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OF DECORATIVE
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Vol. 15 No. 2 February/March 2015

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From the Publisher's Desk

Dear Readers,

Each new edition of *Concrete Decor* provides invaluable insights and perspective from our industry columnists. The magazine also contains focuses on projects that constantly aim to unlock the best practices for turning ordinary concrete into finishes that challenge traditional building and finishing methods.

Concrete has extraordinary qualities as a sustainable material, provided people follow established guidelines for application. In any given building environment, concrete now represents a growing number of finishes. Some of these are structural embellishments while others are materials applied by artisans that reproduce natural, distressed or modern finishes. In any case, the quality of the products and the workmanship by those who design and install them are now shaping the future of architectural and decorative concrete.

Inside this issue is a new focus on concrete buildings. Architects and design professionals were asked to share their perspective on how concrete is used in modern-day architecture. These are people who prefer concrete over other building materials, and they share why concrete helps them achieve their design goals. Their perspectives illuminate ways we can change our patterns of thinking about our trade and approach to business. If this article influences your perspective, or changes the way in which you approach your work, we'd like to hear your comments and share them with our readership.

From my perspective, concrete and, in particular, decorative concrete, are seen in more places and with escalating sophistication in applications. With increasing frequency, architectural concrete is becoming the norm because of its innate qualities. Today, concrete is becoming the artisan material that consumers prefer for almost any building environment.

This new platform on which our industry stands carries with it an increasing urgency to stay aware and informed. Many artisans now concur that decorative concrete is no longer a niche market but rather the new face of the concrete industry. That awareness imposes on our industry a question that must constantly be addressed: *How can I do better?*

At *Concrete Decor* we ask ourselves that question every day. The exciting thing, we realize, is that we can always do better in so many ways!


Your partners in beautiful concrete,



Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher




On the cover: Cantilevered concrete stair treads designed by FuTung Cheng for "House 7" in Los Altos Hill, Calif. For more information, see page 39.
Photo by Matthew Millman Photography

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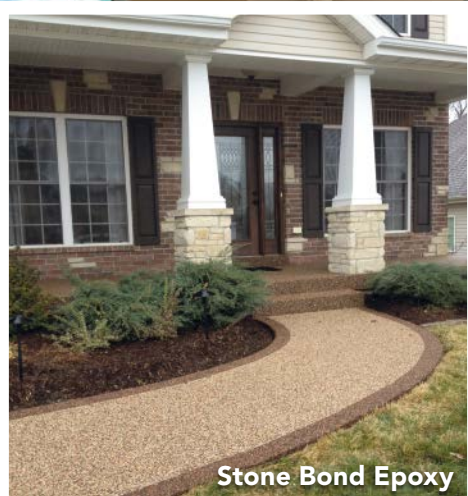
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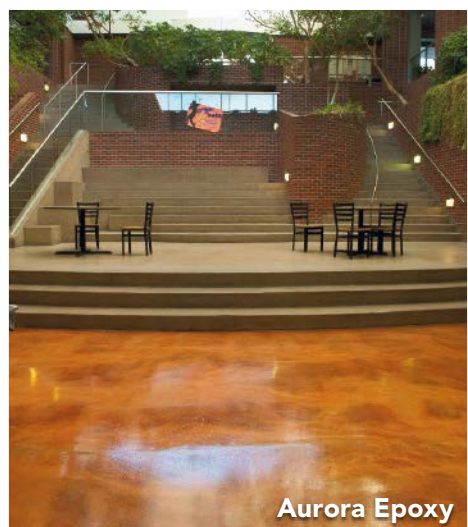
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24



28



30

business & industry

- 18** How small Marketing Tactics Can Make a **BIG** Difference

by Vanessa Salvia

- 20** Concrete in Colorado: Re-ignite Your Spark of Passion for Decorative Concrete

by Karen Van Heukelem

artisan in concrete

- 24** Robin Brailsford, LithoMosaics
Dulzura, California

by Vanessa Salvia

project profiles

- 28** Creating the Look of Stones
Residential pool deck, Augusta, N.J.

by Gail Elber

- 30** High-Octane Vibe
Contractor navigates twists and turns to transform Harley-Davidson dealership

by Joe Maty



features

- 36** Design Theory:
The Ongoing Evolution of the Species Concrete

by Joe Maty

- 42** Field Recon App Makes Quick Work of Jobsite Data

By Vanessa Salvia

CONCRETE QUESTIONS

- 44** Debunking Common Decorative Concrete Myths

by Chris Sullivan

- 46** The Vitality of Line

by Gaye Goodman

- 50** The Polishing Consultant
Recognize and Respect the Value of a Good Worker

by David Stephenson

7 INDUSTRY NEWS

52 MARKETPLACE

12 PRODUCT NEWS

56 FINAL POUR

Joint Fillers and Sealants for Industrial and Retail Concrete Floors

Why Should You Specify Polyurea Joint Fillers & Sealants?

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Gaye Goodman is an artist who fell in love with acid staining 20 years ago. She and her company, based in the high desert of New Mexico, work on decorative projects across the Southwest. Contact her or see training materials on staining at www.gayegoodman.com. See Gaye's article on page 46.



David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com. See David's column, "The Polishing Consultant," on page 50.



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 44.



Karen Van Heukelem wears many hats at Denver-based Colorado Hardscapes Inc., including business development, marketing, sales, estimating and project management, with an emphasis on specialty rock construction. She can be reached at karen@coloradohardscapes.com. See Karen's article on page 20.

Explore our archive at ConcreteDecor.net

concrete 2015 DECOR SHOW INDIANAPOLIS

New look unveiled for Concrete Decor Show logo

Now in its sixth year, the Concrete Decor Show has grown along with the decorative concrete industry. The show's new look reflects the significant evolution of the annual event from its humble beginnings and updates the brand and company identity.

Exhibitors, workshops, educational sessions and attendance to the Concrete Decor Show have grown with each year. The show in Indianapolis, Indiana, from Sept. 28 through Oct. 2 will top all prior events. Leading industry experts and state-of-the-art exhibits make this show a must-attend event for anyone in the decorative concrete industry and its related fields. Exhibitors and five days of hands-on workshops and seminars will provide education and training for veterans and newbies alike.

www.concretedecorshow.com

Penetron helps turn garbage into power in Sweden

Penetron technology was used to ensure a completely waterproofed below-grade foundation for the Filbörnaverket facility, a modern waste-fired "Combined Heat & Power" (CHP) plant in Helsingborg, Sweden. The plant is now fully online.

Filbörnaverket is a "waste-to-energy" plant that uses combustible household and commercial waste to produce electricity and district heating for the local grid. The CHP technology produces steam, heat and electricity to provide 18 megawatts of electricity and 60 megawatts of district heating, which is equivalent to the annual energy requirements for about 6,000 family homes. The Filbörnaverket plant can burn approximately 200,000 tons of waste per year — at an overall thermal efficiency of almost 100 percent.

Pen-Tec, the Penetron partner in Scandinavia, was called into the project to provide a reliable concrete waterproofing solution that would protect against various aggressive compounds found in the waste contents.

With the groundwater table varying between 8 and 10 meters (26 and 33 feet), Pen-Tec worked with NCC Construction

Sweden AB to ensure a successful solution. The finished concrete structure is 155 meters (510 feet) long and 50 meters (164 feet) high, with an 85-meter (280-feet) tall smokestack. The storage tank is 18 meters (60 feet) high.

Penetron Admix was used to treat approximately 1,400 square meters for the bottom shaft and walls (14 meters/46 feet deep) and another 17,000 square meters for the intake shaft.

The Penetron Group is a leading manufacturer of specialty construction products for concrete waterproofing, concrete repairs and floor preparation systems. The Group operates through a global network, offering support to the design and construction community through its regional offices, representatives and distribution channels.

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By Malish

Michelman improves customer service with reorganized business groups

Michelman, a global manufacturer of surface additives and polymers, has introduced an improved organizational structure consisting of three strategic business groups. The new structure will help Michelman better anticipate and serve its customers' needs by driving collaboration between its experienced industry-focused business teams — now fully integrated into the strategic business groups — that serve customers in the flexible packaging, paint and coatings, fibers and composites, engineered wood, paper and corrugated, digital printing and other industries. The resulting open flow of ideas, solutions and application expertise will allow new technologies and applications to be introduced faster and reduce customers' concept-to-commercialization time.

The three groups are coatings, serving coating formulators with advanced polymers and additives; industrial manufacturing, whose expert teams work hand-in-hand with discrete product manufacturers to improve productivity and end-use performance; and printing and packaging, helping move the industry forward with innovative solutions in print receptive, functional and barrier coating technologies.

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W.R. Grace names winners of the 2014 GATE award

Dr. Klaus-Alexander Rieder and Dr. Kumar Ranganathan of Grace Construction Products are the recipients of the 2014 W.R. Grace Award for Technical Excellence (GATE) for their development of STRUX, a series of novel synthetic macro fibers for reinforcing concrete.

Introduced by the Grace Research Council in 2007, GATE recognizes employees for technical achievement of the highest caliber that has resulted in the most significant commercial, societal and industrial impact. The winning team or individual receives a \$10,000 award, which will be presented by Grace Chairman and CEO Fred Festa.

The technology has significant societal impact, extending the service life of structures and also lowering installation costs. To date, STRUX has contributed more than \$100 million in sales for Grace.

The objective was to create plastic fibers to selectively replace steel reinforcement in concrete. The world's most widely used construction material, concrete requires steel reinforcement in structures such as bridges or buildings. This is not only expensive and labor-intensive, but also susceptible to corrosion.

The result of Rieder's work was the

prototype of STRUX, a product that uses polyolefin fibers to replace steel concrete reinforcement in many applications. STRUX provides the same level of concrete strength, is easy to mix, and is more cost-effective than steel or other rival technologies. Because traditional fibers easily tangle and form lumps, he designed bendable flat fibers which are more resistant to entanglement. Later, when the market demanded even higher reinforcement power, he created another distinctive fiber with a unique three-dimensional shape, which further increased the bond between the fiber and the concrete.

Because of the fibers' unique design, there were engineering challenges to overcome in the manufacturing process. Ranganathan, a senior R&D engineer with GCP in Cambridge, Massachusetts, defined the manufacturing parameters needed to produce the three-dimensional, bi-tapered fibers on a commercial scale and designed special steel rollers to make them.

Ranganathan and Rieder, who is now a global technical manager based in Lügde, Germany, are co-inventors on numerous patents granted to Grace related to reinforcing fibers sold under the STRUX trade name, their use in concrete and the manufacturing process.

🌐 www.grace.com

TRANSITIONS

Atlas Copco Construction Equipment has hired **Frank Lang** as its business development manager of national rental accounts. Lang helps expand Atlas Copco's rental support network and will be responsible for developing relationships and sharing his product expertise with national rental companies.

HTC has expanded its North American sales department with new hires. The new sales representatives include **James Garland** located in Otsego, Minnesota; **Tyson Chester** in Portland, Oregon; and **Adrian del Rio** in Houston, Texas. In addition, HTC veteran **Adam Hicks** has been promoted to a national accounts sales position. Each representative has extensive experience within the flooring industry.

Michelman has appointed several people to lead new strategic business groups to better anticipate and serve its worldwide customers' needs.

Dr. Gautham Parthasarathy has been hired as group director, coatings. Parthasarathy was previously vice president and general manager of Emerald Performance Materials.

Michael Annis has been hired as group director, industrial manufacturing. Previously, Annis was global OEM manager and North America business development manager in the electronics business unit with Celanese Engineered Materials. **Dr. Rick Michelman**, Michelman's chief technology officer, has assumed the role of interim group director, printing and packaging.

CPAA announces 2015 program for education and certification

The Concrete Polishing Association of America's Education and Certification program for 2015 will include five Craftsman, Level 1 training and certification classes and six Tradesman Introduction Certificate classes. Four of the Tradesman classes will be presented as webinars. The other two classes will be offered at industry trade shows. All CPAA classes are taught by a CPAA-certified Craftsman or Master Craftsman instructor.

The 2014 program reached more than 200 students, with more than 50 new certified Craftsman, Level 1 individuals.

CPAA is the industry leader and resource for best practices, educational programs, and certifications for individuals and organizations involved in polishing concrete.

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Penetron app available for iOS, Android devices

The Penetron app, a guide with access to a wide range of information on Penetron products and solutions, is now available for iOS and Android devices. It's touted to be the ideal mobile platform companion to the Penetron website.

The features built into the Penetron app are complementary in structure to the website and include company information, the product overview, a technology summary ("How it Works"), a QR scanner for Penetron codes and a calculator to estimate product quantities needed for a job. Contact information and a Penetron newsletter sign-up are also accessible.

The Penetron app has numerous advantages for people on-site or "on the go." The instant access to product data sheets (for application instructions) and the solutions guide for a vast number of issues are just two of the highlights. The new app can be downloaded for free at Google Play and the App Store.

The Penetron Group is a leading manufacturer of specialty construction products for concrete waterproofing, concrete repairs and floor preparation systems.

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TCA introduces bilingual format for its quarterly publication

The Tilt-Up Concrete Association (TCA) has launched a new bilingual format for *Tilt-Up Today*, its quarterly publication that covers tilt-up industry news, market intelligence, business strategies, technical solutions, product information and other resources for professionals in the tilt-up industry.

The change began with issue 22-4 in Winter 2014-2015, with each article, member news story and TCA announcement presented in both English and Spanish side-by-side.

Nox-Crete Products Group and Alianza Soluciones are sponsoring the new feature. The first bilingual issue was distributed during World of Concrete and featured the tilt-up achievement award winners in a special expanded edition.

A one-year complimentary subscription to *Tilt-Up Today* is available. Visit www.tilt-up.org/tilt-uptoday/subscribe to start your subscription.

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Call for abstracts for Fall 2015 ACI Convention

Presentations are currently being solicited for the American Concrete Institute Fall 2015 Convention in Denver, Colorado. The title of the ACI 310 session is "Getting the Most Out of Decorative Concrete."

This session will bring together expert speakers on the finishing topics covered in ACI 310 Guide to Decorative Concrete. Members of ACI 310 and decorative concrete professionals are asked to submit 50 to 100 word abstracts for 30-minute presentations to be part of this session. Aesthetic and decorative finishes discussed in the ACI 310 guide will be given preference. Anticipated topics include:

- Best practices for stamped concrete finishes
- Dos and Don'ts in polished concrete systems
- The art of using multilayer stencils
- Key lessons to be learned from ACI 310 Guide to Decorative Concrete
- Sealing and curing decorative concrete

The deadline for abstracts is March 1, 2015. Abstracts should tell prospective attendees what they will learn during the program and how the topic relates to concrete aesthetics or the materials and methods covered by the ACI 310 guide. Also provide a brief description of your qualifications and work experience with regards to your presentation topic. Prospective speakers should supply abstract and complete contact information to: Larry Rowland, Lehigh White Cement Co., 7660 Imperial Way, Allentown, PA 18195.

