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CERAMICHE PIEMME: MADE IN ITALY IN THE WORLD _____page 2

CERAMICHE PIEMME...IN FIGURES_____page 3

PRODUCTION_____page 4

ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLINESS_____page 5

VALENTINO BY CERAMICHE PIEMME_____page 6

CERAMICHE PIEMME: latest collections_____page 8

CERAMICHE PIEMME CONTRACT: latest collections_____page 12

PIEMME PROJECT SOLUTIONS_____page 13

TAILOR MADE_____page 14

MATERIALS AND FINISHES_____page 15

THE ORIGIN OF CERAMIC TILES_____page 16

Established in Maranello (MO) in 1962, Ceramiche Piemme specializes in the manufacture of ceramic floor and wall tiles. The modern production facility in Solignano di Modena with its heat-recovery kilns every year produces over 7 million square metres of porcelain stoneware. The broad range of ceramic floor and wall tiles also comprises a line of products designed by Valentino, the haute-couture brand of which Ceramiche Piemme has been exclusive licensee for the ceramic industry since 1977.

CERAMICHE PIEMME: MADE IN ITALY IN THE WORLD

Established in Maranello (MO) in 1962, Ceramiche Piemme specializes in the production of Made in Italy ceramic floor and wall tiles and is based in Fiorano Modenese (Mo).

In 1977 the company signed an agreement with Valentino, the fashion designer, for the design of a haute-couture line of products of which Ceramiche Piemme is the exclusive licensee for the ceramic industry.

In 2000, the company began a radical industrial transformation, investing in both the production process and in a new range of products. The production process switched from single and double-fired red body tiles to the most innovative systems dedicated to porcelain stoneware in sizes such as 60x60, 80x80, 45x90 and 60x120cm.

With the introduction of more sophisticated digital decoration technology, the need arose to also rethink the product range from a cultural and design viewpoint.

With this in mind the company has revamped the management and started new partnerships with some of the protagonists of contemporary design.

At the end of 2018 the company has opened a new branch in London, **Piemme 40** (English pronunciation pm forty) in the heart of Clerkenwell, the design district *par excellence*.

The London inauguration marked the beginning of a strategic path for the company to work in depth on decision makers: besides strengthening and consolidating its position on the retail channel, the company has set itself the goal of becoming a real benchmark for specifiers and designers as regards major international architectural projects.

Thanks to the strong driving force represented by the US market and to the increasing stability of that of Europe, the company is currently closely focused on the two brands which have made its history in order to improve its competitive edge as regards medium-high bracket consumers and major international projects: **Ceramiche Piemme**, which has always been synonymous with medium-high quality wall and floor tiles; and the **Valentino** brand, already-known in the world for the quality of its materials and the elegance of its.

In 2019 the company has extended its range with the introduction of "**Ceramiche Piemme Contract**" (www.ceramichepiemme.it/contract/): a division dedicated to ceramic collections created to support the **designer** in choosing finishes for public and private spaces.

CERAMICHE PIEMME IN.. FIGURES

Date established: 1962

Headquarters: Via Crociale 42/44 – Fiorano Modenese (MO)

Production: Ceramic floor and wall tiles

President: Carla Vacchi

Employees: 330

Press Office: Threesixty - Gabriella Braidotti – 011-547471
g.braidotti@360info.it

PRODUCTION

The modern Solignano di Modena production facility, with its heat-recovery kilns, every year produces over 7 million square metres of porcelain stoneware.

Covering a surface area of 100,000 square metres, it today represents an industry benchmark in terms of sustainability and efficiency.

A project which involved an investment of 25 million euro in two new 98-metre kilns, four presses linked to horizontal spray-dryers and a cutting-edge, fully-robotized piece handling system. And besides this, the implementation of the decoration department with seven high-definition digital stations; three new "one roof" ceramic tile polishing, lapping and grinding lines, as well as electronic quality standard control.

A new computer system monitors every stage of the production process: from the selection of raw clay to the dispatch of finished product invoices.

Every aspect has also been optimized in terms of energy efficiency to ensure low environmental impact.

