

Tiles: an Italian Tradition

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The International Contemporary Furniture Fair is in New York from May 14-17, 2011. And the Ceramic Tiles of Italy pavilion is the icing on the cake

The use of Italian tile began in the Middle Ages when ceramic tile became a useful architectural medium for the decoration of walls and floors in religious and public building. The tiles were mostly hand-decorated majolica. The local artisans borrowed from the hexagonal terracotta tiles prevalent in the late Roman Empire. By then, Islamic and Moresque tiles had also been introduced to Christian Europe. Italian majolica handcrafters developed new styles, adapted from those types to fit the changing modes and patterns of interior decoration in both public and private buildings. Starting from the 15th century, the use of tiles spread rapidly in religious buildings, palaces and villas throughout Italy.

To these days tiles are still a very Italian affair, which this month it is celebrated and showcased in New York at the [International Contemporary Furniture Fair \(ICFF\)](#) [2] from May 14-17, 2011. Sponsored by the [Italian Trade Commission](#) [3] and [Confindustria Ceramica](#) [4] (the Italian Association of Ceramics), the [Ceramic Tiles of Italy](#) [5] pavilion will feature vignettes from eleven



different manufacturers, many exhibiting for the first time at ICFF. These producers represent the array of available shapes, sizes, textures and formats and serve as a testament to the Italian tile industry's position as a leader in innovation, quality, design and trends.

Considered a global summit for what's best and what's next in design, ICFF annually attracts more than 25,000 design enthusiasts from all over the world. "We are excited to be back for a third year in a row. The fair gives our members the chance to present their latest introductions to the top designers and architects in the industry," says Franco Manfredini, chairman of Confindustria Ceramica.

Aniello Musella, Executive Director of the Italian Trade Commission in the US, adds, "It is great to have a fair like this in our back yard. Our Ceramic Tile Department is based in New York and is here to serve as a clearinghouse for information for the Italian tile industry as well as a major link between Italian manufacturers and the North American market. A tradeshow like ICFF is an important opportunity for Italy to communicate and connect with the American design community."

One of the first tile floors designed by a known artist was in the chapel of S. Petronio in Bologna in 1487. It was by Pietro Andrea da Faenza. Five centuries later, Italians still dominate the world of tile manufacturing. If you are about to renovate your bathroom or are just into Italian design you should not miss this event at the [Javits Center](#) [6]

For hours and directions [click here](#). [7]

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