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Vol. 12 No. 5 July 2012

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Trans Concrete, Port St. Lucie, FL

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publisher's LETTER

Dear Readers,

On August 14, 2012, *Concrete Decor* will be in Charlotte, N.C., to conduct an Informational Meeting for the 2013 Concrete Decor Show. Aside from bringing everyone up to speed on plans for the event, this meeting acquaints our exhibitors, sponsors and prospective trainers with the many opportunities for them at the Show.

You might be saying to yourself, how does this meeting apply to me? From our standpoint, it has a lot to do with you. We discuss ways the event can promote you and your industry. What's more, we use this face-to-face time to recruit product manufacturers and trainers, people who want to put their products and expertise to work in an environment that educates and promotes our industry.

One of the exciting ways you can be involved in the Show is through our Spring Training program. Spring Training consists of a number of hands-on workshops that are offered each year. Some are held at the convention center while others are conducted at the site of a nonprofit organization. Together with the help of those that show up for the Informational Meeting, we take a bus tour of these potential project locations, and together we make the site selection.

Once the project location is selected, the Concrete Decor Show and our 2013 workshop trainers begin the process of working with a project manager for the organization to design unique and practical decorative concrete projects. Here, manufacturers and trainers are paired with one another to provide innovative solutions for the nonprofit location. These indoor and outdoor projects are a great place to showcase your expertise as well as provide show attendees with an environment where they can gain practical experience in decorative concrete using the latest products, tools and equipment.

By the end of the week, nearly 200 attendees and trainers, with support from numerous product manufacturers, complete nearly \$250,000 in site improvements resulting in the ultimate "decorative concrete makeover." This event is generating increased regional and national coverage from television networks, news and industry media each year. If you've never been involved in this part of the Concrete Decor Show, please visit the "Show Recap" section at ConcreteDecorShow.com to learn more.

Have I got you thinking? If so, save the date and make plans to participate. We look forward to meeting you in person and hearing more about ways you can contribute to the 2013 Concrete Decor Show and your industry's success.

Sincerely,



Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher



concrete DECOR®

THE JOURNAL
OF DECORATIVE
CONCRETE

July 2012
Volume 12 • Issue No. 5

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troy@protradepub.com
(702) 869-4342
Subscriptions: USA (one year): \$22.95
Canada (one year): \$32.95
Other countries: \$64
All prices in U.S. dollars
Subscriber Services: (877) 935-8906
circulation@protradepub.com
Fax: (541) 341-6443
U.S. Postal Service Professional Trade Publications Inc.
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25210
Eugene, OR 97402
Other Shipping: Professional Trade Publications Inc.
228 Grimes St.
Eugene, OR 97402

Concrete Decor™ The Journal of Decorative Concrete is published eight times a year by Professional Trade Publications Inc. Bulk rate postage paid at Lebanon Junction, Ky., and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 1542-1597

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by Stacey Enesey Klemenc



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On the cover: Troy Lemon, Cornerstone Decorative Concrete, Holland, Mich., created this beautiful metallic epoxy piece on a 2-foot by 3-foot sample board. He mixed four batches of polyurea with Cohills metallic pigments — Copper, Arizona Gold, half and half Copper and Arizona Gold, and a pearl color. He drizzled the batches into a base of black Key Resin epoxy and manipulated them with a chip brush. “It’s the flatness of the black that makes the color pop out,” he says.

The blue in the design comes from Magic Blue pigment mixed into polyurea. Lemon coated the whole piece with it after it hardened, but the blue only shows up over the black. The amount of visible blue changes depending on where you’re standing, he says. “It moves as you move.” For more about metallics, turn to page 18.

Photo courtesy of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete

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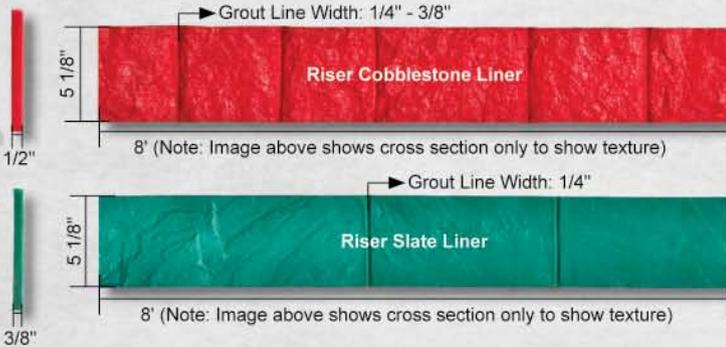
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SUMMER 2012

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Riser Cobblestone Liner & Riser Slate Liner

The Riser Cobblestone Liner and Riser Slate Liner are designed to be used with Butterfield Color's 2 1/2" Cantilevered Cut Stone Step Liner and 2 1/4" Cut Stone Step Liner to create 7 3/8" steps. They may also be used as standalone liners.

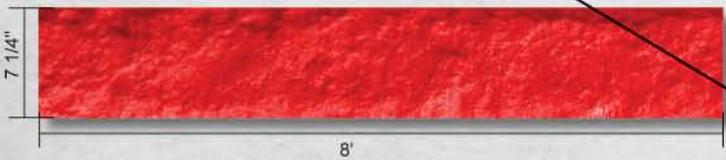


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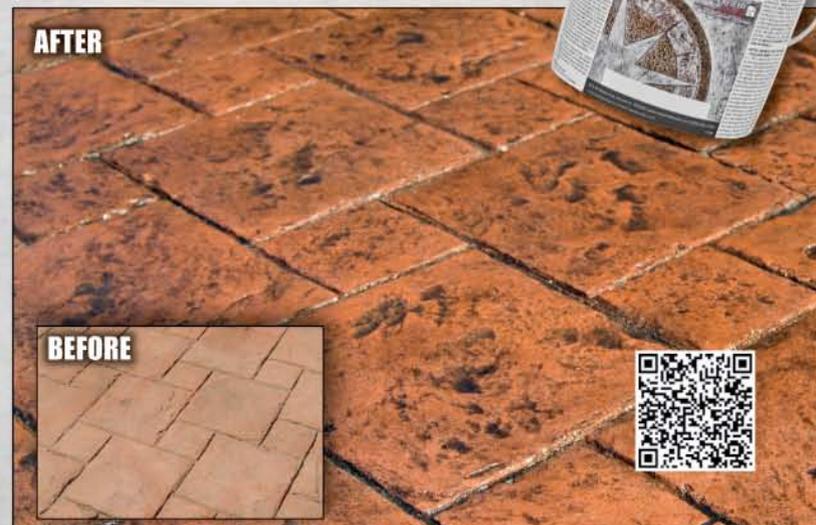


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SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Be a presenter at the 2013 Concrete Decor Show

The Concrete Decor Show is looking for innovative and informative presentations on the art and business of decorative concrete.

Presentations are needed for both beginning and advanced skill levels in these categories:

- Green Topics
- Construction Services
- Concrete Coatings
- Countertops & Precast Concrete
- Fresh Concrete
- Grinding & Polishing
- Overlays & Toppings
- Staining & Coloring
- Stamping & Texturing
- Walls & Hardscapes

This is a great opportunity to help the industry grow and be recognized for your expertise. By submitting a proposal, you will help shape the educational focus at the Concrete Decor Show and the future of your industry. If selected as a speaker/trainer, you will gain visibility in the industry and contribute to the advancement of your profession.

Go to www.ConcreteDecorShow.com and submit your proposal. Final submissions are due August 1, 2012.



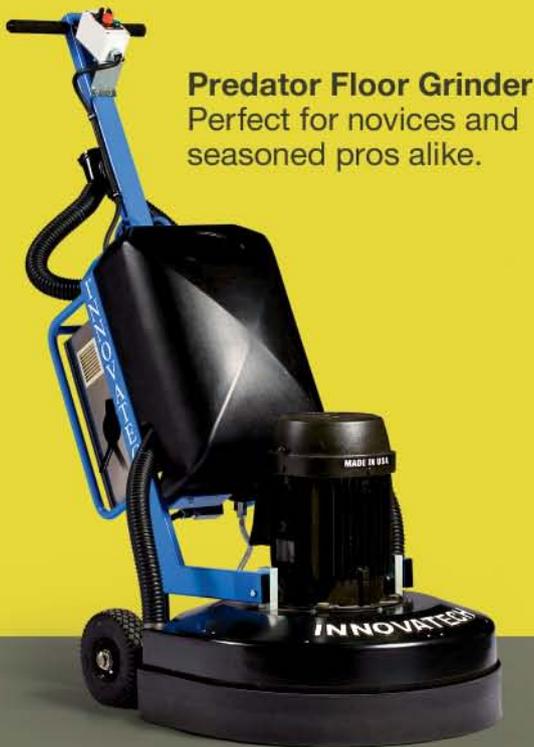
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Clark Branum is Ultraflor program manager for Diamatic USA and handles all of the training nationwide for Diamatic. He can be reached at clark.branum@diamaticusa.com. See Clark's article on page 45.



Doug Carlton operates Carlton Concrete Inc. in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at carltondoug@comcast.net. See Doug's column, "Carlton's Corner," on page 61.



Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. Contact him at trowelanderror@protradedpub.com. See Chris' column, "Trowel & Error," on page 54.



Jacob Webb, MBA, is a small-business strategy consultant and co-founder and vice president of NewLook International Inc., where he is primarily responsible for business development, sales and marketing. Reach him at jacob@getnewlook.com. See Jacob's column, "Fundamentals of Business," on page 31.



Jeremy R. Wilkerson is president of Mid Atlantic Floor Care LLC, Richmond, Va., and director of sales and operations for DreamKrete, the company's polishing and decorative concrete division. He can be reached at jeremy@midatlanticfloorcare.com. See Jeremy's article on page 41.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Texas retail chain Decorative Concrete Supply opens fourth location

Texas retailer Decorative Concrete Supply Inc. has opened its fourth location in Fort Worth, Texas.

The retail store and color-making facility occupies 5,000 square feet. It offers a showroom, expanded product warehouse and outdoor training facility like those found in DCS's three other locations, in Dallas, Houston, and Buda (between Austin and San Antonio).

☎ (855) 439-8884

🌐 www.decorativecs.com

U.S. Concrete signs license agreements

U.S. Concrete Inc. announced that it has signed license agreements with major ready-mix concrete producers to manufacture its proprietary technology, Aridus Rapid Drying Concrete. Aridus is a ready-mix concrete solution for preventing floor covering failures that result from excess moisture vapor in concrete slabs.

The licensees include Stoneway Concrete Inc., Prairie Materials, Cemstone, Irving Materials Inc., Bayou Concrete and MMC Materials Inc. Under the terms of the agreement, licensed ready-mix concrete producers are granted the right to utilize Aridus mix designs as well as access to all support materials to manufacture Aridus at

their licensed facilities. The agreement also includes the exclusive right to market and sell Aridus in select locations.

🌐 www.us-concrete.com/aridus

WerkMaster names US distributor

WerkMaster Ultra Floor Systems, a manufacturer and provider of surface preparation, restoration and refinishing equipment and solutions, has teamed up with distributor Braxton-Bragg to sell in the United States. The partnership will provide customers with more opportunity to access WerkMaster's technology and floor finishing products.

🌐 www.werkmaster.com

🌐 www.braxton-bragg.com

ASCC Decorative Concrete Council accepting entries for annual contest

The Decorative Concrete Council, a specialty council of the American Society of Concrete Contractors, is accepting entries for its fifth annual Decorative Concrete Awards. The competition is open to DCC members and nonmembers.

Entries are invited in the following categories: overlays, cast-in-place (stamped and special finishes), stained, polished, countertops, vertical applications, concrete artistry, multiple applications, graphics, and epoxy and polyaspartic flooring. With the exception of countertops, two awards may be given in each category, for projects 5,000 square feet and less and projects larger than 5,000 square feet.

Submittals are judged on craftsmanship, aesthetics, functionality and creativity.

The deadline for submittal is Oct. 1, 2012.

☎ (866) 788-2722

🌐 www.asconline.org

Shotcrete Awards open for entries

The American Shotcrete Association has opened its eighth annual ASA Outstanding Shotcrete Project Awards program to recognize excellence and innovation in projects in which the application of shotcrete has played a significant role. Awards will be granted in six categories: Architecture, Infrastructure, International, Pool & Recreation, Rehabilitation & Repair, and Underground.

Winners will be invited to receive their award and present their projects during ASA's annual awards banquet, held in conjunction with World of Concrete 2013.

Entries will be accepted until Oct. 1, 2012.

🌐 www.shotcrete.org

ACI student program opens for upcoming academic year

The ACI Foundation, a wholly owned and nonprofit subsidiary of the American Concrete Institute, has announced the opening of its student Fellowship and Scholarship program for the 2013-2014 academic year.

This year, the ACI Foundation is offering eight fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students, five scholarships for graduate students and one scholarship for undergraduate students studying concrete, through funds from both private and corporate donors. The application process is open through Oct. 12, 2012.

ACI Foundation Fellowships range from \$7,000 to \$10,000 and are awarded to high-potential undergraduate and graduate students who are studying engineering, construction management, or other related fields of study in the area of concrete. ACI Foundation Scholarships, in the amount of \$3,000, are awarded to graduate students studying concrete-related subjects.

🌐 www.scholarships.concrete.org

event
calendar

**American Society of
Concrete Contractors 2012
Annual Conference**

Sept. 20-23, Chicago, Ill.

🌐 www.asconline.org

Oldcastle Architectural debuts new name for architectural masonry unit

Oldcastle Architectural has renamed its high-density, prefinished architectural concrete masonry unit Cordova Stone.

The adoption of the new name, which signifies the end of the company's sale of the product under the Prairie Stone mark, is intended to more accurately express the unit's artisan aesthetic and natural stonelike beauty. The company plans to unveil additional artisan product offerings in the coming months under the Artisan Masonry Stone Veneers brand.

Cordova Stone is ideal for efficient installation, as it can be easily cut and shaped in the field. Manufactured with a high-performance water repellent admixture, Cordova Stone masonry units repel moisture and resist mold and efflorescence staining.

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Concrete equipment manufacturers enter joint agreement

Allen Engineering Corp. has entered into a joint marketing agreement with Equipment Synergy International.

Under the agreement, the concrete equipment manufacturers will share some of their sales and marketing resources to better penetrate the construction equipment rental market domestically and internationally under both the Allen and ESI brands.

To facilitate this agreement, Roger

Euliss, president of ESI, has agreed to join Allen Engineering as sales director while still retaining his position at ESI. As AEC sales director, Euliss will be responsible for growing Allen's business in domestic equipment rentals as well as global equipment sales.

www.theesichoice.com

www.alleneng.com



Dynamic Diamond Tooling distributes Vexcon densifiers and chemicals

Dynamic Diamond Tooling is now distributing the full line of Vexcon densifiers and chemicals. Product included in the deal are StarSeal PS Clear, StarSeal PS Clear HB, StarSeal Fusion, StarSeal Fixation and StarSeal Finish Coat.

www.dynamicdiamondtooling.com

Super-Krete available in China

Overlay product maker Super-Krete is now distributing its materials in China. Jiangsu KLK Chemical, of Kunshan City, China, is the official distributor.

www.super-crete.com

Dur-A-Flex names international strategic marketing manager

Dur-A-Flex Inc. has named Alessandro Machado Jesus as international strategic marketing manager. Prior to joining Dur-A-Flex, he spent 13 years working for the Loctite division of Germany-based Henkel Corp., for which he held a number of international marketing leadership roles.



www.dur-a-flex.com

Movers and shakers at Husqvarna

Husqvarna has announced a number of staff changes.

Chris Banks has joined the company as the district sales manager for southern Florida.

Ed Cancela recently became the district sales manager in central and northern Florida.

Randy Silver is Husqvarna's new district sales manager for its Surface Preparation team based out of Atlanta. Silver will be covering the entire Southeast United States.



Christopher Trevitt is handling territory in California — San Diego County, South Orange County, part of Riverside County, and Las Vegas, Nev. — as a district sales manager.



Ryan Word was promoted to district sales manager covering the central and west

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Texas regions.

Peyton Carroll was promoted to district sales manger, which his territory includes the greater Houston area in Texas.

www.husqvarna.com

Pervious Plus names VP of marketing and sales

Pervious Plus Inc. has announced that Steve Palmer has joined its team as the company's new vice president of marketing and sales. He will further develop a growing portfolio of regional and national accounts.

www.perviousplus.com

Lafarge North America names US senior leader

The board of directors of Lafarge North America Inc. has appointed John Stull as Lafarge's senior leader for all aggregate, cement and concrete operations in the United States. This appointment, which brings these Lafarge business lines in the U.S. together under a single leader, will further the company's customer focus as it delivers sustainable solutions to the construction industry.

