







Welcome to Quarter 27!

The core values of sustainable business - efficiency, economy, respect for people and the environment - have always been important at Solus. As we look to the future, we are deepening our commitment to sustainable business practices.

In this edition we have presented products with a commendable sustainability profile and projects that bring to light issues and ideas around sustainable design.

We have a new range from ELLE Deco Young Designer of the Year, Federica Biasi; and projects from Edinburgh, Oxfordshire, and London. We introduce the ingenious Nick Szczepaniak and Simon Astridge who have created an installation at our showroom for Clerkenwell Design Week.

Finally, we are delighted to introduce our new Sustainability Manager, Kenneth Graham. Coming all the way from New Zealand, Ken has joined Solus at a critical juncture, when we look to create a new future while keeping faith with the values of our past.

Conleth Buckley, Editor

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I have been part of the Solus story for almost 15 years and have been witness to many changes. Recently, I have had the pleasure to welcome our new Creative Director, Sam Frith, into the mix and am excited about the new direction the company is taking.

This magazine, which was a spark of an idea 8 years ago, has become the voice of Solus and I am very proud to remain a part of its creation and development. I hope you find the read as interesting and forward thinking as I do."

Marcel Thomas, Solus Marketing Manager



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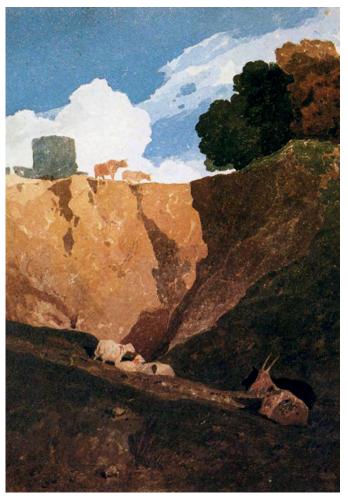
Luxury gymnasium in heart of Mayfair

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Rhododendrons, restorations, and cake







John Sell Cotman, Marl Pit, 1809

Everything old is new again

Solus have teamed up with a local design led architectural practice Szczepaniak Astridge, to create a sensory architectural installation in our London showroom, for Clerkenwell Design Week.

Most people experience the world, most immediately, through sight. If I asked you to describe your surroundings right now, you would most likely look up from the page rather than take a deep sniff, swivel your ears, reach out with fingertips.

James Joyce called this the "ineluctable modality of the visible". To a certain extent our senses are dominated by sight and it's rather a loss.

Sensory Architecture valorises the non-visual acuities, not to the detriment of sight but as an enhancement of experience. "Everything old is new again" tells the story of a remarkable material and its journey through time. We hope you'll join us at our Clerkenwell showroom to experience this fascinating tale with all your senses.



Prior to CDW, we sat down with Nick Szczepaniak and Simon Astridge to talk about the installation they have designed for the Solus showroom

How did Szczepaniak Astridge come about?

We worked together for a busy West London practice 15 years ago when we were newly qualified Architects and have been friends since.

We both run our own independent architecture practices and started Szczepaniak Astridge as a collaborative partnership to help one another on certain projects. We like to think of it as an umbrella to bring in people and makers to help us deliver our special projects.

What is "Sensory Architecture"?

Sensory Architecture is about designing for the human experience rather than what something looks like.

Architecture has the power to shape experience. Sensory Architecture speaks to the human in all of us.

What have you designed for Solus?

We were commissioned by Solus to design an installation from Ketley Quarry for Clerkenwell Design Week. It can be touched and walked upon and heard by the visitors. This installation is a prototype for a larger project we have been commissioned to complete later this year for Solus.

What will visitors get from the installation?

Architecture, however small, can change the way you think about a material, about light, about yourself. We want visitors to come away from the installation having learned more about Ketley and more about Solus.

Where can people see more of your work?



The Ketley Story



"If I put these straight in the main dryers, they'll just explode. And then I'll have to make them all again!"

Brick Specials Maker, Steve Cartwright and I survey pallets of hand-finished canted bullnose brick – CPU tower-sized blocks of glistening chocolate-coloured Etruria marl clay. Steve effortlessly lifts an unfinished block, which must weigh ten kilograms, onto his worktable and takes out a cutting jig made from wood and cheese wire. He presses the wire into and through the clay, removing the right-angled edge of the brick to create a convex profile familiar to anyone who has sat on the wall of a town-centre planter.

Dreadnought Tiles and Ketley Brick products are ubiquitous in the UK, hiding in plain sight. You will have danced on their tiles on a night out, leant against one of their walls while waiting for a friend, rested your coffee carefully on the flat of their bullnose brick. If you've visited the Barbican, if you've walked along the Wembley Way, you've been on Ketley Brick.

In a time of disrupted supply chains and ballooning lead times, local solutions begin to look attractive; a fact that has not escaped Steve, "It looks like globalisation has come to a shuddering halt. It only makes sense to be able to source stuff from your own locality."



Ketley is one of the few remaining traditional clay quarry tile makers that uses the South Staffordshire / Shropshire firing technique

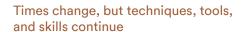


With 10 miles separating quarry and kiln, Ketley is a highly localised manufacturer. Most of the workforce walk to work and generations of local families have laboured here.



QHSE manager, Chris Dyke is showing me the piles of tipped clay that reach to the top of the quarry walls. It's hard but friable and has a complex aroma. "When we've dug the clay, we make a stockpile and seal it by compacting it to make it weatherproof. It's a bit like a Battenburg cake, really. Our geologist then takes core samples to determine the composition – the levels of silica and iron and other minerals."

Once the clay arrives on site, it is crushed and ground into the grade required for each product, then mixed with water and extruded into shapes which are then hand finished where required. The iron-rich Etruria marl clay fires to a radiant red until the last thirty minutes when oxygen is reduced to produce different colours. "The iron in the Etruria marl clay is essential to create our blue. Other producers have to use a stain to achieve a similar effect." Chris tells me. The blue is particularly striking and shimmers like the wing of a magpie. A stain just couldn't come close.







The site sits in the void created by the original quarrying. From the eponymous Dreadnought Road, you look down onto a canopy of dusty corrugated roofs, occasionally punctured by a strut of machinery. The chug and whirr of the clay processing overlays the deep humming kiln. The site has been in production since 1805 and is so old that a major modernisation took place in 1906, when R.S. Davenhill joined Messrs Hinton and Perry to develop a new factory. The Davenhill family continue to manage Dreadnought Tiles and Ketley Brick at the executive level. I spoke to Mr. Richard Davenhill, 85, who recently stepped down as Chairman.

"My grandfather was a mining engineer and had been involved in tunnel engineering. In those days, a mining engineer would make his own bricks from suitable local clay for the project in hand. He answered an advert in The Telegraph to join Hinton and Perry in their brick and tile venture. "After acquiring the land and building the factory, he, sadly, died. His son, my father, enlisted in the Worcestershire Regiment and went off to fight in the Great War at age 16. He was captured by the enemy but did survive the war and, when he returned, he joined the company, alongside Mr Perry.

"They were progressive in their approach to business and by the mid-1930s were making 30 million tiles a year. They built numerous rectangular coal-fired down-draught kilns. Fire holes ran down both sides at ground level, and two chimneys with dampers to control the air flow, were at either end. The kiln itself was filled from both ends then bricked up and sealed with wet sand. The fire holes were tended by kiln men who would drive horses and carts loaded with coal up between the kilns. Sometimes the fire holes would flare with the wind and set the horses tails smouldering, at which point you'd hear, 'Eh! Yer ors is afire!' and the sloshing of buckets.

"They used their profit to invest in innovative continuous coal gas-fired chamber kilns in the mid-1930s which put them ahead of the game. Of course, there wasn't much production during WWII, but they were in a good position once the war ended.

"At that point Ketley Brick, who were adjacent to us became available for sale. We acquired them and asked the previous owner to come and work for us. Really, it was the acquisition of Ketley Brick that consolidated our success in the latter half of the 1900s.











Yet no man ever wetted clay and then left it, as if there would be bricks by chance and Fortune..."

Plutarch, De Fortuna



"We've employed a lot of people over the years. Many of the industrious migrant communities in the Black Country started with us: Italians, Caribbeans, Pakistanis. We've also employed a lot of women, as they were seen as more dextrous at operating the tile presses than the men. Funnily, we've become a sort of heritage feature of the area, although we're still very much a going concern.



"We still use the same traditional hand tools and methods within our heritage studio, but we also use the latest technologies to create bespoke textures and patterns and we've just introduced a new robotic handling system for sorting our quarry tiles once they're fired.





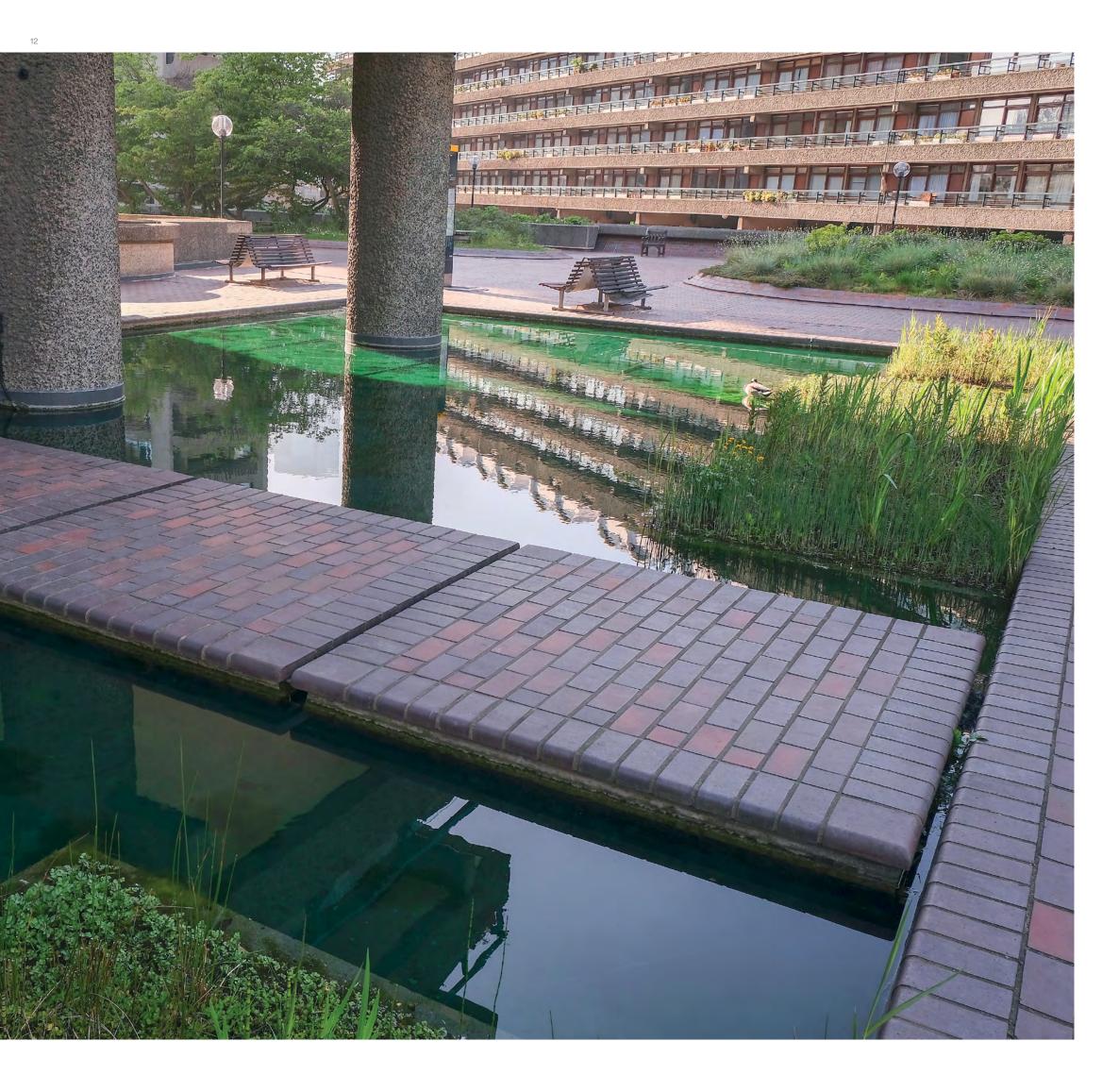


"Our key selling point is the colour.

