

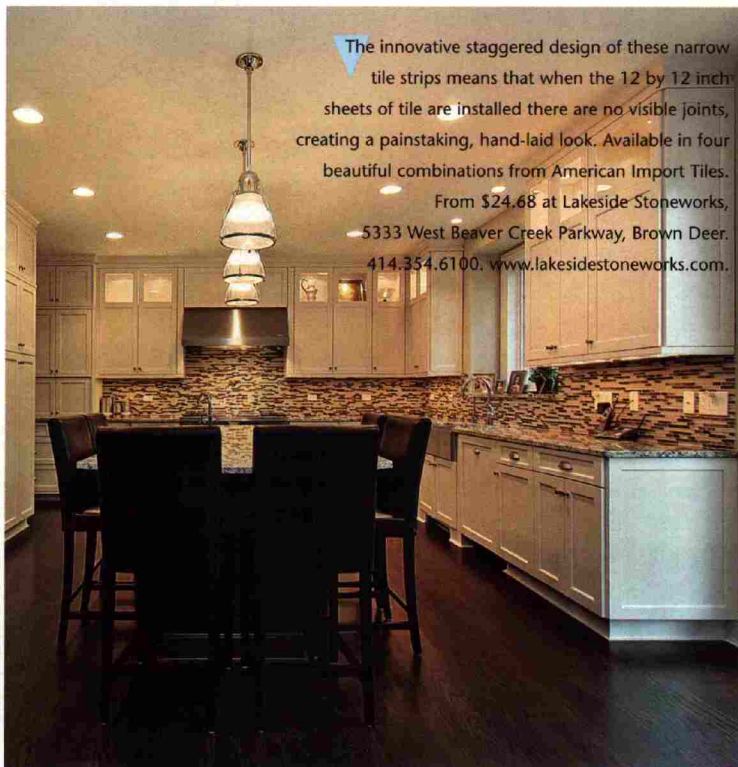
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TREND ▼

Trendy Tiles

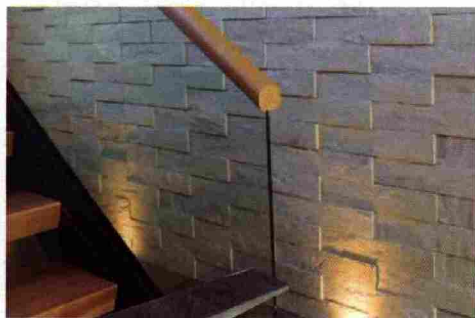
TILE IS ONE OF THE OLDEST DECORATIVE treatments known to mankind, but it needn't be old-fashioned. In recent years, manufacturers have found new shapes, sizes, materials and colors that go way beyond the familiar white squares. Ceramic, long the material of choice for tile, has lately been usurped by porcelain, with its significantly greater strength and ability to mimic other materials. Glass is another alternative that continues to be popular. Tiles can also be found in metal — and even leather — for a very unique look. Whether it's a fresh backsplash in the kitchen, a new fireplace surround or a complete bath remodel, breaking out of the ordinary can provide exciting style rewards.

— KATHLEEN FINCH
 See "Resources," page 65.

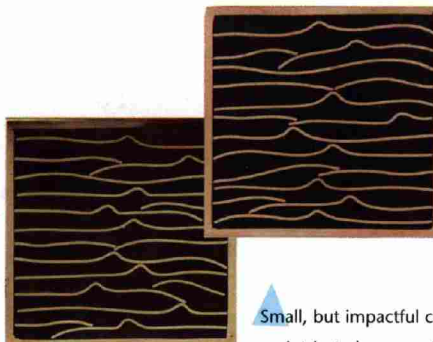


The innovative staggered design of these narrow tile strips means that when the 12 by 12 inch sheets of tile are installed there are no visible joints, creating a painstaking, hand-laid look. Available in four beautiful combinations from American Import Tiles.

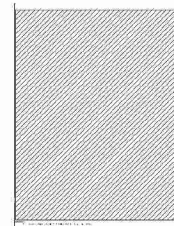
From \$24.68 at Lakeside Stoneworks, 5333 West Beaver Creek Parkway, Brown Deer. 414.354.6100. www.lakesidestoneworks.com.



The Cladding Series from Island Stone presents slate tiles that are exactly cut to install tightly without the need for grout. Ideally suited for fireplaces or even entire accent walls, some of the collections are wedge-shaped pieces that create unique designs depending on how they are installed. \$1.80 per piece at Colleen Horner.



Small, but impactful colored enamels on intricate brass or nickel patterns by designer Robert Kuo create these stunning cloisonné tiles that are truly jewelry for your walls. A 2 by 2 inch tile in the fanciful mi-shi wen design is \$36.95 at Ann Sacks, 765 Woodlake Road #1, Kohler. 920.452.7250. www.annsacks.com.





Yummy glass tiles are now available in

sizes larger than the typical tiny mosaics — this 5 inch by 10 inch style creates a sleek, contemporary look installed horizontally, or run it vertically for an intriguing Asian vibe. Made entirely of recycled glass in a wide variety of colors by Oceanside Glass Tile. \$12 each at Colleen Horner, 379 Forest Grove Drive, Pewaukee. 262.695.7103. www.colleenhorner.com.



Large scale porcelain tile, like this 24 by 24 inch Alfa Nepal style from American Import Tiles, is an excellent choice for the heroic proportions of many of today's grand residences, while in a smaller home the oversize tiles can give a contemporary feel to an otherwise classic tile. From \$6.19 per square foot at Lakeside Stoneworks.



Lustrous metal complements stainless steel appliances or bronze hardware beautifully, making metals a wonderful choice for accent tiles in a kitchen. Covering a whole wall in metal, however, definitely implies contemporary. Faux metal tiles from Questech are available in steel and bronze for \$7.27 per square foot at Lexco Tile & Stone. 1616 South 108th Street, Milwaukee. 414.771.2900. www.lexcotile.com.



Rich, supple leather is bonded to a treated wood substrate to create a tile with rare warmth and — surprisingly — water resistance. The tiles, available from Piel Leather in nine different colors, have coordinating base, crown, and chair mouldings available to completely wrap a room in floor to ceiling luxury. A 12 by 12 inch tile is \$82.50 at Ann Sacks.

INSIGHTS

Trend: Questech, 802.773.1228, www.questech.com; American Import Tiles, 708.614.8100, www.americanimporttiles.com; Oceanside Glasstile, 760.929.4000, www.glasstile.com; Island Stone, 800.371.0001, www.islandstone.com. **Artist's Studio:** Katie Gingrass Gallery, 414.289.0855, www.gingrassgallery.com.