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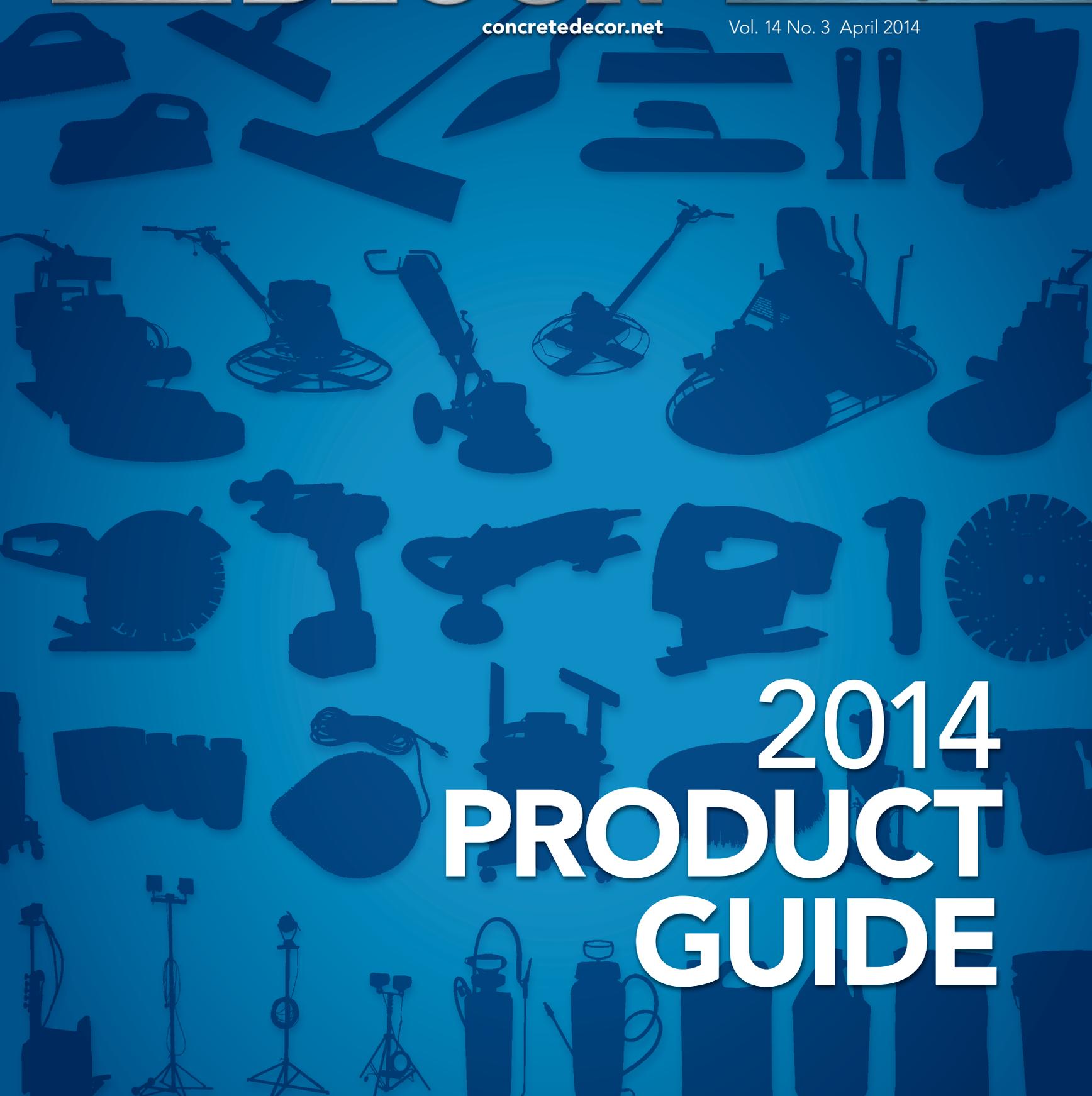
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Vol. 14 No. 3 April 2014



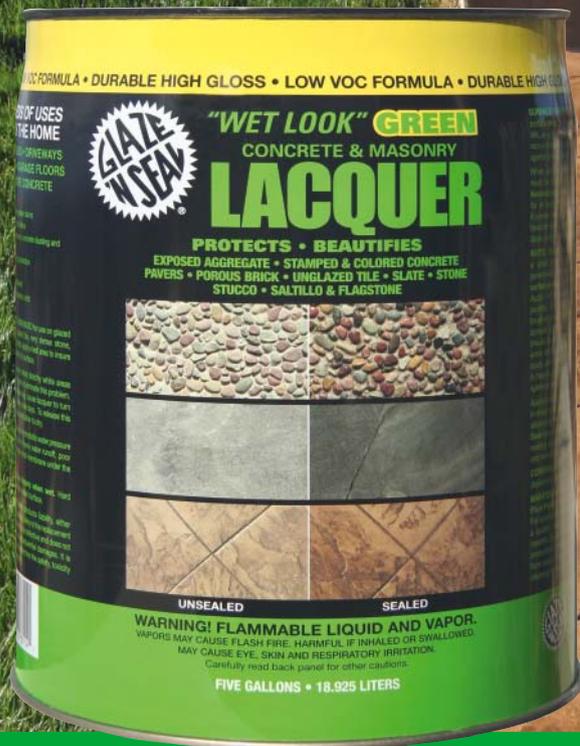
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From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

After a particularly intense winter, spring is finally here, and with it comes a work season that has many people rubbing their hands in anticipation.

Chief among the positive thinkers is the Portland Cement Association. At World of Concrete, the PCA's chief economist Ed Sullivan delivered a bullish prediction of about 8 percent cement consumption growth in 2014, which would double last year's growth rate. The PCA says the jump will come thanks to projected demand in residential as well as nonresidential construction.

We're hearing encouraging anecdotes here, too. Many *Concrete Decor* readers on both the contracting and manufacturing sides are reporting busy springs so far. Some are even contemplating hiring extra help. However, many are nervous about pulling the trigger on expansion so soon into a recovery that took so long to get here.

Another concern when it comes to hiring is finding people who are trained well enough to be trusted on the job. Most aspects of the decorative concrete trades are complex work that will fail if proper procedures are not followed every step of the way. The craft requires patience, discipline and knowledge, and not everyone can do it well. Education and training help to separate out those who have the knack, but where to find that training?

Our favorite place for training is our own Concrete Decor Show, which will offer opportunities of all kinds this fall in Fort Worth, Texas. And there are other opportunities as well – the last week in April, for example, will bring the third weeklong West Coast Training Center class, hosted in Lorane, Ore., by Nathan Giffin and Vertical Artisans. These and other training events are good places to send your new and prospective employees to help them get their feet wet in decorative concrete.

Sincerely,



John Strieder
Editor



concrete
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READERS POLL

Q: As the 2014 work season picks up, what types of decorative concrete are you seeing more demand for, compared to last year?

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and see results at

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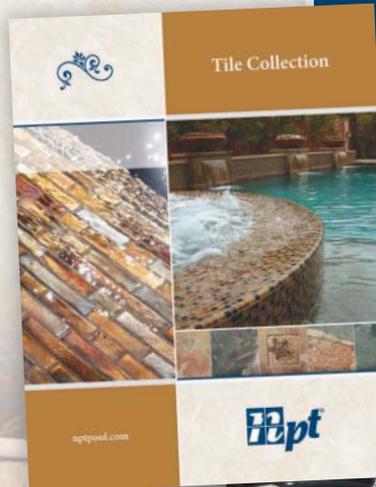
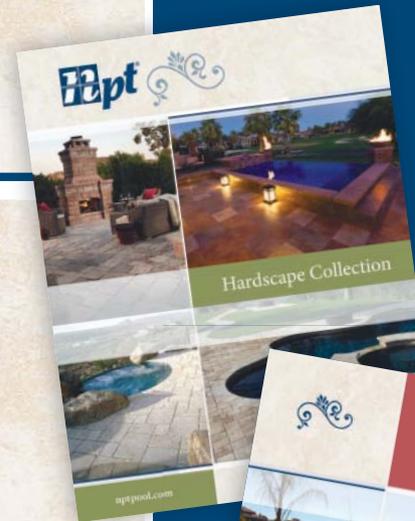
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Bryon "Bru" Bruington is technical sales director for KutRite, a producer of products focusing on the concrete grinding, polishing and scarifying industry. Email him at b_bruington@kutritemfg.com. See Bru's column on page 77.



Doug Carlton is working on his third decade in the decorative concrete industry. He's the owner of Carlton Construction, located at the base of the Big Horn Mountains in northeastern Wyoming. Doug can be reached at carltondoug@sbcglobal.net. See Doug's column, "Carlton's Corner," on page 60.



Jeffrey Girard is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute and a pioneer of engineered concrete countertops. He can be reached at info@concretecountertopinstitute.com. See Jeffrey's article on page 56.



Heidi Hudnall is the marketing manager at Runyon Surface Prep Rental and Supply, an Indianapolis-based distributor of flooring products for prep, polishing and removal. Reach her at heidi@runyoncompanies.com. See Heidi's article on page 75.



Michael Miller is managing principal of the concretist, an association of artists, craftspeople and others producing sensory-concrete art and architecture in cement, stone, glass and steel. the concretist has a presence in California, Nevada and Wyoming. Miller may be contacted at miller@theconcretist.com. See Michael's column, "the concretist," on page 50.



Wendy Runyon-Ricker is the director of operations at Runyon Surface Prep Rental and Supply, an Indianapolis-based distributor of flooring products for prep, polishing and removal. Reach her at wendy@runyonsurfaceprep.com. See Wendy's article on page 75.



Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net. See Chris' column, "Concrete Questions," on page 54.

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COMPANY INDEX

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Rakes & Spreaders, Hopper Guns, Integral
Color, Metallic Coatings & Additives,
Microtoppings, Mixes - Countertop,
Mixes - Flooring, Moisture Barriers,
Overlays, Overlays - Polymer, Overlays -
Stampable, Polyaspartics, Polyurea,
Sealers - Countertop, Sealers - Flooring,
Sealers - Pigmented, Sprayers, Stains -
Acid & Reactive, Urethanes, Vinyl Chips,
Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

**Construcolor USA, Ltd.
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www.construcolor.com
Overlays - Stampable, Pigment

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Brownsburg, Ind.**

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www.creatherm.com
Radiant Heating Systems

The 2014 Product Guide is also available online:
www.ConcreteDecor.net/Product-Guide

CSS Polymers, Inc.
 Cumming, Ga.
 (770) 645-0101
 www.csspolymersinc.com
 Crack Repair, Joint Fillers & Sealants

D



Delta Performance Products, LLC
 Covington, Ga.
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 www.buddyrhodes.com

Admixtures, Aggregates, Cement & Cement Alternatives, Color Restoration Products, Curing Compounds, Fiber, Grinders, Hopper Guns, Mixers, Mixes - Countertop, Mixes - Vertical, Molds, Pigment, Sealers - Countertop, Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based, Training Products, Waxes

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Depiction Software
 Poolville, Texas
 (818) 620-4272
 www.depictionsoftware.com
 Computer Software, Overlays

Dur-A-Flex, Inc.
 East Hartford, Conn.
 (860) 282 4147
 www.dur-a-flex.com
 Overlays - Polymer



Duraamen Engineered Products, Inc.
 New York, N.Y.
 (212) 657-5565
 www.duraamen.com

Coatings, Densifiers, Dyes, Garage Floor Coatings, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Microtoppings, Overlays, Overlays - Polishable, Overlays - Self-leveling, Overlays - Stampable, Sealers - Flooring, Stains - Water-based, Underlayments, Urethanes



Dust Collection Products
 San Diego, Calif.

(877) 223-2154
 www.dustmuzzle.com

Angle Grinders, Crack Repair, Crack-chasing Saws, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Joint Sealant Equipment, Needle Scalars, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Respirators, Safety Equipment, Saw Carts, Saws

E

Eco Safety Products
 Phoenix, Ariz.

(602) 305-9397
 www.ecoproco.com

Coatings, Etching Solutions, Floor Strippers, Garage Floor Coatings, Microtoppings, Sealers - Countertop, Sealers - Flooring, Stains - Water-based, Urethanes

Elite Crete of Michigan
 Warren, Mich.

(248) 343-0709
 www.elitecretemi.com
 Metallic Coatings & Additives, Overlays - Polymer

Elitecrete Central
 Kansas City, Mo.
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 www.elitecretcentral.com
 Epoxy, Overlays - Polymer

Engrave-A-Crete, Inc.
 Mansfield, Mo.
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 www.engraveacrete.com
 Engraving Tools, Saw Carts

Equipment Development Co., Inc.
 Frederick, Md.

(301) 663-1600
 www.edcoinc.com

Crack-chasing Saws, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Floor Strippers, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Power Trowels, Saws, Scarifiers

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EZ Screed Tools, LLC
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F



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Admixtures, Aggregates, Angle Grinders, Cement & Cement Alternatives, Coatings, Consolidation Tools & Vibratory Equipment, Consultants, Countertop Materials, Densifiers, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Edging Machines, Epoxy, Fiber, Finishing Tools, Floor Sanders, Form Accessories, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Hopper Guns, Integral Color, Measuring Tools & Scales, Microtoppings, Mixers, Mixes & Mixing Equipment, Mixes - Countertop, Mixes - Flooring, Mixes - Vertical, Mixing Tools, Molds, Mortar, Overlays, Overlays - Polishable, Pigment, Pigment - Iron Oxide, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Release Agents, Retardants, Rollers, Sealers - Countertop, Sealers - Flooring, Sealers - UV-Cured, Stains - Acid & Reactive, Stains - Solid Color, Stains - Water-based, Training Products, UV Curing Equipment, Urethanes, Vertical Overlays, Vibrating Tables

**Flex North America, Inc.
Omaha, Neb.**

**(402) 933-7759
www.flexnorthamerica.com**
Edging Machines, Polishing Machines

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Picayune, Miss.**

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www.flex-c-ment.com**
Overlays, Overlays - Stampable

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**Franmar Chemical, Inc.
Bloomington, Ill.**

**(800) 538-5069
www.franmar.com**
Release Agents, Strippers
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G



**Gelmaxx Slurry Solutions &
Excess Water Management
Santee, Calif.**

**(855) 322-3335
www.gelmaxxusa.com**
Cleaning Products & Equipment, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Slurry Management, Terrazzo

**GMI Engineered Products, LLC
Bluffton, Ohio**

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www.gmiengineeredproducts.com**
Densifiers, Polishing Pads & Tooling
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Reader Service 33



**Granicrete International, Inc.
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Antiquing Agents, Coatings, Color Restoration Products, Countertop Materials, Coving, Crack Repair, Dyes, Epoxy, Etching Solutions, Franchises & Licensing Agreements, Garage Floor Coatings, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Microtoppings, Mixes - Countertop, Mixes - Flooring, Mixes - Vertical, Overlays, Overlays - Polymer, Overlays - Stampable, Polyaspartics, Polyurea, Sealers - Countertop, Sealers - Flooring, Sealers - Pigmented, Slip-resistant Additives, Stains - Acid & Reactive, Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based, Training Products, Urethanes, Vertical Overlays, Vinyl Chips, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

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www.gulfsynthetics.com**
Coatings

H



**H & C Products Group
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www.hcconcrete.com**
Cleaning Products & Equipment, Coatings, Color Hardeners, Densifiers, Dyes, Epoxy, Etching Solutions, Garage Floor Coatings, Microtoppings, Overlays, Overlays - Stampable, Patching Compounds, Release Agents, Sealers - Flooring, Slip-resistant Additives, Stains - Acid & Reactive, Stains - Solid Color, Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based, Urethanes
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Reader Service 79 & 80

Heritage Glass, Inc.
Smithfield, Utah
**(435) 563-5585
www.hgglass.com**
Aggregates, Terrazzo



**Hi-Tech Systems
Ontario, Calif.**

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www.hitechpolyurea.com**
Control Joint Systems, Crack Repair, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Joint Sealant Equipment, Patching Compounds, Polyurea, Pumps, Spiked Shoes, Urethanes, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes
See our ad on page 30 • Reader Service 36



HoverTrowel
Mohnton, Pa.
**(610) 856-1961
www.hovertrowel.com**
Mixers, Trowels



**HP Spartacote, Inc.
Golden, Colo.**

**(303) 534-9244
www.hpspartacote.com**
Coatings, Sealers - Flooring
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Reader Service 37 & 38

**Husqvarna Construction
Products
Olathe, Kan.**

**(800) 288-5040
www.husqvarnaccp.com**
Crack Repair, Crack-chasing Saws, Densifiers, Drills, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Grinders, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Saw Blades, Saws
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The 2014 Product Guide is available online at **ConcreteDecor.net/Product-Guide**

I



Decorative Concrete Technology

**Increte Systems
Odessa, Fla.**

(813) 886-8811
www.increte.com

Antiquing Agents, Bonding Adhesives & Primers, Coatings, Color Hardeners, Color Restoration Products, Curing Compounds, Densifiers, Dyes, Epoxy, Fiber, Garage Floor Coatings, Grout, Integral Color, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Microtoppings, Mixes - Flooring, Mixes - Vertical, Overlays, Overlays - Polishable, Overlays - Polymer, Overlays - Self-leveling, Overlays - Stampable, Pigment, Pigment - Dispensing Equipment, Pigment - Iron Oxide, Polyaspartics, Release Agents, Sealers - Countertop, Sealers - Flooring, Sealers - Pigmented, Slip-resistant Additives, Stains - Acid & Reactive, Stains - Solid Color, Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based, Stamps & Texturing Tools, Stencils, Strippers, Texture Rollers, Urethanes, Vertical Overlays, Vinyl Chips, Wall Forms



**Innotech Decorative Concrete Products
Twinsburg, Ohio**

(330) 425-2506
www.innotechDCP.com

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**Iron Horse Machine Works
Phoenix, Ariz.**

(602) 791-5459
www.ironhorsemachineworks.com

Aggregates, Coatings, Crack Repair, Densifiers, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Edging Machines, Epoxy, Floor Sanders, Floor Strippers, Garage Floor Coatings, Generators, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Joint Sealant Equipment, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Microtoppings, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Polyaspartics, Polyurea, Saws, Scarifiers, Scrapers, Scraping Tools & Machines, Scrubbing Machines, Sealers - Flooring, Slurry Management, Sprayers, Spreaders, Squeegees, Terrazzo, Underlayments, Urethanes, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

J



**Jon-Don
Roselle, Ill.**

(800) 556-6366
www.jondon.com

Angle Grinders, Applicators, Cleaning Products & Equipment, Consultants, Control Joint Systems, Crack Repair, Densifiers, Drills, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Dyes, Epoxy, Expansion Joint Products, Eye Protection, Finishing Tools, Floor Sanders, Floor Strippers, Garage Floor Coatings, Gauge Rakes & Spreaders, Generators, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Groovers, Integral Color, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Joint Sealant Equipment, Knee Pads, Masking Products & Equipment, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Mixers, Mixing Tools, Moisture Barriers, Moisture Detection, Patching Compounds, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Polyaspartics, Protective Clothing, Pump Sprayers, Respirators, Rollers, Saw Blades, Saws, Scarifiers, Sealers - Flooring, Shotblasting Equipment, Shotblasting Machines, Slip-resistant Additives, Spiked Shoes, Sprayers, Squeegees, Stain Block, Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based, Strippers, Texture Rollers, Trowels, Underlayments, Urethanes, Vinyl Chips, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

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K



**Kapro Tools, Inc.
Lake Mills, Wis.**

(920) 648-2900
www.kapro.com

Levels, Measuring Tools & Scales



**Kemiko by EPMAR Corporation
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www.kemiko.com

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**Kingdom Products
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(570) 489-6025
www.kingdom-products.com

Color Hardeners, Microtoppings, Mixes - Countertop, Mixes - Vertical, Overlays, Overlays - Stampable, Patching Compounds, Pigment - Iron Oxide, Release Agents, Toll Blending Services

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Brooms & Brushes - Finishing, Finishing Tools, Floats, Gauge Rakes & Spreaders, Groovers, Hopper Guns, Levels, Mixers, Screeds, Trowels

L

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Stains - Translucent, Stains - Water-based



Globally Proven
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**Laticrete Toll Blending Division
Bethany, Conn.**

(203) 393-0010
www.laticretetollblending.com
Mortar, Toll Blending Services

**Lehigh White Cement Co.
Allentown, Pa.**

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www.lehighwhitecement.com
Cement & Cement Alternatives, Mixes - Flooring



**Liquid Metals
Orville, Ohio**

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www.liquid-metals.us

Epoxy, Metallic Coatings & Additives
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**LR Tools, Inc.
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www.lrttools.com

Finishing Tools, Power Trowels

**Lythic Solutions
Vancouver, Wash.**

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Cleaning Products & Equipment, Curing Compounds, Densifiers, Finishing Aids, Moisture Barriers, Surface Protection

M



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www.mckinnonmaterials.com

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**Metalcrete Industries
Cleveland, Ohio**

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www.metalcreteindustries.com
Aggregates, Coatings



METZGER/McGUIRE

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**Michelman
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www.michelman.com

Slip-resistant Additives, Waxes



**Midwest Rake
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**ModaCrete, Inc.
Middletown, Conn.**

(860) 343-7005
www.modacrete.com

Countertop Materials, Sealers – Countertop

N



**Nikka Corporation
Marietta, Ga.**

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www.nikkacorp.com

Applicators, Cleaning Products & Equipment, Coatings, Densifiers, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Dyes, Epoxy, Garage Floor Coatings, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Overlays – Polishable, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Pump Sprayers, Scrubbing Machines, Sealers – Flooring, Stains – Acid & Reactive, Stains – Translucent, Stains – Water-based, Urethanes

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chemical solutions to **concrete** problems

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Reader Service 52 & 53



**Nubiola USA, Inc.
Norcross, Ga.**

(770) 277-8819
www.nubiola.com

Admixtures, Coatings, Color Restoration Products, Countertop Materials, Crack Repair, Garage Floor Coatings, Grout, Integral Color, Mixes & Mixing Equipment, Mixes – Countertop, Mixes – Flooring, Mixes – Vertical, Mortar, Overlays, Overlays – Polishable, Overlays – Polymer, Overlays – Self-leveling, Overlays – Stampable, Pigment, Pigment – Iron Oxide, Sealers – Pigmented, Shotcrete, Stains – Solid Color, Vertical Overlays, Vinyl Chips

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**Nufinish Corporation
Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada**

(866) 550-7933
www.grindandpolish.com

Polishing Pads & Tooling

P



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PolishedConcreteSolutions.com

Aggregates, Angle Grinders, Cleaning Products & Equipment, Crack-chasing Saws, Densifiers, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Dyes, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Mixers, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Saw Blades, Scraping Tools & Machines, Scrubbing Machines, Sealers – Flooring, Slurry Management, Stains – Translucent, Training Products

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**Prism Corporation
St. Paul, Minn.**

(651) 488-4250
www.prismpigments.com
Color Blenders, Pigment – Iron Oxide

**Proline Decorative Concrete
Systems**

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www.prolinestamps.com

Antiquing Agents, Color Hardeners, Integral Color, Release Agents, Sealers – Flooring, Stains – Acid & Reactive, Stains – Water-based, Stamps & Texturing Tools, Tampers, Texture Rollers

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R



Contractor Supplies, Inc.

