

# CW CONSTRUCTION WORLD

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## VERTICAL LIMIT

CW reviews best practices and gaps in India's  
skyscraper engineering scene.

42 ■ Tall Buildings

66 ■ Material Handling Equipment

92,120 ■ Projects: ISKCON Temple,  
WoCO One

72, 78, 118, 98, 84 ■ Interviews:  
Dholera, Trimble, Aparna  
Constructions, Matrix Geo  
Solutions, KPC Projects

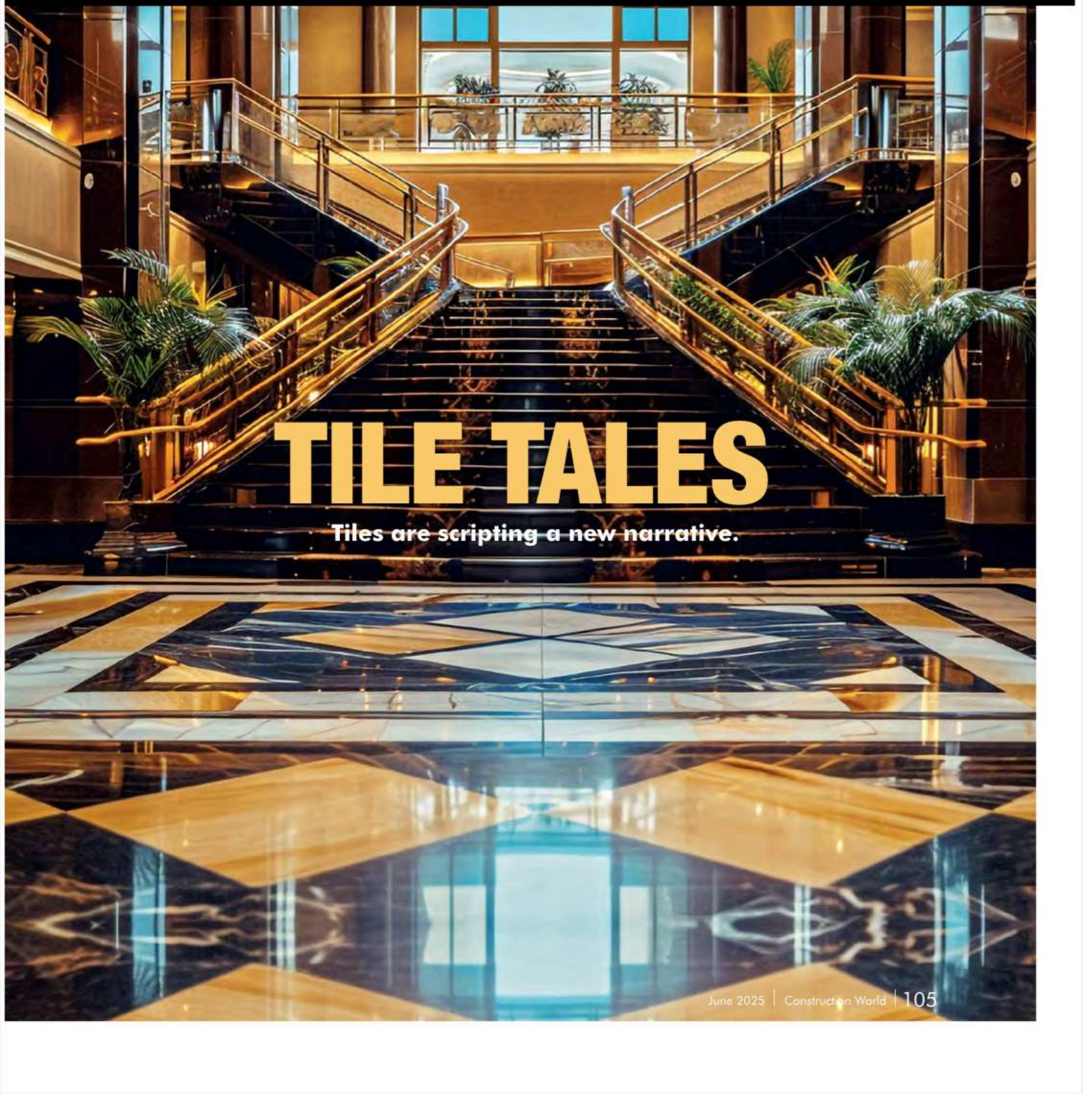
**CW DESIGN  
BUILD**

106 ■ Tile Solutions

# CW DESIGN BUILD

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## TILE TALES

Tiles are scripting a new narrative.