The production range comprises over 20 original series for interiors and outdoors in various sizes (from 30×30 to 60×120 up to 120x120 cm) but also proposals which combine the practicality of ceramics to the aesthetics of other materials. Marble (over 30 variations), wood and even resin or concrete: the 3-D relief surfaces have in fact made it possible to faithfully reproduce the characteristics of all textures.

Rectangular or square, the ceramic tiles are made in many different sizes conceived for interior design but also for outdoors and large highly-trafficked public premises.

ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLINESS

To drastically reduce the consumption of natural resources and CO2 emissions into the atmosphere, Ceramiche Piemme has invested in the modernization of its production facilities with special focus on the heat recovery of its kilns in favour of sprayers and dryers.

The recovered heat is also used to heat the production departments, with a further reduction of CO2 emissions amounting to over 4200 tonnes/year.

The high-performance production of electricity is by means of a natural-gas fuelled turbine.

Ceramiche Piemme is a member of the Green Building Council (www.gbcitalia.org) a non-profit organization which promotes sustainable building and is engaged in fostering the awareness of the public and the institutions on the impact which building materials and methods have on the quality of life.

Thanks to a partnership with the UK institute which promotes LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, GBC Italia promotes and adapts to the Italian situation the parameters which establish precise design and building criteria for healthy and energy-efficient buildings. It also sets a market value for "green buildings", stimulates competition between companies on the issue of the environmental performance of buildings and encourages aware consumption behaviour among end users.

In November 2019, Ceramiche Piemme won the **CONAI contest** for prevention and packaging sustainability, which selects the most innovative, eco-sustainable packaging solutions on the market during 2017-2018. The company was chosen not just for its raw material savings but also for its logistics optimisation. Especially for 60x120cm tiles and the 20x120cm size. As well as for the simplification of its packaging system.

VALENTINO BY CERAMICHE PIEMME

In 1977, Ceramiche Piemme teamed up with the Valentino label to give life to a line of top-quality ceramic floor and wall tiles able to represent the elegance of Made in Italy.

A forty-year partnership which has seen this ceramic brand grow on major international markets.

MAJESTIC

Designed by the Valentino by Ceramiche Piemme researchers, the Majestic collection of tiles and slabs is inspired by the arabesque textures of marbles like Carrara, Grigio Verona, Nero Levanto, Onice, Nero Marquinia and Bianco Arabescato.

The collection deliberately breaks out of the classic mould of marble effect surface installation and interprets interior decorating with haute couture taste in unmistakable Valentino brand style.

Tiles and large slabs interpret the veins of precious marbles in eight colour shades with over 150 different graphics to simulate the great diversity of natural materials. Numerous sizes and finishes are combined with decorations, mosaics and coverings in extra-fine white body.

ELEGANCE

Elegance is the new collection conceived to combine all the elegance and the preciousness of marble with the versatility of porcelain stoneware. Thanks to modern digital technology, the natural veins of the precious stone are designed on surfaces to create one-of-a-kind and elegant environments.

Four different marbles – which go from a softer colour with lighter veins to deeper coloured lines - are reproduced in this collection, which is inspired by four icon streets of Italian fashion in Milan and Rome: Via Condotti, Via Montenapoleone, Piazza di Spagna and Via della Spiga.

With this series, the Valentino range of marbles is enhanced by the new large 60x120 cm size to be modulated with the 30x120 cm size to create installation effects on walls and floors.

Furthermore, the new Extra Gloss surface, the upshot of cutting-edge polishing methods, conveys depth and brightness, features particularly suitable for designing hotels and prestige residential interiors.

MARMI REALI

The Marmi Reali collection presents the most precious Italian marbles made of fine porcelain stoneware, including in matt version. The line, thanks to the most modern and cutting-edge production technology, is able to reproduce in a natural way the typical and unique veins of this material. Alongside the slabs in natural version, Marmi Reali Mat present new forms, with lead role played by three-dimensions and geometric patterns.

6 different shades and veins of marble available in 2 sizes (30X60cm - 60X60cm) and also in the 80X80cm size for Carrara, Statuario Gold, Calacatta and Alabaster shades.