**RCS Contractor Supplies
Noblesville, Ind.**

(317) 773-4223
www.rcs-supplies.com

Coatings, Color Hardeners, Countertop Materials, Dyes, Finishing Tools, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Integral Color, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Microtoppings, Overlays, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Sealers – Countertop, Stains – Acid & Reactive, Stains – Water-based, Stamps & Texturing Tools, Stencils, Training Products, Trowels

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South St. Paul, Minn.**

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www.roadware.us

Patching Compounds

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**Runyon Surface Prep Rental
& Supply
Carmel, Ind.**

(317) 429-0065
www.runyonsurfaceprep.com

Aggregates, Cement & Cement Alternatives, Crack Repair, Densifiers, Dust Collection & Vacuums, Dyes, Floor Strippers, Gauge Rakes & Spreaders, Generators, Grinders, Integral Color, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Mixes & Mixing Equipment, Overlays – Self-leveling, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Pump Sprayers, Shotblasting Machines, Spiked Shoes, Stamps & Texturing Tools

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S



**SASE
Rockford, Tenn.**

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www.SASECompany.com

Dust Collection & Vacuums, Grinders, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Scarifiers, Scrapers

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(425) 628-1212
www.scanmaskin.com

Edging Machines, Finishing Tools, Floor Sanders, Grinders, Grinding Accessories, Polishing Machines, Polishing Pads & Tooling, Power Trowels

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**L. M. Scofield Company
Los Angeles, Calif.**

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www.scofield.com

Admixtures, Antiquing Agents, Coatings, Color Hardeners, Color Restoration Products, Curing Compounds, Densifiers, Dyes, Integral Color, Pigment – Dispensing Equipment, Release Agents, Sealers – Flooring, Sealers – Pigmented, Stains – Acid & Reactive, Stains – Solid Color, Stains – Translucent, Stains – Water-based, Stamps & Texturing Tools, Surface Protection, Training Products

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**Seal-Krete
Auburndale, Fla.**

(800) 323-7357
www.hp.seal-crete.com

Coatings, Epoxy, Garage Floor Coatings, Metallic Coatings & Additives, Polyaspartics, Sealers – Flooring, Sealers – Pigmented, Slip-resistant Additives, Surface Protection, Urethanes

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Reader Service 19 & 20



Slip Industries, Inc
Manheim, Pa.

(717) 665-2139
www.slipindustries.com

Finishing Tools, Groovers, Levels, Screeds, Spreaders, Tamperers

SMK Sprayers, Inc.
Carlisle, Iowa

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www.smksprayers.com

Applicators, Sprayers



Solomon Colors
Springfield, Ill.

(800) 624-0261
www.solomoncolors.com

Fiber, Integral Color, Mortar, Pigment, Pigment - Dispensing Equipment, Pigment - Iron Oxide

SpecChem
Kansas City, Mo.

(816) 968-5600
www.specchemllc.com

Curing Compounds, Densifiers, Finishing Aids, Overlays - Polishable, Overlays - Polymer, Patching Compounds, Release Agents, Sealers - Flooring, Stain Block, Underlayments

Specialty Solutions, Inc.
New Hyde Park, N.Y.

(718) 736-8477
www.ssmincorporated.com

Overlays, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes



SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock Enterprises
El Dorado, Calif.

(530) 344-9000
www.speedcove.com

Coatings, Coving, Garage Floor Coatings, Joint Fillers & Sealants, Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

SRI Concrete Products
Rock Hill, S.C.

(803) 327-6880
www.sriconcrete.com

Sealers - Flooring, Stains - Acid & Reactive



The Stamp Store
Oklahoma City, Okla.

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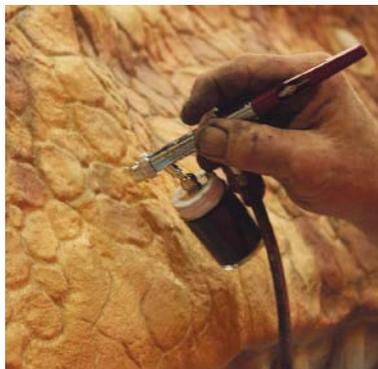
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Reader Service 85 & 86

T

Tramex Ltd. c/o Black Hawk Sales, Inc.

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See our ad on page 80 • Reader Service 87

U

UltraCrete Overlay Manufacturing
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(877) 485-8721
www.ultracrete.com
Overlays, Overlays - Stampable

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www.universaltemplates.com
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V



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W

W. R. Meadows
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www.wrmeadows.com
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Wagner Meters
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www.wagnermeters.com
Moisture Detection, Testing & Measuring Equipment
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Walttools
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www.walttools.com
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X



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Deerfield Beach, Fla.

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www.xtremepolishingsystems.com

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- Concrete Countertop Solutions
- Concrete Ideas
- The Concrete Protector
- Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
- Foundation Armor
- Increte Systems
- Key Resin Company
- Laticrete
- McKinnon Materials
- Nox-Crete Products Group
- The Stamp Store
- Super-Krete Products

Admixtures

- Butterfield Color, Inc.
- Concrete Countertop Solutions
- Concrete Ideas
- Delta Performance Products, LLC
- Fishstone Studio
- Foundation Armor
- Laticrete
- McKinnon Materials
- Nubiola USA, Inc.
- L. M. Scofield Company
- Trinic, LLC

Aggregates

- Ambient Glow Technology
- BDC Supply
- Delta Performance Products, LLC
- Fishstone Studio
- Heritage Glass, Inc.
- Iron Horse Machine Works
- McKinnon Materials
- Metalcrete Industries
- Polished Concrete Solutions
- Runyon Surface Prep Rental & Supply

Angle Grinders

- Bedrock Contractor Supplies & Rentals
- Concrete Polishing Solutions
- Dust Collection Products
- Fishstone Studio
- Jon-Don
- Polished Concrete Solutions
- The Stamp Store

Antiquing Agents

- Butterfield Color, Inc.
- Cement Colors
- Chemsystems, Inc.
- Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
- Foundation Armor
- Granicrete International, Inc.
- Gulf Synthetics
- Increte Systems
- Innotech Decorative Concrete Products

- Proline Decorative Concrete Systems
- L. M. Scofield Company
- The Stamp Store
- Walttools

Applicators

- Aztec Products
- B&G Equipment Company
- Bedrock Contractor Supplies & Rentals
- Cement Colors
- Concrete Polishing Solutions
- Jon-Don
- Midwest Rake
- Nikka Corporation
- SMK Sprayers, Inc.
- Trimaco

B

Bonding Adhesives & Primers

- ARDEX Americas
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- Chemsystems, Inc.
- Concrete Countertop Solutions
- Concrete Ideas
- The Concrete Protector
- Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
- Foundation Armor
- Increte Systems
- Key Resin Company
- McKinnon Materials
- Nox-Crete Products Group
- Super-Krete Products

Brooms & Brushes - Finishing

- Cement Colors
- Kraft Tool Co.
- Midwest Rake

C

Caulking

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- Metzger/McGuire

Cement & Cement Alternatives

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- Delta Performance Products, LLC
- Fishstone Studio
- Foundation Armor
- Lehigh White Cement Co.
- Runyon Surface Prep Rental & Supply
- Trinic, LLC

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- Aztec Products
- Cement Colors
- Concrete Polishing Solutions
- The Concrete Protector

Foundation Armor

- Gelmaxx Slurry Solutions & Excess Water Management
- H & C Products Group
- Jon-Don
- Lythic Solutions
- Nikka Corporation
- Nox-Crete Products Group
- Polished Concrete Solutions
- Trimaco
- WerkMaster Grinders & Sanders, Inc.

Coatings

- Ambient Glow Technology
- Arizona Polymer Flooring
- BDC Supply
- Brickform
- Cement Colors
- Citadel Floor Finishing Systems
- The Concrete Protector
- Concrete Solutions & Supply
- Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
- Duraamen Engineered Products, Inc.
- Eco Safety Products
- Elite Crete of Michigan
- Fishstone Studio
- Foundation Armor
- Granicrete International, Inc.
- Gulf Synthetics
- H & C Products Group
- HP Spartacote, Inc.
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- Iron Horse Machine Works
- Jon-Don
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- Key Resin Company
- Laticrete
- Liquid Metals
- McKinnon Materials
- Metalcrete Industries
- Nikka Corporation
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- Trinic, LLC
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Color Blenders

- Butterfield Color, Inc.
- Foundation Armor
- Prism Corporation
- The Stamp Store

Color Hardeners

- Brickform
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- Chemsystems, Inc.
- Foundation Armor
- H & C Products Group
- Increte Systems
- Innotech Decorative Concrete Products
- Kingdom Products
- Laticrete
- Proline Decorative Concrete Systems
- RCS Contractor Supplies
- L. M. Scofield Company
- The Stamp Store
- Trinic, LLC
- Walttools

Color Restoration Products

- Brickform
- Cement Colors
- Delta Performance Products, LLC
- Foundation Armor
- Granicrete International, Inc.
- Gulf Synthetics
- Increte Systems
- Kemiko by EPMAR Corporation
- Nubiola USA, Inc.
- L. M. Scofield Company
- The Stamp Store
- Super-Krete Products
- Trinic, LLC

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- Depiction Software

Consolidation Tools & Vibratory Equipment

- Fishstone Studio

Consultants

- Cement Colors
- Concrete Polishing Solutions
- Delta Performance Products, LLC
- Fishstone Studio
- Jon-Don

Control Joint Systems

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- Hi-Tech Systems
- Jon-Don
- Metzger/McGuire

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- BDC Supply
- Cement Colors
- Concrete Countertop Solutions
- Concrete Ideas
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- Fishstone Studio

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Concrete Polishing HQ

Concrete Polishing Solutions

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F

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Floor Sanders

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G

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H

Hopper Guns

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 Nox-Crete Products Group
 Polished Concrete Solutions
 Runyon Surface Prep Rental & Supply

SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock Enterprises

Xtreme Polishing Systems

Joint Sealant Equipment

Advanced Floor Products, a Division of Curecrete Distribution, Inc.

Concrete Polishing Solutions

Dust Collection Products

Foundation Armor

Hi-Tech Systems

Iron Horse Machine Works

Jon-Don

Metzger/McGuire

K**Knee Pads**

Jon-Don

McKinnon Materials

L**Levels**

Kapro Tools, Inc.

Kraft Tool Co.

Slip Industries, Inc

Lighting

Ambient Glow Technology

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 Hi-Tech Systems
Increte Systems
Iron Horse Machine Works
Jon-Don
Kemiko by EPMAR Corporation
Key Resin Company
McKinnon Materials
Nikka Corporation
Nox-Crete Products Group
 Seal-Krete
Trinic, LLC
 Vexcon Chemicals
WerkMaster Grinders & Sanders, Inc.

UV Curing Equipment
Fishstone Studio
Trinic, LLC

V

Vertical Overlays
Brickform
Butterfield Color, Inc.
Cement Colors
The Concrete Protector
Fishstone Studio
Granicrete International, Inc.
 Gulf Synthetics
Increte Systems
Key Resin Company
Nubiola USA, Inc.
Sundek Products, Inc.
 Universal Templates, LLC

Vibrating Tables
 Armcon Molds USA
Fishstone Studio
Vinyl Chips
Arizona Polymer Flooring
BDC Supply
The Concrete Protector
Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
Granicrete International, Inc.
 Gulf Synthetics
Increte Systems
Jon-Don
Key Resin Company
Nubiola USA, Inc.

W

Wall Forms
Increte Systems
Trinic, LLC
Waterproofing Systems & Membranes
Brickform
Cement Colors
Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
Granicrete International, Inc.
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Laticrete
 Specialty Solutions, Inc.
SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock Enterprises
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Green Products

The Green Products list showcases manufacturers that make decorative concrete materials and tools that are environmentally friendly and promote sustainable construction practices.

- Use this guide to identify manufacturers that provide green products and equipment.
- Then, look up the manufacturer's contact information in the Company Index, which starts on page 9 in this magazine.

Aggregates

Heritage Glass, Inc.

Cleaning Products & Equipment

Advanced Floor Products,
A Division of Curecrete
Distribution, Inc.

Coatings

Eco Safety Products
Key Resin Company
SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock
Enterprises
Super-Krete Products
Walttools

Color Restoration Products

Super-Krete Products

Coving

SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock
Enterprises

Crack Repair

Hi-Tech Systems

Densifiers

Advanced Floor Products,
A Division of Curecrete
Distribution, Inc.

Dyes

Super-Krete Products
Walttools

Epoxy

Key Resin Company

Etching Solutions

Brickform

Floor Strippers

Brickform
Eco Safety Products

Garage Floor Coatings

Key Resin Company
SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock
Enterprises

Integral Color

Solomon Colors

Joint Fillers & Sealants

Hi-Tech Systems
SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock
Enterprises

Metallic Coatings & Additives

Elite Crete of Michigan

Microtoppings

Super-Krete Products

Mixes — Vertical

Walttools

Mortar

Solomon Colors

Overlays

Super-Krete Products
Universal Templates, LLC

Overlays — Polymer

Elite Crete of Michigan
Key Resin Company
Universal Templates, LLC

Patching Compounds

Hi-Tech Systems

Pigment — Iron Oxide

Solomon Colors

Polyurea

Hi-Tech Systems

Sealers — Flooring

Advanced Floor Products,
A Division of Curecrete
Distribution, Inc.
Eco Safety Products

Stains — Acid & Reactive

Brickform

Stains — Translucent

L & M industries, LLC

Stains — Water-based

Brickform
Eco Safety Products
L & M industries, LLC
Super-Krete Products
Walttools

Stamps & Texturing Tools

Universal Templates, LLC

Stencils

Universal Templates, LLC

Strippers

Brickform

Surface Protection

Advanced Floor Products,
A Division of Curecrete
Distribution, Inc.

Terrazzo

Heritage Glass, Inc.
Key Resin Company

Toll Blending Services

Super-Krete Products

Underlayments

Super-Krete Products
Trimaco

Urethanes

Eco Safety Products
Hi-Tech Systems

Vertical Overlays

Universal Templates, LLC

Waterproofing Systems & Membranes

SpeedCove, Inc. / Solid Rock
Enterprises



All you need to
know about concrete color.

www.daviscolors.com



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The 2014 Product Guide is also available online:
www.ConcreteDecor.net/Product-Guide

ACI creates subcommittee to write specification for polished concrete

The American Concrete Institute has announced the formation of Subcommittee 310-0J, Polished Finishes, which has as its first goal to write a specification for polished concrete flatwork. The mission and goals of the Polished Finishes Subcommittee are as follows:

Mission statement:

Develop a specification for polished concrete flatwork.

Goals:

- Publish a dynamic and contemporary specification for polished concrete flatwork based on the work of ACI Committee 310 (Decorative Concrete) and other industry resources as they are credibly proven.
- Solicit, consider and integrate reliable resources and guidance in order to create a credible, defensible, multiple-item specification for use by all entities wishing to create durable, sustainable polished concrete flatwork.
- Publish and provide educational support.
- Advance and make available for dissemination knowledge, understanding and best practices for concrete polishing.

ACI Committee 310 member Jim Vermillion is the chair of the subcommittee and is spearheading this effort.

[\(610\) 366-4645](tel:6103664645)

www.concrete.org

World of Concrete 2014 Most Innovative Products Award winners announced

Hanley Wood has announced the winners of the 2014 Most Innovative Products (MIP) Award program, held annually at the World of Concrete trade show.

This year's products were grouped into eight categories, including Decorative Concrete Materials and Equipment. Winners in that category were:

Industry Choice: KRazor EDGE polished concrete edge grinder, KutRite Manufacturing Co.

Experts' Choice: StarSeal PS Ultra Stain, Vexcon Chemicals

Editors' Choice: One-piece 7 1/4-inch Cantilevered Step Liner, Butterfield Color Inc.

The MIP award program allows attendees and audiences of Concrete Construction, Masonry Construction, and The Concrete

Producer magazines an opportunity to vote for the products they judge as innovative. A panel of industry experts, many of whom serve on the World of Concrete Educational Advisory Board, reviewed and selected MIP Award winners. Also, the editors of Concrete Construction, Masonry Construction, and The Concrete Producer reviewed and selected the products based on the innovation they bring to the industry.

www.votemip.com

Clarification

Duraamen Engineered Products Inc. specified and supplied Sgraffino (now called Skraffino) overlays, CP1000 polymer primer and Colorfast colorant at the Providence, R.I., Alex and Ani jewelry store project. The materials are manufactured by Canadian company Smart Surface Technology Inc.



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Photo Courtesy of Gary Dusseau



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- Spall Repair



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Durability + Design magazine announces architecture design contest

In a new design competition juried by some of architecture's most esteemed leaders and sponsored by Dow Chemical Co., one promising architecture student will be awarded a cash prize of \$2,500. The winner of the Durability + Design Student Design Competition will be announced at D+D 2014, a conference and exhibition taking place May 20-22 in Cincinnati.

D+D 2014 is presented by Durability + Design magazine, which focuses on building performance and aesthetics. D+D 2014 is designed to integrate an emerging technical community of specifiers, architects, contractors and building owners through their shared interest in advances in protective and aesthetic technologies for buildings.

durabilityanddesign.com/show

New admixture technology may make air-entrained concrete obsolete

The Admixture Systems business of BASF's North American Construction Chemicals division has announced a new technology for freeze-thaw durability that it claims eliminates the need for air-entrained concrete. This patent-pending, microsphere-based admixture and point-of-use manufacturing system is being developed to help concrete professionals overcome the challenges traditionally associated with the variability and uncertainty of producing air-entrained concrete.

Microspheres are extremely small, hollow spheres that have a highly resilient, tough but flexible polymeric shell. Similar to entrained air, they provide stress relief zones for the expansion of freezing water within concrete, enhancing its long-term durability. Microspheres are not susceptible to variations in ambient conditions, concreting materials, construction practices and other factors that often impact the air void system in concrete. The compressive strength of concrete treated with the microsphere-based admixture technology can be over 30 percent higher than that of air-entrained concrete, because of the difference in air content.

BASF plans to commercialize the microsphere-based admixture technology in 2015.

[\(216\) 839-7800](tel:(216)839-7800)

www.master-builders-solutions.basf.us

Equipment supply store chain offers more for concrete professionals

Jon-Don has expanded the concrete flooring product lines it carries in its equipment and supply stores.

Jon-Don now gives concrete flooring professionals a wide range of choice in chemicals, equipment and accessories from well-known brands such as Scanmaskin, Lavina, Husqvarna, Prosoco and Metabo. With the exception of a small area in California, Scanmaskin's line of Scan Combiflex floor grinders is available throughout the United States through Jon-Don. All products are backed with a 30-day, money-back satisfaction guarantee as well as a price match guarantee.

[\(800\) 556-6366](tel:(800)556-6366)

www.jondon.com

American Society of Concrete Contractors names 2014 board members

Scott Anderson, Keystone Structural Concrete LLC, Houston, Texas, has been elected first vice president of the American Society of Concrete Contractors. Rocky Geans, Mishawaka, Ind., Chris Plue, San Mateo, Calif., and Thomas Zinchiak, Woodbine, Md., were re-elected as vice presidents. Keith Wayne, Kannapolis, N.C., was re-elected as treasurer, and William Bramschreiber, Glendora, Calif., Steve Lloyd, Forest, Va., and Scott Winkler, Hamilton, Ohio, were re-elected as directors.

The Decorative Concrete Council (DCC), a specialty council of the ASCC, elected Paul Schneider, Patterned Concrete of Cincinnati, Fairfield, Ohio, as council director of the DCC Advisory Board for

NEW FACES

Mark Anderson, group vice president of public affairs, Portland Cement Association

Jake Harp, national account manager for the East region, Husqvarna Construction Products

Clint Ralston, heavy-user application manager for the South region, Husqvarna Construction Products

Jared Wesson, district sales manager for southern Texas, Husqvarna Construction Products

2014-15. Neil Roach, Danville, Ill., was elected secretary. Michael Campbell, Oxnard, Calif., Byron Klemaske II, San Diego, Calif., and Karen Van Heukelem, Denver, Colo., were elected as new directors. Nicholas Adams, Cleveland, Ohio, Dionne Ojeda, Dallas, Texas, Greg Hryniewicz, Annapolis, Md., and Chris Sullivan, Littleton, Colo., were re-elected as directors.

☎ (866) 788-2722

🌐 www.ascc.org

GranQuartz opens Dallas location

GranQuartz recently opened a new store in Carrollton, Texas, close to Dallas. The new store has 3,500 square feet of warehouse and showroom. It will allow GranQuartz to better serve customers across the region with stock on hand and experts in the store.

The Dallas store is one of 13 GranQuartz stores located across the country. Each store has a complete offering of tools and equipment for the stone, tile and concrete professional. 🛠

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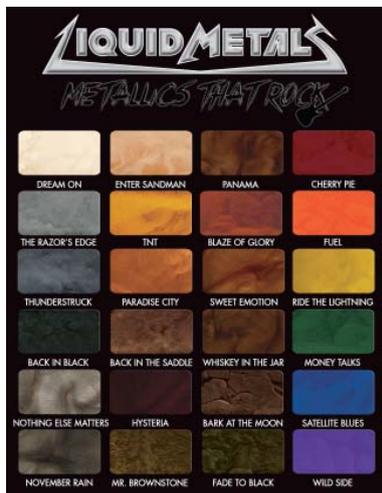
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COATINGS

Liquid Metals metallic epoxy system debuts

Deco-Crete Supply has introduced Liquid Metals, a new metallic epoxy floor system. The system features a line of 24 metallic epoxy pigments, all named after famous songs by hard rock and metal bands such as Metallica, AC/DC, Van Halen and Aerosmith. It also includes Quik Fix crack filler, Electric Epoxy for the base/primer coat and Rock Hard Urethane for the topcoat. The system is available with either 3 gallons or 15 gallons of epoxy.



