

## GUIDE TO SELECTING HANDMADE CEMENT TILES

*What to look for – and look out for – when purchasing handmade cement tile*

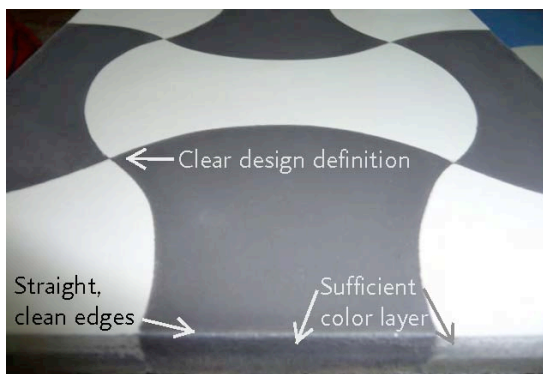
When made well, handmade cement tiles are sensational. They form beautiful patterns that look like sumptuous carpets when installed. They can last a lifetime *or* two and are easy to maintain.

Sounds great, doesn't it? It is, *IF you buy a high quality tile*. You see, not all cement and concrete tiles are created equal. Cement tiles are handmade typically in small factories. Conditions, materials and quality control vary significantly from company to company.



### QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A HANDMADE CEMENT TILE:

- ✓ **Consistent thickness of the tile.** Most are in the neighborhood of 5/8".



- ✓ **Clear design definition.** The design (if there is one) should have clear definition between areas.
- ✓ **Consistency and depth of colors.** The colors are true and consistent from one tile to the next. (A small amount of color variation is normal.)
- ✓ **Straight, clean edges.** These allow the grout to stay between the tiles and not over them.
- ✓ **Integrity of tile.** It should feel strong and solid and not crumbly.
- ✓ **Sufficient color layer.** The top color layer should be approximately 1/8" thick.

### PROBLEMS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN A HANDMADE CEMENT TILE:

*Visible Problems:*

- ➔ **Varying thicknesses of tile** that make them hard to install evenly – from lack of consistency in production process
- ➔ **Design is blurry** – from pouring pigment sloppily or from a mold that has not been calibrated (made so that it sits completely flat on the steel plate)
- ➔ **Major variations with the same color** – inaccurate measuring of color pigments or poor quality pigments
- ➔ **Major chipping around the edges** – weak mixture or poor quality control

## GUIDE TO SELECTING HANDMADE CEMENT TILES

- **Crumbly on the back** (weak tile) – from inconsistent hydraulic pressure or too much sand in the mixture
- **Thin color layer** (less than 1/8" thick) – from pouring inadequate color paste into the mold.

### *Invisible Problems:*

- **Ratio of cement to sand** – without the right ratio, the tile will not be strong and durable
- **Quality of the pigments** – if cheap pigments are used, colors may fade (even high quality blues and greens will fade in direct sun)



When in doubt, ask for Engineering Test Reports performed by an outside testing agency (not the tile manufacturer). The most common ones are Abrasion Resistance, Absorption, and Coefficient of Friction. These tests are performed based on uniform standards set by ASTM International, formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials. They are a good, objective way to insure that specific standards are being met.

## FINAL WORDS OF PRACTICAL ADVICE

Remember that this is a **HANDMADE PRODUCT** and not machined and mass-produced. Look for **quality** but *not perfection*. Let the minor variations in the tiles remind you that you have something unique and beautiful.

Handmade cement tiles from one quality producer will never look exactly the same as those made by another quality manufacturer. Different aggregates and pigments mixed into the tiles' upper color layer produce varied appearances. This is part of the beauty of mastercrafted cement tiles. Find the look you love and go with it.

## GUIDE TO SELECTING HANDMADE CEMENT TILES

### **About Granada Tile**

Based in Los Angeles, Granada Tile creates sensational, handmade, eco-friendly cement and concrete tiles. Working closely with architects, interior designers and homeowners, Granada Tile strives to capture the customer's creative vision through cement tile.

Top tier designers and architects (including Tihany Design, Zeff Design, BaMo, Shubin + Donaldson, and Bestor Architecture) have selected Granada Tile for their resorts, spas, restaurants, and offices. Homeowners and interior designers have chosen Granada Tile for their kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms, pools, patios on the floors and walls.