

and durability. "The technology is a nine-step process that not only imparts strength and durability to the marble, but also beautifies its appearance. By applying this process, we have ensured that the quality and life of the product increases thereby reducing the cost in post installation service and care, explains Amit Shah, managing director, Classic Marble Company.

To deal with issues of joints and installation in wood flooring, Square Foot has come up with an innovative technique called the Click Lock System. According to Abhishek Saraf, joint MD, Square Foot, "The system instantly allows two planks to be joined without any nailing on top, which makes the process very hassle free. It has reduced the labour cost and the time spent in installation. We have also introduced an aluminum oxide top finish that offers additional protection to the lacquer and provides strong barrier against heavy traffic in hotels. This finish has helped in making the maintenance and replacement period come down, thereby reducing the cost involved in same."

TEXTURE AND FINISHES

There are several options of textures and finishes available to go with various décor patterns and design. While the basic elements of flooring remain the same, a variety of finishes, thickness, durability, colours, textures and sizes have been trending. We possess the ability to customise designs, sizes and colours. It is a great pleasure to see materials like terrazzo, poured concrete, metal inserts and even resin that can be fashioned into flooring materials increase the scope for exploring these new age materials.

Sumesh Menon, principal architect, Sumesh Menon Associates.

Simple patterns have gained prominence, with people's focus shifting towards minimalism rather than grandeur. An emerging trend in flooring design is the use of seamless joints between flooring options, using innovative fillers or eliminating the use of one altogether.

Malcolm Daruwala, principal architect, Seedle by DC Group.

Wood floorings from Italy, chevron, herringbone, Quadro collection are trending because of variations in colours, textures and patterns they offer. In terms of finishes, hand-scraped for more natural lived-in kind of feel, mild brushed, medium brushed, smooth and glossy finishes are in vogue.

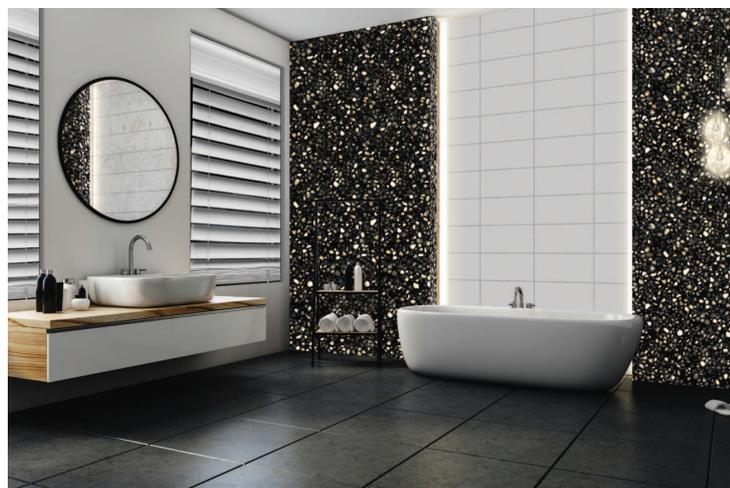
Abhishek Saraf, joint managing director, Square Foot.

On the marble front, polished, textured, leather finish, rough finish, honed finish marbles are a successful trend. Colours such as whites, classics and exotic hues of beige and off-white are trending. Porcelain tiles are popular for their artistic look and affordability. Polished and honed finished tiles are also in vogue. Nature-inspired and geometric patterns, earth-colour and textures, or marble tiles with a thickness matching international standards are also making their appearance in the commercial flooring industry.

Ramesh Bhandari, director, A-Class Marble India Pvt. Ltd.

Wood finishes range from satin, matt and super matt to rustic and distressed. Depending on the aesthetics, one can also choose from stained, non-stained or smoked options in flooring colours. While brushed surface textures offer an intense and visible textured finish, non-brushed textures have lighter grain pattern. The non-brushed texture and satin lacquer finish works best in heavy traffic areas as they are easy to clean and maintain.

Parul Mittal, director, Greenlam Industries.



➔ CMC's Stone and Luce on the wall creates an aesthetically appealing bathroom.



➔ Sumesh Menon, principal architect, Sumesh Menon Associates



➔ Malcolm Daruwala, principal architect, Seedle by DC Group

Taking the flooring solution to another level is Stone Reinforcement System (SRS) introduced by Stonex India. SRS technology brings in the highest international quality standard in marble processing and polishing, says Saurav Agrawal, MD, Stonex India.

"This technology is meant to retain the sheen and life of our products for a longer period of time."

Orient Bell Limited has experimented with cool tiles which reflect the sun's heat instead of absorbing it. "This helps keep the inside of the building cool. The tiles show best results when applied to building terraces, exterior walls exposed to sunlight, pavements and balconies as it has been designed to reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat than a normal surface," says Alok Agarwal, its chief marketing officer.

While technological advancement in flooring is not just making a difference to how much effort has to be put into maintenance and installation of tiles, marbles and wood, it is also significantly reducing the cost. While wood floors are quite in-trend, the more sustainable bamboo floors are gaining prominence. Being eco-friendly, durable and water-resistant, bamboo floors can be a viable flooring option for hotels to create a far more sustainable design. ■