☎ (330) 682-5678

🌐 www.liquid-metals.us

COUNTERTOPS AND PRECAST

A new single-component GFRC premix from Trinic

Trinic has introduced a single-component complete GFRC mix, Trinic 11K. It's the only all-in-the-bucket, no-liquid-admixture GFRC mix on the market. Just add water and start spraying.

The high-performance premix delivers 11,000 psi with no freezing or molding worries. Add fiber for a high-performance backcoat. Add Trinic plasticizer for a self-consolidating concrete mix.

Trinic 11K is available in standard or fast-set mixes. Standard Set is recommended for warm weather and overnight cures. Fast Set is recommended for colder climates and same-day stripping.

☎ (800) 475-1975

🌐 www.trinic.us

ModaCrete releases countertop sealer

ModaCrete has introduced Pamako CCS (Concrete Countertop Sealer), a high-performance silane-based penetrating sealing system designed specifically for ease of application with consistent results.

Pamako CCS penetrates deep into the concrete surface and chemically bonds to your cement and aggregates. It can be applied to polished, honed or out-of-the-mold concrete and is slightly enhancing.

The sealer is UV-stable and extremely hydrophobic and oleophobic. It offers easy wipe-on and wipe-off, is spot-repairable, and is designed to provide outstanding stain and etch resistance in a nonfilm-forming coating.

Pamako CCS requires very dense concrete to perform properly. For ultimate performance, high-performance admixtures are recommended, in conjunction with common practices of concrete densification, if needed.

☎ (860) 343-7005

🌐 www.modacrete.com

Smooth-On introduces 85A urethane rubber

Simpact 85A is a new Shore 85A urethane rubber from Smooth-On Inc. that has extraordinary tear strength as well as high impact and wear resistance. It is used for a variety of industrial and display applications. It is easy to color with tints or pigments. Simpact 85A offers a low-odor, low-shrink formulation that is free of phthalate, mercury and MOCA.

With a mix ratio of 85A to 100B by weight, components mix and pour easily. Working time is four minutes and handling time is two hours. To reach maximum physical properties, allow castings to cure for 48 hours at room temperature.

☎ (800) 762-0744

🌐 www.smooth-on.com

POLISHING & GRINDING

New Vexcon polymer coating for polished concrete

Vexcon Chemicals has introduced StarSeal PS Ultra Guard SPE, a water-based stabilized penetrating and film-forming curing polymer that provides durable, long-lasting stain protection and enhanced shine to densified and polished natural and colored concrete floors.

Ultra Guard SPE provides quick stain and wear resistance while increasing the gloss level and coefficient of friction of the treated floor. Additionally it dries in less than one hour, provides food and chemical stain protection, quick-dries in less than one hour, helps to hide polishing imperfection, and adds a nonslip finish.

☎ (215) 332-7709

🌐 vexcon.com

Concra releases sleeking system in the United States

The Concra sleeking system has recently been released in the United States. It allows you to polish a new or existing surfaces without the use of heavy grinding machines. Used in a six-step process, Concra discs are strong enough to expose "salt and pepper" and polish up to the equivalent of a 3,000-grit floor, leaving a glossy, hard, easy-to-clean and durable surface.



The Concra discs, which snap onto standard brown stripping pads about a dozen at a time, are 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) in diameter and 10 millimeters thick. The diamonds for both grinding and polishing are bonded with a rigid resin. The strong resin helps increase the longevity of the discs.

☎ (480) 999-7171

🌐 www.concrausa.com

Trapezoid floor-grinding disc from Applied

Applied Diamond Tools has introduced its newest product, Trapezoid 2-Bar diamond floor-grinding discs. The Trapezoid floor-grinding discs are for concrete grinding and lippage removal. The diamond is medium-bond for grinding concrete of medium hardness.

☎ (800) 980-7808

🌐 www.toolcity.com

KRazor EDGE grinder from KutRite

KutRite Manufacturing Co. has introduced the new KRazor EDGE. The KRazor gets operators off their hands and knees when grinding and polishing the edges of the floor. It offers a fully powered electric system with a 360-degree, six-position adjustable swivel handle for operator comfort, a tilt-back feature and quick-change tooling, and easily changeable heads, enabling the operator to change from a single 7-inch path to a footprint twice that size.

The KRazor's grinding heads can use a 5/8-inch-11 cup wheel or a 7/8-inch smooth bore wheel and offer a flexible system with complete magnetic tooling. The tilt-back feature makes the machine labor-friendly when it comes to changes, and it is also safer to use. The operator can use the single head for a 7-inch path, or quickly change the nose to double the grinding and polishing footprint. In addition, experienced contractors can opt to use one grit on one of the twin plates while using another grit on the other.

☎ (877) 955-5067

🌐 www.kutritemfg.com

New Bosch sealant-removal knife

The new Bosch Industrial Sealant Knife is designed to speed the removal of caulk and sealant removal in tough masonry and industrial applications by using the versatility and power of the multitool on what has traditionally been a hand-tool task.

The industrial sealant knife offers a one-piece design and industrial-grade steel honed to a continuous cutting edge for maximum precision. This material and design combination gives the blade greater durability, even in harsh silicone and urethane removal jobs. The extra-thick blade design increases rigidity. The blade can be resharpened for even longer life.

The Bosch Industrial Sealant Knife provides a longer blade surface (3 inches, versus 2 inches with a conventional multitool blade) to maximize the cutting power of the blade. The sharpness of the blade and the additional cutting length means the user is cutting material with each movement of the blade. Less wasted motion means a faster job.

☎ (877) 267-2499

🌐 www.boschttools.com

REPAIR

The new Bosch V-Groove for crack repair

The new Bosch V-Groove diamond blades offer an optimized diamond formula that delivers deep, clean grooves for strong, long-lasting concrete restoration.

The key to Bosch V-Groove technology is the metal bond, which offers the versatility of cutting in hard, soft and normal concrete.

☎ (603) 916-3035

🌐 www.boschttools.com

STAMPING & TEXTURING

Butterfield Color's new One Piece Cantilevered Step Liner

The new One Piece Cantilevered Step Liner from Butterfield Color creates a cantilevered cut stone edge and textured risers in new concrete pours.

The liner is made out of urethane, making it highly flexible and good for use on radius applications. Additionally, it can be used on pour after pour.

The liner eliminates the need for complex forming to create a cantilevered step. In most cases the steps can be framed using standard 2-by-6 lumber. Also, the liner has a 45-degree angle on the back, which gives room for finishing the step or slab below — therefore, the forms can be stripped the following day. 🛠️

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🌐 www.butterfieldcolor.com

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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE

Victoria Simpson Collins, Capitol Decorative Concrete Easley, S.C.

by Gail Elber

OVER her 22-year career, Victoria Simpson Collins' talent for acid staining has created a niche she hopes to occupy for a long time to come.

"It's hard for people to understand why a 'girl' would be interested in concrete work," she says. "But once they see how the floors turn out, they see that concrete is an 'open palette.' You can create a floor that is only yours, since no two floors are ever the same."

Simpson — known to some customers as Simpson and others as Collins — took a roundabout route to her career.

"I have a paralegal degree and a music performance degree. Then I was a corporate investment planner for Michelin Tire Corp. for about 12 years," she says.

Next, Simpson decided to run a bookkeeping business from her home. One of her customers was a distributor for decorative concrete products. "I started keeping the books and learning the products from the bookkeeping standpoint."

When the distributor decided to get into the installation business, it hired employees. But it had a hard time keeping them. "Over about six years, every time someone would quit, I would take on a little bit more of the business," Simpson explains. "The salesperson quit, and I became the salesperson. If somebody wouldn't come in, I would fill in on the crew spot. Then the head of the crew quit, and that meant I was meeting the concrete trucks in the morning and doing a lot of stamped concrete work. Then it was my own pair of yellow boots, and I was pouring concrete every day.

"I did that for about six years, and I was doing all the work and they were making all the money. So I approached them about profit sharing or some way to make it worth my time."

The company rebuffed her, and she decided to go back to bookkeeping. "But I couldn't get away from the fact that I just

loved this work," Simpson says. "So after about six months of that, I decided to open my own company."

Acid stain mastery

When Simpson founded South Carolina-based Capitol Decorative Concrete in the early 1990s, she stamped concrete. "Back then, nobody knew what decorative concrete was," she says. "You'd go to a home show, and somebody would think it was landscape tile that you laid in the bark mulch. They didn't understand it."

But in the past seven or eight years, her focus has shifted to acid-staining existing concrete. "I love that market," she says.

One of Simpson's signature techniques involves using acrylic paint to increase the palette of colors available with acid stains. "You can't get the primary colors in acid stain," she explains. "I do a logo for the Copper River Grill chain in all their lobbies, and it has colors you can't get with acid stain. I came up with a technique using an acrylic paint, like Apple Barrel craft paints. I thin it with an acid-water

mix. I don't get as deep of a burn as I get with acid stain, but I get enough of a grip from that little bit of extra burn. Then it's sealed in under a 30-percent-solids solvent-based sealer. These Copper River Grills, there's thousands of people a year that go through the lobbies, and I only reseal them every two or three years. So they're hanging in there."

She also likes to heavily spray multiple colors of acid stain and let them run together, producing what she calls the "cosmos effect," like an image of a multicolored galaxy. The characteristics of the floor — a low spot here, a crack there — create a one-of-a-kind appearance for each job.

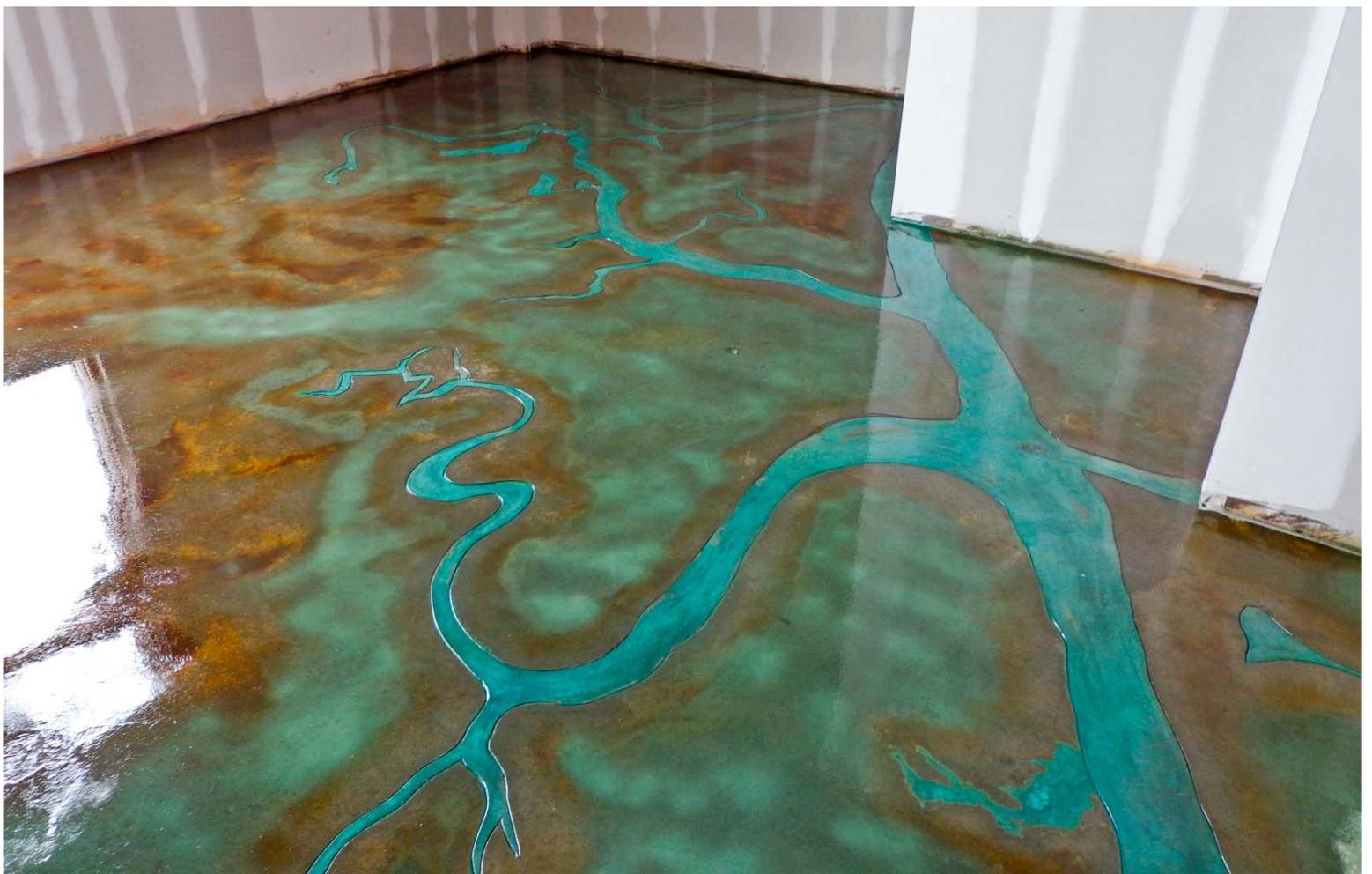
In her acid staining work, Simpson draws on some informal art training she had when she was young, and she even credits

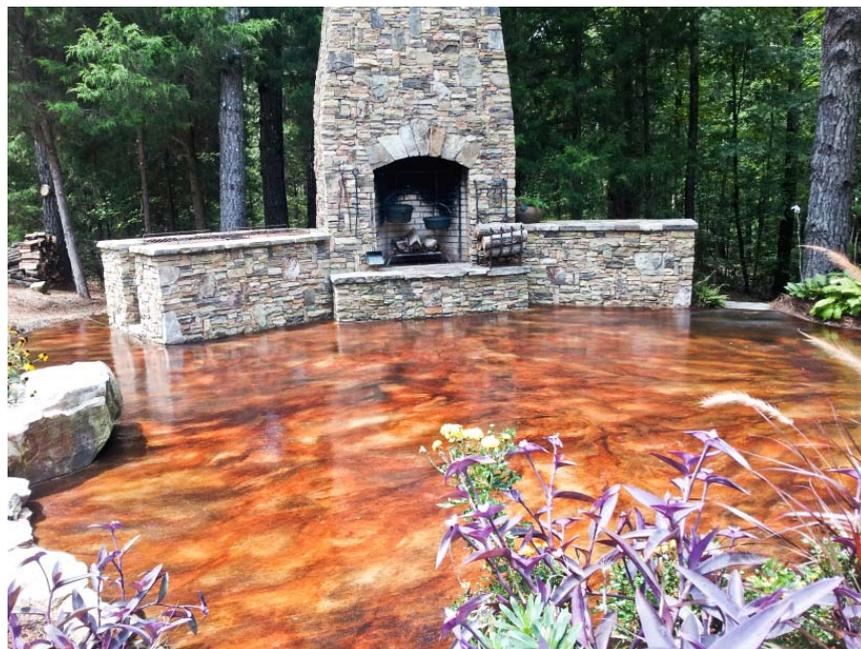
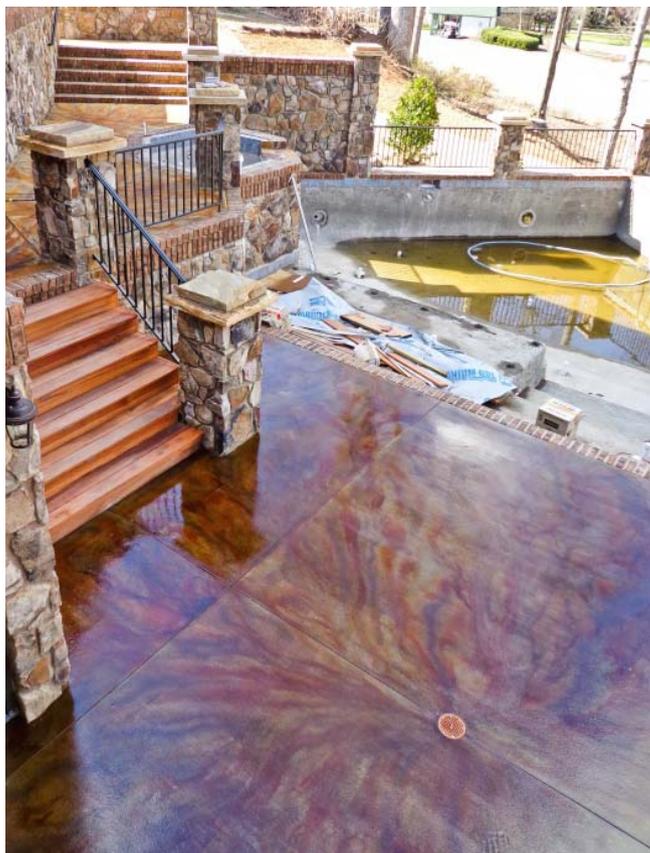




Above: This residential pool patio won Victoria Simpson Collins a grand prize in L. M. Scofield Co.'s 2013 Decorative Concrete Awards.

Below: On the floor of the Marina Store, located next to the Charleston Harbor Fish House at the Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina, in Charleston, S.C., Simpson executed an elaborate map of Charleston Harbor that shows channels, marshes and shipwreck sites.





her music background for inspiration. She's painted a big bunch of grapes in the lobby of His Vineyard, a church in Greer, S.C., and a 33-foot-diameter compass rose in the courtyard of The Children's Museum, in Greenville, S.C. One challenging project was a map of Charleston Harbor that she created on the 3,300-square-foot floor of the Marina Store at the Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina. Store staff created a handout that keeps children busy finding all the shipwrecks marked on the map while their parents shop.

Her expertise is recognized. Earlier this year, manufacturer L. M. Scofield Co. gave

one of her residential patio designs a grand prize in the Artistic Concrete category at the company's Decorative Concrete Awards.

Getting the job done

Simpson often works alone. "Since I'm doing so much artistic work, you can't pass that off to someone else, give them that responsibility," she says. "In the acid staining market, there are a lot of residential or small commercial projects that are 5,000 square feet or less, and I can almost do those on my own.

"Usually I have one full-time person who's with me all the time, and then I can

call in three to five people. I have two or three professional people who I've trained — people I've known over the years who have gone with me on jobs and have learned the skill.

"Plus, my oldest son is an architect, and my younger son is a builder, and they have been raised in this for 22 years. They've been trained their whole life. So if I have a large project on the weekend, I'll pull in my kids and say, 'Come on, we have something to do.'"

Although Simpson attributes most of her business to referrals from existing customers, she mails out a postcard once or twice a year to home-builders association



members, architects and interior decorators. “I’m trying to do more lunch-and-learn type things for architects and decorators, because a lot of people out there don’t have a clue what acid stain is. There have been so many concrete paints over the years that don’t hold up that clients are a little bit worried about taking their existing concrete and making it into something like this.”

Though she’s been in business 22 years, the 57-year-old Simpson is only now in the process of applying for Women’s Business Enterprise certification. “I’ve never wanted anyone to hire me because I was a girl,” Simpson says. “I wanted them to hire me

because I was good at what I did.”

Simpson currently has a steady pipeline of work that takes her from Kentucky to Florida. Retirement isn’t part of her plans. “I would love to have commissioned work in artistic concrete that would allow me to travel, even internationally,” she says.

“I feel like I’m making little marks in the world that will be here long after I’m gone. To be able to build a reputation for something good is worth so much more than just getting a paycheck at the end of it. I never hate to go to work, even though it’s a 10-hour day.

“When I worked at Michelin Tire, at the

end of the day, my inbox looked just like it did (when I started work that day). I could work all day long, do my job the very best I could, and come back the next morning — and nobody would know I’d been there.”

Decorative concrete offers more satisfaction. “At the end of my day, when I look across what I did, it’s like, ‘I did that, that’s something I can be really proud of,’ and that speaks to what I love. That’s why I’ve stayed with it this long, and why I intend to stay with it until I die.”

www.flickr.com/photos/capitoldec

A Colorful Transformation of a Transit Stop

4th Avenue and 7th Street Sun Link Streetcar Stop, Tucson, Ariz.

by Gail Elber

THIS summer, Tucson will inaugurate Sun Link, a \$196 million electric streetcar line. The City of Tucson and Pima County's Percent for Arts Program provided for artwork at the route's 22 stops.

The call for proposals inspired Phoenix artist Mary Lucking to create a design for a stop in a neighborhood she loved. "I lived in Tucson for quite a few years and spent a lot of time on Fourth Avenue," Lucking says. "I decided to apply with Pete Goldlust, my old studiomate from grad school. We love doing transit projects, and we love doing work in Tucson."

The stop on Fourth Avenue between Sixth and Seventh streets serves a vibrant neighborhood of students and hippies, says Lucking. "It's a place where people actually walk around. There are clubs and restaurants and secondhand stores and food co-ops. It's very vibrant and very fun."

Neighborhood merchants had requested a design that wouldn't block the view of their storefronts. So, instead of creating vertical structures, Lucking and Goldlust decided to concentrate on decorating the 45-foot-by-8-foot concrete platform and the chairs and partitions that would have to be at the station anyway.

Project at a Glance

Client: City of Tucson, Ariz.

