

19<sup>th</sup> July 2018

## On-trend solutions

**Decorative vinyls and LVTs are pushing new technical and aesthetical boundaries so that both customers and contractors benefit, says Nav Dhillon, Marketing Manager, Gerflor**

Decorative vinyl and luxury vinyl tiles and planks (LVTs) are practical, durable and straightforward to maintain and install. They come with the added benefits of exceptional acoustics and slip resistance and are rarely dull in appearance. Ideal for so many contract and residential applications, they are hard to beat when it comes to combining outstanding performance with what's on-trend in aesthetics for installations as diverse as homes, offices, hospitality and retail, as well as healthcare and education environments.

Vinyl flooring has been around for almost 100 years and in 1937 Mipolam™, the first homogenous flooring, was produced. As vinyl easily lends itself to different formats, sizes and countless design interpretations, decades later when crafting new flooring collections the creative teams of leading vinyl flooring manufacturers are never short of inspiration from worldwide resources like nature, fashion, textiles, graphics interior design and architecture.

### Developing new ranges

Having identified emerging styles and trends, the gestation period for a new decorative vinyl or LVT range is around 12 to 18 months. The trick is successfully uniting innovations in design, advanced production techniques, the best sustainable materials and the expertise of marketing teams so that new floorings excel in meeting customers' requirements. Almost any design concept can be applied to the print layer that tops a vinyl constructed roll, tile or plank flooring. This design layer is then covered by a wear layer, the thickness of which denotes longevity and durability depending on application, followed by appropriate protective, easy maintenance and specialist finishes.

Manufacturers are therefore pushing the boundaries in the design, colour, texturing, finishes and performance of decorative vinyls and LVTs that are not necessarily possible with other flooring materials. The immense design scope enables manufacturers equipped with the necessary technology and design capabilities to capitalise on trends for global markets. For example, as wood is an ever-popular choice, replicas in vinyl have been perfected to look as good as the real thing but with fashionable colours and grained finishes providing an individual, modern edge.

### Key trends for 2018

The look for 2018 is for purer, raw, 'un-treated' wood surfaces giving an overall matt appearance that isn't rustic. Forget waxed and varnished boards or polished parquet, timber is going naked, stripped back to basics. Wood-look LVTs are also taking on darker, deeper tones and elegant shades for a more traditional look. Mineral designs in vinyl flooring have become the interior design classic in 'minimalist' style and they go from strength to strength. However, concrete and stone looks are also taking a more matt, natural appearance with a colour palette extending from greys to warmer, brighter colour combinations including a terracotta revival.

For a more refined look than stone, marble with its luxurious appeal is set for a come-back. Rejuvenated by fresh, colourful and lively designs, rather than the more familiar monotonous, new marble LVTs will transform both traditional and highly contemporary interiors with ease.

There is also a return to the look of carpet and textiles as luxury vinyl re-captures classic designs in distinctive new ways such as trendy twists on tweed. The Retro-trend, although well established with vintage décor, is seeing a 60s revival but with less psychedelic colours than the period when Terrance Conran opened

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#### With Compliments:

Hannah Evans  
The Studio 4  
Grosvenor House  
Central Park  
Telford  
TF2 9TW  
Tel: 01952 234 005  
Email: [pr@thestudio4.co.uk](mailto:pr@thestudio4.co.uk)

#### Issued on behalf of:

Navjot Dhillon  
Gerflor  
Wedgnoek House  
Wedgnoek Lane  
Warwick  
CV34 5AP  
Tel: 01926 622 600  
Email: [contractuk@gerflor.com](mailto:contractuk@gerflor.com)

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Habitat and Mary Quant revolutionised fashion. Nevertheless nostalgic, it captures the distinctive, modernism of the time but the designs and colours are warm, cosy, mellow and welcoming with coppery hues making big impact.

However, the new 'kid on the block' is the geometric trend – don't miss out on this one. Stylish geometric shapes take on a new, striking dimension as they are re-formed into unique, powerful designs with clever illusions of relief. Perfect for making bold, interior statements where it matters.

Not only do LVTs come in traditional formats like 50cm x 50cm tiles, now larger and rectangular tiles are taking the spotlight including the innovative 25cm x 140cm tile. Current trends are also for longer, wider planks of 1.2m long and up to 18cm wide while 'mix and matching' designs and formats is on-trend and gives greater scope for individual styling.

### More than good looks

LVTs are the fastest flooring trend in the industry providing complete solutions for clients. Extensive design choices provide the inspirational looks that designer, specifiers and end-users want making them the perfect foundation for interior schemes of all decoration styles and ideal for reflecting brand images or creating zones within large spaces. By using different colours, patterns or tile and plank formats, the flooring can effortlessly define or unite areas within open plan spaces.

Decorative vinyls and LVTs also encompass the construction technology required for outstanding performance. They are environmentally friendly, can improve indoor air quality and are low maintenance with more cushioning, warmth and acoustic characteristics than traditional stone, wood and laminate floors.

In addition, protective polyurethane treatments applied during the manufacturing process provide easy-to-clean, scratch and stain resistant surfaces. Whereas installation can be made fuss-free, faster and less costly by the fibre backing and construction technology of some loose-lay decorative sheet vinyls and LVTs that come in alternative installation types to the glued method providing interlocking and removable fitting options to best suit the project, whatever the need. It's a fast-moving world and vinyl flooring gives endless possibilities in design solutions for both new build and refurbishment projects.

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 visiting [gerflor.co.uk](http://gerflor.co.uk) for the latest innovations.

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Grosvenor House  
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