The mat version is available in 4 shades (Statuario Gold, Carrara, Bardiglio and Nero Reale) in the two sizes 30X60cm and 60X60cm.

The collection is designed for interior bathroom, kitchen and living area floors and walls.

URBAN

A collection created using digital technology with a modern and essential design, smooth surfaces or characterized by relief sections with cutting-edge technical properties and high resistance to slipping and sudden weather changes, which makes it perfect for highly-trafficked residential and commercial interior floors, but also for outdoor flooring. Available in 5 shades (bianco, sabbia, terra, grigio and nero), to the 4 sizes is added the 20mm thick version ideal for high stress floors.

CERAMICHE PIEMME: latest collections

GLITCH designed by Benoy

A collection of porcelain stoneware tiles designed by London firm **Benoy**. The word "glitch" refers to the flickering produced on a computer screen by *an unpredicted error*. A theme which is very much in line with the design trend that favours imperfection as a sign of uniqueness.

Hence the inspiration of the Benoy designers, expressed in 8 colours in various sizes. Glitch focuses on the distinctive irregularities of concrete surfaces, such as cracks, films, scratches and wear, and reinterprets them for ceramic tiles. The result is a contemporary collection ideal for both homes and commercial locations (Benoy's real expertise).

MATERIA

An unusual effect, creating surfaces that merge metal, Corten steel, stone and ceramic in a refined, contemporary look. Starting out from very different metals, oxidised or glossy, from the natural feel of stone and the versatility of ceramic, Ceramiche Piemme's R&D team have created a new material with "Materia". Thanks to sophisticated production technologies, this collection combines the ground look typical of hand-polished metal with the small flaws that denote genuine craftsmanship.

It is available in six tones, ranging from the lightest OPAL (white) to DEEP (anthracite), taking in the light grey NACRE, the dove grey SHIMMER, the dark grey REFLEX and the Corten steel-coloured RUST. Five sizes are available, with two three-dimensional structures and two third firing decorations.

SOUL

All the spirit of reclaimed wood for the new **Soul** collection: digital technologies recreate natural oak in its most natural aspect with all its *knots, flames* and signs of time and *ageing*. In line with the increasingly popular "used look", the Piemme Soul floor tiles in porcelain stoneware are designed to 'warm' the space just like ancient, sturdy parquet made of oak.

Under the spotlight in this collection of tiles are the **natural** features of wood with light shades at the base and slight flaming emphasized through hand brushing; the **rustic** effect of knots usually discarded when selecting the boards are enhanced to give more naturalness; the elegance of the **recovered** wood, seasoned and handcrafted in the wax finished version, are the real protagonists of this collection of tiles.

STONE CONCEPT

Stone Concept takes its inspiration from the trend of recycled stone; in this case a white Burgundy stone typical of the medieval French courts along the Loire. A sedimentary calcareous rock with various faint veins. This new collection is designed to create internally and externally coordinated environments, but also to enhance the walls with three-dimensional surfaces. The Stone Concept tiles are designed for residential, public and commercial environments.

5 shades, ranging from white to beige to grey, 4 sizes with natural, smooth or bush-hammered surfaces and 2 decorations in line with the recovery of poses and ancient surfaces.

FREEDOM

The tiles in Freedom collection recreate the natural effects of the stone from Hauteville, used all over the world for its extraordinary compactness. Indeed, it can be found in the covering of the façade of the Empire State Building and even in the base of the Statue of Liberty.

Freedom collection is the result of continuous research on materials and digital technologies. The wide range of different colours presented by this rock provided the Ceramiche Piemme researchers' inspiration for this collection, who decided to pay tribute to a collection in which the focus is on the aesthetic potential of Hautville stone, by naming it Freedom.

The colour palette contains 5 shades, which range from white (white) to beige (sand), and from hazelnut (nut) to grey (grey and the darker antracite).

Freedom tiles can be used as a wall covering and for indoor and outdoor flooring. 3 different sizes and 3 dimensional surfaces for wall covering.

