



A custom floor mosaic was created for the lobby floors of The Rodney, a 17-story, multi-family, luxurious high-rise in Portland, OR. *Photos courtesy of Shelsi Lindquist Photography*

# A striking entry

# For the entryway and lobby in The Rodney, an upscale apartment building in downtown Portland, OR, a custom mosaic was created using Italian ceramic tiles

by Heather Fiore

**T**he Pearl District is an area of downtown Portland, OR, formerly occupied by warehouses, light industry and railroad classification yards, which is now known for its shopping, art galleries and upscale businesses and residences. Located at 14th Avenue and NW Glisan Street, is The Rodney, a 17-story, multi-family, luxurious high-rise, which features an incredibly unique floor mosaic using ceramic tiles from Appiani.

Stretching from the entryway to the elevator lobby, the detailed mosaic was created using a custom-made pattern from Appiani's Open Space collection, which was designed by local design firm, Vida Design.

"The goal for the design was to provide a 'wow' moment when potential residents and guests enter the building," said Sheena Brittingham, principal and director of design at Vida Design. "The name we gave to the interior design vision was 'classic edge,' which is inspired by classic interior design you would see in older historic buildings, but given a new/fresh perspective. We wanted to blend the history of Portland into the design and what better way than by a mosaic inlay floor."

Upon entering The Rodney, you are greeted by a "tile entry mat" that reads "Portland" in all caps, which is indicative of the local product of the building, according to Brittingham. "We are a Portland-based design firm and we wanted our love and pride for our great city to show," the designer explained. "Our client was very involved

with the approval process. We used our SketchUp rendering tools to represent multiple versions of the tile design and had mock-ups made in different color combinations, which we shared with the client. At one point, the tile was going to be mostly blue, and after seeing the options, ultimately the group preferred the more neutral combination of white, black and warm gray."

The customized pattern, which resembles an older-style area rug, was crafted using three colors from Appiani's Open Space collection — Blackite, Calcite and Vanadio — in a matte finish. Around 380 square feet of the 1/2- x 1/2-inch tiles set on 12- x 23-inch sheets were chosen for their slip resistance, durability, color options and customizability.

"Prior to choosing to work with Appiani tile, we were considering using Puzzle by Mutina," Brittingham said. "We chose to change directions due to concerns with the thickness of that product and potential for dust to show on the solid colors of that tile. We are so happy we changed directions."

The soft- and neutral-toned tile from Appiani, which creates a "dynamic, interesting motif," was supplied by Statements Tile and Stone in Portland, OR. "My favorite thing about it is that it's incredibly durable and functional," Brittingham said. "I don't think we could've achieved the same aesthetic using any other product. The size and sheen of Appiani mosaics are so unique."

Although the design of the building took around two years to complete, the tile



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installation only took two weeks. “We had very detailed drawings that we provided to the installer and Appiani did an amazing job mapping out and numbering the pattern to make the installation very straightforward and smooth,” Brittingham said. “We visited the site a few times during the installation process, mainly because we were so excited to see it going in.”

Since the project’s completion, it has received an extremely positive reaction, according to Brittingham, and was also awarded the very first People’s Choice Award at the 2020 Ceramics of Italy Tile Competition. “The Rodney really stands

out in the Portland multi-family housing market and we couldn’t be happier with the outcome,” Brittingham said. **TILE**

### The Rodney Portland, OR

**Architect/Designer:** Vida Design, Portland, OR  
**Tile Supplier:** Statements Tile and Stone,  
Portland, OR (Appiani’s Open space collection)

# MID-CENTURY MODERNIZATION



An outdated home in Bel Air, CA, which was built in the 1960s, was recently rebuilt by local designer and builder, David Griffin, who worked diligently to create a more modern, contemporary aesthetic using a range of Italian tile and stone. *Photo courtesy of Mike McNamara*

For the reconstruction of a 1960s home in Bel Air, CA, a local contractor incorporated a range of modern touches, which are complemented by contemporary and eclectic Italian tile finishes

**by Heather Fiore**

**B**el Air is by far the wealthiest and most well-known neighborhood within Los Angeles County, CA. Situated in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, about 12 miles west of downtown Los Angeles, the neighborhood features older-

style architecture, with some homes that are still standing from the time they were constructed in the early 1920s.

One of these homes, which dates back to the early 1960s, was recently rebuilt by local designer and builder, David Griffin, who



For the flooring throughout the kitchen, Griffin opted for a striking, wood-inspired porcelain tile from La Fabbrica's Kauri collection in the dark gray color, "Victoria Tech." Just over 700 square feet of the diagonally patterned tile was utilized in a 24- x 48-inch format, which provides a nice complement to the massive white marble countertop on the island that stretches almost the entire length of the kitchen. *Photo courtesy of Marc Boileau*

worked diligently to create a more modern, contemporary aesthetic.

"My client inherited his parents' 1960's Bel Air home, which had not been remodeled for decades. The spacious home sits on a 22,000-square-foot lot and was in a complete state of disrepair, so I gutted the home, inside and out," said Griffin, founder of Complete Access, Inc. in Los Angeles, CA. "The results had to be stunning and uncompromising. It was vital that we brought to market an

inviting home; and in this regard, my client and I worked together to design and rebuild to appeal to an array of discerning buyers. As the intention was to sell the home upon completion, we worked hard to ensure that overall, we incorporated gender-neutral elements and colors. We focused on color, clean lines, function, quality appliances, fixtures, lighting and other superlative elements to create a home with a wonderful flow, especially for grand entertaining."



