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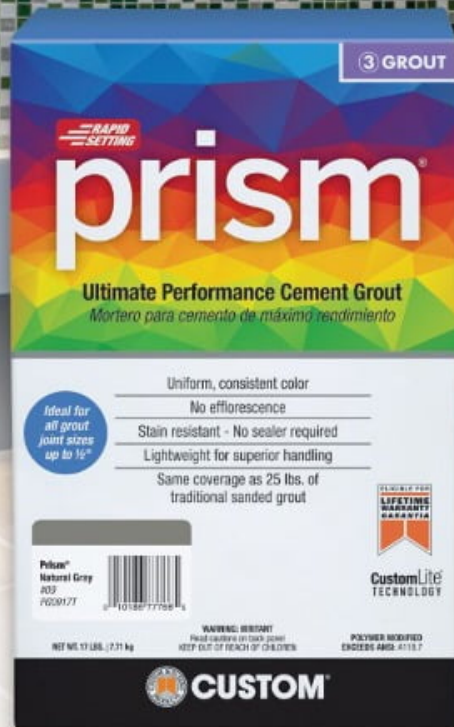
CONTEMPORARY STONE & TILE DESIGN

Summer 2021 Volume 28, No. 3
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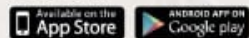
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Sculptor Darrell Petit collaborated with landscape architecture firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) to create a 60-ton granite sculpture, "Event," at the entrance to Four Seasons Hotel & Private Residences, One Dalton Street in Boston, MA. Crafted from Stony Creek and Barre Gray granite, the architectural piece is the ultimate example of designing with natural stone. To learn more about the project, scroll to the story "A sculptural urbanscape."

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From the Editor

Jennifer Richinelli, Editorial Director, richinellij@bnpmedia.com

A Time For Opening Up

Spring is a time associated with rebirth. For those of us living in northern states, we welcome the smell of fresh cut grass and taking time to plant flowers and vegetable gardens. This year in particular, spring has started with promising signs. After living through the pandemic for the last year, it is exciting to see things opening up more and resuming some “normalcy” in our lives.

Personally, I am thrilled to be hitting the road again after more than a year. Two of the largest trade shows for the stone and tile industries are holding in-person events. By the time this eMagazine is published, I will have already attended the International Surface Event (TISE) in Las Vegas, NV, and getting ready to visit Coverings in Orlando, FL. Understandably, these shows will not have the attendance as in years past, but it is certainly the first step to getting back up and running at full capacity in 2022. It has been long overdue for industry members to get together to introduce new products, share ideas and network. I am looking forward to reuniting face-to-face with my industry friends. Be sure to follow our social media platforms and check our website regularly to see what these events had to offer.

Getting out to meet people – whether visiting a quarry, project or trade event – has always been one of the favorite parts of my job. In this issue, we feature a magnificent sculptural piece created by Darrell Petit, a longtime industry friend of mine. I have met up with Darrell at many trade shows around the world throughout the years, and have visited Stony Creek Quarry several times. It is always amazing to me to see stone in its raw state and how it is transformed to the finished product. You can read more about Darrell’s sculpture, “Event,” which is showcased at the entrance to Four Seasons Hotel & Private Residences, One Dalton Street in Boston, MA, in this eMagazine. Additionally, there are two in-depth Q&As – one with Darrell and one with landscape architect Laura Solano of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) – featured on our website.

In this edition, we also offer some insight into the world of large-format porcelain slabs and highlight a collection of the latest product introductions in quartz surfacing, sintered stone and porcelain slabs.

I hope everyone enjoys their summer and having the opportunity again to get out and meet your clients and peers.

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A sculptural urbanscape

A 60-ton granite sculpture, "Event," forms a captivating entrance to Four Seasons Hotel & Private Residences, One Dalton Street in Boston, MA

by Jennifer Richinelli

Photos by Sean Kernan

Four Seasons Hotel & Private Residences, One Dalton Street is among the newest buildings enhancing Boston's skyline. Standing 61 stories high, the tower – featuring an urban chic design – is the city's third tallest building and the tallest residential building in New England. Taking center stage of the urban landscape located at the entrance of the residential building is "Event," a stone sculpture crafted by sculptor Darrell Petit of Darrell Petit LLC and Stony Creek Quarry Inc. Petit was commissioned by landscape architecture firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) of Cambridge, MA. The building design was the creation of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners of New York, NY.