Stull has 20-plus years of experience with the Lafarge Group, including assignments in the United States and overseas.

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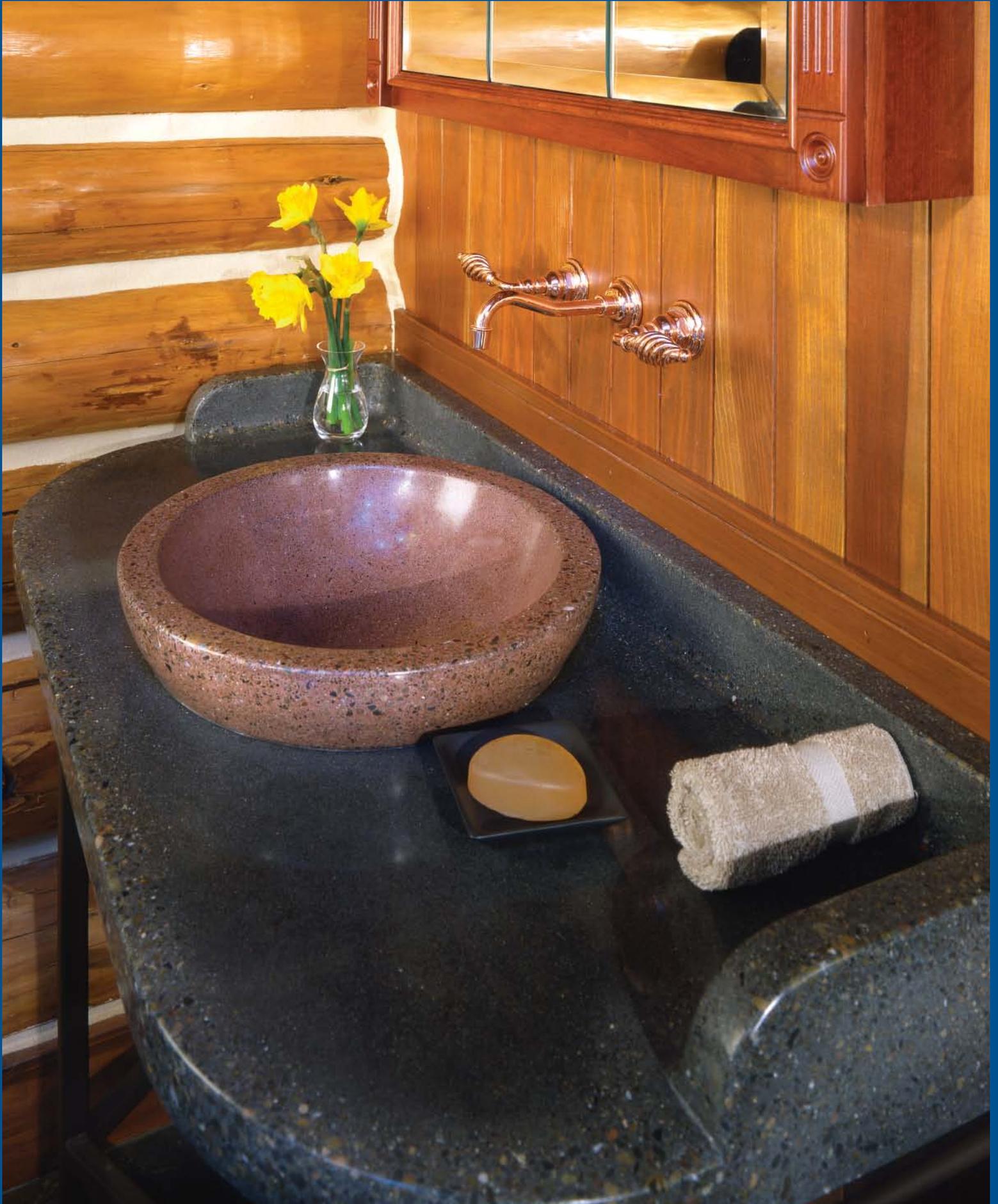
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Photos courtesy of Bohemian Stoneworks



Patrick Miller, Bohemian Stoneworks Sebastopol, Calif.

by Chris Mayo

START with a career developing computer and video systems that track the movements of fish, humans and animals, add 17 years of doing high-tech special effects for video games and movies (including the last two “Matrix” movies), and end up owning a high-end decorative concrete company? That’s the career path taken by Patrick Miller, founder of Bohemian Stoneworks, in Sonoma County, Calif.

“After working for years in the special effects field I had enough money to build kind of my dream house,” explains Miller. “While the house was being built I was spending a lot of time on location in China setting up special effects studios and I found that all I wanted to do was get back to the construction project.”

He soon realized that the aspect of his home’s construction that intrigued him most was the challenge associated with decorative concrete. It wasn’t long before he was doing work for paying customers.

“By around 2000 and 2001, when the dot-com bust happened, I knew I was ready to get out of the special effects field,” recalls Miller. “The bust was just the impetus I needed to finally make the decision to start my own company.”

Since then, Bohemian Stoneworks has developed a reputation for its ability to create virtually anything a customer wants in decorative concrete — countertops, fireplace surrounds, furniture, floors and walls. You name it, they either do it already or are willing to try.

“I was comfortable that I knew the concrete aspect well enough, but having never had my own business

before, the details of starting a company were the hardest part,” Miller says.

He says he started his business following five business principles:

Curiosity: Stay eternally curious about better methods, collaborative opportunities and advances in sustainability.

Artistry: Remember that concrete is an artisan’s canvas.

Innovation: Employ state-of-the-art techniques to achieve a very dense and reliable concrete product.

Collaboration: Work closely with customers to craft pieces that meet their aesthetic, functional and budgetary requirements.

Responsibility: Success is measured by more than just a balance sheet. Provide superior customer service, maintain a healthy and interactive workplace and acknowledge responsibility to the environment.

Miller has stayed true to those principles and it has served the company well. A case in point: Sebastopol, Calif., resident Cynthia McReynolds wanted a concrete countertop to go with her new bathroom cabinet and was referred to Bohemian Stoneworks. After visiting the showroom she settled on a concrete top with a hand-crafted copper sink embedded flush.

Patrick Miller collaborated with her to create something special. “Patrick encouraged me to think about colors and patterns and what I might want as inlays in the countertop,” recalls McReynolds. “Instead of just a pretty countertop, we were creating a piece of art. I picked



out a color I liked from a paint store and Patrick matched it perfectly. I was involved in deciding the placement of serpentine rock gravel and cut gravel in the mold, all with Patrick's encouragement. They made me feel like I was the artist and not just another customer."

Being green

Lots of contractors sell the idea of concrete as a green product. Miller takes it to another level. "I try to be a realist when it comes to being environmentally responsible," he says. Considering how much energy goes into shipping and manufacturing a lot of so-called "green" products, many aren't that green, he argues. "If you're located in

California, like me, and you're getting your colored, recycled glass from Utah, where it's crushed, melted with pigment added, and shipped, is that really being green? Shipping rock across the United States just doesn't make sense. Getting raw materials from a local source does."

Miller is also dedicated to putting in additives (fly ash, silica fume, ground glass powder) to reduce the amount of cement in his company's concrete. The sand and gravel in Bohemian's mix are quarried only 19 miles from their manufacturing facility. The mix uses CSA (calcium sulfoaluminate) cement, which is fired at a much lower temperature than standard portland cement, using less energy and producing less carbon dioxide.

Adding glass-fiber reinforcing material to the mix reduces the amount of cement and raw material needed.

"Our manufacturing facility is another way we work to reduce our impact on the environment," says Miller. "At least 95 percent of our production wastewater is reused through a closed-loop system. We recycle most of our scrap, and since the size of each batch of concrete is carefully and accurately calculated, extra landfill is minimized."

The art

The quest for being green has led to some of the signature art that defines much of Miller's work. He embeds wafers cut



from recycled wine bottles, oyster shells and river rock — all collected locally — in some of his countertops and has mastered a grinding and polishing technique in which the aggregate is subtly revealed to add to the feeling of depth in the finished product.

“With all the techniques we use, it’s important to have an artistic eye so the final product almost looks like a thing of nature,” says Miller.

Vincent Landucci has known Miller for several years — they met because Landucci specialized in etching and cutting concrete with water jets. He’s been an employee of Bohemian Stoneworks for about a year and a half. “There’s so much fusion to concrete,” he says. “There are so many different

components to it — cabinetry, mixology, knowing your ingredients, fabricating. At times, our options seem to be limitless. I like to experiment with new ideas and Patrick encourages that.”

“I think part of the reason that I was interested in the challenge of concrete has to do with my father, Eugene Miller,” says Miller. “He worked as a civil engineer and always encouraged me to think and be innovative.”

Miller’s work can be found throughout Northern California. It can also be found in this year’s Marin Designers Showcase house, an annual high-end remodeling project in Marin County, Calif.

“This particular house is estimated at

a value of \$45 million,” says Miller. “We built a 12-foot radius bar, with a curved backsplash and edged detail, and also a large outdoor barbecue and fire pit. The opportunity to display our work while giving something back to the community was really something special.”

It seems that “special” is Miller’s bailiwick.

“Everything about my experience with Bohemian Stoneworks was unique,” says McReynolds. “What was most special, though, was that even though I could tell they had far bigger projects than mine going on, they always made me feel like my project was the most important one.”

www.bohemianstoneworks.com



MIGHTY METALLICS

Thanks to new products and growing consumer interest, metallic-infused concrete coatings have everyone's attention

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc



Replicating techniques used in Raku pottery, Rick Fischer, Roanoke, Ind., sponged a thin layer of Texturline Inc.'s silver MetalTech paint onto a black-tinted texture-troweled wall. Iridescent metallics in water-based stain highlight the drifts.

Photo courtesy of Deco Illusions LLC

DO YOU LOVE the look of acid staining but could do without its unpredictable outcome and predictable mess? Would you like to pour floors that exquisitely mirror objects without any polishing? Finally, do you wish you had a way to achieve a consistent three-dimensional look with the same color (or colors) time after time?

If you answered yes to any or all of the above, you may find metallics attractive. More and more contractors, business owners and consumers across the nation are discovering the variegated beauty, dazzling shine and depth of coatings made possible with metallic and metallic-like pigments.

Today's metallic-looking coatings vary in composition. Some don't contain metal and are largely mica or synthetic mica particles coated with colors. Others contain aluminum pigments, various metals and liquid colorants. Some boast a complex combination of the aforementioned ingredients. But they all have one thing in common. "They all provide drift and sparkle in different ways depending on how light hits them and on the angle of viewing," says Gary DeBoer, technical director with Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems.

Metallic coatings are being used all over the country and throughout the world, perhaps more in metropolitan areas with larger populations. The coatings can be found everywhere from nightclubs, restaurants and car dealerships to doctors' offices, hair salons and high-end retail stores where durable surfaces are needed and a contemporary look is desired.

Besides the private garages of car aficionados and serious collectors, metallic floors also are popping up in celebrities' residences, with celebrities such as Vanna White reportedly wild about the Cafe Dazzle in her home theater in Beverly Hills.

Photo courtesy of Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems

The showroom at Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems' headquarters in San Diego features the Liquid Dazzle metallic epoxy floor-coating system in Ruby. It was applied by company staff.



Photo courtesy of Düraamen

This floor at a Cleveland Cavaliers practice facility was colored with Düraamen's Lumiere epoxy in Brass, Bronze and Copper by Pat Maloy, PDM Concrete LLC, Avon, Ohio.

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INTEREST IS GROWING

Ask the manufacturers and distributors of metallic coatings if the use of their products is on the rise and you'll get an emphatic "yes."

The reasons are many, including the fact they are so easy to use and the color palette is so broad. These days, higher-grade metallics are dispersing better and creating a deeper 3-D look. Epoxies flow more proficiently, many self-level, and they don't have nearly as many bubbles as in years past. They are also clearer and are less likely to amber. The pot life has been extended and the drying time is faster without compromising the integrity of the coating. There's a quicker turnaround time for the installer than in years past, with less labor involved. And metallic coatings can be a less-expensive and viable alternative to overlays and stains for floors in bad shape.

"It's a niche business," says Westcoat president Paul Koury, whose company introduced Liquid Dazzle four years ago. "In the last four to five years, we've seen increased interest. The beauty of the product is it can produce a variety of colors on a seamless epoxy floor that's chemical-resistant, easy to clean and durable. And on the food side, it meets USDA criteria for flooring."

"I think we've seen a surge of interest in metallic coatings because you get an acid stain look that's controllable in a 20-mil coat of epoxy," says Ken McKinnon, president of McKinnon Materials, which makes Aurora Epoxy Dust Concentrate in 12 standard colors. With dust-size pigment particles suspended in translucent epoxy, "you also get a deep mirror look that is simply beautiful," because the pigments reflect light instead of absorbing it.

The real beauty of metallic products, he adds, is how easy they are to install and how easy it is to duplicate results. "We can show

Metallic Application Tips from the Professionals

STARTING THE JOB

Before tackling a job using an unfamiliar epoxy metallic-type coating product, practice off-site on a cement board or similar substrate to help you get the basics down pat. Then move on to a small room to perfect your technique. Don't take on projects larger than your ability. Start small and ratchet it up as your skills and confidence improve.

— Paul Koury, president, Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems

Portable sample boards have never done me any good. Instead, I apply a couple different metallic colors in 2-by-2-foot sections on an inconspicuous area of the actual floor so customers can see how they look. This is very important when it comes to managing their expectations.

— Michael R. Jensen, CEO, Atlanta Concrete Artist

Properly prep the floor before applying any type of metallic epoxy coating or you will have problems. Lightly sand or screen between coats. Apply a sealer or a good coat of wax to protect your job. Epoxies are durable but not as hard as polyurethane, polyaspartic or acrylic.

— Ken McKinnon, president, McKinnon Materials

THE ALCOHOL EFFECT

Spritzing the surface with denatured alcohol will add mobility to Metal FX and create dramatic results. The most dramatic effects occur when you allow the color to migrate and flow. Like any decorative material, you need to play with it to discover its possibilities.

— Bernie McGuire, marketing manager, Increte Systems

If you have a large area and are going to disperse denatured alcohol or some other solvent onto a metallic epoxy floor, have one person do the whole job for a consistent look. Don't have people on opposite ends meet in the middle. In all likelihood, their spray patterns and droplet sizes will vary depending on the applicator and the job may look 'piecemealed.'

— Brett LaFevers, regional sales rep, Cohills Building Specialties



Photo courtesy of Michael R. Jensen, Atlanta Concrete Artist

Waiting for the right window makes a big difference when applying denatured alcohol. If in doubt, spray the solvent earlier rather than later. If you spray too early, the effects will go away but you can always spray again. If you wait too long, the alcohol can create a slight texture on the coating's surface.

— Matthew Newman, president, Versatile Building Products

OTHER EFFECTS

Putting color into color is the most common way to create a unique metallic coating. After the main color is down, carefully walk out onto the surface wearing spiked shoes and add small amounts of a second and maybe a third color. Then agitate together with a small roller or trowel. For even a larger amount of color movement and/or effect, wait until the material starts to slightly thicken. Then wearing spiked shoes again, carefully walk out onto the surface and spray a small amount of solvent or Hydra-Stone Dye Stain (from Elite Crete) over the surface.

— Mario Nicasio, market development and technical support, Elite Crete Systems

When using glitter to accent concrete coatings, be careful, because it's really lightweight. It's best to throw a small amount of glitter in the air, like you would paint chips, and let it float down soft and evenly. Add more as needed to achieve a balance as it's easier to add than subtract. Also, during application take care not to create lines and spillages.

— Rick Fischer, owner, Deco Illusions LLC, Roanoke, Ind.

After applying a water-based colored epoxy primer, apply our polymer modified Spray-Top or Trowel-Top about 1/8 inch thick over an adhesive vinyl stencil. When dry, peel up the stencil and apply Metal Fusion over the entire floor. This technique creates a subtle and elegant logo or design that's revealed through the metallic epoxy coating.

— Bart Sadleir, general manager, Concrete Solutions/Rhino Flooring

STEPS AND STAIR RISERS

If a contractor is working solo or without much help, it's best to first mix a smaller amount of the metallic coating to do trim work such as steps, corners and perimeters. After that's done, mix up the rest of the product to do the full floor. In ideal conditions between 55 and 75 degrees, you'll have 50



Photo courtesy of Versatile Building Products

Rob Reygers, of A-1 Commercial Specialties Inc., Eugene, Ore., backsprays denatured alcohol on a Cold Stone Creamery floor in Hillsboro, Ore., after applying a coating with Versatile Building Products' Lava Flow pigment in Mojave Sand.

to 60 minutes to apply the coating after it's mixed. Spiked shoes are highly recommended for walking on the floor and creating special effects.