He can be reached at lrowland@lehighcement.com or (610) 366-4645. His fax number is (610) 366-4638.

Attendance hits 100 for 2014 CSDA training

In what has already been a banner year for the Concrete Sawing & Drilling Association, 100 industry professionals graduated from its hands-on training and certification courses in 2014.

In 2014, CSDA saw a 43 percent increase in attendance for its three training courses at World of Concrete from the prior year, and the training program reached a milestone of 4,000 graduates. With an additional two hands-on classes completed in October and Operator Certification courses held in November, CSDA confirms

that exactly 100 people participated in its 2014 hands-on training schedule—up 21 percent from 2013 and the highest annual attendance in the past eight years.

Launched in 1993, the CSDA Training Program currently consists of 33 hands-on, classroom and online courses. Advanced Operator Certification courses were added to the program in 1995 and the association has partnered with St. Petersburg College Corporate Training for the past 13 years to provide these courses through an accredited educational facility.

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EVENT CALENDAR

The Precast Show 2015

National Precast Concrete Association

March 5-7

Orlando, Florida

🌐 www.precast.org

Fabric Forming and GFRP Workshop

Concrete Design School

March 6-8

Tempe, Arizona

🌐 www.concretedesignschool.com

Spring Convention

International Concrete

Repair Institute

March 25-27

New York, New York

🌐 www.icri.org

3-Day Basics Concrete Course

Atlantic Concrete Association

March 25-27

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Canada

🌐 www.atlanticconcrete.ca

Spring Convention

American Concrete Institute

April 11-15

Kansas City, Kansas

🌐 www.concrete.org

EDCO has redesigned website

EDCO has completely redesigned its website, www.edcoinc.com.

The new website combines the latest in web development with EDCO's successful training tools, creating an advanced informational site full of videos, explanations and illustrations.

This website is now in responsive design format, meaning all information is easily seen on desktops, tablets and smartphones. New features include a "Product Applications Guide." With this tool, visitors can match their needs with specific EDCO machines and recommended tooling. The "Image Resources" tool grants customers free access to EDCO product picture downloads for their websites and marketing needs. The "EDCO Blog" features answers to common application questions and keeps readers updated on manufacturing.

The new website offers numerous training and how-to videos. Different language translations are also available. Visitors have a choice of reading in English, Spanish, French or German.

www.edcoinc.com

Lafarge conservation programs grow through WHC certification

Nine conservation projects at Lafarge North America sites across the U.S. were certified or recertified this year by the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC). Six of these projects fall under WHC's Wildlife at Work program, which oversees voluntary efforts that go beyond regulatory requirements to restore and conserve wildlife habitats on corporate-owned land. The remaining three projects operate under WHC's Corporate Lands for Learning certification, which goes a step further by opening up corporate lands to the local community for educational use.

Since 2008, Lafarge has been working with WHC to restore and preserve habitats where they operate through projects that promote the diversity of native plants and animals. The Lafarge programs that are certified under WHC's Corporate Lands for Learning also serve as hands-on outdoor classrooms for local schools and community groups.

Examples of these conservation initiatives include planting trees and shrubs to enhance habitats, establishing gardens that attract essential pollinators, mounting bird houses, building brush piles

to provide cover for animals, and building and maintaining water supplies. Within Lafarge's U.S. businesses, they support migratory birds and ecosystems from New Orleans to Upper Michigan and a significant portion of the northeastern U.S.

WHC works with businesses to translate corporate sustainability goals and objectives into measurable real-world action that address a habitat's most pressing needs. By building collaboration among corporations, other conservation organizations, government agencies and local residents,

WHC conservation programs strive to build healthy ecosystems and connected communities. With the addition of these certified and recertified projects, Lafarge and WHC now operate a total of 25 programs in 10 states across the U.S.

Lafarge North America Inc. has close to 200 industrial and distribution sites and approximately 2,600 employees in 39 states in its U.S. cement, aggregate and concrete businesses.

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Tramex raises moisture testing to a higher standard

Tramex has improved its Hygro-i Hole-liners for ASTM F2170 testing of relative humidity in concrete. The Tramex CMEX System is renowned for testing to the highest standards in the fastest time. Now, thanks to its new improved hole-liners, it is even easier to use.

The Tramex Moisture Testing System for flooring is the most complete system on the market. The Tramex CMEX II moisture meter and reusable Hygro-i RH Probes enable fast, accurate, economical and reliable testing of concrete floor slabs to ASTM F2170, as well as give ambient temperature, relative humidity, dew point and grains-per-pound readings.

The CMEX II allows for instant, nondestructive subsurface ASTM F2659 moisture content tests to show where and when to carry out the in situ RH tests. The CMEX II and heavy-duty pin-probe provide precise wood moisture content readings for your wood flooring.

While maintaining the speed and accuracy of the test, these hole-liners have been designed to be even easier to cut and insert, as well as have more malleable circumferential fins for optimum isolation of the airspace under test.

☎ (970) 488-1898

🌐 www.tramexmeters.com

At WOC, Westcoat showcased Temper-Crete Urethane Cement

At the 2015 World of Concrete, Westcoat showcased its Temper-Crete Urethane Cement system, a high-build, fast-drying, urethane cement with excellent chemical-, heat- and steam-resistant qualities. It is used to create an industrial seamless floor in commercial kitchens, manufacturing areas, breweries and wineries or anywhere a high-performance, fast-turnaround floor system is desired.

Temper-Crete is available in three distinct systems. Temper-Crete Standard is a self-leveling, flowable and monolithic urethane cement system that's easy to install without sacrificing durability. Temper-Crete Custom is a self-leveling urethane cement system that yields the same ease of installation but allows greater decorative and aesthetic possibilities with quartz sand and color chip finishes available. Temper-Crete Industrial is a trowel-grade urethane cement mortar that produces a heavy-duty, industrial flooring solution. Cove base options are available. All systems meet USDA, FDA and ADA compliance.

☎ (800) 250-4519

🌐 www.westcoat.com

Atlas Copco features 1-megawatt generator at Power-Gen

Atlas Copco featured the QAC 1200 during the 2014 Power-Gen International tradeshow in December in Orlando. These generators, which produce 1 megawatt of predictable power, can be used in prime power or critical standby applications in a multitude of industries. Operators can parallel as many as 16 of these generators for greater dependability, versatility and reduced fuel consumption.

Atlas Copco engineers the QAC 1200 into custom, 20-foot enclosures with the same footprint and form factor as ISO containers. This ensures the units are structurally sound and can

accommodate features that would otherwise weaken the integrity of standard shipping containers. The enclosure also helps minimize engine noise to 75 dBA at 23 feet, which makes it an ideal generator for sound-sensitive applications near hospitals, museums and schools.



The QAC 1200 features a Cummins QST30G5 diesel engine that is EPA Tier 2 certified and provides 1158 kVA/926 kW prime power rating (60 Hz). With this fuel-efficient, electronically governed engine, the integrated fuel tank provides a minimum run time of eight hours.

Atlas Copco also offers optional cold-weather packages for the QAC 1200 generators. They include alternator heaters, coolant heaters and battery chargers to ensure dependable starts and operations in cold climates.

🌐 www.atlascopco.us/usus

Water Cannon releases new pressure washer package

Water Cannon recently released a model 17K12 pressure washer package featuring a Kohler CH750 electric start 30-horsepower, twin-cylinder, gasoline-powered engine, a 15-gallon long-run fuel tank and a roll cage protected poly-chain drive. The unit also comes with a TSF series general triplex plunger pump. The unit can handle 12 gallons per minute at 2,800 PS and comes with a 50-foot hose, trigger gun, wand, quick-connect nozzles, quick disconnects and a warranty.

The gallons-per-minute and pounds-per-square-inch measures mean you are blasting grime with 33,600 Effective Cleaning Units (ECUs). For the convenience of a portable package, this series also has an optional portable wheel and push-handle kit.

Water Cannon pressure washers meet or exceed all 2014 EPA and California regulations relating to fuel tanks, vents and carbon canisters and can be sold in all 50 states. Water Cannon uses low-permeation fuel tanks and fuel lines. Water Cannon's fuel caps vent to the engine air cleaners as required by law, not externally to the atmosphere. Water Cannon also includes an appropriate-sized carbon canister as required by California.

☎ (800) 333-9274

🌐 www.watercannon.com

SCP introduces process that transforms security fencing

Superior Concrete Products, a North Texas-based manufacturer of precast concrete fence and barrier products, introduces Superior Ballistics, an exclusive product enhancement that strengthens and reinforces fencing for use by electric and gas utility substations, business owners and other security-minded consumers. This new proprietary feature doubles the strength of SCP's solid barrier and fence panels, making them impervious to close-range fire from high-caliber ammunition.

With custom finishes that take on the appearance of ledge stone, brick or the deep wood-grain look of board-on-board or other traditional type of fencing textures, the Superior Ballistics membrane significantly reinforces and strengthens the precast concrete panels, making for a heavier, more bullet-resistant fence.

Based on appearance alone, a ballistics-enhanced panel looks similar to the company's line of Superior Bric, Superior Cobblestone, Superior Stucco or other solid fencing and barrier products. However, the proprietary process that SCP uses to encase the ballistic-resistant barrier within precast concrete makes the difference.

Prior to launching the panel, SCP subjected it to rigorous testing at a U.S.-based independent laboratory. From 30 feet away, an experienced testing facilitator fired a .308 Winchester caliber round from a high-powered rifle directly into a section of the reinforced Superior Fence panel. And, while the fence sustained damage, the bullet was unable to punch a hole through the fence, even at close range.

☎ (817) 277-9255

🌐 www.concretefence.com

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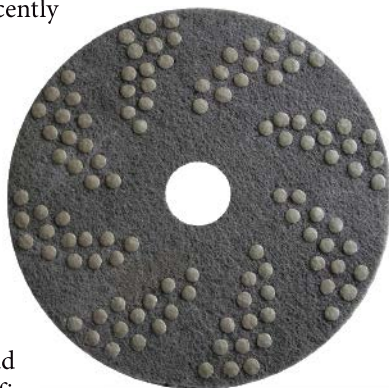
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Universal Polishing Systems unveils new polishing pad

Universal Polishing Systems recently introduced the new Vespa Pad, a Value Engineered Semi-Polished Application designated as a diamond tool specifically used with high-speed burnishing equipment. The pads are available in 20-inch and 27-inch diameters with 30, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1,500 grits. Infused with Universal Polishing System's Hybrid Metal Bond matrix, the pad will open concrete to accept densifier, hone and polish the surface up to 1,500 grit.



☎ (888) 877-4899

🌐 www.universalpolishingsystems.com

Gardco's new instrument measures reflective appearance

Gardco's new IQ FLEX 20 is an intelligent instrument for measuring reference of reflective appearance such as gloss, haze, distinctiveness of image (DOI) and goniophotometer curves.

The Rhopoint IQ Gloss-Haze-DOI-Goniophotometer has been established as the reference instrument to measure reflective appearance. In a single fast measurement it captures information about the gloss and texture on a sample surface. Combined gloss, haze and orange peel (DOI/RIQ values) information has made the IQ essential for controlling appearance finish in the paints and coatings sector.

Previously only available for measuring flat surfaces, this technology is now available in a new format specifically designed for curved surfaces and small and delicate parts. The IQ Flex 20 has many beneficial features. It has Bluetooth compatibility to transmit data, full on-board statistics (max, min, mean, S.D.) and graphs, and easy customization for every application. The IQ FLEX 20 can be customized with magnetically attached adaptor plates that can be easily interchanged for different applications:

Interchangeable magnetic adaptors allow reduced measurement spot sizes down to 4 mm or 2 mm. Bespoke 3D-printed adaptor jigs allow for repeatable control of small parts, buttons and controls.

The IQ FLEX 20 has a battery life of at least 17 hours of operation, or more than 20,000 readings per charge. It charges in four hours with a rechargeable lithium ion. Memory can store more than 1,000 readings. It's PC compatible with a USB connection and requires no software for data transfer. The unit measures 5.90-by-3.11-by-1.34 inches (without head) and weighs 1.21 pounds.

☎ (800) 762-2478

🌐 www.gardco.com



Ardex launches three self-leveling underlayments

The sometimes overwhelming task of choosing the right self-leveling underlayment has been made easier by Ardex with the addition of three new self-leveling underlayment options.

Ardex America's president, U.S. and Canadian divisions, Jesse David says customers requested clearly defined solutions for certain challenges. The company developed a comprehensive series of underlayments with specific differentiating qualities that provide the best solution for every installation or installation challenge.

Depending upon your need, you can now choose from the following options:

- High flow – Ardex K 16 is fast and installs at a thin coat with high compressive strength.
- Benchmark – Ardex K 15 is the original and the most specified self-leveler in North America.
- Faster dry time – Ardex K 13 is high performance; you can install floor coverings in just 16 hours.
- Can be reactivated – Ardex K 10 has a 25-minute healing time. Reactivate setting material with a spike roller.
- Workhorse – Ardex V 1200 is the trusted leveler for big jobs on tight schedules.
- Versatile, no water – Ardex K 60 Arditec offers unmatched flexibility and adhesion.
- Low prep – Ardex LU 100 installs directly over well-bonded VCT, and existing patching, leveling or fill materials where complete removal is not an option.
- Over gypsum or wood – Ardex GS-4 installs over gypsum and wood substrates. It also is recommended for above-grade in-floor hydronic and electric radiant heat.

☎ (888) 512-7339

🌐 www.ardexamericas.com

Scofield releases new integral concrete colors

L. M. Scofield Co. has released Naturescapes, a new set of Chromix admixtures for color-conditioned concrete colors. Its nine integral concrete colors are specifically designed to visually recede into the surroundings by reflecting the darker, more recessive color schemes of native soils or vegetation.

Developed to complement the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management's Standard Environmental Colors guide, Naturescapes can help to dramatically improve coordination of the hardscape and its visual impact when used in a multitude of natural conditions such as grasslands, deciduous or coniferous forests or rocky arid landscapes.