"Event" – comprised of two Stony Creek granite elements of a combined weight of 50 tons joined in dynamic connection of interdependence and grounded by a third 12-ton interlocking element of Barre Grey granite – measures 15 feet, 6 inches high x 12 feet wide x 16 feet long.

Petit explained that the sculpture's configuration enables a multiplicity of views from all angles and perspectives of the site. "A physical tension becomes manifest as one experiences the enormous forces that are in balance with each other," he said. "A viewer might be led to personify the stones by taking the point of view of each coming to the conclusion that the stones represent the dynamic of a human partnership."

"The overall approach to the landscape focused on its appeal and usefulness to the people who would use it in their every-day lives," said Laura Solano, partner at MVVA. "The landscape stands on its own, making it unnecessary to respond to the large scale of One Dalton. Boston is architecturally traditional and the adjacent 19th Century townhouses echo that, but the 1970s era Christian Science Center's administrative offices are in the style of Brutalist architecture, and the new Four Seasons/One Dalton's tower is sleek and taught. In this case, the landscape was used to unify design eras, to be the meeting ground between residents, workers and hotel visitors, and to add more greenspace to this part of the town."

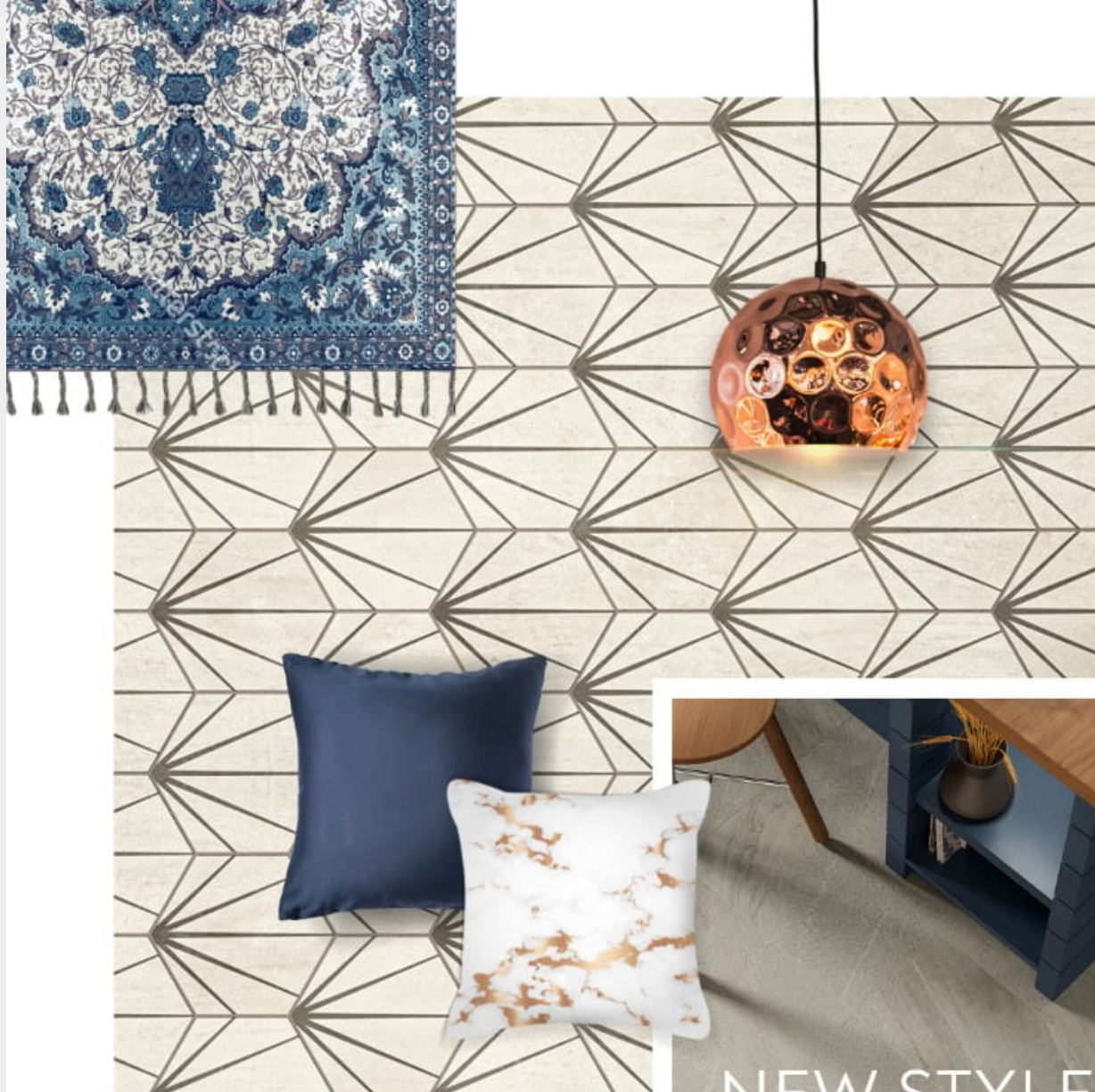


"Event" is sited where pedestrians and vehicles overlap; it is experienced differently from every approach, according to Petit. "Topography plays a subtle but important role in defining and differentiating its spatial envelope by elevating it 18 inches above the surrounding grade, which reinforces its monumentality," he said. "This soft mound within the planter is approximately 28 feet long x 15 feet, 6 inches wide. It was also just enough to mask the sculpture's foundation and to increase soil volume for plants."



"The monumentality, bold forms and surface textures of "Event" called for a quiet and consistent treatment at its base," Petit went on to say. "Plants offered a complementary, but unassuming solution. Monroe's White Lily Turf (Liriope muscari 'Monroe's White) forms an evergreen mat at the base of Event and was selected for its strap-like, arching, dark leaves and tolerance of urban conditions. It grows to about 12 to 18 inches tall in tiered whorls with subtle white flowers in late summer."

"Event has become an iconic form in the project," said Solano. "Although it was conceived to serve the residential entry, the sculpture is visible from every direction. It catches the eye from near and far, changing with light, season and aspect. Although it is not a landscape in a traditional sense, its quiet complexity shares all the best aspects of nature."