For the 652-square-foot kitchen, which more than doubled in size from its original 276-square-foot layout, Griffin focused on opening up the cramped space. “This was achieved by incorporating the adjoining, open, double carport space into the new layout, resulting in a chef’s kitchen, which features an abundance of storage, bistro seating for six at an island, a connecting kitchen lounge and a seamless flow onto the adjoining, outdoor dining terrace,” he said. *Photo courtesy of Marc Boileau*

While the original home had “decent bones,” according to Griffin, it was outdated and needed a complete overhaul to meet today’s modernized design standards. “It was dark and dingy, choppy and absolutely unappealing,” the designer said. “Everything from the roof to the sewer pipes had to be replaced, so we stripped it. The original kitchen was especially cluttered, extremely dysfunctional and more befitting to a two-bedroom apartment than a luxury estate.”

With an overarching goal to transform the home and grounds into an “enclave befitting the area,” Griffin set out to create a magnificent home, uncompromising when it came to quality and artistry, which was completed with the use of various upscale additions, including a variety of Italian tile employed throughout the main living areas and bathrooms.

“Quite clearly, I was charged with delivering a home that stood apart from the other high-end properties for sale to high-expectation homebuyers wanting to live in the affluent

Bel Air community,” Griffin said. “We delivered a masterpiece that turns heads. The kitchen is clearly the crown jewel.”

For the new 652-square-foot kitchen, which more than doubled in size from its original 276-square-foot layout, Griffin focused on opening up the cramped space. “This was achieved by incorporating the adjoining, open, double carport space into the new layout, resulting in a chef’s kitchen, which features an abundance of storage, bistro seating for six at an island, a connecting kitchen lounge and a seamless flow onto the adjoining, outdoor dining terrace,” he said.

For the flooring throughout the kitchen, Griffin opted for a striking, wood-inspired porcelain tile from La Fabbrica’s Kauri collection in the dark gray color, “Victoria Tech.” Just over 700 square feet of the diagonally patterned tile was utilized in a 24- x 48-inch format, which provides a nice complement to the massive white marble countertop on the island that stretches almost the entire length of the kitchen.

“To bring as much light into the enlarged kitchen, we kept the skylight, and widened and made taller the kitchen entry, which we dressed with synchronized, etched-glass entry doors,” Griffin said. “We added new windows and installed two sets of floor-to-ceiling tri-fold doors, leading to the adjoining patio.”

Nearby the kitchen, in the office bathroom, different variations of porcelain and ceramic tile were used on the main floor and in the shower. For the main flooring, 50 square feet of ceramic tile from Mirage’s Ruche collection was utilized. The 5- x 4 1/4-inch, honeycomb-style hexagonal tiles, which incorporate matte, glossy and metallic finishes, add an interesting textural finish to the floor. The “Noir” color was selected, which features shades of black, gray and silver. A smaller hexagonal tile was continued into the shower on the floor and ceiling; around 18 square feet of the 1 1/2-inch glossy tiles were implemented in solid black, with minimal white grout joints. On the shower walls, 80 square feet of Iris Ceramica and Diesel Living’s Shades of Blinds collection was used. The 4- x 12-inch porcelain tiles, which emulate closed vertical blinds with light peeking through, were utilized in “Black” with a glossy finish to complement the other glossy tiles in the bathroom.

On the other side of the kitchen, at the far right end of the home, penny round circular tiles were utilized on the floors of the exterior pool shower and adjoining bathroom. A customized pattern was designed in the indoor bathroom to complement the pedestal sink cut from a solid block of marble. “I wanted continuity between the outdoor shower and the pool bathroom, hence the similar floor tile – the Salluto glass collection, Penny Circle Series, in ‘Whisper White’ outside flowing into the ‘Grey Spring’ color on the floor inside the bathroom with adjoining changing room,” Griffin said.

Customized glass tile is also featured on the wall of the outdoor pool shower. A 60s-inspired mosaic was constructed using 12 3/4- x 12 5/8-inch glass tiles from Oceanside Glass & Tile’s Devotion collection.



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A custom color combination was created with Devotion’s swank pattern. “The glass tile for the outdoor shower backsplash is an homage to the home’s 1960’s vintage,” Griffin said.

The 4,316-square-foot home also features an extensive range of natural stone tile, which was used for the flooring, walls and shower elements in the entryway, hallways, master

bathrooms, powder room and second floor bathroom. Various types of Italian marble were used in different colors to tie all of the spaces together and create a cohesive design throughout the home.

“With each of my design/build projects, I strive for a uniformity with distinction,” Griffin explained. “For example, all wall and ceiling paint throughout the home is a Benjamin Moore ‘white.’

Stylistically, the elements must be complementary, while at the same time each must make their own statement. Careful thought was given to the tile selections for every space to create wonderful ‘moments’ and the ‘wow’ factor a home of this level commands.”

With such an extensive project, the redesign and rebuild took about two years to complete. “Preliminary discussions about design and budget began in the last quarter of 2017,” the designer said. “We actually broke ground on May 1, 2018, and the project was completed in August 2019.”

Since the home’s completion, it has received great praise from the owner and visitors alike. “People have been extremely complimentary,” Griffin said. “They admire the overall look, the attention to detail, the quality, unique elements, high-end finishes, indoor-outdoor floor, harmony and lighting.” **TILE**



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### Private Residence Bel Air, CA

**Designer/Builder:** Complete Access, Inc., Los Angeles, CA  
**Tile Supplier:** Westside Tile & Stone, Beverley Hills, CA (La Fabbrica’s Kauri collection, Mirage’s Ruche collection, Iris Ceramica and Diesel Living’s Shades of Blinds collection, Oceanside Glass & Tile’s Devotion collection)