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JOSE SEMPRE HANDMADE TERRACOTTA – Fixing & Sealing

Guidelines

Jose Sempre Handmade Terracotta is a mellow sandy coloured tile, the tones varying from pale sienna to burnt amber. Fired at low temperatures, this terracotta is an absorbent tile and can be sealed in the traditional manner or treated with synthetic sealers. This Spanish clay shows all the characteristics associated with a handmade tile – attractive colour tone variation, minor structural deficiencies such as pitting, nooks and crannies on surface and edge, together with the advantage of the clay being able to retain heat. This floor will never be ice cold to the touch. Stated sizes are nominal and imprecise and there can be different porosity within a batch.

Please note that the appearance of mineral salts is a characteristic of this tile. It is therefore important to remove these before the sealing process.

PRIOR TO FIXING – Please inspect the tiles as soon as they arrive. This will give you a chance to rub down any chipped edges with an emery cloth, or in severe cases with the edge of another terracotta tile. The clay tends to come in ‘batches’ and tiles of a similar clay tone are best separated and mixed to produce the most attractive overall effect. Make sure the sub-floor is sound, level and clean – free from dust and paint etc. If laying on a concrete floor, we recommend you use a cement based adhesive. It is important that sufficient adhesive is used to enable the tiles to be well ‘bedded’ without hollows beneath. Make sure the correct adhesive and grouting is used for your specific requirements (i.e. underfloor heating, old concrete may need priming with PVA first etc) – check with manufacturer/tiler. New concrete floors should not have tiles laid until completely dry – approx 4 weeks (see manufacturers recommendations).

If the terracotta appears in any way to be damp, it is advisable to stack the tiles on end and allow them to dry out thoroughly before laying.

If tiling onto a wooden floor, the floor has to be sound with no flexing. If there is any movement we recommend overboarding with either 18mm plywood or specific backer boards.

Jan 2010

Flexible adhesives and grouts must be used (refer to manufacturers recommendations) and correct board fixings.

FIXING – Only proceed to lay tiles when sub floor is completely dry and free of contamination (dust etc). We recommend buttering the backs of the terracotta with the adhesive and applying a thick bed of notch trowelled adhesive to the floor, then sandwich the tile onto the floor adhesive, alleviating any air pockets. One tends to space these tiles by eye as they are slightly irregular and take care not to stain the top of tile with the adhesive when handling them. Allow the correct drying time for the adhesive (as per manufacturers instructions) prior to sealing/grouting.

At this stage, when the adhesive has dried, efflorescence (mineral salts) should be given sufficient time to work its way to the surface of tile. If there is evidence of this, you can use a little LTP GROUT STAIN REMOVER, followed by warm water which will help disperse the salts. When dry, brush the tiles over to remove any dirt or dust.

SEALING METHOD. 1

TRADITIONAL SEALING – Firstly, it is necessary to establish the porosity of your batch of clay i.e how many coats of boiled linseed oil it will absorb prior to general application. Experiment on a spare tile before beginning the sealing process.

Once the tiles are dry from laying, apply a coat of LTP BOILED LINSEED OIL – apply sparingly using a paintbrush and work evenly into the tiles to cover the whole floor. **AFTER 15 MINUTES, IF THE OIL HAS NOT ABSORBED INTO THE TILE, IT MUST BE WIPED OFF SURFACE.** Wipe any excess oil off surface using a soft fluff-free cloth and a little Genuine Turpentine. THIS MEANS THE TILE HAS FOUND ITS SATURATION POINT AND THIS IS WHY THE SURPLUS OIL HAS TO BE TAKEN OFF THE SURFACE BEFORE IT BECOMES TACKY OR OXIDISES (HARDENS). If the oil has been left too long on the surface and has become tacky or hardened and cannot be removed by the Genuine Turpentine – use LTP POWERSTRIPPER (follow manufacturers instructions). Please note: **DISPOSE OF OILY RAGS CAREFULLY AS THEY CAN SPONTANIOUSLY COMBUST.**

After a further **12 hours** and only if the floor will absorb it, apply a further coat of boiled linseed oil sparingly – again noting the above instructions. When you are happy that the tile will take no more boiled linseed leave the floor for another **24 hours** before applying a coat of LTP CLEAR BEESWAX (or LTP ANTIQUE BEESWAX for a much darker aged appearance).