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A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Sintered Stone Provided The Beauty And Durability Required For The Interior And Exterior Design Of A Year-Round Vacation Retreat Nestled On The Shoreline Of Canada's Lake Huron

Located on the shoreline of Lake Huron, one of the five Great Lakes, is an awe-inspiring 17,222-square-foot second home in cottage country, approximately one hour from London, Ontario. The lake "cottage" – although in reality, far from your average getaway – serves as a retreat by its owners throughout the year, for all three generations of the family to enjoy. In order to create a striking contemporary space, Neolith, a pioneering brand of sintered stone, was specified for both the exterior and interior of the residence. The homeowners requested a space that was durable, versatile, low maintenance and visually captivating from the inside out.



As far as the eye can see

The architects and designers, Mark Bullivant and Johan Basson at SAOTA in Cape Town, South Africa, in collaboration with Steven Cooper and Phil Sharron at London, Ontario-based firm matter architectural studio inc., were faced with a significant challenge from the get-go when they took on this project. "When you first arrive at the location, you can't see the lake right away because the site sits on a bluff, occupying a transitional space between the water and acres of forest land," said Bullivant. "We therefore wanted to make sure that the first moment you see the lake has a real impact."

Conceptually, the architects stacked a series of rectangular boxes to embed the building into the ground plane, and suspended one overhead so that the living level could exist in between.

They then placed an indoor-outdoor volume to the south in order to anchor the building and allow the various spaces to capitalize on the views. The architects have designed it so the setting sun creates a dramatic view from the living room in the summer. Moreover, the spaces within the home are fluid, yet well structured, ensuring the house has a casual effortless feel – a big driver given the home was built for the entire family to relax and entertain.



Durable and beautiful

Neolith was specified throughout the interior home design in collaboration with distributing partners, Marble Trend and Ontario Panelization. The material was employed for all the flooring, bathrooms, kitchen ceiling, several corridors and the stairwell, which is three stories high.

The interior color palette is a subtle representation of the exterior, with a strategic balance of light and dark. While Strata Argentum was selected for the floors, Krater was chosen to achieve the blackened metal aesthetic of the fireplaces and external screens.

The seamless continuity of material from the inside out was further aided by Stone and Textures artist, Eva Chylinski, who hand-painted the edges of each surface to match its pattern.

