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## Icon Tile & Design

*Combining artistry and excellence in Kirkland, Washington*



Icon Tile & Design ([icontileanddesign.com](http://icontileanddesign.com)) is a Seattle-based company whose culture values artistic creativity combined with technical excellence. It is owned and run by husband-wife



team Jamen and 2017 Coverings Rock Star Chanel Carrizosa. The company focuses primarily on high-end residential, plus light commercial if the fit is right.

“We certainly enjoy the edge of all styles, and feel very fortunate to install what we design,” Jamen said.

Icon got its start with Chanel, who brought her love and eye for fashion and design into practice through her parents’ tile compa-



*Jamen and Chanel Carrizosa*

ny when she was 17. Initially, she had her sights set on the make-up and fashion industry, but, as she tells it, “I would have preferred to dress up fashionably every day, but the money

was good and I loved having the freedom of my own schedule and design.” She re-engineered her passion through the lens of tile and created art through her tile installations in high-end homes working with her family’s business.

“It was a bit of a domino effect, she said. “At first, I handled a lot of the design aspects at my father’s company. Then I branched out with my husband Jamen, and we collaborated with Icon Tile & Design. With our new customers, my role began to evolve into creating more of the complete design package. I needed that – to share my vision of ‘fashion that you get to live in.’”

In the process of executing their original designs, Jamen and Chanel meet with general contractors and project managers on a regular basis to educate them on the proper



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substrate conditions needed for a successful tile installation. Chanel also speaks with manufacturers and has been asked to advise on future product lines.

"I feel I make an impact in the trades by letting people know that they can be successful by being themselves," Chanel added. "I believe that our trade is getting back to appreciating highly skilled artisans. Yes, I work in a male-dominated industry, but there's a lot of validity in doing things from a woman's point of view. We hire and work with a staff that shares our vision."

### Dedicated to proper methods and to employees

Jamen's passion centers on knowing the proper installation methods for the many different situations his company encounters.

"After a conversation about this with my friend William White (Oregon State Ambassador), I was directed to the NTCA," Jamen said. "As a seasoned educator, William explained many of the benefits to me and how to use those resources. We joined the NTCA two years ago and haven't looked back.

"NTCA University has so much to offer our staff as well as us as business owners/operators," Jamen continued. "NTCA's Training and Education coordinator Becky Serbin has helped us out so much with this. Whenever there is down time on a project (which happens

often), we utilize that time for our staff to take some of the modules offered. It quickly turns the negative impact of down or drying time to a positive opportunity to increase comprehension and know-how. Our new hires take several modules before stepping foot onsite. This really changes the learning curve once they are in the field."

Chanel and Jamen are both NTCA Washington State ambassadors as well, and find it as useful for their own business as for the other industry contacts with whom they interact.

"Being able to reach out to other State Ambassadors – as well as our Regional Director Dirk Sullivan of Hawthorne Tile – has been very helpful," Jamen said. "Whether it's bidding/contract information or general business questions, they are always available to offer direction.

"Utilizing the NTCA as the resource that it is holds countless benefits and opportunities," Jamen added. "We used to rely on our portfolio to sell jobs. Now we're able to showcase our talent along with providing knowledge of proper installation methods and products as well as selling who we are as a business in our industry. This has been key. Many customers have shared their appreciation for hiring us due to these aspects."

Before joining NTCA, Jamen and Chanel never made it to a trade

show. But in recent years, they've attended Total Solutions Plus, Surfaces/TISE West and Coverings.

"These shows have given us a much different take on our business and our industry," Jamen said. "Meeting up with amazing talents and business owners from all over the country is both humbling and inspiring."

NTCA staff and members have mentored and encouraged Jamen and Chanel to their next steps. "Erin Albrecht from J&R Tile in San Antonio has been strongly encouraging us to get our team signed up for the Certified Tile Installer exam," Jamen said. "This will happen this year and we hope to qualify next year to be a NTCA Five Star-rated company. Amber Fox has kept in good communication with us on this topic.

"We joined the NTCA to help further our installation knowledge," Jamen concluded. "We feel we've gotten this and have joined a strong team and movement."

It's worth noting that as dedicated as the team is to proper installation and ongoing installation, they employ best practices with their workers as well.

"The hardest part of leadership is knowing when to listen," said Jon Dille, Icon craftsman. "Sometimes you aren't the best at something on site, or may not have all the information. At Icon Tile, communication is key. We stay connected with each other and the project manag-



*Jon Dille*

ers as well as the carpenters. We work with everyone to make everyone's job easier. It gives each project good flow and keeps everyone positive."

Feeling like you're working in a caring environment supports overall great job performance, and a sense of security and a family atmosphere. Eli Devine, another Icon artisan, said, "One thing that stands out to me is the way they

care for their employees. In this industry, it is very common for workers to be treated as if they are expendable and easily replaceable.

At Icon Tile & Design, I have always felt that they genuinely care about your well being and are actively looking for ways to help plan for your future. This type of mentality helps you be happy in the workplace and helps produce overall better results."



*Eli Devine*

