

## Ceramics: One of the Many Facets of Italian Creativity

N. L. (May 29, 2013)



With the booth Ceramics of Italy, 8 Italian producers once again drew crowds in its 5th year participating in the International Contemporary Furniture Fair. Sponsored by Confindustria Ceramica and the Italian Trade Promotion Agency with support from the Italian Trade Commission of NY, they were showcasing the latest introductions in Italian tile.

“Used on the floors of our homes, in our kitchens, living rooms and bathrooms or around swimming pools, Italian ceramic tiles are a familiar presence in our day-to-day lives. But how much do we really know about them? If we had to purchase tiles for a new home or a renovation project, would we have all the necessary information to choose the tiles that are most suited to our needs?” These are just a few questions that Franco Manfredini, Chairman of Confindustria Ceramica (the Italian Association of Ceramics producers) had for the guests of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF).

With the booth Ceramics of Italy, 8 Italian producers once again drew crowds in its 5th year participating in the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (from May 18-21) at the Jacob K. Javits

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Center in New York City.

Sponsored by Confindustria Ceramica and the Italian Trade Promotion Agency (ICE) with support from the Italian Trade Commission (ICE's New York office). Booth #1432 served as a multi-brand exhibit featuring eight popular Italian tile manufacturers: Atlas Concorde, Cooperativa Ceramica d'Imola, Fap Ceramiche, Florim, Refin, Sant'Agostino, Settecento, and Tagina.

It also included a special exhibit on the Ceramics of Italy Tile Competition, celebrating 20 years of exemplary projects by North American architects and designers using Italian ceramics.

The institutional booth was a wellspring of design inspiration, showcasing the latest introductions in Italian tile. With each collection, manufacturers continue to push the envelope in terms of design and production, transforming ceramic and porcelain into wood, marble, concrete—even paper!—using advanced technologies and eco-friendly manufacturing processes.

"We are proud as always to present, once again, what our Italian ceramic manufacturers can do," Pier Paolo Celeste, the new Trade Commissioner for North America at the Italian Trade Commission New York office said, "Italian creativity is a leading character not only of the most recognized sectors, such as fashion and food, but it goes beyond that... Italians apply their creativity to all sorts of objects, to everything they do. So right here, right now we are offering our best to a market that is expanding greatly. Mortgage loans are more affordable and people are more willing to buy, their desire to invest in the future is growing and we are always ready to present them with the best Italian products... in this case with ceramics."

"Creativity is always linked to innovation and to technology so we bring to the American market - distributors, importers and consumers - our best," the Commissioner continued, "Maybe our prices are a bit higher, but our products are more durable, they last over time."

Amongst the many ceramic tiles producing countries worldwide, the Italian tile industry enjoys an unchallenged world leadership position. A number of factors have contributed to this success. Since the 1950s, Italy has pioneered all industrial-level product innovation in the ceramic tile sector. It developed single-fired tiles, then porcelain and most recently super thin and large format tiles, its unflagging research efforts leading to successive generations of ever more advanced products. This progress has gone hand in hand with advances in the field of ceramic tile technology, another sector that originated and developed in Italy.

Italy has a deeply-rooted culture of beauty. It is home to a lion's share of the world's cultural heritage, its language is the language of music, and Italian fashion and food are renowned all over the world. This cultural sensibility is also expressed as a flair for product development and an innate ability to recognize and reproduce beauty, spawning new aesthetic trends in the world of ceramics. This natural creativity has driven the expertise that has long been the trademark of Italian ceramic production, from old artisanal workshops to modern factories. It is this passion for aesthetics and craftsmanship that has been the force behind the industry's success.

"Thanks to this partnership with Confindustria Ceramica we have the best the market offers," Celeste concluded, "we don't have to go out there and search for them."

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