— Tonino Zaccagnini, director of operations, EpoxyMaster

If you are doing a job that calls for something vertical such as stair risers to match the floor, apply the metallic coating to a piece of cement board such as HardieBacker when you are doing the floor. After the coating has cured, you can cut the board into pieces and attach it where you want. This also works well for small vertical accent pieces.

— Troy Lemon, president, Cornerstone Decorative Concrete, Holland, Mich.



Photo courtesy of Troy Lemon, Cornerstone Decorative Concrete

you a sample of our Aurora dust in our epoxy and that's the way it's going to look on your floor," unless you opt to manipulate it by blowing, raking or troweling it.

APPLICATION IS SIMPLE

Although the effects produced by metallic coatings look advanced, installation is quite simple. Most manufacturers suggest you profile and prep the floor with a primer of some sort, with some recommending a light sanding once the primer dries. Next, you spread the self-leveling metallic coating with a trowel, roller or squeegee in a random back-and-forth motion so as not to create lines. At this point, you could be done ... or you could put on spiked shoes, go onto the floor and trowel, squeegee, roll, spritz with a solvent or even blow the epoxy around the floor to redistribute the pigments that create the metallic look.

Don't assume that all of these techniques will get good results with every metallic. For example, McKinnon doesn't recommend spraying alcohol on an Aurora surface. "While you'll get the pigment to move, it won't move all the way to the bottom. It will just move on the surface. If you get a blemish and had to sand it down, you'd end up sanding away part of the swirl."

Finally, some products on the market today require a sealer, while others do not.

"We've been able to produce a coating with a high gloss, so we eliminated the need for a smelly urethane to give it more shine," says Tonino Zaccagnini, director of operations for EpoxyMaster, which manufactures more than 20 premixed custom-colored epoxy kits in the metallic category. "What was once viewed only in exotic car paints now can be achieved in exotic floors. It takes epoxy flooring beyond the normal."

Thanks to metallics' consistency and controllable attributes, says Matthew Newman, president of Versatile Building Products, "the concrete substrate is no longer the determining factor of the end color achieved. With metallics, you can get the same results, the same color (regardless of where you are). I so wish metallics were available when I was acid staining." It's also a much more environmentally friendly product, with little to zero VOCs, he adds.

CHOICES AROUND

There are dozens of metallic-type products on the market today you can use

A Guide to Metallic Coatings and Colorants for Concrete

These metallic coatings and additives add color and visual flair to concrete surfaces. More are introduced every year.

AlpenGlow metallic pigments from HP Spartacote

Introduced in 2012
www.hpspartacote.com/products

Aurora Epoxy Dust Concentrate from McKinnon Materials

Introduced in March 2011
www.mckinnonmaterials.com

Key Luster Metallic epoxy system from Key Resin Co.

Introduced in 2005
www.keyresin.com/products/luster-metallic-systems.html



Lava Flow metallic pigment from Versatile Building Products

Introduced in 2008
www.garagecoatings.com
Project: Restroom at Club Lido in South Gate, Calif.
Color: Arctic Pearl
Applicator: Garage Experts of Orange County



Lumière Metallic Epoxy Flooring System from Düraamen

Introduced in 2010
www.duraamen.com/products/metallic-epoxy-flooring
Project: Head Injury Association in Hauppauge, N.Y.
Color: A custom blend called Galaxy Blue
Applicator: Fernando Franco, Garage & Beyond, Englewood, N.J.

Liquid Dazzle epoxy floor coating system from Westcoat

Introduced in January 2008
www.westcoat.com/liquid-dazzle-p-19.html

Metal Fusion from Concrete Solutions

Introduced in 2010
www.concretesolutions.com

Metal FX pigments from Increte

Introduced in January 2012
www.increte.com



Metallics by Bob Harris line from Decorative Concrete Institute

Introduced in 2012
www.decorativeconcreteinstitute.com



Desserts menu of systems from FLOORChef

Introduced to U.S. market in January 2012
www.floorchef.com
Project: Candy store, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia
System and color: Candy Swirl system in Pewter
Applicator: Peter Schamburg, FLOORChef



Metallic Pearl Effect epoxy floor coating kits from EpoxyMaster

Introduced in 2011
www.epoxymaster.com
Project: 100-year-old residential kitchen in Michigan
Color: Apple Green
Applicator: EpoxyMaster Floor Coatings



Pearlescent Metallic system from Citadel Polyurea

Introduced in June 2011
www.CitadelFloors.com

Project: 2,000-square-foot hair salon in Laval, Quebec
Colors: Tahitian Pearl with Copper Pot on top
Applicator: Erik Gravel, Zone Garage, Blainville, Quebec



Pro Series Metal Essence Metallics pigments from Cohills

Introduced in August 2007
www.cohills.com

Project: Cohills Training Center, Phoenix, Ariz.
Colors: Quick Silver, Caribbean Blue, Autumn Blaze, Tuscan Sun, Galaxy Blue and Merlot
Applicator: Cohills staff

Reflector Enhancer epoxy flooring system from Elite Crete Systems

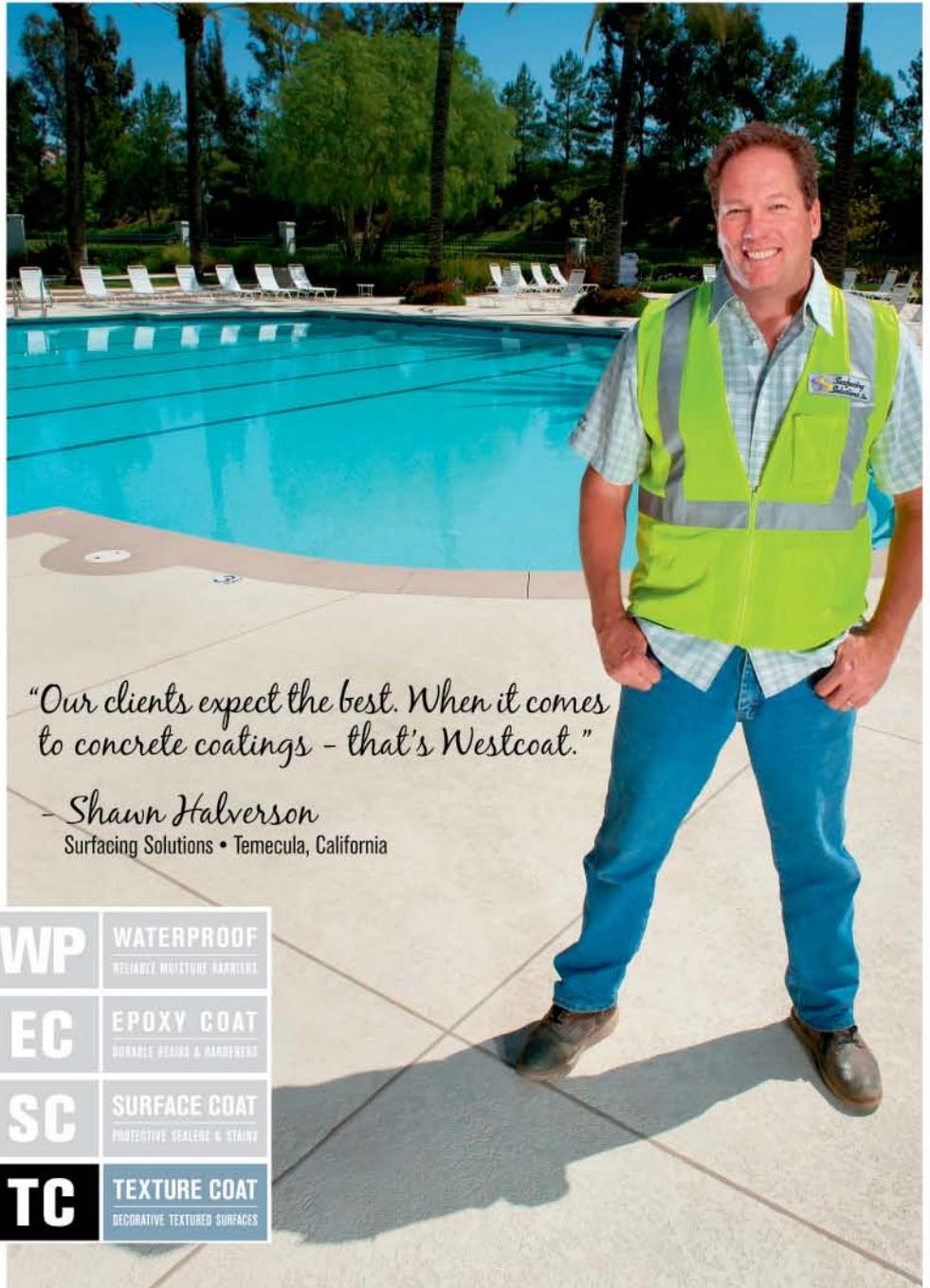
Introduced in 2007
www.elitecrete.com



The Concrete Protector Metallic Stain

Introduced in July 2010
www.metallicstains.com

Project: Basement, Toledo, Ohio
Color: Burnt Umber and Copper
Applicator: Lance Ferguson, Toledo Artistic Concrete Coatings, Toledo, Ohio



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- Shawn Halverson
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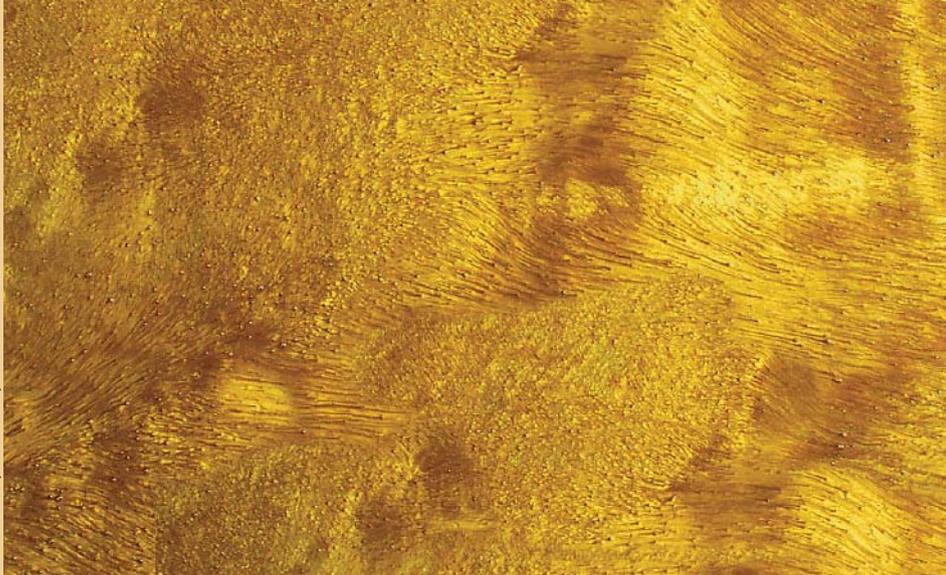
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A sample board for the Gold Leaf color of Metal FX from Increte Systems.

New Metallic Products Fuel the Trend

Several companies have added metallic pigment products to their lineup in the last year or so.

Just last April, HP Spartacote Inc. launched AlpenGlow, a metallic pigment consisting of synthetically produced aluminum platelets coated with metal oxides. Available in 12 brilliant colors, the pigments are designed to be added directly to the company's polyaspartic coatings as well as a number of commercial and decorative concrete coating systems. Ideal applications include showrooms, retail spaces and other high-end commercial floors that are subject daily to heavy traffic.

Other recent newcomers include Increte Systems, which added Metal FX to its lineup in January. The metallic-effect epoxy flooring system, which contains mica pigments, not metals, comes in nine distinct colors that can be mixed to form even more.

"Mica, unlike a metallic pigment, does not conduct electricity or contribute to potential static electricity," says marketing manager Bernie McGuire. He says this makes Metal FX a good choice for areas such as clean rooms and places with sensitive electronics. The coating is also viable for a wide variety of commercial and residential applications.

Pigments are premeasured and mixed with clear epoxy to produce an easy-to-apply, durable surface, McGuire says. For dramatic and unique results, he adds, applicators can apply two or more colors or spray the surface with denatured alcohol.

Also in January, FLOORChef LLC introduced products to the American market that feature 16 different flooring looks made with just one resin. Eight of these styles are marketed as the decorative Dessert line. The "Desserts" can be customized with shimmering metallic colors ranging from the bold patina-toned Envy to the more subtle

color-changing Pearl. There are six core colors from which 36 blended colors can be created.

"One of the distinguishable advantages of the FLOORChef systems is that they are reproducible decorative designs, not just someone's interpretation," says Daniel Cherrie, head FLOORChef for the United States. "When you specify Wicked Mousse on the East Coast, you can get the same design on the West Coast." The FLOORChef system may be an ideal choice for chains or companies that want to project the same look at multiple locations.

At the same time, at least one manufacturer has quietly withdrawn from the market.

"We don't sell metallics anymore," says George Reedy, national sales director for the Miracote division of Crossfield Products Corp. "It was more cost-effective for us and our installers to let those be outsourced and acquired elsewhere."

Back in early 2006, Miracote launched Chameleon Symphony, a product line that featured MiraFlor CQ Clear epoxy pigmented with metallics and other additives. "We manufactured the epoxy," Reedy says, "but purchased and resold the metallic pigments."

As the popularity of metallic floors blossomed, Reedy says more and more installers began buying the metallic pigments directly from other sources to save some money but continued to buy MiraFlor CQ.

So about two years ago, he says, it made good business sense to stop being the metallic middleman and simply concentrate on promoting the company's epoxy. "The most crucial component of any metallic floor coating isn't the metallic itself, but the quality and clarity of the epoxy resin used," Reedy says. "As the epoxy component accounts for roughly 97 percent of what is being applied to the floor, this is far more manageable and cost-effective for us as well."

to add color to clear epoxies, polyaspartics, polyurethanes and even acrylic sealers. Most of the products are primarily designed to be used with epoxies.

Some companies, such as McKinnon Materials, Increte and Elite Crete Systems, sell powdered pigments along with their epoxies as part of a kit. Others, like Cohills Building Specialties Inc., sell metallic pigment packets that can be added to your coating of choice. And still others — such as Westcoat, Key Resin, EpoxyMaster and Concrete Solutions — pre-mix the metallics into part of a two-component epoxy system.

Versatile Building Products, which has been manufacturing Lava Flow since 2008, recently switched from premixing pigment into an epoxy component to offering it as a color pack that can be purchased separately. "It gives the product a longer shelf life," says company president Newman, "and it allows us to better control inventory." Lava Flow, which requires a vapor-stop primer but not a topcoat, comes in 11 colors.

Koury notes Westcoat continues to premix Liquid Dazzle. "We developed a metallic process for our epoxy system and ended up with something better than we hoped for," he says. The company has even coined a term, "dynamic drift," to describe how the pigments swirl, flow and melt together.

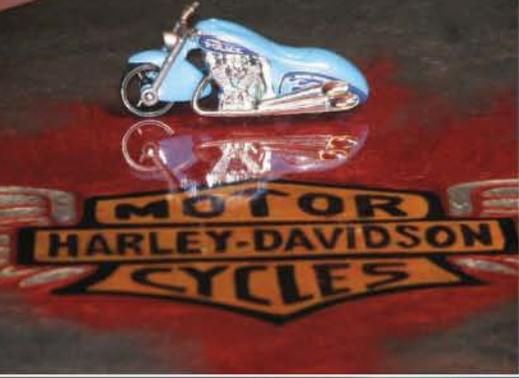
"You just have to be sure you pour Liquid Dazzle thick enough so the drift will occur while it's setting up," Koury says.

To produce Liquid Dazzle's 16 colors, the company uses "a broad mix of metallic pigments and liquid colorants," says DeBoer, and combines them in a controlled environment. "The biggest thing about Liquid Dazzle is its consistency. It takes some of the error out of the equation for the installer."

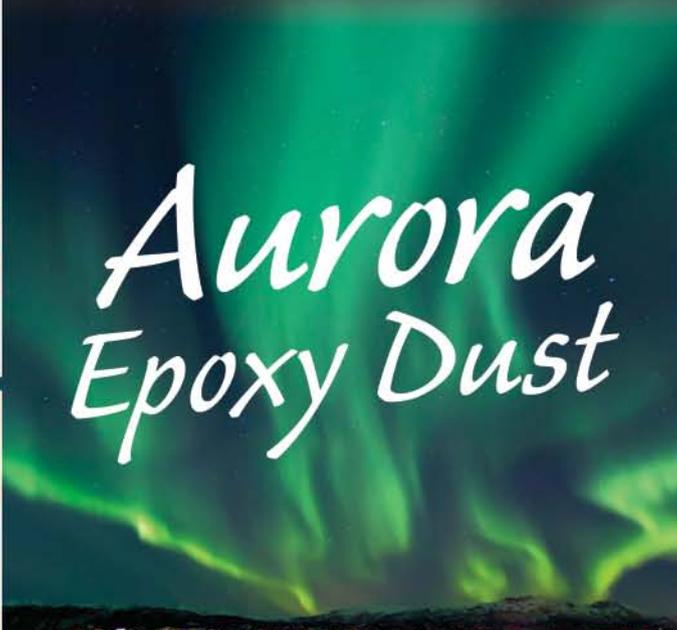
Elite Crete Systems, a leader in the metallics coating business since 2007, has always offered its Reflector Enhancer in a powder form. "We believe it offers greater versatility to the installer," says Mario Nicasio, in charge of market development and technical support. "You can use it in our epoxy or any of our clear sealers or industrial topcoats to get a different effect.

