



FAKE IT TO MAKE IT

There is nothing quite like the luxury of marble or the richness of leather. Designers are drawn to such qualities; to the unique depth and quality that only natural materials possess. If only every project could be draped in yards of linen and clad in white arabesque marble! Here is the catch: not all of us are able to afford the price tag attached to the laboriously harvested, tanned, and milled product. Natural resources are limited – this creates both the demand for their valued qualities and the matched high prices.

That which is natural tends to come with its inherent weakness, whether that is the porous quality of stones or the delicate surface of hides. The maintenance issue plays a significant role in material selection. Design trends are born out of the need for them. The high demand of these trends and the desire of a budget-friendly and low maintenance option caused the market to be filled with “cousin” materials, alternately known as fakes. I have personally witnessed the transformation of “the fake” go from Frankenstein to fabulous. Truthfully, the result is often better than the real thing!





Below is a list of my top three fakes that give the real thing a run for its money.

1 STONE TILE AND SLABS

No doubt we all love the aesthetic of marble; however, do we really want the panic that ensues when we spill hand cream on the bathroom floor or red wine drips on the kitchen counter? Have no fear! Porcelain products are a great replacement; they are inherently nonporous, thus bringing the maintenance to a bare minimum. Moreover, they are priced at a fraction of their fancy counterpart. Collections such as MAXFINE from Ciot include slabs and tiles that allow ultimate flexibility in design. For instance, the slabs are available in several patterns within each colour for an authentic "natural" application. With thicknesses

starting at ¼" the issue of heavy weight associated with natural stone is eliminated. In short, porcelain is cheaper, more durable, and easier to install than the natural option.

2 LEATHER WALL COVERS

Using luxurious materials and textiles to make a statement has long been a designer go-to move. I have installed rich leather panels on the entry walls of a penthouse and created leather-wrapped wall panels in a dining room. The subtle patina offers texture and elegance; however, it is an expensive installation process that requires professional skill. Further, leather is not highly tolerant of scrapes or scratches. A fantastic alternative is a wall cover which is available in a variety of patterns, hides, and tones. Whether you are looking for

classic leather, or the detail of a faux-croc or faux-ostrich, synthetic wall covers are a fast, affordable, and humane alternative.

3 NATURAL TEXTILES

I love the softness that natural linen adds to the interior. The problem is that I am not very keen on the hefty price that 100% linen carries. If you ever had custom drapery made, you will quickly learn about the enormous quantity of yardage required. The price alone can be debilitating. In addition, some natural materials do not fare well under direct sunlight. As an alternative, consider a linen blend. It offers the drape and aesthetic of the real thing with added durability and reduced cost associated with synthetics.

If you love luxury but prefer an easy and affordable reality, I say, fake it to make it!

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