

Installation & Maintenance Recommendations

popham design bi-encaustic cement tiles are handcrafted in Marrakech. The beauty of the hand-made process results in subtle color variations. A chalky residue appears on the raw, uninstalled tiles and is a result of the time-honored production process. Some light shadowing will remain after installation and cleaning, and is an inherent part of the tile. Tiles retain moisture from the manufacture process and will dry to their correct color a few days after installation. The final installed patina differs from the raw state of the tiles, and it is important to follow the steps below to ensure this result is achieved. Exterior applications may experience some fading over time due to UV exposure and this is more obvious in the blue and green colors.

INSTALLATION

Planning the Layout :

- Before installing the tiles, batch mix them from multiple boxes since nuanced color variations are inherent in the manufacturing of the tiles.

Cleaning and Sealing :

- It is essential that the surface of the tile is level, clean, and perfectly dry.
- Wash the tiles using a mild soap and water and a Scotch-Brite pad or a fine-grained (400+ grit) vsandpaper. This will give the tiles a wonderful, smooth surface texture and will remove any surface dirt or irregularities, including small chips on the edges of the tiles. Allow the tiles to dry thoroughly (approx. 24 hours) before proceeding.
- It is essential that each and every tile is carefully sealed before installation.
- Please see the Resources list below for recommended sealers. The sealant will oil and waterproof the tile. Please make sure the tile is completely clean otherwise you will be sealing in any stains.

Laying the Tiles :

- Work in small areas of just 3-4 feet at a time so that the tiles can be cleaned properly as they are installed.
- Patterns look best with small grout joints (about 1 mm).
- Cement tiles should be installed with thin-set mortar, using a double-adhesive process, whereby the mortar is applied to a clean, level substrate and to the back of the tile using a trowel or wire brush.
- If setting the tiles on a concrete slab on grade, provide a moisture barrier, and if not on grade, be certain the concrete substrate is fully cured to prevent white efflorescence spots from showing on the tile after installation.
- Submerge the tiles in clean water before they are laid to remove any dust from the back of the tile.
- During installation, tiles should be gently pressed into place by hand; never strike the tiles with a hammer (even a rubber hammer) as this will cause cracking.

Grouting the Tiles :

- Tiles should be allowed to set for 24 hours before applying grout to the joints with a trowel or sponge.
- Non-pigmented, flexible, un-sanded cementitious grout like those available from Laticrete are recommended.
- Care must be given to wipe down the surface of the tile immediately following placement to keep the mortar or grout from setting in the tiles' porous surface.
- If any cement residue remains on the face of the tile, a Scotch-Brite pad or fine-grained sandpaper can be used to gently remove the residue. Much care should be taken if doing this as it is easy to damage the seal on the tiles and actual surface of the tile. If the tiles are being cleaned properly as you work you should not have this issue.

Sealing and Cleaning the Tiles :

- Once the tiles have been grouted and properly cleaned, it is important to leave them to dry completely. This can take between 12-24 hours. Apply another layer of sealant, and allow to dry again. Once dry, finish with either Fila Satin or Fila Matt. Other products to consider include Miracle Sealant's Seal + Enhance, Aqua Mix's Seal & Finish Low Sheen and TileLab's SurfaceGard Penetrating Sealer. Please make sure you contact the manufacturer as they can give you full directions on the best way to apply their products and dilution levels for encaustic tiles.
- Once the tiles have dried, they should be washed with water and a mild soap to remove any chalky residue, which may appear as the tiles dry. Never use bleach or other acidic products on the tiles.
- Leave the clean tiles to fully dry for about a week.

MAINTENANCE:

One of the attributes of cement tiles is that they improve with age and wear and cleaning. The tiles should be regularly washed with mild soap and water. Again, never use bleach or acidic products to clean the tiles. Depending on the level of luster you desire, additional coats of sealant can be applied as the tiles' finish become duller. When the sealants are rubbed into the tiles and polished, a lovely lustrous patina can be achieved. The type of sealant, as well as the number of coats, will impact the look of the tiles, which naturally have a matte finish. Depending on the traffic on the floor, the chemical sealant should be re-applied every few months for optimum effect.

RESOURCES:

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| · Fila | www.filasolutions.com |
| · Lithofin | www.lithofin.com |
| · Miracle Sealants | www.miraclesealants.com |
| · Aqua Mix | www.ptsaquamix.com |
| · Laticrete | www.laticrete.com |

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL TILE INSTALLER