"Our product mottles automatically," he says. "It won't look the same 20 minutes after you first put it down because the floor continues to move without your spraying solvents or using air."

Elite Crete director of technical



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Left: Troy Lemon, Holland. Mich., teaches 2012 Concrete Decor Show attendees how to manipulate metallic epoxies with a tongue depressor. **Right:** Two of Lemon's works.

engineering and market development Ken Freestone notes that Reflector Enhancer colors achieve the dimensional effect in one of two ways — some are true metallic particles and some are multiple sizes of similarly colored nonmica particles.

Reflector Enhancer is usually used as an opaque in 100-percent solids epoxy, Nicasio says. "From a distance it looks like stained or polished concrete, but as you get closer you'll see 3-D mottling with metallic shimmers." To create a semitransparent look, you can apply

a pigmented epoxy base coat and cover that with a Reflector coat that has less of a load.

In waterborne epoxies, the look is usually more translucent because they are generally applied thinner. With a polyaspartic medium, Nicasio says, there's still mottling, but colors will separate differently as the coating begins to thicken, creating more of a reptilian-scale look in areas. Polyaspartics also offer superior chemical and abrasion resistance and is 100 percent UV stable. Still, he doesn't recommend using it outdoors as it's a nonbreathable coating. Instead, he suggests using Elite Crete's CSS Emulsion, which is an MMA-laced high-solids acrylic sealer.

Brett LaFevers, regional sales rep for Cohills Building Specialties — a company that offers a whopping assortment of 42 different colors—says you typically won't get as dramatic an effect with a polyaspartic coating as you will with 100 percent solids epoxy. But the upside is that a polyaspartic allows a floor to be put back into service much quicker.

The same holds true for the polyurea product introduced by Citadel Polyurea Coatings in June 2011.

Pearlescent Metallic solution, which the company boasts is "as strong as the metal it mimics," is reportedly 20 times stronger than epoxy. This product features iridescent powder tints combined with the company's single-component polyurea to produce marbled floor coatings with gleaming high-gloss finishes.

Unlike most other metallic-type coatings, which are only intended for indoor use, Pearlescent Metallic is UV-stable and can be used for outdoor projects as well. It claims a four-to-eight-hour walk-on time and a 24-hour return-to-service time, even with multiple layers.

MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES

While most metallic coatings on the market will produce a variegated look just by applying them, you can do a number of things to enhance their appearance. "They can be manipulated with air and denatured alcohol to give you a rippled and mottled effect," says Bart Sadleir, general manager for Concrete Solutions (part of Rhino Flooring Corp.), which makes Metal Fusion in 11 standard colors. All you need is a solvent-resistant pump-up sprayer and a

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Decorative Concrete Contractors Reveal Why They're Into Metallics

Troy Lemon, president of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete in Holland, Mich., has been using metallics for going on seven years. "I think it's on the upswing as more commercial operations are moving toward getting a little more glitzy," he says. He's also been working hard to bring the product to market, he notes, trying to show it off to two or three designers each time he goes on out-of-town business trips.

He's had more luck selling jobs to the commercial sector than the residential market. "I was having a harder time with high-end residential designers, but in the last couple of years I've been getting them to look at metallics as an up-and-coming thing. And we've done some pretty fun jobs," Lemon says, including putting metallics in an acrylic wax and applying it to a textured fireplace, where it gathered in the recesses.

One nice thing about a metallic coating, in contrast to acid stains or dyes, is its ability to fully cover cracks and other defects, regardless of their size. Lemon says he's also been using metallic pigments as accents in microtoppings to get certain shading and highlighting effects.

And although most people think a metallic finish has to be shiny or sparkling with a high sheen, it doesn't have to be that way. The end product can have a matte finish, Lemon says. "It definitely

changes the dynamics. You'll still totally see the metallic effect. It just won't be shiny." A lot of his clients prefer the matte look, he adds.

The opposite is true for Michael R. Jensen, CEO of Atlanta Concrete Artist in Georgia. He did his first metallic job several years ago when a client wanted a shiny, iridescent coloring that had the reflective quality of automotive paint. After researching the topic, he ended up using Reflector Enhancer from Elite Crete Systems, which was the only product he found at the time that met the client's criteria. "It was something people hadn't seen before," he says.

Before he knew it, he had several jobs lined up where clients wanted full, vibrant colors to trick out their garages. Although he's done a few basements and other concrete slabs, custom garage floors remain highest on his request list.

In the past year, he has completed a dozen metallic-looking floors in garages and basements in the greater Atlanta area.

Car enthusiasts request these metallic-type finishes because the vibrant colors mimic the shiny car paint they know and love, Jensen says. "They get the benefit of a hard-wear, sparkling surface that reflects their cars." Typical homeowners in his area are not requesting these finishes, he notes. "They want something more basic."

Jensen says he charges more for the metallic-



Photos courtesy of HP Spartacote

type finishes than he does acid stains or dyes because the floors tend to be more intricate. Many include a pattern, logo or some kind of unusual treatment.

"I think the coolest thing you can do is create a floor that looks 12 inches deep," Jensen says, adding he uses solvents to thin the material and employs various layering techniques. "The three-dimensional depth you can get from metallics is unlike any other."

Jensen says he layers different colors or different shades of the same color to create veining, marbling or interesting waves in the floor or to accent certain areas. "I also use an air compressor to push the material around to create a wave effect or crater look." For the craters, he adds, it's best to wait 20 to 30 minutes for the material to set up before you hit it with a blast of air.

Jensen, who has been working with iridescent-colored coatings for several years now, says he started out primarily using an epoxy as his carrier but now prefers a polyaspartic. "It's a much stronger material and you can get the same great-looking floor with much higher scratch resistance. Plus the drying time is so much faster and the client can use the floor the next day. I find the epoxies stay a little soft and you have to coat them with a urethane to protect the finish." Still, he adds, the choice really depends on the project.

The Atlanta contractor thinks that as more people learn about metallics as an alternative flooring choice, the residential sector of the market will grow. "Homeowners, builders and architects need to see more projects involving metallic surfaces. I don't think many know it's out there."

www.atlantaconcreteartist.com

www.cd-concrete.com

Mike Jensen, Atlanta Concrete Artist, Alpharetta, Ga., used AlpenGlow metallic pigments from HP Spartacote in this 10-car garage at a Sandy Springs, Ga., home.



cordless blower, he says.

“You also can add concrete dye mixed with acetone and fog that over the surface to achieve additional color variation,” he says. Or you can just stick with one color and use air or solvent to get different tones in the coloring.

According to Versatile Building Products company literature, using a looped paint roller or a notched trowel when first applying the product produces a more uniform appearance, while a pool trowel or metal squeegee leave a more mottled, flowing look.

After the coating has begun to set up, some companies recommend using a basic pump sprayer filled with a dispersing agent, which is usually denatured alcohol, to backspray the surface. A light spray will produce a more uniform pattern while a heavier dose will leave a pattern that looks more sporadic. Different solvents produce different results, but in general the larger the drops, the bigger the craters the solvent will form. If you don't like the look the backspray has made, you have 15 minutes or more where you can trowel or squeegee the



Photo courtesy of Concrete Solutions

James Johnson applied the Sterling color of Concrete Solutions' Metal Fusion to this office floor in Las Vegas.

surface and try again.

“Alcohol is just a weight that moves the metallic and creates the mottling effect,” says Newman.

Koury says Westcoat has developed a coloring system called Dazzle Effects that combines multiple colors of Liquid Dazzle — sometimes including Fast Stain,

the company's concrete dye, in the mix — so the colors swirl and drift into each other to form dynamic patterns. Although the company doesn't offer specific training classes on the technique, there are videos available on both Liquid Dazzle and Dazzle Effects, as well as informal training clinics in some locations. 📱

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FUNDAMENTALS OF BUSINESS

Seven Surefire Ways to Improve Your Sales

MAKING sales is arguably the most fundamental function of business. Maintaining an effective and relevant sales strategy is absolutely critical since it directly impacts your top-line (gross sales) growth more than any other function. Here are seven actions you can implement today to win more decorative concrete jobs and increase sales.



by Jacob Webb

Booming voices and fast speech may work for cleaning cloths and knives, but you're selling decorative concrete. It's a much more involved process than demonstrating how thin you can slice a tomato. Hiring a decorative concrete contractor is more expensive than buying the latest miracle kitchen cleaner. This can complicate things since the crummy economy has forced customers to be more concerned about the bottom line. Remember, there is a big difference between telling and selling. As the purchasing process becomes more involved, customers benefit more from consultative sales. They use fewer educated guesses and spend more time evaluating all

the consequences of a purchase.

Your product affects more people than just the property owner. They have to consider what store customers will think, how the homeowners' association will respond, how the finish will affect future decisions about property décor, if the kids will slip and fall, or even what the neighbors will say. There is a lot to consider, and presenting yourself as a consultant will help calm clients' purchase anxiety.

Customers need to trust you. They need to know you're on their side. Have a dialogue with them about your product. If your customer needs a decorative finish you can't provide, be upfront with them

1. Be a consultant, not a pitchman.

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about it. Be honest with them. Refer them to someone who can. This establishes trust that is critical for customers to hire any type of contractor.

2. Channel your inner plate spinner.

Consider the circus clown who spins plates on a stick. One plate. Two plates. Eventually he has six, eight, maybe 10 plates in the air. As he spins one plate, another one slows down. So he runs from plate to plate making sure the spinning doesn't stop. As he adds more plates, he's able to spend less time with each one. Eventually, there are too many plates to manage and they all come crashing down.

Reduce the number of opportunities you pursue. Otherwise, you'll spread yourself too thin.

So it goes with sales. Some believe the more prospects you slam into the sales pipeline, the more jobs you'll win. This isn't necessarily the case. Each customer must be managed differently and every minute you spend pursuing one customer is time you can't spend with another. Reduce the number of opportunities you pursue. Otherwise, you'll spread yourself too thin to give your customers the attention they need and eventually, you'll lose them like the overzealous plate spinner.

3. Increase the average dollar value of each job. It takes just about as much effort

to win a 500-square-foot job as it does to win a 5,000-square-foot job. Sometimes, it takes more effort. The more revenue you book on each opportunity, the more money you'll make overall.

4. Increase the percentage of time you spend selling. Just as your propensity to catch a fish is directly proportionate to the amount of time your line is in the water, your likelihood of winning jobs is directly proportionate to the amount of time you spend selling. Prioritize your time and maintain a healthy balance between selling and all your other duties at your business.

5. Utilize the right technology.

Computers. Tablets. Smartphones. There is a lot of technology and keeping up with it all can be a full-time job. Not all technology can be advantageous for decorative concrete contractors. I mean, when was the last time you used videoconferencing to sell your customers on a job-site sample? Some technology, however, has proven to be very useful for decorative contractors — necessary even.

For example, "tablet" computers such as the iPad have emerged over the past few years as a popular and useful tool for decorative contractors. They serve as a high-tech brag book. Portable and lightweight, they can be used to easily show your customers high-resolution images of your project portfolio. They are also a relatively convenient medium for communicating with suppliers, customers and employees while on the job.

6. Respect the gatekeepers, but focus on the decision-makers. Picture this: You call a prospective commercial customer about restoring their concrete. The receptionist picks up the phone. She asks who you are and why you're calling. She may or may not mention who the property manager is, but she definitely says he's not available. You leave a message. No one calls back.

Sound familiar?

It's easy to call any gatekeeper a Cerebus but respecting them will get you much further, because they can be influencers. Gatekeepers usually have a working relationship with the decision-maker. And if you leave a positive impression with them they are more likely to be an advocate if the decision-maker asks them for advice. Believe me, you don't want the receptionist telling the property manager you're difficult to work with. You won't get far.

Ultimately, you must develop a relationship with the decision-maker. This is usually the homemaker or property manager. Once you discover who this person is, stay in regular contact with them throughout the sales cycle.

7. Stay focused on your targeted customer niche. It's easy to get distracted by new opportunities. You may bid on a garage floor and notice your customer has a wood deck that needs to be restored. But it's better to focus on your core and refer noncore opportunities to other contractors for a referral fee.

In his book "Crossing the Chasm," Geoffrey A. Moore explains how laser focus is necessary when targeting and pursuing your customer market. "The key to (winning) over pragmatist customers in advance of broader market acceptance is focusing an overabundance of support into a confined market niche," he states. "By simplifying the initial challenge, (decorative concrete contractors) can efficiently develop a solid base of references, collateral, and internal procedures and documentation by virtue of a restricted set of market variables."

For example, one of my Certified NewLook Installers has identified a substantial opportunity in staining precast retaining walls. As he gains more experience with this specific application, his skills increase. When he is presented with an opportunity to stain anything that is not within his targeted niche, he refers it so he can spend more time focusing on what he does best. 📱

Jacob Webb, MBA, is a small-business strategy consultant and co-founder and vice president of NewLook International Inc., where he is primarily responsible for business development, sales and marketing. Reach him at jacob@getnewlook.com.

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Sanding and Buffing Coatings on Cast Concrete Pieces

by Amy Johnson

CONCRETE tables and countertops are held to a higher standard of appearance, feel and performance than floors and walls. And the final element of the finished piece — the interface between the concrete and the customer — is the coating.

There is much debate about the benefits and drawbacks of various coatings used to color and seal countertops. Most people feel there is a trade-off between good chemical resistance and appearance. A high-performance protective coating is often too shiny for many tastes. And to add insult to injury, any coating is vulnerable to contamination from particles that settle into it before cure is complete, so that when the customer runs a hand over the piece, he or she feels tiny imperfections and rough spots. While this is particularly common on countertops installed on a busy job site, it can happen even under controlled studio conditions.

But there is a way to improve the look and feel of high-performance coatings while making them more scratch-resistant. With some extra time and elbow grease, epoxies, polyaspartics and polyureas can be sanded and buffed to a rich, satiny sheen with a glass-smooth finish.

Here is how some concrete artisans are doing it.

Coating prep and application

The first step is to keep as many impurities out of the coating as possible. “Clean the piece again and again before coating it,” instructs Rick Ogden, Rick Ogden Construction, Pryor, Okla. “The fewer impurities, the easier the sanding and buffing process.” Then apply two coats of the selected coating, following manufacturers’ directions for how quickly the second coat can be applied. The coating should be completely cured for 72 hours before sanding. Ogden recommends at least 12 mils. Polyaspartics cure more quickly



Photo courtesy of The Stamp Store

When this sealed tabletop was displayed at an art show, visitors could hardly keep their hands off it! Sanding and buffing gave the top a soft feel with no scratchy, rough spots or bumps.

and can be sanded the day after application, but they are thin-film, so contractors should avoid oversanding.

Sanding

This is where the elbow grease comes in. To eliminate the nubs and bumps, the piece is wet-sanded by hand. Frank Wise, Custom Design USA Inc., Oklahoma City, compares this step to wet-sanding the paint on a car. He starts with 200-grit sandpaper and works up to 1,000 grit. Ogden starts with 1,000 grit if the surface has quite a few impurities and finishes up with as fine as 2,500 grit. Wetting the surface makes the process easier and the surface smoother.

Buffing

Once the surface has been sanded

smooth, the coating is buffed using a commercial variable-speed buffer. Start buffing with a more-aggressive buffing compound and a higher-grit buffing pad, and work down through medium and fine-grit polishing pads. Ogden recommends using wool pads over foam and using the compound liberally.

While the process feels similar to buffing paint, there is little risk of going too far and buffing all the way through the coating, as can happen with paint. Also, more pressure must be applied than when buffing paint, in order to remove all the sanding marks.

After buffing with each grit, wipe the piece clean with a damp cotton cloth. Repeat the process until this cleaning step reveals that the desired finish has been accomplished.

Sanding and buffing give a piece a softer-looking finish and keep scratches from showing.

Challenges

The biggest downside to sanding and buffing is the extra time it adds to the process and the cost to the customer that results. There is no way to sugarcoat this, but clear communication from the beginning will set a cost expectation and demonstrate the benefits.