The admixtures are a deeper shade than most conventional integral concrete colors, and are ideal for coloring concrete in theme parks, tourist attractions, restaurants, residential projects or anywhere a deep earth color is desired. They are suitable for all types of colored concrete projects from hard landscapes and cast-in-place or precast structures to interior floors. Naturescapes admixtures are available in powder form only.

☎ (800) 800-9900

🌐 www.scofield.com


Kaza Concrete now offers Edgy concrete tiles

Kaza Concrete now offers “Edgy” tiles, a collection of 3-D and 2 1/2-D tiles that give structure to smooth walls. The tiles can be applied to interior and exterior surfaces, partially or entirely covering them.

The 3-D form is made up of asymmetrical surfaces “folding” onto one plane to form a hexagonal base. By playing with concave and convex planes and using them to accentuate one another, it creates the effect of visually pulling the user toward itself. The side surfaces of the two-and-a-half-dimensional form imitate the three-dimensional one, giving it a playful character, despite the flat top surface.

Edgy’s asymmetry enables the designer to create a multitude of patterns, allowing flexibility and individuality. The tiles can be used in a wide range of applications, from decorative surfaces and corporate identities to guidance systems.

Edgy tiles, designed by Patrycja Domanska and Tanja Lightfoot, come in basic colors with a matte or glossy finish. Custom colors are available. The tiles are made of reinforced, colored, fine-composite concrete and measure 160-by-138 mm.

 www.kazaconcrete.com



Atlas Copco’s ES attachments simplify maintenance, operation

Atlas Copco’s new Essential (ES) breaker attachments give rental centers and contractors a fast return on investment by simplifying maintenance and operation. Atlas Copco created the ES Range as an economical and user-friendly option for general construction projects and light demolition.

Kevin Loomis, business line manager for Atlas Copco Construction Equipment, said the compact, ES hydraulic breakers are easy to maneuver into tight spaces and provide good visibility, which speed up day-to-day construction, landscaping and renovation jobs.

The new ES Range includes three models, the ES 60, ES 70 and ES 80, which are remarkably narrow to promote good visibility and handling on worksites. The slim design also results in faster cleanup. For example, operators can cut narrow and precise trenches for plumbing installation applications without removing excess soil to accommodate the breaker’s size.

The ES breakers feature Atlas Copco’s exclusive, solid body construction that combines percussion and mounting components in one uniform structure. This eliminates the need for external fasteners, which allows rental center mechanics to quickly and easily replace wear bushing and seals, resulting in fast turnaround times for repairs and maintenance.

Designed with a central lubrication point that contractors can quickly and easily access to grease the breaker, they also feature full-length floating bushings to ensure grease fully coats bushings and tool steel to minimize wear. The breakers enhance productivity with a nitrogen-gas assist system that works with the units’ hydraulic oil to accelerate the breakers’ pistons and achieve impact rates as high as 1,300 beats per minute.

 www.atlascopco.com



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SawKart + Your Saw = Decorative Concrete Dynamo

ENGRAVE-A-CRETE announces the addition of a second SawKart model. Designed to fit the Makita 4100NH, the new model shares the same great features as the original SawKart. Both models convert your standard portable circular saw to achieve beautiful concrete engraving patterns, cutting, grooving and scoring.

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www.SawKart.com

www.EngraveACrete.com



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Clemons Concrete Coatings releases WB-40 Epoxy

Clemons Concrete Coatings recently released WB-40 Epoxy, a two-component, water-based, low-odor epoxy coating formulated for interior concrete surfaces.

WB-40 Epoxy provides superior durability and chemical resistance as well as color enhancement compared to water-based acrylic sealers. It protects and enhances decorative concrete and is easy to use. It meets or exceeds OTC and LADCO VOC standards and provides chemical, water and abrasion resistance. It is available in 1.5-gallon and 15-gallon kits.

(615) 872-9099

www.ccc-usa.com

Blastcrete Equipment releases hot epoxy pump

Blastcrete Equipment Co. recently introduced the D3522 attachment, a hot epoxy pump that can be powered by an existing hydraulic power source. It is lighter, more versatile and more affordable than hot epoxy pumps and mixer/pump combinations with built-in power supplies, especially since skid steers and other equipment with auxiliary hydraulic hookups can power the unit.

Featuring a hydraulic squeeze (peristaltic) pump built for long life and low total cost of ownership, it has two rollers that rotate clockwise and squeeze a 2-inch rubber pumping tube. The rotation generates suction from the receiving hopper and pushes the material through the pump and out the discharge into the delivery hose. The epoxy materials do not come in contact with the moving parts of the squeeze pump, unlike a rotor stator or piston-style pump. The attachment's primary wear part, a 2-inch rubber pumping tube, can be replaced in 20 minutes or less.



The attachment can pump hot epoxy or cementitious grouts at variable speeds from 0 to 6 cubic yards per hour and deliver up to 400 psi of pumping pressure. Those capabilities, coupled with the unit's light weight, make it easy to transport and highly versatile. Contractors can use the pump for a wide variety of applications, such as grouting to mount and secure heavy industrial equipment and pumping fiberglass jackets for pier rehabilitation and stabilization. The D3522 attachment also can be used for spraying plaster and small wet-shotcrete applications.

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How small marketing tactics can make a **BIG** difference

by Vanessa Salvia

CONCRETE artisans have the wherewithal to market themselves in some unusual ways. Take for instance Cory Hanneman's ideas for getting the name of his company, Element 7 Concrete Designs in Marble Falls, Texas, out in front of his clients. He made drink coasters out of a urethane mold and self-leveling cement mix. He also used self-consolidating concrete to make a Bakugan game for clients with young children. These out-of-the-box ideas can definitely be memorable, but sometimes it's the tried-and-true marketing practices that can make the most long-term difference.

Gather testimonials

Once you complete a job and you know the client is happy, follow up over the phone or through email to ask for a testimonial or quote

for your website or a brochure. To make things even more convenient, send a stamped postcard they can easily mail back to you.

"Most people simply don't ask, so ask for testimonials and follow up on it," says Nekhia Christian, owner and content strategist at And Update My Website, a marketing firm in Eugene, Oregon. "You may have to ask multiple times." Christian suggests you ask specific, focused questions about your work, which will probably yield better results than simply asking someone for a "testimonial."

Genuine testimonials give you credibility. When displaying testimonials, the more detail you can provide about the work and about the person giving the testimonial the better. "Pairing quotes with a photo of the client or the job is ideal," says Christian.

Anonymous quotes don't hold the same weight. Use longer quotes if you can, because a page of selective one-liners such as "great work" or "will use again" doesn't come across as authentic. And never ever be tempted to write fake testimonials — people can sense it.

Keep your website up to date

Think of website updates as akin to changing the oil in your car. While you can ignore it for a long time, the performance is going to keep declining until you deal with it. "And if you wait too long, the repair costs will be considerable," says Christian.

By keeping your website current, you convey to every site visitor that you are still in business and available for work. Keep your dates current. Check your "About Us" page for outdated information. For instance, if it

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says, "I started this business three years ago" and that was in 2008, it's time to update!

From the technical side of things, search engines such as Google love fresh content. "The more often you update your website by adding content to it in the form of words and pictures, the more often the major search engines will visit your website," explains Christian. "Over time, a search engine will display your website over others not updated as frequently."

Add photos and words about every job you finish. Search engines can't see pictures, so make sure you include a few sentences with keywords — such as "stamped concrete patio" or "textured concrete walkway" — along with the pictures.

Gather high-resolution photos

High-resolution photos are required for sharp reproduction in printed publications. While in-focus lower-resolution photos may look fine online, they don't have that same quality when reproduced on paper. "It really does pay to invest in a quality camera," says Janelle Frazier, a graphic designer with Oh So Graphic in Eugene, Oregon. "You can get a nice camera for \$300. Snapping a picture with your iPhone or tablet works for sending pictures through email, but with good, reproducible photos you can use them in print, on the web or send them to the media." To *Concrete Decor*, for instance.

If you have a camera, go into the settings and do two things. First, remove the date stamp. It blocks elements of your photos and looks unprofessional.

Second, adjust your image settings to large. "This setting refers to the pixel dimensions," says Frazier. "It tells the width and height of your image in pixels, which are like the digital building blocks of the photo. The more pixels your image contains, the more detail the image can convey." High-resolution images can be easily converted to smaller, lower-resolution images but not the other way around.

Taking large pictures will cause the images to take up more space on your memory card. "For convenience, get a larger memory card so you can store more photos, or download them to your computer and remove them from your camera on a regular basis so you always have room for more," says Frazier. It also doesn't hurt to have more than one card.

Encourage referrals

Working on getting referrals can be difficult, especially for the owner-operator who is busy running the day-to-day operations. Fostering good customer service and doing a great job is the first step in encouraging referrals.

"If you have really good product and you do a great job, people are going to want to share and talk about it," says Alma Hesus, communications specialist at Cappelli Miles, a full-service marketing firm in Eugene.

Engage them in being part of your team, says Hesus. "That means leaving extra business cards with them and explicitly saying that you would appreciate them telling others about your work."

Make it easy for your information to be shared. "Take photos of the work you did for them. If it's appropriate, ask them if they would be in a few of the photos and tell them where you will use the images. You always want permission before posting anything online," Hesus says. "People love to say, 'Hey, I was on this website and they talked about me.'"

Connect with the media

Concrete Decor welcomes information and high-resolution pictures about the jobs you've done. But don't limit your media communications just to us.


Find out who covers the business beat for the local newspaper and television stations in your area and develop a relationship with them. Send them pictures and information about your work and your events.

"Let them know you can be a resource for concrete- or construction-related articles, even if it's not directly covering your work," says Hesus. "Connect with people in your area who are passionate about it or have some sort of connection to your industry and develop a relationship."

Ease-of-use is key to communicating with the media. Provide the most important information — who, what, when, where, why and how — upfront. "Make it as easy as possible, so they have all the pieces they need to talk to you," she says. 📱

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Concrete in Colorado: Re-ignite Your Spark of Passion for Decorative Concrete

by Karen Van Heukelem

THE fear that we may lose touch with the concrete artistry in our industry is a legitimate feeling. It seems like more and more projects require firm decisions and designs before they ever reach our eyes. Are we losing the chance to add our expertise, advice and artistic touch to decorative projects?

We are at a crossroads right now as an industry. As the economy bubbles back up, it's easy to get swept away by mountains of bid invites and specification requests, leaving your passion buried under paperwork. But I encourage you to step back. Brush off the cobwebs and pursue those artistic projects.

I know many of us are hungry for any projects that may surface right now and we want to chase those while the getting is good. Although basic projects are important for keeping employees and vendors paid and happy, they are not what set us apart from the curb-and-gutter contractor down the road.

What sets us apart is the “decorative” aspect of our industry. We aren't just concrete contractors; we're decorative concrete artisans. We are individuals with passion, vision and innovativeness. But maybe it has been awhile since you pursued your passion because the economic downturn chopped the word “decorative” out of most budgets.



Colorado Hardscapes worked with this artist to make his vision of a concrete rainbow a reality.



Photos courtesy of Colorado Hardscapes

Before construction begins, Colorado Hardscapes builds a maquette to help educate and inspire the entire project team. The small preliminary model helps set expectations as well as builds excitement and passion for the project early on in the process.

A few techniques work for us when pursuing the next decorative project:

- Ooze with excitement for decorative concrete.
- Educate others about the possibilities.
- Befriend the design community.
- Prove your skills.
- Open your mouth.
- Collaborate with your friends and colleagues.

Ooze with excitement for decorative concrete

This may sound silly, but it's proven successful time and time again. When I'm excited about pretty concrete, other people get excited about it, too. They may roll their eyes or think you're crazy to get that excited about something as boring as concrete. Until, of course, they see why.

Educate others about the possibilities

Often the only option for reaching designers or municipalities is through a good old-fashioned lunch-and-learn presentation. Attendees often have low expectations for

the presentation and aren't even sure who's there to talk to them that day.

If you are oozing excitement about what you're sharing, chances are, you can convey that excitement to them. You want to leave them feeling they got something valuable from your presentation. Ideally, your presentation sparks their imagination and they already have something in mind they want to chat with you about.

Befriend the design community

Once you've shown the design community the possibilities, it's time to befriend them. I don't mean golfing dates and buying drinks (although if that's your style, have at it). I mean talking to and listening to them. It goes hand-in-hand with educating them. If you allow them room to use their imagination and embrace their design capabilities, chances are, they will come up with something even more amazing.

It is the architects and landscape architects who push our industry every day. They help us with our creativity and innovation. As a member of their team, true

innovation and creativity can flourish. Once you see their vision and can help them make it a reality, you will have a friend and client for life. Plus your portfolio will look pretty nice, too.

Prove your mad skills

You may be a fantastic sales person who can sell sand to a desert dweller. What should set you apart, though, is that you and your company actually follow-through and perform the spectacular projects.

I wouldn't be able to sell a thing if we did not have the amazing crews to back me up with passion and extraordinary skills in the field. Being the problem solver, assisting the designer and giving them a decorative concrete project they can be proud of will get them to call you on the next project, too.

Open your big mouth

Sometimes there are possibilities to enhance concrete on projects you already have. I'm not one for upselling, but I think it's important to listen to designers and owners. If they express a concern or desire, which you can help them on, by all means, speak up!

Being shy with your ideas will not get you very far in this industry. This can come at many stages. Even when the general contractor mentions those dreaded "value engineering" words, it's an opportunity for you to help solve a problem and still meet design intent.

This usually requires thinking beyond the traditional solutions of cutting back on color or design. Perhaps it means taking out an entire sidewalk in order to better emphasize the owner's main entry, where the dollars count more. Or perhaps it means looking at other finishes on the site and providing an alternate.

It goes back to educating others, befriending them and proving your mad skills. By earning the trust of all members of the team in each of those stages, you will be on their must-call list when the next decorative concrete project rolls around.

Collaborate with your friends and colleagues

Utilize the strength of our industry and get involved. We are a crazy, passionate and knowledgeable group. Reach out to your friends and colleagues! I've found great value in collaborating with like-minded individuals through the Bomanite organization and the Decorative Concrete Council through the American Society of Concrete Contractors.

Find your inspiration by reading this magazine regularly and joining an organized association. Join local chapters of groups such as the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Institute of Architects or the American Society of Interior Designers. The key to each of these organizations is the friendships and collaboration opportunities within them. The association is only as valuable as what you are willing to put into it, but the reward is great.

I'm excited to see the changes in our industry over the next 10 years. As a team we are slated for great innovation and design. Let your creativity and passion for decorative concrete be contagious and spread through your projects and the design community. 🚚

Karen Van Heukelem wears many hats at Denver-based Colorado Hardscapes Inc., including business development, marketing, sales, estimating and project management, with an emphasis on specialty rock construction. She can be reached at karen@coloradohardscapes.com.



