

New technologies at Coverings include much thinner tiles



Jeff welcomes your comments. He can be reached via e-mail at GoldenJ@bnpmedia.com, or you can write him in care of *NFT*.

The Coverings show in Orlando late last month offered a glimpse of the future of ceramic tile and stone in the U.S. The show was well-attended, and included some important educational opportunities.

New this year was Project: Green, highlighting residential and commercial green projects. The show also offered more than 70 free educational sessions during the four-day event for retailers, contractors, installers, distributors, designers and architectural specifiers.

The buzz on the exhibit floor was about thinner tiles. Porcelain wall tiles are definitely going to become thinner – much thinner than the current 12 mm. The future will be between 3-7 mm and offer manufacturers an immediate savings in transportation and raw material costs.

As long as costs are taken out, everyone in the supply chain will win along with the buyer/consumer. The thin tiles can also be installed directly over the existing floor or wall covering, while avoiding demolition on the job-site. Wall tiles will also be able to be made larger and will be easier to handle on the job-site.

At this time only a limited number of manufacturers have installed equipment to produce the sleek product. They include: Lea Ceramiche, Cotto D'Este, Kale, and Inalco. Other companies have already added this new technology or are in the process.


Floor tiles (reinforced with a sheet of fiberglass) in the same 3-7 mm thickness are just around the corner. Materials are now being tested to provide a successful installation. However, a rush to market should not occur without adequate testing. Failure of any product installed will leave the flooring industry with a negative image.

Other notable products I saw on the show floor were Stoneskin, a 4 mm stone mosaic tile from Stonexpress, in both peel & stick and traditional installed; and Homax Spray & Set Wall Tile Adhesive.

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