

tile REPORT

From sleek stone to timber-look porcelain and bright mosaics, modern tiles make a big impact

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MODERN MOSAICS

With a burst of rainbow colour or graphic pattern, luminous glass mosaic tiles can transform your bathing space. "Black and gold mosaics add a touch of glamour to a bathroom," says Tina Di Lorenzo of Di Lorenzo Tiles. Shimmering metallic mosaics are hot property right now: "It's the pattern and texture that give metallics an extra intensity," explains Morena Petrolo of Lapege.

pros

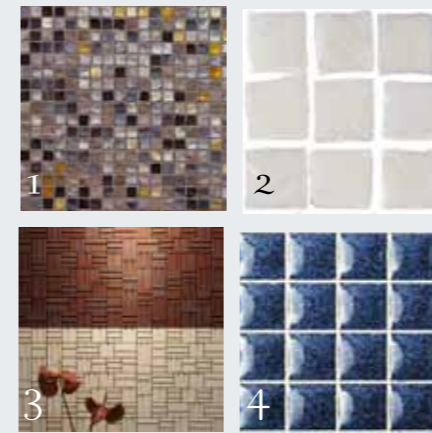
Most ranges come pre-mounted on mesh sheets, so they're quicker and cheaper to lay. Mosaics can also be eco-friendly, as some are made from recycled glass bottles. They are also heat and moisture resistant.

cons

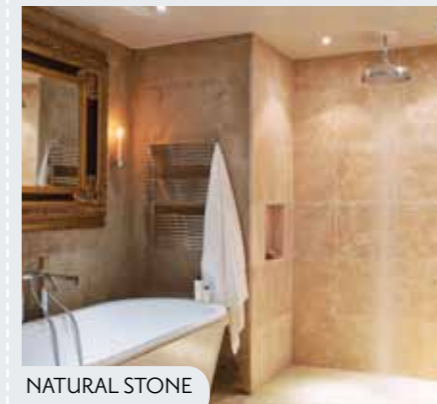
Because of their small size, mosaics require a lot of grout per square metre – so unless you want spend your weekends scrubbing soap scum from hundreds of grout lines, avoid placing them in wet areas.

expect to pay...

\$40-\$330/sqm for the tiles, plus \$80-\$150/sqm for installation.



get the look... 1. 'Vetro' recycled glass mosaics in Melange Scuro, \$51/30cm x 30cm sheet, Di Lorenzo, dilorenzo.net.au. 2. Glass mosaics in Pearl, \$49/30cm x 30cm sheet, Perini Tiles, (03) 9421 0550, perini.com.au. 3. Inax 'Plateau Block' porcelain mosaics, from \$378/sqm, Artedomus, (02) 9557 5060, artedomus.com. 4. Venis 'Mosaico Star' mosaics, \$79/sqm, Earp Bros, earp.com.au.



NATURAL STONE

The epitome of luxury, natural stone (marble, granite, limestone and travertine) adds instant character to a bathroom, with the texture-rich look lending old-world charm and adding depth and visual interest. Choose large slabs to create a seamless effect with minimal grout. "The bigger the better," says Morena, adding that the most popular sizes are 60cm x 60cm and 40cm x 80cm.

pros

Stone's anti-slip qualities make it desirable for wet floors. Porous stone is prone to staining, but inexpensive sealing products, such as the Australian Stone Seal range (visit stoneseal.com.au), will protect it from harm.

cons

If you're stressed about scratches, you may need to pick granite or slate over marble. Also, natural stone is not naturally moisture resistant, and will need to be resealed every few years to protect from damage.

expect to pay...

\$90-\$300/sqm for the tiles, plus \$80-\$120/sqm for installation.



get the look... 1. 'Luxe' 33cm x 33cm porcelain tiles in Anthracite, \$39/sqm, Beaumont Tiles, tile.com.au. 2. 'Breccia Nera' 20mm-thick marble slab, \$286/sqm, Artedomus. 3. 'Limestone Mercury' 457mm x 457mm tiles, \$91/sqm, Amber Tiles, 1300 362 241, ambertiles.com.au. 4. 'Bianchi' 60cm x 60cm Calacatta marble tiles, \$140/sqm, Di Lorenzo.



HARDY CERAMICS

Ceramics come in an array of sizes, colours, shapes and patterns, with many even posing as stone, timber and marble. "Porcelain tiles that mimic timber have so much texture, they almost pass for real wood – with no moisture problems," says Morena. The sheer variety offers a chance to get creative: "Use florals and other graphics for a strong feature wall," suggests Ben Saliba of Academy Tiles.

pros

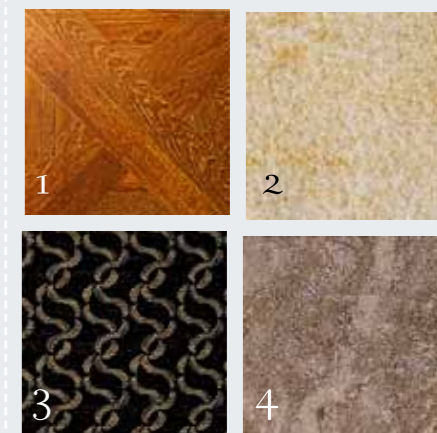
Unglazed tiles have a soft, earthy look, but glazed tiles offer rich colours and patterns and are a breeze to clean. Choose rectified (machine-cut) tiles, which have perfect edges that closely abut for minimal grout.


cons

Some smooth tiles can be slippery – try using unglazed or textured tiles instead. High-quality tiles won't lose their lustre through wear and tear, so it's worth paying a bit more for a superior product.

expect to pay...

from \$30/sqm for ceramic, from \$50/sqm for porcelain, plus \$50-\$80/sqm installation.



get the look... 1. 'Stella' 34cm x 34cm glazed porcelain tiles in Teak, \$49/sqm, Beaumont Tiles. 2. Lea Ceramiche 'Digi Quartz' 60cm x 60cm rectified porcelain tiles in Luxor Beige, \$91/sqm, Bisanna Tiles, (02) 9310 2500, bisanna.com.au. 3. 'Patterns 3D Chain' tiles in Black, \$115/sqm, Di Lorenzo. 4. 'Travertini' 30cm x 30cm porcelain tiles in Flannel, \$94.95/sqm, Amber Tiles. 

PHOTOGRAPHY (OPPOSITE) GAP INTERIORS/INSIDE/OUT, CLAESSENS. (TOP LEFT) NARRATIVES/JUAN BALDWIN. (CENTRE) RAY MAIN/MAINSTREAM/IMAGES/ MALMESBURY DESIGN. (TOP RIGHT) DEREK SWALWELL