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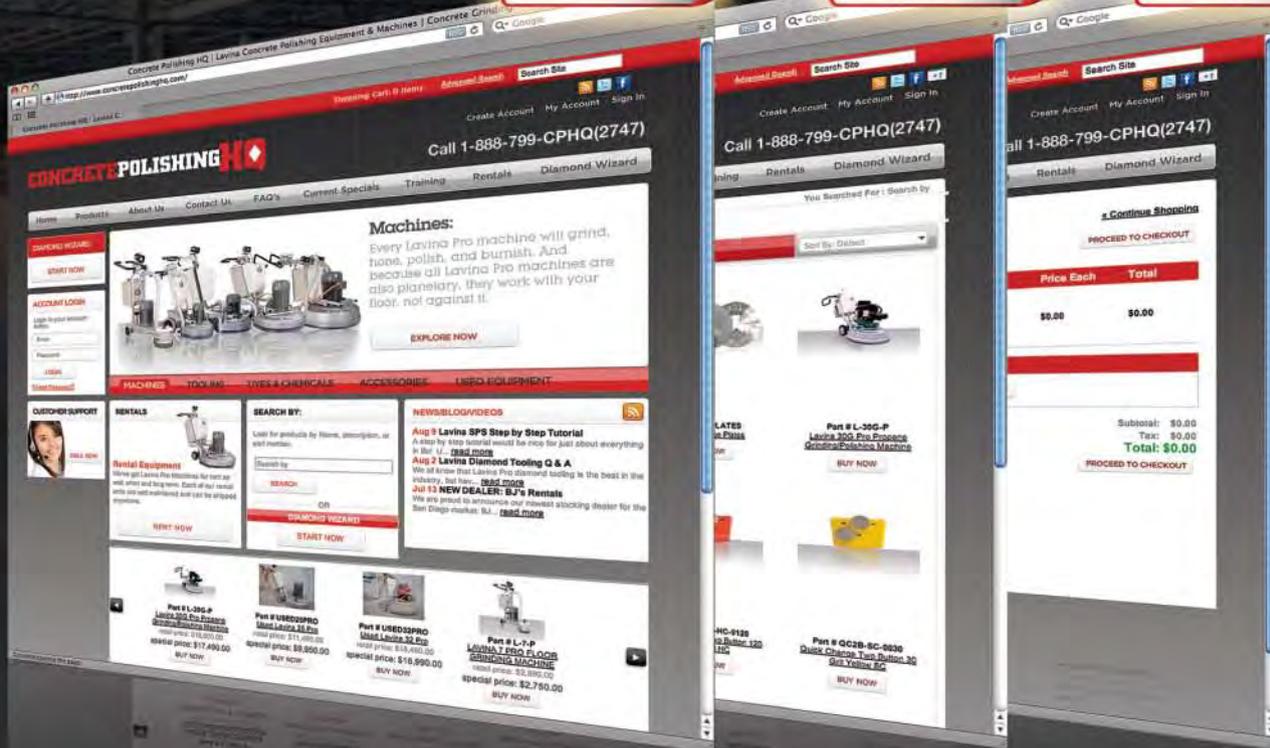
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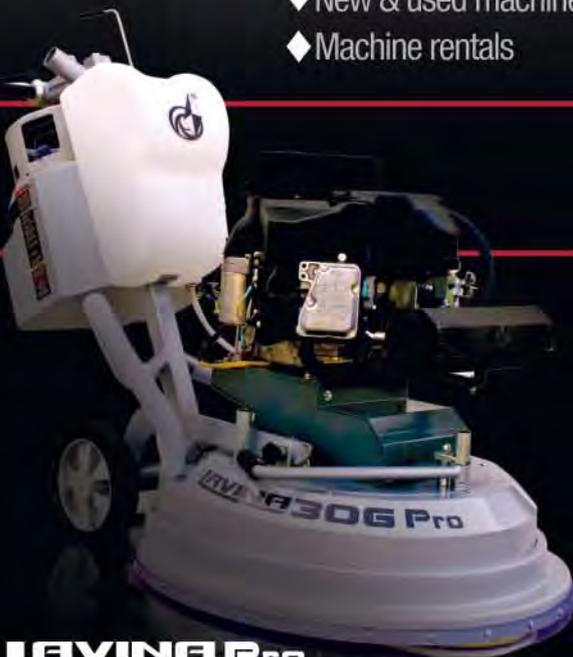
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**Publisher:** Bent O. Mikkelsen

**Co-Publisher:** Ernst H. Mikkelsen

**Editor:** John Strieder

**Assistant Editor:** Emily Dixon

**Creative Director:** Bill Simpson

**Webmaster:** Steven Wolff

**Writers:** Sherry Boyd  
Doug Carlton  
Mark Celebuski  
Natasha Chilingirian  
Jennifer A. Faller  
Jeffrey Girard  
Stacey Enesey Klemenc  
Chris Mayo  
Kelly O'Brien  
David Searls  
Chris Sullivan

**Business Manager:** Sheri Mikkelsen

**Circulation:** Meg Kilduff

**Editorial:** (877) 935-8906  
news@protradepub.com

**Advertiser Services:** (877) 935-8906  
info@protradepub.com  
Fax: (541) 341-6443

**Eastern U.S. Sales:** Donna Flood  
donna@protradepub.com  
(770) 967-3373

**Western U.S. Sales:** Troy Ahmann  
troy@protradepub.com  
(702) 869-4342

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MEMBER OF



# publisher's LETTER

## Dear Readers,

To follow up on the many enhancements we made to *Concrete Decor* magazine at the start of 2011, we have planned even more positive changes to the magazine as we head into 2012. Besides my own excitement about these modifications, our staff is itching to see these changes underway with the January 2012 issue.

The *Concrete Decor* e-newsletter is also undergoing change. You will see some of these changes immediately as new newsletters are published, but the real changes to this informative news service will be unveiled in January when the frequency of these e-mails will increase. Don't be alarmed about that! It's going to be chock full of hot deals and special offers from our magazine advertisers. In addition, there will be online exclusives that feature tips, techniques and beautifully executed projects from around the United States and the world. There will be links to great videos and a cool new *Concrete Decor* Calendar that keeps you abreast of industry activity. Training opportunities will be a part of the calendar so you can stay informed on what's happening close to home and elsewhere. I have left a few items out here because I want them to be a surprise. You can sign up for the *Concrete Decor* e-newsletter by visiting [www.concretedecor.net](http://www.concretedecor.net).

Another exciting change lies with *Concrete Decor's* new digital magazine. Starting next month subscribers can start reading *Concrete Decor* on iPads, iPhones and other portable devices. In addition, the digital version will include built-in videos and other entertaining and educational features that help you do your job better and faster. The upcoming Show Preview for the 2012 Concrete Decor Show will be viewable in this application too, and you can register for classes by touching your screen. How cool is that?

In addition to membership in ASCC/DCC (the American Society of Concrete Contractors and its Decorative Concrete Council) we have recently become a member of ACI (the American Concrete Institute) and will be assisting with committees that address architectural and decorative applications for new and previously installed concrete. ACI is nearly a year away from publishing documents for decorative concrete, and we want to make sure that these documents get the necessary industry attention they require. Your support for these organizations is fundamentally important to the ongoing success of your company.

At home, I set time aside each week for rowing practice at Dexter Lake. I love this sport, because every time I get out on the water I am pushed physically and mentally. It's not easy to maintain consistent form and strength when I've been doing three or four 20-minute pieces with only a few minute of rest in between. However, when I correlate this kind of exercise to challenges facing our businesses today, I can know with certainty that individuals who are mentally and physically tough will win.

Keep up the great work and enjoy this edition of *Concrete Decor*.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen  
Publisher



Read and search articles online at [ConcreteDecor.net](http://ConcreteDecor.net)



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Photo courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons Inc.

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# concrete DECOR® EXPERTS



**Sherry A. Boyd** of Boydworks Marketing provides public relations and advertising services for building-industry clients. A USGBC member, she gained knowledge of the decorative concrete market from eight years as head of marketing for a leading manufacturer of concrete coloring materials. See Sherry's column, "Green Matters," on page 22.



**Doug Carlton** operates Carlton Concrete Inc. in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at [carltondoug@comcast.net](mailto:carltondoug@comcast.net). See Doug's column, "Carlton's Corner," on page 27.



**Mark Celebuski** is a full-time consultant to the precast and concrete countertop industries. He can be reached at [mark@trini.us](mailto:mark@trini.us). See Mark's article on page 40.



**Jennifer A. Faller** has been in the surface preparation industry for the past 15 years as a decorative concrete contractor, technical consultant and owner of a distribution company. Currently, she is business development manager for Vexcon Chemicals and lead trainer for the Certi-Shine brand of polished concrete materials. Contact her at [jfaller@vexcon.com](mailto:jfaller@vexcon.com). See Jennifer's article on page 46.



**Jeffrey Girard** is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute. He can be reached at [info@concretecountertopinstitute.com](mailto:info@concretecountertopinstitute.com). See Jeffrey's column, "Success with Concrete Countertops," on page 37.



**Chris Sullivan** is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has presented seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Contact him at [trowelander@protradepub.com](mailto:trowelander@protradepub.com). See Chris' column, "Trowel & Error," on page 56.

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# business & INDUSTRY

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### NewLook, WerkMaster form partnership

NewLook International Inc. and WerkMaster Grinders & Sanders Inc. have established a partnership that entitles the partners to promote each other's brands in marketing campaigns and training programs.

NewLook's corporate facility in Salt Lake City will now be an alternative training location for WerkMaster. Also, customers will be able to source WerkMaster's equipment from NewLook and vice versa. Each product and their respective system will be incorporated into the training program of the other partner.

NewLook manufactures concrete stains, polishing densifiers and sealers.

[www.getnewlook.com](http://www.getnewlook.com)

[www.werkmaster.com](http://www.werkmaster.com)

### New publications from ACI

The American Concrete Institute has released several new publications. They include: Fiber-Reinforced Self-Consolidating Concrete: Research and Applications CD-ROM (SP-274); Report on Chemical Admixtures for Concrete (121.3R-10); and Specifications for Structural Concrete (301-10).

[\(248\) 848-3800](tel:(248)848-3800)

[www.concrete.org](http://www.concrete.org)

### Solomon Colors plans price hike

The current market environment of higher energy costs, dramatic increases in raw materials and changing currency exchange rates has influenced Solomon Colors to announce an anticipated price increase in the third and fourth quarters of 2011 for all dry, liquid and granular products.

[www.solomoncolors.com](http://www.solomoncolors.com)

### Grace grabs waterproofing makers

Grace Construction Products, an operating segment of W.R. Grace & Co., has acquired the De Neef Conchem Group,

a Belgium-based group of companies that develop waterproofing and concrete protection and repair products.

In addition to this transaction, Grace recently acquired Wuhan Meilixin New Building Materials Co. Ltd., a Chinese manufacturer of waterproofing products.

[www.grace.com](http://www.grace.com)

### Flooring chain become Blastrac dealer

Fishman Flooring Solutions has been named an authorized outlet for Blastrac shotblasters, grinders and dust collectors.

