



Simply Sophisticated



Opposite: Staying with a simple color palette and effectively blending stone with porcelain tile that mimics the appearance of natural stone brings a casual yet sophisticated feel to this home.

Above: The powder room features a dramatic Crema Valencia marble vanity top. The soft gold tone and faint pink veins give the stone a look similar to onyx.

Monochromatic Surfaces Unite Design

Photography by Matt Silk

How do you obtain that sought-after look of understated elegance? One method is to select timeless surfaces of enduring aesthetic value designed for today's lifestyles.

That's the task one homeowner, whose striking Longview residence was built by Arcadia Homes, Inc., entrusted to Wendy Rollins, showroom manager for Tile Collection, Inc. "Our home is casually elegant. We wanted it to have an informal feel but to be a little more upscale," says the homeowner. Their home is a sophisticated blend of styles, with Tuscan influences predominant on the exterior and modern touches inside.

The Tuscan style specifies the use of natural materials, a factor Rollins kept in mind throughout the planning process, which took place over the course of several appointments. "When you first go in to Tile Collection, it's almost overwhelming with everything that you need to accomplish and also having to stay within a budget," says the homeowner. "Wendy was just a joy to work with. She let me change my mind until I felt I was getting things exactly the way I wanted, and she let us bring samples home to ponder. She worked with us and was very helpful."

In fact, Tile Collection is well regarded as the place where fine custom builders such as Arcadia send their discerning clients for impeccable service and design assistance. "They do a tremendous job both in the field and in the showroom. Their in-house designers are exceptional," explains Jeff Ecleberry, Managing Partner of Arcadia Homes. "Tile Collection consistently demonstrates the high level of service we expect from all of our trade partners, and they make the process fun and exciting for our clients as well." The family-owned firm, which has been serving Charlotte since 1992, is known for its granite and marble fabrication, quality solid-surface options such as Corian and Zodiaq, and, of course, a wide and varied selection of fine tile and natural stone.

For this particular residence, Rollins used the home's style and the homeowners' desire for casual elegance as a guide. She worked with them to select a striking 18" x 18" Walnut Travertine for the foyer, dining room and wine room. "It's an open plan, and all of those rooms are connected. So we used the same stone - it's a beautiful milk chocolate shade - in varying patterns, with the entry placed on the diagonal," Rollins explains.

The kitchen backsplash features 12" x 12" porcelain tile set in a diagonal pattern with round bronze clips. The resulting tufted appearance is striking but understated. Tile Collection also supplied the Gallo Napoleone granite, the soft cream and gold tones of which complement the porcelain tile.

For the rest of the main level, they selected an Italian porcelain tile. "The tile is by Petra Latina in a shade called Navona Dorato. It's a soft cream with touches of gold. It really looks like stone, so it transitions very well from the travertine," Rollins says. The lower maintenance of porcelain is a practical benefit many homeowners admire, particularly for heavy traffic areas. "We used it for the service entrance off the garage, the homeowner's office, the powder room, the kitchen and breakfast areas, even in the sunroom and master bath," Rollins explains. "For the most part, it was 18" x 18" tile. In some areas, we added 2" x 2" clips of the same stone cut into the floor. The powder room uses the same tile in a 12" x 12" with mosaic clips." Using the same tile in a monochromatic color scheme in varied patterns gives the home a sophisticated, tied together look that at the same time is very soft and elegant, she says. "It gives a really elegant feeling to the home," Eccleberry agrees.

Some of the most dramatic use of that tile appears in the kitchen, where 12" x 12" tile was set in a diagonal pattern for the backsplash. "Round button clips were set into the intersections of the tile. We had to get a special tool to make those round cutouts," Rollins says. "The result is just beautiful – the backsplash looks tufted, with the simple



bronze circles looking like buttons." Those 'buttons' complement bronze tones that are repeated throughout the home. The owners had art niches designed for several bronze statues they had collected over the years. To better highlight these pieces without competing with them, Rollins selected bases of Crema Marfil marble for the niches.

All of the marble and granite used in the home also came from Tile Collection, which has its own state-of-the-art fabrication facilities. "The most difficult part was selecting

the granite and marble for our countertops, because there were so many to choose from," explains the homeowner. "They had fabulous slabs in the showroom, and we wanted to get just the right movement and color."

For the kitchen, she opted for the soft cream and gold tones of Gallo Napoleone granite, which complements the porcelain tile. The beverage bar is a departure that harkens back to the walnut travertine used in the entrance. "It's Marron Cahiba - a stunning dark brown granite with a silver undertone,"



The soft cream and tan shades of Navona Dorato porcelain tile were used throughout the master bath in varied patterns on the floor and shower. "By keeping it simple, it give the space an elegant feel," explains Wendy Rollins of Tile Collection, Inc.

The front porch and steps, upstairs balcony and lower terrace of this striking home were finished in a highly textured 18" x 18" chocolate porcelain tile, which is both practical and beautiful in outdoor applications.

she says. Playing off that deep brown tone was the Dark Emperador marble used in a master bath. "It's chocolate with a lot of veining and a lot of movement. It's my personal favorite," Rollins says. The powder room features a dramatic Crema Valencia marble vanity top. The soft gold tone and faint pink veins give the stone a look similar to onyx.

The master bath returns to the soft cream and tan shades of the Navona Dorato porcelain tile in a 17" x 17" shape. "By keeping it simple, it give the space an elegant feel," Rollins says. "It was installed on the diagonal in the floor, and the shower and tub used the same 17" x 17". For the shower's radius wall, we cut the tile into brick shapes and ran it vertically. The shower pan features it in a 2" x 4" diagonal herringbone."

The other baths feature varieties of that same tile with decorative pieces that lean toward bronze sprinkled throughout. "Every room in this house works with every other room, although the patterns are different, so it's not repetitive. That continuity gives it a look of understated elegance, which is very soft and lovely. I was very pleased with how it turned out," Rollins says. This homeowner definitely agrees: "There isn't one room in this house that I don't love. I love everything about it."



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TCH Tip

The front porch and steps, upstairs balcony and lower terrace of this striking home were finished in a highly textured 18" x 18" chocolate porcelain tile. "Always use porcelain tile outside," Wendy Rollins explains. "Since it's one solid piece, you won't have any cracking issues due to freezing and thawing, and if you select a highly textured surface, it will also be nonskid."