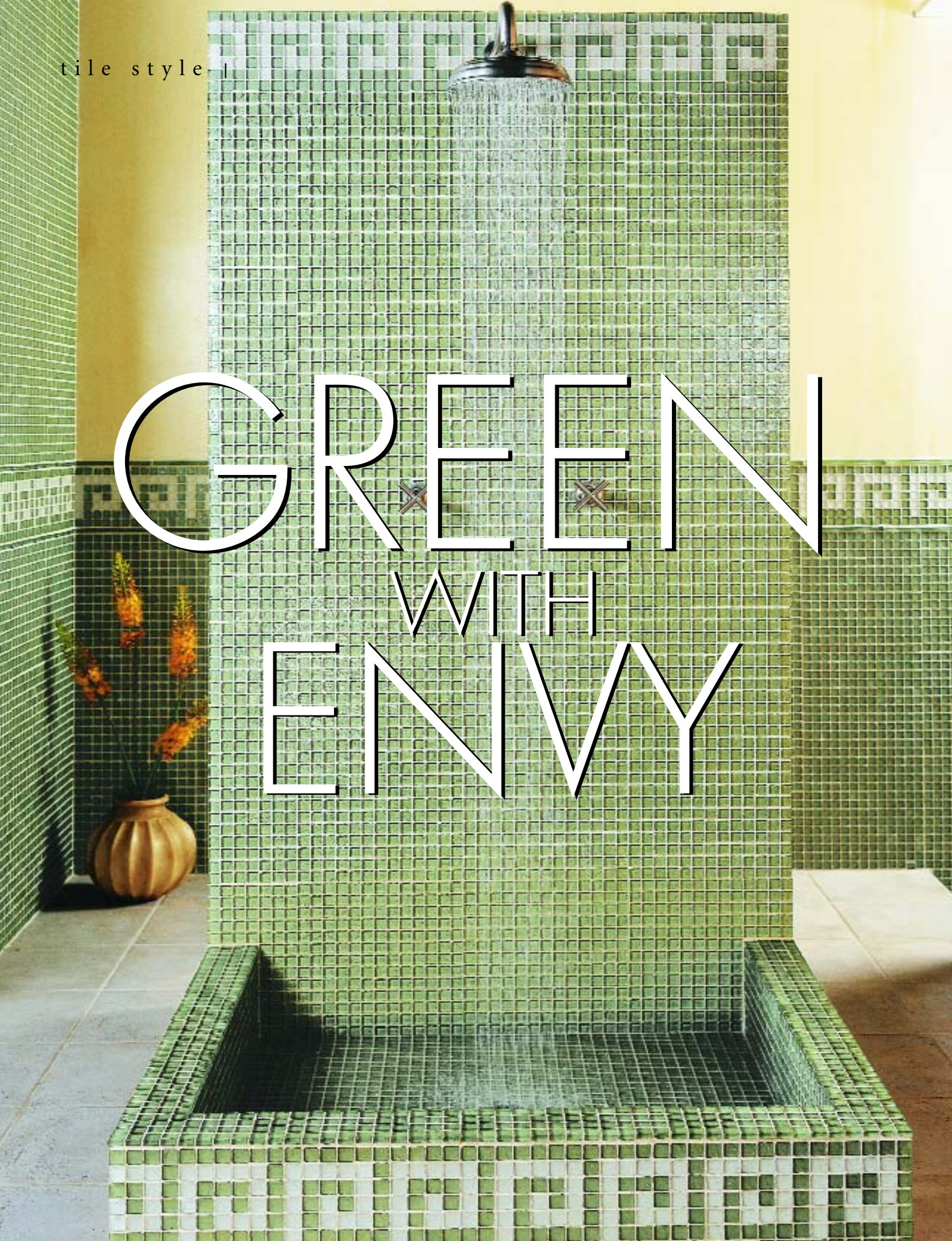
