

# ROBBINS®



## **PORCELAIN RESOURCE GUIDE:** Helping Customers Choose the Right Porcelain Tile



Why Porcelain Tile?

Tough. Resilient. Built to last. Porcelain tile is designed to withstand heavy use, resist water, stains, and wear, while delivering reliable performance in any setting. Made from a denser, less porous form of ceramic, porcelain tile offers exceptional waterproof durability customers can trust.

Porcelain tile is also a highly sustainable option that promotes cleaner indoor air by resisting allergens like dust, pet hair, and pollen.

Guiding customers to the right porcelain tile transforms a simple purchase into a successful outcome, ensuring the perfect balance of performance, durability, and design. By asking the right questions, recommending the right product for the application, and setting clear expectations upfront, customers gain confidence in their decision. They don’t just love the look, they trust the long-term performance.

Start Here: Qualify the Customer

Ask the following questions to help simplify the customer’s decision before showing samples.

Step 1: Ask 5 Questions

- Where is the floor going? (kitchen, bathroom, outdoor, fireplace)
- Does the space have natural, overhead or ambient lighting? (Cooler tones may look harsh in artificial lighting, while limited lighting may dull a vibrant color)
- Is this a high traffic area? (Heavy traffic areas may not be best suited for lighter, low-variation tiles, or very dark tiles that may show dust)
- Installation (DIY vs Pro’s Timeline)
- Budget/Range (get idea of total product range)

Quick Routing Matrix

| If the customer says...                                        | Steer them to...                                  | Why it works                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outdoor Spaces: Patios, walkways, pool decks, outdoor kitchen, | Exterior rated porcelain, textured, light colored | Water-resistant, fade-resistant, low maintenance, light colors stay cooler on the foot             |
| Kitchen                                                        | Backsplash                                        | Heat-resistant<br>Stain-resistant                                                                  |
| Bathroom<br>Floors & Walls                                     | Use the same tile across surfaces                 | Water-resistant<br>Creates visual continuity                                                       |
| Fireplace Surrounds                                            | Stone-look, marble-look, or textured finishes     | Heat-resistant, durable, and creates a strong focal point while maintaining a clean, high-end look |
| Tight Budget                                                   | Standard porcelain sizes and simple layouts       | Lower material + install cost                                                                      |





Understanding Shade Variation

**Ask the customer:**  
Are you looking for something more uniform, or do you like natural variation where each tile looks a little different? (Each tile collection we offer aligns with a level of variation—from very uniform to substantially varied. So, the industry has established four levels of shade variation to help customers understand and select the right level for their tile project.)



**CORE SELLING POINT:**  
Porcelain tile is one of the most durable, low-maintenance, and versatile surfaces available. It resists water, stains, and heavy wear, works in almost any environment, and comes in endless design options so you get the look you want with performance you can rely on for years.

**Understanding Finishes /Application Areas**  
Finishing textures affect a tile’s recommended application, benefits and advantages, and overall look and feel. Customers worry about dents, scratches, and regret. Your job is to match performance to lifestyle and set expectations.

Finishes Guide (Simple and Useful)

| Finish | Application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UPS    | Unpolished Finish is recommended for interior floors dry, interior walls, countertops, exterior walls, pool waterlines and full linings in both residential and commercial applications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| FST    | FeatherSoft™ Silky and smooth to the touch, it combines comfort with practical traction, making it ideal for interior flooring in both residential and commercial spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| EXT    | Exterior Textured Finish is not recommended for interior dry floors because it could be more maintenance. A better option for dry interior floor applications is UPS, FST, or LTR finishes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| LTR    | Leathered finish with a subtle texture and muted sheen, resembling the feel of natural leather, offers an organic, sophisticated look that adds depth and character. Ideal for a refined, understated style, this finish balances aesthetics with functionality, making it perfect for both residential and commercial interior walls and floors.                                                                                                      |
| PO     | Polished Porcelain Stone is a practical alternative to natural stone with its attractive, mirror-like finish and can be used with other surface textures to increase visual interplay and interest. Polished finish adds a look of elegance and sophistication to interior floors and interior and exterior walls. Polished finish is not recommended for wet areas where standing water may occur or for exterior horizontal and/or walking surfaces. |