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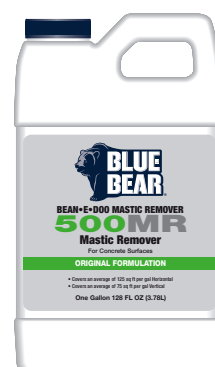
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ADVERTISERS

ADVERTISER	PAGE	RS#
Arizona Polymer Flooring	16	01
Barnsco Decorative Concrete Supply Inc.	53	02
BDC Supply Co.	54	03
Braxton-Bragg	43	04
Butterfield Color	51	05
Concrete Decor Show	Inside Back Cover	06
Concrete Edge Company	52	07
Concrete Polishing Association of America	51	08
Concrete Polishing HQ	54	09
Concrete Polishing HQ	Back Cover	10
Concrete Tools & Equipment Inc.	17	11
ConcreteNetwork.com Inc.	23	12
Deco-Crete Supply (Liquid Metals)	53	13
Dur-A-Flex, Inc.	31	14
Dynamic Diamond Tooling	47	15
Engrave-A-Crete/Concrete Resurrection	16	16
Engrave-A-Crete/Concrete Resurrection	19	17
Franmar Chemical	21	18
GelMaxx	53	19
GMI Engineered Products, LLC	Inside Front Cover	20
GranQuartz	48	21
Increte Systems/Euclid Chemical	42	22
Innotech	29	23
Jiffy Mixer Co. Inc.	52	24
Jon-Don	1	25
Jon-Don	54	26
L & M Industries LLC	54	27
Laticrete International	13	28
McKinnon Materials	3	29
NewLook International Inc.	49	30
NewLook International Inc.	55	31

ADVERTISER	PAGE	RS#
Niagara Machine	41	32
Nox-Crete Products Corp	47	33
Nubiola	18	34
Pacific Concrete Images	55	35
Performance Polymers LLC	53	36
PlastiForm Concrete Forming Systems LLC	55	37
Polished Concrete Solutions	6	38
Polytek Development Corp.	55	39
Preval Spray Guns	13	40
QC Construction Products	55	41
Quest Building Products	54	42
Runyon Surface Prep Rental & Supply	7	43
SASE Company Inc.	45	44
Sherwin Williams/H & C Concrete Coatings	9	45
Smith Paint Products	15	46
Solomon Colors	54	47
Stamp Store/SS Specialties	15	48
Stamp Store/SS Specialties	39	49
Stamp Store/SS Specialties	55	50
StoneCarpet	33	51
Super Stone	35	52
Trinic LLC	52	53
Ultra Concrete Coatings LLC	53	54
Universal Templates	55	55
VersaFlex	5	56
Wagner Meters	43	57
Wagner Meters	53	58
Water Cannon	50	59
Water Cannon	53	60
Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems	11	61
Z-Poolform (Concrete Countertop Solutions)	52	62

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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE

Robin Brailsford, LithoMosaics Dulzura, California

by Vanessa Salvia

ROBIN Brailsford's online resume lists her as "Artist, Inventor, Aesthetic Engineer." The word "concrete" doesn't make its first appearance until the third page, but nonetheless, Brailsford has made a huge contribution to the art and science of decorative concrete through her patented invention, LithoMosaic.

Brailsford, 61, grew up in an artistic family in an old-fashioned oceanfront town on Massachusetts' North Shore. Her mother, Frances Wosmek, who died in 2014 at age 96, wrote and illustrated children's books and was the first card designer hired by American Greetings. Brailsford's father was a master mariner, a sea captain originally from London.

Brailsford's hometown had nary a concrete block in sight. "There really isn't any concrete in New England," she says. "The curbs, bridges, everything is made out of stone."

She went to graduate school in New Mexico for a sculpture degree, then realized that wasn't the best location for an artist. "The problem with New Mexico was that everybody was an artist and nobody was a client. I found that California was what I was looking for."

California discoveries

Some of Brailsford's public art projects in California involved setting regular mosaic tiles on Duraboard, an insulating board made by Unifrax. "Then they were set into the sidewalk in a medallion," she says. "Those were wonderful but they were very limited in scale. Duraboard is only 3-by-5 feet."

For the Downtown Transit Mall in Santa Monica, Brailsford wanted stenciled designs in six intersections. "So I was ranging around looking for how I could do what I wanted to do," she recalls.

She discovered a process called Lithocrete, invented by Ron Shaw of the California concrete construction company Shaw & Sons. Lithocrete is a natural granite and/or stone finish permanently embedded into the surface of structural concrete.

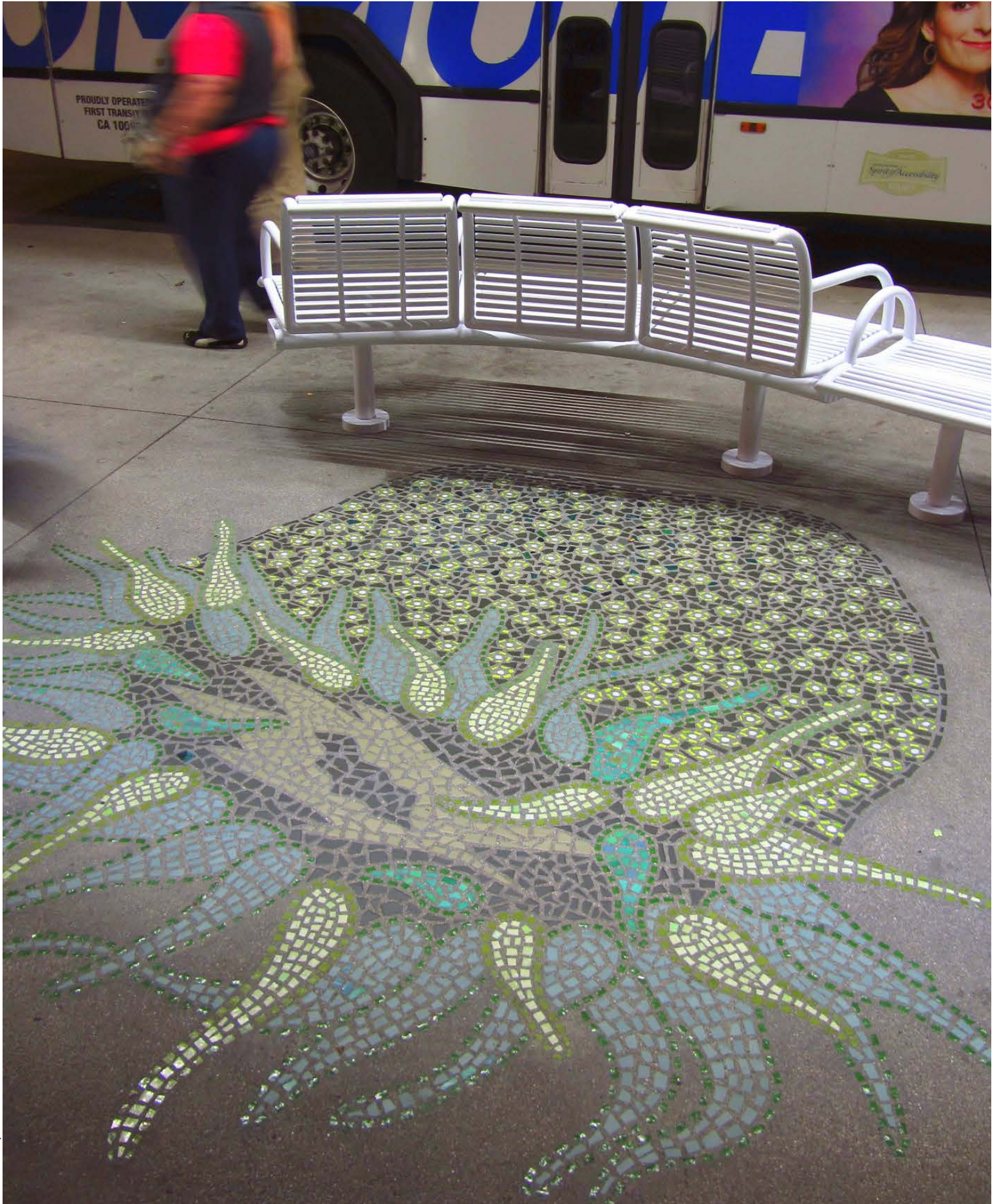
That technique helped her achieve her goals on the Santa Monica project.

Next, Brailsford used the Lithocrete process on a 1,000-foot-long "river" at a bus transit mall in Phoenix. To achieve an artistic river effect, she hand-tossed all the aggregates in a meandering form. "It was a very hard job because I had to toss the aggregate as fast as possible ahead of the five-man concrete crew following me that was troweling the aggregates as I threw them," she recalls.

"It was 100 degrees and I had 50 buckets of aggregate I was tossing. I thought, 'There's got to be a better way!'"

Placing Lithocrete involves a technique of scattering aggregate on the surface of wet concrete. Brailsford wanted a way to create a deliberate pattern in the comfort of a studio that both the artist and the client could look at and consider, and which could be placed in monolithic concrete pours. "It took five or six years of research and development to get the magic combo of glues and mesh and sequence. I did a lot of work with Shaw & Sons and T.B. Penick (& Sons), and one day we got it right."







Photos courtesy of Robin Brailsford

LithoMosaic as public art

Brailsford, along with Ron Shaw, secured the patent about five years ago. LithoMosaic is now in the lexicon and is specified by architects from Alaska to Florida. Originally, Shaw & Sons wanted to write in the contract that Brailsford install every LithoMosaic.

“But I wanted to see what other artists could do with it as a new art technique,” she says. “I do get a royalty for every LithoMosaic that goes in, which buys me freedom to create, and it’s exciting to see where other artists can take it.”

To her, LithoMosaic is not only the future of mosaics, it’s the future of concrete. “You can work big, so it has the attributes of

concrete — the strength, the durability, the scale. And then you also have the artists who don’t have to know about any of those things at all, but are completely in charge of designing a superb work of public art.”

The LithoMosaic technique involves creating a large-scale design and blowing it up to full size. Next, a piece of plastic is placed over the design, with a piece of mesh over the top of it. Using a specific glue, the tiles are adhered upside down on top of the design drawing. The LithoMosaics are then shipped as a whole piece.

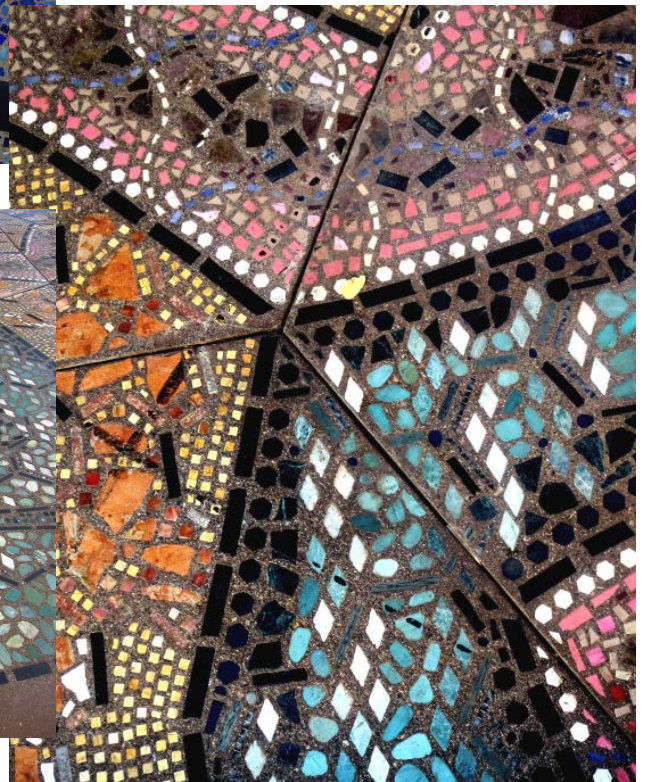
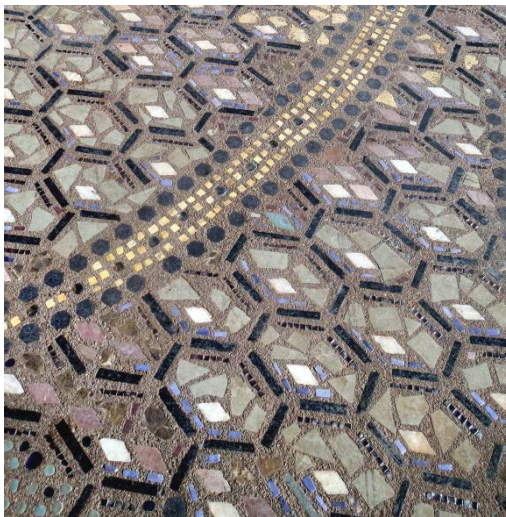
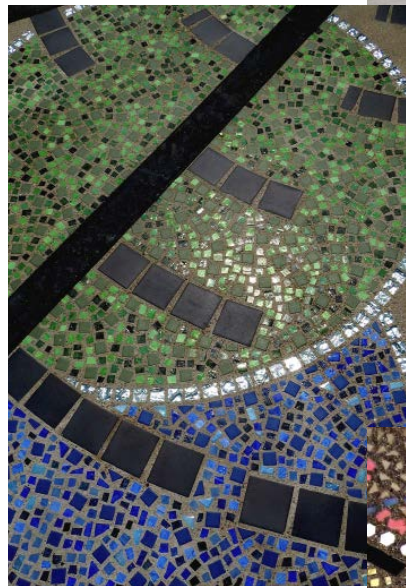
At the site, the concrete is poured, troweled flat and the LithoMosaic is laid upside down so the tiles are under the surface of the concrete. “The water in the

concrete releases the glue and the mesh is pulled back and the tiles are set in the concrete,” Brailsford says.

One size does not fit all

LithoMosaic is not a good fit for small patterns or for backyard projects. The technique does work extremely well for transportation corridors, parks, public plazas and other places where large, monolithic concrete pours would be appropriate and a bold aesthetic is desired for wayfinding, sense of place, intrigue and beauty.

“The tiles have to be substantial in size, and you need a 1/4 inch between the tiles so that the concrete cream can come up



between them,” she says. “Usually we do very large projects made up of sections that are 4-by-8 feet.”

