

For immediate release

Authentic Mid-Century Modern Ceilings



Photo courtesy of the Caribbean Motel

The Caribbean Motel in Wildwood Crest, NJ, went all-in on its Mid-Century roots, creating a 1960's fantasy that mixes tiki bar with Space Age, brought together by an MCM thermoformed ceiling from Ceilume.

GRATON, CA, 2024-October-29 -- Designers all over the country are scrambling to find authentic Mid-Century Modern (MCM) pieces and products for their clients' homes and businesses. It may surprise some to learn that authentic, new MCM decorative ceilings are readily available, still being made by the same company that has kept these styles alive and continuously in production for over 60 years. These thermoformed ceiling tiles and panels include many original patterns from the 1950s, maintaining the authenticity of the products, but now made in 16 colors and finishes including metallics (think Copper) and highly realistic faux wood, and manufactured with 21st century environmental and sustainability standards in mind.

Made in USA

The quest for a Space Age geometric ceiling or an affordable modern “stamped metal” ceiling has led many designers to Ceilume, a small, family-owned company located in Northern California. The company traces its roots back to Cepco, the San Francisco firm that pioneered suspended grid ceilings starting in the 1950s. Ceilume is now headquartered and manufacturing in a former apple-packing warehouse in California’s wine country, making over 40 patterns of ceiling tiles – many of them from the original Cepco catalogue – and include many emblematic Mid-Century looks. The tiles are sized to drop into conventional 2x2 and 2x4 suspended grids, and many can also be glued to hard substrates including both ceilings and walls.

“Back then, the patterns were insightfully designed to be versatile,” explains current company president Ed Davis, “to complement a wide variety of architectural styles. That’s why they’ve endured. Building on modern advances in materials, we’ve been able to increase their versatility by adding different colors and finishes.”

These decorative ceiling tiles are a world away from the flat white panels that most people associate with a drop ceiling grid. Thermoformed tiles are three-dimensional, with moderately deep relief – up to 2” – and have both smooth and textured surfaces, depending on the pattern. Some patterns were designed to emulate vintage ceiling styles - ornate European plaster or early 20th Century stamped metal, for example. Others are quite contemporary, including the linear and geometric designs that define the MCM aesthetic.



Photo by Ceilume

Regency, for example, is a pattern that would be right at home in the Jetson’s house. The circle projects over 2 inches downwards from the tile face and creates a strong light-and-shadow effect. Opaque colors such as Stone (above) have a satin finish.



Photo by Ceilume

Southland is an arrangement of clean straight lines that closely resembles a plank ceiling. In a faux wood finish such as Caramel Wood or Cherry Wood (above), it's like an extension of Danish modern furniture styles, and can help create the perfect setting for a variety of Mid-Century pieces.



Photo by Lauren Kay

Designer Lauren Kay found the exact MCM vibe she wanted for the ceiling of her own basement library: thermoformed tiles with a faux wood finish that look like a plank ceiling.



Photo by Ceilume

Circle Star in this high sheen Copper metallic finish (above), costs about one quarter of the price of a metal copper tile, it never needs polishing, and it will never corrode or lose its bright copper appearance. Like many Ceilume styles, Circle Star is available in a variety of opaque colors from white to black, translucent materials, as well as metallic and faux wood finishes, not just Copper.



Photo by Ceilume

The different colors and finishes can completely transform the effect of some patterns. In White (left), Petal evokes the Streamline Moderne era of the 1930s. In Caramel Wood (right) it's easy to imagine the same style in the boardroom of a large 1960s advertising agency.



Photo by Ceilume

Transluminous® tiles and panels are a perfect embodiment of another Mid-Century Modern concept, the luminous ceiling, seen here in a very 50s pattern called Dart. Luminous ceilings originally used fluorescent fixtures positioned above translucent panels, but have become much easier to create and more energy-efficient to operate using LED lighting above the grid. Luminous ceilings spread gentle, diffused illumination, and with RGBW LED fixtures, the ceiling can be programmed to glow in millions of different colors for effects both subtle and bold.

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Photo by Brian Bossany

The Bavaria Downs wedding venue in Minnesota features a vast luminous ceiling that can be illuminated in millions of different colors, and even synced with music to create a customized lightshow.

While many of the tile styles are vintage, the newly-made products have 21st century sustainability. Ceilume's tiles and panels are robust and long-lasting, thermoformed from recycled materials (up to 100% in some cases), and 100% recyclable, either locally or through the company's takeback program. They are also GREENGUARD Gold Certified to protect indoor air quality, and their lightweight design allows them to be nested closely to minimize the impacts of packaging and shipping.

The heritage of Ceilume's tile business gives designers access to authentic MCM products, and makes a direct connection to the period. Going through their catalogue can be a bit like taking a step back in time, channeling designers of the 50s and 60s, seeing what they had to work with and the kinds of choices they were making.

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Company president Ed Davis is available for interviews.

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About Ceilume

Ceilume is the leading manufacturer of thermoformed ceiling and wall tiles and panels. The company's roots go back to the pioneers of modular ceilings, when "Mid-Century was Modern." The family-owned business is located in California's wine country and occupies a historic apple-packing warehouse. With an eye on the future, Ceilume's research and development continues to improve interior finish systems to meet changing environmental, performance, and aesthetic needs. For more information, see ceilume.com/pro.

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