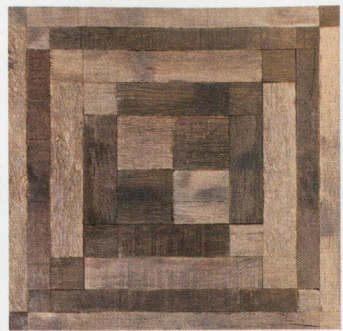




LEFT: Roman Alonso of Commune, Franck Nataf and his mother, Paula Nataf, of Exquisite Surfaces, and Steven Johanknecht of Commune.
BELOW: Bauhaus II parquet flooring.



FAIR AND SQUARE

When the cutting-edge design firm Commune teams up with Exquisite Surfaces, the result is a fresh take on tiles and flooring

The Los Angeles design collective Commune has brought its mix of worldly, offbeat style and laid-back California attitude to residences, boutiques, hotels, and branding. So it might have seemed surprising when they proposed a collaboration with Exquisite Surfaces, a flooring company that uses such timeworn materials as antique limestone and Italian tiles. “We have more in common than you’d think,” says Roman Alonso, one of Commune’s four partners. “We like things that are honest and that have a soul. Exquisite Surfaces products feel soulful. Everything has a history.”

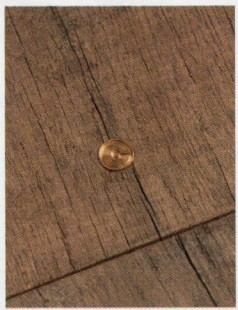
“People think of us as Old World,” says Franck Nataf, who founded Exquisite Surfaces with his mother, Paula. “Commune brings something new to us. They’re using reclaimed materials in a contemporary, organic way.” The designers chose salvaged French oak as the basis for their Signet collection of wood flooring. The oak, which is tinted, comes in planks marked with a small brass seal. Commune also fashioned the same wood into parquet tiles, with two graphic motifs inspired by geometric Latvian textiles. Bauhaus I has variously patterned squares that can be configured in a number of ways; Bauhaus II is a crazy-quilt pattern of rectangles and squares meant to repeat across a floor. “You can imagine them in an 18th-century public building in Copenhagen,” says Alonso, “or in a Manhattan loft.”

Sitio is a collection of handmade terra-cotta tiles marked with recessed slashes that can be inlaid with metal or oak, or filled with colored grout. The impulse came from the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, who installed painted tiles in his Rio garden pavilion. “I knew nothing about him,” says Franck Nataf. “That’s exactly what I wanted out of Commune.”

CAREN KURLANDER



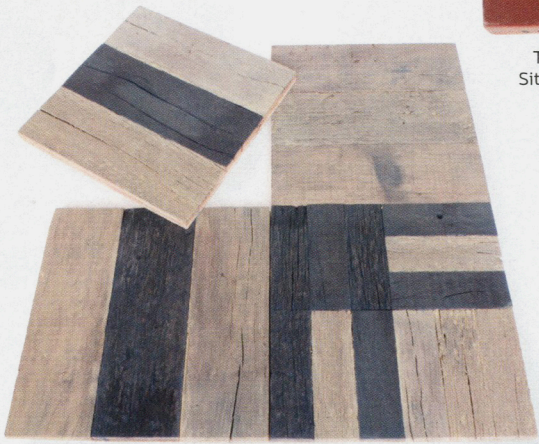
A random configuration of Sitio tiles.



Oak planks from the Signet collection.



Tiles from the Sitio collection.



Bauhaus I parquet squares.