Brailsford’s technique has been used for public art projects in Nevada, Texas, Arizona and North Carolina and in California in Santa Monica, Irwindale, Lemon Grove and Long Beach. Her “Edendale Botanica” for The Trust for Public Land in Los Angeles has eight curving LithoMosaic benches with floral imagery that celebrates the area’s natural history. A promenade down Main Street in Lemon Grove includes giant LithoMosaic lemon slices and fruit crates. Also in Los Angeles, the Goldline light rail commissioned a 10,000-square-foot

LithoMosaic element for the station.

Brailsford has given presentations on LithoMosaic and received honors throughout the nation, including LEED platinum certification for the Desert National Wildlife Visitor Center in Las Vegas.

Concrete and the artist

Though Brailsford has spent her life seeking out artistic inspiration and collaboration, she never imagined that concrete would become her primary medium.

“Growing up, the two art materials I didn’t like were silver and concrete, and those turned out to be the most important to my artistic career,” she says.

“I also really enjoy collaborating with landscape architects and engineers in the planning stage on really big and difficult projects. And then the fabulous one-on-one collaboration with the guys in the field, masters all. I also enjoy the unique collaboration between a woman artist and the male-dominated world of concrete construction.” 📱

🌐 www.lithomosaic.squarespace.com

See more photos from this feature online at ConcreteDecor.net

Creating the Look of Stones

Residential pool deck, Augusta, N.J.

by Gail Elber

LAST year, a homeowner in Augusta, New Jersey, went into a masons' supply store looking for a fix for his pool deck. The pavers installed 15 years ago had settled. The deck wasn't draining properly, and his homeowner's insurance company had identified the paver portion of the pool deck as a hazard.

The staff suggested he contact Unique Concrete in West Milford, New Jersey, to learn about alternatives to pavers.

"The old pavers were laid in a sand base, which is typical," says Todd Fisher of Unique Concrete, a family company owned by Fisher's father, Barry. "Pavers started to get really popular around here 15 or 20 years ago. They didn't understand the need to excavate, build up that base layer and get good drainage."

The pool deck consisted of a concrete coping around the pool, surrounded by pavers. Originally, the homeowner had sought estimates on tearing out the concrete, taking up the pavers and reusing



Photos courtesy of Unique Concrete

Project at a Glance

Decorative concrete contractor:

Unique Concrete, West Milford, N.J.

www.uniqueconcretenj.com

Design and project management: Todd Fisher, Barry Fisher and Timothy Fisher

Products used: Random Ashlar stamps by Unique Concrete; integral color by Lanxess from Empire Blended 330 and 6524 (Bayville, N.J.); Kingdom Product's Imperial Vertical Wall Mix (Throop, Pa.); Hazelnut, Whey, Dusty Rose and Bluestone water-based stains from Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply (Throop, Pa.); colloidal silica, polymer and super plasticizer from Innovative Concrete Technologies (Port Murray, N.J.); polyvinyl alcohol fibers from Nycon (Fairless Hills, Pa.); polypropylene fibers from Forta Corp. Grove City, Pa.; ready mix from Sparta Redi-Mix (Sparta, N.J.)

Project description: A pool deck made of pavers that had settled, as well as a concrete pool coping, were replaced with a concrete slab with an overlay textured using a process that creates the look of individual "stones" on the surface.

Challenges: A drainage system had to be created and tied into existing drainage; a diving rock had to be fabricated; and the whole thing had to be done next to a functioning swimming pool. A fence with two gates added a challenge to bringing in and maneuvering materials.

the pavers in a new deck. But the old concrete turned out to be up to a foot thick in sections and demolishing it would be expensive. A fence around the pool limited access to the pool area, meaning everything had to be transported by wheelbarrow.

"It was a very thick mass of concrete, but overall, for the amount of time that had elapsed, it was in pretty good shape and structurally sound," Todd Fisher says.



The new dive rock is more kid-friendly than the old diving board. The homeowner picked out a waterfall and LED lighting to install below it.

Tying the old with the new

The project of tying together the old concrete with a new slab was a good candidate for Unique Concrete's characteristic process, which it calls Handcrafted Stone.

The process involves two steps. First, the Fishers pour a structural slab that doesn't have to be pretty. "Not only can we put in rebar, but we can also add structural polypropylene fibers that would prevent it from being stamped," he says. When they resurface existing concrete, as in this job, they pour a 3/4-inch structural layer with both polypropylene and polyvinyl acetate fibers. "It is a blend we have come up with that provides enough workability to be placed and tined (roughed up) to achieve a mechanical bond for the decorative layer," Fisher says.

The next day, they go back and pour a 1-inch-thick overlay. Instead of a polymer-modified material, they use a mortar-style mix, meaning there is no large aggregate with a small aggregate. Colloidal silica in the mix "acts like a pozzolan to make it durable," Fisher says. The decorative layer mix consists of well-graded concrete



The old pavers had settled, but the concrete pool coping was still in good shape. The Fishers had to maneuver material in the tight space between the pool and the fence.



If you look closely, you can see a straight line, which is actually a sawcut, running from the middle of the last step through the pool deck. Also to offset the pattern and draw attention to individual shapes, the Fishers hand-applied various stains to each rectangle.

sand, portland cement, colloidal silica, a polycarboxylate superplasticizer and PVA fibers, as well as the integral color. "It behaves more like a traditional concrete mix, meaning it trowels and textures better than a polymer-modified mix," Fisher says. Their standard decorative mix tests at 5,800 psi. When necessary, he adds, they use a different mix tested at 8,000 psi.

The overlay is stamped with "old-fashioned cookie cutter-style stamps," which make an impression that goes all the way down to the underlying slab. The voids between the "stones" in the pattern are grouted with a polymer-modified grout applied with a grout bag and tooled. The grout lines behave as control joints, preventing the "stones" from cracking.

Adding features that 'rock'

The pool deck was completed in July 2014. The homeowner removed the pavers. The crew, consisting of Fisher, his brother, Timothy, and their father, installed 120 linear feet of drains, connecting them to an existing drainage system in the yard. Then they poured the 2,500-square-foot slab and the overlay, breaking both into sections because the fence limited access to the site. The Fishers textured the overlay with rollers of their own creation, then colored the integrally colored overlay with water-based stain, applying it to individual "stones" for a realistic look.

In addition to the uneven pavers, the homeowner wanted to replace an old diving board. Fisher suggested replacing it with a concrete diving rock. The homeowner was delighted with this idea and purchased a Jandy Sheer Descent waterfall and LED lighting to be installed under the rock.

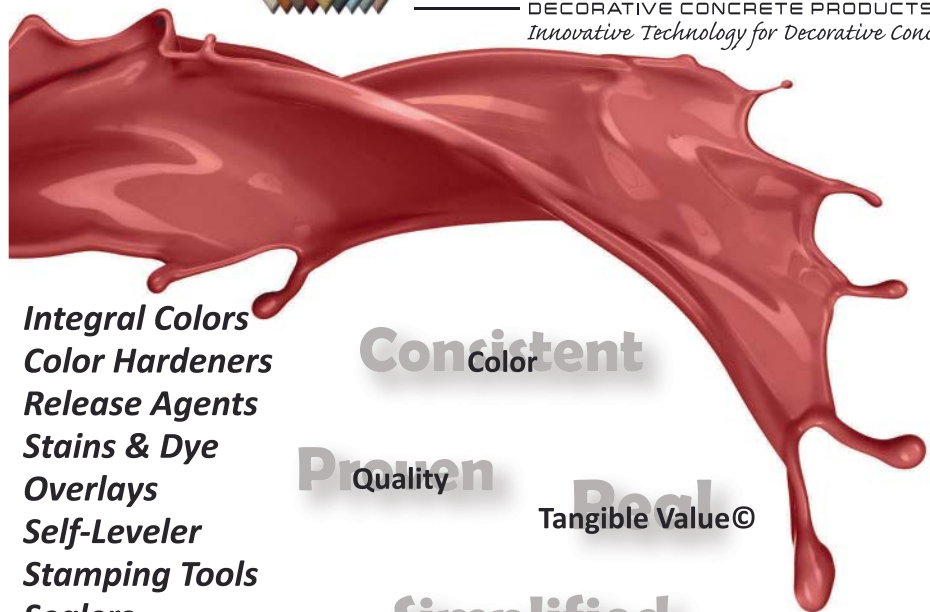
"We created a rough shape out of concrete block and then used that to mount the plumbing and the electrical," Fisher said. "We poured a skeleton out of a sand mix that could be rough-carved to the shape of the rocks. Once that was set, we came back with a vertical carving mix from Concrete Texturing that we manipulated by hand to create the final texture. We used texture rollers and skins."

During the whole project, the pool remained full—of both water and people. Fisher's crew floated polystyrene foam boards on the water to prevent material from falling in. That enabled the family to use the pool without interruption all summer, and the homeowner's grandchildren have pronounced their new dive rock — more suited to their size than the old diving board — a rocking success. 🛹



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Black Bear Coatings & Concrete turned a patchwork of existing concrete into a polished surface worthy of this Revere, Massachusetts, motorcycle palace.

Photo by Damianos Photography, courtesy of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete

High-Octane Vibe

Contractor navigates twists and turns to transform Harley-Davidson dealership

by Joe Maty

THE owners and designers of a new Harley-Davidson dealership near Boston are revved up about the unconventional, highly varied appearance of the renovated building's polished concrete floor.

Black Bear Coatings & Concrete, the contractor that tackled this demanding decorative-concrete assignment, is also feeling a good vibe about the new Boston

Project at a Glance

Decorative concrete contractor: Black Bear Coatings & Concrete, Fitchburg, Mass.

Client: Boston Harley-Davidson, Revere, Mass.

Architect: studio Troika; Robert Elfer, partner in charge

Project description: Install polished-concrete overlay and epoxy floor system; polish concrete; cast and polish concrete countertops; apply moisture-mitigation sealer system.

General contractor: J. Calnan & Associates Inc., Quincy, Mass.

Project cost: Approximately \$250,000

Project duration: Approximately three months (off and on) — five days for epoxy flooring, six days for concrete sealer application, 21 days for polished concrete, four days for polished overlay and seven days for concrete countertops.

Challenges: Evaluation and preparation of existing concrete surface of varied ages and condition, including grinding and polishing with different diamond grits appropriate for range of concrete characteristics; installation of cementitious polishable overlay; evaluation of moisture issues in existing concrete in shop/service and storage areas, with application of moisture-mitigation technologies.

Tools and materials used: Tools — Hippo portable mixers; Terrco 3100-3P and 2000 grinder/polishers and Husqvarna PG820 grinder/polisher; Pulse-Bac 2150 vacuums; Ruvac; Edco Scarifier; Fusion Pucks (dry and wet) from Dynamic Diamond Tooling; ReDiToo demo blades (for heavy concrete removal). Materials — CTS Cement/Rapid Set TRU PC self-leveling cementitious polished-concrete overlay; Vexcon Certi-Shine potassium silicate concrete-polishing system; Buddy Rhodes Counter Mix with glass fiber reinforcement; Dur-A-Flex Shop Floor epoxy flooring system (MVP Primer, Shop Floor epoxy with sand broadcast, Armor Coat aliphatic urethane top coat); and Synthetics International Synthetic30 vapor control system.



Photo courtesy of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete

Harley-Davidson. After all, the company went into high gear to turn the designers' creative inspiration into striking reality.

"The rewarding part of the job is to go there and see the complete project," says John Scott, technical field adviser and partner with Justin Tousignant, president of Black Bear. Not to mention, he adds, the owner and architect thought the outcome was fantastic.

"Every few feet came out differently, which in this case is very appropriate," says architect Robert Elfer, with studio Troika, of the 16,000-square-foot polished floor. Elfer, who served as the firm's partner in charge of the project, says the transformation of the building's battle-scarred, much-abused existing concrete floor delivered the "urban, authentic" impression sought by the designers and owner.

"We knew the floor was in rough shape, but the one thing we liked is that it illustrated the history of the building," Elfer says. The polishing process preserved rather than obscured this legacy.

But it fell to Black Bear to make it work — to salvage this patchwork concrete canvas and turn it into a useful and usable floor in sync with the ultra-cool vibe exuded by this new motorcycle palace. To accomplish this feat, Black Bear steered a tortuous path through a ragged concrete terrain made up of a "smorgasbord" of issues including residue from various flooring types installed at one time or another in the 40-plus year-old building: trenches, residual mastic and gypcrete underlayments, and a patchwork of slabs. Black Bear's crews plowed through this maze, constantly switching grinding grits, cutting away residues and removing unsalvageable concrete.

When Black Bear found a 3,000-square-foot area beyond hope of reuse, it turned to a cutting-edge alternative, a new polishable overlay designed to match traditional concrete's gray color and aggregate composition — CTS Cement/Rapid Set's TRU PC. This facet of the polishing job blended effectively with the other sections of the polished concrete floor, Elfer says.

The polished concrete floor in the dealership's showroom and sales area might be considered the crown jewel of Black Bear's scope of work at the site, but the company also demonstrated its versatility by casting concrete countertops and installing epoxy flooring and protective concrete coating systems.

'It was a mess'

Tousignant says the existing floors in the building's showroom and sales areas "were a mess," and appeared to offer little potential for polishing. But the owner and architect were adamant about polished concrete and Black Bear found ways to deliver it.

The concrete surface extended across a boundary where a common wall had divided two different buildings occupied by separate businesses. Removing the wall and constructing a new steel structural framework was part of a massive rebuilding

program, as the two buildings and floors were combined into one.

"It was like four timelines," Elfer says of a procession of different businesses, including a grocery store, that had occupied parts of the spaces over the years. "We knew the floor was in rough shape, but the one thing we liked was the history of the building and how the floor showed this."

"Choosing the right diamond for the psi was a challenge," says Scott, referring to the existing concrete's varied compressive strength and condition. "We went through



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PROJECT PROFILE



Photo courtesy of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete



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During the demolition of the unusable slab, 1/4 to 1/2 inch of concrete was removed prior to installation of the overlay.

The concrete overlay following installation and polish.



Photo by Chad Wullman, studio Troika

The polished overlay section material is formulated to match the gray color and aggregate composition of conventional concrete.

different grits, switching diamonds out. We'd start grinding, then run into a Cracker Jacks box, not sure what kind of surprise would be there."

The trial-and-error grinding eventually succeeded on most of the surface, except for that sizeable area where the new TRU PC overlay was used. Solution samples were prepared and the polishable cementitious overlay, formulated to produce an authentic

concrete look with gray colorant and aggregate, won out over an epoxy metallic.

The look and color of the real deal

Using a scarifier, Black Bear demolished about 1/4 inch of the concrete slated for overlay installation. A crew used a diamond blade to cut joints at the section's edges where the overlay would meet the existing concrete substrate.