Decorative concrete contractor: Progressive Hardscapes, Phoenix

General contractor: Granite Construction Co., Tucson

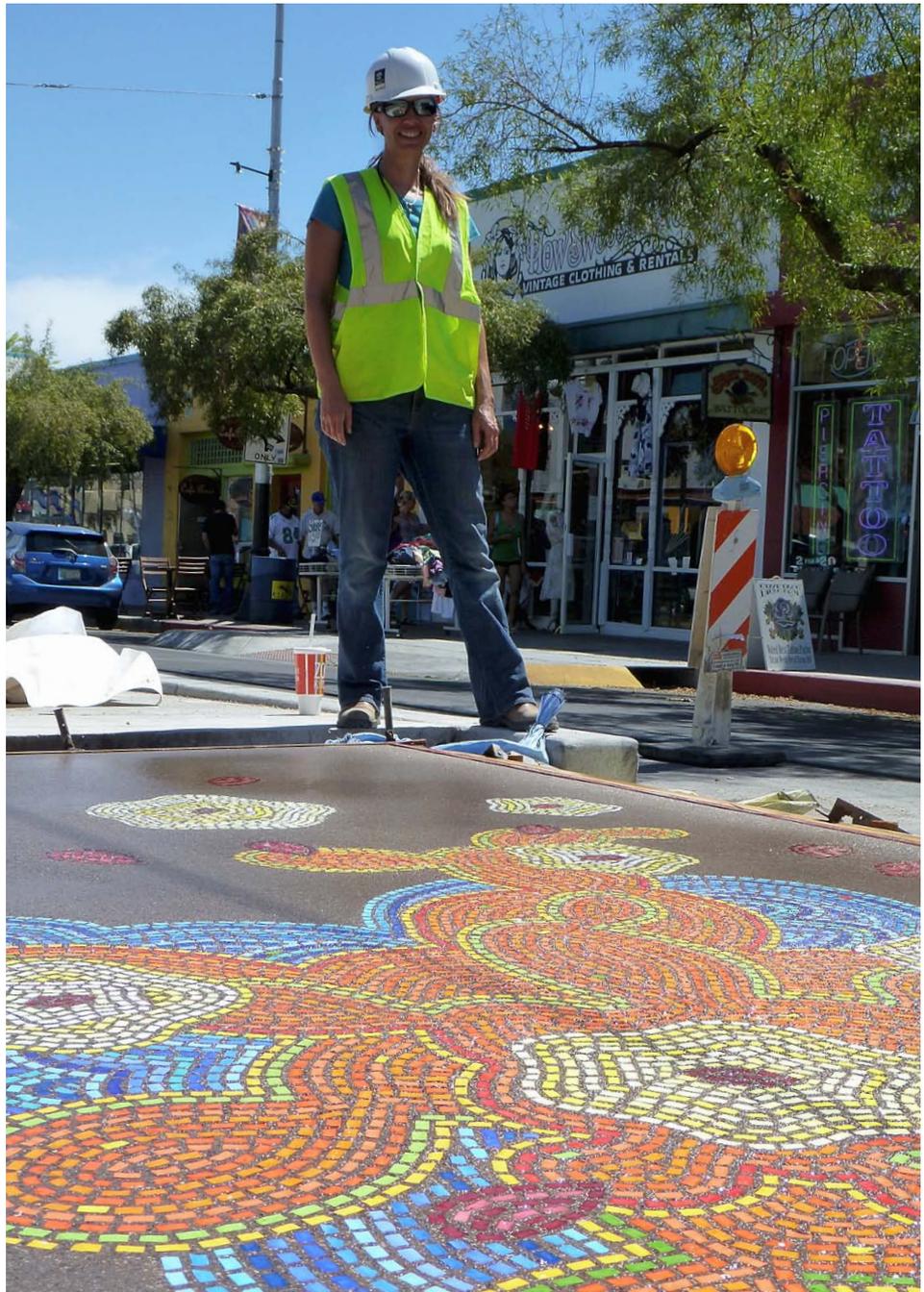
Design and project management: Mary Lucking and Pete Goldlust, Phoenix

Products used: Lithocrete System 7 LithoMosaic, from Shaw & Sons; Mesquite pigment from Davis Colors; smalti from Mosaici Donà Murano, Murano, Italy, distributed by di Mosaico, Tucson

Challenges: An artist and a decorative concrete contractor teamed up for their first project using the LithoMosaic process.

progressivehardscapes.com

marylucking.com



Phoenix artist Mary Lucking poses with part of her streetcar station mosaic.

Photos courtesy of Progressive Hardscapes



Psychedelic cactuses

The pair conceived a lively design of swirling cactus shapes. “The imagery was kind of inspired by the playfulness of the site,” Lucking says. “It’s like psychedelic cactuses, which is what Fourth Avenue is like.” They decided Lucking would execute the design in a mosaic on the pavement, and Goldlust would render it as cutouts in the station’s steel benches and partitions.

To turn the mosaic into reality, Lucking contacted Progressive Hardscapes, the Phoenix office of Denver-based decorative concrete contractor Colorado Hardscapes

Inc. “Mary applied for the grant, and we were a subcontractor to Mary,” says Progressive manager Mike Riggs. “She had it together not only from an artist’s standpoint but also for submittals and construction. She was right on top of it.”

Although Lucking had never used the LithoMosaic technique, she was drawn to it. “It gave us an opportunity to add color in a way that wouldn’t fade in the desert sun, the way a lot of colorful materials do,” she says.

Progressive Hardscapes had never worked with LithoMosaic either. In fact, says Riggs, the streetcar station was the first

LithoMosaic project in Arizona.

To be licensed to use the LithoMosaic technique, Progressive Hardscapes staff spent time with its developers, Ron Shaw, of California concrete contractor Shaw & Sons, and Robin Brailsford, a mosaic artist who pioneered the technique.

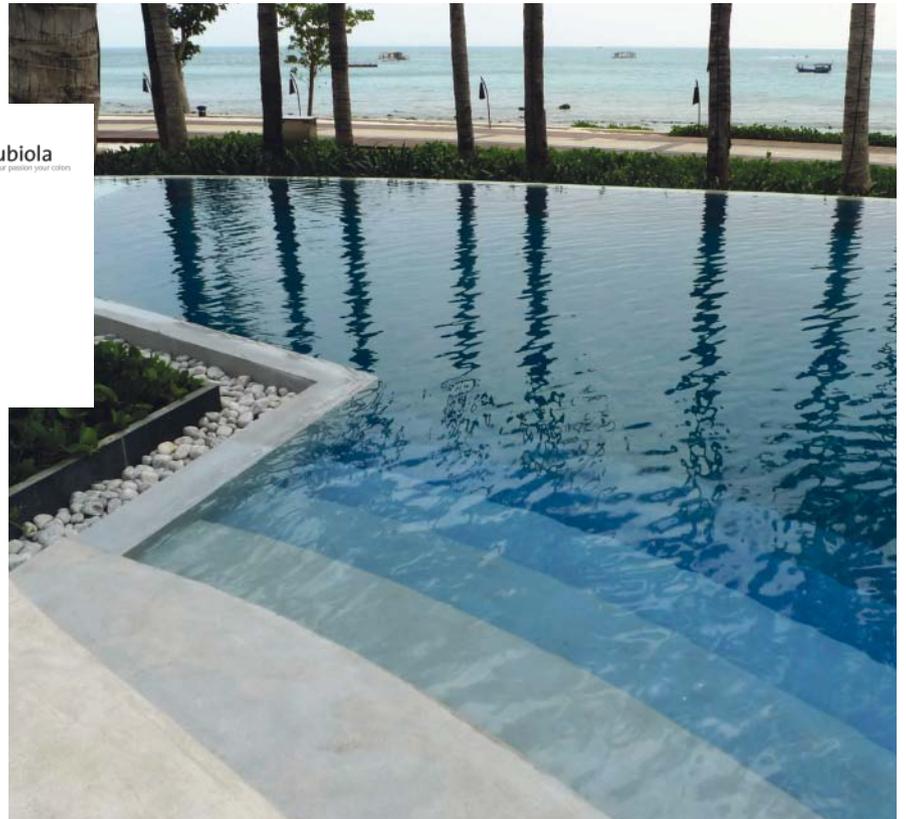
“During the training that is required to become a licensed LithoMosaic installer we toured multiple projects that were done in Southern California,” Riggs says. “Then we went to Shaw & Sons’ facility, where they showed us how the patented process is done, and we did some hands-on training.”

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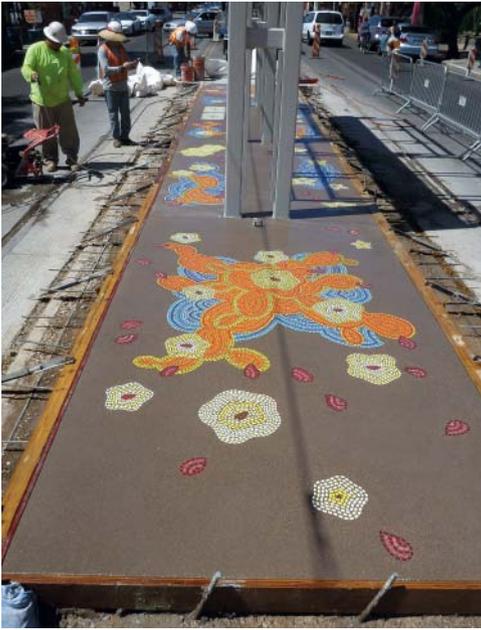


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PROJECT PROFILE



In the LithoMosaic process, the artist glues tiles facedown on plastic mesh. After the tiles are embedded in wet concrete, the mesh is stripped away.

LithoMosaic is part of Shaw & Sons' Lithocrete system, a suite of materials and methods for creating decorative concrete surfaces. Among the materials are mix additives that control alkali-silica reaction (ASR), enabling artists to use glass tiles or glass aggregate without fear of their popping out later. Lithocrete licensees also use a proprietary sealer that provides further insurance against ASR problems.

"Ahead of time, we spent quite a bit of time with Mary looking at overall designs and talking about how the system was going to go together," Riggs says. Lucking originally envisioned a design that would incorporate both LithoMosaic and the Lithocrete System 1 exposed-aggregate technique, but the budget wouldn't accommodate that.

Once LithoMosaic was chosen, Progressive Hardscapes made 1-foot-by-1-foot mockups of the design and then a 4-foot-by-4-foot mock-up so Lucking could see how her color scheme looked.

"Once we had our means and methods dialed in and the colors just the way she wanted them, we were ready to proceed with the project," Riggs says.

Lucking discovered she could get smalti — brightly colored square glass tiles — right in Tucson from di Mosaico, which distributes smalti from Italian manufacturer Mosaici Donà Murano. Her design included more than 20,000 tiles, and she spent hundreds of hours gluing them onto 2 1/2-by-8-foot mesh sheets.

When the design was complete, Lucking rolled the sheets up with bubble wrap, put them in Sonotube sections for protection, and brought them to Progressive Hardscapes.

Progressive Hardscapes staff completed their part of the job in three days in June 2013. On day one, they placed #3 rebar on 18-inch centers and doweled the joints. Concrete was placed and finished on days two and three. Progressive Hardscapes staff laid out the mosaic mesh on templates, then laid it on the concrete, troweled it in, and stripped off the mesh. Control joints were saw-cut right through the mosaic. "With the bright colors, you don't really notice a standard saw cut running through the pattern," Riggs says.

A bit of Davis Colors' Mesquite pigment was added to the concrete "just to take off the gray," Riggs says, as well as to match the exposed aggregate finish used on some other Sun Link stations.

LithoMosaic made the project easier not only for the artist, but also for Progressive Hardscapes. "The artist can do that time-consuming work in a nice air-conditioned environment, and then we can install the mosaic quickly on-site," Riggs says. "From a safety and traffic control standpoint, we can get in and out of there a lot quicker."

The project's \$73,000 budget covered materials and labor for the mosaic and the time Lucking and Goldlust spent designing and managing the project. The general contractor covered the costs of Goldlust's cutouts as part of the fabrication of the steel furniture.

"I was thrilled with both the process and the result," Lucking says. "I like the freedom of form that the technique gave me, putting a handmade feel into a contractor-fabricated project." 📱



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The Ultimate Backyard Hacienda Resort

Weiner Family Backyard Swimming Pool and Spa, Simi Valley, Calif.

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

LOOKING at it today, it's hard to imagine that the focal point of the Weiner family's backyard used to be a \$300 aboveground swimming pool from Walmart. Now, the award-winning residential resort is more in line with the likes of Neiman Marcus with its outdoor kitchen, water slide, conversation area with fire pit, and concrete swimming pool and spa with a Baja shelf, two in-pool tables and a shaded pavilion.

Designed and built by Scott Cohen, owner of Green Scene Landscaping and Swimming Pools, in Chatsworth, Calif., the "staycation" resort only retained one element from the previous backyard expanse: a wooden pergola at the back of the property, something Cohen thought was too small for the massive makeover.

"The homeowners wanted to keep the pergola and I had to figure out how to tie it in to make it work. Its location also dictated the location of the swimming pool," Cohen says. His solution was to make the pool longer than the pergola on both ends, centering it to the pergola, and to visually tie the pool and pergola together with four runnels, similar to the narrow



Photos courtesy of Green Scene Landscaping and Swimming Pools

channels used in ancient Spain's aqueducts that allowed water to flow from one place to another. "I stole the idea from Tarragona, Spain," he confesses.

The runnels are positioned to create three cabana-like areas along one of the pool's edges, where family and guests may lounge. Each runnel is accented with a



Project at a Glance

Client: Weiner family, Simi Valley, Calif.

General and pool contractor: Scott Cohen, owner of Green Scene Landscaping and Swimming Pools, Chatsworth, Calif.

Scope of project: Design and build a residential backyard resort in that includes an outdoor kitchen with a polished concrete countertop and a 792-square-foot concrete pool surrounded by a stamped pool deck.

Materials used: Pool deck integrally colored with Davis Colors' Sandstone, accented with Brickform's Nutmeg, Walnut and Desert Tan antique releases and stamped with a rock texture; cast-in-place tables in pool colored with Davis Colors' Adobe; pool finished with National Pool Tile Group's QuartzScapes in Midnight Blue; countertop integrally colored with Adobe and hand-seeded with #2 and #3 crushed Amber and Mirrored Blue glass from American Specialty Glass.

Challenges: Tying the new backyard design to an existing pergola.

Awards: Bronze, 2013 Association of Pool & Spa Professionals International Award of Excellence in the Residential Concrete Pools, Geometric, 601 square feet or more category; Silver, 2014 United Aqua Group Award of Distinction in the Residential Concrete, Geometric (601 square feet or more) category

www.greenscenelandscape.com

flaming torch ensemble made by a Mexican craftsman who carved them out of Cantera stone. “The craftsman worked from a 3-D sketch we supplied and he was able to get all four to look nearly identical,” Cohen says. “The details are quite impressive.”

Three planters attached to a wall behind the pergola and the coping for the pool are also carved out of Cantera stone.

Something for everybody

To help him design backyard retreats, Cohen says he first doodles several concepts and then uses SketchUp to create a 3-D model that homeowners can view on a computer. He finds the 3-D model very important when conveying the concept to homeowners, he says, because it helps all parties see how the project will look from different angles both on the ground and from vantage points in the house.

One of the biggest influences of this design was the young family’s penchant for socializing, Cohen says. “They make up holidays in between holidays so they have an excuse to entertain,” he says with a laugh. The couple has a 10-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter, so the backyard setup needed to accommodate large groups of both adults and children.

At the grown-up side of the backyard, a perimeter overflow spa, which Cohen calls an “illusion spa,” flows into the pool. Its flat, waveless surface “gives the impression you can walk across the water,” he says. “It makes for a very cool effect, especially at night.” Behind the spa, there’s a conversation area complete with pillows and a 12-foot-long fire trough.

At the other end of the pool, there’s a big slide for the kids and a wide-open grassy area behind that where they can play.

At each end of the pool there is a concrete table with built-in seating. “That’s one of my signature touches,” Cohen says. “It’s a super alternative to a swim-up bar. It provides the same sit-around-and-have-a-cocktail experience at a fraction of the cost.” And the kids like their table because they can sit in the water and play games like checkers, backgammon or cards, he adds, and have a place for their drinks and snacks.

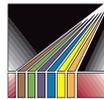
Midway along the pool’s edge closest to the house, there’s a Baja or sun shelf, “one of the hottest trends in pool design today,” Cohen says, where people can enjoy each other’s company while sitting in shallow water. It features oversized steps wide enough to hold lounge chairs.



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Overall, he continues, the pool features what's called a sport layout, where it's 4 feet deep at the ends and 5 feet deep in the middle. "It's great for playing volleyball," Cohen says, noting that the 44-by-18-foot pool is equipped with places to attach a net.

Everything and the kitchen sink

As part of the backyard renovation, Cohen also built the family an outdoor kitchen, complete with high-end, stainless-steel Alfresco appliances and a cast-in-place concrete countertop hand-seeded with recycled beer bottle glass and accents of blue glass.

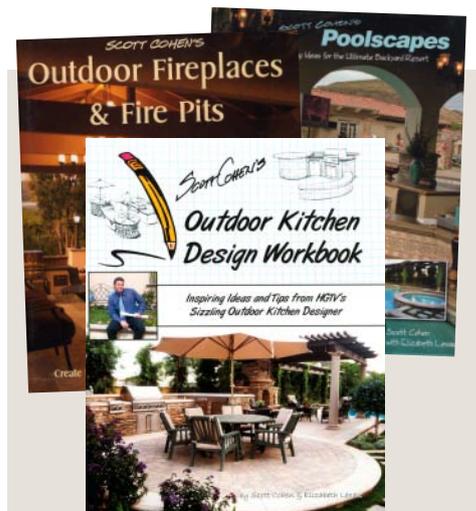
"To bring out the blue in the swimming pool, we used a light seeding of blue glass chips dipped in silver," Cohen says. "When you grind and polish you end up with little pieces of blue glass and miniature mirrors. It's a very cool effect. Subtle, yet effective."

The project also integrated ample outdoor lighting and speakers throughout the landscape so the homeowners can control the mood for a variety of events. "That really brings a project like this together," Cohen says.

From start to finish, the entire project took Cohen about six months to complete and ran about \$265,000. He says his crew

fluctuated between three and eight men, depending on the task performed.

"I never get tired of seeing my projects going from concept to completion," Cohen says. "When I was a kid, I loved to play with Legos. Now the blocks I use are just heavier." 🧱



Books by Cohen

Are you interested in learning more about Cohen's work? If so, check out "Scott Cohen's Outdoor Kitchen Design Workbook" where, step by step, he covers how to cast countertops and embed glass. This and other Cohen titles are available for purchase from the Bookstore at ConcreteDecor.net.

Pit Stops with Pizzazz

Florida's Turnpike Service Plazas

by Joe Maty

If Florida's Turnpike were a rail line, the Fort Drum service plaza in the south central part of the state would be the equivalent of New York's Grand Central Station, with glitzy interior treatments that include terrazzo floors and decorative exterior treatments and landscaping that evoke Florida's unique natural environs.

So says David Edwards, owner of Edwards Concrete, of Winter Garden, Fla. He considers the Fort Drum service plaza to be the crown jewel of a series of turnpike stops decked out with decorative concrete after a multiyear renovation program directed by Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. Edwards Concrete played a part in spiffing up the service plazas, with decorative concrete installations that included walkway and plaza areas outside service station and restaurant facilities.

From the north, the first jewel is at Turkey Lake, then comes Canoe Creek, Fort Drum, West Palm Beach, and finally Pompano Beach. These were all major upgrades — reconstructions essentially — of existing facilities that hadn't been completely updated since the opening of the turnpike in the 1950s and 1960s.

Edwards Concrete placed and finished imprinted concrete at the plazas, applied a variety of colors, and in some cases seeded recycled, colored glass into landscape borders. To offer just one example, the glass aggregate conveyed a bluegrass look that blended with the natural flora at Turkey Lake and West Palm Beach.

It's a major transformation in that the old concrete at the service plazas had been plain gray, with demolition done by general contractor Stride-OHL Group, of Miami. The installations are a project of Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, a separate business unit of the state Department of Transportation. The turnpike, one of the busiest highways in the nation, is formally named the Ronald Reagan Turnpike.

Times have changed along the turnpike mainline, sometimes called "Florida's Main



Photos courtesy of Edwards Concrete

Street," which started life as the Sunshine State Parkway running from Miami to Fort Pierce. The existing service plazas didn't meet the standards of the traveling public of the 21st Century, says Brett Nein, manager of landscape architecture for Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.'s Deerfield Beach, Fla., office. Jacobs provided design services for the service-plaza projects.

Three primary design themes connect these dramatically redesigned facilities, says Nein: Water, sun and earth (or land). From these themes, the designers and Edwards Concrete interpreted the conceptual vision of the architectural firm directing the total project — Miami-based Zyscovich — using concrete colors and decorative patterns for the hardscape materials.

Edwards Concrete placed a total 60,076 square feet of decorative concrete at the rebuilt and redesigned plazas. Linear feet of border treatments installed totaled 20,684. Two service plazas remain to be rebuilt: Okahumpka, on the northern end of the

Project at a Glance

Client: Florida's Turnpike Enterprise

Decorative concrete contractor: Edwards Concrete, Winter Garden, Fla.

General contractor: Stride-OHL Group, Miami

Architect/designer: Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., Deerfield Beach, Fla.; Zyscovich Architects, Miami, Fla.

Project description: Decorative concrete installations at multiple service plazas of Florida's Turnpike; techniques include decorative imprinting and application of color hardener and colored glass aggregate

Products used: Bomanite Color Hardener (Steel Blue, Chargreen, Garden Slate, Moss Rock, Moccasin, Birch Bark, Nickel Gray, Beech); Bomanite Release Agent (Brownstone); Bomanite stamp patterns (Limestone Frayed Edge, Used Brick, River Rock, Birch Bark Wood End Grain, Coquina, Granite, Sandblast Limestone); American Specialty Glass decorative glass aggregate (River Mix and Sunshine Mix).

Challenges: Long-distance transportation and installation of concrete in high temperatures and persistent wet weather, causing adverse effects on concrete and requiring frequent reinstallation.

www.edwardsbomanite.com

PROJECT PROFILE

turnpike at Wildwood, and Port St. Lucie/ Fort Pierce.

For concrete coloring, Edwards used Bomanite Color Hardener, a proprietary dry-shake material, in various shades. The hardeners are a blend of mineral oxide pigments, cement and graded silica aggregates, according to company product-data literature. Imprint patterns, also from Bomanite, delivered a range of decorative effects. A release agent in the Bomanite color Brownstone was employed in all stamp installations.

Vision and interpretation

The sun theme at the Turkey Lake plaza (and the not-yet-built Okahumpka plaza) feature patterns of sun rays designed into the decorative paving, radiating out from the building entrances. The patterns extend across landscape beds by means of colored glass beds (in mixes of orange, yellow and red) with decorative containment bands that match the sidewalk border pavements. The landscape plantings were then also arranged to reinforce the decorative-pavement ray bands, says Nein, manager of landscape architecture for Jacobs.