The best way to communicate is with samples that the customer can see and touch. "One selling point is the feel of the product," Ogden says. "It has the feel of old marble. Customers who really want something unique and are already convinced of the worth of a one-of-a-kind concrete table or counter are most likely to appreciate the value added by sanding and buffing."

Why do it?

The main reason is appearance. "It's gorgeous," says Doug Bannister, owner of The Stamp Store, Oklahoma City. "What you're doing is taking the shine away and then putting a degree of shine back. It has a wonderful glow." For the customer this is a better-looking result. For the contractor, it is a competitive advantage. "I just wanted to make my work look different — and nicer — than everybody else's," says Frank Wise.

Performance coatings such as epoxies and polyaspartics tend to have a high sheen. Some people don't like the shiny look. And any scratches in the high-gloss coating are immediately visible. Sanding and buffing give a piece a softer-looking finish and keep scratches from showing. Bannister suggests that the heat generated during buffing actually improves the scratch resistance of the coatings.

Another reason is the feel. Sanding and buffing give the surface

a nice "hand-feel" comparable to natural stone. Bannister recalls taking two tabletops to an art show. Visitors repeatedly ran their fingers over the buffed and sanded piece, but not the other.

Finally, the look of concrete surfaces that have been sanded and buffed can be restored by repeating the process after years of wear. If the coating gets scratched or dull, wet-sanding and buffing it again restores the soft luster.

The story Rick Ogden tells about how he got started sanding and buffing illustrates both the process and the end result. He says: "I made a coffee table for a man, and even though it was a very beautiful table, it had one little impurity in it that you felt every time you passed your hand over the table. I just could not sell it like that. So I decided to sand it out and see if I could buff the table back to some sort of luster that would be acceptable. Not only was I able to do it, the overall feeling and look of the table was improved immensely. Now I sand and buff everything I do and the results are always worth it." 



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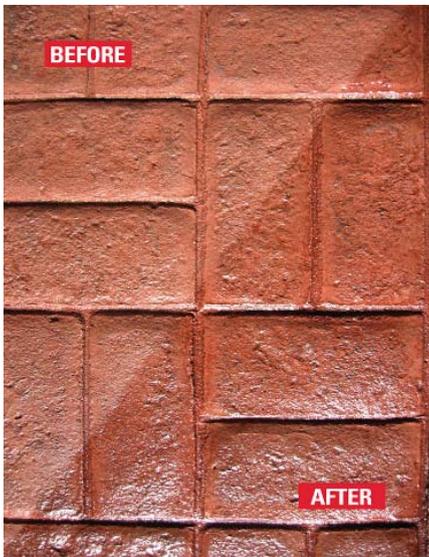
PRODUCT NEWS

Versatile offers new Vapor Stop color

Versatile Building Products' 4150 Vapor Stop is now available in Baja Beige.

4150 Vapor Stop epoxy is a pigmented two-part epoxy primer and sealer designed to reduce moisture vapor emissions from concrete to acceptable levels for moisture- and vapor-sensitive floor systems and coatings. Vapor Stop is also used for the chip coat in epoxy floor systems that use vinyl chips. The system is applied easily by roller or squeegee.

www.garagecoatings.com



New treatment restores high gloss to weathered decorative concrete

ChemMasters Inc. has introduced a new product to restore the original gloss, luster and beauty to weathered decorative concrete sealers. Gloss Restorer SRT chemically alters dull sealers to provide long-term protection from water and salt, as well as offer spectacular cosmetic improvements. Its patented Ultra Perm film formation allows for multiple applications without fear of blushing or whitening.

Gloss Restorer SRT is not a traditional sealer. It is intended to be applied over existing sealers that have been dulled due to weathering and UV exposure. It is neither a polish nor a temporary wax. Rather, it bonds to and chemically alters a

concrete sealer to improve its gloss without compromising the coating's permeability.

Gloss Restorer SRT minimizes the problems often associated with the use of traditional acrylic concrete sealers. Its environmentally friendly and user-safe formula bonds more tightly to existing sealers than does reapplied traditional water-based sealer. It applies easily, requires no special respiratory equipment and can be used indoors or out.

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www.chemmasters.net

Ardex updates iPhone app

Ardex Americas has enhanced its iPhone app by adding the Henry and Pandomo lines and Ardex Polished Concrete to the app's capability. This update also includes a visual redesign.

In addition to detailed product descriptions, the free app features a user-friendly calculator that installers, distributors, architects and engineers can use to estimate the amount of Ardex product required to cover a job area. 

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EXPERIENCE ★ TECHNOLOGY ★ INTEGRITY

The Cheng Concrete 2012 Circle of Distinction Winners

CHENG Concrete has announced the winners of its 2012 Circle of Distinction Design Challenge, honoring design and craftsmanship in cast decorative concrete created by members of the Cheng Concrete Exchange.

Judges for the 2012 Circle of Distinction Design Challenge were: Fu-Tung Cheng, founder of Cheng Design, Cheng Concrete and ConcreteExchange.com; Jim Peterson, founder of ConcreteNetwork.com; and Miranda Jones, style editor of Sunset magazine. Entries were judged on elements and principles of design, design planning, innovative concepts and forward thinking, creativity and innovation, use of color, presentation, innovative forming techniques, and client problem-solving.

The judging panel looked at 104 entries and awarded a Best of Category in nine categories, plus 19 Honorable Mentions and one Best of Show. The co-presidents of Cheng Concrete awarded two Presidents' Awards for entries of special merit. A new category this year focused on entries made using Cheng's D-FRC (decorative fiber-reinforced concrete) or GFRC (glass fiber-reinforced concrete).

The Best of Show award went to Cody Carpenter of Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz., for the Timo bar, a Phoenix commercial restaurant project for which Carpenter acted as general



Photo courtesy of Cheng Concrete

Best of Show: Cody Carpenter, Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz.

contractor, designer and fabricator. Using a form made of finish-grade plywood veneered with high-gloss laminate, Carpenter cast in place to develop a sense of visual movement by creating varied color

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PRODUCT NEWS

Cheng releases mix package for outdoor casting

Cheng Concrete has debuted Cheng Outdoor Concrete Pro-Formula, the newest in its family of additive blends for concrete.

Noted artisan Fu-Tung Cheng developed Cheng Outdoor Concrete Pro-Formula for his own award-winning design projects, blending crack-prevention fibers, freeze-thaw additives, and finest-grade, fade-resistant color pigments that do not wash away when exposed to exterior conditions.

An Outdoor Pro-Formula package added to locally sourced bagged concrete mix and water will yield workable material. Concrete that contains the mix will resist cracking and breaking away from the surface, and it will expand and contract with temperature fluctuations.

The package is available in six colors — Charcoal, Sand, Saddle, Stone, Amber and Platinum — as well as Base.

www.concreteexchange.com

GEM Orbital Sander eliminates swirl marks

The GEM Orbital Sander features an 11-inch drive pad and 100-percent orbital action that eliminates the possibility of swirl marks, leaving a consistent and uniform finish. There is no need to apply pressure when sanding as the 18-pound weight of the machine does the work. The sander can come with a dust shroud attachment.

www.gem-industries.com

striations in the monolithic piece. The bar features a hammered foot rail set into the concrete wall and a removable pewter bar-top shot rail suspended on inlaid steel pins.

Cheng praised the winner in a news release: “We appreciated the massive and complex form building it took to create this site-cast work in a restaurant. From the compound corner that looks like a reverse wave to the exquisite detail of the wrought iron bar, and (from) the contrast between the slick surfaces and the delicate inlays to the grout finish — bold and ambitious, this was a clear winner.”

The two Presidents’ Awards were chosen by the co-presidents of Cheng Concrete, Annalyn Chargualaf-Peluso and Mike Heidebrink. Chargualaf-Peluso chose a concrete, steel and glass cabinet created by Paul Wood, of Made by Wood, New York, N.Y., for a computer design firm. Heidebrink’s award goes to Michael Pasquale, of Pasquale Construction, Yuba City, Calif., for a concrete shower.

Here’s the complete list of the winners:

Best of Show: Cody Carpenter, Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz.

Presidents’ Awards: Michael Pasquale, Pasquale Construction, Yuba City, Calif., and Paul Wood, Made by Wood, New York, N.Y.

Best Outdoor Living: Dania Andrade, Ancuba, Rosarito, Mexico

Best Bath: Cody Carpenter, Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz.

Best Integral Sink: Cody Carpenter, Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz.

Best Furniture: Yves St. Hilaire, Sticks + Stones Furniture, Squamish, British Columbia

Best Fireplace: Cody Carpenter, Architectural Concrete Interiors LLC, Phoenix, Ariz.

Best Commercial/Retail: Sean Dunston, Concrete Jungle Design, Singapore

Best Sculpture: Caio Paagman, Concrete Gallery Design, Invermere, British Columbia

Best Interior Kitchen: Yves St. Hilaire, Sticks + Stones Furniture, Squamish, British Columbia

Best D-FRC/GFRC: John Newbold, Newbold Stone, Austin, Texas

To see photos of all the winners, visit the Cheng Concrete Exchange website at www.concreteexchange.com/2012-winners.html, or read our award announcement on the Online Exclusives blog at ConcreteDecor.net.

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PROJECT PROFILE

Museum of Art/Fort Lauderdale Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

by Amy Johnson

THE Museum of Art/Fort Lauderdale likes to say “there is always something new and different at the Museum,” but until recently, that claim did not apply to the building’s exterior. The faded concrete pavers in the Museum’s entry plaza were worn and tired-looking — they didn’t create an inviting first impression of the high-energy, dynamic, creative space inside.

When Nova Southeastern University acquired the Museum of Art in 2010, they wanted to revamp the look. They asked their long-time master planning firm, EDSA, to help. The first phase was to rebuild the second-story terrace as a welcoming public place suitable for all kinds of functions. This lovely new terrace overlooked the old plaza, which EDSA associate Andrew Ferrara described as “a pink paver pad with dying palms.” It was time to begin Phase Two.

The plaza had potential to be so much more than it was, and Museum management was committed to reaching that potential. They had several goals. One was to create a strong pedestrian environment. Another was to make the entrance, recessed under a breezeway, accessible and ADA-compliant. A third was to create a welcoming space that drew people in to the recessed entrance. But equally important, especially to the

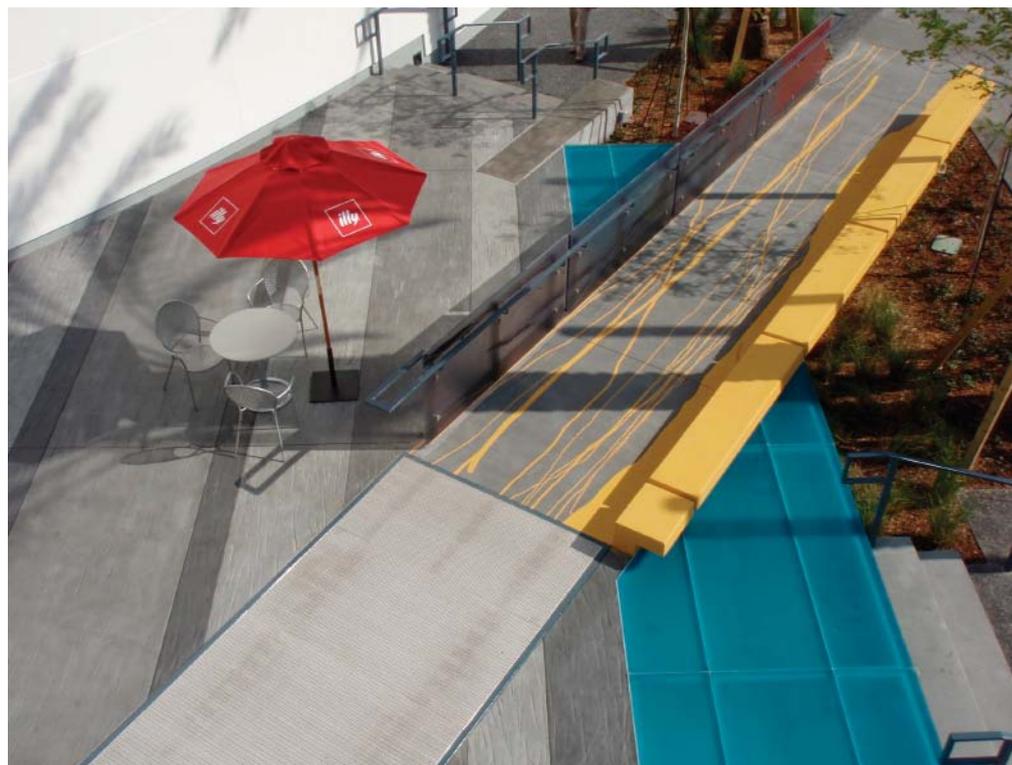


Photo courtesy of L. M. Scofield Co.

donors who helped fund the project, was to expand their mission of bringing art to the community. To that end, they commissioned an artist, Margi Glavovic Nothard, to turn the outdoor area into a piece of art.

Nothard and EDSA were convinced that concrete was an excellent medium to achieve all these goals. Technically it was an obvious choice for an accessible pedestrian area. Artistically, it gave Nothard the means to bring the Museum’s art experience outdoors. Concrete is a material that could be shaped, colored and textured to fulfill her vision of evoking the Florida landscape in a durable urban environment.

The EDSA team, led by partner Kona Gray, acted as liaison between the Museum staff, its board and the university. They

worked to put the artist’s concepts into the construction documents and served as owners’ rep to the general contractor, Stiles Construction. In turn, Stiles engaged

Project at a Glance

Client: Museum of Art/Fort Lauderdale (MOAFL), Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Concrete Contractor: Homestead Paving, Homestead, Fla.

General Contractor: Stiles Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Master Planners and Landscape Architects: EDSA Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Collaborative Artist: Margi Glavovic Nothard

Products Used: L. M. Scofield Co.’s Scofield Texturetop Stamp Grade System in Caution Yellow, Chromix Admixtures for Color-Conditioned Concrete in Charcoal, French Gray and Caution Yellow



Photo courtesy of Homestead Paving

Homestead Paving, a South Florida concrete contractor with whom they had already completed several successful projects. Homestead entered into the artistic give-and-take early, making suggestions and keeping an eye on the budget.

One idea that became central to the look was to cut saw grass from the Everglades and imprint the concrete in alternating and intersecting bands of yellow and grays, bringing a taste of Florida's unique natural environment into the city and harmonizing the hardscape with EDSA's landscape. The concrete was integrally colored using L. M. Scofield's Chromix Admixtures for Color-Conditioned Concrete in Charcoal, French Gray and Caution Yellow. Some bands were seeded with black granite and sandblasted to expose this dark, shimmery aggregate.

Nothard's concept also included bright "strings" to create energy and movement. Homestead Paving executed this idea by creating a stencil of Nothard's design. They used it to perform a deep sandblast and then filled in the area with Scofield Texturetop Stamp Grade in Caution Yellow.

A bright yellow concrete bench completes that section. The result is a dynamic, dimensional space full of energy and movement, but level and smooth enough for everyone to access and enjoy it.

While the color of the bench is unusual, the construction is simply good concrete work. Homestead Paving owner Michael Rhodes explained that it was poured using normal smooth-faced wood forms. "You just have to make sure you have the appropriate release so the wood doesn't leach into the colored concrete," he says.

The whole project won the grand prize in the Scofield 2011 Decorative Concrete Awards competition.

The finished plaza could hardly look more different from the one it replaced. Now there is not a pink paver in sight. Instead the courtyard is alive with shape, color, and texture, inviting passersby to experience the art they are working through. "People are curious," Nothard says. "This entry, with lots of color, lights and concrete, draws you in to look at it." 

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PRODUCT NEWS

Allen introduces roller screed

Allen Engineering has introduced the RS844 Rollerscreed. The RS844 is a ride-on steerable roller screed powered by a 44-horsepower Kubota Turbo Diesel engine. The 8-inch diameter paving tube provides 25 percent more surface contact to the concrete than other roller screeds, and it is available in widths of 14 feet to 34 feet with working widths of 12 feet to 32 feet.

www.alleneng.com

A trolley system for roller screeds

Lura Enterprises has introduced the Trolley System, a new accessory designed for Lura's Lightning Strike Concrete Roller Scream.

The Trolley System runs across pipes as large as 2 1/2 inches in diameter to help a roller screed easily maneuver across a pour. The frame body is supported by eight concave rollers capable of carrying as much as a metric ton each.



The Trolley System works well in projects such as radius pours, parapet walls, and those with obstructions such as rebar. It features three adjustment points — one at each end and a third at the center CV joint — as it extends to cover pours as wide as 38 feet. If needed, additional articulation points can be added.

The Trolley System becomes operational within about four hours and with the efforts of only two people.