Fishman is based in Baltimore, Md., with 25 locations throughout Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

[www.lfishman.com](http://www.lfishman.com)

[www.blastrac.com](http://www.blastrac.com)

### Laticrete partners with Supercap

Laticrete International Inc. has partnered with Supercap to form Laticrete Supercap LLC.

Supercap System licensed applicators use patented pump trucks to blend and deliver underlayment systems to the job site on large-scale surface preparation and remediation projects. Heights of 50 stories can easily be served.

[www.laticrete.com](http://www.laticrete.com)

[www.supercap.us.com](http://www.supercap.us.com)

### Laticrete acquires Drytek Flooring

Laticrete recently acquired Drytek Flooring Solutions to bolster its range of cementitious decorative floor and wall installation materials and treatments.

Five former Drytek employees will service the lines added to the newly established Laticrete Specialty Products Division. Jim Baratta, Tom Leahy and Dennis McHugh have been added to the technical sales staff. Former Drytek owner Terry Cotton and former director of operations Aaron Abbott will consult.

[www.laticrete.com](http://www.laticrete.com)

### Scofield names research director

L. M. Scofield Co. has announced that Lee Hertz has been appointed director of research and technical services. Hertz has several patents and published papers.

[www.scofield.com](http://www.scofield.com)

### Account manager named for Padco

Rollie Peterson has been named account manager for applicator manufacturer Padco Inc.

[www.padco.com](http://www.padco.com)

### Spancrete hires contracts manager

Spancrete has added Michael "Mick" Linse to the role of contracts manager, where he will work with the Contracts and Administration Group.

[www.spancrete.com](http://www.spancrete.com)

### Tindall hires sales engineer

Angela R. San Martin, P.E., has been appointed to the position of sales engineer for Tindall Corp. She is responsible for sales in Georgia, Florida and Alabama. 

[www.tindallcorp.com](http://www.tindallcorp.com)

## event calendar

### Strategic Development Council Session No. 30

Sept. 21-22, Northbrook, Ill.

[www.concrete.org](http://www.concrete.org)

### American Concrete Institute Fall 2011 Convention

Oct. 16-20, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Photos courtesy of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete



# Cornerstone Decorative Concrete

## Holland, Mich.

by Kelly O'Brien

**T**roy Lemon, founder and president of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete in Holland, Mich., starts his story with a familiar admission. "I was a concrete guy way before I was a decorative concrete guy," he says.

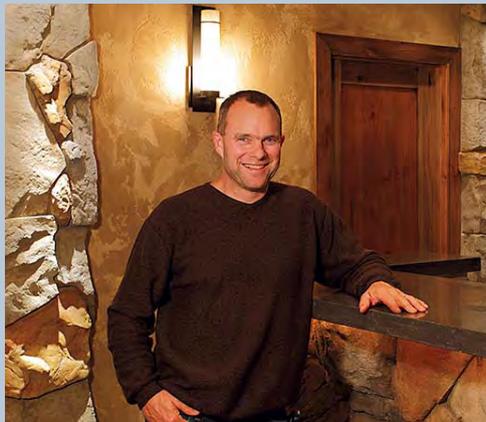
That's not particularly unusual for a decorative concrete artisan, but Lemon says that going from one to the other required pulling something of a professional 180. "When I was younger, I was just a bull, you know? I loved to sweat. I loved to do the most physically challenging things, to go as fast and as hard as you can. And that's what makes a great concrete guy, to not be afraid to get in there and go after it with everything you got," Lemon says.

"But that makes a terrible decorative concrete guy," he continues with a laugh. "You cannot rush through decorative concrete."

Lemon, 46, has spent the last 11 years transforming Cornerstone, founded as a flatwork company in 1991, into a nationally recognized decorative concrete contractor. Not only do they get called for projects across the continent — from Montana to New York, Florida to Toronto — but Lemon has had requests

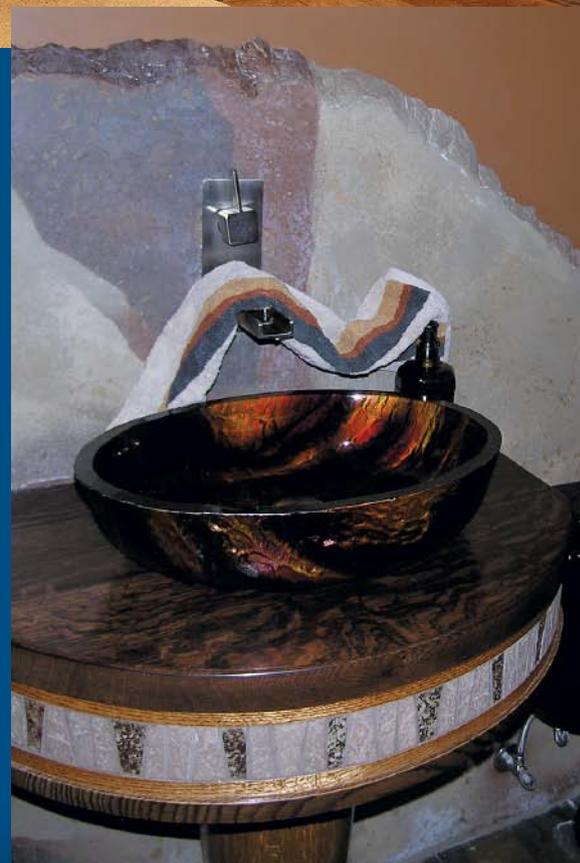
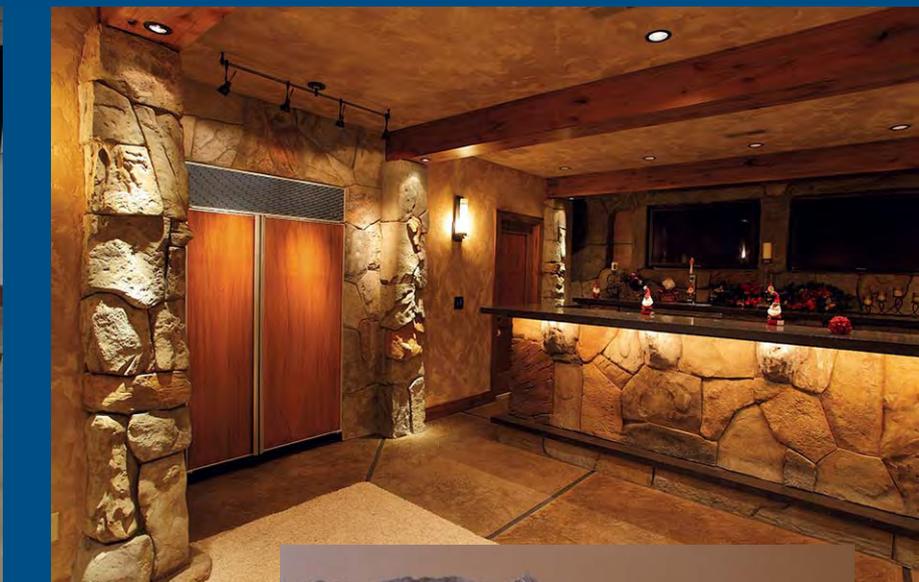
from around the world to lead training courses and workshops.

Being in such high demand could easily go to a person's head, but Lemon is as modest as they come. And that attitude is central to the Cornerstone approach.



For one thing, Lemon places a high premium on being involved in the decorative concrete community as a whole, through events, education or just outreach between contractors. In addition to teaching workshops and courses for other contractors, Lemon does frequent presentations for architects and design professionals in an effort to raise awareness of decorative concrete. "I tell them, 'I'm not here just to give you ideas, I want you to think we can do anything,'" he says. "Mix ideas, stay out of the box, keep it fresh."

But Lemon is also keenly aware that education is a two-way street. "For a lot of years I didn't take classes — it was a pride thing," he says. "Now, I go to every class that I can." He's looking forward to taking some GFRC classes in the near future, since that's a technique



he's not yet experimented with. He says training is also a great way to meet some of the industry's movers and shakers. Getting to know people such as Buddy Rhodes, Jon Nasvik, Bob Harris, and Joe and Jerry Garceau has been a real highlight, he says. "All the cool things we get to do are built on their backs."

Even outside of classrooms and conference rooms, Lemon is a firm believer in sharing resources and expertise, even with competitors. "I'm not afraid to share

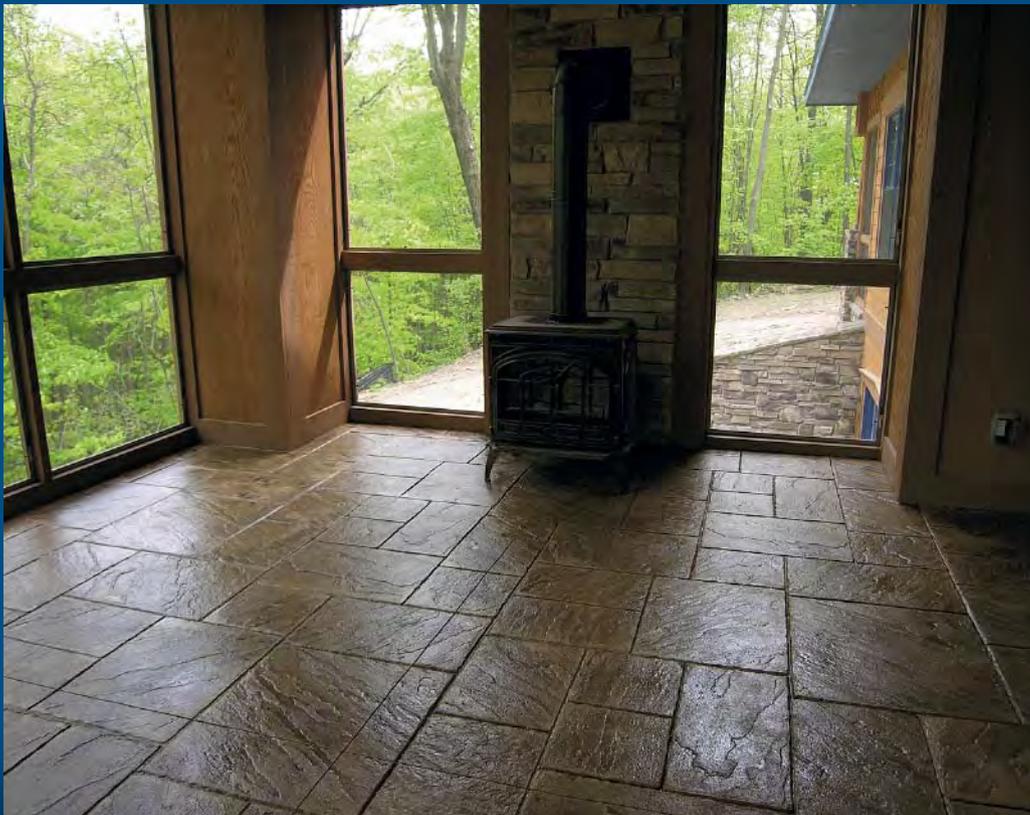
my secrets," he says. "Decorative concrete done well is just going to help the industry continue to grow and get better."

