

## STYLE CLASSIC

# The *metro* tile

**Designer** Anonymous.

**Background** The classic brick-shaped 'metro tile' is as iconic a part of London Underground's identity as the Johnston typeface on its signage and its circular logo. It was used in the early days of the Tube to maximise light reflected from gloomy gas fixtures. When electricity took over in the Edwardian era, it wasn't as essential to stick to white-only tiles and each station now has its own design style. However, the utilitarian aesthetic of the white tile has always had user-appeal in commercial spaces. It made its move into home interiors during the wave of early Nineties warehouse conversions and has recently been revived as a go-to look thanks to its use in 'industrial luxe' London restaurants such as Pizza East and The Riding House Café. The classic approach is to lay the tiles in a stretcher bond overlap (like a brick wall). Ring the changes by scaling up or down from the standard 7.5 x 15cm size or apply them in a vertical linear pattern. Alternatively, try a coloured grout or tile - Fired Earth has a range in a muted palette named after various Underground stations. A little bit urban, a little bit egalitarian, the metro tile goes with everything.

**Details** H&E Smith supplies tiles to the London Underground. From 89p for a plain tile or £1.03 for a bevelled-edge tile.