Polishing the overlay began the next day, as the material typically achieves a strength of 5,000 psi within 24 hours, says Joe Zingale, CTS/Rapid Set flooring group specialist.

The Boston Harley site is one of the first places where the new overlay product was used, Zingale says. He anticipates it will be on the market soon. "We're still tweaking it," he says.



Photo by Damianos Photography, courtesy of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete

An epoxy flooring system was applied to 12,580 square feet of concrete in the dealership's service area.

It will be marketed specifically for use with Husqvarna grinders to ensure predictability in performance and appearance, Zingale says. "It's more spec driven, so to speak," he says. "It makes specification simple . . . here's the machine, the material, the process and the results."

Tousignant says from a contractor's perspective, the overlay material can provide an "exposed aggregate aesthetic." In practice, the overlay is comparable to Rapid Set's conventional TRU self-leveling overlay, with its ease of handling, leveling and fast set. It's ready for polishing in 12 to 16 hours.

"The main difference with the PC is the larger aggregate profile," Tousignant says. "It resembles typical concrete," producing a new-pour appearance at 1/4-inch depth.

Polishing the existing concrete and the new overlay proceeded in stages over a number of days, with more than 10 days spent just on grinding and prepping different portions of the existing slab, says Scott. Black Bear used the Vexcon Certi-Shine system, consisting of the Certi-Shine Clear potassium silicate densifier, Fusion floor-repair technology and Finish Coat Ultra guard-sealer. Also used was Certi-Shine Fixative Wash, which scavenges and removes excess or unreacted silicates from the concrete.

The Fusion product is a modified silicate formula applied during the grinding/polish process, using a specially designed diamond puck. When applied, the grinding process creates a wet slurry on the concrete surface. After it's dry, the slurry is ground off to remove residues. The slurry created by the grinding fills voids and holes.

A story in the floor

The existing concrete's varied patterns and hues "weren't perfect, but that's what they were looking for," Scott says of the client. "They didn't want a Macy's floor or a Filene's floor," he says, referring to a uniform department-store look. "They wanted a clean but industrial look," polished to a 400-grit level.

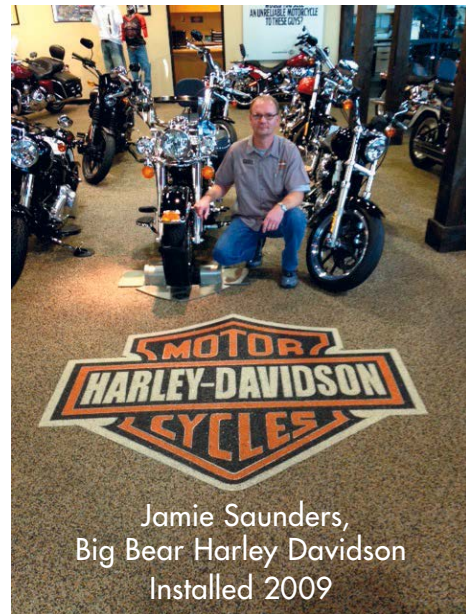
Andrew Janiak, facilities director for Boston Harley-Davidson, says he was influenced by a visit he made about a year ago to a Recreational Equipment Inc. store in the SoHo district of New York.

"It's in a renovated building with a beautiful floor, and also great

walls and exposed structure, that all showed the history of the building," Janiak says. "In the floor I could see shapes from previous structural elements, patterns from floor repairs and pieces of steel half-ground. I could see pipes and beams, and other miscellaneous steel in the concrete, cut flush with the surface.

"All of this displayed a history of the building and that's what we

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Photos by Chad Wullman, studio Troika

The design architects and owner got what they were seeking: a sense of the history of the building, seen in the variation of the existing concrete. Photos above and below show two areas of the dealership's polished concrete floor.



wanted to do with the new dealership, to celebrate the history of the building, the city and of the Harley-Davidson brand. Also to be proud that we re-purposed a building that was in need of a new purpose.”

Completing a portrait

Black Bear's efforts at Boston Harley extended well beyond the concrete polishing task. The company also crafted 34 cast-in-place concrete countertops, applied an epoxy flooring system to 12,580 square feet of concrete in the dealership's service area and applied a vapor-mitigation sealer to 9,000 square feet in storage areas.

For the countertops, Black Bear used the Buddy Rhodes FGR Countertop Mix. A centerpiece is the main reception desk, where the mix was poured and pressed over a Harley-Davidson nameplate to embed the image on the countertop surface.

Here, the piece was cast off-site upside down, with the concrete mix pressed over the brass nameplate. Melamine plywood was used to produce the smooth countertop surface and facilitate release, Scott says. The 8-by-3 1/2-foot piece, estimated at 420 pounds, was then flipped over and put in place.

All the countertops were diamond ground and



Photo courtesy of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete

For this 420-pound reception counter, the countertop mix was poured and pressed over a metal Harley-Davidson nameplate.

polished with 50-grit metal-bond diamonds followed by resin-bond diamonds at 100, 200 and 400 grit.

In the service and storage areas of the building, an investigation of the existing concrete substrate revealed the presence of high moisture content (relative humidity). Black Bear installed a multicomponent epoxy flooring system and a vapor-reduction sealer in these areas, where performance and function took precedence. Both floor areas had already been shot blasted for asbestos abatement and the final prep was done by diamond grinding.

For the service-bay areas, a Dur-A-Flex epoxy system was installed — Dur-A-Glaze MVP Primer (vapor-mitigation epoxy primer), Shop Floor epoxy and Dur-A-Flex Armor Top clear aliphatic urethane top coat.

In the storage areas, Black Bear applied a vapor-reduction primer that doubles as a sealer — Synthetics International's Synthetic30 vapor-control system. 🛠️

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Cross a moat and you'll enter the concrete "portal" to House 7's guest house. The flanking wall and canopy are extensions of the main house wall and upper deck. The 450-square-foot guest house in Los Altos Hills, California, has its own deck, bathroom and living space.

Photo by Matthew Millman Photography

In addition to integrally colored concrete, FuTung Cheng's House 6 (note the "6" at the far right) in Menlo Park, California, features a water sluice on the right. Water runs toward the home's wall and drops over the edge into a channel running left and into a pond. The entry's canopy is made of carbonate embedded with twigs. The assembled elements reflect Cheng's design philosophy of integrating architectural and structural elements.



Photo by Matthew Millman Photography

DESIGN THEORY:

The Ongoing Evolution of the Species *Concrete*

by Joe Maty

IN FuTung Cheng's view, the term "decorative concrete" fails to convey the full measure of the material's prowess in enhancing design. Coloring, texturing, stamping or staining don't begin to tell the whole story.

Cheng, widely acknowledged as a leading figure in the use of concrete in architecture and often hailed as a "guru" in the building trade, considers concrete "integral" to design and architecture. The use of concrete extends beyond interior space and the objects within, such as countertops and fireplaces. It's about the space itself being surrounded and embodied by the sculptural envelope of a substance. It's about the whole of architecture.

"I like to use it structurally and integrally — form and function integrated together," says Cheng. "You can treat the surface while the structure is poured in place. You have infinite opportunities to mold it, texture it, sculpt it, color it and refine it, simultaneously with the structural pour."

Cheng cites a recent residential project in which color, design and texture were incorporated into poured concrete wall structures. Each four-foot "lift" provides the physical access to the forms to allow placement of bands of color and aggregate. It simulates the process nature might take over millennia to stratify layers of sediment in bands to form a hillside cliff face.

Why and how designers use decorative concrete in their projects is as much philosophical as it is based in aesthetics. Cheng and other designers offer their views on design and the role played by concrete — and in particular decorative concrete — in a wide-ranging discussion.

The choice of concrete

Cheng, founder and head of Cheng Design in Berkeley, California, says designers first must determine what they

seek to convey in a project, then weigh whether concrete is the right architectural finish. In Cheng's specialty of residential projects, he first strives to interpret the client's intent and desires for the home.

"The essential question is have they seen our work? Is the use of concrete one of the primary reasons for the attraction to our design work? If so, what attracts them to concrete?" he asks. "Usually it's the gut feeling of mass and substance — both structural and decorative — that speaks directly to their emotions. It's not a coating. It isn't veneer. It's integral and real."

Michael Pape, landscape architect and head of Michael Pape & Associates in Ocala, Florida, agrees. "Overwhelmingly, design decisions to use concrete are based on aesthetics and durability," he says, and the latter often translates into environmental benefits and sustainability.

Marley Porter, president and principal of Living Architecture and Construction Management based in Cottonwood, Texas, has a bulging portfolio of decorative concrete projects to his name. He extols the material's myriad strengths and



A mixture of colorant, aggregate and cement placed in formwork during a pour create a decorative vein in one of House 6's concrete walls.

Photo by Cheng Design



Photo courtesy of Delineation Inc.

Residual mastic was ground off the existing concrete floor in this Fort Wayne, Indiana, cafe, exposing the natural aggregate. A clear epoxy primer was applied, followed by a matte-finish urethane.

qualities. “Concrete is one of the most versatile, flexible, organic, structural, aesthetically potent materials on earth,” he says. “Concrete can lie flat or spring out and soar. Concrete can be the ‘big heavy’ in composition or concrete can float like a fairy on a feather. Architects abuse concrete too often because they don’t understand its inherent nature: frozen movement.”

Porter’s unique spin: “When concrete is thought about as only an architectural finish, it’s like me thinking about my wife’s pretty sundress instead of me thinking about the woman within. Concrete finishes are the dress. The power comes from what’s under the finish.”

He elaborates: “Concrete finishes should echo what they cover. They should extend the intent of what the concrete inside wants.” He provides an example of entering an asymmetrical room that is angled on one side, open on the other and looks over a pool just outside a big picture window opposite the door. In this example, on the floor is a fancy, decorative concrete compass that does nothing for the space except compete for the pool’s attention.

“Score the concrete to be what the room is and use the decorative nature to do what the room wants the occupant to do . . . and that is not to look down and proclaim, ‘Oh my, another unique and totally outrageous compass!’”

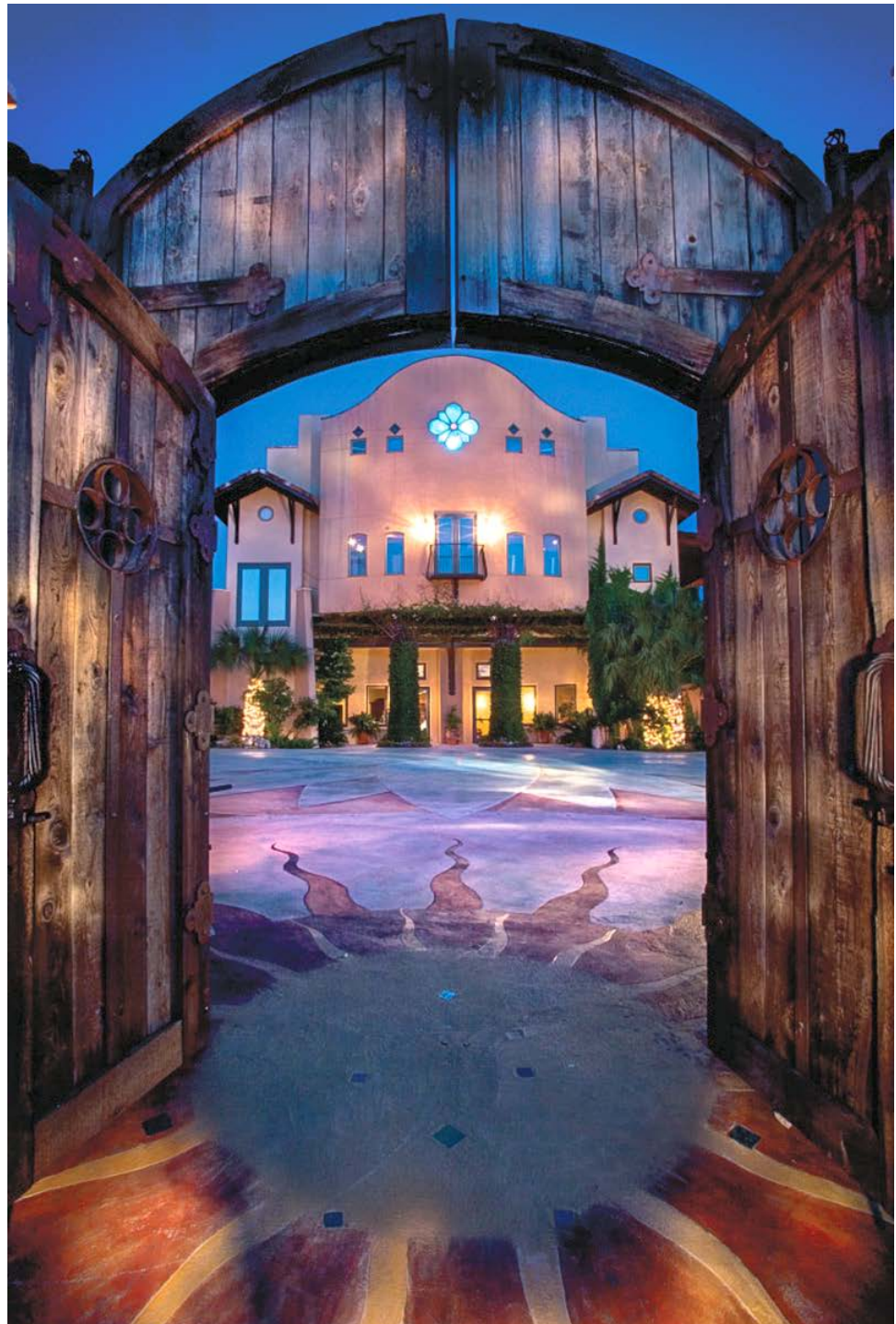


Photo courtesy of Marley Porter, Living Architecture and Construction Management

For this courtyard of One World Theatre in Austin, Texas, acid staining, combined with solid-color pigmentation in darker areas, was used on the hand-cut concrete design. The decorative concrete patterns serve as geometric extensions of the building forms, intersecting with the principal focus—the 28-foot lotus flower.

Outside the box

The emergence of concrete as flooring has added a new dimension to the material’s vast design adaptations — and to its value as a flooring alternative, says Amie Lindsay, architect and principal with Delineation Inc. in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

“There are clients who like the industrial feel to an urban space. Finishing the existing concrete floor is such a great way to give

character to a space,” Lindsay says. “There are many options to stain that provide the look/color that fits the interior design.”

