



The knots and so-called 'imperfections' of natural wood remain visible and are even flaunted in Whetstone Oak's handcrafted furniture. Rather than covering up the irregularities of timber, owner and designer James Ransley makes them the defining features of his custom pieces.

**A FINISH** can make or break an interior or a product, transforming its look and feel, increasing its comfort levels, and adding contemporary design relevance. *Frame* talks to some major brands about their latest products and the impact they could have on the future of finishes.

### Raw Beauty

Several manufacturers note the trend for materials to look more natural and unfinished, even when they result from a highly refined process. 'There is a definite shift towards materials that have a more honest, industrial look – and this has very much influenced the finishes we developed for our Concrete series,' says Eli Feiglin of Caesarstone. Part of the company's Classic Collection, the new products are Raw Concrete (rough, classic, industrial luxe), Fresh Concrete (white, rugged, clean) and Sleek Concrete (smooth yet grainy). They combine tactility and authenticity with durability and ease of maintenance. Feiglin comments that the 'very honest character' of these finishes complements the patinated surfaces – stone, wood and metal – which are increasingly popular in today's interiors.

They also demonstrate another recurring trend: an increasingly minute differentiation in materials, which also characterizes Stone Italiana's new Cartapietra and Jaipur 14.15 ranges. White Cartapietra is available in no fewer than six finishes, from gloss to roface, offering a wide range of visual and tactile experiences. Jaipur 14.15, an update of the bestselling Jaipur quartz-based range, comes in an array of earthy, spice-inspired hues and in textural variations that make each slab unique. 'To determine our collections, we look at trends in various fields, from fashion to graphic design,' explains Stone Italiana's Silvia Dalla Valle. 'Technology also influences what we do in a major way, but it makes it hard to predict how surfaces will evolve.'

### Perfectly Imperfect

Some areas, however, are marked by a distinct desire for *unevolved*, primeval surfaces. Wood is enjoying huge popularity in the field of furni-

ture. The 'untouched' look is visible in the bespoke work of Whetstone Oak, a company that showcases the naked beauty of wood. The brand's tabletops are left 'to tell their own story – and it's my job to get out of the way,' says Whetstone's James Ransley. 'People seem interested in our work largely as a way of bringing something organic into what might otherwise be quite a clinical modern interior,' he adds.

Ransley describes a certain polarization in modern woodworking: 'There are those who embrace the potential of CNC technology, taking it to the limits, and those who embrace the imperfection of the materials – the knots, cracks and colour variations that require a judgment at every step.' In an age jaded by mass production, he says 'the natural, unique imperfections in materials become even more valuable'.

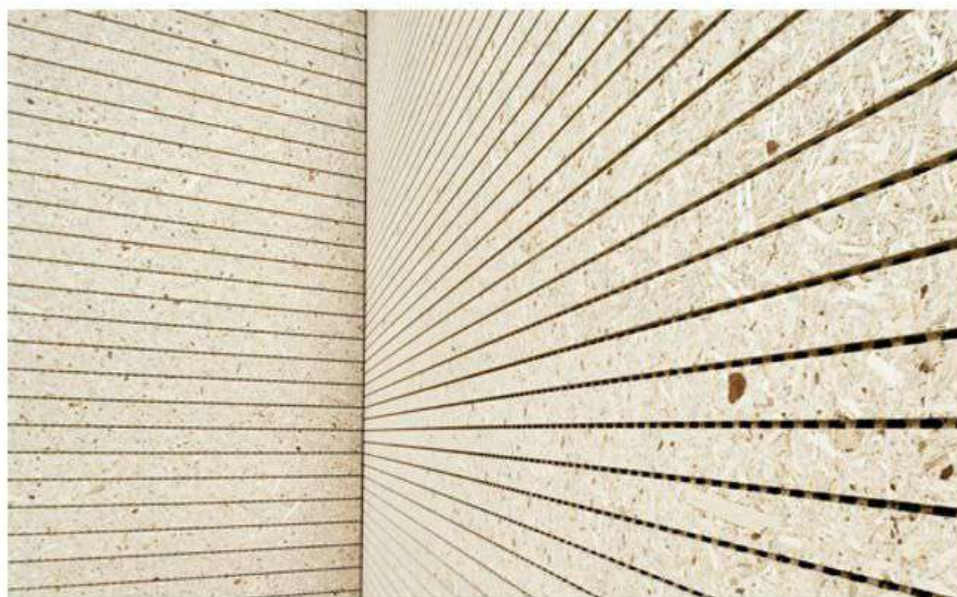
### Nature Calls

The influence of nature is felt strongly in more 'manufactured' work as well. Take the latest collections from Interface, a sustainable brand of carpet tiles. The company calls its new products Walk the Plank and Human Nature: materials used for the latter, designed by longtime



Made to imitate natural stone, the thin tiles of Stone Italiana's Cartapietra series offer architects and designers a range of textured and smooth finishes.

Fantoni's ISB insulated 4akustik panel is both sound-absorbent and eco-friendly. Similar to wood panelling, 4akustik has both decorative and structural applications.







Juta, piastrella per rivestimento in quarzo ricomposto con trasposizione di texture tessile di **Stone Italiana**. Fa parte del progetto Micro 3D ispirato alle goffrature e cromie della carta da parati di Jannelli&Volpi, ideato da Lorenzo Palmeri.