"We achieve the colouration of our clay quarry tiles through the control of the conditions in the kiln. We lay our tiles on their side to allow a small gap between each tile. This allows the kiln atmosphere to work its magic creating brindle patterns and an iridescence on the face of the tile. They retain colour over time, unlike concrete, and improve with age. The significant secondhand market for our clay quarry tiles is a testament to this."

There is an authentic pride here, not the jingoistic nonsense of this year's political adventurer, rather something deeper, something quieter, something earned. A pride in doing something well for a long time. Ketley quarry tiles are relatively simple products that achieve their beauty through a semi-controlled process whose outcomes cannot be entirely predicted. This lends each tile a singularity, a mystery, an artisanal idiosyncrasy that is aesthetically satisfying.

As the UK Architecture and Design community engages with sustainability and localism, traditional solutions are being rediscovered. Ketley Brick offers the quiet beauty of the quotidian and the sustainability advantages of proximity and community.



New range

Ketley Quarry

Etruria marl clay from the West Midlands is fired in a reduced oxygen kiln to produce these stunning, iridescent, brindled quarry tiles.



Terracotta | Floors and walls | 4 Colours | 1 Finish | 2 Sizes

Terracotta appearance



Ketley Quarry

Handmade clay quarry tiles from South Staffordshire

Ketley Quarry is the fulfilment of an exclusive partnership between Solus and Ketley. This collection is made in Brierley Hill in the West Midlands at a brickworks that first opened in 1805. As a Midlands company, Solus is excited to partner with our neighbour and promote Ketley Quarry because it embodies values that express the dynamic spirit of the Midlands; industry, quality, and authenticity.

Ketley Quarry is an heirloom of the Industrial Revolution and evokes the spirit of enterprise and innovation that characterised that era. Etruria marl clay, quarried at pits in the Black Country is processed and fired by members of the local community. The iron-rich clay takes on different hues when the oxygen in the kiln is reduced.

The Head Kiln Burner, Linden Pinches, can achieve different patterns of brindling according to how the tiles are stacked or positioned in the kiln. This means each tile has its own distinctive colouring and texture, within parameters.

Four colours - Smoke, Flame, Ember and Cinder - are available. The tile is suitable for use on both floors and walls. Its uniquely textured surface gives excellent slip resistance, and its frost resistance rating means it can be used outside and inside. The effect of a varied installation is immediately familiar to people from the UK as it is often used in civic spaces.

Ketley Quarry is honest, lovely, and unique. Its charm derives in part from the firing process and in part from its simplicity. Solus is pleased to announce a collaboration with Ketley to bring to the market Ketley Quarry.

The Solus-Ketley partnership focusses on the promotion of a specific range. This empowers the factory to produce stock of the components in the range resulting in shorter lead times. Solus also hold samples and technical information to be shared with the A&D community using their established communication channels. Solus will facilitate supply of Ketley Quarry ensuring clear communication and fast delivery. •



Ketley Quarry



Colour selection offers harmony from unity or dynamism from difference

The mixing of the available colour variations over one space has a distinctive effect. The warm reds and cooler blues create an almost serpentine shimmer. When used in uniformity of colour the effect is soothing and homely. Both effects were specified by Bickerdike Allen Partners (BAP) in the 2011 renovation of the Grade II listed Barbican Estate.



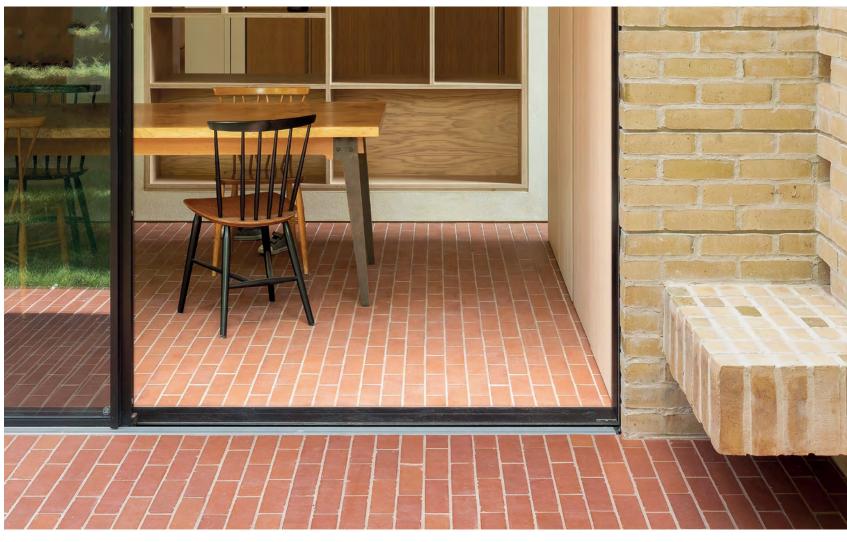






Clay is a very interesting and fundamental material: it's earth, it's water, and – with fire – it takes on form and life."

Rithy Panh



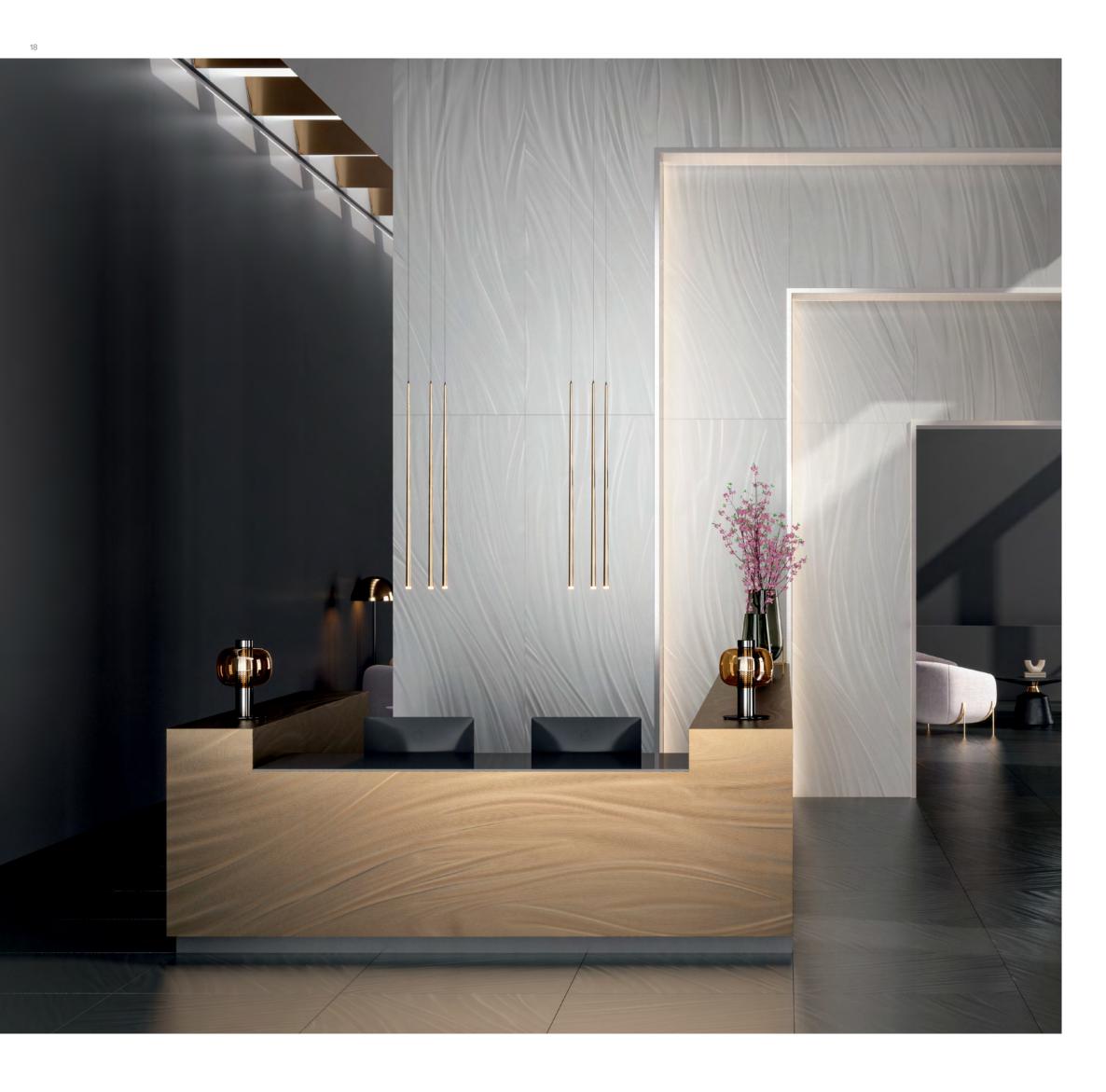
Ketley Quarry technical details:

Finish: Smooth Appearance: Terracotta Material: Terracotta Usage: Floors and walls



Search for Ketley Quarry at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

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New range

Seda

Suggesting the folds and curves of silk, this luxurious tile expresses a sense of motion. Seda is quite unlike anything else.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 6 Colours | 1 Finish | 2 Sizes

Mono colour appearance

20 Seda New range



Seda

A revolution in ceramics

Capturing the folds and curves of shifting silk, this tile has qualities of movement. Billowing folds appear to rise and fall, like a curtained window. The textured surface corresponds to the visual effect, so that the message from the eyes agrees with the message from the fingertips. This tile is unlike anything else and makes every space flow with a calming energy.

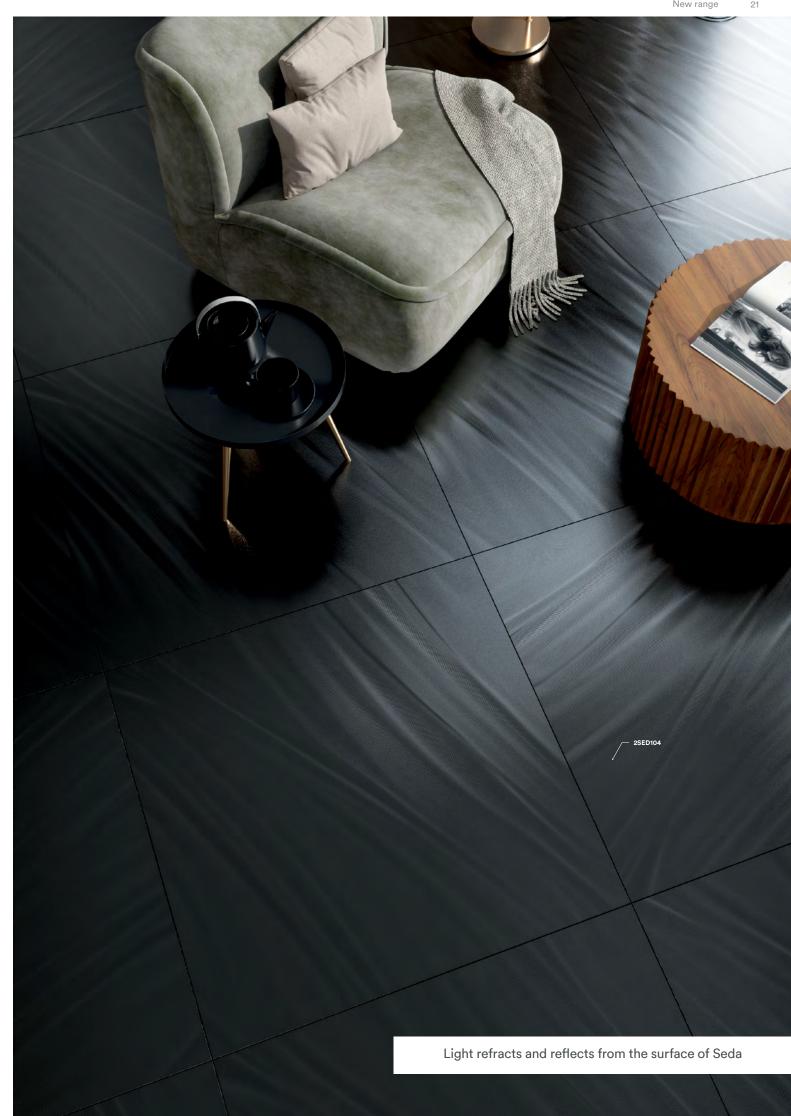
Seda is a high-performance porcelain using a patented technology that allows the surface to clean itself. The inclusion of titanium dioxide and silver transforms the tiled surface into an eco-active material.