| Porcelain Stone       | Finish | Interior Floors (dry) | Interior Walls (wet/dry) | Exterior Walls | Interior Floors | Extiror Paving | Pool/ Fountain Full Lin- ing** | Water Line Pool/ Fountains | ANSI A326.3 Reference Category (Field Tile) | ANSI A326.3 Reference Category (Mosaic*) |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Delicate Expressions™ | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          | IW+                                      |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              | X               | X              | X                              | X                          | EW                                          |                                          |
| Earth's Tapestry™     | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          | IW+                                      |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              |                 | X              | X                              | X                          | EW                                          |                                          |
| English Isle™         | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          | IW+                                      |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              |                 | X              | X                              | X                          | EW                                          |                                          |
| Entrée™               | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          | IW+                                      |
| Lisbon Impressions™   | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | EW                                          | IW+                                      |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              | X               | X              | X                              | X                          | IW                                          |                                          |
| Momenti Dolci™        | LTR    | X                     | X                        | X              |                 |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          |                                          |
|                       | UPS    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          |                                          |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              |                 |                | X                              | X                          | EW                                          |                                          |
| Urban Indulgence™     | FST    | X                     | X                        | X              | Mosaic Only*    |                | X                              | X                          | IW                                          | IW+                                      |
|                       | EXT    |                       | X                        | X              |                 | X              | X                              | X                          | EW                                          |                                          |

ANSI A326.3 PRODUCT USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Interior Dry (ID)

Robbins® products with this classification have a wet DCOF value of 0.42 or greater and are intended to be kept dry, but may intermittently be exposed to water, liquids and other contaminants. Possible applications may include entry foyers, public restrooms (without showers), grocery stores, restaurant dining areas, or home kitchens and baths, as well as the applications listed under Interior Dry.

Interior Wet (IW)

Robbins® products with this classification have a wet DCOF value of 0.42 or greater and are intended to be kept dry, but may intermittently be exposed to water, liquids and other contaminants. Possible applications may include entry foyers, public restrooms (without showers), grocery stores, restaurant dining areas, or home kitchens and baths, as well as the applications listed under Interior Dry.

Interior Wet Plus (IW+)

Robbins® products with this classification may be suitable for interior areas that are frequently subjected to standing water. These products feature one or more characteristics that promote improved traction and drainage, such as an elevated wet DCOF value, enhanced texture, and/or frequent grout joints. Possible applications may include shower floors, interior pool decks, and locker rooms, as well as the applications listed under Interior Dry and Interior Wet.

Exterior Wet (EW)

Robbins® products with this classification typically feature an elevated wet DCOF value along with an enhanced or exaggerated surface texture for improved traction. As a result, such products may be suitable for level outdoor areas that may be walked on when wet. Possible applications may include patios, walkways, and pool decks. These products may also be suitable for the applications listed under Interior Dry, Interior Wet, and Interior Wet Plus, but may not be desirable in certain areas due to their surface texture.



WB12409, Travertine Frost, Entree™

Understanding the Difference between Porcelain & Ceramic

| Porcelain                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Similarities                                                                    | Ceramic                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Made from more refined clay and is fired at higher temperatures</li><li>• Denser</li><li>• Water resistant (&lt;0.5% absorption)</li><li>• More durable: handles heavy foot traffic indoor &amp; outdoor</li><li>• Frost resistant</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Made from clay and kiln-fired</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best for light-use areas</li><li>• Mostly indoor</li><li>• More porous (3–7% absorption)</li><li>• Glaze may chip over time ideal for indoor kitchen backsplash</li></ul> |

Uniformity & Design

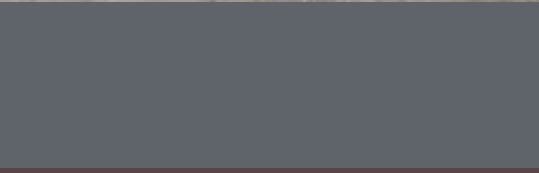
PRO TIPS: Use calibrated tile when you want a more forgiving installation—like on walls or floors where the surface isn’t perfectly flat or you’re not chasing ultra-tight lines. Choose rectified tile when you want a clean, modern, high-end look with tight grout lines—but only if your substrate is very flat and your install is precise.