Patterns for the Turkey Lake plaza were the 24-by-24-inch and 12-by-12-inch Slate Limestone and a 4-by-8-inch Used Brick, from Bomanite. Color-hardener colors from Bomanite were Beech and Moccasin, and recycled glass aggregate called Sunshine



Mix came from American Specialty Glass.

For the water-themed sites (Pompano Beach and Canoe Creek), wave patterns were designed into the decorative paving, again radiating out from the building entrances, giving an impression of ripples caused by a pebble dropped into a pond. Here too, the patterns extend across landscape beds with the use of colored glass beds in blues, greens and grays. Decorative containment bands matched the sidewalk border pavements. The landscape plantings were then also arranged in wavy or

curvilinear forms to reinforce the decorative pavement waves.

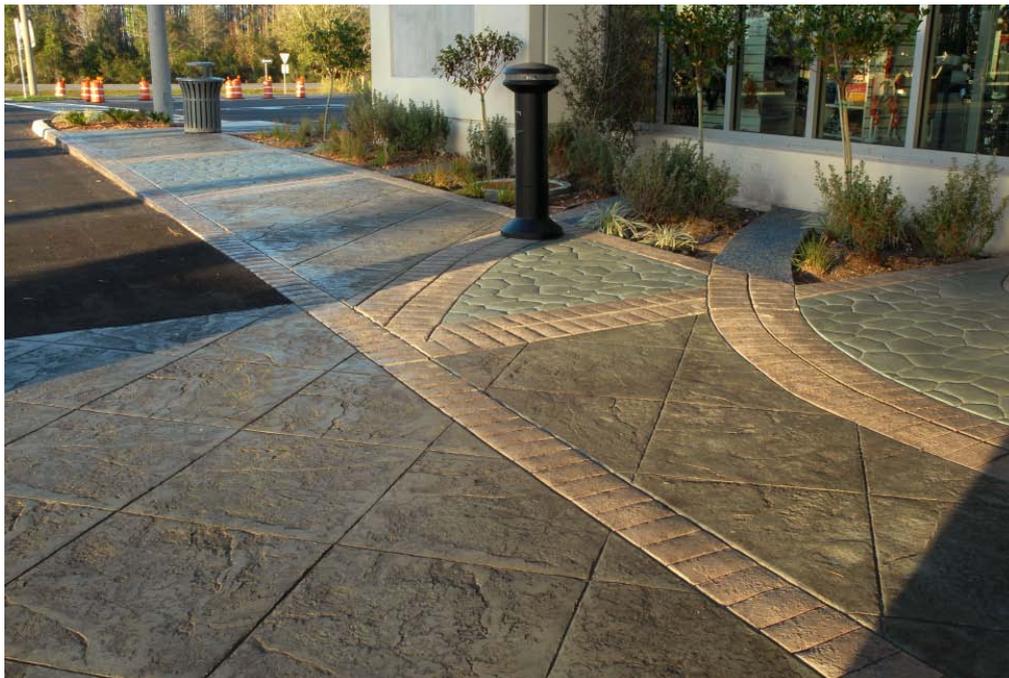
The stamp pattern for Pompano was the 24-by-24 River Rock and 6-by-6 Granite, from Bomanite. Hardener colors were Bomanite's Steel Blue, Chargreen, Birch Bark and Nickel Gray.

For Canoe Creek, patterns were Bomanite's 24-by-24 River Rock and 4-by-8 Used Brick. Also used was the River Mix glass aggregate from American Specialty Glass, and hardener colors of Steel Blue, Chargreen and Birch Bark, from Bomanite.

The "earth" theme at the Fort Drum and West Palm Beach plazas employed pavement patterns and colors that were "played down some" to frame the adjacent, more naturalistic landscape beds where a lot of native plants were used, Nein says. "To complement this we chose paving patterns that were based in natural materials" — granite squares and coquina (a common natural stone in Florida), for example, and earth tones.

Patterns for West Palm Beach were the 4-by-8 Used Brick, 6-by-6 Granite and 12-by-12 Coquina, from Bomanite. Hardener colors were Bomanite's Garden Slate, Moss Rock and Moccasin.

At Fort Drum, Edwards Concrete used a 24-by-24 slate stamp and coloring to produce a "coquina" look, simulating a common rock seen in Florida — a sedimentary type composed of the shells of invertebrate sea creatures. A "soldier course" border was installed as well at



Fort Drum, employing a 4-by-8 Used Brick Bomanite pattern. A 6-by-6 stamp pattern and 24-by-24 Coquina pattern from Bomanite also were used in the sidewalks to separate the handicap ramps.

Edwards Concrete's work won a 2014 second-place award from the Decorative Concrete Council of the American Society of Concrete Contractors for cast-in-place stamped projects of more than 5,000 square feet.

Creating a crossroads oasis

The Fort Drum plaza is situated in a largely rural section of south-central Florida, with cattle raising the dominant economic activity. The area once was a crossroads of routes that connected a series of forts built by the U.S. Army following the Second Seminole War in the 1840s. Later, it served as a jumping-off place for travelers heading for South Florida.

The remote location came into play during installation, as the lengthy distance to the nearest cement outlet — some 60 miles — and summertime heat resulted in marginal and in some cases unworkable concrete.

"We tore out more concrete this summer than any project in Edwards Concrete history," says David Edwards. "It rained, it seemed like every day." Concrete overheated.

"That was the biggest challenge, to get the concrete trucks unloaded. You've got 90 minutes to unload that truck, starting when it leaves the plant, and the truck had to travel 60 miles."

Nein gives Edwards Concrete high marks in collaborating and finding solutions for the turnpike projects.

"They did nice work. They were really creative, and when we ran into situations in the field, they were good at coming up with solutions. They have done it for so long. Doing work for Disney as they have requires that kind of flexibility, in terms of design interpretation."

Jacobs collaborated with Zyscovich Architects on the service plazas. Zyscovich developed the design themes and conceptual program for the project and Jacobs completed working drawings for permitting and construction, Nein says.

Nein says Edwards Concrete worked effectively as a design partner in helping to interpret the concepts and themes developed by Zyscovich. "One key thing was that they

did mock-ups for every plaza, with 4-by-4 samples of the textures and colors. Until you see it in the field, you're always open to different interpretations and outcomes."

The samples were developed well in advance of installation, allowing time for review and evaluation.

"We did make a lot of changes during the construction phase. And they (Edwards Concrete) also suggested patterns we were not even aware of."

David Edwards recalls an example of

a change in direction, where Edwards Concrete suggested the Coquina pattern — reflective of Florida geology — over a sandstone replica originally conceived by the designers.

"They were very open," Edwards says of the Jacobs representatives. "They liked the feedback, unlike what you see with many architects."

After all, Edwards says, "This is what we do, every day, and sometimes we have a better idea." 🚗

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A Veteran Floor Guy Takes on a High-End Cast-in-Place Countertop

by Michael Miller, the concretist

NEW Year's Eve 2012 in Rancho Murieta, Calif., I had just finished stripping cast-in-place concrete countertops in an outdoor kitchen with concretist artists Emily McClintick and Greg Stanley.

What the hell was I thinking? After all, I'm a concrete philosopher and artist, a part-time columnist and full-time floor guy. I'm no countertop specialist! It's generally best to call a countertop guy like Buddy Rhodes or Fu-Tung Cheng. These guys are most often best suited for the job. Most often. But not always.

It all started when I got a call from interior designer Julie Doran. Been a long time. Where you been? "Second career as a flight attendant, third career as a full-time mom. Now, I'm back into design." What's up? "Got a new client. I'm designing a tricked-out outdoor kitchen. I think you may be just the guy to do the countertops."

Whoa! This is where alarm bells go off and I try to persuade the potential client to engage a specialist. She wouldn't hear of it. Honoring our relationship, and because I might've been able to sort out who would've been the best fabricator for her project, I agreed to meet, figuring I'd be recommending Cheng Design or Tommy Ralston. No way was I interested in or expecting to be performing on the job!

Julie had done a great job of reviewing my portfolio, on her own and with her clients, Ken and Susan Catchot. Their project was an atypical residential outdoor kitchen. The home was large, on a large piece of land, on a lake, and with grapes. An estate. Their project was equally expensive. Detailed. Ambitious.

What Julie would design for the Catchots wasn't just a kitchen. It was a themed environment. I'd done a lot of themed environments! Casinos, theme parks, malls, restaurants. This was either a very large residential kitchen or a smallish restaurant in a pretty good-sized casino.

Project at a Glance

Client: Ken and Susan Catchot

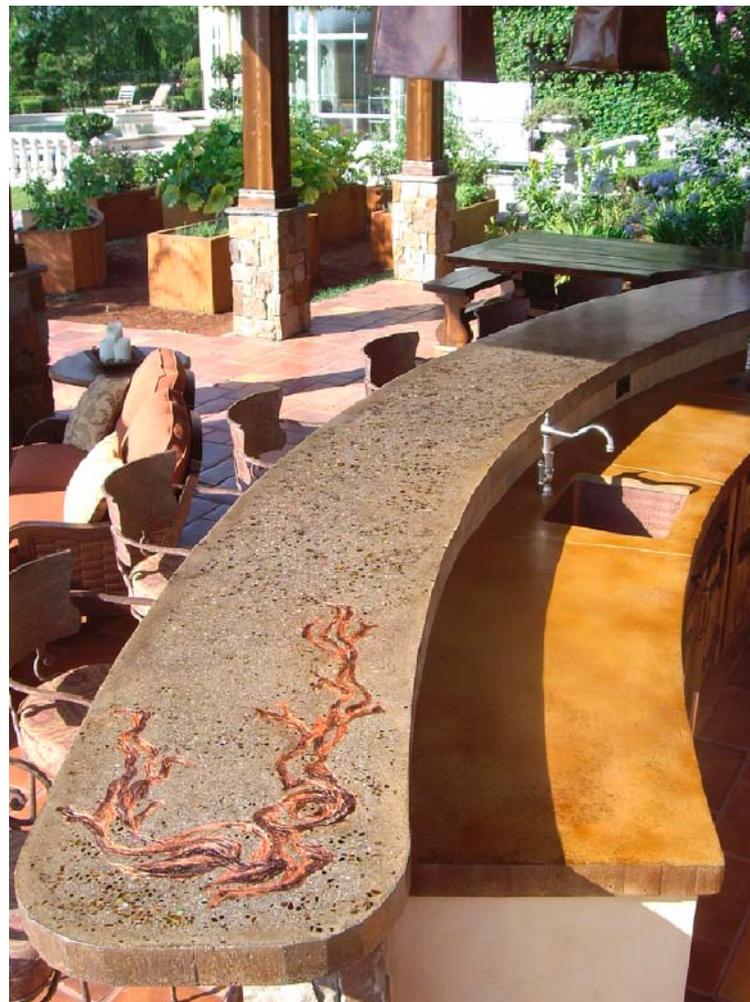
Decorative concrete contractor: the concretist inc.

Description: A 22.5-foot bar, plus about another 75 lineal feet of countertops — one beneath the bar, and one long L-shaped one running from under a roof to the open air — for an outdoor kitchen.

Materials used: Quikrete concrete augmented with Davis Colors pigments, Nycon nylon fibers and extra portland cement; Bedrock Industries broken and tumbled wine-bottle glass (greens and ambers from bottles of white wine), Colormaker Patinaetch acid stains, Colormaker Deso Dyes, Sherwin Williams Sher-Wood CAB Acrylic Lacquer

Equipment used: Inter-Tool DS301 grinder/polisher, Makita variable-speed polisher, Preval sprayers, 100-grit sanding discs from Smart Surface Technology Inc., rigid diamond cup wheels

www.theconcretist.com



Photos courtesy of the concretist

Project complete! This is a great example of a very appropriate project for cast-in-place counters (but, not done cheap or with any skimping on effort).

The themes were wine and the Oregon Ducks. The Catchots had vineyards on their property, with plans for more. They had an appetite for good wine. Who could blame them? They also had a daughter at the University of Oregon. Nice school. Good football team. How about an "O" graphic or a duck, they asked. Hmm. I'd have to figure out a way out of that one.

They liked patinas (my bag). They liked the troweling of leaves and other things into slabs. How about troweling duck feathers? Ugh! How about green and gold glass? THAT idea wasn't so bad.

I pitched the idea that we seed tumbled broken wine bottles, green and gold, into the bar top. We could trowel grape leaves right off their vines into the kitchen counters, and we could grind the bar, exposing the glass.



Greg Stanley removes bar forms. Notice the texture, similar to that of a coopered wine barrel. The concrete wasn't edged. Sharp corners will be eased with soft diamonds on a polisher.



The sculptural bar top is integrally colored and unjointed (a big risk). The countertops are natural gray with "fossil" leaf impressions and minimal joints, at or near blockouts, to control cracking and curling.

And we could form the sides of both with oak, like a barrel of chardonnay. This was an especially bitchin' idea because of the shape of the bar — 22.5 feet long, 2.5 feet wide, 3 inches thick, with an extreme cantilever and a lovely radius. It was this radius that supported the theme of the coopered cask. The size, shape and cantilever supported it being cast-in-place. And this was all reinforced by the fact that Ken was big and liked to party. A requirement: He had to be able to dance on the bar, on the very edge, so, not only was the thickness and structure of the bar top critical, the connection of the bar to the base and the base to the slab were as well.

"Ken, I didn't think this would be the case, but you've just about convinced me to do it. We may be able to do this together. You don't want to joint it right?"

"No joints!"

"OK. Because of the length, thickness and shape, it's gonna crack. If it doesn't crack, it'll curl. Or both. It's risky. You'll need big balls."

"I got 'em!"

He did. I priced it high. He wrote the check. Turns out, he was more than gutsy. He was lucky too.

How we did it

First, the soffit (underside) was formed with plywood, and the joints covered with flashing, duct-taped in place. This was covered with waterproof building paper. Returns were formed with lumber. Where returns met the soffit, the plywood was beveled, allowing for less restrained shrinkage.

The vertical edges were formed with red oak sealed with a

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Concretist Emily McClintick art-directs finisher Michael Todd as to the best “random” troweled grape leaf locations. Note the tooled contraction joints at re-entrant corners on counter. The sculptural bar wasn’t jointed.



Michael Miller lost his battle of wills with client Kenny Catchot over the idea of an additional graphic on the bar. But Emily McClintick provided a take on the concept that Miller calls a win-win alternative.

solvent-based acrylic. Joints with a potential for leakage were sealed with silicone (on the face side) and duct-taped (on the back side). We utilized several types of reinforcement: integral “stealth” fibers and three types of steel: 2-inch by 4-inch 14-gauge rolled fencing material tie-wired to flat 6-inch-by-6-inch 10-gauge mesh, tie-wired to light rebar. On the cantilevered bar, we tie-wired to heavy rebar instead and connected to the platform with U-bolts, through lumber and steel framing.

Most of the time, it’s the water, cement and stone that really make the difference in my work. This time, it was all about attention to detail in forming (preventing restraint and to provide texture), reinforcement, and connections (so when “Big Kenny” really got it on, bits wouldn’t break or it wouldn’t tip over).

The concrete (a 7-cement-sack-per yard pea gravel grout mix) was blended with a portable mixer. The bar was natural gray concrete, seeded with the broken, tumbled wine-bottle glass (from bottles of white wine only — greens and ambers, no dark greens).

The countertops would be pigmented light tan with grape leaves troweled in, placed over two cool rainy days. The finish: smooth, not hard-troweled.

No edging. However, we did bang the crap out of the forms with a rubber mallet in lieu of vibrating. The idea was to minimize, not entirely eliminate, bugholes, as well as maximize oaken texture. We’d ease sharp edges later, with a polisher and soft diamond pads. We used no curing compound, but came back the next day, covering it with plastic and plywood. Concrete was allowed to cure for about a week. When the plywood and plastic were removed (with no cracking or curling apparent yet), I cut contraction joints in the countertops (near sink blockouts and so forth) with a diamond-bladed grinder.

The bar was left to “hang” (cure) au natural. Should’ve cracked somewhere in the middle — didn’t. Should’ve curled like elf shoes at the ends — didn’t.

I figured between the “fossil leaves,” ground-to-expose wine bottle glass and the bitchin’ sculptural radius (including the barrel lines and texture), I’d wear Ken down and convince him that additional graphics were unnecessary. Not! His force of will matched mine. I offered him a \$4,000 refund ... no! I offered him \$4,000 and called him a fool ... no!



A wide variety of finishes support the themed environment: ground-to-expose, seeded, tumbled white-wine bottle glass, "fossil" grape leaves, oak, wine cask edges. Dyes and patina stains went over pigmented and natural gray concrete.

Emily McClintick had been with me from the start. She also felt that the gnarly vine graphic we had decided upon was a mistake, though not as adamantly as I. I suggested that Emily complete the graphic. She's a real talent, and Greg would have her back. Much better to have someone executing this who didn't think it was a phenomenal mistake! The Catchots and Emily agreed.

Emily's graphic was smart as could be. She transferred the vine to the bar instead of just making an image. Greg used diamond blades, grinder and moto-tool to sculpt the graphic, with the grain of the cut and depth suggesting the wiry husk of the trunk. They copper-leafed the void, overfilled it with clear epoxy, and ground it flush. A mechanical process producing a rich graphic result, it was truly brilliant. 🛠️

Michael Miller is managing principal of the concretist, an association of artists, craftspeople and others producing sensory-concrete art and architecture in cement, stone, glass and steel. the concretist has a presence in California, Nevada and Wyoming. Miller may be contacted at miller@theconcretist.com.



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How Can I Minimize Sealer Slipperiness?

by Chris Sullivan

Question: I have sealed concrete walkways and stairs that are about three months old. They are very slippery when wet or snowy. What can I do as a temporary fix in winter? I understand I can add an additive to a sealant and reseal, but I will have to wait for that solution until summer.

USING grit additives has become the most common method for reducing slipperiness when sealing decorative concrete flatwork on exterior walking surfaces. The grit additives are mixed into the sealer, then the gritty sealer is applied to the concrete. However, as the question states, in this situation the weather was too cold to reseal the concrete. So another method needs to be used until springtime arrives and temperatures rise consistently above 50 F.

The best temporary measure for dealing with slippery sealed surfaces is to broadcast sand over the affected areas. Also, using concrete-friendly snowmelt chemicals in conjunction with the sand helps eliminate snow or ice that can make a slippery surface even more dangerous. Almost any sand that is available at big-box or hardware stores will work.

While the use of grit additives mixed into sealers is fairly common, I find that most installers are not aware of what these powders are, how they work, their proper use, or the fact that different types are available. For those who have read my columns and articles, you know I am a huge proponent of understanding the products and process. This is all about gaining a better understanding of the products you use on your projects and how they are properly applied.

Grit options

When it comes to grit additives for decorative concrete sealers, you have a few different types to choose from. They all work the same way, by creating a rougher profile on the surface of the sealer.

This creates more traction, reducing the slipperiness of the sealed surface.

The old-school grit additives are silica sands. These naturally mined sands come in various particle sizes ranging from 4 to 270 mesh. (The mesh number designates the number of openings on a square inch of a sieve. The larger the mesh number, the finer the particle size.) They are either mixed into the sealer or broadcast on top of the sealer after it has been applied. Sands with mesh numbers of 90 and greater are usually used as grit additives in clear coatings.

The limitations for using silica sands as grit additives in sealers include their colors, which range from almost white to dark tan. Silica sands change the texture and aesthetics of the sealer surface. What's more, crystalline silica dust has been found to be a carcinogen.

The biggest of these limitations affecting the decorative concrete industry is how silica sand affects surface texture and aesthetics. Since decorative concrete is all about the visual appeal of the concrete surface, changing that with a silica grit additive can have a negative impact on the finished work. Silica is still used on higher-solids high-performance coatings, which are often colored, or on primer coats that require substantial surface texture, but it is not commonly used on one-part clear acrylic sealers or cure-and-seals.

It should also be noted that in recent years, there has been a push towards using recycled material, such as crumb rubber or mineral-based aggregates, as grit additives. But like silica sand, these are usually found in thicker high-performance coatings and primers. They are not common in clear thin-build sealers commonly used in decorative concrete applications.

Since final aesthetics are critical with decorative concrete projects, grit additives need to be invisible, if you will. The most common grit additives used in clear decorative concrete sealers today are just that — to a point.

The majority of grit additives used in

clear decorative concrete sealers are made up of micronized polypropylene. Sold under numerous trade names, micronized polypropylene is really not much more than ground-up plastic (the same plastic used in the pails that hold color hardener, acid stain and many other industrial and consumer products). What makes it special is that it is manufactured to provide a unique texture and uniform particle size. This size and shape gives a smoother feel to the coating surface while decreasing the slipperiness, especially when wet.

Silica sand is angulated, which disturbs the visual aesthetics of the sealer. In contrast, the uniform particle shape and size of propylene powders do not have a major impact on surface aesthetics — in most cases you cannot see a difference in the coating, only feel a difference.

It is interesting to note that polypropylene grit additives have been used as texturing agents in paint and industrial coatings long before they found their way into clear sealers in our industry.

Mix it in properly

Most common brands of propylene grit on the market will work in solvent or water-based sealer or coating systems. They have a low density, which allows them to float throughout the sealer and not sink to the bottom like silica sand or heavier grits.

When adding them to a sealer, proper mixing is important. The standard mixing ratio is between 5 percent and 15 percent by sealer solids to obtain a medium level of grit. So for example, a 25-percent solids acrylic sealer will call for 3.2 ounces of grit (10 percent load) per 1 gallon to achieve a medium level of texture. Most manufacturers preweigh the powder and designate it to be used with a certain amount of sealer.

A common mistake is to use too much grit, thinking this will increase the level of slip protection. It will help to a point, but the sealer durability can be compromised very quickly and the sealer itself can get cloudy.

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When mixing polypropylene grit additives into sealers, I always recommend using a mechanical mixer (drill) with a quality mixing blade designed for blending powders into liquids. Mix the powder into the sealer slowly and while the mixer is running. Avoid overdosing or adding the powder too fast, as this can lead to clumps and a cloudy sealer.

Lastly, if you do need a higher level of grit because the sealer is going to be used in a consistently wet or slip-prone area (kitchens, entryways, or around hot tubs and pools) consider using a larger particle size. Some manufacturers offer different-size polypropylene grits.

In today's litigious society, slip-and-fall injuries are a major source of lawsuits. Safety always needs to be the number one factor with any project. As an installer using a clear coating that can increase the potential for slips, it is your responsibility to work with your clients to educate them on the type of grit additives available and where and when they should be used. 🛠️

Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net.