SHADES by Gordon Guillaumier

With the Shades collection Ceramiche Piemme provides a new answer to the dialectic between art and technology: the newest frontiers of digital printing are explored by designer Gordon Guillaumier to give life to floors and surfaces of artistic inspiration. The porcelain stoneware tiles and slabs of the Fiorano Modenese manufacturer reproduce the designer's strokes.

The Shades tile collection replicates in a realistic way the delicate and imperfect sign of the brush stroke; the overlapping colours create unique nuances which go to combine with the 5 basic concrete-effect shades.

The four types of decoration are each expressed in five shades that vary from blue to light blue, from white to golden and mid-blue: the real colour movements so typical of water-painting.

The encounter of modernity and tradition is also expressed through the choice of sizes: with the modern 60X60cm or 60X120cm slabs, Ceramiche Piemme combines hexagon-shaped decorated tiles that recall traditional cement tiles and other small-size (20X20cm) tiles typical of classic majolica ware.

FLEUR DE BOIS

Porcelain stoneware 'dresses up' in a brand new outfit, combining the effects of American and Italian walnut wood, and relying on advanced digital technologies to flaunt an even more natural look.

The collection recreates the veining **effect of wood** and adds a few special effects, such as the slightly hand-planed look or the worn effect characteristic of old floors.

The sizes available make it possible to recreate classic laying configurations or for creating the chevron design – sometimes known as the herringbone, or Hungarian point pattern - with the special 60x120cm size. The range of colours spans from lighter, modern shade Glace to the darker Chocolat tone, offering one more natural shade Miel.

UNIQUESTONE

Stone, granite and marble: an unprecedented blend for the Uniquestone collection by Ceramiche Piemme, designed to furnish interiors and outdoor environments with elegance, using a product that is easy to lay and maintain.

Uniquestone is fruit of the continuous research performed by the company on materials and **digital technologies**. The natural finish, for example, recreates in detail the textured effect of the various minerals that inspire it, whereas the polished version adds elegance and brilliance. The collection includes 5 colours: from the lighter "silk" shade to the darker "nite" colour. The tiles are available in a variety of sizes (30x60, 60x60, 80x80, 60x120 cm) and include the decorative element Chevron (10X53 cm) designed for use in coverings laid in a herringbone pattern. The series also offers four 3D wall coverings that reproduce the effect of hand-processed stone: **Level**, a large tile (60X120cm) featuring the 4 textured effects by which Uniquestone is inspired; **Iced** which recreates the veined effect of stone with a fine polished effect on the top, **Maya** with a geometric design, available in *ton-sur-ton* or in a range of shades that can easily be matched and **Weave**.

FRAGMENTS by Pierre Charpin

Pierre Charpin has chosen the name "Fragments" for the Ceramiche Piemme collection, paying tribute to the painstaking task of gathering and composing references to his artistic work, elements of the history of the company from Fiorano Modenese, inspirations and trends linked to his vision of space and surfaces

Walls can be "dressed" in an outfit combining shiny and matte surfaces with the use of maiolica in 6 natural shades: from the lightest colour Milk to the darkest one Charcoal (dark grey), and with the grey Cloud shade and the warmer Tan tone; the grey Fern and the light blue Ocean.

BITS&PIECES by Gordon Guillaumier

The collection of floor and wall tiles in fine porcelain stoneware (1250°C full-body coloured) designed by Gordon Guillaumier, is characterized by sizes and digital decors inspired by the Greek and Roman classical period.

Making this collection involved developing two new tiles: lava stone (Bits) in natural or polished version, and in five colour shades (Pearl Grey, Peat Brown, Pitch Black, Pewter Smoke, Powder Bone), and marble grit (Pieces) in polished version only in two colours (Steel Grain, Ash Grain) only available in polished smooth finish.

Playing with materials and shapes, Guillaumier replaced the marble "tozzetto" with wood-effect inserts, setting them in the lava tiles (Bits), while he preferred marble fragments in the smooth marble grit tiles (Pieces) for a modern reinterpretation of classical Palladian.

Quad and Facet are the two graphic textures (rectangular or irregular "tozzetti")

Bits & Pieces received the prestigious ADI Ceramics Design Awards 2016 for its modularity and the originality of its colours.