# TILE TALES

Tiles are scripting a new narrative.

In contemporary design, tiles are no longer just about function but have evolved into powerful design elements that inject character, texture and vibrancy into bathrooms and kitchens. Essentially, tiles have advanced from being mere surface solutions to part of the material narrative and a means to create mood – through a splash of strategically placed pattern or colour or by zoning an open layout. What's more, designers are finding new uses for tiles beyond these conventional areas of deployment. We explore the key trends defining this evolving role.

### Large-format tiles

In recent years, we've seen a significant shift toward textured and large-format tiles, which create a seamless, spacious look in both bathrooms and kitchens, says **RK Malik, Director and Principal Architect, RK Malik & Associates.**

### QUICK BYTES

- Large-format textured tiles are booming.
- Anti-slip, easy-to-clean surfaces preferred for their practicality.
- Tiles now used in furniture and facades.
- Patterned tiles add personality while bold prints create visual drama.

"Large-format tiles in sizes like 24" x 48" or larger reduce the number of grout lines, creating a minimalist look and simplifying maintenance," explains **Rinki Kotak,**



**"Using large-format tiles in bathrooms in shower walls or floors, gives the**

**illusion of more space."**

- **Rinki Kotak, Principal Architect, 4th Dimension**

**Principal Architect, 4th Dimension.** "Using them in bathrooms in shower walls or floors gives the illusion of more space. In kitchens, they can act as statement backsplashes that evoke contemporary sophistication."

"Sustainability and ease of maintenance, which lie at the core of contemporary design, are naturally achieved through large-format tiles," says **Rachna Agarwal, Founder and Design Ideator, Studio IAAD.**

**Chhaya Sharma, Founder and Principal Designer, Design Artec,** points out that in bathrooms, large-format tiles and earthy textures give a clean, seamless and spa-like feel.



**"Matte and anti-skid tiles are especially growing in popularity in senior living and healthcare projects."**

- **RK Malik, Director and Principal Architect, RK Malik & Associates**

For a layer of sophistication without overwhelming the material palette, **Neha Garg, Founder & Principal Designer, Studio Jane Designs,** suggests pairing large-format tiles with stone-like finishes, with subtle metallic inlays or trims.

Popular materials for oversized



**Sustainability and ease of maintenance, which lie at the core of contemporary design, are naturally achieved through large-format tiles.**



**"In kitchens, the traditional backsplash has evolved into a design space."**

**- Neha Garg**, Founder & Principal Designer, Studio Jane Designs

tiles include marble-look porcelain, polished concrete and natural stone textures, in both neutral and bold colour palettes, according to Kotak.

### Functional preferences

Functionally, there is a growing preference for low-maintenance, anti-slip and easy-to-clean surfaces, says Garg.

"Anti-skid tiles are being prioritised for wet areas to enhance safety without compromising design, eliminating the need for unsightly mats," explains Tania Bhatia Shringi, Founder & Principal Architect, Studio Novoforma. And according to Malik, "Matte and anti-skid tiles are especially growing in popularity in senior living and healthcare projects, where functionality is as important as aesthetics."



**"In kitchens especially, warm and neutral tones have given way to statement colours."**

**- Rachna Agarwal**, Founder and Design Ideator, Studio IAAD

### Patterned tiles

Patterned tiles have seen a resurgence as a way to inject energy and personality into bathrooms and kitchens, and create visual anchors



Inspired by the Chambal Valley, a two-storey wall clad in handmade tiles brings an earthy texture and local flavour to the space.

in spaces, shares Abhilasha Joshi, Founder and Principal Architect, Kypad Design Office. "In bathrooms, they are often used to highlight a shower floor or the bathroom floor itself. In kitchens, they make way in underfoot galley-style layouts. The contrast between patterned tiles and simple cabinetry creates a beautiful tension that enlivens the space."