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The Importance of Polymer Content in Trustworthy GFRC Mix Designs

by Jeffrey Girard

GLASS-FIBER reinforced concrete (GFRC) is a highly specialized form of concrete distinguished by a cement-rich mortar containing a very high load of alkali-resistant glass fibers. The fibers are the main ingredient responsible for producing high flexural (or bending) strengths in GFRC. High flexural strength is essential to making large, thin concrete slabs and other shapes that are strong, durable and long-lasting.

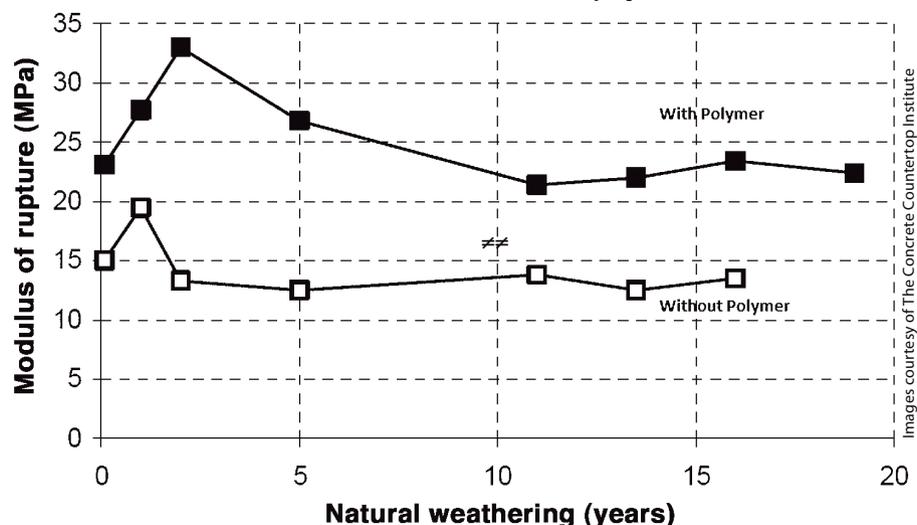
GFRC also contains another specialized ingredient that performs a vital, but not so obvious, role. It is a prime contributor to achieving the performance, aesthetic characteristics and quality levels that we and our customers demand. That ingredient is polymer, and it commonly misused and misunderstood.

This article presents a lot of calculations, but please read through to the end. They show how some popular GFRC mixes don't actually contain enough polymer, and how the "recipe" or "formula" format helps conceal that.

Most people don't understand percentages, but instead work off small batches that make 1/2 cubic foot or so. It's not obvious from simply looking at a batch formula that calls for X pounds of cement and Y pounds of fibers that the dose of polymer — or fiber — is too low to be effective. I have found that it's easy to illustrate my point if I show some batch formulas people are using and then back-calculate the proportions from those to show that these popular mix designs actually contain too little polymer and fiber.

Decades of research show that certain levels of polymer are necessary for GFRC to have its expected high compressive, flexural and tensile strengths. The manufacture of GFRC building panels is a massive industry with large research and development budgets, and by using the same practices as this industry, GFRC countertop manufacturers can be confident that their creations will have the same high quality, strength and longevity.

Modulus of rupture (flexural) strength vs. time for GFRC with and without polymer



Modulus of rupture (MOR) is the maximum fiber stress in bending at failure and represents the ultimate strength of the material. It is also known as the material's flexural strength. This graph shows that glass-fiber reinforced concrete made with polymer is stronger when it's made and as it ages than GFRC made without polymer.

MPa is the metric version of PSI. MPa stands for megapascals, equivalent to 1 million pascals.

Polymer's importance in curing GFRC

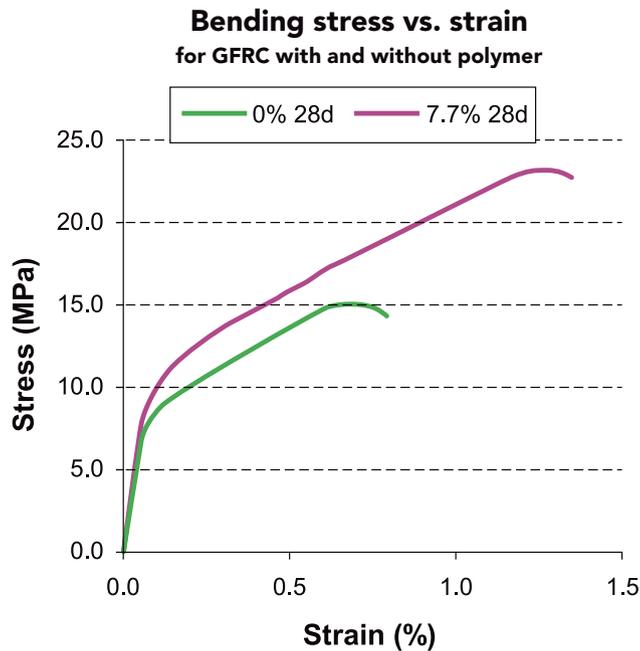
GFRC is often cast in very thin sections, typically around 1/2 inch (13 millimeters) to 3/4 inch (19 millimeters) thick. Large, thin panels of concrete have very large surface areas, so they lose moisture rapidly, and thin sections of concrete reach lower internal moisture levels much more rapidly than thicker sections of concrete do. This means that good curing practices are more critically important and must be given more time so the full thickness of concrete can reach acceptable strength levels. Concrete that dries out too soon never reaches its full potential, resulting in concrete that is weaker, more brittle, more porous, and often lighter in color than is expected.

Inadequate curing has less of a negative effect on thicker, steel-reinforced concrete, since this type of concrete often spends more time curing in the mold and its greater thickness retains more internal moisture longer. Undercuring thick steel-reinforced concrete usually doesn't affect

its structural performance nearly as much as undercuring GFRC does. Often the compressive strength of the concrete is more than adequate even when it's only partially cured, and the tensile strength of the reinforced concrete slab (or shape) comes entirely from the steel reinforcing. A properly designed steel-reinforced slab has very high flexural strength thanks to the steel. This is why polymer is not used, nor is it necessary, in conventional steel-reinforced precast concrete.

GFRC, on the other hand, is more sensitive to poor curing practices, and its strength properties (flexural, compressive and tensile) are directly dependent upon the strength development of the cement matrix, as this is what binds the fibers together and creates a solid, reinforced composite. Inadequately cured GFRC is brittle and weak in flexure because of premature fiber pullout from a low-strength, undercured cement matrix.

Polymer in the mix promotes wet



This graph shows how polymer gives concrete more flexural strength and helps it tolerate more bending (strain) before failure. The pink line is higher, longer and extends to larger strain values than the green line. The GFRC made without polymer is weaker, more brittle and therefore cannot take as much bending or stress before failing completely. Comparing the two curves shows that using the correct amount of polymer yields GFRC that is 50 percent stronger and that can take more than 50 percent additional bending strain.

curing during the first seven days after casting and also helps the concrete achieve its desired 28-day strength. Typically GFRC is cast, cured under plastic sheeting overnight, and then demolded. Using polymer, and more importantly using the right amount of polymer, permits this rapid turnaround time. The polymer acts both internally and on the surface, decreasing the porosity of the concrete so the evaporation rate is reduced. This allows the concrete to be stored in the open air and yet continue to gain strength as the concrete cures from its own internal moisture.

A 20-year durability study by Hiram Ball, Ball Consulting Ltd., found that the minimum acceptable polymer solids content that will confer composite strengths equal to or greater than those achieved with a seven-day wet cure is **6 percent polymer solids by weight**. In addition, the long-term properties of GFRC with polymer are superior to GFRC that does not contain polymer. In fact, naturally aged nonpolymer GFRC tends to be weaker and more brittle than it was when it first was made, whereas GFRC with polymer retains its early strength and flexibility.

In addition to its role as a curing aid, polymer offers a host of other benefits too:

- It reduces permeability and water absorption rates.
- It reduces shrinkage cracking and curling tendencies.
- It gives GFRC excellent freeze-thaw resistance.
- It reduces the brittleness of GFRC, letting thin sections flex more without cracking.
- It helps disperse integral pigments better for more uniform and often more intense coloration.
- It makes spraying and hand-layup of vertical surfaces easier.
- It gives concrete with a low water-cement ratio better workability.

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Calculating the right amount of polymer

As I've just stated, the effective minimum dose of polymer solids in GFRC is 6 percent by weight. Polymer is most often in a liquid form, so the calculations to figure the right amount of liquid polymer require knowledge about the solids content of the liquid polymer. Most commercial GFRC polymer is about 50 percent solids. (Two widely used brands have 51 percent solids and 47 percent solids, respectively.) If we use an example of polymer with 50 percent solids, half of the weight of the liquid is polymer solids, and the other half is water. And this water counts as part of the mix water used in the GFRC.

I will step through the calculations since this gets a bit complicated. Let's start with a typical commercial GFRC mix design that will make 10 square feet of 3/4-inch-thick backer for GFRC:

- Sand: 33.4 pounds
- 6 percent liquid polymer with 51 percent solids: 3.9 pounds
- Water (assuming a water/cement ratio of 0.32): 8.8 pounds
- Portland cement (80 percent): 26.7 pounds
- Pozzolan (20 percent): 6.7 pounds
- 3 percent AR glass fibers: 2.5 pounds (3 percent of total weight of all ingredients, including the fibers)
- **Total weight per batch: 82.0 pounds**

This mix design has 33.4 pounds of sand and 33.4 pounds (portland cement plus pozzolan) of total cementitious material. All admixtures (polymer solids, pigments, superplasticizer, etc.) are dosed based on the total cementitious material weight.

A 6-percent polymer solids dose means we need 33.4 pounds times 6 percent, or 2.0 pounds, of polymer solids (not liquid polymer). To calculate how much liquid polymer (what is poured out of the bucket) is needed, perform this calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{2.0 \text{ pounds polymer solids}} \\ & \div \mathbf{0.51 \text{ (or 51 percent solids content)}} \\ & = \mathbf{3.9 \text{ pounds of liquid polymer}} \end{aligned}$$

If you think about it, about half of the liquid polymer is water and the other half is solids, so about 2 pounds of solids is contained in about 4 pounds of liquid polymer.

To calculate the water:

1. Calculate the total amount of water needed:

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{33.4 \text{ pounds cementitious}} \\ & \times \mathbf{0.32 \text{ w/c}} \\ & = \mathbf{10.7 \text{ pounds of water}} \end{aligned}$$

How Polymer Additives Became a Part of GFRC

Glass-fiber reinforced concrete became a commercially viable material in the early 1970s with the advent of commercially available alkali-resistant glass fibers. GFRC would allow larger, thinner, more intricate architectural panels and details to be made, replacing conventional full-thickness precast units or stone and masonry elements. But it would take another decade or two before it became an economically attractive and faster alternative to the heavy and expensive materials traditionally used in commercial buildings.

Polymer was not part of the original GFRC formulation. GFRC often was simply a blend of fine sand, portland cement, water and glass fibers. Wet curing was critically important in order for the large panels to achieve their strength before installation and remain dimensionally accurate. Premature drying can lead to shrinkage and curling, a problem exacerbated in cement-rich concrete cast in large, thin sections.

To become strong panels that would remain true to shape, the large building panels had to be wet-cured in large curing rooms, where they were stacked and stored for a week at a time. It's not

uncommon for a large plant to make a few thousand square feet of GFRC per day, so the curing rooms had to be large enough to accommodate this voluminous throughput.

Commercial GFRC includes a very wide variety of products and applications, including building facade panels, planters, tiles and fireplace surrounds, but multistory building panels were what forced many factories to build warehouse-sized curing rooms to produce strong, durable products. Naturally this increased the manufacturers' overhead substantially, raising the per-square-foot cost of GFRC.

Polymer was introduced in the United States to overcome the severe economic impact imposed by the necessary and expensive seven-day wet cure. Studies performed in the 1980s and 1990s established the type and amount of polymer that would allow the GFRC to be stored in the open air after it was demolded. GFRC thus produced would retain enough internal moisture that its strength after being air-cured for seven days was equivalent to the strength it would have if it was wet-cured for seven days.

Even though polymer is an

expensive additive, using it made GFRC economically feasible, because it eliminated the need for large curing rooms (and the overhead associated with building and maintaining them). Now large panels could be cast, cured under plastic overnight, and then demolded. They were subsequently stored outdoors in open-air lots, all without compromising strength or dimensional tolerances.

The adoption of polymer as a curing aid helped reduce the manufacturing costs of GFRC, making it economically attractive to produce, specify and use. In addition, the polymer helps the GFRC retain its integrity, high strength and flexibility for many decades, even when exposed to harsh environmental conditions.

The polymer used in commercial GFRC is a liquid acrylic copolymer emulsion that contains defoamers and other proprietary additives that aid in producing architectural-grade concrete with a high-quality surface finish. The polymer is UV-stable, unaffected by alkalinity, and conforms to the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute's PCI MNL 130, Quality Control Manual, 2nd edition, Appendix G for curing admixtures used in GFRC.

2. Some of that water comes from the liquid polymer. So now we need to calculate how much water will come from the polymer we're adding. We've already calculated that 3.9 pounds of liquid polymer is needed, and that contains 2.0 pounds of polymer solids, leaving 1.9 pounds of water being contributed by the liquid polymer.

Now subtract that water from the total amount needed:

$$\begin{array}{r} 10.7 \text{ pounds} \\ - 1.9 \text{ pounds} \\ \hline = 8.8 \text{ pounds water to add} \end{array}$$

Changing the w/c ratio alters only how much water we must batch out (more or less than 8.8 pounds). It does not change the amount of liquid polymer needed.

Calculating the right amount of fiber

For completeness, I'll calculate the weight of fibers called for, too. Unlike other admixtures, fibers are not dosed based on dry cementitious weight. A 3-percent fiber load means 3 pounds of fiber have been added to 97 pounds of nonfiber material to make 100 pounds of GFRC backer.

We first have to determine how much nonfiber material we have. Adding up our ingredients (everything but the fiber), we have:

$$\begin{array}{r} 33.4 \text{ pounds sand} \\ + 26.7 \text{ pounds cement} \\ + 6.7 \text{ pounds pozzolan} \\ + 3.9 \text{ pounds liquid polymer} \\ + 8.8 \text{ pounds water} \\ \hline = 79.5 \text{ pounds of nonfiber material} \end{array}$$

So rather than having 97 pounds of material, we have 79.5 pounds of material. We can use ratios to find the amount of fibers to add.

In English: 79.5 pounds is to 97 pounds as (unknown fiber quantity) is to 3 pounds.

In mathematical terms: $79.5 \div 97 = x \div 3$. Do the algebra: $(79.5 \times 3) \div 97 = 2.458$ pounds of fibers needed, rounded up to **2.5 pounds**.

The total amount of backer would be:

$$\begin{array}{r} 79.5 \text{ pounds} \\ + 2.5 \text{ pounds} \\ \hline = 82.0 \text{ pounds} \end{array}$$

These calculations are complex but essential for correct GFRC mix design. I've included them to give you a full understanding of GFRC mix calculations. It is easier to present GFRC mixes in 10-square-foot batches, which you can then multiply by the number of 10-square-foot units you have. For example, if you need to make 52 square feet of GFRC, you can simply multiply your 10-square-foot batch by 5.2. Alternatively, I have a GFRC mix calculator that asks you to enter only the square footage (or meters), after which it produces a batch report.

Examples of poor GFRC mix design

As GFRC has become more popular over the last five or six years as the go-to concrete mix design for concrete countertops, I have gotten more calls about cracking, curling and other issues that I believe are directly related to a disturbing trend: mix designs that use too little polymer and too little fiber. These mix designs run

counter to decades of well-studied commercial GFRC mix design and would fail to meet the quality levels required by certified commercial GFRC plants.

Instead of producing a high-flexural-strength concrete that is strong and resists cracks and shrinking, users of these mix designs are instead making brittle, underreinforced concrete that has low flexural strength, higher porosity and greater shrinkage and crack tendencies.

For example, this mix design seems to be quite popular judging by the amount of problems I'm seeing, and it clearly uses too little polymer and fiber to produce the quality and strength of GFRC that the users of this mix are expecting:

- Cement: 23.5 pounds
- Pozzolan: 2.6 pounds
- Sand: 21.5 pounds
- Water: 7 pounds
- Liquid polymer (50 percent solids): 1.5 pounds
- Glass fiber: 1 pounds

Using the calculation methods previously mentioned, the above mix design has only 2.9 percent polymer solids content and only 1.8 percent fiber content! (I'm using 50 percent solids as a middle ground between the commercial polymers that are 47 percent and 51 percent solids.)

Another mix design I've seen using powdered all-in-one additives is:

- Cement: 30 pounds
- Sand: 30 pounds
- Water: 9 pounds
- Dry polymer blend: 0.45 pounds
- Glass fiber: 1.8 pounds

This mix design has insignificantly low 1.5 percent polymer solids content and 2.5 percent fiber content!

Concrete has rules that must be followed if it is to produce the kind of performance that is being expected from it. GFRC is a well-studied material purposefully developed to create large, thin structural shells, panels and other high-quality architectural products. It's an internationally used and recognized material that has certification requirements and standards for quality and strength. The mix designs and ingredients are widely used and tested for performance and consistency.

It's true that using the required amount of polymer and fibers does increase the cost of the material, but that's what it takes to make a high-performance material like GFRC. Extraordinary performance demands extraordinary care and attention to detail, and paying attention to what the world has done for the last few decades is a good way to ensure your GFRC will perform to your expectations. 

Jeffrey Girard is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute and a pioneer of engineered concrete countertops. He may be reached at info@concretecountertopinstitute.com.

Should You Overlay or Replace That Cracked Concrete Surface?

by Doug Carlton

THE question “to overlay or replace” is more complex than some will admit. Unfortunately, the decision is often left to you, the decorative overlay professional.

Most of you will be surprised by my opinion as to why so many overlay projects fail even as our overlay material options continue to improve. Need I remind you what can potentially happen when the substrate beneath your new work of art fails? Nothing will undermine a customer’s confidence quicker than overlay delamination. This is not the type of exposure most decorative professionals need, ever.

While preparing to write this article I researched the life cycle, or life expectancy, of a typical modern-day slab of concrete. My hope was that an engineer somewhere had compiled the data you could use as a do-or-don’t rule of thumb. Sorry, no such luck. What I found is that each potential concrete canvas has its own variables that will affect whether or not an overlay is recommended.

Many of these variables hinge on good concrete practices at time of concrete placement, and who honestly knows the level of effort exerted decades ago? In most cases the only information you get is by evaluating the concrete’s surface. Each person contemplating their next overlay project must use due diligence before making such a big commitment.

It is at this point we must discuss why so many concrete overlay projects fail. Each one of you reading has already formulated an opinion of the number one reason overlays fail. Could the reason be cracks or moisture-related? Maybe too much damage stemming from freeze-thaw? None are the primary reason most projects fail. The number one reason most fail is because the decision-maker fails to recognize that the concrete canvas at hand is not a good candidate for an overlay. This poor judgment is often inspired by a need for work or desire to earn money, but sorry, neither should influence such an important do-or-don’t decision.

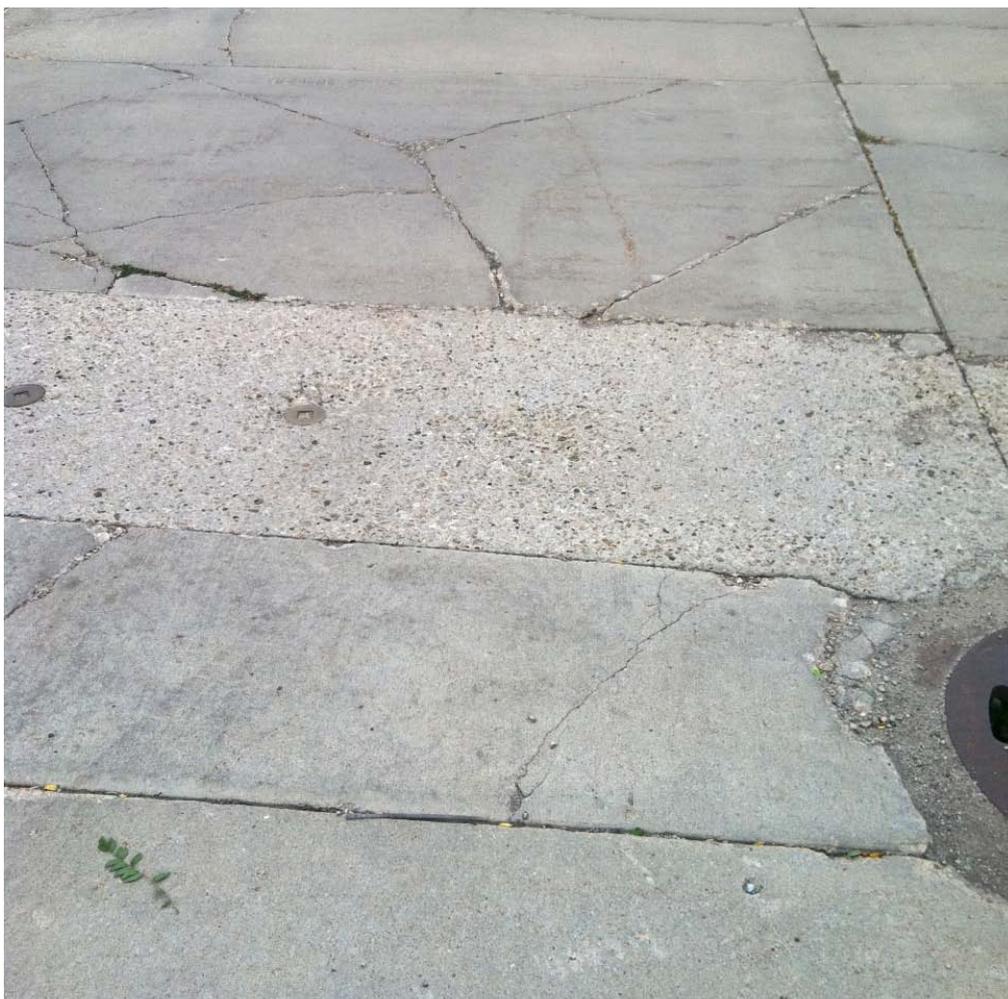


Photo courtesy of Doug Carlton

First Federal Savings Bank, Sheridan, Wyo., asked Doug Carlton if there was an overlay that could improve their cracked, uneven parking lot. He told them no. The crack pattern shows a problem beyond random cracking. He guessed that the concrete is too thin or not properly reinforced, or that the subgrade had failed.