"Materiality is a key pillar of our design ethos, in that we constantly seek to create interest and expression in our buildings through the products we use," said Basson of SAOTA, speaking on the overall design concept. "Faced with the challenge of working in an environment as demanding as this one, the product choice and its longevity were critical. Our main goal was to build a home that could withstand Canada's weather conditions, while also being beautiful. When the client, in collaboration with Ontario Panelization, introduced us to Neolith, we immediately fell in love with the brand and its wide variety of high-quality finishes, as well as, of course, its durability."



Withstanding the outdoor elements

Outdoors, the entire exterior of the home is clad in Neolith. A total of 21,000 square feet of the material was specified for the Ceramitex Facade System utilizing the proprietary Unity Attachment Technology by Elemex and installed by Ontario Panelization. Here, architects Bullivant and Basson used lighter hue creamy Strata Argentum to blend in with the snowy landscape in the winter and bright skies in the summer, and the darker charcoal Nero Zimbabwe to match the lower-level forest and the rest of the surrounding environment.

The home's design is unique – both in its appearance and its construction – as it was designed in the same way a encapsulate the warmth of a, due to its size and complexity. However, with its sleek lines and earthy tones, it still manages to encapsulate the warmth of a, due to its size and complexity. However, with its sleek lines and earthy tones, it still manages to encapsulate the warmth of a, due to its size and complexity. However, with its sleek lines and earthy tones, it still manages to encapsulate the warmth of a, due to its size and complexity.

"The final execution of the project was realized due to deep collaboration, technical expertise and appreciation of the design intent," said Steven Cooper, architect-of-record. "Minor modification to design and construction details were suggested based on the geographic location, building code and local municipal practices. Ultimately, this collaboration has produced a project we are collectively very proud of."

Neolith was the ideal choice for the home's facades due to both its durability and its ability to be shaped in an unusual way. According to David Waugh, facades specialist at Elemex, "One of the great features of Neolith is that it not only comes in a very large format, but is extremely durable for such a thin panel. Initially, its strength was proven when we had to cut the material into particularly complex angles. Furthermore, it is scratch resistant and immune to high impact – all essential traits for a home surrounded by wilderness. Neolith is also tag resistant, which means the homeowner's grandkids can play freely without fear of permanently marking the floors and walls."



A product of the future

Neolith was specified for this project due to its similarity in appearance to elements found in nature with the added benefits of durability, versatility and even sustainability. This makes it a modern and practical choice for a range of residential applications.

Commenting on the project, Robert Geerts, project manager at Bernardo Group Ltd., the subcontractor who managed the interior tile fabrication, said, "When first introduced to Neolith, I saw it as the product of the future. I believed in it right away. The material takes time to the next generation, and having now worked with Neolith products, I can say its advantages truly lie with the end user. They will have floors which will last decades, wall cladding that is non-pervious and outdoor applications that can withstand Mother Nature."

Mar Esteve Cortes, Neolith director, added, "This home is very special due to the numerous factors that surround its creation. From the stunning location and the architects' inspired design concepts to Elemex's ingenious Ceramitex Facade System, the project was a success from start to finish. This is one of our most exciting projects in the region and the team truly pushed endless boundaries with this build. We are absolutely thrilled with the outcome."

