

# 4D REAL ESTATE

## Tile is tops for beauty, least cost



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If you'd been born in the early days of tile (around 4,000 years ago) you could never have afforded the luxury.

Once reserved for royalty and the wealthy, ceramic tile is now the most economical type of flooring available, according to an independent study commissioned by the Tile Council of North America.

The study, released in early 2006, compared all types of ceramic tile, including quarry, porcelain and mosaic, to 12 other flooring types such as hardwood, laminates, concrete, stone, carpet, terrazzo, vinyl and poured epoxy. Over the lifetime of the average floor, tile lasts longer, costs less per year to maintain, and less overall than any other type of flooring, the study revealed.

"Is it any wonder that tile has long been the product of choice for anyone who wants a beautiful, durable design element in their home?" asks Tamara Christian, president of National Trade Productions. Christian's company manages Coverings, the annual exposition showcasing the newest trends in ceramic tile and natural stone. "Tile has always been popular, and homeowners are finding increasingly creative ways to use it in their homes."

Commonly used in kitchens and baths, tile can be employed creatively in every room of your house.

- **Front door** - You've probably seen the tile house numbers that hang near the front door. But what about framing the door itself with tile? The technique can convey stately elegance or playful whimsy, depending on the type and color tile you choose.

- **Entryway** - Dress up a foyer with a colorful tile mosaic. Or, welcome your guests with polished porcelain tile for extra durability and beauty in this high-traffic area of the house.

- **Window seat** - Your family's favorite spot for reading, can also be a prime snacking location. Tile makes a window seat easy to clean and more decorative.

- **Media room** - Not everyone views a 72-inch TV screen as a thing of beauty. You can turn a room-dominating screen into a design statement by adding tile. For wall-mounted flat screens, consider a tile frame. Natural stone can be a perfect foil to high tech equipment when used to define and accent an alcove for video equipment.

- **Exercise room** - Top spas around the world know the value of tile to enhance workout areas. The flexibility and

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## Create a state-of-the-art kitchen with historical-style detailing

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Vintage or period motifs have become one of the hottest trends in home kitchen design, but your Old-World kitchen doesn't need to feature modern-looking faucets to take advantage of the latest technology. Whether creating an original design, restoring an old kitchen, or merely redecorating, more homeowners are turning to new period-style plumbing that offers traditional style with all the modern conveniences.

"It's all about marrying form and function," says Jeff Pratt, vice president of sales for Danze, a manufacturer of decorative plumbing products including kitchen and bath

faucets, bath accessories and showerheads. "Today's styles are greatly inspired by the past, but live in the present. As more homeowners gravitate to high performance kitchen products, the industry is responding with new products and finishes to ensure no one has to compromise on style."

In addition to products such as the pot filler faucet (a faucet mounted near the stove to bring water right to the stovetop) and various pull-down or pull-out faucets, other high-performance kitchen products like commercial-style dish rinse faucets and even hands-free electronic faucets are quickly gaining popularity. Though modern in function,

their range of styles and finishes ensure even the most up-to-date kitchens can evoke the grandeur of an earlier age.

Pratt points to the Danze Opulence Collection as one example. The popular collection, based on Victorian styling cues, achieves the Old-World look many homeowners are striving for while delivering performance that is anything but traditional. A pull-down faucet, pull-out faucet and pot filler faucet offer convenience in the kitchen, but the selection of finishes from antique copper to oil rub bronze capture an authentic vintage look.

"Creating ambience in the kitchen is all about the details, so homeowners

shouldn't underestimate the impact of a unique finish," Pratt says. "Stainless steel has led the way in popularity for metal finished kitchen appliances and accessories, but if you're going for vintage style, you can now rely on a range of aged or distressed finishes to complete your look."

Coordinating metal finishes is one of the easiest ways to create a professionally designed look in your kitchen. Oil rub, black and other types of subdued metal finishes are appearing on faucets, lighting, cabinet knobs and other trim and hardware elements for the kitchen, offering a simple way to create a period-

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## Installing a new basement bathroom

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If you're remodeling the basement of your home and thinking about adding a new bathroom or powder room, that's a smart move.

According to Remodel Magazine's "2005 Cost vs. Value" report, homeowners can recoup more than 86 percent of the cost of a bathroom addition.

But conventional plumbing can be costly. And the digging is a real mess. So how can you increase your property value, while maximizing your remodeling investment? A quick and economical Saniflo bathroom installation is the answer. You'll have a sleek new bath in just half a day, without the high cost and hassle of

conventional plumbing and digging.

Saniflo "macerating" technology makes it possible to install a powder room or bathroom anywhere you want, including in an unfinished basement. Excavation isn't needed because the above-ground plumbing system is installed directly atop the finished floor. Saniflo systems can even be installed below the sewage line.

A Saniflo toilet looks very much like a conventional toilet, taking up roughly the same amount of floor space. But instead of routing the flush water through a drain in the floor, the macerating system moves it to a special pump box, usually located on the floor between the toilet and the wall.

The macerating unit can also be concealed behind the wall.

The unit uses a fast-rotating blade to reduce waste and toilet paper in the flush water, which is immediately and entirely released under pressure through small-diameter piping to the sewer or septic tank. No special maintenance is needed and the pump is sealed for life.

This simple and cost-effective alternative to conventional plumbing is ideal for basement renovations and other home-improvement projects. Properly sized, a Saniflo macerating system can handle all the fixtures in a bathroom, including the sink, shower, tub and toilet - even on a

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## Don't let spring thawing damage your basement

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Don't Let Spring Thaw Damage Your Basement  
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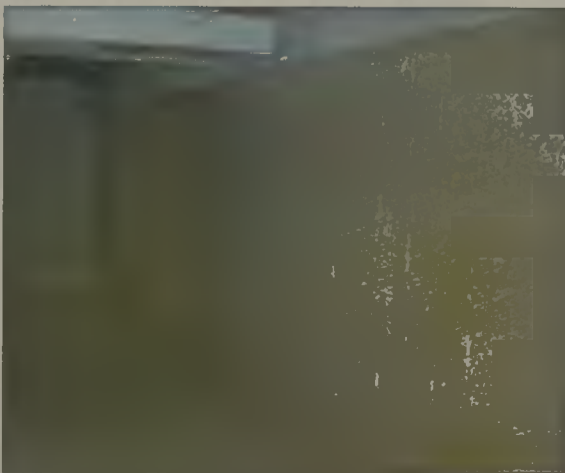
About this time of year, people start wishing for spring thaw and nicer weather. Spring brings lots of good things, but it can also highlight water problems, especially in base-

ments. Whether it comes from the melting snow that finds its way into your home through cracks in the foundation or humidity which comes in through the walls and the concrete floor, moisture is a bad thing.

Damp basements are unused basements - you don't want to risk damaging furniture and electron-

ics, and the musty smell doesn't make for a pleasant space. Moisture problems not only limit your use of the space, they can cause a number of serious problems, from mold to weakening your home's foundation.

However, many homeowners put off repairing the problem because tradi-

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