

MEXICAN SALTILLO UNSEALED TERRACOTTA TILES

MANUFACTURE: Terracotta tiles are handmade by small factories in Mexico using traditional methods. The colour variations seen in the tiles are as a result of the temperature differences during firing and also the tiles overlapping when they are stacked in the kiln. Each piece can range from shades of rosy pink terracotta to pale ochre.

MIXING COLOURS: We suggest your tiler mixes the tiles as he works, taking them from three or more boxes. If your tiler does not understand the nature of this hand-made material, we are able to provide you with a list of recommended tilers who are familiar with this product.

CHARACTERISTICS: These handmade tiles can be bowed (not flat) and may vary in size, shape and thickness. For this reason we suggest recommended grout widths, depending on the size of the tile, ranging from 12mm to 20mm. It is characteristic for the uninstalled material to show chips, dents, salt bursts, fine hairline cracks and firing marks, as well being very dry and dusty. These features create the *lived-in* look of the finished floor. Close inspection of our showroom floors will demonstrate these characteristics. These variations are normal characteristics of terracotta tiles and do not mean they are in any way inferior.

CARE IN HANDLING: Handling with care is essential. Tiles are packed and stored vertically in the boxes and should be shipped this way.

SALT: Most new terracotta will be affected by the appearance of salt on the surface for a period of time. This is not an ongoing condition and will cease once the tiles have dried. All sand used in the bedding and grout must be fine washed river sand. Do not use sand with a high salt content.

GROUT: We do not recommend using coloured oxides in the grout as the colour could seep into the terracotta. Our advice is to use Kemgrout Sanded Mid- Grey grout or grey cement and washed sand.

SYDNEY	- 28 Moncur Street, Woollahra 2025	02 9326 2444
	- 563 Willoughby Road, Willoughby 2068	02 9958 6041
	- 2 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest 2086	02 9453 9466
MELBOURNE	- 236 Coventry Street, South Melbourne 3205	03 9690 9292
PERTH	- 259 Stirling Highway, Claremont 6010	08 9384 7777
N.Z.	- 29 Mandeville Street, Riccarton, Christchurch	64 03 343 4583

INSTALLATION:

Dry Method

Adhesive installation is recommended where possible. a) Kemgrip Floor and Wall adhesive for masonry surfaces or b) Monoflex adhesive for surfaces which may be prone to movement, ie cement sheet over timber, new cement slabs, heated concrete slabs, cement render and especially for tiling over existing sound tiled surfaces.

We suggest tiles are laid dry then pre sealed before grouting. Sealers: We recommend Aquamix products, which are outlined in the "Sealing Terracotta" information sheet.

Wet Method

The traditional method for handmade terracotta is a mud, slurry or sand and cement bedding. With this method, the tiles are immersed in water prior to installation and no pre sealing is necessary due to the terracotta being damp. This method may activate salts and bring them to the surface as the tiles dry.

Shower Bases

Being a matt surface, soap residue may be more difficult to remove from the surface in the shower stall and the tiles will have a tendency to stay wet. (Clients may choose to use a complementary coloured ceramic tile or create a feature in this area.) For wet areas such as shower bases, bathrooms, counter tops and fountains where a waterproof installation is required, we recommend the use of a cement based adhesive such as Kemgrip Floor and Wall or Monoflex.

PENCIL MARKS: Graphite from pencils can permanently mark your tiles, as can any marking pen. Advise your tiler to make cutting marks on the reverse side of the tile. Do not allow electricians or other workmen to mark your floors for any reason. There are some methods that can be used to remove the marks, but sometimes complete removal without damaging the surface of the tile is impossible.

CLEANLINESS: Please ensure all workmen take the utmost care when working around terracotta and stoneware. Oil, pencil, food, paint, dirt, work boots and synthetic shoe soles prior to sealing and treatment, may permanently mark terracotta. Once work has commenced on your floors, rectification of any subsequent staining or damage caused by wayward workmen, animals, children or others, to completed or part-completed work, may increase your expense. Cover the new floor while work is in progress with a natural breathing cover (medium weight canvas, calico or painters drop sheet). If heavy work is occurring use a temporary hard cover. This should be removed, however, when the work in the area is completed so that your tiles can finish drying. Do not cover your tiles with plastic, newspaper, aluminium foil or tar paper.

SALTWATER POOL DISCLAIMER: We do not recommend the use of Terracotta tiles around a salt water pool. They can, however, be used in adjacent areas, chlorinated pools and coastal locations.

SEALING MEXICAN TERRACOTTA

Mexican terracotta is a natural product and needs to be sealed as soon as possible after laying. Certain stains, such as oils and fats, may prove very difficult to remove from unsealed tiles.

Test Area

Before using any of the products below, it is important to carry out a test on a small inconspicuous area (or loose tiles) to ensure that the finish is satisfactory before proceeding with the entire floor.