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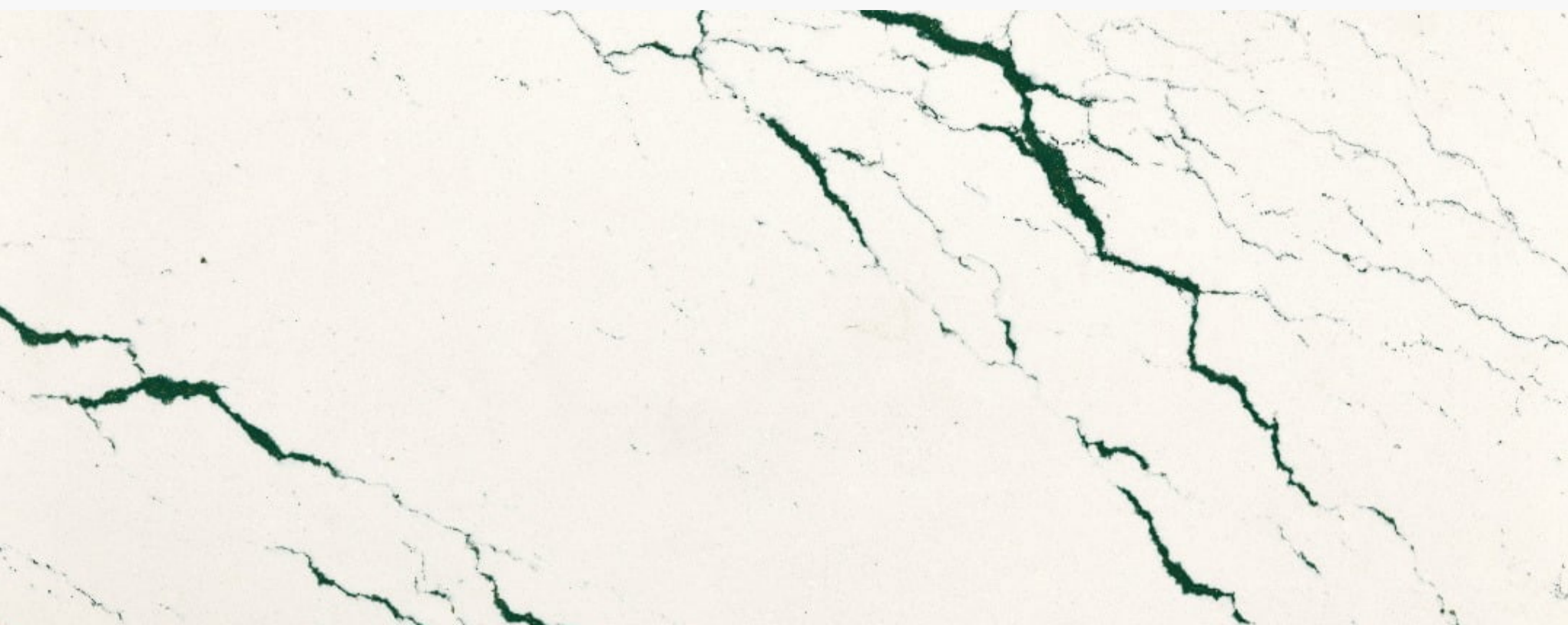
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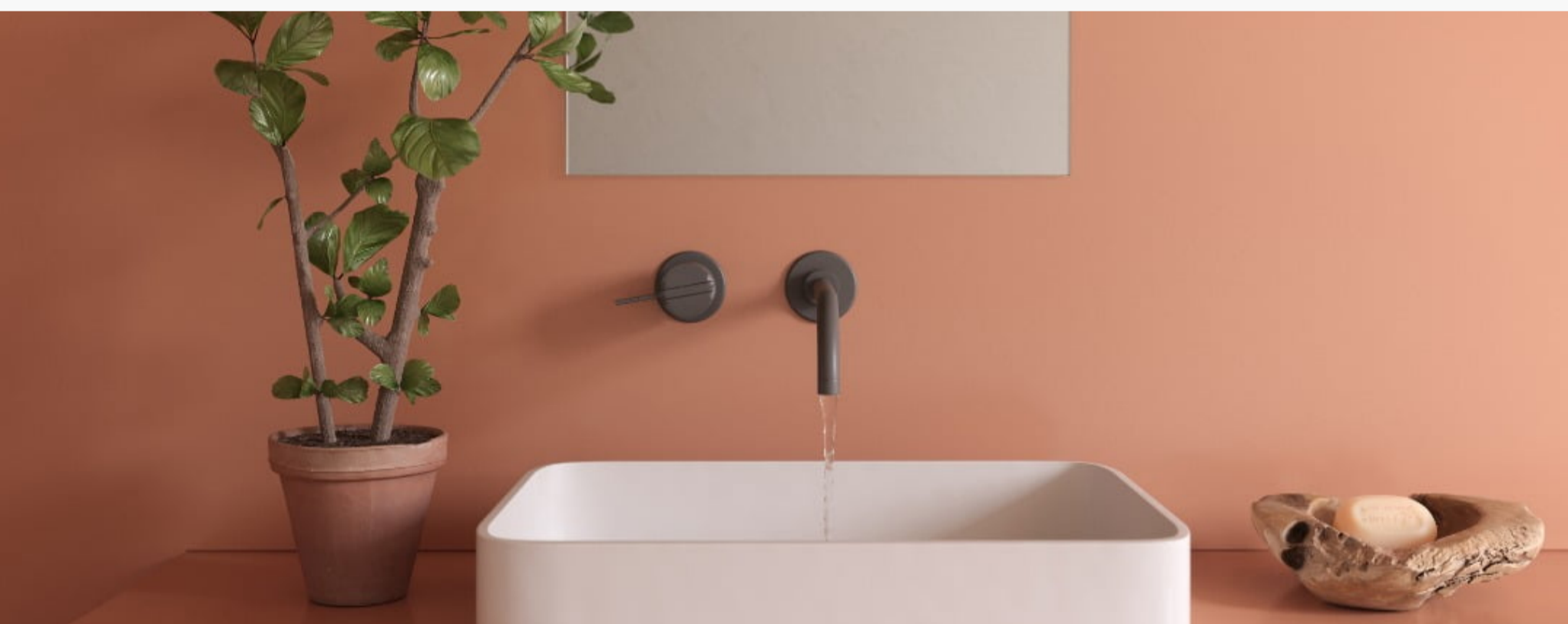