Buff with a soft clean cloth, working an area of about one square metre at a time. Do not use too much polish as this may prevent proper hardening.

Jan 2010

GROUTING – We recommend grouting **24 hours** after the wax application when the tile is completely dry. Grout the joints using a good proprietary wide joint grout and remove surplus grout before it is cured. After allowing the floor to dry, dust off any residual grout from the surface, making sure that all grouting smears have been removed. Should you be unable to get some of the grout off, use LTP GROUTSTAIN REMOVER. Use sparingly (follow manufacturers instructions) and again allow the floor to dry. Do not use this product near stainless steel.

FINAL STAGE SEALING – Finally, when the grout has cured/dried (as per manufacturers instructions), apply a second light coat of LTP CLEAR BEESWAX (or ANTIQUE BEESWAX) over the tile and grout joints. This will slightly age the grout joints. Again, rub in using a fluff-free cloth, then buff up by using a soft brush or buffing machine to produce lustre. Protect from water for 24 hours and do not wash surfaces for at least 3 days.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE – Do not wash your floor with detergents or bleach as these will strip the waxes. We recommend you sweep the floor, then use LTP WAXWASH for general cleaning and maintenance once a week. Wipe up messes with a rag or sponge (you can use a little Dettol if you require a disinfectant). If the floor has been blemished slightly, apply a little more beeswax, allow to dry, then buff to polish. The beeswax layer should ideally be regularly maintained as it is this that provides the primary floor protection. Where the floor surface dulls, buff well. When the surface will not buff, more wax will be required.

SEALING METHOD 2.

SYNTHETIC SEALING – This option will keep the terracotta looking a little lighter in shade than the traditional method. Follow the same fixing instructions as above and when the tiles are dry from laying, apply 3 – 4 coats of LTP MATTSTONE (follow manufacturers instructions). Apply generously using a paintbrush or sponge and work evenly into the tiles to cover the whole floor. Allow **5 hours** between each coat and remove any excess sealer not absorbed into the tile within **20 minutes** of application. Remove any surplus sealer with a fluff-free cloth.

When the floor is completely filled with LTP MATTSTONE, leave for **24 hours** before grouting.

GROUTING – Proceed to grout, using a good proprietary wide joint grout and remove surplus grout before it is cured. Do not use too fluid a mix as this may result in discoloration of the tiles or encourage efflorescence (mineral salt stains). After the recommended grout drying time, dust off any residual grout from the surface, making sure that all grouting smears have been removed. Should you be unable to get some of the grout off or have any efflorescence on the tile, use LTP GROUT STAIN REMOVER (follow manufacturers instructions).

Jan 2010

FINAL STAGE SEALING - After **24 hours** from grouting and the floor clean and dry, finish off with one coat of LTP CLEARWAX using a soft fluff-free cloth. Work in manageable areas at a time and buff to a shine with a short haired brush or mechanical buffing machine. Protect from water for 24 hours and do not wash surfaces for at least 3 days.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE - Do not wash your floor with detergents or bleach as these will strip the waxes. We recommend you sweep the floor, then use LTP WAXWASH for general cleaning and maintenance once a week. Wipe up messes with a rag or sponge (you can use a little Dettol if you require a disinfectant). If the floor has been blemished slightly, apply a little more LTP CLEAR BEESWAX, allow to dry then buff to polish. The beeswax layer should ideally be regularly maintained as it is this that provides the primary floor protection. Where the floor surface dulls, buff well. When the surface will not buff, more wax will be required.

The foregoing advice, whilst given in good faith and from experience gained in various installation situations is for guidance purposes only. If in doubt at any stage of floor laying, experiment before proceeding further or seek further advice. Neither the supplier nor the manufacturers will be liable for any dissatisfaction resulting from these instructions nor will they in any circumstances accept responsibility for any damaged or incorrect tiles once they have been fixed.