

LIFE&TIMES **LIVING**

Beautiful and practical

Tiles can help make your living space come alive, writes **Aneeta Sundararaj**

IT'S no stretch of the imagination that people use tiles precisely because they are easy to maintain and clean. If that is so, have we compromised on the look and sense of warmth that we can get from a room with wooden flooring or panels?

Kym Wong, 45, general manager, marketing and innovation of Guocera Marketing, says: "That's the whole reason we came up with our new parquet design. Almost a renaissance of what people used to have."

The Parquet Collection, which is part of Guocera Digital, features print technology that produces

one-of-a-kind designed tiles that can make rooms and spaces "come to life". Guocera Digital offers natural and luxurious looking tiles that are suitable for floors and walls as well as murals of a feature centre-piece.

The tile designs are made to bring out true-to-life effects of natural stone, sand and wood as well as antique and modern finishes.

The collection comes with two options for the tiles: Glazed porcelain and glazed ceramic. Both these tiles are then subdivided into different patterns. For instance, the Parquet Collection is further subdivided into Tamara, Mirati and Kejora, which replicate the refinement and timeless charm of traditional parquet.

"We have many people asking us, 'are you sure it's not wood?'" says Jan Loo, 43, general manager of Guocera Marketing.

Amused, she says they run their fingers over the tiles to assure themselves that what they're look-



Guocera Digital Glazed Porcelain - **Pietra Collection** (Pietra Toscana Beige)



Guocera Digital Glazed Porcelain - **Parquet Collection** (Tamara Pine)

ing at are actually tiles.

She then explains part of the technique that Guocera has used to create such realistic designs. "We use an ink jet printer and print the images onto the tiles. We use a solvent-based ink. The tiles are baked at such a high temperature that the ink is unlikely to leak and cause trouble.

As she introduces the Pietra Collection, Loo explains that the beauty of this collection is that they feature the natural stone, from layered characteristics of golden sandstones to luxurious swirls and veins of fine Italian marbles. In addition, there are three types of tiles to choose from in each series.

"We had the client in mind when we came up with this concept. You see, there are many people who use an 'open concept' in their houses now. They want one tile for the whole space. So, if you use the Pietra Dorata for example, you can have one tile for the floor (Natural),

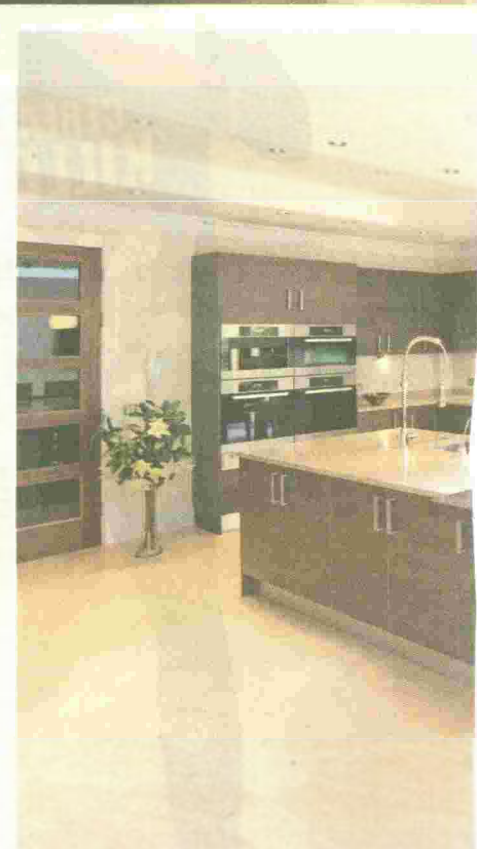
another type for the walls (Lappato) and R11 for the wet areas."

IMPORTANCE OF MATCHING TILES

Matching the type of tile to the area it's to be used for is very important, says Loo. "One time, we had some friends visiting from Australia. When I rang them the day after they arrived, they said that they were at the dentist's. One of them had fallen on slippery tiles and broken her tooth."

Wong says slip-proof tiles at Guocera undergo what's called a Slip Resistance Test. Also known as a Ramp Test, it involves an operator wearing standard footwear walking on the test surface, which is a ramp with a modifiable incline.

The inclination of the ramp is then progressively increased until the operator slips. The angle at which slipping occurs is used to establish a classification R value. The R values are expressed with a number from 9 to 13. R9 indicates





Bathroom featuring Guocera Digital Glazed Ceramic - Opulenz Collection (Soul Series)



3-dimensional view from the front

the lowest slip resistance level and R13 is the maximum.

Both Wong and Loo advise that these slip-proof tiles should be used in places like entrance halls, stairways with direct access from the outside, restaurants, hospitals, schools, bathrooms and showers, kitchens, and places where the floor is likely to be oily or greasy.