### Dictated by demand

Cornerstone has definitely been doing its part to add to that growth. The company consists of Lemon and a crew of three other artisans — Vic Brooks, Dan Granger, and Willy Torralba — and they do around 80 percent high-end residential work and 20 percent retail, churches and

restaurants. Stamping, overlays and casting (countertops, sinks, and tubs) comprise the company's bread and butter, with their focus shifting substantially, depending on demand. Having that mix of different specialties is one of things that Lemon particularly enjoys about the work. "Y'know stamping is something we could do in our sleep," he says, "but when you haven't done it for a while, it's fun all over again."

Being honest, though, there's not a lot about decorative concrete that



Lemon doesn't think is fun. "I've thought sometimes, I'm 46. Boy, y'know, I'm not going to be able to do this all my life," he says. "But I'd miss it so much — I just love to do it."

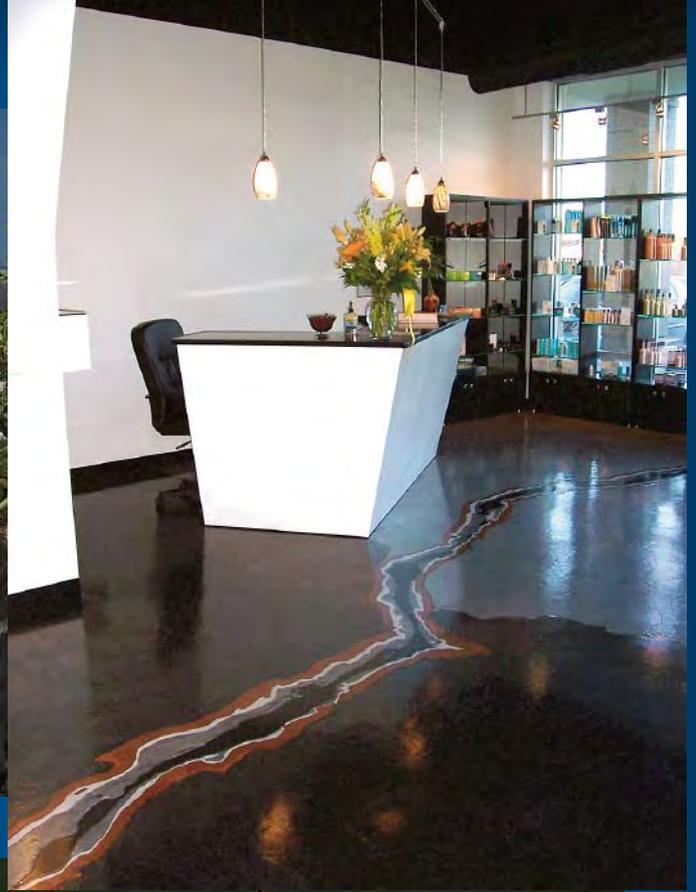
One of the things Lemon would like to see for Cornerstone's future is a move into the boutique retail market. He has pulled off some pretty dramatic projects over the years, including: a salon with a layered, metallic, polyaspartic-and-epoxy floor finish; a countertop with chunks of

shattered stone globes for aggregate; and a depiction of an alpine lake, complete with sandy shore and fallen logs, created using polyaspartics and metallic pigments on a garage floor. But Lemon says that overall, there are rarely opportunities for the wackier stuff in residential work. He is hoping to break into some high-end retail markets that will have more call for the wilder projects, he says.

### Organic and colorful

Lemon's design tastes, whether the project is wild or not, run towards the organic. "I almost always gravitate toward really organic shapes and natural-looking things," he says. "I would never do a straight line on hardly anything."

Color is another really important consideration for any Cornerstone project. "If I'm talking to you as a client, I try to describe it as three different things: color, the way the color moves, and the way the





color appears to have texture,” Lemon says. Discussing color this way has helped him understand what his clients are envisioning.

Knowing all of this about Lemon’s design approach, it might surprise you to know that while Lemon sees himself as artistic, he doesn’t think he’s an artist. A lot of his approach, he says, is just a matter of being observant. “You can’t carve a rock without knowing what a real rock looks like,” he says.

But on an even deeper level, calling

himself an artist, for Lemon, means taking credit for his talent, and from his perspective as a devout Christian, his talents are from the Lord. “Sometimes people will say, ‘Oh, you’re an artist,’ but I think I have whatever measure of creativity that I’ve been given,” he says, “and I’d like to give credit where credit is due.” Lemon is not only grateful to God for his success, but also to Marilyn, his wife, for taking on the “much more important job of raising our kids.”

If there were a formula for the success

of Lemon’s company it would be something like equal parts craftsmanship and humility, plus regular installments of gratitude. 📱

🌐 [www.cd-concrete.com](http://www.cd-concrete.com)

### LEARN FROM AN EXPERT

Troy Lemon of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete will be a trainer at the 2012 Concrete Decor Show. For details, visit [ConcreteDecorShow.com](http://ConcreteDecorShow.com).





# *Better* Bridges

by *Natasha Chilingirian*

**most bridges** are built to be purely functional, but functional doesn't have to mean boring. Decorative concrete contractors have played a key role in some recent artistically striking bridge construction projects. Using materials that add character and can withstand exposure to the outdoors, contractors are transforming concrete bridge decks and support structures from dull and gray to eye-catching.

Materials of choice include stains, overlays and specialty paving systems. Some bridge developers favor integrally colored concrete over concrete coatings, as integral color carries with it less maintenance costs.

Here are eight instances in which decorative concrete applications took bridges from functional to beautiful. Some designs are simple and some come with a story (like the motifs on the Demonbreun Street Viaduct's piers that salute Nashville's railroad history), but all of them take travelers from point A to point B in style.

## Demonbreun Street Viaduct — Nashville, Tenn.

The 774-foot-long, three-lane Demonbreun Street Viaduct in Nashville, Tenn., pays homage to the city's railroad heritage by displaying locomotive engine motifs on its poured-in-place concrete support piers. The motifs, which wrap around three sides of each of the piers, are a result of the combined talents of concrete-texturing product manufacturer Scott System Inc., Nashville landscape architecture firm Hawkins Partners Inc., and Brentwood, Tenn.-based Bell & Associates Construction.

Buck Scott, founder of Scott System, said he was contacted by Hawkins Partners architects about creating form liners that would be used to build the bridge's piers. (The client, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, had called on Hawkins Partners earlier to design the bridge.) Working off the architects' designs, Scott System employees developed custom form liners made from urethane elastomer and incorporated various surface textures into their designs.

"We picked out the textures that would make the engine stand out," Scott says. "Then we pieced the different textures together like a puzzle and poured one-piece form



liners to complete the image. It was the architect who had the idea and asked us, 'Can you do make this work in concrete?' Then we did it all with shadow and texture."

Scott System sold its finished form liners to Bell & Associates Construction, which constructed the piers by placing the liners inside the concrete forms prior to pouring. Workers made a full-size mock-up of one of the piers before Scott System finalized its form liners.

Viewed from the front, each pier looks similar to an oncoming train, and mirroring train engine designs appear on the sides of each pier. Round metal rivets were applied to enhance the fronts.

Scott says the towering height of each completed pier was the toughest part of working on the Demonbreun Street Viaduct.

"The biggest challenge was the size," Scott says. "The piers were upwards of 24 feet tall, and that's a big piece of work."

The Demonbreun Street Viaduct opened in October 2006, replacing a 75-year-old deteriorated bridge that the city closed in 2004. The viaduct, which connects Nashville's downtown and midtown areas, also holds lanes for bikes and pedestrians.

"It started with a dream, with an idea," Scott says. "They wanted it to reflect that history of the railroad." 🚂

## Antelope Valley Bridges — Lincoln, Neb.

One goal of the city of Lincoln, Neb.'s ongoing revitalization efforts in the Antelope Valley region was to transform five bridges that cross Antelope Creek in downtown Lincoln, as well as spruce up several mezzanine areas and walking and biking paths located along the creek. The material of choice? Five different types of decorative concrete applications, which crews from Todd Rose Decorative Concrete installed over the course of six months.



On each of the five bridges, workers sprayed a texture polymer overlay from Miracote out of a hopper gun onto sides and railings, which matched the look of stucco desired by project managers, says company owner Todd Rose, who is now based in Charleston, S.C.

“They wanted an inexpensive, protective coating that would produce the look of stucco without the high cost, and the spray texture polymer fits that to a T,” Rose says.

On the concrete support structures located underneath each bridge, workers created a wave pattern with Nox-Crete Products Group's protective Nox-Carb stain

in Mocha, Saddle Tan and Sandpiper Beige. They also stained five bridge retaining walls with Nox-Carb in varying wave patterns. Crews stamped 3,000 square feet of concrete walking paths with Murray Decorative Concrete Supply stamps in a cobblestone design, then topped the stamped paths with a Decorative Concrete Impressions color hardener in a dark brown shade.

Workers also sandblasted tens of thousands of square feet of concrete surfaces along Antelope Creek and used stencils from Decorative Concrete Impressions to imprint quotations by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. On one sandblasted patio area, workers used a giant stencil to leave an impression of the word “celebrate.”

“This job really showcases decorative concrete and demonstrates how versatile it is,” Rose says. “The job didn't include any plain concrete, except for a bike path.”

Overseeing the Antelope Valley project was the international construction management firm Parsons Brinckerhoff along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Two different Lincoln-based architecture firms, Erickson Sullivan Architects and The Clark Enersen Partners, were responsible for designing the wave patterns seen on the bridges and retaining walls.

Rose says he got involved when the city asked his company to fix a coating job that another contractor had previously completed on one of the bridges.

The biggest challenge, he notes, was not the physical job itself but the activities leading up to each phase of the job. With so many organizations and decision makers involved, the planning process proved to be a lengthy one. “There would be meetings every week, and I learned a lot of lessons,” he says.

Todd Rose's workers completed their leg of the Antelope Valley project last year, and Rose says their work has helped produce a new community gathering space in the city of Lincoln.

“They're starting to do concerts in the area and people will come and sit in the grass,” Rose says. “It's all about the community.”

Overseeing the Antelope Valley



Photos courtesy of Todd Rose Decorative Concrete

## Millers River Bridge — Athol, Mass.

Flowing through the downtown area of the quaint town of Athol, Mass., is the Millers River, the site of a bridge project that has earned Woburn, Mass.-based Donlon Coatings recognition for its staining work.

Donlon Coatings used L. M. Scofield Co.'s Lithochrome Tintura Stain in shades of gray and peach on the two support walls at Millers River Bridge, and earlier this year, the manufacturer awarded Donlon Coatings as second runner-up in its Third Annual Decorative Concrete Awards contest for the project.

Acton, Mass.-based construction company MIG Corp., which hired Donlon Coatings to complete the bridge's decorative work, built the 120-foot-long steel girder bridge for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. The two support walls that hang down each side of the bridge are made from concrete formed to resemble fieldstone, for which L. M. Scofield representatives developed a stain color mock-up designed to give the stones a subtle, natural look.

"The process was to stain the formed concrete stones in alternating colors, using three different colors to form a pattern that looked like an actual stone wall," says Jim Donlon, president and owner of Donlon Coatings.

Donlon Coatings installers, who were led by 25-year industry veteran Phil Harris, were met with an unexpected challenge when they got to work. The general contractor had mistakenly stained both



Photo courtesy of Donlon Coatings

bridge walls a single gray color, so Donlon's team had to take the walls back to their natural shade prior to carrying out the original staining plan.