CLAYMOOD

The idea came from a combination of clay and cement mortar which created a totally new look. Four base shades -Gray, Pearls, Sand and Taupe- which create nuances and a particular cotto-concrete effect thanks to multi-face digital technology.

Available in 4 sizes (60x120 - 60x60 - 30x60 - 80x80 cm) with 3D in-line surfaces SHAPE and ROCK and mixed mosaics.

In-line decorated surfaces are also available (filet random graphic on 30x30) as well as 60x60 third-firing decorated surfaces: Murano (three green and blue and craquelé patterns) and Florence (two patterns decorated with white majolica glaze).

CERAMICHE PIEMME CONTRACT: latest collections

In 2019 Ceramiche Piemme has extended its range with the introduction of "**Ceramiche Piemme Contract**" (www.ceramichepiemme.it/contract/): a division dedicated to ceramic collections created to support the **designer** in choosing finishes for public and private spaces. Ceramiche Piemme Contract was created to facilitate the construction industry chain linking customer to company.

VENETIAN MARBLE

The collection combines the technical performance of the latest generation of porcelain stoneware with the aesthetics of the Venetian terrazzo flooring. Used since ancient times in Greece, this type of floor then spread throughout Italy thanks to the ancient Romans first and then to the Venetian nobles. A floor covering that is an integral part of the history of Made in Italy and that through the centuries of its evolution has come down to the present day to be reinterpreted in ceramic key.

The Venetian Marble Collection is available in 4 shades -Rainbow, Cloud, Fog, Storm- and 3 sizes (30X60cm, 60X120cm and 60X60cm).

AGELESS

The collection is inspired by the aesthetics of industrial concrete resin: thanks to the most modern digital technologies, Ceramiche Piemme researchers have reproduced on porcelain stoneware tiles the pleasant aesthetic effect with a ceramic twist and a light movement of the typical directional streaks associated with the manual or mechanized laying of mortar.

Available in "natural" finishes, the new contract collection combines industrial aesthetics with high technical performance and guarantees high resistance to daily stress in residential, commercial and large public areas.

The Ageless Collection is available in 7 shades - Africa, Island, Sahara, Europe, Polar, Britain, Baltic - and 2 sizes (30X60cm, 60X60cm). To these is added the 3D structure Textured in 60x60cm format with a thickness of 9.5mm, available in Baltic, Britain and Sahara colors.

PIEMME PROJECT SOLUTIONS

The construction industry is rediscovering porcelain stoneware for public and private projects thanks above all to the development of production technologies that have given us new sizes, surface textures and decors unthinkable until a few years ago. Easy to install and convenient to clean or renew, stoneware can be used on floors and walls both inside and outside buildings.

The vital factor is knowledge of its characteristics and installation options: therefore, **Piemme Project Solutions** offers a consulting service and a complete range of tools which historic Modena-based producer Ceramiche Piemme provides for architects and contractors.

Solutions for installing outdoor pavings in the extra-thick 20 mm size, and for indoor or outdoor raised technical floorings (loose-lay or with pedestal) and floating floorings.

Particularly resistant to the most extreme stresses, 20 mm porcelain stoneware allows the construction of floating pavings on terraces and courtyards, the creation of paths by dry laying on grass, or the safe temporary paving of even vast areas on sand and gravel substrates.

The slabs produced in this high-strength thickness are also suitable for installation with glue on a screed, ideal for surfaces exposed to high mechanical stresses, such as car parks or industrial or retail areas. Raised paving, on the other hand, is recommended for free-draining outdoor areas such as terraces and public and private courtyards.

Ceramiche Piemme's 20 mm tiles, available in a variety of finishes, combine aesthetic quality with high levels of technical performance, such as resistance to heavy loads, slipping, frost, thermal shock, mould, staining and salt.

TAILOR MADE: a real *prêt-à-pos*er bathroom collection

In September 2019, Ceramiche Piemme presented the first sanitary fittings in its *Tailor Made* project: porcelain stoneware washbasins, tops and shower trays made in Fiorano Modenese.

Matching sanitary fittings ready to install together with the tiles, making the very most of the interior designer's work and the technical characteristics and looks of ceramic: an eco-friendly, versatile, hard-wearing material.

