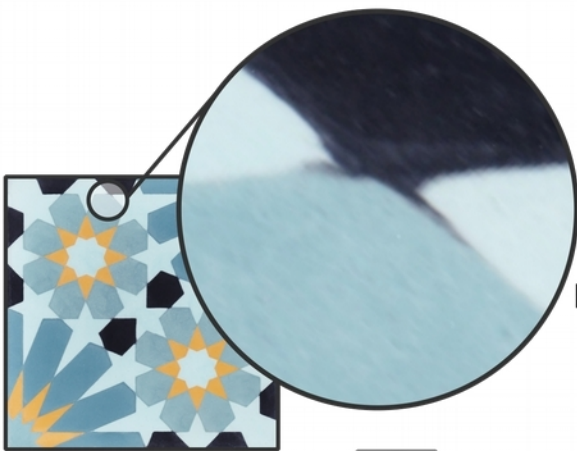


# What To Expect From Cement Tile

V I L L A L A G O O N T I L E

Many people today ordering cement tile have only seen it on their computer monitor, phone or in a magazine photo. They are unaware of the nature of cement tile. Usually clients order a sample tile, but one tile does not depict all of the quirks and nuances of the entire handcrafted cement tile experience.

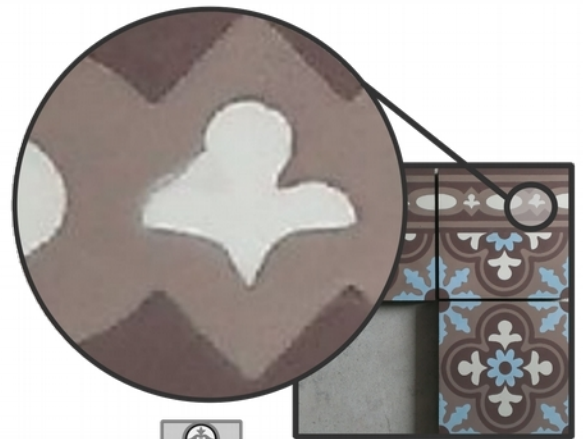
The growing popularity of "encaustic" cement tile in the USA has attracted many people who have no previous exposure to historic cement tile installations. Often these clients have expectations more related to their familiarity with mass produced, machine-made tile than the charm and quirks of hand-made cement tile. The two keys to a successful client experience are: realistic expectations and a really good sealant! These are some things you may or may not see in your cement tile.



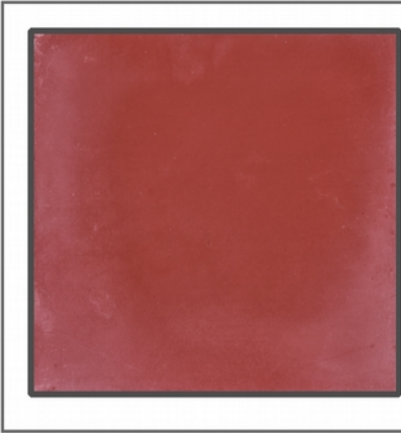
**FUZZINESS.** Because cement tiles are made upside-down using a poured colored liquid cement and marble dust suspension, there will sometimes be a bit of fuzziness where the colors meet one another. You will see it when looking at a tile held in your hand, but it visually disappears after installation. This is similar to viewing a knotted oriental rug,... close inspection is very different from viewing the whole carpet.



**COLOR DRIFT.** After all the color areas are poured, the cookie-cutter-like interior frame is lifted out of the mold. Sometimes this can cause small spots of color drift...what some people might call a smudge. These tiny imperfections are noticeable on a tile that is viewed up close, but visually disappear in an actual installation.



**COLOR.** The color is a part of the tile. It is not painted on the tile. It is created using a liquid suspension. Color variations are common in cement tiles. Because the color mix is really just a suspension of color particles in a liquid, there will be some areas in a tile which come out with more color saturation and some with less. Not only is this the nature of cement tiles but, it is the nature of the medium itself. Think about a poured concrete floor...there are always light and dark areas, swirls and spots.



**HALO.** Cement tiles often have or develop a 'halo' of lightness around the outer edges. Sometimes it is all the way around the tile and sometimes just on some edges. This is common. It occurs as the tile cures and dries out. Many people love this look as it adds a softness and richness to the installation, but some people are surprised. It is very important that the tile setter pulls tiles from various boxes as he sets them. This will insure a harmonious overall effect.

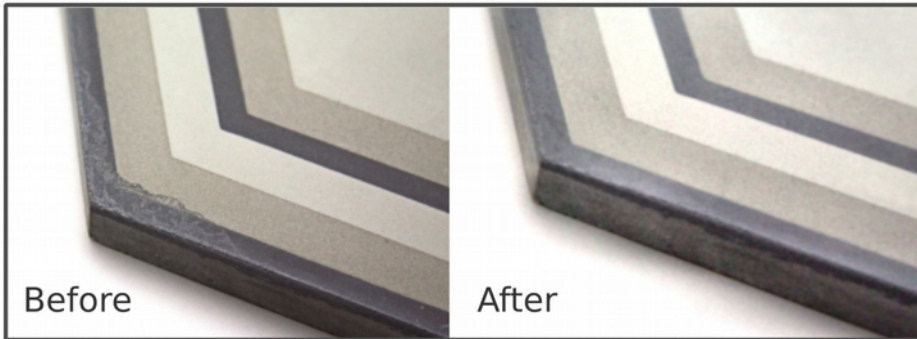


**COLOR VARIATION.** Mixing color for cement tile making is not like paint mixing. Multiple, hand-mixed batches are necessary to complete an order. As large orders of cement tiles are made over several days and many batches of color are mixed fresh, there will be variations in color.

If a client does not order enough tile and small amounts of additional tile must be re-ordered there is a good chance that there will be color difference from first and second order. There are multiple reasons for this; suppliers of pigments change sources, raw cement sources change over time, a different craftsman is making the second batch and his mixing, stirring and pouring technique may be slightly different from the person who made the first order. Even the weather can make a difference.



For these reasons, a tile order may look a little different in color from the color chips. One cannot realistically expect precision in color matching. Generally, hue is consistent, shade may be lighter or darker.



**HAZE.** During manufacturing, the tiles are placed in a water bath as a part of the production process.

No matter how frequently the water is changed, there will always be some suspended particles of excess cementitious materials.

For this reason there may be a dusty haze on the surface of the

freshly made tile or an area of crusty deposits along an edge. A responsible tile contractor will know how to use light abrasion to remove any surface residue before the tile is sealed.



The key to cement tile happiness is proper installation, sealant choice/application, and site preparation that meet your projects specific needs. Please choose a tile contractor experienced with cement tile or natural stone for best results. We are happy to help with any questions you have at any stage of your project!