Through a process of photocatalysis, viruses, bacteria, pollutants, and odours are sterilised, making the surface

effectively self-cleaning. Even graffiti will, after a few weeks, be broken down until it disappears entirely.

The surface is made by a process that exemplifies sustainable production. Energy is used efficiently and is predominantly drawn from renewable sources. Waste is avoided or recycled, and harmful emissions eliminated through robust filtering technology.

Solus is pleased to offer Seda in two modular sizes. An impressive 1000×3000mm and a versatile 1000×1000mm. Pearl, black, blue, grey, silver, and gold colours are muted and mature, complementing the sophistication of the visual and textural effects. Seda can be used to create unforgettably luxurious interiors. •











Self-cleaning surfaces for the post-pandemic era

Ultra-violet light destroys bacteria and viruses. Titanium dioxide in the surface of these tiles catalyses the rate of this process, speeding it up. Under direct sunlight, these tiles rapidly break down pollutants and will need to be cleaned less often.







Colours



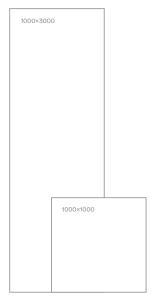
SED-Gold 2SED105 SED-Blue 2SED103 SED-Pearl 2SED101



SED-Silver 2SED106 SED-Grey 2SED104 SED-Black 2SED102

Search for **Seda** at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

Sizes (mm)



PTV results available upon request.



New range

Wabi-Sabi

Available in three finishes - matt, textured, and textured fine - Wabi-Sabi exploits texture and colour to create spaces that are restful and meditative.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 5 Colours | 3 Finishes | 2 Sizes

Mono colour appearance



Wabi-Sabi

Perfect imperfection

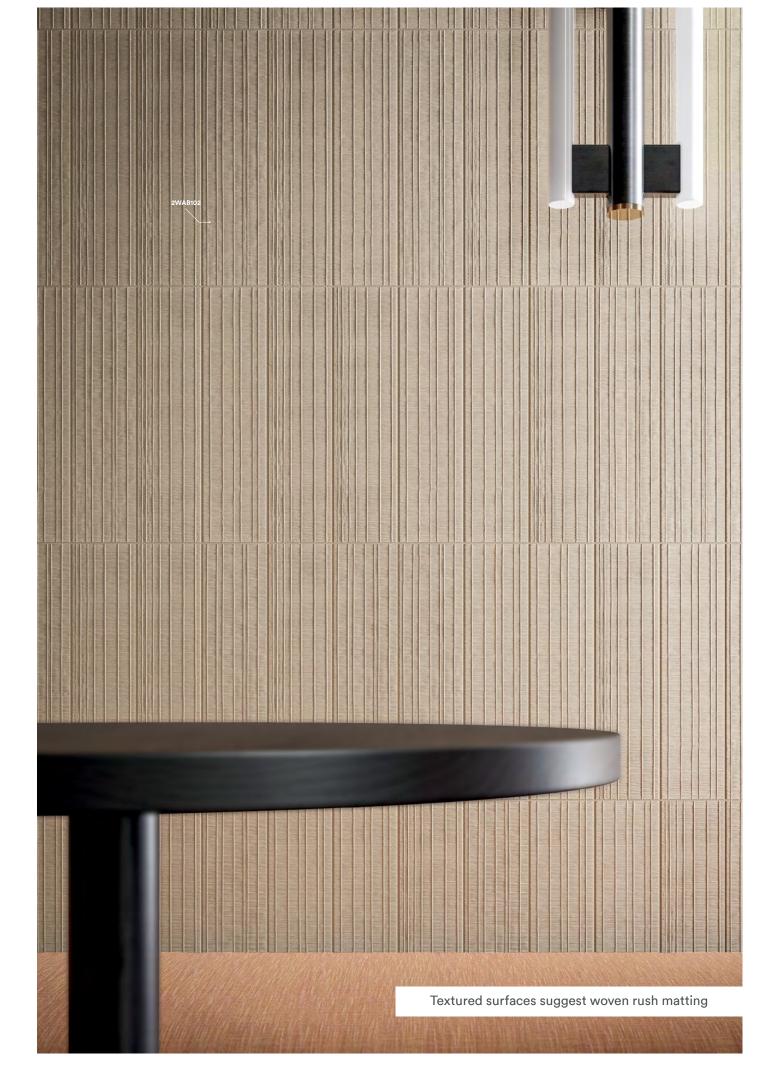
Wabi-Sabi is a collection informed by the Japanese aesthetic and cultural concept of wabi-sabi. Oceans of ink have been spent attempting to explain wabi-sabi to the 'Western' reader. For our purpose, it is sufficient to say that the concept expresses an appreciation for imperfection in beautiful things.

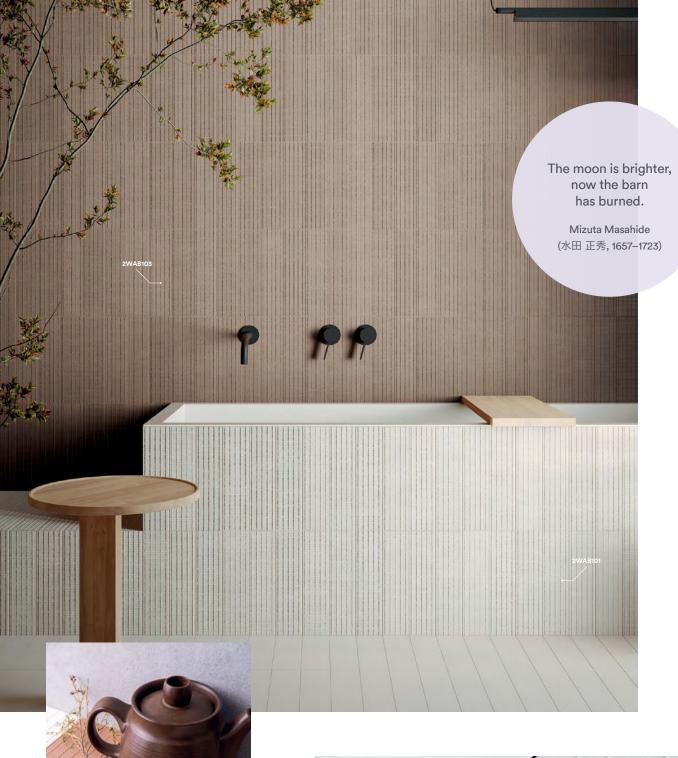
ELLE Deco Young Designer of the Year, Federica Biasi, found inspiration for this collection from the simple bamboo mats that are used in various ways in Japan.

The collection is available in three finishes: matt, textured, and textured fine. The surface of the textured and textured fine finishes resembles woven rush mats used as traditional Japanese floor coverings. All finishes can be used on both floor and wall.

The effect of the bolder, textured finish is quite delightful under a bare sole. The textured fine finish is pleasant under the fingers. Both exploit shadow within their topography giving walls and floors a softened appearance.

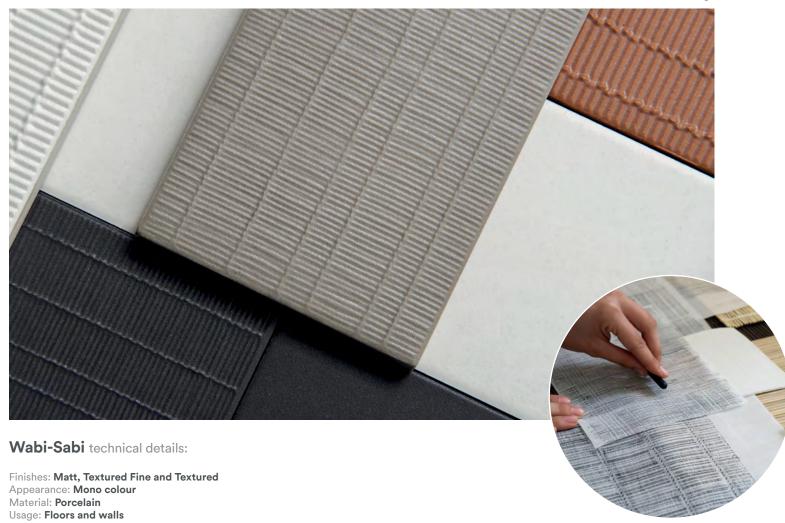
The palette is muted and soft, permitting the creation of spaces that are soothing and restorative. There are five colours: Cotton, Ecru, Mud, Canyon, and Anthracite. The collection is available in two sizes 75×300mm and 140×140mm and we recommend self-levelling spacers to avoid lippage. •









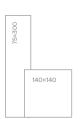


Colours and finishes

Textured



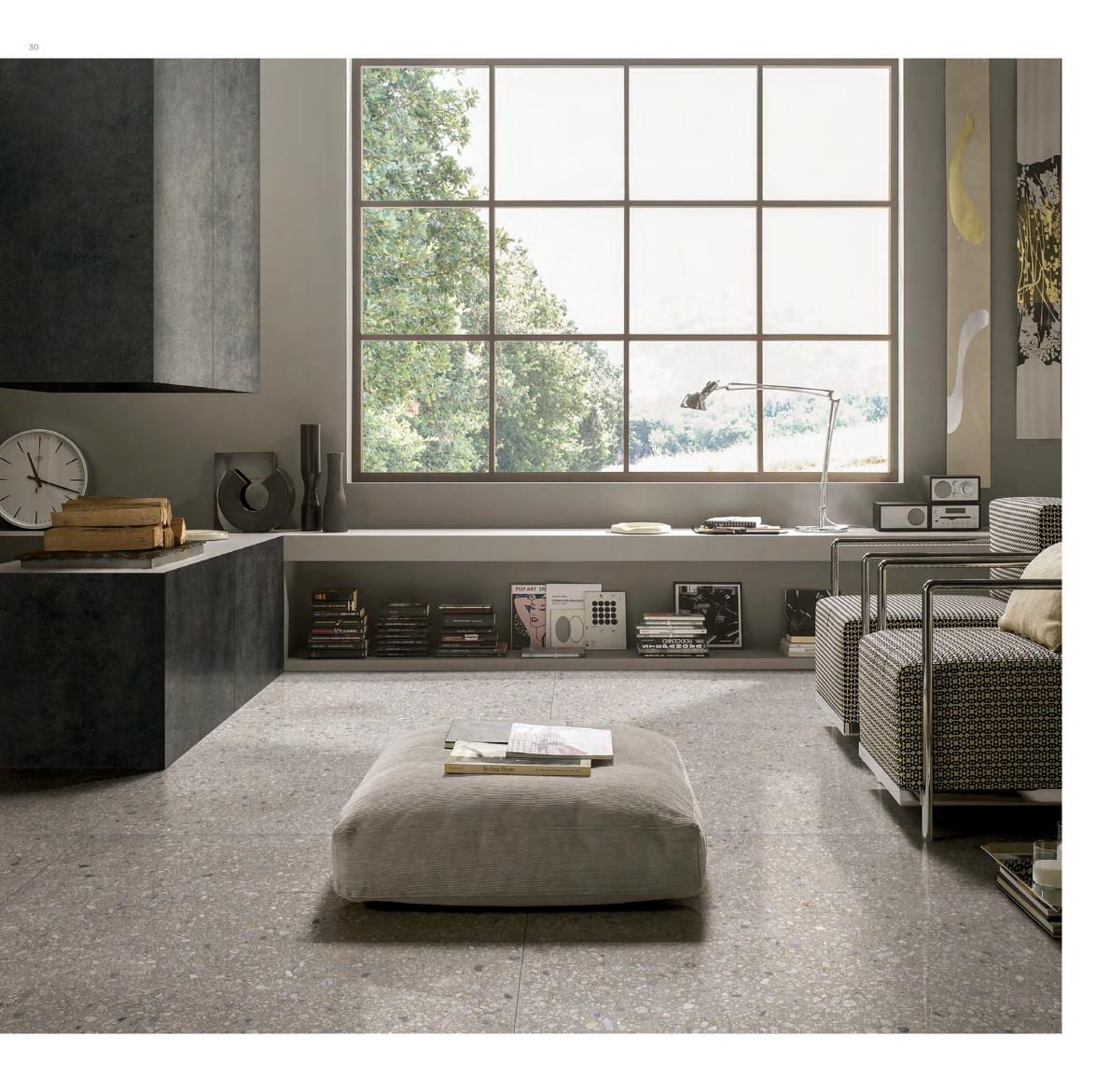
Sizes (mm)



PTV results available upon reques

Search for Wabi-Sabi at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

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New range

Matter

A playful collection of décors complement minimalist surfaces. Matter is a stylish collection that allows for expressive design.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 12 Colours | 4 Finishes | 6 Sizes

Concrete appearance



Matter

Contrasting architectural surfaces, with an intriguing selection of mosaics and décors

This contemporary range mixes colours, shapes, finishes, and décors to achieve a multiplicity of possible combinations. There are two fundamental surfaces: a concrete effect with an urban industrial aesthetic and a unique marble agglomerate effect that blends tone, tactile elements, irregular shapes, and varying sizes.

