



Cersaie 2016 preview

By Joe Simpson, International Correspondent

Cersaie is the beating heart of the global ceramic tile industry. Now more than ever, the Bologna-based exhibition showcases the truly global nature of our industry; both in the diversity of exhibiting manufacturers but also in the international melange of buyers attending what is the greatest tile show on earth.

Nowhere else can attendees view such a diverse range of tiles from across Europe, North and South America, Asia, and even Africa. A show that was once dominated by Italian and, to a lesser extent, Spanish manufacturers, now features tile factories from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, UEA, UK, Vietnam ... the list goes on and on. In total, the 2016 event

will see exhibitors from more than 40 countries showcase their latest designs.

For the organisers, four factors - the exhibition, the meeting place, interactions between people and knowledge of the material - will form the foundation stones of Cersaie 2016.

“The new image is focused on the concept of exhibition, as a place in which the various levels and spaces of ceramics, in all its manufacturing and expressive variety, can meet and intersect, but also a place for meeting people interested in knowing, innovating and designing this extraordinary material”.

Cersaie has always prided itself on its ‘value added’ range of events, talks and exhibitions within exhibitions that run alongside the tile show itself. Highlights of these will appear later in this article, but Tile Today

understand that, for most Australian visitors, Cersaie is all about the tiles: seeing and evaluating the latest trends, exploring new commercial opportunities and meeting up with tried and trusted suppliers.

So what is on horizon for Bologna 2016? Regarding floor tiles I expect to see increasingly prominent displays of 20mm thick external tiles that allows designers to really explore inside-out design at its most coherent and sophisticated. The progression for 2016 is likely to be 10mm and 12mm ‘standard’ floor tiles in more coherently co-ordinated settings with 20mm outdoor tiling, and even some 30mm thick slabs for ultra heavy duty applications.

Surface finishes will continue to concentrate of simulations of sandstone, limestone, quartz and slate; alongside concrete effects. Expect to see more distressed and → 8

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semi-distressed finishes, some made to look like reclaimed materials, other recreating the affect of ageing from the abrasion of the passage of thousands of shoes, or the weathering caused by rain, sand and salt spray. In all cases the objective is to achieve instant character: an interior or exterior finish that looks settled and comfortable; warm and welcoming.

Regarding formats, while factories that have invested in either Continua by Sacmi or Supera by Siti B&T will show off mega formats up to 1,800 by 3,600mm, I expect that the dominant formats for new floor tile ranges will be 800 by 800mm and rectangular formats from 300 by 600mm up to 500 by 1,000mm. In wood-effect tiles, one can also expect more elongated plank formats, like 200 by 1,200mm and 300 by 1,200mm.

Modular floor tile formats will be increasingly prominent, because both Continue and Supera technologies encourage manufacturers to cut up large slabs, after firing, into a range of rectified tiles formats such as 400 by 400mm, 600 by 600mm, 800 by 800mm, 300 by 600mm, 400 by 800mm, etc.

I am also expecting to see many new terracotta-effect tiles in 2016, as the market returns to its roots in search of warmth, tonal variety and semi-polished patinas. → 10





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One can also expect manufacturers to have picked up on the impact of Vives' OSB-inspired Stand range – the stand-out tile at Cersaie 2015 – to produce more floor tiles that evoke basic board materials.

The brick trend, so dominant in the wall tile sector in 2015, will also increasingly find its way into the floor, with parquet-style wood effects, clay pampments, brick-style paviments and other small format tiles with a high degree of tonal variation.

Regarding wall tiles, the dominant design trends will be light marbles, brick-effects, chevrons, textured finishes, complex 3D forms and new small rectangular formats. One can also expect to see more and more ranges that mix matt, satin and gloss

glazes on the same tile surface, in the manner of Ceramica Sant'Agostino's Flexible Architecture created by Philippe Starck, or Mutina's Numi created by Konstantin Grcic. This type of tile has strong architectural appeal, and is also now easier to manufacture due to the use of inkjet-applied glaze effects. The subtle play of light created by such ranges looks set to fascinate tile designers for some years to come.

The explosion of hexagonal tiles in 2014 will be followed in 2016 by some new shapes, from asymmetric interlocking pieces through to an old favourite, the Provençal tile. To see the most avant garde wall tile creations, I would suggest visiting Peronda, Dune, Aparici, Lea Ceramiche and CIR.

I am also hopeful that 2016 will also see more startling fabric effects to match the impact of Sant'Agostino's Digital Art collection. Early experiments with fabric effects were generally gruesome: some of the worst tile designs ever created. Now, the ability to reproduce accurately on textured surfaces using digital inkjet technology has revolutionised the market, making this a very fertile ground for today's tile design studios.

Regarding the stand short list (above), creating your own list in advance is probably the best way to make sense of the sheer scale and diversity of Cersaie. Last year, of course, the situation was complicated by the fact that two of the largest and most influential factories, → 12



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Marazzi and Florim, decided to stay away, preferring to host events at their showrooms in Sassuolo. For me this meant that far too much of Cersaie 2015 was spent queuing on the motorway between Bologna and Modena.

This year, with only three days devoted to the show before I head off to Verona for Marmomacc, I will be giving such stay-at-home factories a miss. I will, however, make sure to visit, in no particular order, Marca Corona, Refin, Sant'Agostino, Ariostea, Atlas Concorde, CIR, Coem, Rondine, Fioranese, Mirage, Imola, Cerdumus, FAP, Casalgrande Padana, Serenissima, ABK, Emilceramica, Tagina, Ascot, Viva, Piemme and, if they are back this year, Mutina. I know it is a very Italian focused list, but I tend to concentrate on the Spanish factories at Cevisama, and the Brazilian factories at Revestir and find that, at Cersaie, the leading Italian factories are the best place to discover what's hot in the world of tiles.

I will also swing by other leading world producers, like Porcelanosa

and RAK, who are so commercially successful they can't be overlooked. I will also visit several of the leading Spanish manufacturers, like Grespania, Peronda, Natucer, Aparici, Saloni and Gayafors, because they offer a superior range of wall tile styles. For high performance technical tiles, swimming pools tiles and the types of flooring found in dairies and food production units, then I will head for Germany and Agrob Buchtal: the specifier's best friend.

But it is always worth going off the beaten track: every year Cersaie throws up some surprises and this year will be no exception as several long-establish factories are now in new hands and have been investing over the past 12 months to revive tired brands.

Away from the exhibition halls, Cersaie 2016 promises its usual mix of events, seminars, presentations, press conferences (not for the faint-hearted), themed exhibitions, etc.

For instance, this year Manuel Aires Mateus, founder of the eponymous Lisbon-based architectural practice,



will be the guest of honour at a conference called The architecture of Aires Mateus on Wednesday 28 September as part of the Building, Dwelling, Thinking program. The Portuguese architect will discuss his projects with architectural historian Francesco Dal Co.

Cersaie 2016 takes place at the Bologna Exhibition Centre, Italy from 26 to 30 September. www.cersaie.it/en

The free official Cersaie app contains the exhibitors' catalogue and other helpful information for your visit. http://www.cersaie.it/en/e_app.php ■