She cites intricate Moroccan motifs and modern geometric

prints as popular examples of patterned tiles. Many opt for encaustic-look tiles, which replicate traditional patterns using modern materials, while others embrace maximalism with bold colours and clashing prints.

### Bold prints

"Bold botanical and graphic prints such as floral tilework and large-scale prints are making a strong comeback; these add visual

Photo courtesy: The Works Interiors



**"Bold botanical and graphic prints are making a strong comeback."**

**- Aanchhal Bhuwalka, Principal Designer, AB Design**

nature-inspired palettes that seamlessly blend form and function. "Intricately patterned floor tiles, or those with vibrant colour combinations, add an element of visual interest in residences."

In kitchens especially, warm and neutral tones have given way to statement colours with expressive surfaces like bold textures, handcrafted detailing or light-reflective glazes that layer depth, she adds.

#### **Handcrafted options**

The opportunities for handcrafted tiles are also growing. "We're exploring tiles that are

**Intricate patterns and vibrant floor tiles add visual interest to homes.**

drama transforming the shower area into a focal feature," says Aanchhal Bhuwalka, Principal Designer, AB Design.

"We're exploring deeper colours and cleaner patterns, like geometric and organic variations," adds Devika Khosla, Creative Director, The Works Interiors.

Agarwal agrees, saying boring hues are giving way to bold patterns, which include geometric compositions, mosaics and

Popular oversized tile materials include marble-look porcelain, polished concrete, and stone textures in neutral and bold tones.





**"We're exploring handcrafted tiles that add an artisanal touch to interiors."**

- Devika Khosla, Creative Director, The Works Interiors

textured finishes adds a layer of tactility instead of plain glossy surfaces, adds Khosla.

"Clients are increasingly comfortable with asymmetry and texture – tiles are laid in offset or vertical patterns, or combined with other materials like fluted wood or brushed metal to break monotony," says Garg. "Textured tiles that emulate stone have also become popular," agrees Shringi.

The growing use of vertically stacked fluted tiles in pastel tones such as sage green and blush pink highlights the growing preference



**"The use of textured surfaces has significantly increased."**

- Rahul Mistri, Founder and

Principal Designer, Open Atelier Mumbai

for texture and rhythm on surfaces, adds Bhuwalka. "These tactile tiles bring subtle dimension while maintaining a clean, modern aesthetic. Dusty pinks, sage greens and greys – earthy and muted hues – reflect a shift toward grounded, calming palettes that complement both natural materials and modern finishes, as seen in the mix of tile, marble and matte textures."

#### Visual continuity

Using uniform tile tones across



walls and floors helps create visual continuity and makes smaller spaces appear more expansive, a useful practice in shrinking urban spaces, especially in compact bathrooms and urban homes, according to Shringi.

Mistri has used tiles to create visual continuity while addressing practical considerations like durability and maintenance. In a

recent clubhouse project, he used flamed granite not just to clad the building but also extend it seamlessly into the walkways, adding an earthy sophistication to the overall design.

#### Earthy over glossy

Homeowners are preferring earthy, tactile surfaces over glossy, marble-look tiles, says