"It was kind of a green-gray and we needed to get it back to the original concrete gray before we could duplicate the mock-up," Donlon says. "Which we did. We were able to get a gray Tintura stain and take (the concrete) closely back to the original color, and then pretty much follow the prescription that L. M. Scofield had laid out."

Finding the perfect shade to finish correcting the mistake was a trial-and-error process, Donlon says. "We blended colors of greens and grays, and there was a little hint of blue that we put into one of the grays to

try to get it to a very natural-looking color. It was a little challenging to come up with a color combination. We made about six or seven mock-ups before we hit on the correct combination, and then carried that out across the bridge."

After workers stained the formed stones in the initially planned shades of gray and peach, they finished the walls with a coat of Scofield Repello sealer. Donlon Coatings spent approximately three weeks total on the job and completed it in October 2010.

"The folks at Donlon did a great job applying the different colors," says Dave LaPrade, a project manager with MIG Corp. "I personally feel the décor makes the quality of the workmanship that was put into this project stand out." 🐾



Photos courtesy of Scott System Inc.

## 195th Street Bridge — Farmington, Minn.

This bridge, which carries 195th Street across the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks in Farmington, Minn., is supported by poured-in-place, arched concrete piers with integrally cast thin brick and simulated stone rustications. Installers used Scott System's Rim Snap system, plastic brick holders that snap together via interlocking tabs and are designed to hold thin brick in place against the inside of a concrete form. Scott System founder Buck Scott says concrete was poured into the form, bonding the bricks, which were then exposed once the form and the reusable Rim Snap system were removed.

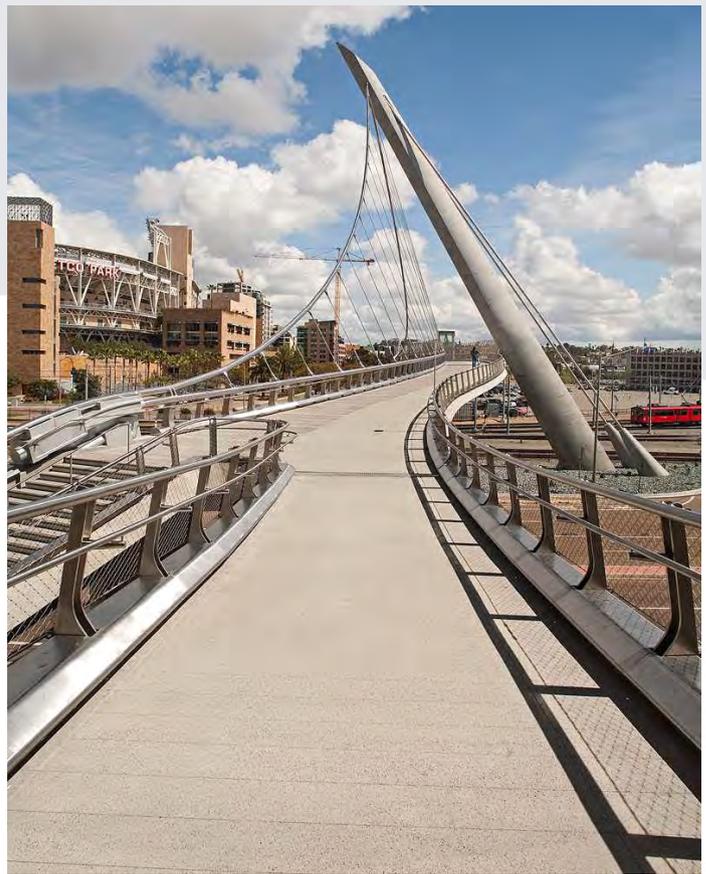


## Harbor Drive Pedestrian Bridge — San Diego, Calif.

In downtown San Diego, you'll find an abundance of the Carroll Canyon exposed aggregate finish, a finish dictated by the city's redevelopment agency, Centre City Development Corp. (CCDC). Now, that finish also appears on the Harbor Drive Pedestrian Bridge, a graceful structure that carries residents and visitors over San Diego's Harbor Freeway.

San Diego-based Safdie Rabines Architects, the firm responsible for the bridge's design along with San Francisco-based T.Y. Lin International, selected the Carroll Canyon exposed aggregate finish and a quarried stone sand finish for the bridge deck. Reyes Construction, the general contractor on the project, asked San Diego-based decorative concrete manufacturer and installer T.B. Penick & Sons Inc. to recreate these two paving finishes, but in topping form. The result: T.B. Penick & Sons Specialty Topping System, a poured-in-place system the company developed especially for the bridge.

"The goal was to match CCDC, which has specific paving in downtown San Diego," says Chris Klemaske, project developer for T.B. Penick & Sons. "Achieving both finishes in a 3/4-inch topping and, in addition to that, on a bridge structure was a challenge."



Photos courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons Inc.



The 550-foot-long bridge spans the waterfront area of San Diego and is one of the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridges. The bridge is curved and supported by slanted cables on one side, creating a shape that mimics that of a sailboat, Klemaske notes. The bridge is owned by both CCDC and the Unified Port of San Diego.

The walking surface holds perfectly aligned saw cuts that define squares and rectangles, and surface textures and colors vary from a grainy, dark beige to a smoother, pale beige. Architects say T.B. Penick & Sons' topping gave them the leeway they needed during the design process.

"The concrete topping used on the Harbor Drive Pedestrian Bridge was used due to the material's thin section and inherent light weight," says Eric Lindebak, principal at Safdie Rabines Architects. "This material also allowed us the flexibility to vary the color, texture and scoring patterns in the horizontal plane that provide necessary scale, refinement and relationship to the bridge geometry."

Workers had to grind down some areas of the bridge's surface to allow for the 3/4-inch topping, Klemaske says. Then, they installed approximately 6,600 square feet of topping material in small, controlled pours. Achieving superb precision was the biggest challenge installers faced, she adds.

"If you look at the span of the bridge, you'll see that those control joints in between each pour and the saw cuts had to be perfect," Klemaske says. "Being precise was so critical."

The bridge opened in early 2011 and has been met with praise, including several awards. "It looks beautiful," Klemaske says. 🐾

## Brickell Key Bridge — Miami, Fla.

The deteriorating Brickell Key Bridge, which connects downtown Miami to the 44-acre island of Brickell Key, underwent an extensive restoration this year courtesy of products from Mapei.

Installers began the project by repairing the damaged bridge deck and the underside of the bridge with three types of repair mortars: Planitop 18, Planitop XS and Planitop 15.

The deck was shotblasted and coated with an epoxy overlay broadcast system, which consisted of two coats of Mapei's Planiseal Traffic Coat. Both coats were seeded with an approved "black beauty slag" aggregate, per the owners approval. This waterproofing system provides superior durability and excellent skid resistance while delivering an aesthetically pleasing finished appearance on the 812-foot-long surface.

"The addition of 'black beauty' aggregate not only created a highly attractive finish, but effectively complemented this highly



Photo courtesy of Mapei

impermeable system that is capable of arresting carbonation and penetration of chloride ions into the concrete deck,"

states Mapei CRS product manager Roger Pratt in his recent article in *Realtà Mapei Americas* magazine. 📖



Photo courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons Inc.

## Cliff Street Pedestrian Bridge — Solana Beach, Calif.

This pedestrian bridge in Solana Beach, Calif., features related words in English and Spanish, such as "shell – concha," and a beach-like finish in blue and beige shades that were achieved with Lithocrete, a patented paving system that allows artisans to embed eye-catching aggregates into reinforced concrete. This project incorporates a combination of glass and seashells. San Diego-based T.B. Penick & Sons Inc. installed the Lithocrete system, then added the lettering through sandblasting and staining work.

## Rosa Street Pedestrian Bridge — Solana Beach, Calif.

The surface of this Solana Beach, Calif., pedestrian bridge, installed by San Diego-based T.B. Penick & Sons Inc., was inspired by the colors of the Solana Beach sunset, says T.B. Penick project developer Chris Klemaske. Installers used the Lithocrete concrete paving system, embedding glass in shades of red, orange and yellow. There's even a burst of green glass pieces in a corner, which Klemaske says represents the "green flash," a phenomenon known among locals as a flash of green that can be spotted in the sky as the sun sets.

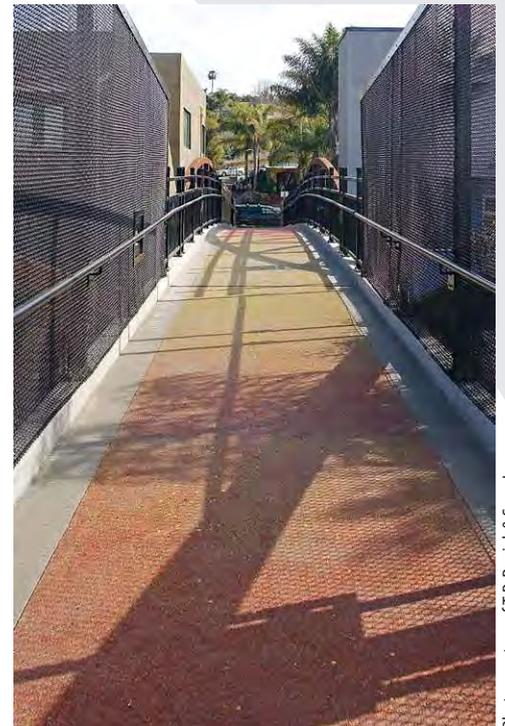


Photo courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons Inc.

# green MATTERS

## Be Prepared for Tough Questions about “Green” Concrete

Just a few short years ago, saying that concrete was a green building material was sufficient.

It was taken for granted that concrete, being locally produced, durable and nontoxic, was a sound, sustainable choice. Today, it is not enough to repeat the word “green” like a mantra. Whether they are green-skeptics or advocates, consumers and architects are becoming better educated and more concerned about environmental impact, and they want substance.

The next step is to improve our green accountability as an industry, even beyond talking about LEED points. As an industry we have to increase transparency by providing more details and disclosure. It may sound like extra work, but when we use the facts we can win on the issue of “eco-value.”

Documenting any green claims is vital. There is no doubt that litigation and government regulation of green criteria affecting our industry are looming issues. The Construction Specifications Institute



by Sherry A. Boyd

has been offering courses to advise specification writers and their employers about the risks of promising sustainability and energy efficiency, but not delivering it.

Generalizations must be replaced by specifics. For instance, “recycled content” is a very broad umbrella term open to misinterpretation and the design and building community won’t accept lack of further information. Savvy buyers are asking to know the exact percentage of any materials we use, broken out as preconsumer, post-consumer or post-industrial. Are manufacturers you choose delivering a consistent product and providing this information?

Even though not all customers will require it, you can demonstrate green thinking when you make it standard practice to point out the exact low-VOC content of surface-applied liquids, such as sealers, curing compounds and other treatments, used on a job. Products are available that meet and exceed local requirements, and it is easy to find specifics in MSDS documents to show your customers that you are committed to being an environmentally conscious company.

When you are ordering ready-mixed concrete for new construction, have you

been asked to have your supplier document and certify the amount and type of recycled content and local materials used? Often architects ask for this for LEED projects. Examples of recommended documents are supplied in the appendix of the Ready Mixed Concrete Industry LEED Reference Guide, prepared by the RMC Research & Education Foundation. This report provides a good benchmark of standard procedures in the ready-mix concrete industry.

Do you document the procedures that you use to manage construction waste? That is required on jobs that either will be submitted for LEED certification or are said to adhere to LEED criteria. Shouldn’t that be done even when you aren’t involved in LEED projects? It shows your company uses environmentally sound procedures for reuse and recycling, giving you an excellent selling point. It might even make the difference in a competitive bid, allowing you to demonstrate you are greener than the competition.

If you want to increase green demand for all types of decorative concrete, it’s important to quantify its eco-value to the building owner or building operator, whether you are doing a big commercial project or a smaller personal residence.

Vague answers to questions  
will only make us look like we are  
engaged in “greenwashing.”

# Documenting any green claims is vital.

As a good example of how to promote green benefits, examine the reasons why polished concrete has become a phenomenal top seller in these challenging financial times. Manufacturers and installers used the hard facts and cost comparisons as market drivers. First, the lower installed cost of polished concrete compared to alternative materials is a selling point.

Second, the higher potential replacement cost of other materials over the floor's life span can be spelled out in dollars and cents. Third, there are the benefits for building owners and operators of eliminating toxic cleaning materials and reducing maintenance time and expenses. These three key benefits create eco-value.

Architects designing buildings that

would apply for LEED certification have influenced the increasing demand for polished concrete, but more and more non-LEED projects employ polished concrete, too. The strong message trickled down, and demand increased for polished concrete in homes, schools and office buildings that won't ever spend the money to apply under LEED. We see an increasing number

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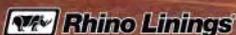
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of projects that just have a goal to be considered environmentally responsible.

A strategy focusing on eco-value and key market drivers can increase demand for other decorative concrete methods, too. To be more direct, you can stop selling against each other and start selling against the costs and benefits of other types of material alternatives that are less durable, more expensive to maintain, wear out more frequently and have to be replaced. When you think about it, bamboo floors don't perform so well when compared to concrete or cementitious toppings. In the present economic situation, almost any materials in the decorative concrete field can win on long-term value comparisons. Instead of seeing LEED criteria as an end point, why not look at these criteria as a starting point for developing a sales strategy applicable to the wider market? Yes, the U.S. Green Building Council LEED program has set new standards that decorative concrete contractors must understand. But don't dismiss the follow-on effect on the whole building industry.

Anyone in your firm who has contact with your customers would benefit from more education on the vocabulary of sustainability and green building. Consumers are reading up on the topic and have probing questions. Designers, builders and architects are experts in the vocabulary promoted by the USGBC and other groups. Vague answers to their questions will only make us look like we are engaged in "greenwashing." We offer a truly sustainable solution. Can you get specific? Are you keeping up?

Ultimately, I believe that the concrete industry and the dimension that decorative concrete offers will play a major role in determining the success of green building initiatives and sustainability efforts. So many low-energy building designs use high-thermal-mass concrete floors and walls in structural design. We have to reach beyond the focus on LEED points to address the larger need for improving, repairing, renovating and maintaining this vast amount of concrete in the built environment. In green building criteria,

when life-cycle cost is seen as important, concrete will outperform alternatives. The larger topic of eco-value is the next hot topic beyond green, and decorative concrete can prove its worth.

In February 2012 the Concrete Decor Show will offer courses to demystify the topic of sustainability and show how the decorative concrete industry can think green, talk green and be more sustainable in both building practices and competitive analysis. Demand for environmentally sound solutions is increasing, and this is the time to dig deeper and understand the eco-value of concrete. 🚧

*Sherry A. Boyd of Boydworks Marketing provides public relations and advertising services for building-industry clients. A USGBC member, she gained knowledge of the decorative concrete market from eight years as head of marketing for a leading manufacturer of concrete coloring materials.*

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## CARLTON'S CORNER

### Three Ways to Drum Up New Work

Since you're reading this, let me say thanks for reading *Concrete Decor* magazine and congrats on being a construction survivor. As you have noticed, our numbers have declined, but as always, the strong have survived, and this includes you, my friend.



by Doug Carlton

Now let me ask you — what is your plan to keep new work coming your way? My suggestion is to look closely at three developing trends that affect our industry.

Eight times per year I look at this magazine from cover to cover, amazed at how our industry has been hijacked by true artists. This level of skill, along with a few creative marketing ideas, should keep fresh money coming into your bank account.

However, if you can't find profitable jobs where you can show your skill, experience and training do little good. The times, they are changing, as the old saying goes, and if you want to keep busy, I have three suggestions. Here we go.

#### Trend No. 1: Market yourself to the "buy local" crowd

The decline in the construction industry has motivated many contractors to travel into new markets, and they're willing to discount services in an attempt to keep busy. The last thing a local contractor needs, especially in a recessed economy, is outside competition moving into their local market. The best remedy for this is to promote your company as the local flavor with a stable track record. Not only will this protect your local market from predator competition, but it will also create a strong sense of community. The growing trend, regardless of region, is to protect local economies supporting local services and businesses.

A big part of the decorative concrete business is providing samples of colors, patterns and so on to prospective customers. This task is easier for contractors working within a local market than for competition from miles away. Make this type of customer service part of your consultation by promoting your quick turnaround of samples, answers and warranty issues. Local decorative contractors build life-long customers compared to out-of-area contractors who are only looking to fill a gap until things improve. Promote yourself as the local choice for decorative concrete.

#### Trend No. 2: Provide quality

Somewhere down the line most of us fell into the mindset that cheap is good. It's not. Why buy two cheap products when one will last longer, be made better and be produced locally? Frugality has replaced frivolous. Customers will be buying less of everything and they will be looking for services and products that last.

My contracting business in the Central Valley of California knows all about declines, but what we have found effective is promoting affordable decorative services with high-quality products and skilled workers. If a customer inquiring about a reseat is price-sensitive, we inform them we offer the best sealers available at competitive prices. Talk about the competitive pricing but clinch with quality.

I have looked through hundreds, maybe thousands of contractors' picture portfolios and they all have one thing in common. Bar none, every picture book features quality work done on quality jobs. Rarely do I see a contractor showing off an "affordable" project promoting how cheaply he or she completed it. Quality will stand the test of time, through recession and recovery. Promote, produce and sell quality.

#### Trend No. 3: Market to the wealthy

My decorative company has kept a list

of several hundred active customers, but in the last year or so, the majority of them have slipped into a more inactive role. My guess is that many of these inactive folks are striving to keep their heads above water, and buying my services is far from their minds. But this is not the case with all our

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## PRODUCT NEWS

customers. Some of our wealthy clients call daily looking for decorative ideas and improvements.

It's funny how markets change. For example, for several years, our business heard little from our farming clients. In fact, they were so quiet we thought most had closed shop and moved away. But after commodity prices shot up late last year and early this year, our phone started ringing, with farmers on the other end looking to spend money. This is a perfect example of how the money flows.

Another truth of the matter is that folks with money realize contractors are willing to do something unheard of not so long ago — negotiate.

I have had the opportunity to work for a handful of self-made billionaires over the years, and I've noticed they have a few things in common. They are very intelligent, very confident and very against wasteful spending. To sell services to the wealthy a contractor must provide quality, provide service and justify price. Leave out one of those three and find yourself looking for new work.

### The perfect profit storm

In a perfect storm, several situations intersect, creating a unique occurrence of some kind. My goal is to formulate a workable plan that creates a perfect buying storm of fresh business for your decorative company. The best way to make this happen is combining all three trends mentioned today.

So many contractors e-mail or call asking how to break into a decorative market that would be willing to spend money on their services. My suggestion is to promote yourself as a local business providing quality work, with a big marketing focus on the wealthy. 📱

*Doug Carlton operates Carlton Concrete Inc. in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at [carltondoug@comcast.net](mailto:carltondoug@comcast.net).*

### Bosch band saw a cordless, agile tool

The new BSH180 band saw is powered by an 18-volt fat or slim battery pack. At 7.7 pounds, including the battery, this lightweight band saw is extremely portable, making it an ideal tool for use in overhead applications.



The band saw is designed with the battery pack above the handle. It's ergonomic and balanced on both sides. The BSH180 accommodates most common-sized materials at up to 2 1/2 inches on a single pass.

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### Ruwac introduces direct-bagging pre-separation system

Ruwac USA has improved its line of High Efficiency Cyclone pre-separation vacuum systems with a newly redesigned HEC with Direct Bagging System.

This pre-separation vacuum system comes with all the benefits and features of the HEC, but includes a unique universal bagging system that allows for safe, dust-free cleanup. Unlike other bagging systems, the HEC-DB is universally compatible with almost any type of bagging container.

Among the improvements made to the HEC-DB is an external gravity drop system. Not only will this unique gravity drop hold the separator's contents as you empty and change bags, but it also allows you to discharge the contents at the pull of a lever. The HEC-DB's newly designed bag clasps securely hold bags in place and also provide an easy release.

The High Efficiency



Cyclone itself is engineered to remove 97 percent of fine dust and debris from the airstream before it hits the filter. The cyclone's rubberized interior is abrasion-resistant with reinforced housing for long-lasting durability and includes a grounded connection hose for use with any Ruwac vacuum. Another vacuum's connection hose can be used to attach the HEC to any non-Ruwac vacuum.

☎ (413) 532-4030

🌐 [www.ruwac.com](http://www.ruwac.com)

### Mixers, wire brushes from Hyde Tools

Hyde Tools' new wire brushes have extended handles and rubberized grips that make stripping and scrubbing more effective and less tiring. The line includes 11 carbon steel, stainless steel, brass and nylon brushes in a wide range of sizes and shapes, from minibrushes for tight areas to large-profile brushes with scrapers. A block scrub brush that fits Acme threaded poles is great for scrubbing concrete floors.

Additionally, Hyde has introduced two new mixers designed for better mixing of paints and stains. The new impeller design is engineered to loosen solids from the bottom of the can, promoting better coverage. Item No. 43420 has a quarter-inch steel hex shaft for use with electric drills, and it is designed for use with 1-gallon cans. Item No. 43430 has a 5/16-inch steel hex shaft and is sized for use with 1- to 5-gallon containers. Both mixers are constructed of rugged, high-quality materials that are resistant to solvents.

☎ (800) 872-4933

🌐 [www.hydetools.com](http://www.hydetools.com)

### Versa-Cut Turbo bit from Husqvarna

Husqvarna Construction Products has unveiled the latest addition to their lineup of diamond core bits, the Husqvarna Versa-Cut Turbo.

The Versa-Cut Turbo bit features a turbo segmented shape, which promotes high productivity and completing wet drilling jobs quickly. The bit has a 1 1/4-inch to

7-inch adapter and a 14-inch drilling depth. It is available in a range of diameters from 2 inches to 8 inches.

The Versa-Cut Turbo is a general-purpose bit made to cut a wide variety of materials. It facilitates fast and smooth drilling of concrete with or without steel reinforcing, brick, block and stone materials.

[www.husqvarna.com](http://www.husqvarna.com)

### Metabo releases metal grinder

Metabo Corp. has introduced the W680 4 1/2-inch angle grinder. This new angle grinder is ideal for cutting, grinding and deburring metal.

Featuring a robust 6.2-amp motor with 680 watts of power, 14 inch-pounds of torque and a no-load speed of 11,000 rpm, the W680 has a classic Metabo design and offers high performance.



[www.metabo.us](http://www.metabo.us)

### New drills from Bosch

Bosch Power Tools & Accessories has unveiled two Brute Tough Drills for heavy-duty applications and two Compact Tough Drills for medium-duty applications.

The Gen 2 drills are the first to debut Bosch's new Lithium-Ion High Capacity batteries, promising up to 50 percent longer run time and the best cold weather performance.

The Gen 2 Brute Tough Drill/Driver and the Gen 2 Brute Tough Hammer Drill/Driver are up to 15 percent more compact and up to a half pound lighter than the closest competition. They weigh in at 4.7 pounds and 4.9 pounds respectively and deliver the shortest head length in class.

The new Gen 2 Compact Tough Drill/Driver weigh 3.4 pounds with a SlimPack battery or 4 pounds with a FatPack battery and have a head length of 7 inches. The Gen 2 Compact Tough Hammer Drill/Driver weighs 3.6 pounds with a SlimPack or 4.2 pounds with a FatPack, and it has a head length of 7.5 inches.

Other Gen 2 Brute and Compact Tough drill features include a new four-pole high-performance motor and patented all-metal gear train and clutch for maximum power,

an ergonomic grip zone, electronic cell protection for 400 percent longer battery life, and a variable-speed trigger.

[\(877\) 267-2499](tel:(877)267-2499)

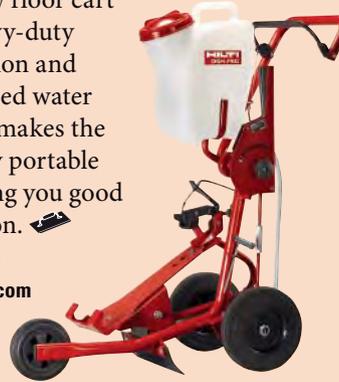
[www.boschtools.com](http://www.boschtools.com)

### A Hilti floor cart for gas saws

Hilti's new heavy-duty DSH-FSC Gas Saw Floor Cart is designed for small cutting jobs requiring the flexibility of a hand-held gas saw and the precision cut and performance of a larger dedicated floor saw.

The saw cart can be used with Hilti's DSH 700 and DSH 900 Gas Saws. This combination is perfect for applications such as cutting expansion joints in concrete, floor-sawing asphalt, cured concrete or green concrete, and demolition and removal of concrete or asphalt. The system offers a cutting depth of 5 3/4 inches.

The gas-saw floor cart is made of heavy-duty steel construction and has a gravity-feed water container that makes the cart completely portable while still giving you good dust suppression.



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## concrete DECOR® product focus

### Hydro Guard

from Southwestern Paint and Supply LLC

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

Southwestern Paint and Supply's Hydro Guard, a sealer designed 22 years ago for secondary containment of chemicals and for sealing exterior stucco, has been discovered in recent years by decorative concrete fabricators who appreciate its thinness and praise its stain resistance and durability.

The polyacrylic topical sealant slightly penetrates the surface, emits a low odor, has no VOCs and resists ultraviolet rays. It starts out as a milky white liquid and cures to a nonyellowing, glass-clear coating that can be applied to provide as much or as little sheen as is desired. When properly applied and maintained, the sealant has a life expectancy of five to seven years.

Mark Venezia, production manager for Absolute ConcreteWorks in Poulsbo, Wash., says he's been using Hydro Guard for the last year and a half on everything interior from tub surrounds and shower stalls to countertops and sinks. And so far so good, he reports. During that time, "I haven't had any callbacks."

Before switching to Hydro Guard, he says, he had run into problems with other sealers. One he had used was very similar to Hydro Guard, but it was much more expensive and it was diluted in strength. "I decided to try the real stuff," he says. Side-by-side tests he conducted showed Hydro Guard to be 85 percent more stain-resistant to a whole host of things, including mustard, wine, salsa, egg yolk and lemon, he says.



Besides its superior stain-resistant qualities, Venezia says, Hydro Guard is simple to apply. "It's so easy a child can do it." Southwestern Paint literature notes you can use a roller, LP sprayer or brush, but he prefers to hand-apply the liquid film-building sealer with a microfiber towel.

He soaks the towel and wrings out the excess product, leaving the towel very damp, and gently strokes the surface, overlapping each wipe by half until the surface is completely covered. He lets each coat dry for an hour to an hour and a half and then puts on another coat, for a total of four to six coats. He then lets it sit overnight.

The next day, Venezia sprinkles the entire surface with baking soda. "You could use VCAS (a white pozzolan often used in countertops), but baking soda is a lot cheaper," he says. He puts on latex gloves and rubs down the surface to put microscratches in the topcoat of the sealer. "This lets you get a natural concrete look and achieve a matte finish," he says.

If a high-gloss or semigloss look is desired, Venezia then applies anywhere from two to four coats of carnauba wax, buffing in between coats.

Tommy Cook, a freelance artist and consultant for the precast industry who is currently conducting business as the Traveling Concrete Gnome, says he'd



Photo courtesy of Tommy T. Cook

been using a weaker form of Hydro Guard for the last four years until recently when he switched over.

It's expensive compared to other acrylics, he concedes, but "it's definitely worth the money." While other acrylics typically run in the range of \$30 to \$50 per gallon, they don't offer anywhere near the stain and scratch resistance Hydro Guard does, he says. At the other end of the spectrum, "hard shells," his collective term for thickly applied sealers that include epoxies and modified urethanes, run



Photo courtesy of Chris Karlick

Photo courtesy of Chris Karlick



When he finishes a job, Cook says he gives homeowners a kit consisting of a pint of Hydro Guard, a 3M Scotch-Brite pad and a microfiber applicator pad. He walks them through the process of maintaining the surface and troubleshooting possible problems.

its natural characteristics with some maintenance effort from the end user. "If your customers choose to go with concrete, they need to know they are going to have to deal with maintenance," Cook says.

According to Brandon Showers, national outside sales manager for Southwestern Paint and supply in Tucson, Ariz., Southwestern is preparing a new set of application, maintenance and repair guidelines for Hydro Guard from information submitted by their clients. The new guidelines should be ready by early fall.

 (520) 747-1578

Unlike topical sealers such as epoxies that make surfaces feel and look plastic, Hydro Guard allows concrete to retain

upwards of \$300 or \$400 a gallon. Hydro Guard, with its \$195-per-gallon price tag, falls somewhere in between, with the coverage rate running about 300 square feet per gallon.

Besides using it on countertops, Cook says, "I also use it on my (cast-concrete garden) leaves. It's a phenomenal exterior sealer as well."

Cook cautions users not to apply coats too thick and to allow coats to cure properly or they'll get a softer surface that easily scratches. "Apply the product as thin as you can in multiple coats," he says. "I typically apply two to three coats with an hour between them and then I slurry to fill pinholes." He then soft-sands to remove residue and applies another four to six coats.

Cook notes that while Hydro Guard is not as durable and scratch-resistant as hard-shell finishes, it's much easier to repair should the sealer fail or if the surface gets scratched or stained. "A lot of work and money are involved when you have to repair a hard-shell system. You can't just touch up an area that's scratched or delaminated. You have to strip it all off and sand it down because you won't get it to lay right," he explains.

Unlike thick hard-shell systems, Hydro Guard is applied so thinly you can easily spot-repair problem areas without having to redo the whole surface.



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## concrete DECOR® product focus

### Polyurea-1 HD from Citadel Polyurea Coatings

Every manufacturer hopes they will develop a product that is truly versatile. Citadel Polyurea Coatings may have come close to that goal with their new Polyurea-1 HD coating.

Polyurea-1 HD is a single-component, 90-percent solids, aliphatic polyurea that was initially developed to make life easier for the contractors using it. It does that, but its advantages don't end there.

"The idea was to come up with a single-component system so that people could just spin it up and pour it out," says Citadel marketing director Mike McAllister. "It wasn't our initial goal to come out with something that had better abrasion resistance, but it came out that way."

Besides the abrasion resistance, Polyurea-1 HD offers installers an unlimited pot life, low VOCs, chemical resistance and 100 percent UV protection.



Photos courtesy of Citadel Polyurea Coatings

It also cures fast, so floors can be returned to service in just 24 hours, with foot traffic in four to eight hours.

Although it was meant to be a topcoat for decorative and industrial jobs, it can also act as a sealer. People have used it on bare concrete and walls as a protective coating.

"It's basically becoming the core of a majority of our systems in some shape or form," McAllister says.

One of these systems is the Medici Polyurea Colour Coating System, Citadel's latest decorative system. Medici uses a two-headed roller to apply a multicolored basecoat and Polyurea-1 HD for the protective topcoat, creating looks that are cost-effective and elegant.

A Citadel customer recently installed 8,000 square feet of Medici at the

Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis., in just one day, and another client used it at the 12,000-square-foot Dahl Auto Museum in La Crosse.

Additionally, a Citadel installer was recently awarded a 48,000-square-foot industrial project thanks to Polyurea-1 HD. "A lot of this is due to the durability and the return to service time," McAllister says.



Since Polyurea-1 HD was introduced at the 2011 World of Concrete show, there's been a lot of interest in it, he says. "We've received sizeable opportunities in Guatemala, Australia, Singapore and Europe. It's really changing things for us as a company.

"We're not just creating residential garage floors anymore."

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# focus

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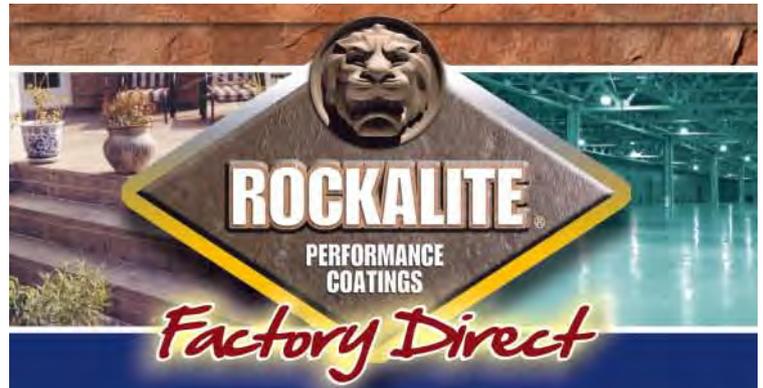
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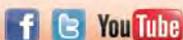


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# coating & topping CONCRETE

## PRODUCT NEWS

### Pearlescent metallic coating part of Citadel's polyurea series

Citadel Polyurea Coatings now offers a Pearlescent Metallic Solution, which uses powder tints to produce marbled floor coatings that contain pearlescent and iridescent accents and offer gleaming finishes. As part of the Single Component Polyurea series, these lustrous floor coatings

are good for commercial applications, retail environments or residential use. They are available in 10 color options.

When used with Citadel's Polyurea-1 HD, the Pearlescent Metallic System offers 100 percent UV stability, making it ideal for both interior and exterior projects. It features high-gloss sheen, a fast cure time that allows it to be walked on in four to

eight hours, and installation temperature requirements from zero to 120 F that allow it to be installed year-round.

[www.citadelfloors.com](http://www.citadelfloors.com)

### A polyurea-based repair system

Citadel Polyurea Coatings has announced its polyurea-based Fortification Formula, a fast-setting, high-strength, low-viscosity repair material that is perfect for repairing and rebuilding damaged concrete.

Fortification Formula can set anchor bolts, repair damaged control joints, fill spalling or rebuild vertical curbs and steps. Its high build rate even allows it to act as filler for repairing large spalls, holes and cracks. An easy-to-mix, 1-to-1-ratio dual-component product, Fortification Formula is self-leveling. It can be applied at any temperature, and with return to service in as little as 10 minutes, repairs can be made whenever they're needed.

Fortification Formula is composed of 100 percent solids and has no VOCs, making it environmentally friendly. It will not shrink or swell, is nonporous and has unsurpassed durability and adhesion.

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## Polyurea systems from RockSolid Floors

RockSolid Floors has developed a One Part Polyurea series, an array of concrete floor coatings with virtually unlimited pot life. This allows consumers to finish flooring projects at their own pace and without any waste. They are also easy to apply with no mixing and no measuring. Just shake, pour and roll.

The Polyurea Diamond Coat is considered the workhorse of the series. Diamond Coat's chemical and abrasion resistance, along with its incredible strength (20 times that of epoxy) make it an ideal sealer or topcoat in any concrete flooring project.

RockSolid Colour Shots can also be added to the Diamond Coat, either to create a solid color floor or as part of the RockSolid Polyurea Colour System, which uses two Colour Shots and a specially designed two-headed roller to create an elegant, stone-simulating look.

Additionally, a Gray Garage Coat has been developed to be used with this system. Along with the polyurea, the Gray Garage Coat package comes with an instructional DVD and booklet, Citric Etch, decorative chips and the specially designed RockSolid Floors Foam Roller.

The One Part systems are self-leveling and cure extremely quickly, allowing foot traffic in four to eight hours and vehicle traffic within 24 hours. Effective in temperatures between zero and 120 degrees, these coatings can be applied any time of year. Ultra-low VOCs make them a great choice for indoor flooring applications. They are also optically clear and high-gloss, giving them better sheen and making solid colors and broadcasts look more vibrant than they do with some traditional floor coatings.

[www.rocksolidfloors.com](http://www.rocksolidfloors.com)

## Crack repair product from Adhesives Technology

Adhesives Technology Corp.'s new Crackbond CSR is a two-part, 100 percent solids, fast-setting urethane used to repair cracks or spalls in concrete.

The ultra-low viscosity of Crackbond CSR allows deep penetration into cracks, producing a high-strength bond. Repaired areas of high traffic can be reopened quickly as CSR boasts a cure time of less than 20 minutes and achieves strength of 4,900 psi in one hour. It is great for repairing spalled floor joints and concrete on bridge and parking decks. It is self-leveling, and the addition of aggregates can produce a mortar. It can be used in temperatures down to zero F.

[www.atc.ws](http://www.atc.ws)

## NewLook releases two coating-removal gels

NewLook International Inc. has recently released two new low-VOC, water-based concrete coating and paint removal products that are available as a gel form.

EasyStrip 1000 is designed to remove most sealers, acrylics, nonacid stains, nonlead-based paints, urethanes, lacquers, latex and varnish. It can also be used in preparation for NewLook Concrete Color Stains or any other decorative concrete product. It can be used on architectural surfaces such as concrete, brick, masonry, and wood where coatings and nonlead-based paints are present.

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EasyStrip 2000 will lift epoxies, urethanes and other high-performance coatings. It is ideal for use on steel, aluminum, concrete, masonry and wood. It can also be used over Modello Design's Decorative Masking patterns to create unique decorative looks.

Both products contain no toxic air pollutants or hazardous air pollutants, and cleanup using NewLook Concrete Degreaser and water is easy. The products are biodegradable and environmentally friendly.

[www.getnewlook.com](http://www.getnewlook.com)

## New website for supplier of metallic powders

Gold Leaf and Metallic Powders, a division of Neuberg & Neuberg Importers Group Inc., has launched its newly designed e-commerce site, Glandmp.com.

The new site offers Gold Leaf and Metallic Powders' complete line of Bronzing Metallic Powders, Mineral Powders and Mixing Mediums. The powders can be added to lacquers, polyurethanes, oil varnishes, acrylic varnishes, glazes, epoxies and waxes. The line consists of a total of 80 colors.

In addition to product information and online purchasing, the new site offers a variety of features such as mixing guides and material safety data sheets. The website also includes a downloadable catalog and a technical information guide.

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## SUCCESS WITH CONCRETE COUNTERTOPS

### Precasting Isn't Just for Countertops Anymore

Concrete rivals or surpasses many common architectural materials when it comes to versatility of design and application. Its customizability is well-known, and more fabricators are starting to realize how they can capitalize on its versatility in expanding their market.



by Jeffrey Girard

While concrete countertops continue to be popular, offering other high-quality architectural products can help expand a concrete countertop maker's repertoire without significantly changing how they make their concrete or how they do business.

Recently, the popularity of outdoor kitchens has increased. Even in northern climates, outdoor kitchens are a surprisingly strong source of business for many fabricators. Of course, outdoor kitchens need countertops, and concrete is an obvious choice. My last article in *Concrete*

*Decor* (May/June 2011) dealt with special considerations for outdoor concrete.

Those considerations also apply to other outdoor fixtures and products made with concrete,



including those I will talk about in this article.

For many years now, the popularity of concrete countertops has grown. While this looks like a good thing on the surface, many concrete countertop makers have found it challenging at times to get the pricing they want. Basic economics tells us that as demand increases, pricing tends to drop. Not only are there more concrete countertop makers getting into the business, there are more countertop choices for the consumer. And those alternate countertop choices are less expensive than concrete, so the great challenge for many concrete countertop makers is how to sell their products at prices that keep them in business.

One good example that we as concrete countertop makers are always up against is granite. The granite industry is, in many areas of the country, vigorously strangling itself in a downward spiral of ever-lower pricing and quality. It wasn't always like this. Thirty years ago, the granite industry was, in many ways, much like the concrete countertop industry. Small shops did low volumes of business because much or all of the work was done manually using hand-held polishers. Because the work was scarce and stone was seen as a high-value exotic material, it commanded high prices. Remember, the dominant countertop material at the time was laminate and the high-end product was solid surface.

Tile and butcher block were the alternatives, so consumers didn't have the



Photos courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute

number of choices they do now.

Fast-forward to today. A single CNC machine can take a slab of granite and, entirely untouched by people, turn it into an installation-ready kitchen within a few hours. What may have taken days of manual polishing in the past now can be done with a few minutes of programming. This rapid production, coupled with the flood of low-cost (and perhaps low-quality) stone has created the state that much of the granite industry faces.

The granite industry is, in some ways, trapped by the material it has hung its hat on. Stone to a large extent is what it is. Once it's quarried, all that you can do to it is change its surface texture.

Some innovative folks have begun dyeing lower-quality stones to create exotic colors. And I've even shown some stone fabricators how to acid-stain travertine and marble. Recoloring, while seen as exotic and new for stone, is really an old trick of the concrete industry.

But stone still has one more limitation that doesn't limit us. Stone is already a hard, rigid material when it comes out of the ground. The granite industry has created a very efficient and cost-effective way to transform large blocks of stone into thin, polished slabs, but the fabricator is limited in what he or she can do with those slabs. If your entire industry is built around and

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optimized to cut up flat slabs of stone and create smaller pieces with pretty edges, then it's very difficult for that same industry to efficiently and cost-effectively change to making 3-D pieces that aren't built out of flat slabs glued together (which is the current way of making complex shapes out of flat material).

In some ways the concrete countertop industry has begun following the same path that the granite industry created. When your business is centered around countertops, it's expected that comparisons between concrete and other materials will be made. And this has a profound impact on expectations about pricing and quality.

However, since concrete is such a versatile material, it is possible to get out of the kitchen and move into new markets that don't have these expectations. For example, you can explore making fire pits, water walls, furniture, planters, and wall panels and tiles.

While all of these items also have established alternatives with their own pricing and market trends, they do not face the same "compete directly with granite" issue that countertops do. And they do not have the same sealer performance expectations that kitchen countertops do.

What do you do? Consider adding a new product line that's complimentary to your core business. If you already do outdoor kitchens, why not start offering fire pits too? If you focus on interior work, how about water walls, wall panels or even furniture?

For those already making high-quality concrete countertops, adding these new products should be easy. However, each requires more care and consideration than simply changing the shape of your forms. Transmuting flat concrete into a vertical wall that has water flowing over it is not necessarily difficult, but making a satisfying water wall that actually works can take thought and effort that most countertop jobs never demand.

New products open new markets, but they also have their own learning curves. The last thing you want is a fire pit that blows up or a water wall that leaks. These new challenges test your confidence with



working in three dimensions, hone your problem-solving skills and push your creativity — but that's why you got into this, right?

Build on the skills you already have and hone your design creativity. Stop competing against granite and start realizing all the possibilities that concrete offers beyond countertops. 📱

*Jeffrey Girard is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute and a pioneer of engineered concrete countertops. He can be reached at [jeffg@concretecountertopinstitute.com](mailto:jeffg@concretecountertopinstitute.com).*

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## Pouring in Place at a College Bar

**S**horty's Bar, located in the basement of the Kutztown Tavern in Kutztown, Pa., is a classic college bar: Concrete floors, block walls, basically indestructible. Patrons line up five deep at the two bars on weekend nights. It's the kind of place where it can take five minutes to move 40 feet. The next day the floor and walls are hosed down into floor drains to clean it up for the night's crowd. My kind of place ... 30 years ago.



by Mark Celebuski

The owner, an old concrete contractor, wanted to replace the two bars with

concrete. The goal was to add ambience and character to the bar with a material that could be hosed down along with the floors. The owner also wanted seamless tops, making this a good candidate for pouring in place.

The question was: Could we approach the quality of our precast countertops on a poured-in-place project? I believed we could.

### The forms

The bar tops sit on a 4-inch-thick solid block wall. We used 3/4-inch exterior grade plywood quick-bolted to the block as the stay-in-place part of the form, and we used HDO (high-density overlay) plywood to form the drop and edge. Angle braces bolted through the block wall held everything in place.



Photos courtesy of Mark Celebuski

No. 3 rebar at 8 inches on center both ways controlled plastic shrinkage and took care of the cantilever and spans.

### The concrete

The concrete had to be strong — I wanted a minimum of 7,000 psi.

It had to be finishable. We could not simply load up on high-range water reducer

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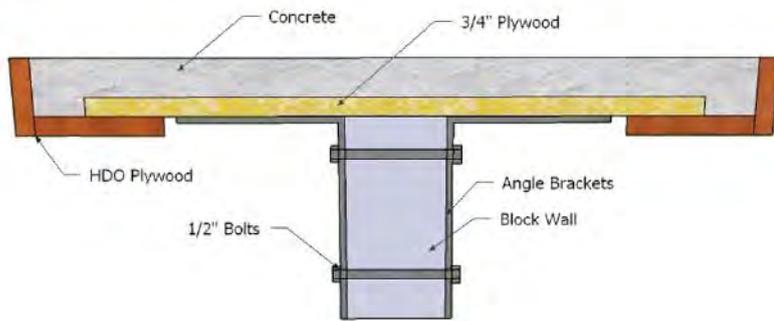
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and hope for the best.