[\(701\) 281-8989](tel:7012818989)

www.luraconcretescreed.com

Allen introduces HDX 750 Riding Trowel

The Allen HDX 750 from Allen Engineering is a new hydraulic-powered riding trowel.

Standard features include a 74-horsepower Kubota turbo-diesel engine, 60-inch diameter six-bladed rotors, a powered spray system for applying retardant, easy steering and blade pitch controls, and multiple design considerations for operator comfort.

www.alleneng.com

New mixer and wheelbarrow mixer stand from Benner-Nawman

Benner-Nawman has developed a wheelbarrow mixer stand.

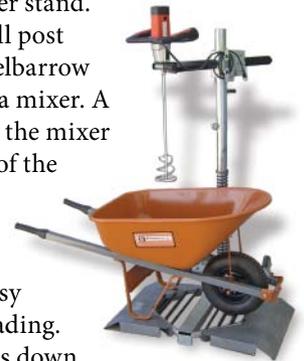
It features a tall post that allows a wheelbarrow to fit underneath a mixer. A pivot arm enables the mixer to reach all areas of the wheelbarrow.

Two ramps on the mixer stand allow for easy loading and unloading.

The stand folds down for storage and includes casters for easily moving it from job site to job site.

Benner-Nawman is also offering a new hand-held power mixer. The BNR6400 offers 1,800 watts of power and a variable speed adjustment with a lock-on feature. It includes a 1/2-inch chuck and a 2-inch by 6 1/2-inch general-purpose mixing paddle.

www.bnproducts.com



Terrazzo mix designs from SureCrete

SureCrete Design has announced a full line of 10 terrazzo concrete designs utilizing the company's Xtreme Series Terrazzo Mix.

This early-high-strength cementitious casting product allows for a 150 percent load of recycled aggregates. Each terrazzo color design utilizes post-consumer and post-industrial materials, delivering multiple LEED points.

www.surecretedesign.com

PRODUCT SHOWCASE



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PROJECT PROFILE

Polished Walls at The Shops at Willow Lawn Richmond, Va.

by Jeremy R. Wilkerson, with Ray Wilkerson

OUR team at DreamKrete, the concrete floor polishing and decorative staining division of Mid Atlantic Floor Care LLC, based in Richmond, Va., recently completed our most unique and challenging project to date.

In January and February 2012, we were involved in preparing specifications, implementation and performance of a high-visibility job: nearly 1,600 square feet of poured-in-place concrete vertical walls for the remodel of the former Willow Lawn Shopping Center on the west end of Broad Street in Richmond.

The polished walls are an integral element of the outdoor park, children's recreation and entertainment area at The Shops at Willow Lawn. They're part of the overall renovation of the 50-plus-year-old shopping center.

DreamKrete, a trademarked division of MAFC, has been in the residential and light-commercial polished and decorative concrete business since December 2009. My parents have been in the commercial floor-cleaning and exotic floors (marble, granite,



Photos courtesy of Mid Atlantic Floor Care LLC

Project at a Glance

Client: The Shops at Willow Lawn, Richmond, Va.

Decorative Concrete Contractor: DreamKrete, Richmond, Va.

General Contractor: Eilerson Development Corp., dba EDC, Richmond, Va.

Scope of Work: Polishing about 1,600 square feet of poured-in-place concrete vertical walls for the remodel of Willow Lawn Shopping Center in Richmond

Equipment Used: Makita 5-inch industrial variable-speed grinders, Intertool DS301 planetary polisher

Tools: HTC Edge Pro Metal Bonds in 30 grit, 60 grit and 120 grit; HTC EZ Grind Resin Bonds in 100 grit, 200 grit and 400 grit, HTC Fenix Resin Bond Pads in 800 grit, 1,500 grit and 3,000 grit

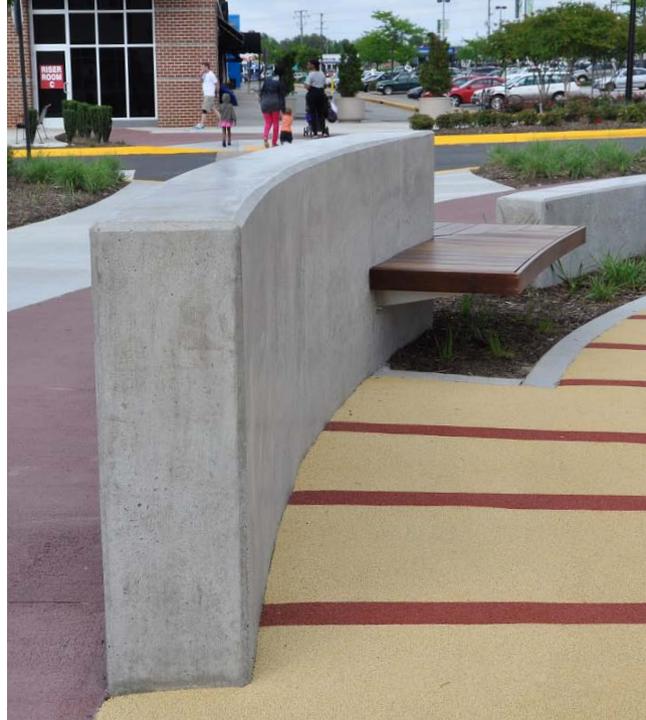
terrazzo, etc.) restoration business for both commercial and residential customers for the past 15 years. We have seen the transitions of floor cleaning over the years and the movement towards more efficient and cost-effective floor systems.

Also, consumers, both commercial and residential, have become more aware of ecofriendly requirements for floor coverings.

As we recognized the trends in the markets, it was a natural progression for us to identify the future direction of our services to customers by developing our expertise in the concrete industry.

We purchased our first HTC 500 concrete grinding system, complete with vacuum and separator, in December 2009. MAFC also became an authorized installation contractor for HTC concrete floor systems. Because of our years of excellent service reputation





and our contacts, we immediately began obtaining contracts for decorative and polished concrete.

Planning and pouring

The challenges of the Willow Lawn project were many and very unique. As one of the original shopping centers in the west end of fashionable suburban Richmond, it had undergone the transformation over

the years from strip-center to enclosed mall. Now the conversion back to its outdoor roots, following the current trend of “lifestyle centers,” required significant demolition and rebuilding.

The idea for the polished walls actually came from the architectural plans. Eilerson Development Corp., dba EDC, the Richmond-based general contractor for the project, specializes in new and renovated

commercial projects throughout the East Coast and has completed projects similar to the Willow Lawn Shopping Center. Never before had they encountered polished vertical concrete walls. Since we had worked with them on “horizontal” concrete polishing projects (floors), they contacted us to submit a bid in July 2011 and to provide them with specifications, recommendations and logistics, such as power demands.

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to finish the walls to polish, and our early communication of this assisted in the final polished appearance. The grinding of the edges and corners to create a more rounded look was not in the original architects' specifications — we suggested this to give the edges a smoother look and feel, both literally and figuratively. We also predicted that this would prevent breaking or chipping over the life of the walls. This idea was well-received by the property owners and EDC after they saw the sample edges we completed.

We did not use any dyes or stains. The concrete is a basic gray in coloration. Any hints of coloration in the photos are actually reflections that are coming from other objects, such as flowers, benches or swings nearby, or sunlight effects. We did not add any special aggregate, but in our specifications we always advise clients that "polishing may produce some aggregate exposure — it is to be expected but the amount and extent cannot be predicted or controlled by us."

Not being experts in the takeoff of plans considering elevations and landscaped grades, we relied on the assistance of EDC project manager Christopher Simone for calculating the actual square footage of the polished areas. This required calculating the square footage of the fronts and backs of the exposed areas as well as the linear footage of the 12-inch-wide exposed sides and tops to be polished. We provided specifications on recommended cure times and preferred psi for achieving best polished results.

On many occasions, our work had to be coordinated around other subcontractors working in the same space, so cooperative efforts were a must.

In this outdoors construction project, weather was always going to be a factor. Considering the sensitive nature of the walls, precautions for polishing under certain wet or temperature conditions was critical to achieving desired results.

Construction is always about deadlines, so our communication and staffing levels kept the polishing on target for completion.

The other critical player in this performance was James River Concrete, the Richmond subcontractor responsible for forming and pouring the vertical walls in place. As we worked with JRC owner and operator Leslie Davis, the plans for this area were changed many times for variables such as drainage, parking lot requirements, sidewalks, and old footings from the many previous configurations of the shopping center itself. The Park was basically designed and poured by sight.

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Gravity and fatigue

Besides working outdoors, the temperature effect on the concrete walls, the rainy weather, the excavation, forming and pouring going on around us, the dust created from the grinding and all the other logistical factors, there were two other major factors that we had to take into account to ensure consistency and quality of our work — gravity and fatigue.

When we do hand grinding on floors, the weight of the grinders is working in a positive direction for the work being done. In this case, we had to work to maintain proper constant pressure of the grinders on the walls. Also, our body positions had to be held for long periods of time. At the end of each day, we were exhausted!

We also had to be safety-conscious, as we always are, regarding the grinding dust and the potential cuts and scratches that could occur from small pieces of concrete grindings. To get the results we got with hand grinders in January and February weather, standing or kneeling below grade in the footings, sometimes working in 6 inches of mud, with concrete being formed and poured all around us — we feel this was a testament to our expertise, resilience and professionalism. Trust me, this was not easy work!

The Park at Willow Lawn, as the area is now called, is a very visible and active center of activity, with children playing, shoppers resting and eating, and performers entertaining crowds with everything from music to magic shows. The area was designed to not only be functional but to also be aesthetically pleasing. The hard work that DreamKrete invested may go unnoticed by the shoppers, but the results of our work are enjoyed every day. We take pride in all our work, but we take special pride that thousands of people annually will get the benefit of our very unique accomplishment. 🚚

🌐 www.midatlanticfloorcare.com

Jeremy R. Wilkerson is president of Mid Atlantic Floor Care LLC, Richmond, Va., and director of sales and operations for DreamKrete, the company's polishing and decorative concrete division. He can be reached at jeremy@midatlanticfloorcare.com.

Ray Wilkerson is Jeremy's father. He describes himself as "re-tired — I was tired yesterday and tired again today."

Important Measurements for Ground and Polished Concrete

WHAT is ground and polished concrete?

How do we determine the difference between a topical-polished floor, in which a product has been applied to the floor to seal it, and a mechanical polish with bonded abrasives?



by Clark Branum

For several years it seemed that the term “polished concrete” was used indiscriminately. One of the bigger problems that arose was “how to specify a polished concrete finish.” An architect or designer could simply use the term and expect a result, but that result might not exactly match the design intent or the owner’s expectation.

How can a specification clearly state the overall criteria needed to reach an acceptable level? Combine key measurements with specific design benchmarks.

For example, the design criteria may include a level of cut or aggregate exposure, a specific color, and logos or other design elements. The key measurements should include properties for surface refinement such as:

- Gloss level (as discussed in ASTM D523)
- DOI (distinction of image, discussed in ASTM D4039)
- Abrasion resistance (discussed in ASTM C944)
- SCOF (slip coefficient of friction, discussed in ANSI B101)

Understand that a true ground and polished finish is achieved through a combination of mechanical grinding, honing and polishing, combined with chemical densification and treatments to



Clark Branum and Frank Benish polished this training-classroom floor at the Western Washington Masonry Trades training center in Seattle. The floor demonstrates high gloss and high clarity. The slip coefficient is 0.74.

produce a properly refined surface that is light-reflective, durable and easy to maintain. If we begin with the end in mind, the logical steps to completion make sense and are easy to follow.

Traveling as I do, I speak with polishing contractors all over the nation, and a common point of contention is how many steps people are taking on any given floor. Simply put, fewer steps equals lower cost. When estimating projects, we are finding large discrepancies in the bids because everyone is bidding something different. Specifiers need more education and understanding of the methods used to achieve a quality floor so they can weed out low-cost processes that will not produce a durable floor or surface.

The Concrete Polishing Association of America has put forth true definitions for polished surfaces that help clear the air here. Their definitions include:

- Bonded Abrasive Polish (a true ground and polished process)
- Burnished Polished Concrete
- Topical Polished Concrete

Each of these processes has a place in the industry, but only with a closer look can the specifiers see the true difference in durability and life-cycle costs associated with these floors.

One way to make specifications more clear is to add sections for the four key measurements listed earlier in this article. Each of these provides specific data that can be confirmed through testing, and they work with the design elements to produce a clear vision of the intended or desired result.

The measurements up close

The three most common or reliable measurements would be DOI (distinction of image), level of gloss (specular reflection),

Photo courtesy of Frank Benish

grinding & polishing

and slip coefficient of friction.

With **DOI**, we get a number that helps us quantify clarity in the surface or haze. Depending on the testing meter we use, we get a number from 1 to 10 that indicates how much clarity there is in the surface. A 10 would be perfect clarity (mirror) and 1 would be a hazy or cloudy finish.

The next measurement to look at is the **level of gloss**, indicating the specular reflection of the surface.

This is measured using a digital gloss meter, which measures the bounce of light at a 60-degree angle from the surface. Aggregate exposure will affect the gloss reading, but note that this test averages results together to deliver an overall number.

When specifying for haze or gloss, a range should always be given and not a specific number. Usually this will read low, medium or high gloss depending on the project requirements. The CPAA specifies four levels of cut (determining aggregate exposure) and four levels of gloss. Most manufacturers specify three levels of each for simplicity.

The third measurement to specify is the **slip coefficient of friction**. These numbers will vary depending on the surface being

tested and type of equipment used, but they generally provide the owner with results that describe the safety of the surface with regard to slip-and-fall conditions. ANSI B101 is the most commonly followed specification for this, but there's also ASTM C1028, which is a test method for determining coefficient of friction for any type of finished flooring.

When measuring, I have had good luck using the ASM-825 slip meter, which is a static pull meter from American Slip Meter Inc., but recently we're seeing the RSI BOT-3000 digital tribometer (dynamic slip co-efficient) being specified.

Some contractors own the required testing equipment, but most have a testing lab perform the tests for liability reasons. The BOT-3000 is a very expensive piece of equipment to own. However, a digital gloss meter is relatively inexpensive, ranging from \$600 to \$1,500.

Another nice unit to own is a combination unit that reads gloss and haze together. These cost slightly more but certainly give you good information. This unit can be useful to a contractor who wants to check his performance criteria as he is processing the floor. He can document his

own results even before the owner has any testing done.

In many cases the owner may not require any additional testing other than a slip coefficient test. When turning a polished concrete project over to the owner, it is good practice to include a turnover document that lists specified and actual key measurements of your job. This document can also help provide maintenance recommendations for the owner as well.

Understanding and performing key measurements is a great way to specify, produce and document high-quality ground and polished floors. If you're not already doing this for your customers, you should look into learning more about it so you can set yourself and your company apart from the others. It's also a great way to sell yourself and your process at the front end of a project. This sends the message to the project team that you're an educated and experienced company that produces high-quality floors. 🚧

Clark Branum is Ultraflor program manager for Diamatic USA and handles all of the training nationwide for Diamatic. He can be reached at clark.branum@diamaticusa.com.



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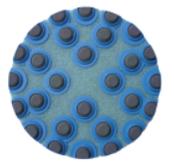
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PRODUCT NEWS

Grinding disks from Applied Diamond

Applied Diamond Tools is now offering three-inch Galaxy Diamond Floor Grinding Discs. The Galaxy Diamond Floor Grinding Discs are designed to remove coatings on concrete floors to prepare the floor for polishing. Galaxy design helps remove coatings more evenly and effectively. They are Velcro-backed and color coded, and come in grits of 30, 50 and 100.

www.toolocity.com

Grinding tool for extra-hard concrete

Superabrasive Inc. has just released a new grinding tool for extremely hard concrete. The new HCP bond tool — a single button in 30 grit on a trapezoid pad — presents a supersoft bond that breaks through the barriers of even the most stubborn concrete floors. Like all Superabrasive's QuickChange tools, the pads easily slide in and out of reusable plates, with no bolting required.

[\(800\) 987-8403](tel:8009878403)

www.superabrasive.com



Use grinding dust to fill pinholes

Prosoco's new Consolideck Grind-N-Fill uses the dust created while grinding concrete floors to fill pinholes, small voids and pop-outs, microcracks and other gaps in the surface with a very durable cementitious matrix.

Just spray Consolideck Grind-N-Fill on the concrete ahead of the grinder near or during the final stage of metal grinding. Low-odor, VOC-compliant Grind-N-Fill creates a monolithic surface that polishes faster, easier and more effectively.

With gaps, microcracks and imperfections filled, floors accept densifiers, protective treatments and stains more evenly. The treatment dries quickly and is suitable for any concrete floor undergoing grinding.

www.prosoco.com



Photo courtesy of Stephen Falls

Surface Koatings adds polishing line

Surface Koatings Inc. has introduced Aqualon, a new line of concrete densifiers and floor guards.

