



ReVISION House™ Orlando 2011



Manufacturer: Italian Tile

Category: Tile

Natural Winner

ReVISION House™ designer calls Ceramics of Italy a clear choice for green flooring.

One of the first impressions a visitor gets when walking into the ReVISION House™ Orlando is the tile flooring. All the common areas – from the covered patio, to the baths, to the kitchen and living areas – are surfaced with ceramic tiles imported from Italy. The reasons for choosing this product were aesthetic and environmental.

Ceramics of Italy, the trademark of Confindustria Ceramica (the Italian Association of Ceramics), together with the Italian Trade Commission, and the Italian Ministry of Economic Development sponsored the ReVISION House with the help of nine Italian manufacturers including Casa Dolce Casa, Emilceramica, Floorgres, Cooperative Ceramica Imola, Marazzi, Ragno, Refin, Trend, and Mapei.

Interior designer Pat Gaylor loved the inherent beauty of Italian tile products, as well as the nearly unlimited design choices they offered. Italian tile also satisfies all of her criteria for a green product: it takes advantage of recycled materials, it contributes to good indoor air quality, and it's affordable.

Italian tile products are continually increasing their use of pre and post-consumer recycled content. For example, the back-splash tile in the kitchen of the ReVISION House Orlando uses a percentage of glass from recycled bottles. Additionally, discarded cathode ray tubes (CRT's) from TV monitors, considered to be one of the most difficult types of electronic waste to recycle, are also re-used in some of the tile products. Manufacturers of Italian tile incorporate recycled water and raw waste in their production process and packaging is often 100% recyclable.

Some of the tiles in the home have slim formats, which require less energy and raw materials to produce, and because more tiles can be shipped in each container or truck, they generate less harmful emissions per square foot of tile during transport. The slim format can also be installed over existing tile. "That helps keep old tile out of the landfill," says Gaylor.

Ceramic tile has an average expected life of 50 years and a cost per year of about .33 cents per square foot compared to vinyl composition tile with an expected life of ten years and a cost per year per square foot of \$1.83¹. "One of the great things about ceramic tile is its longevity and durability," says Gaylor. "It costs virtually nothing to maintain. It performs well, cleans well, and doesn't require replacement for a very long time."

Gaylor insisted that none of the surfaces in the home have problems with chemical off gassing. "I think that indoor air quality is probably one of the most important things to a buyer regarding green design," she says. As an inherently inert material containing no VOC's, Italian tile was a clear winner here.

Tile won't absorb odors from smoke, paint fumes or other contaminants, so there's no worry about it taking on an unpleasant smell. Many of the grouts and adhesives produced by leading Italian manufacturers are solvent-free and non-flammable. And Italian manufacturers are patenting ceramics with an antimicrobial mineral embedded into the body of the tile making it ideal for use in sterile environments.

With Italian tiles you can add a lot of color and style to a space for very little money. According to Gaylor, the ceramic tile in the ReVISION House was very reasonably priced, with some of it costing as little as \$8 per square foot.

The bottom line? "It's a material that gives you a lot of bang for your buck," she says. That's obviously true in more ways than one.

¹ 2005 Tile Council of North America Report