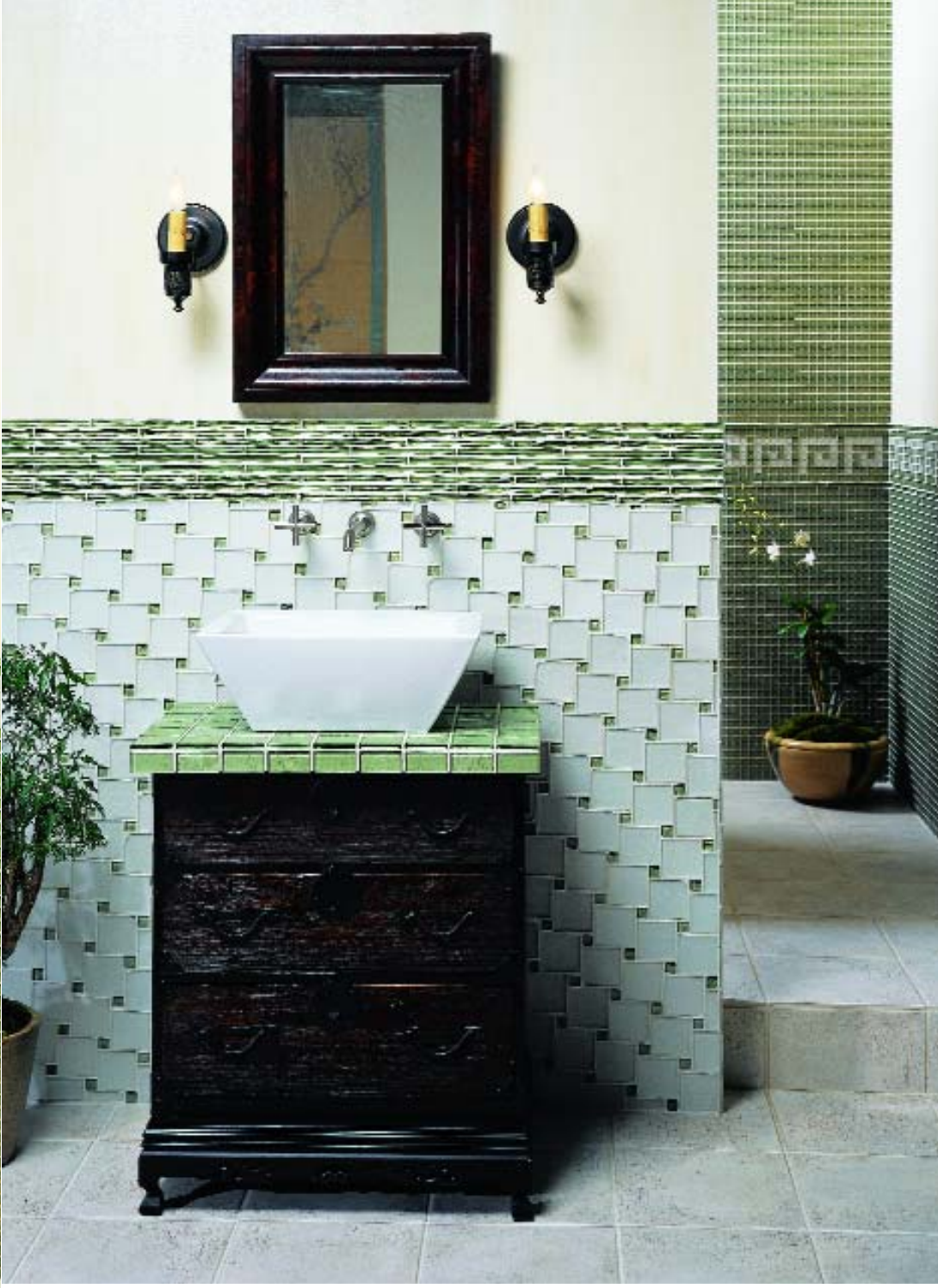


