



Locations

New York
Vermont

Project Type

Retail

Areas Supplied

Main Retail Floors
Restroom Floors & Walls

Products

Ethos
Vintage Wood

Stewart's Shops is a roadside convenience store and gas station with a near cult-like following of their homemade ice cream and farm-fresh dairy products. Stewarts believes that customers can expect better, friendlier service because almost 40% of the company is employee-owned. They take great pride not just in their quality products, but in creating a quality guest experience as well. Stewart's Shops has been in business for more than 70 years. Today there are over 335 Stewart's Shops employing 4,500 people in 31 counties across upstate New York and southern Vermont.

CHALLENGE | SOURCE HIGH ANTI-SLIP TILE

When the recession hit in 2008, instead of putting on the financial brakes, Stewarts doubled down on the aesthetic appeal of its stores, more determined than ever to create a top-of-the-line shopping experience. While the intention was the right one, Stewarts found that there was room for improvement in the tile initially selected for remodels and new build-outs. Although the tile initially selected met Dynamic Coefficient of Friction (DCOF) requirements for commercial applications, given the extreme weather conditions of the Northeast in the winter and the high volume of traffic in the stores, the tile was prone to becoming extremely slippery and dangerous. Stewarts primary concern was that guests would be able comfortably enjoy the stores without having to worry about slipping. Stewarts began searching high and low for a tile that would be suitable for guests and also fit the design scheme.

SOLUTION | PERFORMANCE AND PERFECT AESTHETICS

Stewarts was relieved to find that Creative Materials could offer a wide variety of suitable options and alleviate the burden on the Stewarts team. As Stewarts was not working with a commercial designer, they relied heavily on Creative Material Corporation's own in-house Design Services and Product Sourcing team.

"Creative Materials developed a supply chain model that guaranteed material for all three design schemes and was readily available for all locations, ensuring a leadtime of no more than one week from time of order."

~ Craig Lansley,
Vice President, Supply Chain,
Creative Materials Corporation

Per Stewart's request, the Creative Materials team initially proposed several stone-look matches to the existing floor tile, but with higher slip resistance. The team also took it a step further and suggested some wood-look options in a plank format. The Design and Sourcing team felt that these looks would add some rustic character to the stores and the plank format would offer more grout joints for shoes to grip on to. Now that digital technology has come so far, a realistic-looking wood floor is achievable in high-traffic commercial spaces where natural wood would never be a viable option. The plank format for added grout joints, coupled with a dark grout color and grain movement to camouflage coffee spills, wound up being the winning combination for Stewart's.

RESULT | CONVENIENT PARTNERSHIP

Creative Materials offered interesting design options and sourced a porcelain tile that enhanced the aesthetic of the stores and also mitigated slipping issues. Creative Materials offered numerous aesthetic options that fit within budget and Stewart's selected one that was a perfect fit. By working with Creative Materials, Stewart's has also reaped the following benefits:

- Average 3-day lead times
- Dedicated product availability
- Consistent pricing
- Dedicated account management

Now, Stewart's guests enjoy their favorite ice cream flavors (Crumbs Along the Mohawk!) in a safe, risk-free environment.