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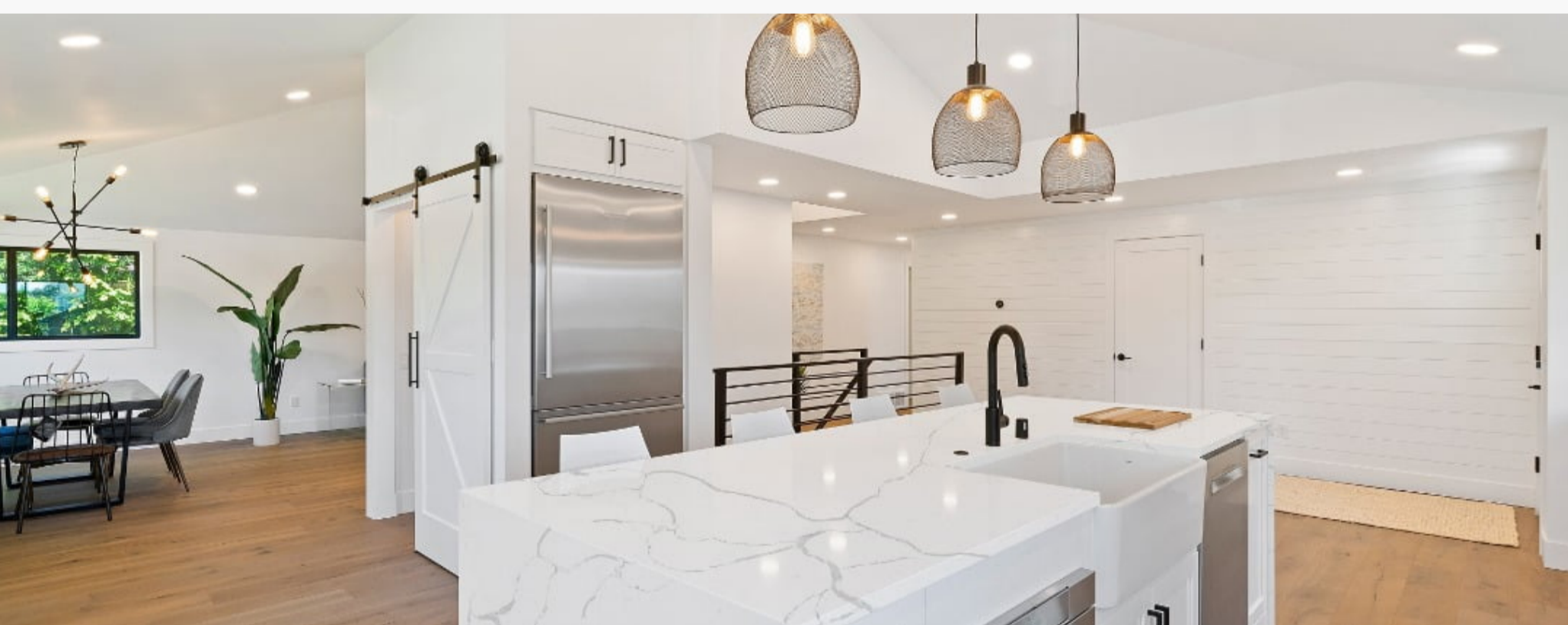
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One-on-one with Brittney Harmond