A washbasin/freestanding unit which can also be installed in the centre of the room, wall-mounted washbasins in different sizes, tops and shower trays: every Ceramiche Piemme sanitary fitting can be produced in different finishes to suit the bathroom's interior design.

A furnishing solution also offered to private customers or to architects wishing to design creative, easily constructed bathrooms: the ceramic slabs and tiles used for floor and wall coverings now enable the realisation of this original collection of sanitary fittings.

Produced in innovative materials, with incorporated wastes, the washbasins, shower trays and tops are ready for installation with no need for any masonry works, saving time and complications. A service which not only sets free the creativity of users and interior designers but also guarantees the very highest technical quality, including with regard to reliability and safety.

There is a vast selection of finishes available for matching shades with the bathroom's other surfaces, with marble, concrete or stone-effect textures. Perfect for the renovation of hotels and other residential and public buildings as well as for high-end residential projects.

MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Ceramics are made from natural clays and are completely recyclable; once installed, they are hygienic, do not harbour dirt or bacteria and are odourless. Ceramics do not burn or release harmful substances, not even during a fire; ceramics do not absorb, do not discolour in the sun, do not freeze and are a hard-wearing material perfect for use in residential and public environments.

Originally designed as a product for technical applications (highly-stressed flooring such as public premises or industrial plants), thanks to the progress made by production technology stoneware has seen its market extend considerably. To sturdiness and flexibility of use have in fact been added aesthetic qualities which have determined its success not only in public buildings but also in quality residential projects.

The colour effects obtained by the introduction of colouring oxides in the mixture of clay contribute to the success of this material in Italian design and interior decoration

Glazed or unglazed

Glazed tiles have their surface covered with a layer of coloured glass. The variety of glazes used permits obtaining a practically unlimited range of colours and decorations. Unglazed tiles instead are uniform with no difference between surface and substrate.

With porous or compact substrate

The substrate is the body of the tile: it can be compact or characterized by the presence of pores. To measure the porosity, the amount of water must be determined which is absorbed in particular conditions of imbibition.

Pressed or extruded

The two methods used for forming ceramic tiles envisage: pressing from a powder mixture, compacted and formed in a high-pressure press. Extruded tiles instead are obtained from a paste passed through a special die.

Red body or clear body

Depending on the raw materials used, the tile substrate can be coloured or clear. The colour of the substrate in glazed products is not visible on the surface, while in the case of unglazed products, it determines the aesthetic appearance of the tile. In some unglazed products different colours can be obtained by adding pigment dyes.

THE ORIGIN OF CERAMIC TILES

Among the first functional and decorative materials for domestic use, tiles documented in Egypt date back to at least the 4th century B.C. They were made of clay and were fired and decorated using blue glazes made of copper.

Other tiles of the same period have been found in Mesopotamia; Tunisia (dating back to the 9th century); Kashan, Iran (11th century) and in various mosques in the Middle-East.

From the hexagon-shaped pieces of the late-Roman period made of cotto with marble insert, we come to the production, including in Italy, of decorated majolica ware.

In the early-16th century, the production began of "laggioni": floor and wall tiles covered with brightly-coloured glazing, according to designs derived in part from Islamic art and also of renaissance taste.

Starting with these types, Italian craftsmen developed new styles, including those tied to the characteristics of the materials available in the different regions.

In Deruta, in central Italy, ceramic ware achieved the height of its glory in the 15th and 16th centuries. Alongside objects in daily use appeared ornamental pieces with geometric patterns and figures.

In the early-19th century, single-theme decorative floor installations began to be replaced by a modular concept of the proto-industrial type.

The growth of the ceramic district around Modena, between Sassuolo and Fiorano is tied to the abundance of clay in the area and to a natural vocation for clay-working that dates back to the Neolithic, as is well documented by the artefacts in the Ceramic Museum of Fiorano Modenese.

But the big boom came after the Second World War, following a burgeoning demand for building materials. Besides Fiorano and Sassuolo, the ceramic district now also includes Formigine, Maranello and Castelvetro.