Susan Fredman, of Fredman Design Group in Chicago, says she will specify concrete as the solution when they are “looking for the natural imperfect perfection that concrete provides.”

Pape says, “For the exterior environments in which landscape architects work, there

Dynamic Disconnect

"Cantilevered stair treads are always an eye-catching sensation in architectural circles," says FuTung Cheng, founder of the website concreteexchange.com. "The very idea of a single point of support at one end of a plank, managing the enormous weight of a person walking on a stair tread, is dramatic. Intuitively we connect the idea of a diving board to the concept — a springy, unstable path to the second floor should be the result. Combined with the inherent weight of a concrete tread, the instability disconnect is reinforced."

In the award-winning Los Altos Hills, California, residential design shown here, the 300-pound treads were engineered to be cast around a dense cage of #5 rebar, a 1/2-inch-thick welded plate and two PVC sleeves for the post-tensioning threaded rods running the length of the tread from the wall. A robust matching steel plate with 5/8-inch rebar tangs was precisely located up and along the wall for each tread. They were then welded to the wall rebar before the concrete walls were formed.



The treads were formed in laminated-lined melamine molds (just like a countertop) with a special mix design of blended fibers and high-performance cement. After curing for 28 days, they were individually ground to a non-slip 200-grit finish. For installation, the contractor made a special rolling carriage to slide each behemoth into the precise level and location of the plate attachment on the wall and into the embedded sleeves for the threaded rods.

To test the cantilever's strength, Cheng says they placed 650 pounds of solid concrete block on the end of each tread, before he and the engineer gingerly stepped on. "We measured a mere 1/16th of an inch deflection with a nearly 1,000 pounds dead load," he says.

NOTE: Engineer of house and stairs: Endres Studio, Emeryville, Calif.; foreman: KC Lowen, and concrete specialist: Greg Whiteside, RJ Dailey Construction, Los Altos, Calif.; and project architect: Ann Kim, Cheng Design.



Photos by Matthew Millman Photography

are no durable finishes that match concrete in terms of flexibility of installation, as well as in the broad range of design effects that are so important aesthetically."

For Cheng, concrete's advantages over alternative "traditional" materials begin with its nearly limitless creative potential.

"With decorative concrete products such as countertops, you can mold them and sculpt them, and provide practical design solutions such as drain boards, rather than plain Jane, bologna-and-white-bread kinds of kitchens," he says. "As in all design, changing the subtle proportions of an object is tantamount to a magician changing your perceptions in the creation of an illusion — the surprise of seeing the ordinary presented extraordinarily with the sensations stimulated by the look and feel of concrete touches our primal comfort-response to a beautiful stone in nature."

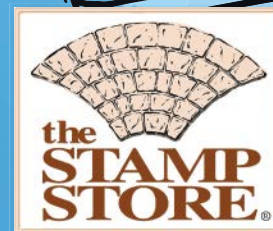
Rather than being mass produced, concrete countertops can be crafted, customized, personalized and tailored to an individual's needs and a kitchen's design requirements.

Cheng scales up the design themes and principles from kitchens to the whole residential structure. For example, take the staircase in a Los Altos Hills, California, residence Cheng calls "House 7," a winner of a 2014 International Design Award. The walls were poured on site, and the stairs were made in the shop, put in place and post tensioned. This is the principle of architectural integration in action. In this case, it's a practical, functional element.

Selling the price

Cost to the client is cited as a major challenge in decorative-concrete designs and installations. "It is a common material for

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construction, but many clients are not aware of it being a finished material,” says Lindsay.

“It’s not something you can quantify immediately,” Cheng says of estimating a project’s cost. “People assume concrete is inexpensive, but doing elaborate formwork, creating something with permanence and value is not low cost.”

Clients see the final, beautiful result but don’t necessarily know what goes into achieving it. For example, if a designer doesn’t want the usual tie holes to be seen in finished concrete, very strong buttresses can be used but they are more costly than form-ties. The same goes with using special materials to get different effects. “You want the concrete to telegraph what you are trying to convey, with artistic textures rather than the look of giant retaining walls made with plywood forms. Those kinds of things add up,” he says.

“Sometimes I have to draw it on paper, explain that this is what I’m trying to do,” Cheng says. There’s a certain amount of psychology involved to instill the confidence needed to convince clients of a project’s worth.

Ballpark costs for Cheng’s residential designs range from \$400 per square foot to as much as \$800 per square foot. “This is one of the rewards of reaching this point,” he says. For him, multimillion-dollar residences are commonplace, if not routine.

Imagination and inspiration

In the design drama, Porter says, decorative concrete methods and materials play a number of roles. “They support. They reflect. They augment. They dress. They genuflect and are subservient to the intent of the architecture unless the architecture is all about letting go and going crazy. Then the concrete products can lift, explode, go three-dimensional, spin, slice and dance. Make the design process integral by bringing the products in before the concrete is placed. Otherwise, it’s a tired and dirty dress on the floor.”

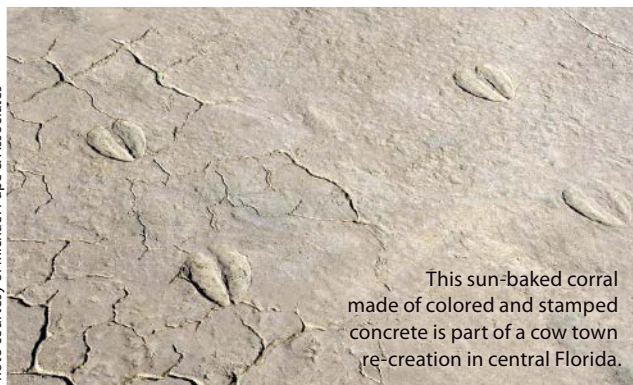
Pape seconds the motion, minus the abstractions and amplifications: “Nothing can match the flexibility and range of treatments available with decorative concrete,” he says.

Fredman calls decorative concrete’s aesthetic “unmistakable.”

Pape invites a look at Brownwood Town Center at The Villages in Florida as an “incomparable example of a project



Stormwater runs from a coffered downspout down the “rain chains” and onto an “erosion wall” found in the rear of House 7 in Los Altos Hills. Flowing water will slowly erode parts of the wall made with higher concentrations of aggregate and sand, and containing personal items from the homeowner, an artist. As the wall erodes, the items will eventually emerge. Moss has already begun to grow, as was Cheng’s intention. These features provide a unique connection to the geology and climatology of California’s coastal highlands, Cheng says.



This sun-baked corral made of colored and stamped concrete is part of a cow town re-creation in central Florida.

where no other material but decorative concrete could have achieved the various design effects that enhanced the unique character and user appeal of the project.”

At Brownwood, Pape and contractor Edwards Concrete conveyed the look and feel of a 19th-century cattle town in central Florida complete with the footprints of cows and wildlife in a sunbaked corral. Except that the sunbaked mud is colored concrete.

“No other paving surface could have replicated the effect of dried mud that gave such a striking thematic quality to the job,” Pape says. “And the thousands of people who visit the project each week are amazed and impressed by that.”

Going rogue

Going rogue, designers can forge their own interpretations well beyond anything shown in a product video or application guide, Cheng says.

“Again, it’s using concrete elements that you mold and cast. This can stimulate thinking on how these designs can be used and crafted in the given situation. The creative possibilities are many.

“It’s a complex, intensive dance with all the materials available, including concrete, to come up with something aesthetic and structural,” he says. “There are so few memorable buildings, because the impetus in our society and the demands of capitalism for profit is all about ‘faster is better.’”

But going rogue can be an expensive process. Consider a setting where the decorative concept is natural, organic — like moss. Cheng’s been there and done that, incorporating a medium that fosters the growth of moss into a concrete wall in a rustic residential setting.

“Typically you have to pick and choose where you want to do something of this type. It can’t be done everywhere in the project,” he says. “It’s definitely for high-end projects, where the concept becomes part of the DNA of the whole building.

“Think of music; you are trying to set a mood, a sensibility. Architecture is much like that — selecting materials that will convey a certain feeling, and you are changing and adjusting — orchestrating materials and looking for new ways to convey the impression you’re trying to make. Complementing concrete with a wood floor, for example, is an ensemble approach.”

That’s the kind of influence concrete can have for Cheng — and for anyone willing to

be receptive to it. There are opportunities for innovative ways to use it, not just repeating what’s been done before, he says.

The story of Genesis

The thinking that concrete should be considered in projects can originate from client or designer. This species called decorative concrete is still maturing and evolving, and the notion that no idea is a bad one almost makes sense.

“As landscape architects who have the privilege of handling such an array of creative projects, we take every opportunity to recommend decorative concrete finishes and educate our clients on what can be done with them,” says Pape. “The success of such projects creates more demand and more opportunity for both design professionals and installers.”

For Cheng, a conversation of decorative concrete finishes typically originates with the client, who’s usually aware of his work. Some clients come to the table with a love of concrete, while others prefer a moderate dose for the design they have in mind.

In Cheng’s early days, most people didn’t realize concrete could be used for decorative

treatments that could produce effects such as the look of terrazzo. Innovative design concepts drove meteoric expansion for Cheng Design, primarily ignited in 2004 by a multipage feature in the *Los Angeles Times* which was picked up by other publications around the country.

“Design was the story, design with concrete,” Cheng says. He remembers the *Times* writer initially inquired about granite countertops. But the story morphed into more varied design mediums since granite countertops “had become commonplace” and carried inherent limitations for forming and molding.

“The real story was design, *is design*,” Cheng says—a story that plays right into the strengths of concrete. 📱

FuTung Cheng:

🌐 www.concreteexchange.com

Michael Pape:

🌐 www.mpala.net

Marley Porter:

🌐 www.livingarchitecture.com

Amie Lindsay:

🌐 www.delineationarch.com

Susan Fredman:

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Field Recon App Makes Quick Work of Jobsite Data

By Vanessa Salvia

CHAD Gill, president of Concreate in Midlothian, Virginia, enjoys having a successful, busy company. But after digging into his finances, he realized he was not being paid for tens of thousands of dollars of work each year because his field crews weren't documenting all of the work they were doing. He developed an app, called Field Recon, to address this and put a stop to it.

"I started to see small guys like me who were good at their work being taken advantage of through paperwork," he says. "We'd get asked for something and it would be done on a handshake and when it comes time to get paid nobody could remember what happened."

Gill, who was elected president of the Concrete Polishing Association of America in November 2014, believed that following processes was an important business practice. "No matter what your business is, even if it's flipping burgers, there's a limited number of processes you do and you've got to document those, track those and charge for those." Gill began searching for a jobsite-

tracking program and couldn't find one that worked for him, so he started building his own in May 2014.

"We took the inexpensive way," Gill says. "We spent some money and got it working and we got to a prototype we were using within our company. Then people saw us using it in the field. After a short time we started seeing big results in our profitability inside of our own company."

Other companies started using it, but the original platform wasn't stable enough for multiple users. "It crashed," Gill recalls. "But we thought it was a good idea and that's when we decided to spend the money to build it on the Salesforce platform." The first working version went up on Salesforce in March 2014 and it has recently been updated.

No interruptions necessary

Gill doesn't want to have to interrupt his field crew for information he should be able to find himself, so he incorporated some basic tools into his app. He didn't want to have to ask them about the weather, so

he incorporated a weather tool. He didn't want to have to ask his workers where they were, so he incorporated a GPS system that records their whereabouts when they clock in and clock out. His app includes addresses for jobsites and hotels, as well as anything else they may need while they're on the road.

The Field Recon app is detailed enough to provide information about processes for numerous locations, which can be rooms, buildings or floors, for instance. "If a building has four floors with 20 rooms on each floor and different instructions for each room, you can navigate to any of those rooms and the app will show you any step, any process, that needs to be done in that room," explains Gill. "As they do each step, they check it off."

The program provides Gill with a feed from a program called Chatter, which he says is similar to Facebook except it shows reports on whether work hasn't begun, is in process or finished. Now every time he calls someone onsite, it's to get information that's unavailable any other way.

The searchable notifications on Chatter are available only to company personnel who have access to that job file, and Gill says, the person monitoring the feed can select how much detail they want to receive in the updates.

Documentation means more profit

Gill realizes that going from paper processes, or no processes at all, to using an app is a tough hurdle for some people. But the feedback he hears is that the guys in the field like it because it gives them the data they need to do the job. "Too many times they didn't know what they were doing in a room," he says. "They don't have that problem now."

For companies that use paper processes already, using Field Recon is an easier sell. "If you're doing it on paper now and you tell your guys, 'We're doing it this way and you're not going to have to do paper anymore,' they like it," Gill says. "If you're not doing it on paper you're going to add to their work." But, he says, it's easy to update, and they'll appreciate the fact that their



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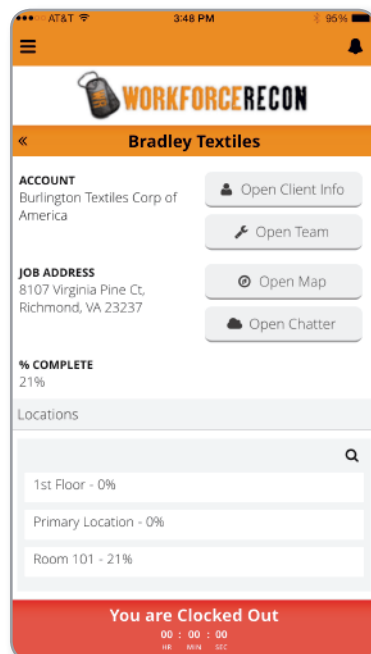
boss isn't calling them multiple times throughout the day to find out what they're doing.

"If you don't have paper processes in place, well, you should," Gill asserts. "You just can't run a company that way. It doesn't mean you can't survive without documentation, but it does mean you won't be as profitable as you could be."

A free, month-long trial version of Field Recon can be downloaded from the website WorkForceRecon.com. Though it's built on the Salesforce platform, a company doesn't need to have Salesforce to use Field Recon. The paid version is \$25 per user per month.

"We recommend just trying to clock in and clock out, track simple processes," Gill says. "It is such a powerful program that if you try to use all aspects of it, it can be overwhelming. But if you just use it to clock people in and out the savings in time drift will pay for itself." The more you put into it, though, says Gill, the more you'll get out of it.

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Debunking Common Decorative Concrete Myths

by Chris Sullivan

JUST apply a decorative overlay and it will hide everything.” Or, “Use acid to strip that sealer.” These are just a couple of the myths or just plain wrong recommendations I have come across on a regular basis. I really don’t know where, when or how these directives got started, but it continues to amaze me that even after decades of education they still are passed around as fact. Here are few of the more popular offenders I have come across in recent months.

