

14<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## Good looking solutions

**Due to advanced combinations of design and technology, LVTs and decorative vinyls are being favoured in sectors beyond what is considered their traditional remit, says Navjot Dhillon, Marketing Manager, Gerflor Limited.**

As contractors, architects, designers and specifiers are continually looking for cutting-edge floorings for projects that must impress, it is the responsibility of manufacturers to closely monitor worldwide trends and interpret them into first-class flooring solutions that couple impressive technical characteristics with innovation in design and performance.

Luxury vinyl tiles (LVT) and decorative vinyl floorings are a fast growing product sector as they meet many contract and residential project requirements, whether it is a design-led, safety, acoustic, extra durable, easy installation, personalised solution, or a combination of benefits that is needed.

For these reasons, LVTs have become firm favourites in sectors like offices, retail and residential markets, whilst establishing themselves in, for example, hospitality, education and healthcare sector areas, where design-orientated yet highly functional floorings are needed.

LVTS and decorative vinyls that embrace decorative trends are therefore challenging some markets to re-evaluate their aesthetic choices - perhaps to be bolder, to demonstrate innovation and dynamism, or simply to enhance interiors making them easier-on-the-eye.

It is, however, advancements in embossing technology that are fine-tuning the look and feel of these floorings. Embossing techniques have evolved from basic levels that provide an element of realism to sophisticated finishes that go beyond aesthetics to re-create the essence of wood, textiles, slate, stone, concrete, marble and other materials. By interpreting textures in effective, grained effects, a more authentic end result is possible, and one that adds depth to what would otherwise be a less realistic and bland surface.

Embossing is also a creative process in its own right, as design and technical teams of vinyl flooring manufacturers continuously strive to achieve improved embossed finishes, even varying embossing features from one plank or tile to another to achieve greater individuality. LVTS and decorative vinyl floorings are therefore perfect for where both first and lasting impressions count and where attention to detail in decoration reflects style, image and brand.

### Emerging trends

As floorings are increasingly becoming statement pieces - it has been revealed that 29% of homeowners currently plan to spend more on flooring than any other interior expenditure - it is unsurprising that experimenting with laying patterns is an up-and-coming trend that delivers impact. Architects and designers are therefore capitalising on a variety of laying patterns using small and large formats, different length planks and rectangles and squares to create irregular yet distinctive looks.

Picking up on emerging trends and tailoring them to meet, or even exceed, customer expectations is the trick to launching successful, new flooring collections. The London Design Festival is just one of many worldwide fairs that showcase and celebrate new trends in design and decoration. Trends, however, are not simply about pattern but also about embellishing the overall 'user-experience' and interior atmosphere.

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It is true that some trends come and go, but classic marble, stone and wood designs are continually being re-invented in decorative vinyl and LVT floorings by manufacturers who apply colour and design in inventive ways and utilise clever embossing techniques.

The looks for 2018 into 2019 therefore include wood and concrete entwined with textile finishes in rich, spicy colours and naked 'un-treated' wood surfaces giving an overall matt appearance that isn't rustic. Wood-look LVTs are also taking on darker, deeper tones as well as Scandinavian looks like light Ash with new twists.

Mineral designs in vinyl flooring have become the modern style interior design classic and they continue in popularity. However, stone looks are extending their colour palette beyond grey tones to warmer, brighter colour combinations and polished, dark-hued concretes.

For a more refined look, marble is experiencing a come-back rejuvenated by fresh, colourful designs, rather than the more familiar monotones. Another key look seeing a revival is the Gothic style with coppery hues taking centre stage. However, it is the geometric trend that is gathering momentum as stylish geometric shapes take on striking dimensions with clever illusions of relief, combinations of different shapes, sizes and colours and distinctive chevron effects: perfect for making bold, interior statements where it matters.

### Choice of installation

LVTs have also re-invented fitting by offering alternative installation methods. They now come in glued, interlocking and removable options to provide for the wide-ranging needs of projects, especially where fast-track fitting is desirable and a cost-effective solution required.

New, interlocking, loose-lay vertical click system LVTs have been developed to provide strong locking and extreme resistance to traffic. Click system floorings can be installed over concrete and existing smooth floorings saving time and money. They are also quiet and clean to work with, whilst replacing a broken or damaged tile or plank is straightforward. Likewise, loose-lay, removable LVTs are clean, noise-free and quick to install, with the advantage of re-positioning.

Decorative vinyls and LVTs offer the versatility and performance that natural counterparts can lack with endless design scope in pattern, colour and finishes making them ideal for reflecting brand images, creating zones or uniting areas within open plan spaces. Environmentally-friendly, they meet different specification criteria for residential and contract applications including slip resistant and acoustic requirements, while protective, easy-to-clean, scratch and stain resistant surfaces ensure good looks will last.

Nowadays, there is a decorative vinyl or LVT to meet most new build and refurbishment requirements.

With over 70 years' experience international flooring specialist Gerflor offer a superb range of flooring solutions which combine technical and design characteristics for any room being specified for refurbishment projects. Colour, design and performance are influencing the way refurbishment projects are now being scoped-out, and Gerflor are at the 'coalface' of this elemental change in that development.

Learn more about Gerflor solutions; ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01926 622 600, emailing [contractuk@gerflor.com](mailto:contractuk@gerflor.com), or visit [gerflor.co.uk](http://gerflor.co.uk) for the latest innovations.

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