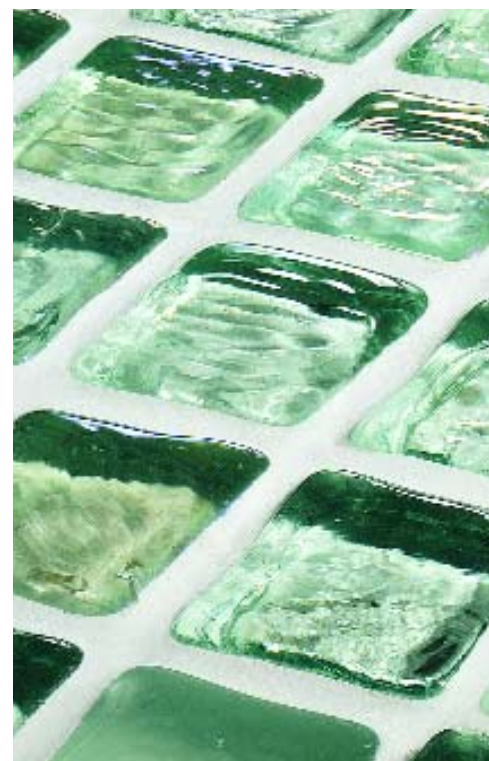
tile style |

GREEN WITH ENVY





From Illuminescence by Crossville come a variety of looks in glass. Opposite: A field of one-inch Seafoam Water Crystal Mosaics, with a Greek Key in Frosted and Clear, blend the qualities of water, glass and light in this shower. At top and bottom left, a pinwheel design is created in Frosted Prism Glass and 1-inch Clear Water Mosaics, all bordered on top by Frosted and Clear Prism Glass Listellos. Directly above is a countertop in two colors, Seafoam and Amber Splash, and three sizes of Radiance and Prism Glass. Below, take a closer look at Illuminescence Glass.



The word ceramic comes from the Greek word *keramikos*, which means potter's clay and is, in turn, derived from a Sanskrit term *keramos*, which means "to burn". So loosely, the term "burned earth" was the early reference to tiles or other products made from applying fire to natural materials from the earth.

Essentially today's ceramic and porcelain are materials from the earth still fired as they were in ancient days. Porcelain products are a bit more modern, made from finer materials and fired at higher temperatures making them less porous and therefore more water resistant for use in more places, like out-of-doors.

With so many tiles and patterns flowing in from all over the world, how do you decide which to choose?

Right now, the stone look is in. Ceramic and porcelain products are being constructed to look like natural stone. Unlike natural stone, ceramic and porcelain stone looks are unlimited by color and texture and designs. Different types of metal chips and other materials can be also "flashed" into the design.

Tile formats are getting larger, but be careful where you use large tiles. If a room is small, not square or oddly shaped, larger tile might require too many cuts and make the room look choppy. If you can use larger tile, your floor will have fewer grout lines and will appear more like one continuous slab. Using smaller tiles can make a room look busy because of more numerous grout lines, which means more areas to catch dirt.

Look also for elongated tiles, 6 inches by 24 inches, which may make for easier installation. (For stone, they can be referred to as "stone planks.") Ask your flooring professional or interior designer for the availability of tile sizes if this is important for the installation. Make sure your installer seals the grout or uses a grout additive to enhance its elasticity. That limits expansion and contraction and cuts down on "dirt catches."

There is no limit to the designs of tile and materials in the market place. Silkscreen technology using permanent inks is producing very interesting designs as well as etched tiles washed with ink; the ink seeps into the tile giving the tile a crackled finish making it appear more stone-like.

Look, too, for more metallic tiles, porcelains with a metallic glaze that add shine to a room. You'll want to make sure that the glazes coordinate with other metals in your room — appliances, plumbing and cabinet fixtures, even pots and pans. Metallics offer more opportunity to coordinate. Pewter palettes of gray, black and solid-textured neutrals will continue to be important as will nickel finishes similar to the ones found in bath and kitchen fixtures. Metallics can add glitz and fun to your room. >>



Bring nature in with the rustic styling and sculpted edges of a realistic stone look, like this large-format ceramic tile called Troon from Shaw.



The look of tile and stone is experiencing quite a Renaissance as designers and home decorators have discovered its underlying artistic temperament and creativity for any budget. Above, EpicStone comes in colors like Whitewash, Terracotta, Seagreen and Beige and with accompanying decorative listellos and ropes. At right, is Retro Classic, featuring the handmade look and feel of subway tiles, 6x6 and 13x13-inch wall and floor tiles — plus new CornerStones, with a cut corner to accommodate any of the six new 2x2-inch RetroClassic colors. All are from Florida Tile.