Have you ever looked at a wall and realised that after the third tile, the pattern repeats? Well,

that's not going to happen with this new range of tiles from Guocera. The pattern repeats after something like seven tiles. In simple terms, what this means is that you can have a whole wall that is completely unique as the pattern on each tile will be different.

If you have difficulty visualising what your new space will look like all tiled up, just bring your two-dimensional floor plan to the Guocera Gallery where a consult-

WHEN CHOOSING TILES, CONSIDER THESE:

HYGIENE Tiles are hygienic, they don't attract dirt or give off odours, and are easy to clean. Tile grouts are also available with anti-bacterial properties.

NON-ALLERGENIC This is good news for asthma and allergy sufferers as tiles don't harbour dust or mites.

HARD WEARING Tiles can last for years as they don't fade and are very hard wearing. Definitely better than carpets and paint.

FRESH Tiles can give your room that 'fresh' feeling.

VERSATILE Tiles are versatile so you can use them in literally every part of the house — even outdoor patios and stairs.

WATER RESISTANT Tiles can withstand water damage, making them ideal for shower and wet areas.

ADDED VALUE Tiles can add value and extra appeal to your home.

COMFORT Tiles are comfortable on your feet and aren't cold to walk on as they actually absorb and retain heat.

INEXPENSIVE Tiles don't have to be expensive. In fact, the life-span of a tile makes them much cheaper in the long term.

(Source from www.ytc-tiles.com)

ant will use computer technology to recreate a two-dimensional image of the living space on the computer screen to show you what it will look like all tiled up. If you don't like what it looks like, change the tiles and see if your living space looks better.

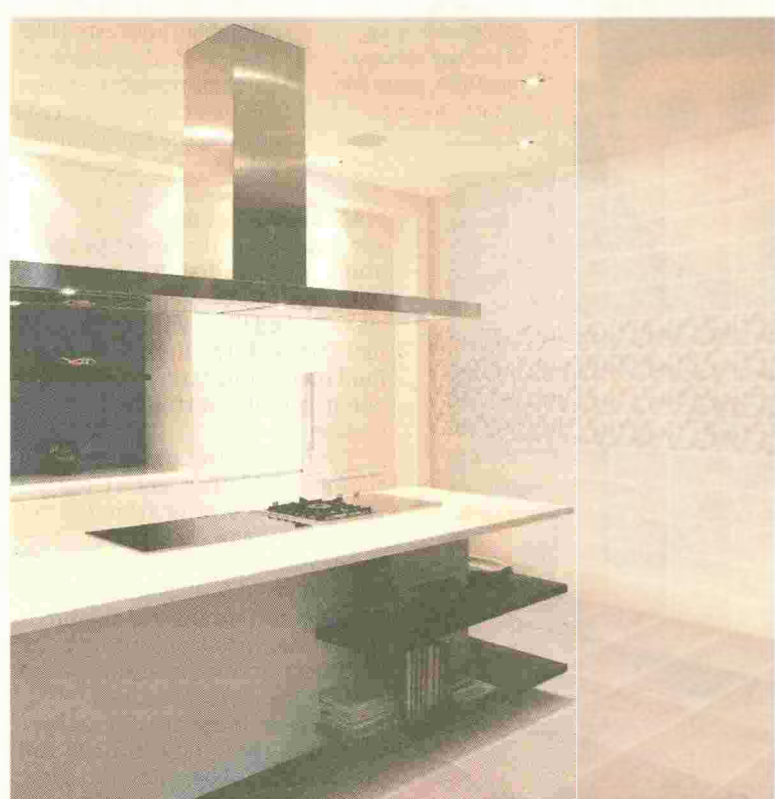
Guocera has a 50-year heritage of high quality craftsmanship. Both Loo and Wong say do-it-yourself attempts at tiling should be confined to small areas. "Laying down a floor can be technical," says Wong. "Usually, you start in the middle and work outwards. But, if you reach the end of the room and it looks terrible, you must know how to adjust the tiles properly."

Loo has a good tip: When you buy tiles, never buy just enough. Always buy extra and store them. This is because, in the future, if the tiles crack and need to be replaced, you may not find the same design. She says: "Trends change and if you don't have the same tiles, it's going to look terrible."

In the end, you cannot deny the durability of porcelain and ceramic tiles. With this new collection from Guocera, there is technology that you can benefit from to have the kind of design and finish in your living space that will suit your lifestyle as well.



Guocera Digital Glazed Porcelain - Seta Collection (Satin Marfil Creame)



Kitchen featuring Guocera Digital Glazed Ceramic - Essentia Collection (Belgium Series)