It is essential that the manufacturer's advice on protective measures be followed during application.

Sealing Options

INTERNAL AREAS

GLOSS WAXED FINISH: Surfaces with a waxed sealed look.

The combination of (a) 3 coats of **Seal & Finish Low Sheen** and

(b) 3 coats of **Floor Shine and Hardener**

should be used in food preparation areas or where maximum protection is required.

Pre - Grout sealing is recommended. (For glue installation only):

Install floor, then once adhesive is dry apply 1 coat of **Seal & Finish Low Sheen**. After a minimum of 2 hours the tiler can grout. This first coat of sealer will act as a "grout release" allowing the grout to be more easily removed from the surface of the tile.

Aqua Mix Seal & Finish Low Sheen. Base coat sealer, for internal use. Use in combination with Floor Shine and Hardener as the protective topcoat. Three coats of **Seal & Finish Low Sheen** should be applied after tiles and grout have been cleaned and allowed to dry. A minimum of 1 hour should be allowed between applications.

- It is still **not** intended to allow excessive grout be left on the tile to dry.

The installation should be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 days and then 2 coats of **Seal & Finish Low Sheet Sealer** applied. To complete the sealing process, apply 3 coats of **Floor Shine and Hardener**. One hour minimum should be allowed between coats.

HELPFUL TIP – READ PRODUCT DIRECTIONS THOROUGHLY PRIOR TO USE.

Sealing Options continued

Aqua Mix Floor Shine and Hardener. Interior use only, to give a gloss finish over Seal & Finish Low Sheen. This combination provides the most surface protection, especially in food preparation areas. It is a hard protective water-based coating to ensure tiles are easy to maintain.

Before applying, we suggest a **water test** is done for approximately 5-10 minutes, to ensure the tiles are sealed. Three thin coats are applied with one hour between coats. To maintain the finish, apply 1 coat of **Floor Shine and Hardener** every 2 – 6 months on the floor areas which begin to show signs of dullness or wear.

Whether you choose the Gloss Waxed or the Natural finish, the sealers are water based and can be applied using a re useable dense sponge or a paint pad applicator.

HELPFUL TIP – MAINTENANCE OF FLOOR SHINE AND HARDENER. AFTER WASHING FLOORS, PUT 1 CUP OF FLOOR SHINE AND HARDENER IN A ½ BUCKET OF WATER FOR THE FINAL RINSE.

EXTERNAL AREAS

NATURAL FINISH: Sub surface sealing for the matt natural look in external areas. (Not recommended for interiors.)

Option 1: 2 coats of **Sealers Choice** are suggested for exterior areas.

Option 2: 2 coats of **Penetrating Sealer** are suggested for exterior use, as an inexpensive alternative to Sealers Choice. Resealing will be required as per label.

Pre- Grout sealing is recommended. (For glue installation only):

Install floor, then once adhesive is dry apply 1 coat of **Sealer's Choice/ Penetrating Sealer**.

After a minimum of 2 hours the tiler can grout. This first coat of sealer will act as a grout release, allowing the grout to be more easily removed from the surface of the tile. It is still **not** intended to allow excessive grout be left on the tile and removed once dry.

The installation should be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 days and then the final coat of Sealer's Choice/ Penetrating Sealer applied.

HELPFUL TIP – READ PRODUCT DIRECTIONS THOROUGHLY PRIOR TO USE.

Sealer Application

Re apply the sealer as directed on the product label.

Aeria can provide you with contacts for professional tradesmen for the sealing and maintenance of your terracotta floors.

Aqua Mix Sealer's Choice. A premium water based matt penetrating sealer, formulated to provide a natural look, while providing stain resistance.

Sealer's Choice allows moisture vapor transmission. It is also an excellent grout sealer. Always read the instructions on the product label.

Coverage

New installations. Average Terracotta coverage is 10m² per litre (1 coat).

CLEANERS for Terracotta

Aqua Mix Concentrated Tile & Stone Cleaner

Regular maintenance of the tiles with Concentrated Tile & Stone Cleaner, which is a neutral detergent recommended by the Ceramic Tile Institute of America, will keep your tiles in good condition. Two capfuls in a bucket of tepid water are sufficient to remove most household dirt and grime.

Aqua Mix Heavy Duty Tile and Grout Cleaner

This product is a highly concentrated heavy duty cleaner, degreaser and wax or floor finish stripper. Use for periodic heavy duty cleaning on high traffic areas.

It is necessary to top up the waxed finish on terracotta with a coat or two after using this product.

Read product directions thoroughly prior to use.

- Aeria Country Floors does not recommend the use of acid on tiles.

For Aqua Mix technical information visit www.aquamix.com.au or contact **A'ngé Kokkiliaris** 02 9521 4000

NOTES: