

V-Tile or European Hip and Ridge Tile

Lonnie Smith — Guarantee Sheet Metal Works


In New Orleans, ceramic V-tile are a widely used and commonly accepted form of installing hips and ridges on just about any shingle roof. New Orleans once was one of the largest ports in the United States. Many ships left England laden with ballast to cross the Atlantic Ocean and weather the seas. Once the ballast on the ships was off-loaded, much of it was used as the construction materials in the up-and-coming city.

One of the gifts the roofs of the city enjoyed were the V-shaped clay tiles that could be easily stacked on the ships during the sea voyages. These tiles were installed on New Orleans roofs after the Welsh slate shingles, also sent from overseas, were fastened onto the roofs. The V-tiles became a common sight on the hips and ridges of the old slate roofs. As the old slate disappeared over time, the tiles were re-used from one roof to the next. Many of the original tiles were stamped with the names of the yards of their origin in England. Today, much of New Orleans still enjoys the old tile, but hurricanes and plastic cement repairs have stolen the beauty of many of the original tiles.

The demand is still present for V-tile, but the plants of England are not flooding the market with product anymore. Demand without supply has sparked our American entrepreneurial spirit back into motion. There is a company out of New Orleans, Hecker-Atlas, that has made a concrete version of the tile in two pitches and three colors. There is a clay version available from The Roof, Tile and Slate Company that comes in a few different colors and pitches. The Ludowici Tile Company also has released a version of their own tile. These products have given new life and character to asphalt roofs, cement asbestos, and of course, slate roofs.

The tiles are approximately eighteen inches long and come in 90 degree and 105 degree pitches. They're installed by setting them in a bed of mortar. A heavy underlayment should be installed before the tile are set. Once the tile is placed in the mortar, it should be aligned into the row. The joint between the two tiles are raked with a finger joint spacing and the tile is then sponged clean. The process can be slow, but it can be much faster than installing a slate ridge.

A large spike or nail is recommended between tiles on steeper pitched roofs to help support the weight of the tile. In some cases an iron bracket is installed at the base of the hip

tile to support the row. The tiles are functional on a slate roof or can be used to jazz up an ordinary dimensional shingle roof. The V-tiles are not terribly expensive, but can range from ten to thirty dollars a piece without shipping. The V-tile market has spread from historic replacements to high end subdivisions and everywhere in-between. Why not install V-tile hips and/or ridges on your next roof? 

Hecker-Atlas, Inc., 4949 Mehurin Street, New Orleans, 70121 Louisiana; Ph: (504) 733-3431; heckeratlas.com

The Roof, Tile and Slate Company, 1209 Carroll Ave. Carrollton, TX 75006; Ph: (972) 446-0005 or 2647 Delaware Ave. Kenner, LA 70062; Ph: (504) 712-6859; claytile.com

Ludowici Roof Tile, 4757 Tile Plant Rd., PO Box 69, New Lexington, Ohio 43764; Ph: (800)-945-8453; ludowici.com

If you would like to know more about V-tile hips and ridges please e-mail Lonnie Smith at info@guarantysheetmetalworks.com or visit the website at **GuarantySheetMetalWorks.com**. 2649 Delaware Ave Kenner, LA 70062, Ph: 504-466-3749



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