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Sensational Spanish Design

Barcelona, Madrid, Seville... Places that conjure up exotic images of hot sun, and traditional Mediterranean living. Awash with awe-inspiring and sensational designs for home interiors and exteriors, Spain has always managed to capture the hearts and minds of British holidaymakers over the years. The influence, however, is getting a little closer to home now - in the form of the Spanish tile.

Tile style is in vogue as the sale of Spanish tiles steadily increases in the UK. The growth is partly down to a greater interest in home improvement and gardens right across the board, but for imagination and creativity tiles from Spain provide a unique blend of styling and practicality, that is encouraging home decorators and designers to take to tiles.

According to ASCER, the Spanish Ceramic Tile Manufacturers Association, Spanish tiles are poised to take off in a big way in Britain. Maria Dolores Arraez, ASCER spokesperson at the Spanish Embassy in London said: "We know there has been a shift towards more modern flooring materials such as solid wood and laminates in the UK, but Spanish tiles offer something different, in terms of practicality and design."

She added: "The success of our tiles across Europe and the world tell you about the investment our manufacturers make in aesthetic and technical innovation to keep up with the latest fashions and contemporary home interior trends, which Britain is slowly catching on to."

Spanish tiles possess characteristics that make them hardwearing, resilient and uniquely effective as a contemporary building material. Porcelain tiles for example, have low water content and low porosity, which leads to a reduction in water absorption and a high resistance to weather conditions such as frost. And, being virtually impervious to water prevents the appearance of germ and fungal colonies, making them perfect for exterior cladding and garden paving. For this reason they are increasingly being used everywhere that is continually exposed to water: bathrooms, kitchens, swimming pools and building façades, to name but a few.

The through-colour construction of porcelain tiles also means any effect, pattern or design will penetrate right through, so a marble effect, for instance, will be the same throughout the tile disguising any chips and wear that will normally show quite dramatically in other materials.

And, technical characteristics aside, the aesthetic beauty of Spanish tiles are regarded as second to none. There is a constant stream of sensational new products coming out of Spain and designs including ones that faithfully imitate natural materials like stone, wood, marble, metal and even leather, make Spanish tiles among the most vibrant available. In addition designs can run seamlessly from walls to floors through to the outside of a property, providing a foundation for developing exciting new interior and exterior décor that can work with stunning effect.

ASCER's prediction of a growth in the use of Spanish tiles in the UK and across the world will mean that if Britain's love affair with Spain ever began to wane, it will probably be a Spanish tile somewhere that will remind us of our appreciation of Mediterranean living and all the beauty that comes with it.

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