Each decorative concrete artisan must appreciate the opportunities created when you blend polymer with cement, creating a thin cement surface with such strong adhesion power. But there are many times when polymer overlay abilities cannot fix a subpar concrete substrate. The ability to accept this as fact will create customer trust that will eventually separate you from the competition.

When not to overlay

Shifting, or lifting, concrete is rarely a good candidate for resurfacing or an overlay.

Broken, lifting concrete solves one huge mystery ordinarily unknown by anyone other than the original placement crew. In nearly all cases, broken and lifting concrete is not properly reinforced. This means the odds of overlay failure are too great to risk spending effort and dollars attempting to create something artistic. It’s your job to make the call to not overlay in such a situation.

It amazes me how many overlay material representatives will argue the aforementioned. Some suppliers will even promote gapping crack repair as part of an

overall overlay package when this procedure will only temporarily postpone the inevitable necessity of concrete replacement. Of course, the resurfacing products work well to create a new surface. But they will do nothing to improve the concrete's structural stability. To promote anything beyond the ability to create a new surface is flat-out misleading.

Most of you realize by now that the decorative concrete trade is very profitable for those willing to put quality and trust before a quick profit. I'm sure the same is true on the supply side of decorative products, too. That's why there is no reason to push the limits by forcing something unrealistic onto a subpar concrete canvas. There are far too many candidates more than willing to entrust your ability to transform their worn surface into something extraordinary. The ability to spot good overlay concrete candidates is the hinge pin of your overlay career. 🛠️

Doug Carlton is working on his third decade in the decorative concrete industry. He's the owner of Carlton Construction, located at the base of the Big Horn Mountains in northeastern Wyoming. Doug can be reached at carltondoug@sbcglobal.net.



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Rubber Safety Surfacing Offers Color, Comfort and Security

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

ACROSS the country, safety surfacing products are gaining in popularity as more people discover that rubber and rubber-like granules not only feel good under the feet and cushion a fall but can also look good, too.

“It’s a neat way of treating broken concrete without ripping the surface out,” says John Schroeter, owner of Ideal Surfacing in Toronto, Ontario, who has been in the rubber safety surfacing business for three years. “A typical project takes a day or two to do and the surface is ready for use in 24 hours. And you don’t need any heavy equipment.”

He says that for his projects, he uses colorful TPV (thermoplastic vulcanized) rubber — “It’s a fabulous product that’s very UV-stable” — as well as a mix of virgin rubber and recycled tires, or just recycled tires, for people looking for a more inexpensive option. “The black rubber is more functional for a driveway or garage,” he says. “It’s a great way to revitalize asphalt or a heavily cracked concrete driveway.”

Schroeter says he learned about rubber safety surfacing when working as a general management consultant. He found the idea of mitigating risk in commercial settings



Photo courtesy of American Recycling Center Inc.

Florida homeowners opted to resurface a patched and repaired concrete pool deck with TPV rubber.

attractive. “I live up North where people have plenty of chances to slip and fall,” he says. “Creating a decorative look that also had functionality intrigued me.”

Besides the obvious uses of rubber surfaces for athletic running tracks, playgrounds and water parks, he says, they work well for all sorts of applications where safety is a concern, such as entrances to grocery stores and public buildings. Stairs that lead up to a house or down to a subway are also good candidates for rubber toppings.

Schroeter says he’s even done a number of “vanity garages,” one with an inlaid 10-foot-wide Harley-Davidson logo made out of TPV rubber. “These garages are like clubhouses,” he says. “(My clients) can comfortably walk and kneel on the floor, which doesn’t get cold.”

He’s also graced the floor of an elaborate play castle with a cobblestone pattern and

“Finding Nemo” characters. Corporate logos, however, are much more common in his line of work.

Other residential uses include pool decks, especially for homes where rambunctious children live, says Rochelle Bagwell, business development manager for American Recycling Center Inc. “Some residential applicators like to use epoxy and stone mix for the garage area and then switch to the same color scheme in rubber for the patio and around the pool,” she says. “And they can make it look the same.”

Recently, there has been an increase of use of rubber in assisted living facilities projects, she adds. Rubber surfaces are suitable for common areas and patios, where stumbles could be cushioned and wheelchairs and walkers could easily glide.

“Safety surfaces are great for the elderly and little people,” Schroeter says.



Photo courtesy of American Recycling Center Inc.

TPV can be applied with a trowel in more than one bright color, as seen here in a four-season room overlooking Rainbow Lake in Michigan.



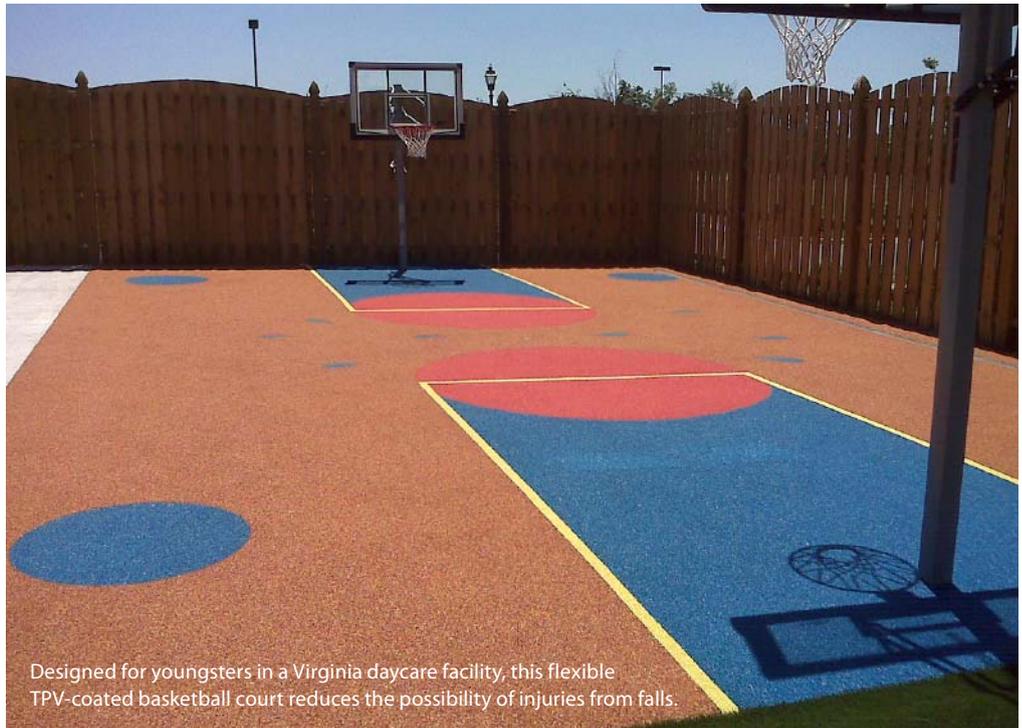
One of the more whimsical projects John Schroeter, of Toronto, Ontario, has done involves a children's castle, complete with precast cartoon characters made from colorful TPV. The TPV floor inside looks like cobblestone.

EPDM vs. TPV

According to Bagwell, decorative concrete contractors already have troweling skills, so safety surfacing is a natural fit with their other flooring options. Of particular interest to those in the decorative concrete industry are two types of synthetic rubber — EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer) rubber and TPV. American Recycling Center sells both of these rubber granules in various sizes to an array of companies that make their own surfacing systems.

EPDM has been around for more than 20 years. Within the last 10 years, TPV was developed as an option thanks to advancements in technology. “If you were holding up a handful of each product, you would not see any difference between the two,” Bagwell says. Preference largely depends on the project, the amount of UV stability needed and the color desired. Both EPDM and TPV surfaces can be stamped with the same tools used for concrete.

EPDM and TPV granules are colored rubber polymers ground into specific sizes for the best yields during install, with the standard sizes a mix of 1-3 mm or 1-4 mm.



Designed for youngsters in a Virginia daycare facility, this flexible TPV-coated basketball court reduces the possibility of injuries from falls.

Photo courtesy of American Recycling Center Inc.

Generally, the granules are available in 18 to 24 standard colors, which can be custom-blended during the install. Some installers, like Schroeter, offer their customers an option to add a percentage of black recycled

rubber, also known as crumb rubber, to their mix.

Overall, Bagwell says, American Recycling Center’s testing has found TPV to be more UV-stable than EPDM. The company also found it offers better color consistency throughout each batch and is stronger than most EPDM products because it is pretreated with a polymer during manufacturing.

Over the last few years, lower-quality EPDM products were introduced to the marketplace, she says. They were prematurely aging and, because of that, tarnishing the topping’s reputation. “But not all EPDMs are manufactured alike,” she says. “There are still good quality EPDMs manufactured out there.” The material remains popular among some longtime users.

When TPV was first introduced, it cost more than EPDM but the price has come down over the years. “Both cost about the same now,” Bagwell says, and because of that TPV is gaining ground.

Choosing a binder

There are basically two types of glue used to bind together safety surfacing: aromatic and aliphatic.

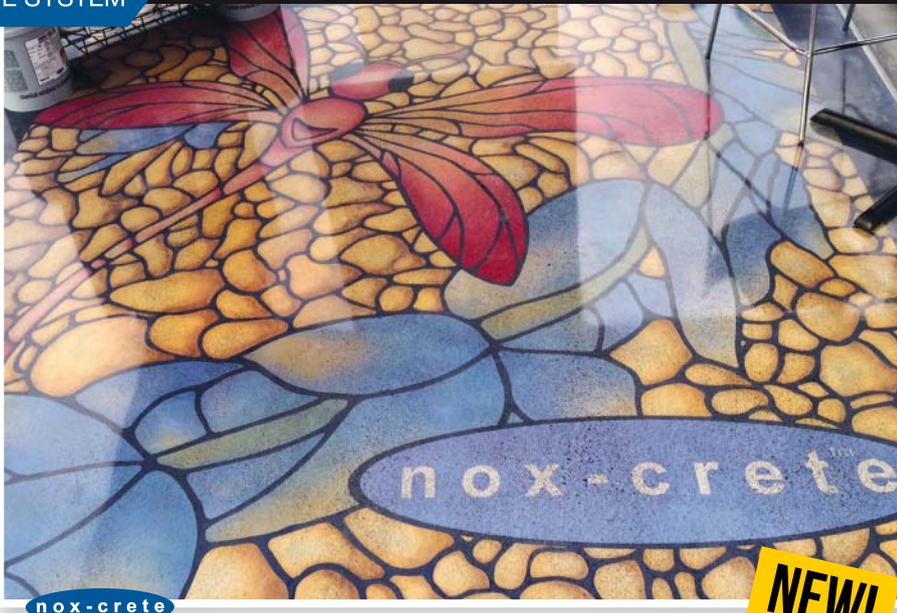
Both are effective binding agents overall, but the oil in the aromatic binder tends to amber when exposed to ultraviolet light, creating a yellowish tint that many find unappealing, especially over light colors

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or greens and blues. The initial yellow tint isn't as noticeable on terra cotta or browns, Bagwell adds.

"On a sunny day, you can see the aromatic binder on a surface slowly amber as it starts to cure," she says, unlike the more costly aliphatic binder that does not.

In time, the yellow color will dissipate as the aromatic binder on the top of the granules wears away. "The surface will 'burn back' to the color the client originally picked," Bagwell says. The clear aliphatic topcoat also wears away, but there is no color change when it does.

"About 90 percent of the playgrounds you see are done with an aromatic binder," she says, with the remaining 10 percent incorporating aliphatic. "The aliphatic costs twice as much and is cost-prohibitive for many large projects."

Rounding out the choices

In addition to EPDM and TPV rubber surfacing granules, there's an Australian newcomer that's making headway in the safety surfacing market. Available in North America for almost two years and now also manufactured here, PolySoft is a pour-in-place surfacing solution composed of polyolefin plastomer (plastic) granules chemically bonded together with a two-part aliphatic polyurethane.

PolySoft is available in 18 colors that can be blended to create hundreds of color combinations. The material comes in premeasured kits and is installed by certified installers to promote consistency and reliability, says Philip Baker, PolySoft's business development manager for North America. It will adhere to most surfaces and is applied over a layer of general-purpose synthetic rubber (usually SBR) where extra cushioning is needed.

PolySoft granules, he continues, are extremely resilient to UV rays, chlorine, chemicals and cleaning agents. The granules are coated with a heat-reflective layer, allowing a PolySoft surface to remain up to 70 degrees cooler than traditional rubber.

For play environments, Baker says, PolySoft can be installed as a permeable surface or as an impervious system. The impervious systems' unique characteristics allow it to be applied vertically. "You can't do that with rubber," Baker notes.

The application Baker thinks is most appealing to decorative concrete installers,

however, is the PolySoft broadcast system, which involves broadcasting the small PolySoft granules over the top of a layer of flexible epoxy and then sealing the surface. This method still produces a nonslip, chemical- and UV-resistant surface, he says, and is a good choice for places such as locker rooms, showers and indoor pool surrounds where you want a completely sealed solution.

"Unlike the other two systems, I wouldn't

recommend this application as a play surface in areas where kids are running around," Baker says. "But if you need a reliable nonslip surface, it's perfect." North American customers for this system include Gold's Gym, Destination Hotels & Resorts and U.S. prisons. 🗑️

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A Contractor Profits from Safety Surfacing

When asked if concrete contractors should add safety surfacing to their roster of services, George Coon's answer was a question that was succinct and to the point: "Do they want to make money?"

If so, the owner and operator of AquaSeal Resurfacing LLC, in Louisville, Ohio, says they should look into it. The topping option is growing in popularity and application uses. "I've been a caulking, sealing and restoring concrete for over 40 years and this is a lot easier to do," he says.

Coon has been in the safety surfacing business since 2006 when among the toppings he distributed and installed was PebbleFlex, a spherical-shaped polyurethane granule that predates the polyolefin PolySoft. In 2011, when Landscape Structures Inc., a leading designer and manufacturer of commercial playground equipment, acquired the PebbleFlex company, his distribution services were no longer needed.

Soon, as the PebbleFlex product became harder and harder to get from LSI, Coon discovered PolySoft and fell in love with it. "It is 10 times better than anything else out there," says Coon, who now distributes and installs PolySoft, as well as other safety surfacing products. "No mold will grow on PolySoft in and out of the water. Colors always stay bright and vibrant because it has a UV inhibitor. And it can stay up to 60 degrees cooler than other surfaces." Not to mention, he adds, it can be troweled vertically and overhead, something you can't do with EPDM or TPV rubber granules.

Coon says he still uses PebbleFlex when a customer requests it — "I still have some excess pallets and I've been buying other installers' leftover stock" — but repairs to existing PebbleFlex surfaces can be made with PolySoft.

The trick to applying either product is to use a screed box.



In this demonstration, a man applies a flexible epoxy to a surface and then broadcasts PolySoft microgranules over the top.



Photos courtesy of PolySoft

Made by an Australian company, PolySoft is an excellent choice for water park surfaces because the plastic product is designed to inhibit the growth of mold, resist the effects of chlorine and retain its nonslip attributes even when wet.

"It makes production go faster and reduces job time from four days to two," he says. "And the screed box doesn't waste any material. It puts down exactly 3/8 inch." He also uses power trowels, such as the Power Pole Finisher, from LR Tools Inc., for smaller jobs and the HoverTrowel for larger jobs.

Coon says he also does quite a bit of broadcast work with PolySoft, the safety surfacing material he installs most often. "You just put the binder down and throw the smaller granules into the binder like you're feeding chickens," he says. "All you need is a 5-gallon bucket. You don't even need a trowel."

The resulting surface is similar to an epoxy and stone floor, he says, "but it's more rubbery. It grabs the feet and will keep someone from slipping, unlike epoxy floor grit. And it's easy to clean." He recently completed broadcast jobs for Great Wolf Lodge in Dallas, Texas, and Stowe Mountain Resort in Vermont. 🚚

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Advanced Tools for Coating Application

by Ted Uram

A GOOD set of tools goes a long way. When it comes to applying urethanes, epoxies and other concrete coatings, it's a necessity. In a world where you have to constantly monitor moisture issues, pH, efflorescence, alkali-silica reactivity, surface temperature variants, and constantly changing weather conditions, the last thing you need to worry about is an underperforming tool.

So, which ones are best? As far as brands go, that's relative. Ask around. Talk to people you trust. They'll tell you.

But when you ask around, you will also find you keep hearing certain types of tools recommended again and again.

What follows isn't a comprehensive list, but these are some mainstays you ought to include in your arsenal, whether you're installing a garage floor or a warehouse surface. We also asked the experts how best to use them.

Photos courtesy of Southern Arkansas University photo team

Chip and synthetic brushes

Not all brushes are created equal, and there is a wide variety to choose from. So how do you select the best brushes to fit your needs? Let's take a quick look at two of the most common: the standard chip brush and the synthetic.

Standard chip brushes are cheap. They are smaller brushes and usually come with a wooden handle. The bristles are made from inexpensive materials, such as horsehair or polyester. Chip brushes are meant to be used once and then discarded.

Tim Seay, of Decorative Concrete of Virginia, a full-service concrete finisher out of Lynchburg, Va., says chip brushes are the best choice for "cutting in" edges when applying thicker coatings.

"We use chip brushes on epoxies and urethanes that will self-level on their own after we cut in the edges," Seay says. "These brushes are much less expensive than the synthetic brushes, so we just throw them out after we use them with any two-part epoxy or urethane."

Another important factor when choosing a brush: What should you use

when applying a solvent-based product? Epoxies, urethanes, acrylics and other coatings are either water-based or solvent-based. If the formulation is based on water, you typically won't see an interaction with the brush. But if the formulation is based on any type of solvent, the glue that holds the bristles in some brushes could dissolve, which could leave brush fibers on the finished surface.

Victoria Simpson Collins, of Capitol Decorative Concrete, Easley, S.C., has been installing decorative concrete for 22 years, and she is very careful about her choice of brush.

"I'm always very aware of what a xylene-based product can do to my brushes and rollers," she says. "If they are not designated for use with solvents, they will melt down and fall apart."

Like Seay, Collins uses brushes as a cut-in tool. She also uses them to install specialty logos in her signature acid-stained floors. "I have even used artists' horsehair brushes to install logos requiring acrylic application of primary colors," she says.

Rollers

On smaller floors, rollers are a great way to apply a wide variety of coatings. There are obvious differences in nap. For epoxies, and clear coats over acid stains, Collins recommends a roller cover with a 3/8-inch nap. "This lower nap ensures that no hairs are pulled from the roller during a solvent-based install," Collins says. "It also leaves a smooth, even glossy finish."

For stamped concrete and reseals, Collins suggests using a 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch nap. "When sealing stamped concrete, you don't want to leave extra sealer in the grout lines and textures of the pattern. This can cause shinier spots. Using higher-nap rollers, you can pick up the extra sealer that can settle into these depressions in the patterns."

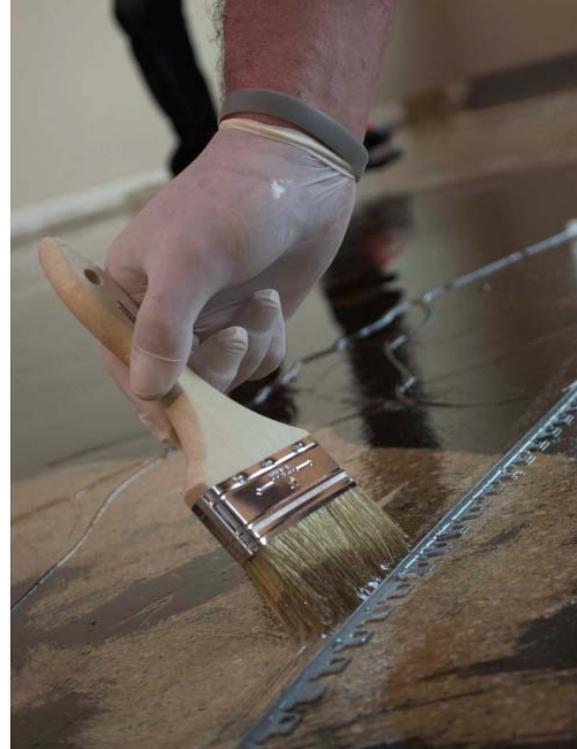
Seay prefers a mohair roller for low-viscosity sealers. "These put down a thin and even coat and leave less lint than other rollers." Seay also has a good tip for rolling sealers: "We roll it in a V pattern across the floor. Then we backroll it by pushing the roller forward and lifting as it is moving.

I feel like when we roll the last pass by only pushing it one direction and lifting the roller, it leaves fewer stop-start lines between each roller pass."

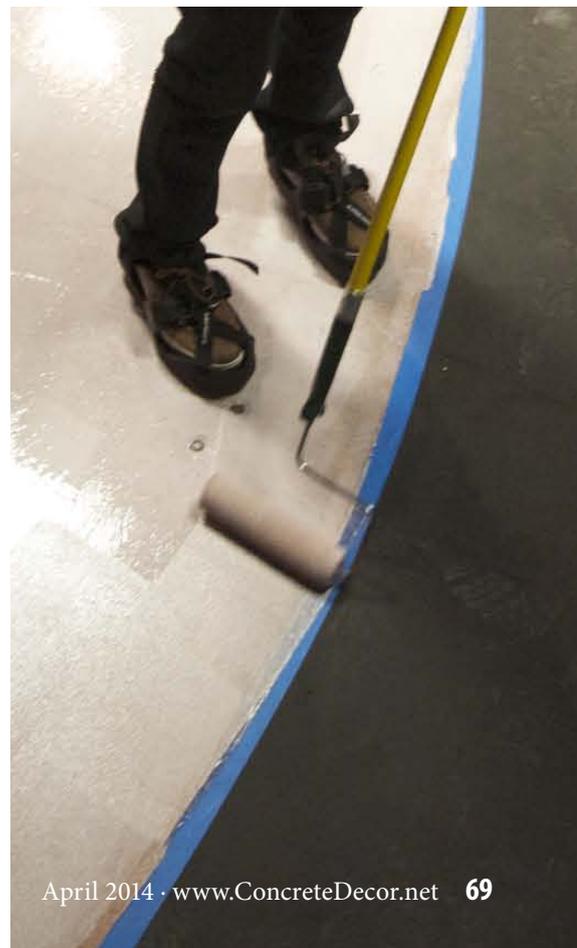
On occasion, Collins uses various faux rollers to achieve special effects. "I especially prefer a sea sponge roller, which comes in both 6-inch and 12-inch lengths," Collins says.