The natural tones of the concrete effect surface are unassuming and provide a subtle backdrop to interior design projects. Several colours are available. The marble agglomerate effect is something akin to a terrazzo and is also offered in a range of subdued colours that create a calm atmosphere.

Sizes range from mosaic up to 1200×2800mm and include special trims. As the products are hard-wearing porcelain, they are suitable for floor or wall.

A new surfacing technology combines the appealing feel of a matt finish with excellent anti-slip performance, making this collection particularly suitable for commercial and public settings. The surface performs well in humid or wet conditions.

Matter distinguishes itself with its collection of different décors. These can be arranged to create pleasing and stimulating effects. Zig-zags and waves can be achieved through judicious orientation of some of the pieces.

There are three sizes of mosaics available; 30×30mm, 75×75mm and 70×150mm. Designers will have a lot of fun creating new effects with these different elements.

The tiles have good sustainability credentials coming from a forward-thinking producer. •



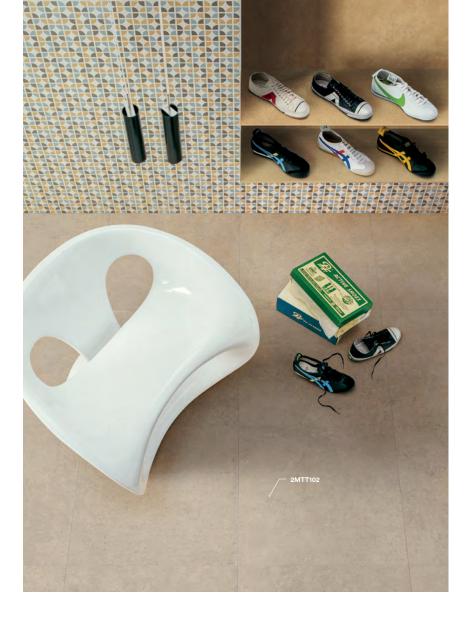
Certified



Solus aligns with B Corp certified Florim Ceramiche

Striving to put sustainability at the heart of its operation, Solus is actively seeking to form partnerships with factories that work to the highest possible environmental standards.

With this commitment in mind, Solus has teamed up with Florim - the first ceramic company in the world to gain B Corp certification - to present Matter, Topography and Calcaire.





The agglomerate surface design suggests something more organic than industrial



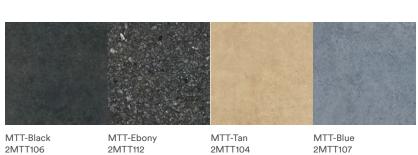


Matter technical details:

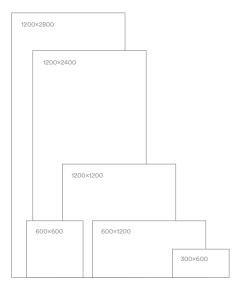
Finishes: Matt R10 (A+B), Gloss, Grip R11 (A+B) and Grip R11 (A+B+C) Appearance: Concrete Material: Porcelain Usage: Floors and walls Shade Variation: **V2 - Light to V3 - Moderate**

Colours





Sizes (mm)



A wide range of décors and mosaics are available. Search for Matter at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



New range

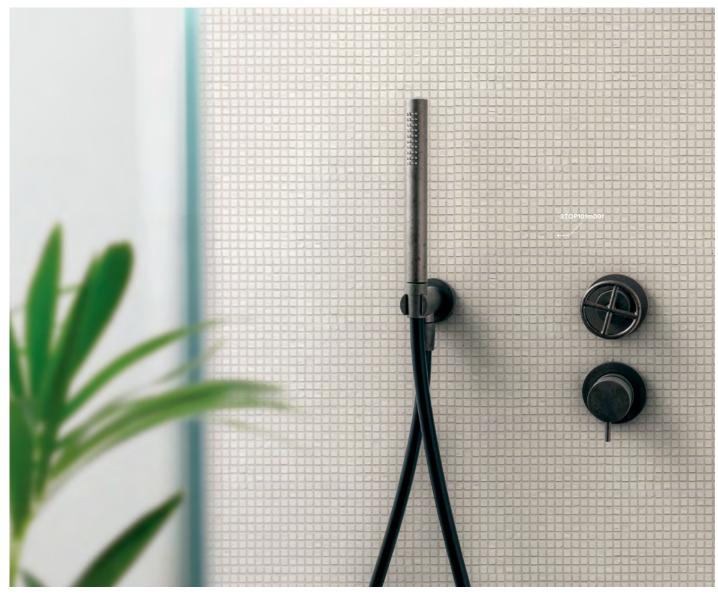
Topography

Inspired by the soft and varying hues of the Mediterranean, Topography expresses the aesthetic of simplicity. Neutral shades and grainy finishes soothe the spirit.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 5 Colours | 8 Finishes | 6 Sizes

Limestone appearance



Topography

Walk on the warm earth, sand, or rock of the Mediterranean

In *Justine*, Lawrence Durrell describes the light in Alexandria as, "filtered through the essence of lemons". This collection evokes that exquisitely soft Mediterranean light and calls to mind the warm, dry earth underfoot.

Topography comes in a range of delicate, natural colours, and surface effects that suggest the granularity of sand. The simple, warm tones and soft tactile experience creates a sense of comfort and a slowing of rhythm to a simpler lifestyle that eschews the unnecessary. The quietude of the collection permits a psychic release in which energy and balance can be regained.

A patented blending technology is used to create each tile, ensuring that no two pieces are the same. The effect

this has on a space is transformative. Whole floors and walls become naturalistic landscapes, looking more like pounded earth than porcelain. And yet all the advantages of high-quality porcelain pertain. Suitable for indoor and outdoor spaces, Topography is available in different sizes, finishes, mosaics, and special pieces.

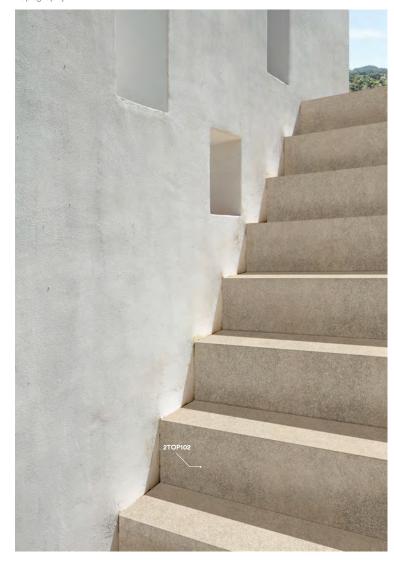
Minimalist designs will be supported by these surfaces inspired by non-colour and the graininess of earth.

Topography is an admirable setting for experiences and objects; and for interiors that frame their owner's tastes harmoniously.

A space to relax, unwind, and restore the mind and spirit. •



Topography





Warm, light colours are enhanced by a grainy finish that feels a bit like sand or rock under the bare foot









Topography technical details:

 $Search \ for \ \textit{Topography} \ at \ solusceramics.com \ for \ more \ information \ about \ this \ range.$

Finishes: Natural R9, Matt R9, Matt R10, Matt R11 (A+B+C), Textured R9, Textured R10, Grip R10 (A+B) and Grip R11 (A+B+C)
Appearance: Limestone
Material: Porcelain
Usage: Floors and walls
Shade Variation: V2 - Light

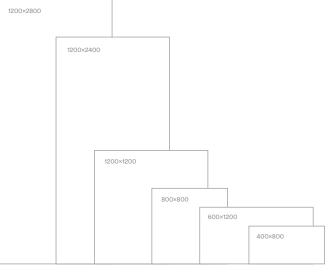
Colours





TOP-Mocha 2TOP105 TOP-Tan 2TOP104

Sizes (mm)



PTV results available upon request.



New range

Calcaire

Inspired by the Petit Granit stone of Belgium, Calcaire is a collection that draws upon geology, geometry, and the sense of touch.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 7 Colours | 5 Finishes | 8 Sizes

Blue Stone appearance



Calcaire

Achieve the impact of a rare and desirable stone

This collection is inspired by Petit Granit, also known as Pierre Bleue, a greyish-blue limestone mined exclusively in Belgium. The stone formed the bed of a vanished sea rich in coralline structures. Delicately variegated surfaces include fossilised small creatures and marine plants, such as the wonderful sea daffodil.

Calcaire partakes of the rough elegance of Petit Granit, communicating a geological gravity. Available in Cream, Ivory, Tan, Ash, Grey, Dark, and Black, Calcaire can be used to create spaces with a strong atmosphere. The colour scheme is derived from rural locations and the old country houses typical of Belgium's countryside.

Décors of concentric squares transformed ninety degrees, hexagonal pieces with baton striations that create a

cuboid trompe-l'oeil, and mosaic pieces with abstract etchings all contribute to the complexity and depth of expression available with this range.

The designers have also provided five finishes to add to the complexity and versatility of the product: a smooth finish, available in large formats; a patinated finish reflecting Petit Granit's distinctive characteristics; a sanded effect for a rough, structured feel; a chiselled effect that creates contrast between darker and lighter shades of the colour; the final surface recalls the natural stone which gives an anti-slip structure and a grainy uneven texture.

This intriguing porcelain collection is available in a variety of sizes and can be used on floors and walls. •







A cuboid herringbone pattern is achieved with the large mosaics









Calcaire technical details:

Search for Calcaire at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

Finishes: Natural R10 (A+B), Satin, Satin R9, Grip R11 (A+B) and Textured

Appearance: Blue Stone Material: Porcelain Usage: Floors and walls

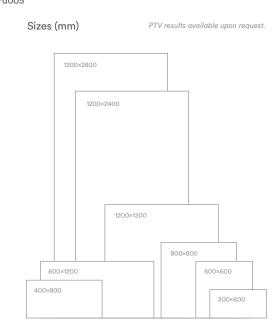
Shade Variation: V2 - Light to V3 - Moderate