The line is made up of five products: Aqualon L-100, a lithium silicate concrete floor densifier, hardener and sealer; Aqualon LP-120, a lithium-potassium silicate concrete floor densifier, hardener and sealer; Aqualon S-400, a sodium silicate concrete floor densifier, hardener and sealer; Aqualon S-450, a water-based blend of 100 percent active sodium silicate and silicate polymers that penetrates the surface; and Aqualon Nano Guard, a copolymer blend of high-gloss sealer and high-performance lithium silicate densifier.

Aqualon materials utilize high-quality silicates and siliconates, and they are designed with the professional end user in mind.

www.surfacecoatings.com



Online store for polishing open for business

Polished Concrete Solutions is a new one-stop online shop offering abrasives, grinders, dyes, densifiers and guards for polished concrete and concrete countertop installers. All PCS products have been field-tested to ensure they are efficient, effective and low-cost to the consumer.

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membership program, which costs \$99 annually, provides customers exclusive access to ongoing discounts of 15-percent off all diamonds, color, chemicals and other consumables, and 5-percent off accessories and parts. Members will also be listed on the Find a Contractor section of PCS's website and will be enrolled in a Grinder Giveaway contest. The contest ends Feb. 7, 2013 and winners will be announced at the 2013 World of Concrete.

PCS also offers a free membership giving customers 5-percent off all consumables simply for creating an account through the site.

The company offers weekly promotions to subscribers and new products are being added regularly.

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Installers find it to be an easy dye to use. Following a quick stir, the mixture is ready to be applied to the concrete floor. There is no need to wait for the dye to sweat in. When using acetone in Super Dye, any kind of sealer can be used immediately after dyeing.

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Hollywood Plasterer Uses Overlays to Make Movie Sets

by *Natasha Chilingirian*

REMEMBER the ship from “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest”? Or the John Harvard statue that students gathered around during the hazing scene in “The Social Network”? What about the boat dock from the Hollywood version of “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”? Each one of those constructions was coated with the resurfacing and texturing product Bond-Kote, from Super-Krete International Inc., a concrete overlay manufacturer based in El Cajon, Calif.

Veteran studio plasterer Adam Barker worked on set pieces that appeared in each of the above movies, as well as set pieces for popular Hollywood movies such as “Three Kings,” “Erin Brockovich,” “Ocean’s Twelve,” “Ocean’s Thirteen” and “Transformers: Dark of the Moon.” A professional in the movie production industry since the mid-1990s, Barker witnessed the introduction of Bond-Kote, as well as Super-Krete’s microtopping product Micro-Bond, into the industry in the mid-2000s. Today, Barker says, the two Super-Krete products are the standard



The ship from the movie “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest” was coated with Super-Krete’s Bond-Kote.



Photos courtesy of Super-Krete International Inc.

industry choices for coating set pieces and floors in Hollywood, as they help plasterers create sturdy canvases for the finishing touches applied by painters and set dressers.

Growing up in Woodland Hills, Calif., a suburb of Los Angeles, Barker was surrounded by movie industry

professionals. But instead of following in their footsteps right away, he began a career as a high-end tile contractor. He only started working as a plaster foreman for the movies in his mid-30s. “A lot of people get into the movie industry because their parents were in it, but I’m a first-generation

movie industry professional who used to do something else,” Barker says.

Prior to working with Super-Krete products, Barker says he and fellow set constructors would coat floors and set pieces with thick materials such as sand and cement in 3/4-inch-thick layers, then hand them over to painters and set dressers. But the laborers longed for a product that would easily stick to any type of material from foam to resin to plywood, could be applied in a single, thin layer and wouldn't chip off. A colleague of Barker's took note of Super-Krete products on display at a trade show but was hesitant to introduce them into movie set projects. "In this industry, you don't want to be the first person to take a chance on a product before it's proved itself," Barker says.

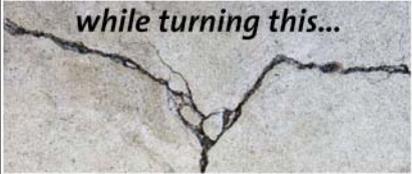
Once Super-Krete's products made their debut in the industry, no one looked back.

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Faux rock built for the movie "Cowboys & Aliens"

Photos courtesy of Adam Barker

to produce a smoother consistency. When the two products are used together, the result has a look and texture similar to granite, Barker says.

Barker recently used Bond-Kote mixed with Micro-Bond to transform a wooden stage floor on the set of the as-yet-untitled "Star Trek" sequel. He and other crew members covered the existing floor with sheets of felt to create a barrier, then coated the felt with the Super-Krete products. The products acted as a base coat to which they applied mounds of sand and USG

Structo-Lite Basecoat Plaster, creating a bumpy, gritty texture that portrayed how the eroded surface of another planet might look. After filming, the crew stripped off the dried resurfacing materials and felt pieces, revealing an undamaged wooden stage floor.

For "Cowboys & Aliens," Barker and other plasterers used two and three coats of Bond-Kote on set pieces that artists carved out of foam to look like cave walls, cave floors and a spaceship. He says the product passed the ultimate durability test on this particular set, as the cave pieces endured heavy foot and equipment traffic and the spaceship prop had to be transported several times.

"The caves in 'Cowboys & Aliens' had to be walked on, leaned on and run through, and there was a lot of dolly traffic," Barker says. "The spaceship had to travel to two locations, and because we used Bond-Kote, it didn't look like it had been beat up."

Super-Krete president Tracey Lackovich says Bond-Kote has the ability to stick to many types of surfaces, can be textured using various applicator tools, and creates a

base to which paint, stains and sealants can adhere. It's also odor- and chemical-free, which is a benefit for the other workers on set, she says.

Lackovich explains that set workers tested a number of products during the set production process for "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," the first film for which Super-Krete products were used, and ultimately picked the Super-Krete overlay for its flexibility and strength.

"They needed something that would coat an existing steel ship and resist the ocean water," she says. "The material also had to allow stunt people and actors to jump on and beat up the ship without damaging it."

Barker reveals that competition between various set constructors and artists can be intense, and plasterers must ensure their applications of Super-Krete products do not overshadow the work of the foam sculptors.

"The sculptors want to see their work, and with these products, we can create textures that showcase the foam carvings, but make the material look like it isn't foam," he says. "Then the painters and set dressers can come in after me. Super-Krete

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Tools of the Trade for a Hollywood Artisan

Aside from Super-Krete's Bond-Kote and Micro-Bond, here are the products and tools Adam Barker says are by his side at work:

- A hawk and trowel
- Stippling brushes, for adding texture
- A hopper gun, for spray-on applications
- USG Structo-Lite Basecoat Plaster, for adding texture and thickness over Super-Krete products
- Various sands and cements
- A high-quality razor knife
- A mixing drill and paddle
- A mud board and stand
- Squeegees



An overlay-surfaced spaceship on the set of "Cowboys & Aliens."

products are organic materials, and they work well with paint."

Barker's role in the production of a big-budget movie, while seemingly small in the grand scheme of things, is all about building backgrounds that appear true to life, he says.

"We're creating textures that translate over to the real world," he says. "We want to make the actors feel like they're there and then let them do their thing."

Barker currently has several new movie set projects in the works, but he's also keeping busy launching his online business,

L.T.D. Castings. For this new venture, he's using foam forms and Super-Krete products to make home and garden items such as hose pots, propane bottle covers and speakers that resemble rocks. He plans to sell these works to the public online. 🛒

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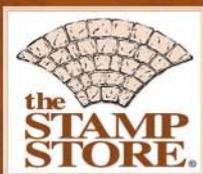
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Common Stain Callbacks and Solutions

No one wants or likes a callback. Getting it

right the first time around is the goal of every installer, no matter the job size or scope. But, as most of us in or around this industry

know all too well, there are always going to be problems, questions or concerns. We all live and work in an imperfect world, and no matter how many years you have been at it and how detail-oriented you are, there are just too many variables that exist in this line of work to avoid the occasional issue. Add in the artistic side of the business, and the



by Chris Sullivan

potential for unrealistic expectations and disagreement grows exponentially.

When you think about it, the relatively low percentage of callbacks and problems compared to the overall amount of work performed says a lot about the caliber of installers and the industry as a whole. But unfortunately there always will be problems, so it is better to be prepared and know how to deal with them once they do come knocking instead of standing there flat-footed with that deer-in-the-headlights look on your face. So, with that in mind, let's get specific and look at some common problems with stained and dyed concrete and the remedies to those problems. These are the most common complaints when dealing with concrete stains and dyes, based

on questions and emails I have received over the last 10 years.

The wrong color

Even though stained and dyed concrete is advertised as a flooring system with color variations and a marbled finish as part of the "beauty" that makes each project unique, the calls and emails still come in complaining about the wrong color. Often the final color is too dark or a shade to the left or right of what was desired. It's wrong enough to warrant the question, "What now?"

It all depends on if it has been sealed or not. If it has not been sealed, and there is any doubt that the color is wrong, don't seal it, or at a minimum, only seal a small

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area to see what it will look like. Depending on the type of sealer, type of stain, and the concrete, the color difference before and after sealing can be significant. I have seen acid-stained floors go from almost faint tan and gray before sealing to a brilliant, deep, rich brown after a solvent-based sealer was applied.

If sealing does not resolve the color issue, the fix involves either restaining or pulling stain out of the concrete. Restaining works best if you need to go darker or fill in light spots, but does not work very well when you're trying to lighten the overall color.

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If the desire is to lighten the color, the best results I have seen come from pulling some of the initial stain out of the concrete. By using the carrier on which the stain is based (water, acidic water, acetone, alcohol, etc.), you can usually pull some or all of the color back out. You may need to scrub or use a wet/dry vacuum to help get the color up and out of the floor.

In cases where the stain has a binder such as acrylic or epoxy, you may need to use a stripper to remove the initial coat. You may also be able to go right over the first coat with something if the final look is opaque.

If the floor was sealed and all parties agree that the color is not correct, your options are usually limited to stripping the sealer off to get access to the stain. In some cases, I have seen a tinted sealer used to help hide or mask stain issues. Keep in mind that this is not a good long-term solution, as color now resides in the sealer and will go away as the sealer wears.

Surface contamination

Stubborn stains, such as oil, wine or pet urine, that were not visible until after you stained or sealed your floor are another common issue. This one is pretty straightforward when it comes to corrective action. You need to be able to get at the stain to remove it. This requires the sealer to come off if it is present, and the use of the proper cleaning chemicals to affect the type of stain being removed.

A quick trick that I have found helpful is to spray the concrete with water prior to staining. While many stains are invisible when the concrete is dry, they can't hide when wet. The water test at last gives you a chance to treat any contamination before you have a stain or sealer applied.

Sealer failure

What should you do when the sealer starts to fail or wear off a stained surface? Depending on if the stain has been affected, the fix can be as simple as a soap-and-water wash, clean-water rinse, and reseat. If the stain has been damaged, restaining or touching up the area with tints or color washes may do the trick.

A trick I learned from a contractor years ago that works well in small spots is to use spray paint. Pick a color of paint that closely matches the stain color, hold the can about 12 inches to 24 inches off the floor and give the area a few quick sprays. The paint hides spots very nicely, and most spray paints bond very well to most surfaces — as graffiti artists have proven over the years. No matter the method you choose to repair the color, clean any excess off the surface and reseat.

Tape lines and tape pull

Tape glue is a lesser-known issue but one that comes up quite often. It is a not-so-well-known fact that the glue in most tape is soft and fluid enough that if the tape is applied to concrete the glue will

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migrate into the pores of the concrete. After you remove the tape the concrete looks fine — until you apply the stain. The glue acts like a barrier, and you end up with a nice clean line of blotch right where the tape had been. A solvent and lots of scrubbing or blotting is about the only way to get that glue residue out of the concrete.

On the flip side, tape also forms an unbelievably strong chemical bond with certain sealers, in particular acrylic-based ones. I have seen these bonds strong enough that when the tape is removed, the sealer, stain and top layer of concrete come with it. Depending on how deep the tape pull is, using the previously mentioned color touch-up method may save the job, or you may have to grind and recoat the entire surface with a microtopping. To be safe, or until someone comes up with a concrete-safe tape, I recommend not applying any tape to concrete that is scheduled to be stained or has been sealed.

The cheapest insurance

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention a good way to avoid being a victim of any type of callback on a stain project: Samples! The cheapest form of insurance on the job is a sample or mock-up done on the actual floor being stained. Identify an inconspicuous location or a place where furniture or carpet will later be placed and lay down some samples. Apply the samples the same exact way you plan on doing the actual job, including the sealer and wax. This sample or mock-up is not only cheap insurance, but can save you some significant time, money and headaches if the client starts complaining, assuming the mock-up and actual project do match each other.

When it comes to fixing stain issues, always test the fixes in an inconspicuous place too. And learn from your mistakes. 🛠️

Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Contact him at trowelanderror@protradedpub.com.

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staining & coloring CONCRETE :

Protecting Yourself When Working with Acid Stain

by Liz Schick

SOME materials you handle as a concrete worker can be hazardous to your health, including the concrete itself. Wet concrete can burn your skin, while concrete dust can hurt your lungs.

Acid stain is comparatively pretty safe — but there are still some safety procedures you should consider.

While acid stains can cause burns, those are easy to avoid. However, there are other, more serious ways in which acid stain can be detrimental to your health.

Most acid stains consist of hydrochloric acid (also known also as muriatic acid) and various metallic salts as color agents. But the concentration of acid in them is weak, says Mike “the concretist” Miller. “Acid stains are pretty benign. Think about using lemon



After spraying acid stain onto a home in Northern California, workers with Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, Calif., brush it in.

Photos courtesy of Tom Ralston

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juice in the kitchen, or wine vinegar. It’s basically that level of acidity we are talking about. When you buy the stains you get one part muriatic acid to 10 parts water.”

Bob Torres, regional manager of L. M. Scofield Co., the oldest manufacturer of acid stains in the country, agrees. “The acid in acid stain is pretty minimal compared with the overall product, so direct contact with the skin won’t necessarily give you a physical burn. But,” he says, “the absorption of the metallic salts into your body isn’t good.”

Torres’ advice is that if you get anything from an acid bath or an etching product on your skin, you definitely don’t want to rub it. Just flush it with water, some baking soda and soap, which does two things: It removes the stain and metals, and it neutralizes any potential acid that could cause a skin irritation. If you get it in your eyes, however, flush only with a lot of water, and if there is any irritation go to the hospital.

“Acids can cause chemical burns that can turn into serious second- and even third-degree burns if they aren’t washed off when you feel the burn,” maintains Tom Ralston, owner of Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, Calif. “But the real hazard is inhaling the finely atomized particles

when you're spraying acid stain. If you do it repeatedly you can get pulmonary edema, which is basically water in your lungs. Plus, your lungs can get burned from the hydrochloric acid base and the iron salts. It's all nasty stuff to breathe in."

Ralston has a detail crew that does nothing except seal concrete and acid stain. Each of them wears chemical-resistant gloves and P100 respirators. "At all of our weekly safety meetings we reiterate that when you're saw-cutting, sandblasting, acid staining or acid etching, you must wear a respirator and chemical-resistant gear, because those particulates are dangerous to your nice pink lungs. Yet on every job site I'll find a guy who won't wear a respirator because it fogs up his glasses, or he has some other excuse." There is no acceptable excuse, Ralston says.

Bob Harris, of the Decorative Concrete Institute, teaches safety in every course. "But," he says, "it seems as though the younger generation (myself included when I was younger) feels they are invincible, without considering the long-term effects working in an unsafe environment can have. Although many of the basic safety



A Tom Ralston Concrete crew member fills up a gas-powered sprayer for acid staining.

concerns are elementary, you would be surprised how often workers put themselves in unsafe situations."

