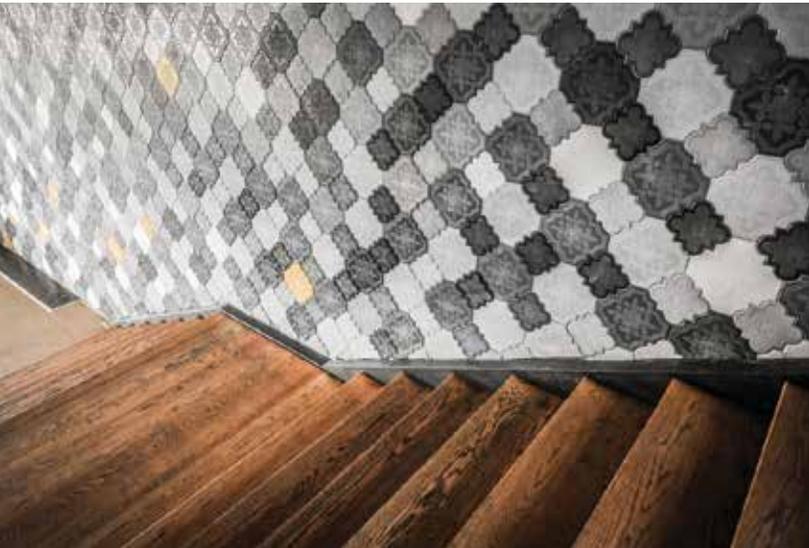
Not sure where to place your child's handmade tile art? See how a designer and homeowner incorporated a special tile into their kitchen design on page 61.

STORIED TILE

Like many elementary schools of the era, Birmingham's Barnum Elementary had a hearth-centered reading area for young children. Art tile potteries of the period specialized in designs

that featured childhood themes and nursery rhyme characters, and are commonly called "storybook" tile fireplaces. Barnum's was designed by the well-known Flint Faience & Tile Co., which produced

glazed ceramic tile from 1922-1933. Although the school was demolished, the tile has been restored and is installed for all to see at the Birmingham Historical Museum's Allen House. bhamgov.org



CHECK MATE: Ivanka Plaster tiles were created by the imaginative team at Ciot.

CIOT

Troy

TRENDING: “Really large format porcelain tiles and slabs are all the rage right now,” says Sylvia Shaba, of Ciot U.S. “They’re large (118” x 59”) and may be applied to floors or walls, simulating concrete, stone, and wood; we even have some slabs that come book-matched.” In addition, “we’re seeing a lot of softer textures, like the linen look.” Shaba also notices “unique shapes and sizes — chevron, herringbone, and a lot of planks up to 6 x 24 or 8 x 36.”

CRYSTAL-BALL INSIGHTS: Two-centimeter exterior porcelain pavers. “They can be raised installation, adhesive installation, or dry-set installation,” Shaba explains. “Both of these will be pretty big in the future, once they catch on.”

NOW COLORS: “Color is such a personal thing,” Shaba says, “but we definitely are seeing a lot of grey and white with our clients.”

INFORMATION: 248-288-8888, ciot.com.

HANDCRAFTED BEAUTY:

“We’ve been hand-making tile since 1992,” says Motawi Tileworks owner Nawal Motawi, “and while technology has certainly helped us in recent years with our execution, the actual making of the tile, shown at right, is fairly unchanged, and that’s the cool thing about Motawi.”



MOTAWI TILEWORKS

Ann Abor

STILL THE SAME: “We’ve been hand-making tile since 1992, and while technology has certainly helped us in recent years with our execution, the actual making of the tile is fairly unchanged, and that’s the cool thing about Motawi,” says Motawi founder and owner Nawal Motawi.

MID-CENTURY MIX: Motawi is noticing a surge in popularity with mid-century modern tiles. “We’re excited that many of our tiles fit into that trend,” Motawi says. They’re also seeing a boost in tiles made to resemble marble, “because real marble is fussy and it requires a lot of care, but porcelain made to look like marble is simple to own,” she says.

CRYSTAL-BALL INSIGHTS: “Huge formats. We saw a lot of unimaginably giant single tiles nearing 4’ to 8’ at the Coverings 2015 international tile show.”

GREAT GREYS: The Motawi team has observed that grey tile and all

its variations is coming on strong right now. “We have several glazes that fit into these color ranges, especially Rothwell Grey, Lichen, and Granite. These particular glazes are versatile enough to represent our roots as perfect glazes for arts and crafts-style designs and also mid-century modern designs,” Motawi says.

GLOBAL INFLUENCES: Look for Motawi’s new all-over patterns, with Latin influences, coming soon.

MAKING AN ENTRY: “One of our most memorable installations was in a house in Decatur. The spectacular use of color on the entryway floor (forms a carpet of tile that leads the eye, eventually, to a stunning fireplace.”

NATION STATION: “Our most unusual installation is a mural of all of the flags from the United Nations,” at the University of Michigan Dearborn campus. “It’s updated to reflect current politics,” Motawi says.

INFORMATION: 734-213-0017, motawi.com.