Colours

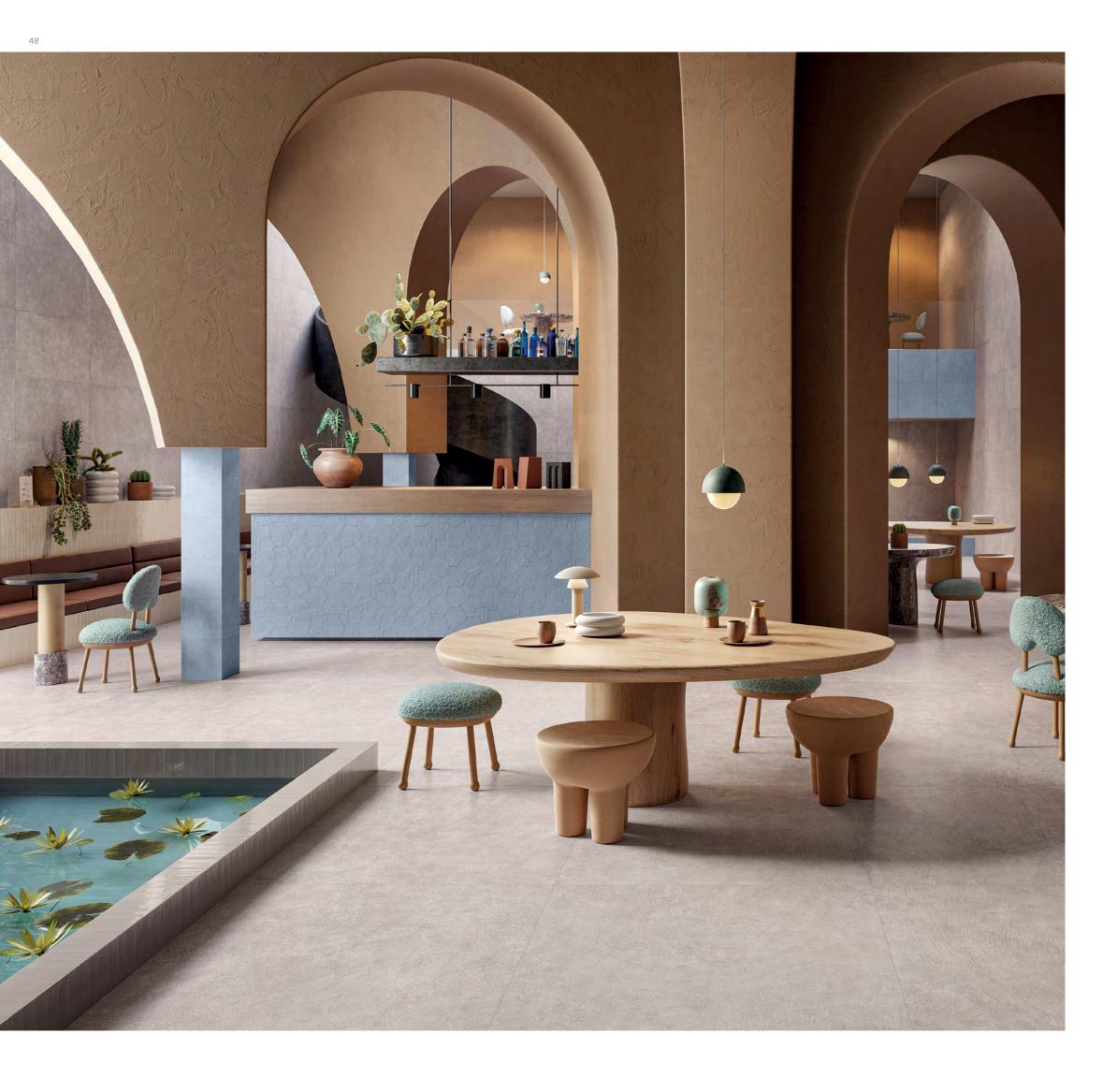


Décors and mosaics





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New range

Emboss

A spectrum of softer pastel hues, imprinted with geometric effects that give texture and variation.

Available in a soft-feeling surface with great anti-slip properties.



Porcelain | Floors and walls | 8 Colours | 5 Finishes | 8 Sizes

Concrete appearance



Emboss

Beautiful geometric patterned textures offer complexity and style

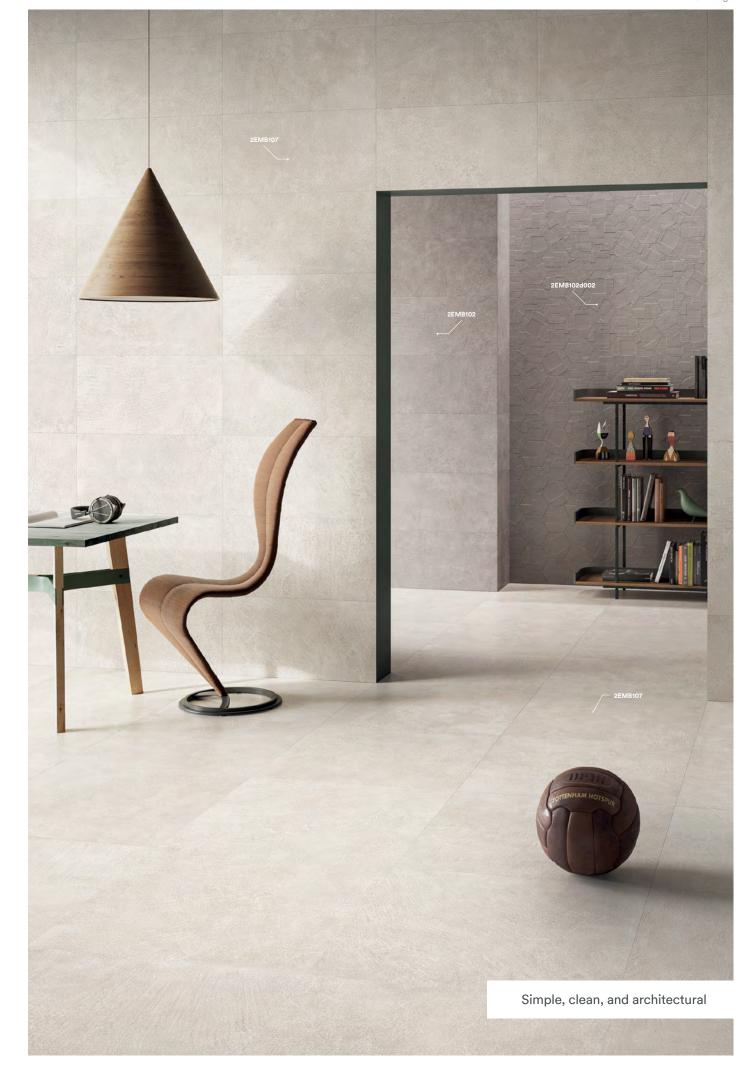
This range is thematically organised as a celebration of the past six decades of production from this studio. The designers wanted to set aside decorative structures and mimetic intentions and return to the purity of clay.

Their message of the importance of origins is expressed through the essential aesthetic categories: the shape, colour, and character that the surface reveals in the light.

Simple geometric and more organic textural effects can be used to create interesting walls and floors. The textured surfaces appear to be embossed with effects standing out in relief. There are several soft pastel colours, that further express the desire for simplicity.

The collection has quite outstanding technical performance in widely varying outdoor locations. Paths, pavements, and other outdoor surfaces can seamlessly continue interior design schemes. This range has excellent load and weather resistance and can be installed dry on grass, gravel, or sand. Emboss can also be glued to concrete screeds for vehicle resistant paving, or for other projects in commercial or public contexts with heavy traffic.

A patented surface technology permits high slip-resistance and a smooth feel. These porcelain surfaces are easy to clean and maintain. Emboss enables stylish design solutions while meeting all the technical demands of contemporary architecture. •





Patterns like woven fabric are embossed in the surface of the tiles





Emboss technical details:

Finishes: Natural R10 (A+B), Natural R11 (A+B+C), Matt R10 (A+B), Matt and Gloss Appearance: Concrete Material: Porcelain

Usage: Floors and walls
Shade Variation: V3 - Moderate

Colours



EMB-Ivory 2EMB107

EMB-Cream 2EMB105

EMB-Tan 2EMB104



EMB-Ash 2EMB101

EMB-Black 2EMB108

EMB-Blue 2EMB103

EMB-Green 2EMB106

Finishes



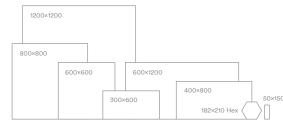
Natural R10 (A+B) Natural R11 (A+B+C)



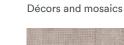
Matt R10 (A+B)



Sizes (mm)



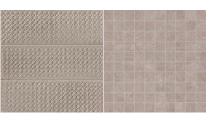
PTV results available upon request.





* Selected sizes and décors are not available in EMB-Black.

Décor A. Available in all colours 182×210×9.5 Hexagon, 300×600×9.5 *, 600×1200×9.5mm * Natural R10 (A+B)



Décor B Mosaic
Available in all colours *
50×150×9.5mm Aut Mosaic
Available in all colours *
300×300×9.5mm (30×30mm chips)
Natural R10 (A+B)





Project

CABI UK Headquarters

Solus consults on cost-effectiveness and sustainability

All projects are under pressure to come in on or under budget. The consequences of overrun are, perhaps, more significant when the client is a non-profit, working in food security and poverty and inequality alleviation. Rosa de Pablo of Scott Brownrigg found herself in this position when working on the new headquarters of the Centre for Agriculture and Bio-sciences International (CABI) in Wallingford.

Founded in 1910 as an entomological research committee, this storied organisation is a driving force behind pest mitigation and agricultural science. CABI supports scientists from all over the world who work to ensure that crops flourish and communities are fed. Now an inter-governmental organisation established by a United Nations treaty-level agreement between 49 Member Countries, CABI is under considerable scrutiny at all times.

The creation of a new headquarters on 16 acres of Oxfordshire countryside, therefore, presented some interesting challenges. Scott Brownrigg brought the project in on time and budget, bolstering their reputation as the leading practice for life sciences buildings.

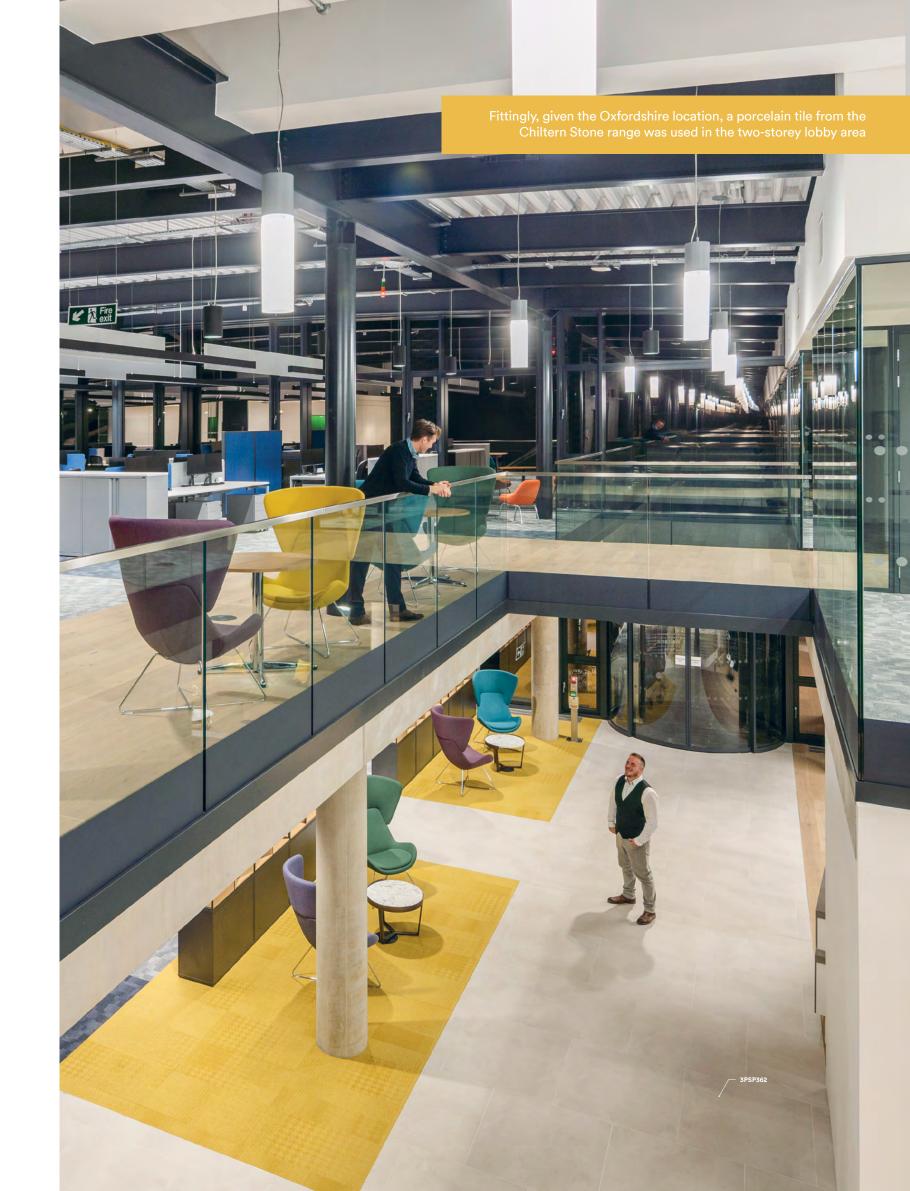
"This building for me has been a thesis, it could be my PhD. I've

learned from working with so many different people from so many disciplines. I'm happy that the building works and people are happy in it."

Rosa de Pablo's bioclimatic design is consistent with the values and priorities you might expect from a client working directly with the consequences of the climate crisis: passive energy management, natural materials, and integration with the landscape all play a role in making this RIBA Award shortlisted project outstanding.

The shape of the building might be described as a cresting wave prior to breaking; the curve builds to a dynamic front in the west and slopes away, becoming one with the ground to the east, a continuation of the rolling Chiltern hills that surround it. Temperature and energy management are in part achieved by not presenting a façade to the sun's path, but also by greening, and so cooling, the steel roof with species that work well with the topography of the building.