Harris shares the story of an industry colleague who was teaching a class on acid

staining and was not wearing protective eye gear. He did not check to make sure all of the fittings on his pump sprayer were secured, and as he was pressurizing the sprayer in front of his students, one of the

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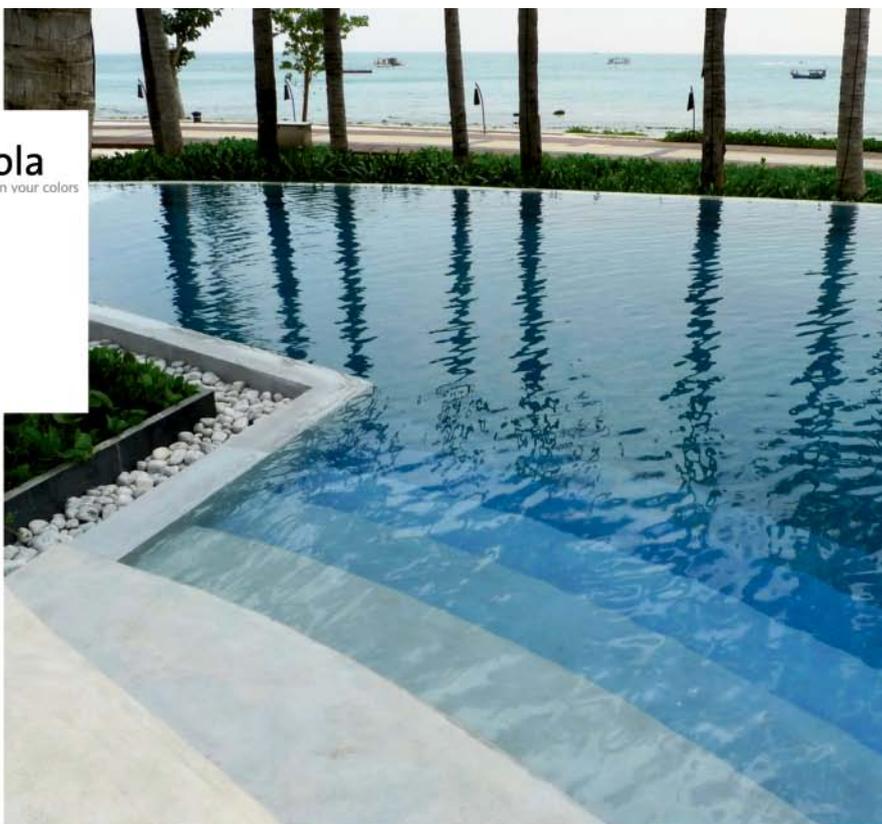
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fittings blew off and spewed acid stain into his eyes. The end result was a trip to the hospital to get his eyes flushed and a failing grade given to the teacher by his students.

To this point, Bob Torres notes that it's important to use a composite or plastic sprayer that has acid-resistant seals made from Viton or a similar material. "The acid eats right through standard metal sprayers, and all of a sudden you'll have acid spurting out of a little hole and shooting someone in the face," he says.

Proper ventilation seems basic, but you'd be amazed how many people don't even

think about it. Bob Harris teaches students that doors and windows should be open on the job, and a floor fan can be really helpful to create air movement. "Without proper ventilation the overspray can create a vapor cloud that is harmful to breathe. So, whether inside or out, ventilators are basic equipment," he says.

Miller says that when you're dealing with acids, read the label, MSDS and technical data bulletin for each new product you take up. It's there that the combination of metallic salts and concentration of muriatic acid will be listed, warning you of potential hazards.

Sometimes even the colorant affects your safety, he says. "For instance, the combination of hydrochloric acid and manganese chloride (the metallic salt used to produce blacks and browns) produces chlorine gas, which is produced under pressure when it's in the container. If it's not handled carefully it can go boom. At the very least you're going to know you

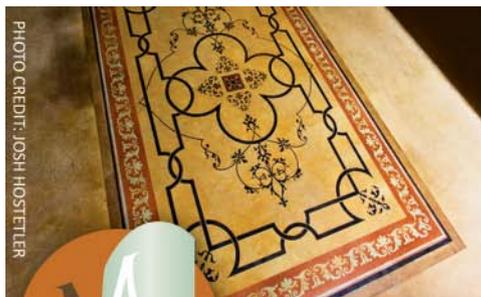
breathed in something you don't ever want to breathe in. You could even pass out for a few seconds. If you're wearing a respirator you won't have to worry about it!"

Bob Torres observes that hydrochloric acid can be potentially explosive when mixed with water. Yes, all acid stains are mixed with water, but you never want to put a half gallon of stain into a 5-gallon bucket and then add fresh water on top, he says. "That's when it could go boom. You want to do the opposite: Add the water first and then the stain or acid wash."

For those always searching for safer methods to get their etch on, gelled acids are more easily controlled and can be applied on a vertical surface without any drip. "However, they can't be sprayed or used to cover a massive area, so their use is limited," Tom Ralston says.

Finally, when it comes to exterior spray applications, be cognizant of what an acid mist can do to the environment. Best results come from the application of several coats using a light fine mist, and when you spray the mist, the wind can catch the hydrochloric acid fog and distribute it below. It can have a harmful effect on everything from windows and sidewalks to parked cars, so think about what it can do to your health! Use proper respirators and acid-resistant protective gear and go home healthy. 🚗

PHOTO CREDIT: JOSH HOSTETLER



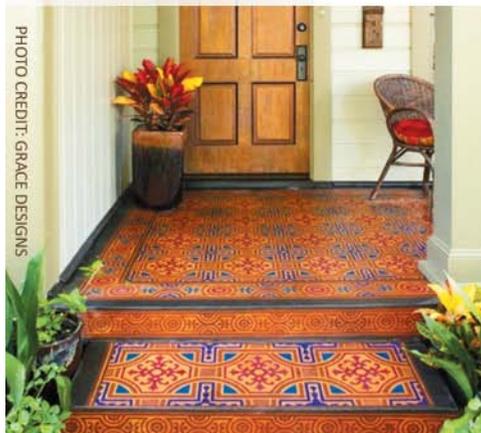
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CARLTON'S CORNER

Cost-saving Innovations in Stamped Concrete

SOME mistakenly view the decorative concrete world as 100 percent committed to overlays, stain and polished concrete, but counting out concrete stamping is a mistake. Stamped concrete is the cornerstone of decorative concrete, and my belief is that this will not change anytime soon.



by Doug Carlton

What will change is the perceived value of stamped concrete, at least in the eyes of tomorrow's buyer. My question to you is — are you prepared for this new era of stamped concrete?

Let's agree on the facts before journeying on. Today's decorative concrete buyer is more money-conscious now than ever before. This causes customers to want to carefully watch improvement budgets yet still end the day with something durable and attractive, such as colored and stamped concrete. At the same time, your cost to produce stamped concrete has risen too, leading some decorative contractors to look for a solution. Let's break down the facts once again:

1. Buyers are less willing to spend, at least compared to a few years back.

2. Contractors' cost to install stamped concrete is as high as ever before.

Today, I want to provide a few simple decorative adjustments that will allow you to sell and install stamped concrete for less money, thereby offering a customer something nice for less. Most customers appreciate a contractor's commitment to saving money, so don't be afraid to promote your money-saving efforts.

Integral instead of hardener

The total stamped concrete package

consists of overhead, labor, concrete, coloring and sealer. (Stamping tools would not be part of an itemized budget for one job.) Concrete material costs are nearly impossible to noticeably adjust, so for this reason I want to focus on options worth the effort — labor, overhead, coloring and sealing.

Here is a breakdown of typical stamped concrete costs:

- Business overhead and profit.
- Labor to excavate, form, place, stamp and seal.
- Concrete, rebar and base materials.
- Coloring materials.
- Sealer materials.

It all starts with the color. I'm a dry-shake color hardener guy myself, but I realize there are times when it makes perfect sense to "batch" color (add color to the ready-mix). By example, using a light dose of integral coloring provides two cost-

saving objectives. These objectives provide benefits to the customer that must be clearly explained early in the sales presentation.

Here are the benefits of an integral coloring system using light colors.

- Light colors attract (and absorb) less heat.
- Light colors show less water deposits.
- Light colors create a perfect canvas for a darker antiquing color.
- Light colors require fewer pounds of color, therefore saving money.
- Light colors offer many shades of earth tones.
- Integral colors are present throughout the thickness of the concrete.

However, by now we all realize the goal here is to provide a coloring process that saves the customer money, and my opinion is that, as products alone, integral colorants provide only a slight color savings compared to shake-on hardeners that color the

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concrete's surface. The true savings offered by integral colorants come with your ability to stamp more concrete surface with fewer crew members.

Using integral coloring is the stamping industry's version of labor efficiency. Here is how and why.

Fewer steps: The art of stamping concrete involves utilizing a skilled team to complete sequential steps in a limited amount of time. Using integral coloring eliminates a major step — broadcasting color (not to mention the learning curve that comes with throwing color hardeners). Eliminating this one step allows for successful stamping with one less skilled artisan at least. This translates to a savings of between 30 cents and 50 cents per square foot on an average stamped project

Less overhead: It is expensive to hire, train, and keep skilled decorative concrete employees. I know this because my firm has hired several dozen over the years. Fewer employees equals less money spent when stamping concrete. I will not estimate

a square-foot savings amount, as no two companies share the same overhead burden.

Saving money with sealer

Sealing stamped concrete is a necessary evil of our industry. You can do everything 100 percent correctly and still wind up with a callback. What's more, the price of materials to seal concrete will never be any lower than it is today. But this is not to say an opportunity to save money is nonexistent.

As you flip through an issue of *Concrete Decor* magazine, my guess is you'll see that most featured stamped projects have included a glossy sealer to enhance color and protect the concrete's surface. The cost to apply this type of sealer is about 75 cents to \$1 per square foot.

Another option does exist for those who are a little more money-conscious. Offer your customers the option of using a penetrating sealer that still protects the concrete's surface from most stains but costs significantly less. No, penetrating

sealers don't enhance less-vibrant colors, but remember, some customers won't mind stamped concrete with a natural look.

Not to mention that with glossy topical sealers, there's the hassle of expensive resealing every year or three. Penetrating sealers cut sealing costs by half in most cases.

My experience is that integral color combined with the use of a penetrating sealer saves at minimum \$1 per square foot on an average stamp project. This savings could be just enough to keep your business in the profit zone. 🛠️

Doug Carlton operates Carlton Concrete Inc. in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at carltondoug@comcast.net.

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PROJECT PROFILE

Johnson Backyard Andover, Mass.

by David Searls

EAST Coast met West Coast and “old school” joined up with state-of-the-art hardscape concrete work at an award-winning residential project in Andover, Mass. The three-level backyard spread, including patio, pool, fire pit and surrounding walls, earned project owner New England Hardscapes, of Acton, Mass., an ASCC Decorative Concrete Award (from the American Society of Concrete Contractors) in 2012 for Cast-In-Place, Special Finishes, Under 5,000 Square Feet.

The bold vibrancy of the stucco walls, done up in a daybreak yellow and burnt orange palette, was the result of a geographic expansion of vendor selection. “The challenge was in finding an East Coast vendor with color as vibrant as you’d find in concrete on the West Coast,” says New England Hardscapes president Rich Capachione. His solution was to choose the bold offerings from Merlex Stucco, of California.

The homeowner called for a look that would complement the property’s sleek, modern architecture in its woody, 5-acre

setting. This blend of contemporary and rustic was Capachione’s starting point in providing a design that could live in both worlds.

Wheat Medium, a sandstone-colored pigment from Prism Pigments, was used as the base color in the flatwork pour, topped by Ash White Lithochrome Color Hardener from L. M. Scofield Co.

And then came the salt. Good old-fashioned rock salt — yes, the kind you sprinkle over pavement in icy weather — provided a glittery, jagged and intriguing texture. “It’s an old-school technique from before stamping came into vogue,” says Capachione.

The rock salt is used to create a pitted texture in the concrete that mimics the variegated porous appearance of travertine.

First, the rock salt was tortured: crushed, run through a sieve and mashed with tampers until no particle was larger than perhaps a half inch in diameter.

Then, the team broadcast it and made one more pass with a trowel, leaving the tops exposed a little bit, says Capachione, “The rock salt starts to break down when introduced to the surface, and we work to embed the rock salt. And then the next day it’s washed out of the surface. What’s left is a nice irregular indentation in the surface. At that point, we cut our custom pattern into it.”

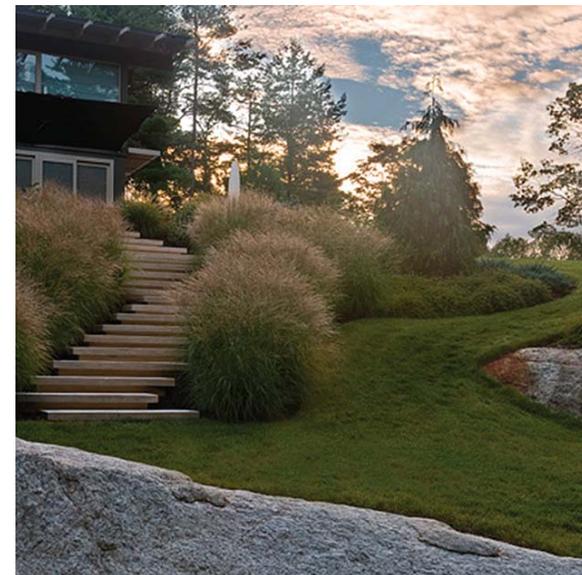
This uniform square pattern was determined by the control joint placement,



Photos courtesy of New England Hardscapes

which had to be integrated into the pattern. “We typically cut the pattern in with a Soff-Cut X-50 hand-held saw and a series of custom diamond blades,” says Capachione.

His crew then waited five or six days before applying a mild acid wash. “This



Project at a Glance

Client: Private homeowner, Andover, Mass.

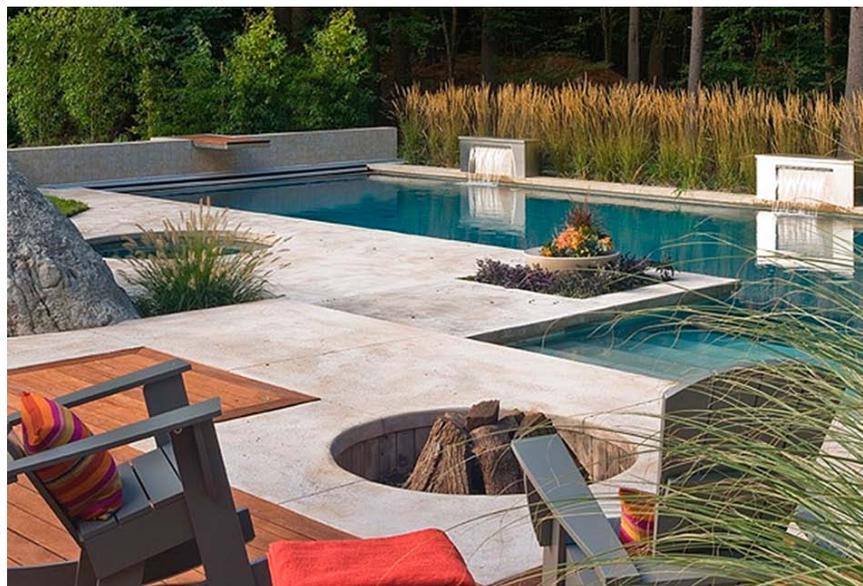
Decorative Concrete Contractor: New England Hardscapes, Acton, Mass.

Project Manager: Rich Capachione

Timeline: Six weeks in the summer of 2008

Project Specs: Just less than 5,000 square feet of tri-level backyard hardscape, including large steps, fire pit, pool surround and multiple stucco walls. The steps leading into pool made out of same concrete surface as patio.

Materials Used: Various grades of rock salt, Wheat Medium integral color from Prism Pigments, Lithochrome Color Hardener in Ash White from L. M. Scofield Co., Pumpkin Seed and Terra Cotta wall colors from Merlex Stucco, sealer from Richard James Specialty Chemicals



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creates some color separation between the color hardener and integral color,” he says.

One week later, the surface was topped with a diluted acrylic sealer, which helped bring out the color.

Capachione offers on-site training to contractors who’d like to learn this custom technique.

Terracing and water challenges

Among the project’s top challenges was the elevation. The pool sits much lower than the house and the rest of the hardscape. That meant major drainage hassles from a hillside lined with loam that washed into the pool during a fierce rainstorm early in the project. Two feet of mud had to be cleaned out of the pool, according to Capachione. The general contractor had to solve the problem with an effective drainage system before they could proceed.

The next challenge was the quantity and tonnage of all of the concrete stairs that had to be constructed to hold the tri-level project together.

“There were about 25 steps in all,” recalls Capachione, “some of which were as long as 20 feet. We poured all of the risers on-site, but had to precast the treads in our shop and set them in place with an excavator.” Heavy machinery was required because each precast tread platform measured 3 feet

by 8 feet with a 4-inch thickness.

Since these massive structures would be subject to intense freeze-thaw during the harsh New England winters, Capachione’s crew had to set the footings 4 feet below the frost line. “That was pretty expensive form work,” he recalls.

Concrete waterproofing became even more of a factor with the several steps that led directly into the pool. “We had to find a sealer that could withstand that much water, and we found what we needed from Richard James Specialty Chemicals.”

Despite all of the time and effort with the stairs, Capachione is gratified by the results. “The 6-inch cantilevers on the steps give a nice reveal to it.”

The award-winning project took about six weeks in the summer of 2008. At the end of that time, the homeowners were rewarded with a grand setting that united the natural and the contemporary. 📧

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