WORKSPACE

This office promises productivity — and it's a nice spot to daydream

By Tanya Zager Chisholm

TUTTO INTERIORS



WHO: Based in Northville, award-winning interior designer Cheryl Nestro, left, is recognized locally and internationally for her work. She studied interior design in Detroit at the College for Creative Studies, but attributes her greatest education to her 15 years of experience. While she has a keen eye for detail and proportion, she also has a passion for beautiful things. Nestro merges traditional, transitional, and modern without declaring allegiance to any particular style, making her a leader in the industry. She is the recipient of 30 Detroit Home Design Awards.

INFO: 248-348-8886, tuttointeriors.com



MADE FOR A WOMAN

This Howell residence office was planned with feminine touches in mind, as it's the workspace for the wife. "The home is on a very grand scale, so in planning for this room, I had to be sure it would be substantial, yet have a feminine touch," says designer Cheryl Nestro. As she did here, when Nestro begins to design an office, she often asks, Will the space be multipurpose, for both sitting and office work? "Most spaces aren't completely thought through," she says. (Not shown here is the room's sitting area.)

"A shag rug adds a comfortable touch."
— Cheryl Nestro



AWESOME AGATE: Omari sculpture, \$240, arteriorshome.com. "A perfect accessory to sit on top of, or beside, stacked books."



PRETTY PRACTICAL: Vanguard Burrell ottoman (not shown in room photo), price upon request, vanguardfurniture.com.



TEXTURE & PATTERN: Clockwise from upper left — Ottoman's Donghia Torero reversible fabric, price upon request; Ghiordes Knot Couristan rug in Killington Cocoa, price upon request; F. Schumacher & Co. window treatment fabric, price upon request; and Fairfield chair fabric — Avant Garde, Rivoli, \$74/yd.



THE WRITE STUFF: Sherrill Occasional Masterpiece Collection writing desk, \$4,050, to the trade. "It has a mirrored finish — perfect for the space, as I did not want the classic wood-finished desk," Nestro says.

STUDY, UP ON DÉCOR

Crack the books in a cool homework space or dorm room that's sure to make the grade and inspire good marks. Here, our favorite stylish. *Styled by Tanya Zager Chisholm*



Stuva loft bed, \$459, Ikea, Canton, ikea.com.



Stay Focused notebook, \$12.95, Paper Source, Birmingham, papersource.com.



Clint mini task lamp, \$99, West Elm, Birmingham, westelm.com.



Carved Horizon planters, \$35/ea., West Elm, Birmingham, westelm.com.



Heck Yeah! note book, \$9.95, Paper Source, Birmingham, papersource.com.



Busy files set of six, \$14.95/set, Paper Source, Birmingham, papersource.com.



Kate Spade oblong throw pillow, \$50, Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.com.



Quick-Dry bath towel six-piece set, \$84/set, area JCPenney stores, jcp.com.



Comfort Research Big Joe bean bag dorm chair, \$56, Brookstone, Troy, brookstone.com.



Skalberg Sporren swivel chair, \$39.95, Ikea, Canton, ikea.com.



Kate Spade New York Random Dot square throw pillow, \$50, Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.com.



Kate Spade New York Vase throw pillow, \$90, Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.com.



Kate Spade New York This is the Life throw pillow, \$50, Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.com.



Kate Spade New York Ampersand square pillow, \$50, Bed Bath & Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.com.

WILL POWER



One more thing to pack for the dorm room: a little lamb

IT ALL STARTED WHEN Cathie Rourke's mother-in-law, Madeline, was injured in a serious car accident. Her son (Rourke's husband, Paul) gave her a nondescript stuffed animal while she was in the hospital to help her through her daily challenges; Rourke explains that her mother-in-law found the little animal to be quite comforting.

After her mother-in-law was back home and fully recovered, Rourke — a Bloomfield Township resident and busy mother of three, shown above — was inspired to create a stuffed animal called Will that can be passed from person to person as needed.

"Will is a little lamb," says Rourke, a marketing manager in the financial industry. "It seemed like the right animal — not showy or attention-getting." Rourke and a small team of creatives developed a sturdy "Traveler's Box" for Will and a *Life with Will* journal for sharing greetings and documenting journeys. In addition, a heartfelt book, *Will Found a Way*, by Rourke, describes Will's path and his powers for bringing strength to others just by being there. (The book is illustrated by Pete Moreau of Clarkston, and the book and box designs are by Ilya Hardey of Beverly Hills.) "Will helps people get through life's difficulties," says Rourke, who even managed to persuade Dr. Ben Carson, professor emeritus of neurosurgery, Johns Hopkins Medicine, to write the introduction.

"I think Will could be great for kids at college. Going to college can be a challenge. Will was designed to go wherever he's needed, to bring comfort to others. He can even be secretly tucked into college gear, along with notes from family and friends that can be placed in the *Life with Will* journal, to help the student feel connected from afar." Hundreds of Wills are traveling through Michigan and he's been delivered to folks across the country. "People have even taken him on journeys to Prague, in the Czech Republic," Rourke says, "and Paris, France." willfoundaway.com — Megan Swoyer

