

## Tiles of the future

*Jasmin Kraneveldt from tile and sanitaryware, Bathroom Bizarre, offers some tips on bathroom tile trends for 2011.*

If you are planning to remodel your bathroom – tiles should be your first choice of floor and wall covering. So says Jasmin Kraneveldt from tile and sanitaryware suppliers, Bathroom Bizarre: “Available in a wide variety of styles, sizes, designs and textures – tiles give bathrooms a well finished and aesthetically pleasing appearance. They are also the most practical solution for wet areas as they are waterproof, easy to clean, exceptionally durable and able to cope well in high traffic areas.”

## Nano technology

Glazed ceramic and glazed or polished porcelain tiles are an especially popular choice, she says: “The most practical option for bathrooms; glazed ceramic or porcelain tiles are resistant to water, moisture and stains. They are also available in the widest variety of colours and designs, are very durable and long-lasting, and they are generally easier on the pocket than other options. However, until recently, the use of polished porcelain tiles had a very limited use in bathroom areas because their smooth, high gloss, polished surface made them exceptionally slippery when wet.”

The above dilemma was recently resolved with the introduction of Nano pre-sealed technology. Kraneveldt explains: “Nano technology is a great new innovation in tile manufacturing that can make a really big difference to the functionality and appearance of a tile. The end result is achieved by applying the lightest and strongest organic Nano particles, which can be compared to a type of wax, onto the surface of polished porcelain and ceramic tiles.

“A process called plating is used to ensure that these particles are evenly spread on the tile’s surface, which is applied using high pressure sanding and polishing. The plating process is repeated a number of times until the Nano organic particles eventually combine with the surface of the tile to form an organic Nano film that is lustrous, exceptionally dense and durable,” explains Kraneveldt.

She lists the many benefits of tiles that boast Nano technology:

- **Exceptional slip-resistant qualities:** The protective layer on the surface of any Nano tile is produced from a non-hydrophilic substance with a high skid resistance, making them a great choice for wet areas.
- **A high gloss sheen:** Common polished tiles have a gloss rating of 50% to 70%, while the Nano pre-sealed polished tiles boast a gloss rating of 90%, giving them an incredible lustre and a mirror-like finish.
- **Added durability:** Nano tile technology ensures increased strength, and enhances the density and durability of the tiles, ensuring that they look as good as new for longer.
- **Effective hygiene control:** Nano tiles boast auto-clean and anti-bacterial properties. Not only is this a very convenient feature, but these tiles also require far fewer cleaning products to keep them looking good, which is good for the environment as well. Unlike materials such as travertine for example, Nano tiles are well sealed and smooth to the touch – so mould, fungus and mildew cannot grow in any porous cavities.

- **A greener option:** Only environmentally-friendly materials are used in the manufacturing of Nano tiles – they don't contain any chemicals, such as toluene or chloroform for example, which are harmful to the environment. The organic materials used are entirely non-toxic, transparent, odourless and colourless.

### **Size and design**

Large format tiles remain a firm trend, says Kraneveldt: "Large tiles are great for design as they leave less grouting lines, and hence, offer a smoother and more streamlined end result. Nano technology is an especially welcome trend with regards to large format tiles, as now, homeowners can use matching large polished porcelain tiles throughout their homes, even in the bathroom and shower rooms, for a seamless and free-flowing look."

She notes that the introduction of colour and design is another growing bathroom tile trend: "Although neutral, earthy tones remain the most popular choice, consumers are becoming increasingly more adventurous with colour, designs and textures. Using a lot of colour or intricate designs in one enclosed space can be overwhelming, but adding a touch of colour or design in the form of a border or a tiled feature wall for example, is an affordable and effective way of adding some visual interest to your bathroom composition."

She says that tiles with an interesting texture is a great way of livening up a bathroom design, and an ideal solution for the neutral mainstays who are not adventurous with colour at all: "Many of Bathroom Bizarre's tiles are available in the popular earthy tones, yet they boast an unusual and subtle texture that can really make all the difference and just add that something special to the end result."

### **Organic inspirations**

The organic influence in design and the choice of materials is still one of the greatest design trends in the bathroom. In this regard, Kraneveldt says that there have been some really exciting innovations that cater to this trend: "Many homeowners would like to use more natural-looking materials in their bathrooms, such as including wooden floors, or sandstone cladding on the walls for example. However, these materials are just not suitable for bathroom applications – wooden or laminate floors don't handle moisture very well, and sandstone cladding is porous and hence prone to stains and the build-up of mould, mildew and bacteria in its cavities.

"However, Bathroom Bizarre offers a large format ceramic tile that boasts a realistic print that gives the impression of a real wooden floor when it is laid. For those individuals looking for a sandstone-type cladding finish, Bathroom Bizarre offers a glazed ceramic tile that boasts the exact texture, feel and three-dimensional appearance of cladding, but it is a tile that is easy and quick to install, non-porous and easy to clean," concludes Kraneveldt.

### Captions:

(All pictures to be credited to Bathroom Bizarre, [www.bathroom.co.za](http://www.bathroom.co.za), 0861 555 000.)

<caption: Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre> The large format Ohio Wood glazed ceramic tile from Bathroom Bizarre offers the good looks of a genuine wooden floor, but with the benefits of using tiles – making them an ideal solution for wet or very high traffic areas in the home. They retail for R106 per square metre and measure 600mm x 600mm.

<caption: Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre (2) and Luxury bathroom interior (stock pic)> Similar to the tile design featured in this image, Bathroom Bizarre's decorative Alpha tile (middle), at R185 per decor tile, boasts a decorative swirl design that can be complemented by the Lino Bianco featured on the right, or the Lino Metal tile featured on the left, which both retail for R192 per square metre. All three tiles measure 300mm x 900mm and they would be perfectly complemented by the Winter Moon glass mosaic tiles featured on top, which retail for R145 per 300mm x 300mm sheet.

<caption: Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre (7), Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre (8) and Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre (9)> This selection of glazed porcelain tiles from Bathroom Bizarre are the ideal solution for creating a natural stone cladding effect in the bathroom, but with the benefits of using tile. They are called Keiv Deco Beige (light brown), Niagara Ivory (cream) and Niagara Anthracite (grey), measure 310mm x 560mm and retail for R295 per square metre.

<caption: Tiles from Bathroom Bizarre (4) and Luxurious bathroom (stock pic)> Similar to this contemporary bathroom, tiles with the new Nano technology, such as Bathroom Bizarre's 600mm x 600mm Petal porcelain tiles (R145,95 per square metre) allow homeowners to tile their entire home, including the wet areas and bathroom walls, in the same tiles for a seamless aesthetic. The curved Webbed mosaic 8mm glass and sandstone mosaic tiles (R175 per 300mm x 300mm sheet) pictured above, are the perfect complement to add some interesting detail and colour to the overall composition.