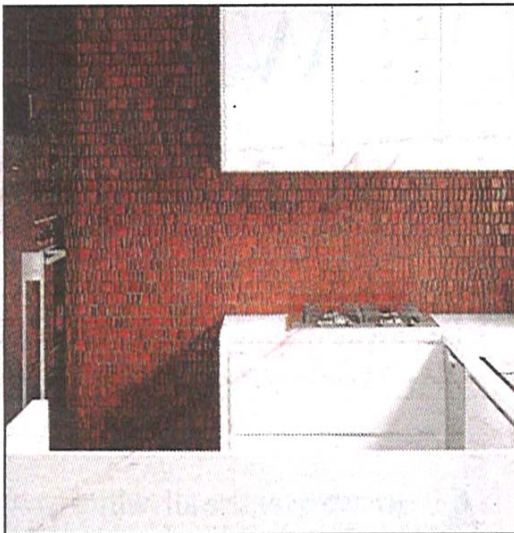


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Weekend Business



A fresh approach

Andrea D'Cruz used handmade red tiles as a splashback to "create a sense of drama" in a black and white kitchen.

"The shape of the red tiles gives a textured effect, which provided a perfect contrast to the crisp white and high-gloss black finishes."

D'Cruz ran the splashback over the rest of the kitchen wall to continue the look.

Today's tiles pack a punch of colour

Tiling doesn't have to be conventional, writes
Cynthia Karena.

TILES are often underestimated for their ability to add depth and brightness to kitchens and bathrooms.

"These days, tiles are beautiful, textural and interesting," says Tina Di Lorenzo, of Di Lorenzo Tiles. "The extra glaze on tiles gives a 3D effect, and the reflected light gives you a beautiful illuminated surface."

Di Lorenzo has recently returned from Italy, where she looked at the latest in tiles. "Colour is back, especially in the kitchen. Red is still a strong colour there."

"In Italy I saw a lot of patterned tiles, but the patterns are more subtle in the bathroom than the kitchen. In the next six months I expect to see a lot of patterned tiles in Australia."

Handmade Spanish pattern tiles are fashionable, says Di Lorenzo, as

'Who wants their bathroom to look like a public toilet?'

are "quirky" random patterns where people can mix and match to make their own patterns. Tiles can also be laid vertically to create interest.

Andrea D'Cruz, director of interior design company RLD, used turquoise tiles "for a punch of colour" in a dull laundry. "We're seeing brave expressions of colour, but still



Square finish ... (clockwise from above) D'Lorenzo's Italian recycled glass mosaic tiles; red brightens a striking white Woolahra kitchen; and hand-made beauties from Spain.

not as widely used as neutrals, which remain a safe option.

"But neutrals or colour, everything goes. It's very much working with the unique space." In the beachside suburb of Dee Why, D'Cruz used a dusty blue elongated mosaic in the bathroom.

"There's also a lot of lovely tiles cut into the shape of a pattern, where the tile is shaped for example, as a teardrop. It's cleverly shaped to fit together so the grout is even."

Colour always adds interest to a wall, and tiles are no different, says Greg Natale of Greg Natale Design. "Neutrals are boring. One job I worked on has a turquoise splash-



back with a textural pattern in a white kitchen. It looks stunning. The same house has a chocolate brown patterned mosaic bathroom."

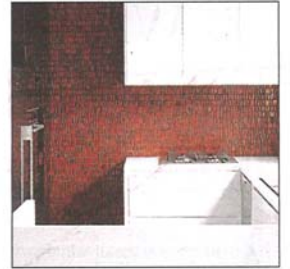
In another project, Natale laid black and white tiles in a striking zig zag pattern on a bathroom floor.

"Plain is out. Who wants their bathroom to look like a public toilet?"

Natale suggests using a colour for tiles that is on the classic side, because "you'll probably be stuck with it for 20 years".

Classic colours, such as turquoise, chocolate, or burnt orange don't date, he says. "Lime is not a classic colour. It's a hard colour to be sophisticated or elegant. If you want lime, you could introduce some lime perspex bowls."

"There is a big trend in huge slabs of tiles. I did the bathroom in my apartment with large black slabs and hardly any grout. It's easy to clean."



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Neutral coloured tiles have adopted texture, says Tina Di Lorenzo.

For example, cement tiles can be stamped with patterns to add texture and colour. "Concrete tiles with timber impressions are used for an industrial look." Different textured surfaces add interest to a kitchen or bathroom. "Lots of clients want hand-painted cement tiles for bathroom floors, and white porcelain tiles on the walls."

"Replica timber-look tiles for bathrooms are still a strong trend. "But rather than copying timber, which looks too fake, they are now looking more worn-in and more interesting."

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