



Kerlite Avant Garde, displayed by Domus.

## Green is the colour

*Joe Simpson reports from ExCel on that rarest of events: a well-attended and interesting UK trade exhibition.*

**C**ompared with the rest of Europe, the UK has a woeful record when it comes to trade exhibitions. As well as struggling to attract a large enough audience, most UK trade shows seem to be staged with little thought to attendee satisfaction.

Given the recent announcement that Interbuild has folded, one would have been forgiven for approaching Ecobuild at ExCel with a degree of trepidation. However, despite the change of venue from Earl's Court, Ecobuild remains an exception to the rule.

It does, of course, have one huge advantage .. the three letters - ECO - in its title. Green is the colour of choice for the construction sector today. However, it was not just sustainable products and methods that drew such a large audience to Docklands. There was also an extensive and exciting programme of seminars, demonstrations and

events that truly added value to the visiting experience.

The tile and stone offering was modest, in terms of number of exhibitors, but included many of the most important suppliers to the specification and contract markets, such as Domus, Reed Harris, Swedecor and Strata Tiles. There was also a shortlist of manufacturers at the cutting edge of design including FAP, Appiani, Bardelli and Mirage. Taken together these companies offered a fair representation of the latest in contract ceramics: laminam sheets, slim porcelain, ink jet decors, precious metal mosaics, etc.

### Highlights

Echotect, a sustainable, 100% recyclable alternative to engineered stone, was unveiled for the first time at Ecobuild.

Echotect demonstrated a series of flat surface materials, manufactured using this patented technology. Made of recycled plastic bottles and

fine aggregate by-products, the material has the same aesthetic and performance characteristics as engineered stone. It is ideal for use as floor tiles, as well as worktops, and other internal flat surfaces. The innovative new technology, itself a non-chemical, styrene-free process, hopes to revolutionise the engineered stone market, replacing the existing 30-year-old technology which has dominated the industry for a generation.

At Ecobuild, Reed Harris showed off its 100% recycled porcelain floor tile: Serie 100.

Swedecor's Studio is the first collection developed in the Linea range with 4.8mm thickness. The minimum thickness means less impact on the environment reducing the consumption of raw materials, energy, packaging materials and transport. The slabs of the Linea range are Ecolabel certified.

Also from Swedecor, Advance is the most evolved



Tema e Variazione by Ceramica Bardelli.

aesthetic expression of carefully selected choice of natural stones, for a ceramic collection where natural inspiration merges with timeless contemporary style. Advance creates refined design spaces, superb hospitality venues ensuring excellent technical features and tremendous versatility thanks to three available surface finishes: matt, brushed and textured.

Caesar presented Summa, an exclusive porcelain range inspired by natural stones and featuring modern, cutting-edge colour shades. The colour changes, the chromatic hues and the material properties of this product are characterised by a tremendous range of variety that imparts a sense of naturalness to surfaces

Caesar also showed Flow, a porcelain tile available in six colours, created from natural pigments and clays of the highest quality. Flow comes in three surface finishes and two modular sizes.

Also from Caesar, Emotions offers three surface finishes - natural, honed and textured - all in a slender thickness of just 4.8mm. Emotions is suitable for residential and commercial areas, both internal and external. The collection, mono-calibre, squared and rectified, boasts a broad range of sizes. The standard thickness comes in five colours; Sandy White, Warm Beige, Urban Grey, Deep Brown and Trendy Black, in 600 by 600mm and 600 by 300mm.

Leading Italian mosaic manufacturer, Appiani, showed mosaics in 20 colours, six finishes and five modular sizes, as well as subtle mixes. The company's products are ideal for wellness and spa projects, as well as high end interior design projects. The company can also create custom-made designs in micro-mosaics.

Amarestone, a specialist supplier of first quality natural stone for architectural and interior design projects, pre-



**Advance by Atlas Concorde, displayed by specialist distributor Swedecor.**



**Flow by Ceramiche Caesar.**

sented an extensive range of marble, limestone, slate and travertine imported directly from carefully selected quarries both in the UK and around the world. Bespoke pieces and unusual or rare stones are Amarestone's speciality and the company can also advise on the use of and supply of ancillary products including adhesives, grouts and stone sealers and waxes..

Fap Ceramiche caught the eye with its special trims, all finished with the range of coordinated TonoSuTono grouts. This particular element is used to create perfect bathrooms, with attention right down to the last detail.

The range of Fornasetti ceramic tiles collections was a feature of Ceramica Bardelli's display. The Fornasettiana collection includes a set of 12 decorative subjects created using hand-applied decalcomania, available in either a matt or gloss finish in 200 by 200mm.

The collaboration between Ceramica Bardelli and Fornasetti started more than 20 years ago and has resulted in numerous collections that

reproduce the decors of Libreria, Bicchieri, Mongolfiere, Soli e Lune, Lunario del Sole and Tema e Variazione.

Today, the Tema e Variazione range offers a set of 20 decorative subjects realised using hand-applied decalcomania on white or platinum background, available with matt or gloss in 100 by 100mm.

Domus, one of the UK's leading suppliers of tiles, mosaic and stone to the residential developer and the architectural specification markets, displayed their latest eco materials and products including Laminam sheets, such as Kerlite Avantgarde Pietra D'Irlanda porcelain tiles.

Refin majored on ceramic tiles inspired by a natural limestone that can be traditionally found in the Bourgogne region of France. Refin has reinterpreted this precious material, combining its natural appeal with the excellent technical performances of top quality porcelain stoneware. The Pietre di Borgogna collection is Ecolabel-certified. Joining Ecolabel was a voluntary move by Ceramiche Refin in order to offer the con-

sumers, architects and planners an environmentally sustainable tile choice. The Pietre di Borgogna range comes in five graphic and chromatic versions, two of them have a textured finish interpreting the surface of limestone. This range is characterised by natural hues, ranging from beige to grey, with bright and dark shades staggered by dots, veining and irregular grey stripes evoking the fossil shells, which can be typically found on the surface of the natural stone from which the ceramic collection takes its inspiration.

Shackerley, one of the UK's leading suppliers of ceramic granite into the architectural and construction sectors, has become one of the country's principal authorities on the use of this versatile material as an exterior cladding material. The company displayed its Queen's Award winning Sureclad ceramic granite ventilated façade systems. This is an attractive, long lasting and cost-effective method of protecting and improving the appearance of the building envelope. Sureclad systems enable the thermal efficiency



**Portuguese Bauvale limestone floor by Amarestone.**

and acoustic performance of a building to be significantly enhanced in line with sustainability objectives and BREEAM targets. Shackerley's ceramic granite façade panels are manufactured entirely from naturally occurring constituents. The blend of refined clays, quartz, feldspars and metal oxides, is dry pressed into slabs at high pressures, then fired until irreversibly fused

Available in an extensive range of colours, sizes and finishes, they can be manufactured to resemble almost any type of naturally quarried stone and provide the specifier with an exceptional range of contemporary aesthetic options.

Pimar Srl, supplies beautiful Italian limestone from its' own

quarries in different colours such as beige, grey, white and Coral Stone. Different finishes, dimensions and even a customisation service are available. Pimar. guarantees perfect results and promises to provide valuable assistance during any project.

At Ecobuild, Sant Agostino's product offer included S.Wood, a most attractive wood imitation tile available in two 1,200mm sizes: 150 and 200mm wide. Laying these two different formats together allows designers to imitate a traditional wood floor made with different size planks. S.Wood offers extraordinary naturalness of appearance, married to porcelain's high impact and wear resistance.