She recently installed a 5,000-square-foot project using solvent-based pigmented sealer. The customer asked her to mimic a Corian countertop using sealer tinted cream and white. "I used a low-nap roller to install the white and then used the sea sponge roller to add the highlights of cream. Both being solvent-based sealers, the two colors emulsified and became a blended color."

Most roller frames (the part that holds the roller) are manufactured to fit on telescoping extension poles that will easily allow you to reach out across a 10-foot by 10-foot section. Avoid using wooden poles as they can bend and crack.



Seay uses synthetic brushes whenever he cuts in edges with any lower-viscosity clear sealer. "I always buy angled synthetic brushes because I think it helps you to keep a cleaner edge," he says.



Squeegees

Large-surface floors are no longer rolled these days. Instead squeegees are becoming the popular choice, especially when it comes to very large, commercial surfaces.

“We use a rubber squeegee whenever we spread epoxy,” Seay says. “We typically use a 14-inch or 16-inch squeegee instead of the 2-foot- or 3-foot-wide ones, because they don’t leave as much epoxy in the lower spots on the floor.” Seay explains that most floors have a certain degree of waviness to them and a wide squeegee will not be able to pull enough material out of the low spots.

Photo courtesy of Seymour Midwest



Magic Trowels

Thanks to a blade designed to smooth and spread while minimizing trowel lines, a Magic Trowel (from TexMaster Tools) is handy for most overlay projects, Seay says. “When we pour stamped overlays, we use a Magic Trowel to get the material smooth before we stamp it. We also apply skimcoats with a Magic Trowel for many of our troweled or sprayed overlay products.” One good tip, Seay says, is to cut the points off of the edges of the blade. “We try to round them so that it leaves fewer lines in the floor.”

Seay also likes to use a hand-held rubber squeegee to remove water from concrete countertops after they’ve been ground. “Just rinsing a countertop to remove the water and slurry doesn’t do a good enough job of cleaning it,” he says.

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T-Bar applicators

Where squeegees have replaced the use of rollers for applying coatings over larger square footages, T-bars are fast becoming the tool of choice for applying smooth and even sealers.

A T-bar applicator is a weighted, rigid frame fixed to a 90-degree swivel. They are used to rapidly pull thinner coatings smoothly and evenly over large surfaces. Depending on the application, different pads can be attached to the tool, including microfiber blades, foam sleeves for water-based and solvent-based coatings, and even mop heads. Some even work with backpacks that autofeed to the head.

Julio Hallack, of Concrete by Hallack, in Turlock, Calif., became interested in concrete coatings when he visited the World of Concrete in the early 1990s. Today, he swears by the T-bar applicator.

“In the old days, you used mops to put down your sealer,” Hallack explains. “Then you had to backroll it. It took four employees two days to get the job done.” By using a T-bar applicator, Hallack has cut that time in half — and with half as many employees. “You can apply up to six coats of sealer to 45,000 square feet in just two days.”



Photo courtesy of Padco Inc.

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THUNDERSTRUCK	PARADISE CITY	SWEET EMOTION	RIDE THE LIGHTNING
BACK IN BLACK	BACK IN THE SADDLE	WHISKEY IN THE JAR	MONEY TALKS
NOTHING ELSE MATTERS	HYSTERIA	BARK AT THE MOON	SATELLITE BLUES
NOVEMBER RAIN	MR. BROWNSTONE	FADE TO BLACK	WILD SIDE

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Basic Steps for Using a T-Bar Applicator

(Always read the manufacturer's instructions.)

1. Choose the type of head depending on the type of sealer (waterborne or solvent), and the application (coat or recoat).
2. For new surfaces, make sure the floor is free of moisture, dust and debris and that the surface is the proper temperature for applying the coating (check manufacturer's specs).
3. For recoats, clean the surface with a mild detergent floor-cleaning product. Rinse well. Squeegee remaining water off the surface. Allow plenty of time to dry.
4. This is a two-man job. Have the first person pour a long bead of product across the floor.
5. Dampen the head in the bead. Angle the head at a 45-degree angle and pull along the bead, moving steadily across the floor.
6. Turn the head and travel in the opposite direction. Maintain the 45-degree angle. Continue until the entire surface is coated. Backroll if necessary.

Hallack says that applying thinner-build coats is very important when applying sealers, and using the T-bar allows you to do just that. "Thin, thin, thin. There's no comparison to the T-bar," Hallack says. "When you're dealing with sealers it's all about how thin you can get the coating and how fast you can pull it down."

Doug Bhatt, of Re-Crete, in Bedford, Texas, also sings the T-bar's praises. He uses one to apply sacrificial acrylic finishes.

"Interior decorative concrete projects aren't complete until an acrylic floor finish is applied as a sacrificial coat to protect the stain and sealer," Bhatt says. "Acrylic floor finishes protect the sealer and can be reapplied when they are worn down without having to strip the finish every time."

Bhatt says that whenever the surface starts to show signs of wear, usually in high-traffic areas, it's time to reapply. "This is done by thoroughly cleaning the floor and then applying the floor finish the same way in the areas that show wear."

Like Hallack, Bhatt says that building up thinner layers is better than applying one thick coat. "Putting down a thin coat is very important," Bhatt says. "This dries faster and is the floor finish manufacturer's recommended application method."

Bhatt says that with a T-bar fitted with a 30-inch floor coater he can apply 1,000 square feet of a sacrificial floor finish in about 10 minutes. "You just can't beat the ease of use of the T-bar." Another advantage, Bhatt says, is that it leaves no roller marks.

David Marling is the senior sales and consulting manager for DCS Facility Services, a Rocklin, Calif., company that maintains more than 9,000,000 square feet of retail and grocery surfaces every night. Many automated versions of the T-bar are gravity-fed, which

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The Automatic T-Bar Applicator from The Surtec System features a finger-touch control valve, chemical-resistant Viton seals, and an applicator width of 18 inches to 24 inches. The backpack tank assembly weighs only 24 pounds when at its 2-gallon capacity. It's safe to use with both waterborne and solvent-based sealers.

limits them to thin, water-based sealers. But Marling uses one that connects to a pressurized backpack that can hold up to 2 gallons of product and can accommodate both water-based and solvent-based sealers. "It works well for all types of coatings," Marling says. "I use the T-bar for all coatings that require coverage of 550 to 1,000 square feet per gallon, and for both waterborne and solvent-based coatings, including the wet-look lacquers used on decorative concrete."

For solvent sealers, he adds about a half a gallon of solvent, shakes well, and runs the solvent back into the solvent container. "This keeps the unit from becoming contaminated and sticky." 🛠️

Basic Instructions for Cleaning a T-Bar Applicator

(Always check the manufacturer's instructions.)

1. For waterborne coatings, rinse the head with water. Use a bread knife to gently scrape the material off. Be sure to clean the entire assembly as well. Air-dry.
2. For solvent-based coatings, use the corresponding solvent (check manufacturer's specs) to wipe the head clean. Be sure to clean the entire assembly as well. Air-dry.
3. For automatic T-bars, follow the directions above, making sure to pump either water or solvent through the hose. Hold down the trigger and pump until the fluid runs clean. Be sure to dispose of your rinsing agent in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Getting the Gunk Off:

A Guide to Removing Built-Up Residue from Concrete

by Heidi Hudnall and Wendy Runyon-Ricker

SURFACE preparation is the crucial beginning stage of any concrete polishing process. It is especially important in old office buildings, warehouses or department stores where tile or carpeting once covered the flooring, leaving behind residue that must be removed before applying an overlay or polishing. Some of the major culprits include carpet glue, black mastic from VCT (vinyl composition tile), thin-set materials, epoxy coatings and rubber membranes, to name a few.

There are four main methods for addressing these residues: grinding, shotblasting, shaving, and buffing with a swing machine. Each has specific benefits and specialties.

Selecting the best method

Prior to determining which method most aptly suits a job, there are several factors to consider. However, keep in mind that there is not always a cut-and-dried solution. Every floor is different and brings with it unique difficulties.

A good place to begin is to assess the surface you are working on. Look at the type of residue that needs to be removed, the concrete hardness and the ultimate profile you desire. Typically, grinding is ideal for removing epoxies and glue. Shotblasting works well at cleaning off thin coatings and paint, shaving removes epoxies, mastics and paint, and buffing is preferred for glue and thin-set.

In addition, grinding and buffing with a

swing machine achieves a smoother profile, whereas shotblasting and shaving may be a tad rougher.

Next, look at the size and nature of the job. For a greater square footage, a grinder or shotblaster is ideal because either can cover more surface area. Buffing with one swing machine is perfect for smaller jobs, while a larger area can be covered with four or five machines.

For a job that first requires a concrete overlay application, shotblasting and shaving may be ideal, whereas grinding is the best alternative for a purely polished concrete job.

Another factor is cost, or how much you wish to spend on surface preparation. Inevitably you have a set budget, so for the

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most economical approach, buffing with a swing machine is common. Grinding and shaving can be more costly because of the diamonds that accompany them, and shotblasting costs somewhere in between.

Finally, browse the equipment you already own, and work with what you have to eliminate costs and procurement. For instance, if you already own an industrial floor grinder, use it when necessary.

When to switch up grinding tooling

Grinding removes almost any coating or mastic that plagues your floor, but there are three main tooling options to choose from. Each addresses certain residues.

Conventional segments, or metal-bonded diamonds, remove brittle adhesives really well. Apply play sand, dust or portland cement to your surface and grind with 16-to-25-grit metal bonds. The sand will attach to the adhesive and pull it up in small balls, all while keeping the diamonds clean.

The second option is carbides, which remove tacky adhesives such as carpet glue. Carbides act like a ride-on scraper would for removal, and they don't gum up like metal segments would with tacky glue.

Another benefit of carbides is that they leave a smooth finish, not damaging the concrete at all. Lastly, carbides cover a large surface area.

PCD (polycrystalline diamond) tooling is the best option for removing epoxy coatings, adhesives, leveling compounds or membranes. PCDs' specialties are thicker residues or high-build coatings. PCDs are popular because they are so aggressive, ideal for 1/8-inch, 3/16-inch or greater thicknesses.

Why shotblasting is popular

Shotblasting cleans and profiles a surface simultaneously. It strips off thin coatings well. Depending on how powerful and aggressive the machine is, it may remove glue or mastics as well, but typically, if the coating does not allow rebound, a shotblaster will not work.

Shotblasting is popular because it delivers high production rates and is dust-free, dry and cost-effective. It is also known for blast pattern accuracy and a wide abrasive selection. However, keep in mind that shotblasting can weaken a concrete surface or make it uneven, which is why it is more suited for profiling before applying an overlay, as opposed to before polishing.

The benefits of shaving

As stated, shaving is the ideal option for removing epoxies, mastics or paint. Shaving is used for uneven concrete and residue removal because it works quickly and makes corrections simple. Also, if you need to take up a concrete overlay that failed, shaving is a good alternative.

Shaving creates evenly spaced grooves to provide traction and reduce slips and falls, as well as leveling and flattening the surface. With this said, shaving is the best method for a floor with dual problems: residue buildup and an unlevelled or bumpy surface. Not to mention, if a job also requires you to create a trench or trough, shaving can cut deeper in one pass, actually making it a three-in-one solution.

Economical buffing

The final method for removal is buffing with a swing machine. Buffing with a swing machine removes glue and thin-set, and it floats easily over rough surfaces. For removal we suggest using a 17-inch hex pin head, but you can also opt for a heavy-duty wire brush. Remember though, buffing

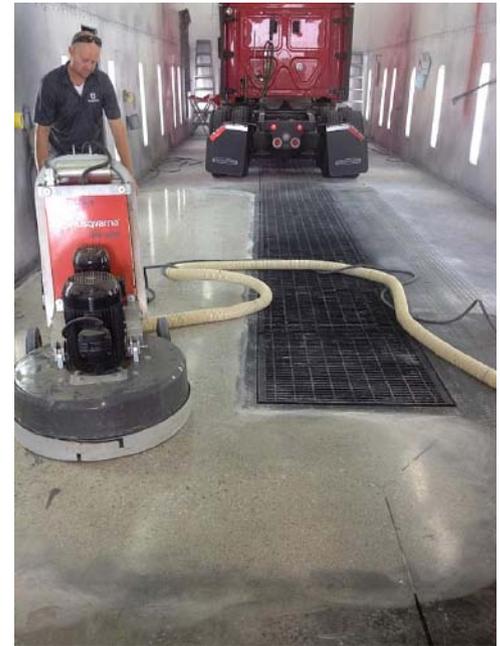


Photo courtesy of Stoops Freightliner

with a swing machine is not as effective as a heavy-duty grinder for tough glue, especially on a large surface. This method is economical and best suited for smaller jobs. It can be an adequate substitute if, for instance, a contractor doesn't own a large grinder and has a small area of glue that needs to be removed.

The future of surface preparation

Surface prep is growing in popularity and quickly becoming its own specialty within the realm of concrete polishing. In fact, we have several contracting customers that exclusively perform surface preparation. They are hired to do all the prep work on a concrete surface, and then another contractor will finish it off with overlay or polishing work.

Understanding all of these methods can become convoluted with such a myriad of factors and options, but this is not an exact science. Although each method has preferred applications and benefits, there isn't one right or wrong answer, so use these tips as a set of guidelines rather than set-in-stone rules. 🛠️

Heidi Hudnall is the marketing manager at Runyon Surface Prep Rental and Supply, an Indianapolis-based distributor of flooring products for prep, polishing and removal. Reach her at heidi@runyoncompanies.com.

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Hands-on Grinding and Polishing Tips: Slow Grind Speeds, Cool Tools and Sweeping Compound Pitfalls

by Bryon "Bru" Bruington

TIP One: Heavy removal jobs can often be problematic. Slowing your variable-speed grinder can help you finish faster — and with better results.

This is very similar to the story told in the old children's tale, "The Tortoise and the Hare." If you remember, the slow-footed tortoise won a race against the faster hare by keeping a slow, steady pace while his faster counterpart sprinted, tired and lost concentration.

In this case, if you have a variable-speed grinder, use the lower revolutions-per-minute (rpm) settings during removal of heavy applications. This will hold true for any type of machine — rotary, planetary, etc.

Slowing the rpm gives the tools more time over the target. During heavy removal

work, tools will sometimes lift and skip over the surface, reducing efficiency. That problem is multiplied if the machine is moving too fast. If you run the machine at a higher speed setting and quicken the pace of the operator behind the unit, the result will often be uneven performance that leads to much more work and less satisfaction. That's why slowing the speed down during the removal of heavy applications can be a wise maneuver. In addition, this is also a good time to slow the operator's pace (the speed of walking behind the grinder).

The opposite holds true for a thin-mil removal situation. In that case, increasing the rpm of the tool will get the maximum cut out of each revolution. This will require the operator to move at a swifter pace as well. If a

slow pace is continued, wasted time and effort can result in removal of sound concrete.

Tip Two: Densify soft concrete.

If you are grinding and you notice a lot of sand particles and machine-produced debris, you most likely are grinding on a soft concrete slab. Soft concrete, often found in the South and warm-weather locations, often requires densifier before the grind.

Soft concrete can wear away valuable diamond tooling and also be very hard on vacuum hoses and filters. Best practices include using a cheap, low-solids sodium densifier until the floor rejects the liquid. This will help to stabilize the floor and make it dense. The result will be positive results for the tooling. This will also help eliminate

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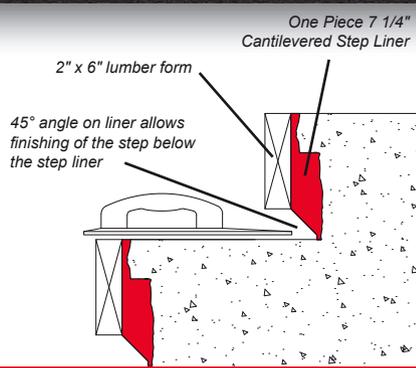
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machine marks or “swells” in the floor.

This process will not negatively impact the end results of the floor and will not inhibit penetration of stains or dyes. This

process will also improve the mechanical bond for the installation of epoxy or urethane coatings.

So remember: In soft concrete situations,

densify until the floor rejects the liquid, then grind. You'll see much better results and much less machine, tool and filter wear.

Tip Three: Keep tools cooler by using handy lubricants.

When using scraper tools on a grinder or carbide tools on a scarifier, spray WD-40 or another mild lubricant on the tool tips. This process will help the tool stay cool, and it will reduce the amount of material buildup on the tools.

This process works well in protecting the undercarriage of the grinder box on the scarifier. It will also help prevent slurry from sticking to the undercarriage of a grinder during a heavy wet cut. Do not worry about the oil transferring into the floor, because the viscosity is not heavy enough to stain.

You can also spray the blades when using a tile removal machine, to extend the life of the spring steel. This works very well when using a carpet removal blade.

Tip Four: Avoid the use of sweeping compound.

It is very important to not use sweeping compound when cleaning a floor for polishing or coating. Sweeping compound contains a heavy oil infused with the solid product. That is the reason it works so well in general construction cleanup. The dirt and dust are encapsulated in the oil and the solids stay dry, allowing for easy pickup.

However, the oil can get caught in control joints, construction joints and the like, and the grinder and vacuum may draw the oil and solids out of the joints and grind them into the substrate. This could cause issues later in the process.

Instead of sweeping compound, I recommend using a foam squeegee. Gather the surface dust in one area of the floor. At that point it can be shoveled into a garbage can or bag. It is not necessary to clean the pile up with a vacuum, because you would just add stress to the filters.

After the floor has been squeegeed, use the vacuum for a final cleanup.

One final note: Try to use a foam squeegee whenever you sweep the floor. A bristle broom will actually fling particulate in the air if not used carefully. 

Bryon “Bru” Bruington is technical sales director for KutRite, a producer of products focusing on the concrete grinding, polishing and scarifying industry. Email him at b_bruington@kutritemfg.com.

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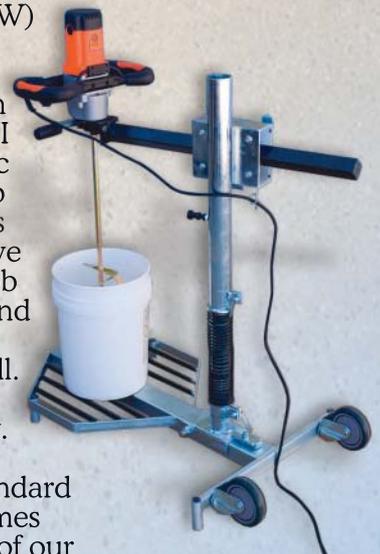
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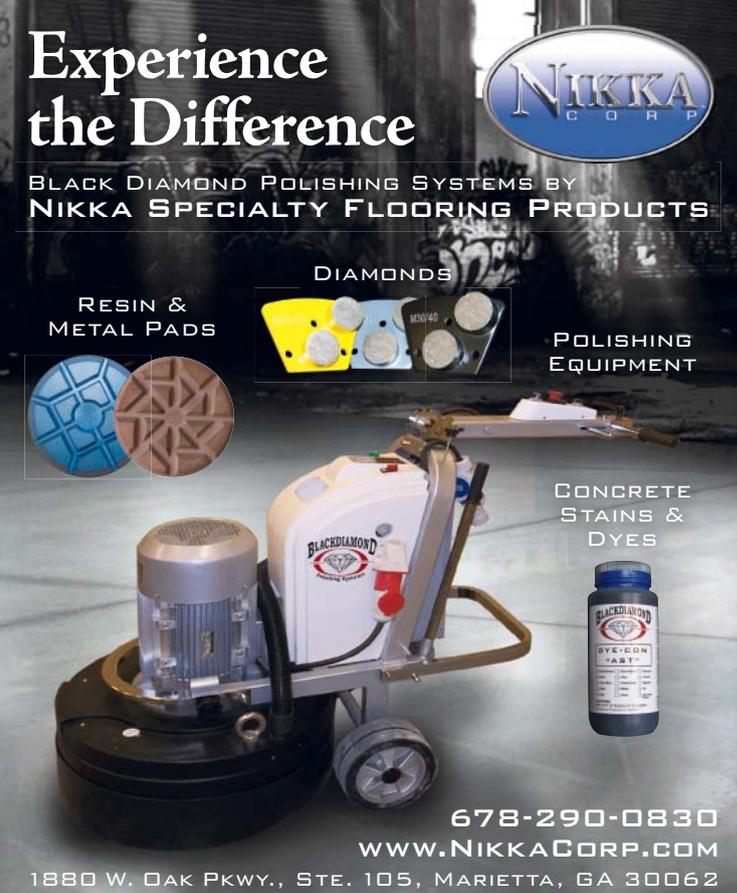
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The Playful Vibe of Crafted Tide Pool Stones

by John Strieder

DECORATIVE concrete wizard Tom Ralston is a familiar name to *Concrete Decor* readers for his elaborate, multifaceted homes and backyards.

But there's another side to Ralston's work: the wildly creative stuff that's almost pure fun.

One recent example is a set of stepping stones molded to look like stones in a tide pool, each artfully crusted with embedded seashells and beach glass.

Tom Ralston Concrete was hired by Santa Cruz, Calif., designer Karen Toole to help build a park on West Cliff Drive, near beloved surf spot Cowell's Beach on

Monterey Bay. The company ended up spending thousands of dollars of its own money to finish the project to its standards, Ralston reports.

Expensive stone molds were created from the choicest sides of boulders found at a local rock supply company. The 17 stones in the path had to be cast two at a time. Nine individual truck deliveries brought in slightly over 20 yards of concrete.

The stones were acid-stained with L. M. Scofield Padre Brown, Kemiko Malay Tan and QC Jade to match the cliff adjacent to the park. Workers epoxied bolts to shells and affixed them to the wet concrete.

Authentic-looking ridges were sculpted by hand on the tops. Plastic funnels were used to form gaps for plants. Beach glass and aquarium sand completed the pieces. Workers even attached oyster shells to the curbs.

The city's parks and recreation department landscaped the park after casting, and over 100 turned out for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to watch the first children (and adults) use the stones to skip through the botanical garden. 📷

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Photos courtesy of Tom Ralston Concrete



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