THE ULTIMATE TILE OR STONE LOOK MAY BE BRINGING IN YOUR CARPET OR AREA RUG AND HAVING A CUSTOM TILE CREATED FOR YOU!



Stone is one way of bringing in the outdoors, naturally, like these offerings from Colorado Stone Planking. Yes, stone planking. This stone can be used in walls, fireplaces, countertops, decking, fountains, planters, patios and walks as well as indoor and outdoor walls and floors, like Autumn Slate, top left, Teakwood Marble, above right, and bottom, Quartzite.

Color experts are forecasting the entrance of more serene shades splashed with vivid hues for 2006, creating even larger color palettes. Color will continue to be in, allowing us to express ourselves in new and exciting ways.

Every day more decos, listellos and trim pieces are becoming available that'll make your room pop.

Want to make some inexpensive and quick changes to your wall tiles? Check to see if you can add a row of trim to the outside of your design; this will quickly and inexpensively change the entire look of a room. If you are doing a new installation, design the installation so that you have an outside row of trim that you can change! Whatever your whim, you can remove the row and add a new tile border or some deco pieces for a whole new look. Look at your present tiles. Do you have trim or decos you would to remove? It's very likely that this can be done easily, most likely by a professional. It's a matter of imagination.

Glass tiles from vivid purples to iridescent blues are the hottest things in the industry. These can be purchased in one-by-one inch squares and used for accents, or they can be in larger sizes. A few glass tiles can go a long way, adding them to your tile design. Like spices, a little can go a long way. Before buying, ask if you can borrow a few square feet of the colors you like, or maybe your retailer has a pre-made sample board. See how the glass pieces reflect colors on your wall. Light reflecting off a floor of green tiles can turn your white wall green. Be sure this is what you want. Give careful thoughts to trendy colors and be sparing.

Some glass tiles are opaque, similarly to ceramic tile; others are translucent but quite shiny. Opaque tiles are very much like colored “milk glass.” They do not display depth like transparent and translucent glass tiles. There are also tiles with scalloped surfaces with imprints of leaves or shells. Glass tile is pretty “green” because it can be cast, molded and recycled. Glass tiles are sold by the square foot or by the piece. Installation takes more time and is often more complicated. This will likely require skilled craftsmen.

For a summer splash, you can add a self-stick trim wallpaper border that can be removed after the season. These can be rows of ivy vines or leaves; in any event these can be removed and replaced for very little money. How about changing the grout? There is grout paint available to darken, lighten or change the color completely. This can change the whole look without removing the tile.

Mixed media may sound difficult and expensive, but many patterns are available on a mesh back: wood, metal, glass and ceramic designs all mixed together. If there is too much of one of the items, you can just pull it off the mesh and replace it or leave it out altogether. Self-expression and individualizing is in; you should be able to find something to your liking.

How about taking that smaller bathroom and turning it into a small spa; a one-person whirlpool with aromatherapy jets pulsing your favorite scent? How about summer scents for your kitchen or bath, outdoor fragrances, jasmine, gardenias or lilies of the valley? Add a new bath towel in “Popsicle” colors or crisp white, which make the room feel cooler.

Old house faucets and showers have in the past presented a challenge to redecorators. Plumbing and supply stores carry conversion kits and face plates that will make it simpler to make decor changes.

How about a mural on the ceiling, painted or one that’s removable? Maybe your tile just needs a good cleaning; start with soap and water and a good stiff brush to clean your grout. Aqua Mix has also introduced an antibacterial cleaner so that you can disinfect your countertops and clean your bathroom. It is said to inhibit the growth of mold and mildew.

How about a light area rug for your bathroom or your kitchen, a nonskid rug with your favorite outdoor scene, a garden scene, the ocean or your favorite ground cover? One that can be thrown in your washer if necessary. Of course new dishtowels to match! 🧼



From Italy, comes a line of high-end, commercial/residential porcelain tile from Gruppo Ceramiche Saicis called the Patapum Series intended to present a feel of wood, shown here in Rosso (scarlet). At left is Natural Stone from the StoneXpress Travertine Collection in Espresso.