As we enter the building, Rosa takes us through the features that achieve the design goals while remaining within the project parameters. Large format porcelain slabs form the floor surface of the entrance, and this space extends right through to the north



side of the building and opens upwards to the suspended steel first floor. The effect is airy and spacious, and the lucent natural tones of the porcelain enhance the light. Movement joints in the tiling align with structural columns, and panels to the side of the tiled areas allow access to the concealed Mechanical and Electrical fixings (M&E). Elegant utility seems to be the overriding theme.

This large open space allows for natural cross ventilation and a traffic light system suspended from the ceiling informs the occupants when to open or close windows to achieve optimal temperatures. The void size in the insect mesh on the exterior of the windows was calculated in consultation with the entomology team to deny access to the smallest local insects, while achieving the desired air flow per minute.

Heating is concealed in a plenum floor and rises through vents, taking advantage of thermodynamics rather than being inefficiently pumped through ceiling mounted M&E. "I've always wanted to build with a plenum floor because it makes so much sense from the perspective of efficiency and conservation of energy. But clients mostly want suspended ceiling mounted M&E. I'm glad I can now point to this project and say, 'See it works!'"

Cost-effectiveness plays a role in material selection. Smaller, concrete foundations and a steel super-structure reduces cost and improves the ongoing sustainability of the building. "One can't claim that concrete is sustainable to produce, however, it stays

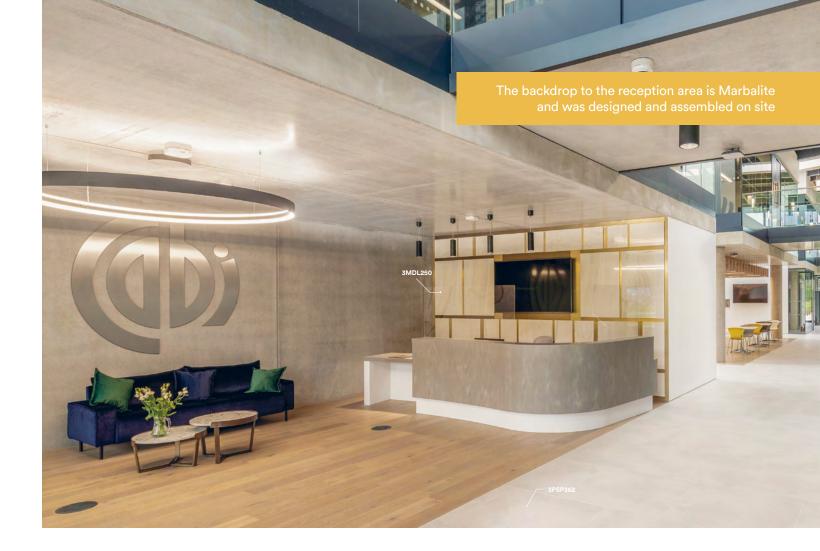
cool in summer and retains heat in the winter meaning that, over the life of the building, energy will be saved."

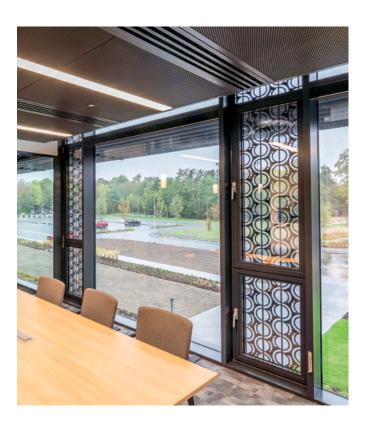
Modules of concrete and steel were fabricated off-site and installed with pre-drilled access holes for wiring. Rosa was clear on the importance of working closely with suppliers to ensure no on-site modification was necessary. "If you detail everything with a drawing, absolutely everything, you don't have any big surprises on site. We also increasingly use VR. Being able to walk through the site in three dimensions with the client and contractors enables an unprecedented degree of precision in communications."

Are these design principles something we should expect to see more frequently? "Sustainability in design? Absolutely, yes.
Especially for speculative building. Everyone wants LEED or
BREEAM because they can rent those spaces more easily. In terms of planning, for example, here in Oxfordshire, authorities are issuing far stricter regulations."

As we walk around the building in grounds planted with a diversity of native species, I hear skylarks and see two magnificent red kites; both species that have benefited from long-term conservation efforts, such as this landscape's designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The building works well in the landscape but also works with the landscape and demonstrates most aptly, that sustainable design is an economic, aesthetic, and environmental victory.







Three quarter windows allow air flow above and below desk level. The insect mesh formed by the abstracted CABI logo can be seen here



MICHAEL IRVINE
Solus Head of London Sales



RIBA have set a target of 50-60% reduction in carbon footprint on the builds for all RIBA architects by 2030. This is significant for a materials supplier like Solus as it prompts us to align with sustainable products, factories, and practices.

For Solus to continue to be engaged in projects like this we must ensure that our own operation is sustainable and transparent."

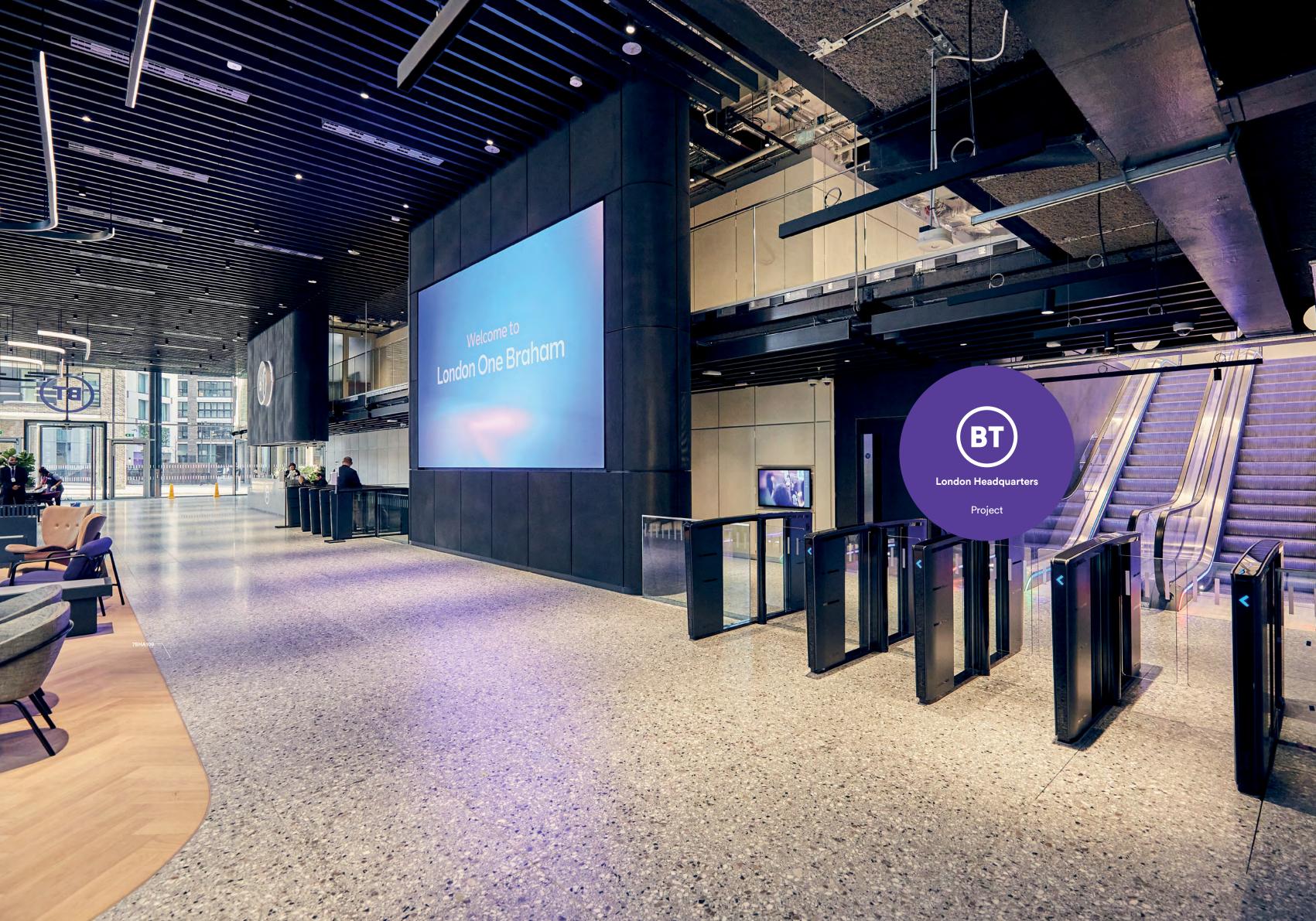
michaelirvine@solusceramics.com

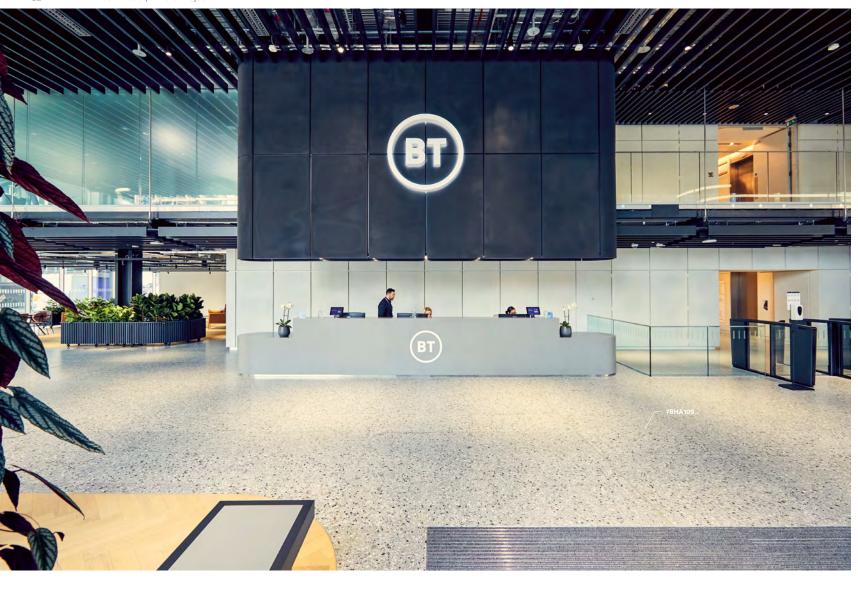
Architecture and Design:

Principal Contractor

Photography: Daniel Hundven-Clements

Tiles used in this project:
Wendover 3PSP362, Chiltern Stone ran
Eves 3LBG504, Stonework range
Equilla 3MDL250, Marbalite range





Project

BT London Headquarters

Solus supplies character to new stunning London HQ

With over 100,000 employees in over 70 countries, BT is a corporate behemoth. Solus was recently consulted to supply ceramics for its new 328,000 square foot, 18-storey flagship office building near Aldgate East Station.

Philip Jansen, BT Group Chief Executive, said, "Our new HQ in London will bring our people together in an impressive and modern environment, transforming the way teams work. We want our colleagues to be proud of where they work, to feel part of something brilliant at BT. Our new HQ has been designed to support our people, to enable them to be at their best and deliver great results for our customers."

