



AU NATUREL

Creating an impact with natural stone

There is nothing more luxurious than incorporating natural stone into an interior. Anytime I use it, my clients love the result, whether it be on a countertop, floor or backsplash—it simply adds depth, interest and makes any home that much more luxe.

It's not always an easy sell, however. Some people are wary of using natural stone surfaces as they worry about cost and maintenance. While it can get costly and, depending where you use it, be more work to care for, it entirely depends on the install. If you avoid using it in high traffic areas (such as flooring in a mud-room, where scratches are guaranteed) and always double check that it has been properly sealed, you can put your fears to rest.

When you're ready to commit, consider marble, travertine, soapstone, or granite—just a few of my favourites. If you are more daring, consider some of the great new natural stone products on the market that are making waves in the design industry.

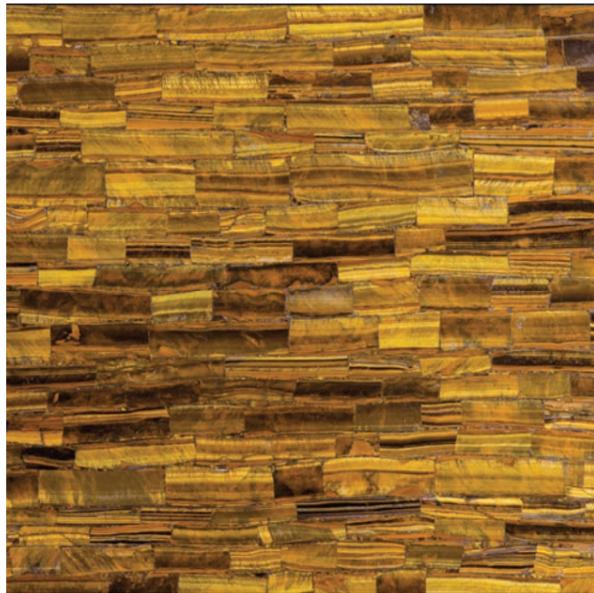
■ BY ALYKHAN VELJI



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(opposite page) Photo courtesy Morrison Homes.

(left) Photo courtesy ICON Stone and Tile.



Armani Natural Stone

This polished natural stone product is perfect for those who want to create a dramatic look. The linear, layered look gives it a modern edge. Try using Armani Natural Stone on a large feature wall in the kitchen, bathroom or as a fireplace surround.

Tiger Eye

An exotic and one-of-a-kind stone product, this one is a showstopper. Tiger-eye is a gemstone that is fused with resin. This process is time consuming but the result is magnificent. Used as a counter top it would make any kitchen go from great to spectacular.

Grey Agate

Another precious stone that is resin bound, this product can also be backlit, making it perfect for use in a bar or lounge area. The pattern has a lot of presence so don't overdo it with this one — incorporate it as an accent and make a bold statement without overwhelming your space.

White Quartz

A subtle but still exquisite stone, White Quartz is an ideal choice for a modern space. Clean in its design (and almost iridescent in the light), I can see this as a counter top throughout a home. Paired with sleek cabinetry and refined accents, it would make just the right statement.

Calacatta Marble

An iconic stone used throughout the ages, Calacatta is timeless and classic. The grey veining gives it an organic and fluid quality. Perfect for walls, floors and counters, the key to using this product is restraint. **D**

Clockwise from top: White Quartz, Armani Natural Stone, Tiger eye and (opposite page) Grey Agate. All Photos courtesy ICON Stone and Tile.

■ **Alykhan Velji** is the president of Alykhan Velji Design and has been featured on TV shows such as HGTV's Designer Superstar Challenge and My Rona Home. He specializes in both residential and commercial interior design projects.

