

Exterior surfaces with Tile of Spain

Practical aesthetics: Extensive possibilities allow architects to personalise exterior environments with the creative application of tiles.

Architects in Spain and southern Europe have long appreciated the multiple benefits of tiles for outdoor surfaces. Whether for terraces, balconies, patios or building facades, porcelain offers high-tech performance combined with the latest and most alluring finishes. Now there's a steady increase in demand for ceramic surfaces in the UK as the availability of specialist exterior solutions widens and the popularity of segueing interior to exterior space grows - a concept made easier with the virtues of porcelain.

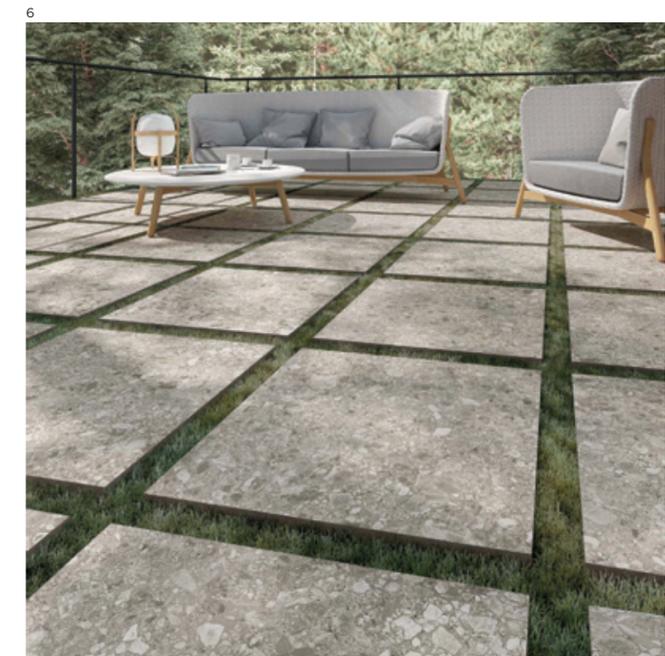
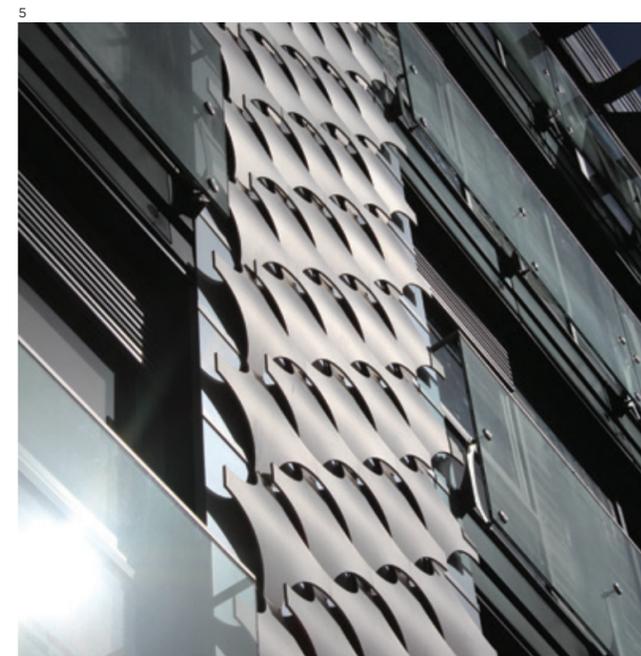
Suited to interior or exterior application, porcelain tiles benefit from a near-zero absorption rate making them frost-proof and ideal for the UK climate. Used as cladding, tiles sympathetically complement our vernacular style of architecture - for example, brick - while broadening scope for innovation in design.

Many Spanish manufacturers make special pieces for building facades, such as tiles in a variety of 3D shapes. There are also large-format slabs with impressively life-like digitally printed effects such as Corten, stone, wood or cement. Even the traditional approach of using multiples of small glazed tiles is finding an enthusiastic fan-base.

When it comes to exterior flooring, ceramics offer unrivalled benefits. As an alternative to concrete slabs on balconies and terraces, porcelain surfaces enable distinctive design possibilities while solving many functional concerns.

Today, there are also many more anti-slip tiles on the market, which is an important factor when selecting a flooring surface in a country with wet weather. A further benefit is the availability of the new 20mm thick tiles which facilitate the installation of tiles outside where a concrete substructure is not used. A number of tile brands offer products in complementary colours and sizes for both interior and exterior, making it simple to create a seamless effect from, say, kitchen to patio. Easy to maintain and durable in high-traffic areas, tiles often are the best solution.

More information is available at www.tileofspain.com. And if you've completed a project with Spanish tiles, enter the Tile of Spain awards for Interior Design & Architecture www.tileofspainawards.com



1 Large-format high-tech porcelain slab by Grespania in a Corten effect. www.grespania.com

2 Everglow, a wood-effect porcelain plank by Rocersa, works well on a patio. www.rocersa.es

3 Terranova Crema by Casainfinita is ideal for outdoor areas that need anti-slip surfaces. www.kerabengruppo.com

4 Glazed porcelain tiles by Ceramicas Calaf make an eye-catching façade for a hotel. www.ceramicascalaf.com

5 3D porcelain shapes by Land Porcelanico are used for cladding on this residence. www.landporcelanico.com

6 Ceppo di Gre in a 20mm thickness by Vives is suitable for installing without a concrete substructure. www.vivesceramica.com