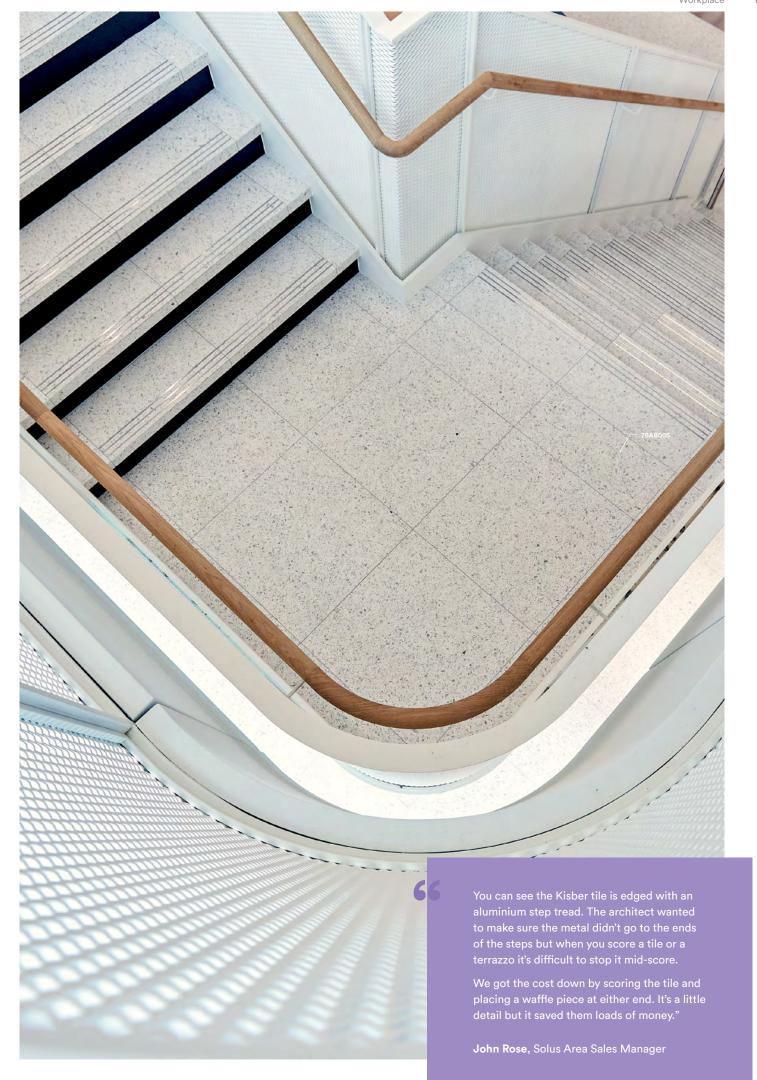
On the advice of Solus Sales Manager, John Rose, a bespoke terrazzo was commissioned. "BT wanted a modern grey

monolithic look that would suit an office but at the same time had a bit of warmth. A lot of the space is tiled with a grey tile from our Format range, which contrasts nicely with the terrazzo.

"Large tiles - 600×1200mm and 30mm thick - with large grey, white, and brown flecks were specified. The joy of terrazzo is it's highly customisable. Terrazzo artisans can create pieces that are totally unique and match the design vision exactly. It also has a super-high recycle value. BT has something that no one else has got, that has real character."

BT is undergoing a process of estate rationalisation by consolidating more than 300 UK locations to around 30.

Sheppard Robson Architects have been brought in to help BT achieve their vision.



"The London HQ encapsulates many qualities that BT promotes throughout its estate. The office embraces agile working, moving away from cellular offices. Wellness is woven throughout the design, with 'community' floors, café and restaurant spaces for socialising, and quieter spaces, such as the multi-faith and contemplation rooms." Peter Dye, from Sheppard Robson, tells me.

The entrance area is striking. John Rose explains, "The idea behind the large 600×1200mm tile is to suggest distance as you enter the space. Laying the tile going away from the entrance should give you the impression that it's a longer space than it is."

John Rose worked closely with BT, Sheppard Robson and tiling contractors Stone & Ceramic, "The working relationship between architect, client, contractor, and supplier is always critical. On this project we were able to actively engineer solutions because of the quality of the communication. For example, the Kisber terrazzo that we installed on two floors of stairs sits in a metal frame to overcome the deflection that naturally comes with the material.

"I worked closely with Stone & Ceramic to get the tiles on site. The weight and volume of the tiles meant that we shipped straight from factory to site. This was during the various lockdowns of 2020, and we had hundreds of palettes coming over from Europe, so there were a lot of logistical challenges to work out."

The office has a BREEAM Excellent rating and 99% of materials removed from the site were recycled. Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said, "It's great to see BT's new global HQ at Aldgate opening. It will provide a great boost to the area, and, as workers across London increasingly return to the office, demonstrates how businesses can combine technology and smart ways of working to really benefit their staff." •



JOHN ROSE
Solus Area Sales Manager – London North Central

Sheppard Robson ID had a clear vision on how to transform the space into one with real character and individuality. It was an honour to work with them and BT on a bespoke terrazzo which gave us the unique opportunity to create a product specifically for BT that at once conjures up a modern, minimalistic appearance

The project was focused on sustainability and, I think, we managed to capture an incredible aesthetic but with a forward thinking view to material and the way each has been produced."

johnrose@solusceramics.com





Architecture and Design: Sheppard Robson
Principal Contractor: ISG
Tiling Contractor: Stone & Ceramic

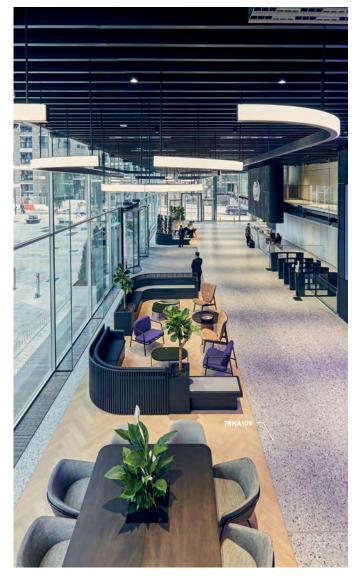
Photography: Solk Photography

Tiles used in this project:
Kilone 7BHA109, Bespoke terrazzo
Kisber 7BAB005, Terrazzo range
Raughton 5TRB108, Britannia range
Monkhill 5TRB117, Britannia range
Howell 2WDR002, Format range
Ansbach 2WDR003, Format range



The bespoke terrazzo contrasts well with the Format range, used in more intimate spaces, such as the Ablution Room







Third Space Mayfair Project Leisure 69



Project

Third Space Mayfair

Luxury gym in central London location specifies Solus products

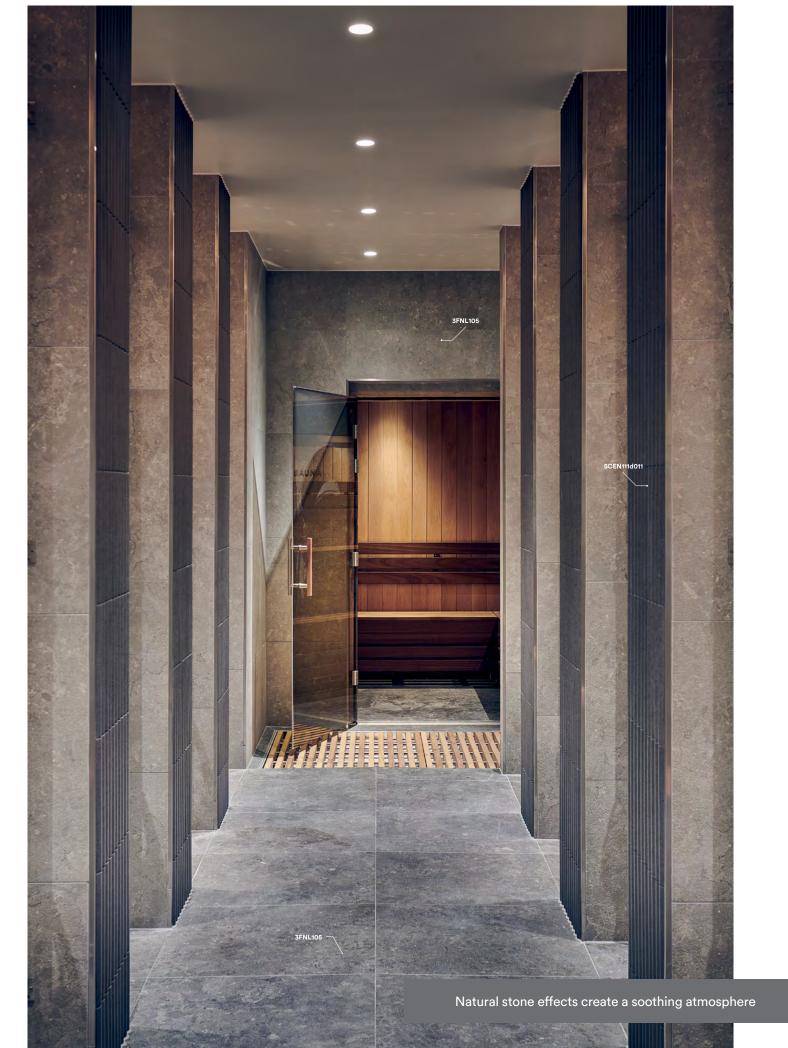
Physical exercise in ancient Athens was seen as a moral responsibility. To be healthy in mind, a good citizen was expected to be healthy in body. The gymnasium was a place of civic privilege and duty. At Third Space Mayfair, the body conscious of today can sculpt themselves in a modern expression of the ancient palaestrae.

Ewald Damen, Creative Director at Virgile and Partners described the project, "The design team wanted to bring together the energetic health club environment for which Third Space is known and elevate it with features that communicate a sense of premium hospitality. The design and material palette merges bold and industrial features, like a metal staircase, with memorable design pieces, such as a bespoke cast reception desk. Comfortable seating areas and dressing rooms are realised in high-end stone, metal-finished,

and walnut materials. The attention to detail and emphasis on service accommodates Third Space values and the character of the Mayfair community."

The project was completed under considerable time pressure. The relationship between Solus Sales Manager Mark Ayliffe, architects Virgile and Partners and the main contractor Woodford Interiors was critical in achieving the design goals and getting the project over the line.

Mark Ayliffe talked me through some of the challenges he met on this project. "I received a phone call from Aliki Kylika from Virgile and Partners just before the summer lockdown of 2021 to say they needed to specify tiles very quickly and could they come and see me with the client. I realised I had to work very quickly and so took the meeting at our Clerkenwell Showroom.



Third Space Mayfair Project

Leisure

"The impending lockdown would influence supply, so I had to have a direct channel with the factories and agents to ensure there was sufficient stock available.

"The designers had a very clear idea, supported by excellent visual resources, of what they wanted. I was able to suggest tiles that fitted their design brief. They were looking for opulence, sophistication, and luxury to reflect the high-end aesthetic of Third Space. The lighting is subdued and atmospheric, and the surfaces had to work well with the lighting plan. It was then a matter of leveraging the relationships I have with the factories and logistics services to ensure the tiles arrived on site on time.

A high-end design brief was well supported by Solus

"We provided a tile from our Marbalite range for the reception, which is obviously an important space as it sets the tone of the whole experience. We also provided tiles for the changing rooms including a beautiful porcelain for the showers called Wavelength.

"We've worked with Virgile and Partners before on some of their projects within the Harrods building. These are generally quite demanding projects involving a lot of bespoke cutting and using tiles from different factories. The quality of their creative team is first class and to support them I manage the correct sizes of the tiles, the thickness of the tiles, and generally advise them on which materials will best achieve their goal."

And achieve it they did. The club is a triumph of subdued opulence. A relaxing, low-light environment where a celebrity or éminence grise might pass unnoticed on the way to a spin class. The great and the good may no longer throw javelins and run in armour to stay fit, but the pursuit of the body beautiful is still an obsession. •





MARK AYLLIFE
Solus Area Sales Manager - South West London,
South East London and East Sussex



It was a real pleasure working on this project.

Virgile and Partners are always great to work with and they've really knocked it out of the park on this one.