MYTH: Decorative overlays are repair products designed to hide major imperfections and/or cracks.

The statement “just apply a decorative overlay and it will hide everything” is so far overreaching it is actually scary to think how many failures have been created by those 10 words. In my research and discussion with overlay manufacturers and expert installers, they all agree the surface you start with and the preparation prior to application are the most important parts of the overlay project.

Decorative overlays are often less than 1/4-inch thick and are not designed to keep a crack or major surface blemish from shadowing through. In fact, the phrase “a topping is only as good as what you put it on” is much more accurate when talking about whether to overlay or not. In most cases, an overlay is considered because of some surface defect. With that in mind, the proper repair products, crack-suppression systems, crack fillers and primers should always be a significant part of the discussion.

MYTH: Salt from de-icing chemicals or pool water will damage sealers.

Before anyone goes off the deep end, keep in mind I said “sealer” not concrete. Science shows salt or salt water negatively affects concrete in the long-run, but it does not damage concrete sealers.

If you don’t believe me, you don’t have to look much farther than your truck or car. Coatings for cars and trucks are made with the same plastic resins as coatings for concrete. If salt actually damaged sealers,



Photo courtesy of Chris Sullivan

Overlays are only as good as the surface they go over. Surface contamination and poor surface preparation caused this overlay to fail.

then most every car or truck would have its paint coat damaged within a year by backsplash from de-icing salts on roadways. As most of us know, this is not the case. (If you live in a warm climate, you just have to take our word for it.)

The exposed metal on the underside is a different story, but the painted top side resists corrosion and looks good for decades. If you still don’t believe me, feel free to place a piece of plastic in salt water and let it sit for 6 months or even a year. I can guarantee you the plastic will be just fine no matter how long it’s immersed. The point to be made is that sealers themselves are not damaged by salt and are a great way to protect concrete, as long as the sealer is suited for the job and is properly maintained.

MYTH: Acid should be used to strip sealers.

What is the one chemical that permanently damages concrete? Acid! Then

why is acid often the first recommendation when dealing with a decorative concrete repair or troubleshooting a problem, especially when it comes to sealers?

Common acids have no effect on sealers. Any acid that may penetrate through or around the sealer can damage the concrete substrate, while having no effect on the sealer. The myth that acid can be used to strip or remove sealers is just that, a myth. I find it interesting that sealers are sold in plastic containers, yet there are some who recommend them to remove or break down plastic sealers.

When it comes to removing or stripping sealers, a sealer stripper or solvent is the best product to use. 🛠️

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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Photo by Mark J. Sindler, courtesy of Louisiana State Museum

The Vitality of Line

by Gaye Goodman

There is a famous paperback called *"The Elements of Style"* by Strunk and White. Many writers treasure it as a guide to writing clearly and succinctly while avoiding common grammatical errors. The handbook itself is a model of clarity.

I had 26 years of studio work and art classes behind me as a fine arts painter when I gave up in disgust at the ploys involved in marketing art. In comparison with the world of galleries and critics, what contractors asked me to produce on floors came as a refreshing whiff of common sense.

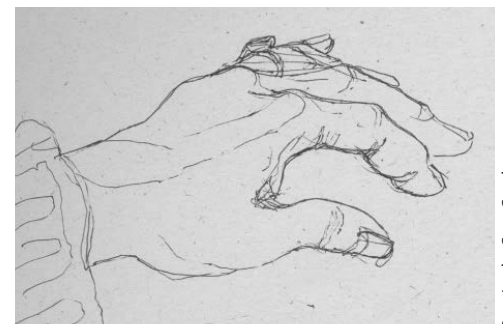
Fifteen years later, I decided to teach some principles of design and composition to my contractor-students. Having some knowledge of the way artists think about filling space truly helps in choosing materials and structure. Therefore, I undertake this series of articles to present the *Elements of Style for Contractors*.

I was thrilled to see all the sweeping curves showcased in *Concrete Decor's* October 2014 issue. This image of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame (above) shows the most remarkable use of concrete I have ever seen. It strongly reminded me of a contour drawing (to be defined below). Of course, that was a multimillion-dollar *tour de force* of engineering that took three years to complete, but other articles in the same issue showed how Justin Burd and Nathan Smith manage to incorporate bodacious curves into their furniture designs.

Would you like to sketch your creative ideas more fluently? If you are a concrete artisan, used to working with your hands and willing to practice, then you are halfway there. Learning to draw is really a matter of learning to *observe* in a certain way. Most artists of my generation learned to draw with

the help of a book called *"The Natural Way to Draw"* by Kimon Nicolaides, a respected instructor who taught at the Art Students' League in New York for many years.

Nicolaides' training alternates slow contour drawing of the model with more rapid gesture drawing. The illustration below is a contour drawing, which takes 20 or 30 minutes and is done almost without



Drawing by Gaye Goodman

taking your eyes from the model. You feel as if your pencil is tracing the edges of the planes you see. Including a few descriptive contours *within* the form gives depth to the drawing. In the first example I used a pen to draw a contour of my left hand. I included some skin folds and pale outlines of shadows to help clarify the foreshortened form.

The sketch below is a gesture drawing of my hand, which expresses the action contained in the shape. Twenty gesture drawings from different viewpoints might be done in the time it takes to do one contour drawing. Serious art students may spend a few hours each day alternating contour and gesture drawing.



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Drawing by Gaye Goodman

You can see remarkable progress after a few months of such practice. Keep your drawings, even if you're embarrassed by them, so you can see how far you've come. The important thing is the experience and practice. After 10 years of taking drawing



Arab Praying, by Eugene Delacroix, from *Modern Prints and Drawings* by Paul J. Sachs, published in 1954 by Alfred A. Knopf

workshops with live models in motion, I was able, on a good day, to combine both contour and gesture in drawings of dancers.

Here are two very different line drawings. The drawing of an Arab in prayer (above) by Delacroix is vertical and calm. The lines are exploratory and meditative. In contrast, the second drawing by Honore Daumier (above right) is full of dark-light contrasts and slanting diagonals, which indicate a forward rush of movement. In the 1870s,



The Witnesses, by Honore Daumier, from *Modern Prints and Drawings* by Paul J. Sachs, published in 1954 by Alfred A. Knopf

Daumier created lithographs weekly, satirizing French politics and laws. His skeletons depict murdered people thronging to the Council of War to denounce their executioner. Clearly, the force or delicacy an artist uses in making his marks can and does transmit to the viewer.

What does all this have to do with our designs in concrete? Look through this, or almost any, architectural magazine. You will see a preponderance of regular geometry —

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straight lines and perfect compass-drawn circles. A snapped-out line or a traced circle cannot convey the meanderings of nature or the emotions of the artist. Only rarely do we see a concrete artist with enough confidence and faith in *his own style of line* to enshrine it in concrete forever.

Another such artist I discovered in the pages of *Concrete Decor* is Brandon Gore, who works in Tempe, Arizona. (*Editor's Note: Read our Artisan in Concrete profile of Brandon Gore in the August/September 2010 online archives.*) Gore's best-known piece is his "Erosion Sink" (pictured at right). Although his works might look like spontaneous, freehand ideas, that is deceptive. It takes many experiments with concrete and GFRC to find the best way to embody an original design and to maintain the strength of the object being cast. 🛠️

Gaye Goodman is an artist who fell in love with acid staining 20 years ago. She and her company, based in the high desert of New Mexico, work on decorative projects across the Southwest. Contact her or see training materials on staining at www.gayegoodman.com.



Photo courtesy of Brandon Gore

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The Polishing Consultant Recognize and Respect the Value of a Good Worker

by David Stephenson

GENERALLY, as a decorative concrete contractor, you are very aware of the cost and value of your equipment. Inventory is key to getting jobs done, so you know how much product and what tooling you have on hand, along with a clear understanding of the value of the inventory. Contractors are mindful of the value of their vehicles and trailers on the road, since each was paid for with hard-earned dollars. All of these things are assets. However, the most valuable asset you have — your employees — is regularly missed when tallying your worth.

Between the money you dole out each week on wages, payroll taxes, insurance and worker's comp, you spend more on employees than all your other assets combined. Even though this is a fact, most contractors have a hard time recognizing employees as assets. Why is this and how can you remedy that situation?

Know their worth

In the decorative concrete industry, employees are even more valuable than in many other businesses. When I was a contractor, I figured each of my supervisors or crew leaders had a value of about \$75,000 to \$100,000 for each year they had worked for me. I got to this value by looking at the lessons each crew leader learned on specific projects. This could be anything from recognizing concrete hardness and its effect

on diamond tooling to properly applying densifier and specific colors of dye and safely disposing leftover materials.

I then tried to figure out how much money I spent to do the repairs necessary from their learning on the job and how much money I lost as a result. Low-end estimates were around \$75,000 a year.

When a lawyer goes to college and then law school it costs about \$250,000 total according to *U.S. News & World Report*. On average, it takes seven years to get through law school, so that's a cost of about \$36,000 a year. Based on these calculations, we as an industry can easily pay double the cost of a lawyer's education to properly train and educate our crews through on-the-job training.

Experience is and will always be the single greatest opportunity for training in our industry. All the classes you can send new employees to will at best give them 25 percent of the knowledge they need to do a job from start to finish.

On-the-job training is key

When you have experienced crews, you can supplement their training effectively if you can use project-based experience to educate them. One large contractor recently had me come in to train their crew leads on concrete repairs because the owner realized each crew had unique methods for performing repairs. When different crews were required to work on projects at different times the repairs were different, which caused questions from the customer.

By taking photos of projects and using real job experiences to educate, we created a standardized repair manual for all crews and all projects. This owner realized the value of his employees and their training enough to invest in their education. Congratulations to Dave Stratton of Pacific Decorative Concrete for acting on this realization.

Another owner recently flew me and one of my associates, Ryan McBride, to his shop where all of the crew leads were brought in for the day to receive training on polished

concrete overlay installation. Again, the owner realized different crews had different methods for prep, placement and polishing of overlays. Some differences were inherent based on the product being installed, but many products require similar installation practices and, when improperly placed, experience similar issues.

By having us train the crews based on hundreds of application reviews, the owner made a significant investment in the education of his employees. Hats off to John Jones of Budget Maintenance Concrete for recognizing the value of training his leaders. The value of project-based training, in conjunction with on-the-job training, is a way to capitalize on your crews' experience and make them a more valuable asset.

Retention, retention, retention

Do not underestimate the value of your employees. Almost all new hires come from other industries and have to be trained how to do decorative concrete. Think about it. Finding a trained employee is extremely rare. I hear the same thing from contractors every week: "If you happen to know any good guys, I am hiring." It almost does not matter how much you are willing to pay, finding the people is extremely hard.

As a result, employee retention is extremely important if you want to have a successful contracting company. I can tell you from experience that regularly reviewing your pay scale—and providing benefits if you're big enough or small side perks if you are not—is *much less expensive* than hiring new, lower-wage employees and having to constantly pay for their education through losses on projects.

I am not suggesting that you need to hold on to bad apples. If guys won't work, will not learn or are troublemakers, you are better off dropping them immediately. Consider that each day of on-the-job training is comparable to a day of college. You are paying the bill. If you have a student who is unwilling to learn, do not waste the

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money. Drop them quickly and find a new student. You will be paying either way so spend your money wisely.

I cannot tell you how many times as a contractor I kept employees, thinking they would turn around only to look up a year later with them making the same mistakes. All I could think about was how much money and time I had just wasted. Think about this and work on what incentives you can offer to keep your good workers and consider dropping the dead weight in favor of new students. The jobs will not stop so each day of training has a value.

Every day the most money you spend will be on your employees. This makes them your greatest asset. Treat them as such and remember that if you do not, there is undoubtedly another company in our industry that will. 📞

David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com.

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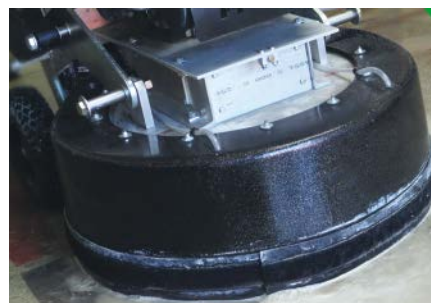
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Concrete Derby was EPIC

by Vanessa Salvia

LAST year, for the fourth consecutive September, Buddy Rhodes and Blue Concrete held their EPIC artisan training event in Covington, Georgia, near Atlanta. There, 50 concrete-minded attendees gathered for a healthy dose of fun and some hands-on creating so they could learn about materials and techniques to improve their style and technical skill. This past fall, the fun involved building little cars that would be put to the test in the EPIC Concrete Derby.

From a prime swine and smoking toaster to a Fred Flintstone-mobile and a hot dog topped with mustard, “The cars were little feats of engineering and art,” says Jeremy French, artisan with Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products.

Participants built their molds beforehand



Grand prize winner Peter Cicalo's car (left, aflame) was made entirely of concrete. Buddy Rhodes' entry (right) won the most heats.

Photo by Jeremy French

and cast their cars on site. To qualify, all derby contenders had to weigh no more than 10 pounds and fit into a 12-inch-long, 6-inch-wide box. Wheels were provided by the participants, with the exception of one attendee, Mike Hearn, who built his wheels

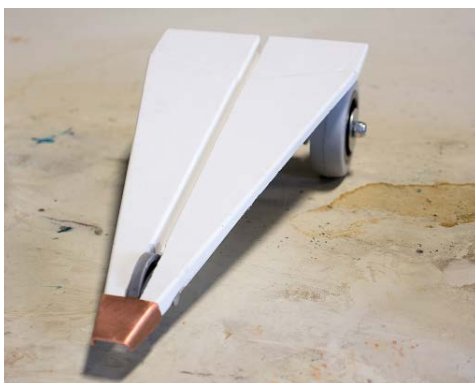
from concrete. (In the end, this daring touch won him the style and technical prizes for having the only car built entirely out of concrete.)

A pair of Australian artisans built the launch ramp and track, where cars had to leap over or plow through the “Pit of Despair” fire obstacle. No car was spared the wrath of the flame. In fact, most of the cars met their fiery fate before they reached the safety of the finish line.

Buddy Rhodes and his classic pinewood derby-shaped car featuring his signature “pressed finish” won the most heats of the race — and everyone swears the race wasn’t fixed — but newcomer Peter Cicalo won the grand prize. He was awarded with an all-expenses-paid trip to EPIC 2015 to defend his title.

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