| Tile Type       | Description                                                                           | Recommended Minimum Grout Joint |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Calibrated Tile | Tile that has been sorted to meet a pre-determined acceptable range of size variation | 3/16 in.                        |
| Rectified Tile  | Tile with edges mechanically finished to achieve more precise facial dimensions       | 1/8 in.                         |

Maximize Project Value:

| Bundle Item         | Use / Benefit                                                    | Why It Matters                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mosaics             | Ideal for showers and accent features                            | Adds visual interest and premium appeal                                                                              |
| Bullnose & Trim     | Creates smooth, finished edges                                   | Delivers a polished, professional look                                                                               |
| Cove Base           | Great for commercial spaces or clean transitions                 | Improves durability and ease of maintenance                                                                          |
| Coordinated Options | All collections offer coordinating trim & mosaics                | Ensures a seamless, cohesive design                                                                                  |
| Grout               | Fills the joints between tiles and helps keep them from shifting | Prevents tiles from moving, cracking, or becoming uneven over time. Protects subfloor, enhances design and aesthetic |

**PRO TIP:** Traditional grout can harbor mold and mildew without proper sealing. Newer grout options combine epoxy and urethane benefits, offering better durability, consistent color, and built-in resistance to mold and mildew.



**The Close Framework:**

**Connect** - Start conversation with customer to guide and build trust

**Understand Needs** - Finish and application

**Lock the Look** - Shade variation and size

**Build the System** - Add coordinated trim, mosaics, and grout

**Quote Confidently** - “Want me to price the exact set up for your square footage?”

**How Do I Install Tile?**

We always recommend that all industry standards, guidelines, and best practices for installation are followed, including but not limited to the TCNA Handbook and the ANSI A108/118/137 series. Customers should know their DIY limits, especially in wet or outdoor areas.

**Some Points to Watch Out for:**

- Use the correct notch-size trowel (indicated on the adhesive bag or container).
- Spread enough mortar or grout to properly bed the tile for flatness. Big tiles require more adhesive than little ones.
- Always use control joints at intersecting planes and where the tile meets another materials, such as wood.
- Wait the proper amount of time before grouting (or walking on the tiles). This time is indicated on the adhesive container also.
- When you grout, keep the grout on the dry side, and pack it well into the joints before striking them.
- Do not use too much water to clean the grout haze off and do not clean it too soon or you can pull the grout out of the joints.
- It’s important to note that most grout joints are not waterproof (unless using epoxy grout). In wet areas like showers, protection comes from the installation system and substrate—not the grout itself.
- Jobsite Blending: blend tiles before installing to produce an even range and distribution of color and finish.

**Robbins Common Porcelain Flooring Claims and How to Prevent Them at Point of Sale****1. The color looks different than expected**

Differences in natural variation, lighting, and dye lots can impact how porcelain tile color looks in a space.

***How to prevent it:***

- Show multiple tiles or a full sample board. Large job offer carton and purchase from same dyelot
- Explain shade variation (V-ratings if applicable)
- Recommend blending tiles from different boxes

**2. The floor is slippery**

When the wrong finish is used for example, polished or feathered in wet areas.

***How to prevent it:***

Recommend matte or textured (anti-slip) finishes for: Kitchens, Bathrooms, Outdoor areas

**3. Tiles cracked after installation**

Improper subfloor preparation and selecting tile that is not suited for the traffic level can compromise overall performance and structural integrity.

***How to Prevent it:***

The tile industry standard (ANSI A108.02) requires substrate flatness for tiles less than 15” to be 1/4” in a 10-foot span and no more than 1/16” in 12”, and requires substrate flatness for tiles over 15” to be 1/8” in a 10-foot span and no more than 1/16” in 24”. Make sure tile is rated for traffic type, back-butter grout to reduce possibility for air pockets. Leave a 1/4“ expansion gap around the entire perimeter of the room where tile meets the wall.



# ROBBINS®

1-866-243-2726

Monday - Friday

9:00am - 4:30pm EST

[www.robbins.com](http://www.robbins.com)