The client is happy, so it's the ideal outcome."

markayliffe@solusceramics.com

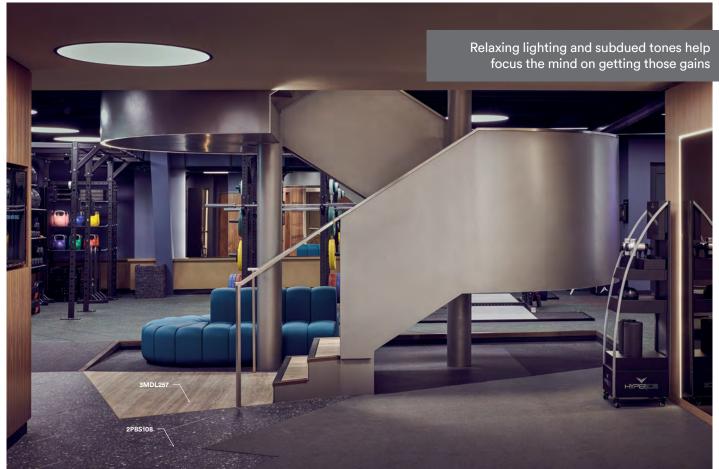


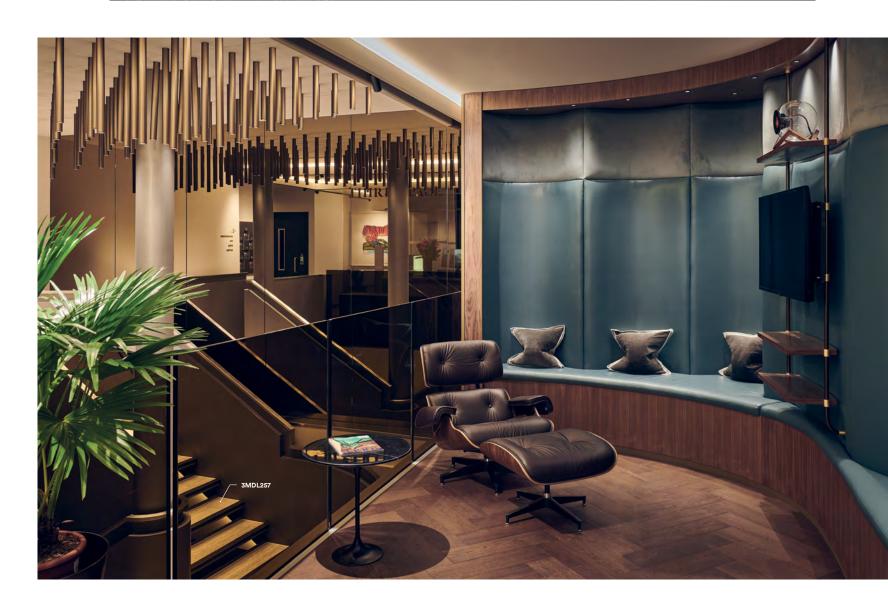
Architecture and Design: Virgile and Partners

Principal Contractor: Woodford Interiors

Photography: Jamie McGregor Smith

Tiles used in this project:
Dyestuff 2PBS108, Colouration range
Holywell 2NDT103, Flintstone range
Observe 3FNL103, Vigilant range
Guarded 3FNL105, Vigilant range
Crink 3MDL257, Marbalite range
Shamrock 3UDY001, Unearthed range
Maxton 3LBG531, Stonework range
Makai 3LBG530, Stonework range
CEN-Ash Décor A 5CEN111d011, Census range









Project

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

A green thought in a green shade

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh were founded by doctors Sir Robert Sibbald and Sir Andrew Balfour in the late 1600s. At that time, the studies of botany and medicine were closely aligned. In fact, until the early 20th century medical students in Edinburgh studied botany: Charles Darwin and Arthur Conan Doyle being two famous alumni.

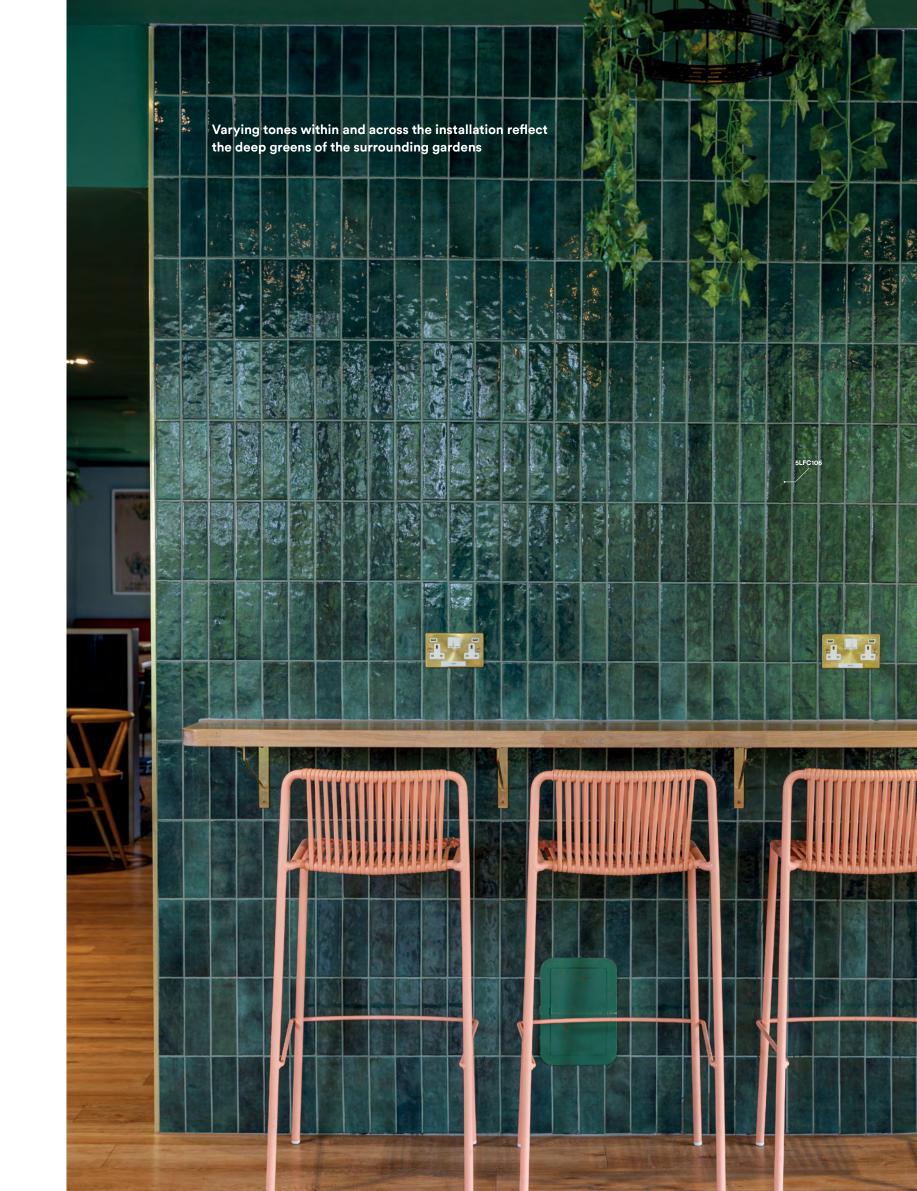
After the first COVID lockdown, the Scottish government realised the importance of access to green spaces to the mental and physical health of the nation and were quick to reopen the Royal Botanic Garden. Although no longer a 'physic garden', 'The Botanics' continue to fulfil their original purpose 352 years after their inauguration as places of healing.

The gardens are a huge visitor attraction, attracting over a million people per year pre-pandemic, and it is not difficult to understand why. The current site of 70 acres located one mile

from the city centre, includes a visitors' centre, Glasshouses, restaurants, cafés, a research library, an art gallery, and a centre for research, all set amongst some of the most exquisite and diverse gardens in the world.

Solus recently provided tiles for a renewal project that includes the shop, restaurant, cafés, and events hall. The Smitten tile from the Charmed range was used which has a complexity and depth of colour as well as a glossy sheen suggestive of the epidermis of a tropical plant. Faye Marshall from 442 Design talked me through the work.

"The Terrace Café was completely refurbished to enhance the customer experience and connection to the surroundings. The concept was to bring the lush, warm greens of the foliage in the gardens into the visitor spaces to create one continuous journey. The natural depth and reflection of the Solus Smitten tile was perfect for our project. We liked the tile so much that



we kept finding ways to use it further, on backsplashes and counters. We even clad central columns to create features through the new servery counter. An organic grout was used (Kerakoll Fugabella) to achieve a green colour as well as being sustainable.

"The flow of visitors around the service island is much more organic now. We were able to reuse wood planks from the previous counter, sand, restain and fit to the walls to create a new feature cladding. Reusing materials is a priority for us and a great way to sequester carbon.

"Some botanical drawings were taken from the RBGE archive, framed, and mounted on the walls to create a further connection to the gardens and its history. You can now enjoy a luxury afternoon tea here, delicious bakes and coffee with a view of the extraordinary gardens."

The renewed Terrace Café is a pleasant place to be.
Rhododendrons are not only on the walls as botanical drawings but also surround the café as part of the 'living collection'. Rhododendrons are a key area of research for the RBGE; the collection started in the early 20th century and currently half of the 1024 species in the genus are present.

Suzie Huggins, the Communications Manager for the Edinburgh Biomes project, explains that rhododendrons

are only one part of the work that RBGE does to support biodiversity and conservation.

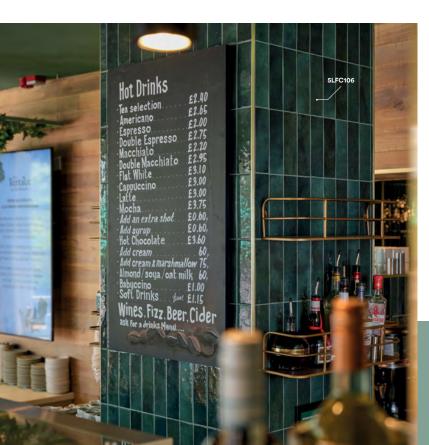
"There's a scary fact that, perhaps, still not enough people know, which is that 40% of the world's plants are under threat. We sometimes call it 'plant blindness'. People will look at a picture of a cute panda and think, 'Oh the poor panda's endangered', they don't look at the tree the panda is on and wonder if the tree is also endangered. Climate change has weakened a lot of species making them more susceptible to disease.

"Fundamentally, we all rely on plants. There is nothing without plants. So, a lot of the research we do is biodiversity research. We go back to the fundamentals. Before asking how we save something we ask, 'What is it?' and we find out as much as we can about the plant, because only by understanding more about each plant and how they work together can you get to the point where you have a plan to save them."

Biodiversity research is supported by the Herbarium, holding over 3 million specimens from all over the world that have been collected or donated over three and a half centuries. Many have been pressed into paper or pickled in jars by generations of scientists. Developments in genome sequencing technology means that this vast, historical



Botanical drawing of Rhododenron Aureum by Lillian Snelling
Image used with permission of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



Interior Design: 442 Design

Photography John Sinclair

Tile used in this project:Smitten 5LFC106, Charmed range



database can now be read in new and exciting ways. As if each sample were a time capsule waiting for the right key to open it up.

RBGE is not only looking to the past, there are also big plans for the future. Expecting to complete in 2028, the Edinburgh 'Biomes' project is a massive restoration and development project that will rehabilitate the iconic 200-year-old heritage palm houses, the 1960s A-listed 'front range' Glasshouses, and the research Glasshouses where scientists work. A new 21st century Glasshouse is being developed, as well as a plant health hub to study plant diseases, and a new energy centre to help reduce carbon output.

Most of the specimens in the Glasshouses are of conservation worth and some are even extinct in the wild. There is no spare Glasshouse and at times the project becomes a high-stakes game of Tetris, moving 40,000 plants to make way for construction then moving them back with the utmost care. Architects, contractors, and horticulturalists are in constant consultation finding innovative ways to the challenges to the collection that are posed by the project.

But, as Suzie Huggins points out, "This project is a duty. We have a responsibility to protect and conserve our collection for the nation and the world." Funding for the project comes from the Scottish government and the National Lottery but

also from the public. "A lot of support comes from the mums, dads, and grannies that pass through the door and make donations. We're a well-kent face in Edinburgh. People love what we do and want to support us and since the lockdowns, people have a heightened appreciation for the healing power of the green spaces." •

The exhibition "Rhododendrons: Riddle, Obsession, Threat" runs from 9th April to 5th June 2022 in Inverleith House at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.



LAURA BIRREL
Solus Area Sales Manager - Scotland and Ireland



keen to get some Scottish projects featured in our magazine. After speaking to Faye at 442 design who is a huge fan of Solus tiles, I knew this was a great project to put forward. The gardens are a great place to walk round and the changes to the terrace café are amazing, as well as the cakes!!"

laurabirrel@solusceramics.com











Duration: 45 to 60 minutes

The seminar includes information on the Equalities Act and British Standards, as well as slip resistance requirements, wet area tiling, movement joints, NCS colour scheme, calibration, and corundum inserts.

Book your free seminar at

solusceramics.com 0121 753 0777 info@solusceramics.com

An overview of tile specification

The main aims of this seminar are to:

- Provide the specifier with ongoing technical and product information as part of continuous professional development
- Discuss subjects which will help the specifier utilise floor and wall tiles avoiding any potential issues
- Provide knowledge and technical support in all areas of supply right through to installation
- To ensure correct detailing for the laying and application of ceramic and porcelain tiles