**"Uniform tile tones across walls and floors create visual continuity."**

**- Tania Bhatia**

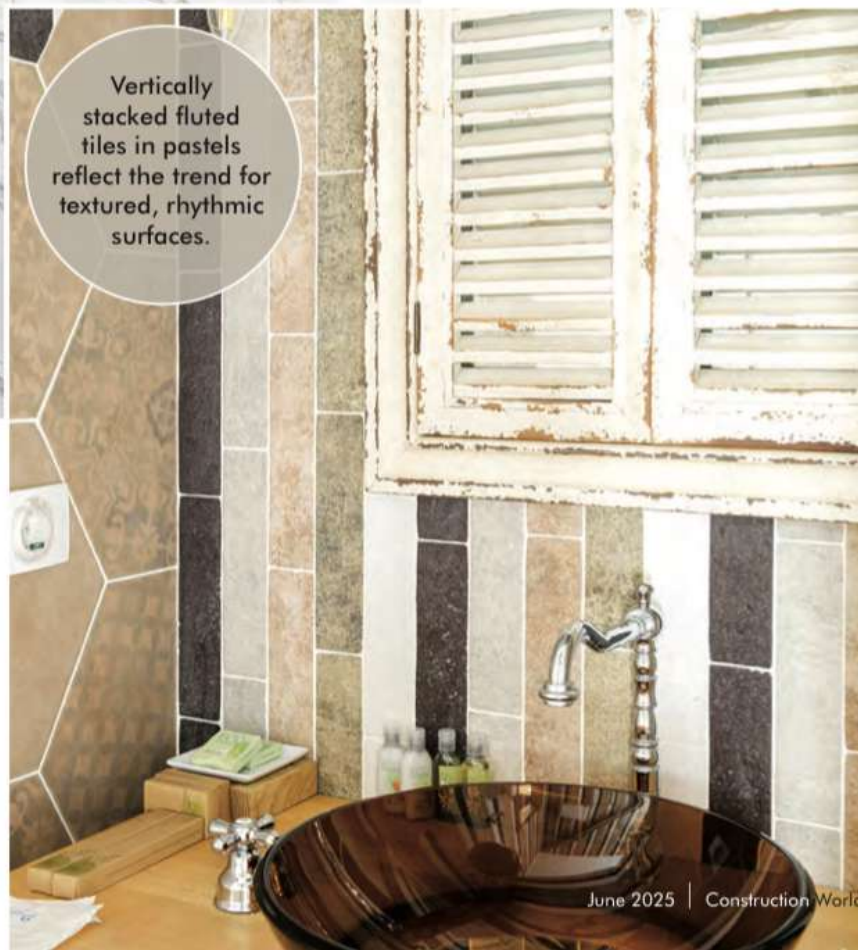
**Shringi**, Founder & Principal Architect, Studio Novoforma

sense of calm while still making a statement are trending, according to Sharma.

Agarwal cites the use of warm-toned brown tiles across the full height of a bathroom's walls – not just as cladding but as a material that sets the tone of the space – to bring calm and cohesion, and added texture without any glare.

A combo effect of earthy plus glossy can be achieved by combining matte fluted tiles with high-gloss stone, or using dark trims to frame tile layouts, suggests

Vertically stacked fluted tiles in pastels reflect the trend for textured, rhythmic surfaces.



Shringi. "Moving beyond the cool elegance of natural stones like Statuario, today's design sensibilities embrace warm, grounded tones – think beiges, browns and muted neutrals – that infuse bathrooms and kitchens with a sense of calm, comfort and understated luxury.

Matte finishes, soft neutrals and even terracotta tones that bring in a

Photo courtesy: Studio Novoforma



Tiles have evolved from surface solutions to mood-makers, shaping spaces through pattern, colour, and layout zoning.



**"Tiles are increasingly being applied to furniture elements."**

**- Chhaya Sharma, Founder**

and Principal Designer, Design Artec

Bhuwalka, calling this a way to lean into layered contrast to define luxury in subtle ways.

#### Tile-plus-light solutions

In both bathrooms and kitchens, the role of natural and artificial lighting has become central to how tile choices are made and perceived, says Garg. For instance, warm and earthy-toned tiles paired with soft and diffused lighting can transform private spaces like bathrooms into a peaceful retreat,

notes Agarwal.

It's all about creating the right mood. "In bathrooms, patterns and finishes that evoke tranquillity are often paired with ambient lighting to improve the overall experience," says Mistri.

#### What else?

Another emerging trend is the combination of two contrasting tiles on the same wall. "We call them half-and-half wall treatments, like the vertically divided application of different colours and textures," says Bhuwalka. "It's a smart way to delineate zones within compact spaces while adding a designer touch."

"Wooden tiles continue to be popular for their warmth without compromising durability," avers Khosla. "Subway tiles are also being reimagined in fresh shapes and



**"Patterned tiles have made a resurgence, injecting energy and personality into bathrooms and kitchens."**

**- Abhilasha Joshi, Founder and Principal Architect, Kypad Design Office**

arrangements. A significant rise in the use of recycled and eco-conscious materials is happening as designers put sustainability at the forefront of design."

Truly, innovative thinking is putting terrific tiles at the forefront of design.

**- CHARU BAHRI | CW |**

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