As a representative for Ceramics of Italy, Brittney Harmond shares her knowledge on the latest product developments, trends and benefits of large-format porcelain slabs

by Jason Kamery



Contemporary Stone & Tile Design recently spoke with Brittney Harmond, a representative for Ceramics of Italy, to discuss the latest trends in large-format porcelain slabs. The general definition we are using for large-format porcelain slabs are sizes measuring up to 5 1/4 x 10 1/2 feet and thicknesses ranging from 6 to 20mm (approximately 1/4 to 3/4 inch). Advances in technology have allowed these products to evolve and broaden the number of indoor and outdoor applications where they can be used. Here is what Harmond had to say on the subject:

CSTD: In the past few years, what have been some recent developments in the production process of large-format porcelain slabs?

BH: Originally invented by the Italians, large-format tiles have been around for a long time and are very popular in the European market. Over the past several years, as Italian manufacturers have invested in innovative technologies to create even more natural-looking stone, and marble-like slabs, they are becoming more widely accepted and requested in North America. The advent of 3/4-inch-thick tiles, for instance, presents a format that more closely imitates real marble slabs, which is appealing to American and Canadian customers.

Another recent development is through-body veining, and Gruppo Concorde's Natura-Vein Tech is a perfect example of this. This groundbreaking technology deposits colored raw materials throughout the entire thickness of the tile using a controlled sedimentation process, allowing for the production of large-format, through-body porcelain tiles on an industrial scale. The resulting large-format tiles feature edges that are visually consistent with the surface – just like the veins in a real marble slab.



CSTD: What are some of the benefits of large-format porcelain slabs?

BH: Large-format porcelain slabs make grout lines virtually disappear, so they are ideal for covering large surface areas when the goal is to create a seamless appearance with minimal visual breaks. This visual continuity can actually make a space feel bigger and more expansive. Large formats are especially popular with marble-look styles, because they mimic the effect of massive quarried slabs. Plus, with fewer grout lines, large-format porcelain slabs are very hygienic and easier to clean than smaller formats – a very important feature in today's climate.

Many stone and tile fabricators are becoming more comfortable working with this material, so using large-format porcelain slabs can actually reduce installation time in comparison to smaller tiles and mosaics, which require many hours of precise application. Large-format porcelain slabs are also versatile. They can be used to cover the floors, walls and countertops in a single project, or even cut to size to build custom furniture.

CSTD: One of the bigger trends we are seeing out there is using porcelain outside. Does this work well exterior wise?

BH: Yes! Outdoor applications with large-format porcelain tiles are certainly gaining popularity in the North American market. Porcelain already has inherent qualities that make it a superior choice for exterior applications – like natural resistance to extreme weather conditions and excellent insulating properties. So the large-format size makes it even more desirable for things like ventilated rain screen building facades and exterior walls.

Of course, large-format porcelain slabs can also be used to build durable outdoor kitchen counters and tables, but we are seeing a lot of growth in the exterior facade category at the moment. In fact, a recent update to the 2021 International Building Code now allows porcelain tiles as big as 36 x 72 or 48 x 48 inches to be used for adhered exterior facades. This update reflects the recent innovations in lightweight, gauged porcelain tiles and slabs, and advancements in mortar technology, giving architects, designers, fabricators and installers greater flexibility to use large-format tiles for exterior applications.

CSTD: To make sure the slabs maintain top quality, is there any routine maintenance that needs to be followed after they are installed, such as sealing, certain types of cleaning, etc?

BH: In general, porcelain tiles are very low-maintenance and require minimal care after installation. This is thanks to the durable nature of the material, which is scratch- and stain-resistant for an entire lifetime of use. Glazed or polished porcelain tiles do not require sealing, as the surface is already impervious to moisture and liquids. And, like any surface, porcelain tile should be cleaned occasionally with soap and water, and regular use of harsh cleaners should be avoided.

A few of our manufacturers have even gone so far as to create their own innovative, self-cleaning technologies.



CSTD: Is there anything else in regards to large-format porcelain slabs that you would like to share with our readers?

BH: The functional and aesthetic benefits of large-format porcelain tiles allow them to be used in almost any design project. The wide variety of large-format tiles makes them incredibly versatile and suitable for installations ranging from floors and walls to custom furnishings like countertops, islands, bathroom vanities and tabletops. The hygienic benefits and easy-to-clean surfaces of these tiles make them especially ideal for food preparation areas like tables and countertops.





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