It could not shrink noticeably. We did not want any joints or plastic shrinkage cracks.

It had to be delivered by a ready-mix truck. There was no way I wanted to mix 1.5 cubic yards on-site.

Working with Jim Casilio of Casilio Concrete (based in Bethlehem, Pa.) we came up with a mix that worked just about perfectly. We used a 70-30 portland-slag mix, a midrange water



Placing the concrete quickly is key. We had both bars cast in about an hour.

## PRODUCT NEWS

### Kingdom Products releases countertop mix

Kingdom Products has released Imperial Countertop Mix, a new high-performance concrete countertop mix.

The mix has been manufactured to be user-friendly and have excellent finishing characteristics. It offers a glass-smooth finish and has little to no shrinkage or curling in the curing process as long as water content is respected. It is suitable for hand-finished, ground and polished, and hand-pressed methods of countertop fabrication.

This is a professional-grade mix that attains 7,500 psi strength, achieves set time in about four hours from time of placement, and can be ground and polished in as little as 24 hours depending on environmental conditions.

[www.kingdom-products.com](http://www.kingdom-products.com)



### New websites offer glass aggregate

East Coast Glass Direct and West Coast Glass Direct are the newest sources of quality crushed, jellybean, landscape and fire-pit glass for United States contractors. Two new websites have been launched — [Eastcoastglassdirect.com](http://Eastcoastglassdirect.com) for East Coast customers and [Westcoastglassdirect.com](http://Westcoastglassdirect.com) for West Coast clients.

Stocking locations in Van Nuys, Calif., and Gainesville, Fla., provide customers coast-to-coast availability, freight savings and short delivery times.

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reducer (dosed as high as we dared) and a shrinkage reducer, and we cast at a maximum 4-inch slump.

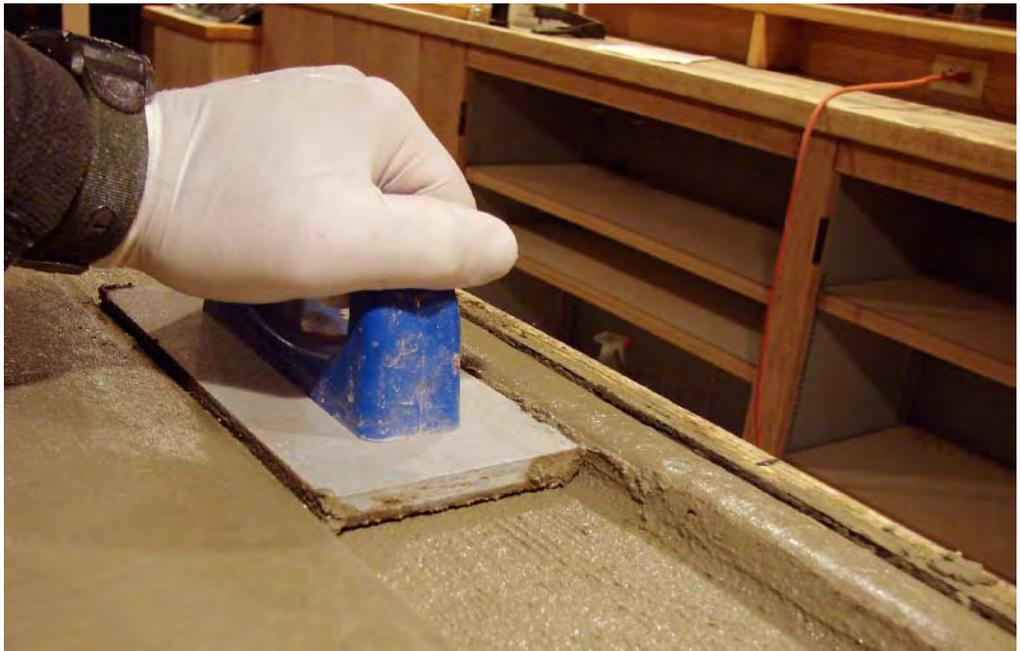
The end result was a mix that was tolerable to cast (with vibration), did not set too quickly, finished very well, did not shrink noticeably and gained strength quickly. We had the finishing process wrapped up about four hours after the start of the pour in ambient temperatures of 70 degrees.

## Sealing mistakes and missteps

Up to the point of sealing, things had progressed very well. The sealer plan was to use one coat of a thin-build water-based epoxy as the primary base coat.

The problem with the plan was the 100 percent relative humidity we had had in my area for the prior three months — remember, we were working in a basement. When it says “Don’t apply this product above 60 percent relative humidity,” you may get away with 80 percent, but as I learned, 100 percent is too high. The sealer turned white due to an improper cure. A six-hour detour to strip it and we were back to square one.

Bob Chatterton from Surface 519 and I came up with a backup plan involving two Surface 519 products: We would use a solvent-borne sealer (519 SB3400, a silane acrylic) that would not white out in high humidity as a base coat, and we’d top it with



I made a tool with the same profile as the drink rail to finish it.

an abrasion-resistant topcoat (Rock Renew) that could be easily reapplied as needed. I’ve had excellent results with Rock Renew in the past. It’s used on the floor of Penn Station with yearly maintenance.

the next pour-in-place project, but overall the project was a success for us and for the owner. I’m looking forward to the challenge of the next PIP project. 🛠️

*Mark Celebuski is a full-time consultant to the precast and concrete countertop industries. He can be reached at [mark@trinic.us](mailto:mark@trinic.us).*

## The end result

There are a few adjustments I’ll make on



Polishing out Rock Renew, an abrasion-resistant topcoat from Surface 519.

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## concrete DECOR® product focus

### B01 from Construcolor USA Ltd.

**D**esigned as an easier-to-use, more controllable color system, Construcolor B01 integral pigment is a liquid gel that has been winning over skeptics for the last decade.

“I remember when we first introduced it in the United States, people kind of had difficulty with the idea because they’d never seen (integral pigment) in a liquid form. As soon as they started using it, they liked it,” says Adrian Jimenez, sales manager for Construcolor USA Ltd.

B01 was originally introduced in Mexico in the mid-1990s, then came to Texas in the late 1990s. Brad Adcock, owner of San Antonio-based Commercial Concrete Inc., has been using it ever since. Both he and Jimenez agree there are two key advantages to using the gel pigment.

First is the ease of mixing. The gel can either be added to the concrete mix water before mixing, or it can be put directly into the concrete itself during the mixing process. Contractors no longer have to fight off clumps of pigment when blending or need to add water to the concrete to counteract large amounts of powder.

Secondly, B01 is a system that is simple but offers a lot of possibilities. While only 14 basic colors are available, a contractor can achieve 56 different shades by using smaller or larger amounts of B01. “How much color you mix in will determine how dark (the color) is going to be,” Jimenez says. “One gallon of red would be pink, while four gallons would produce a very intense red.”

Both of these advantages have been beneficial for Adcock and his company, especially on commercial jobs.

“The disadvantage to powder is



Photo courtesy of Creative Concrete (San Antonio, Texas)

that when you throw in 150 pounds of powder, you have to add back in a lot of water to get the concrete mix back to its original state. That can create an issue with the specifier,” he says. “When you add the liquid colorant you don’t have that problem. It stays just as wet, and you don’t have to convince somebody why you needed to add more water.”

Construcolor B01 can be used anywhere a cementitious mixture requires integral coloring, including in creating precast concrete pieces, tilt-up panels, patios and retaining walls. It can also be used to color mortar-joint grout when installing ceramic tiles, brick and masonry.

The colorant can be used in both interior and exterior applications, as it is UV-resistant. “There’s no way to get around a little bit of fading or efflorescence, but it doesn’t have near the fading (as other pigments). It doesn’t end up that far off from the color chart. A red is still going to look red,” Adcock says.

Adcock is such a proponent of the gel pigment that it’s been his go-to colorant for the last decade.

“We’ve probably poured 4 to 5 million square feet with B01,” he says.

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# grinding & polishing :

## PROJECT PROFILE

### Alfalfa's Market Boulder, Colo.

by David Searls

There was plenty of flooring to do before Alfalfa's Market, a new natural foods store, could open on Earth Day 2011 in a former Whole Foods space in Boulder, Colo.

"It was over 12,000 square feet of bare concrete floor that ranged from 30-day-old new pour to floor sections 75 years old," recalls Randy Anderson, president of decorative concrete contractor Surface Prep Technology, in Aurora, Colo. Not to mention the vinyl composition tile (VCT) that had to be ripped up and all of the glue that needed to be scraped away. "It took us three days just to prepare the floor," says Anderson.

They used a 32-inch Diamatic 780 Ultra concrete grinder with diamond bonds ranging from soft to medium hard, then finished up with grit resins from 50 to 800.

The spray coat was QuickDye, from Concrete Coatings Inc. This solvent-based acetone dye is promoted by its manufacturer as an alternative to chemical stains. Concrete Coatings' Cory Christensen explains that contractor Anderson "ran into issues trying to get a uniform color. Depending on application techniques, QuickDye can create a more uniform coat (than an acid stain would)."

There was another key factor to consider. America doesn't get much "greener" than the environmentally friendly Boulder metropolitan area. Throw in the fact that the client is an organic and natural



Photos by Randy Anderson

food retailer, and the only question became — how environmentally friendly could they get?

The fast drying time of QuickDye is a sustainability feature in that it can keep vapors to a minimum. "It dries in, like, 20 seconds," says Anderson. That factor was equally important to the job schedule, since other remodeling work was going on all around them and as they worked, the store grand opening date was rapidly approaching. Because they were able to rapidly layer spray coat upon spray coat, the Surface Prep Technology team could completely cover each of the two large floor sections with up to four color coats in as little as 10 hours.

#### A subtle palette

As for the creative plan, it sounded like something of a mishmash, a patchwork quilt approach: Anderson and his crew were

#### Project at a Glance

**Client:** Alfalfa's Market, Boulder, Colo.

**Decorative Concrete Contractor:** Randy Anderson, Surface Prep Technology, Aurora, Colo.

**General Contractor:** Deneuve Design, Boulder, Colo.

**Project Manager:** Will Bohner

**Timeline:** 5-7 days

**Project Specs:** Spray-coat 12,000 square feet of concrete floor space; multiple colors and coats

**Materials Supplier:** Concrete Coatings Inc.

**Materials Used:** QuickDye Concrete Coatings System





to spray on a sand-colored base coat over 60 percent of the floor surface, a terra cotta tone over 20 percent, olive color at 10 percent coverage and, finally, gold over 20 percent of the floor space.

“The general manager had a vision of what he wanted, so he was directing us the whole way,” says Anderson. “It was a weird vision.”

But weird in a good way. The idea was that the color would change gradually throughout the interior. In most places the coats would overlap, creating a subdued palette dominated by the neutral sand and terra cotta tones, but with a flicker or streak of brighter colors here and there and a less gradual shift where it made thematic sense. For instance, the olive shade lent a logical, subtle organic feel to the produce department.

Which is where Anderson’s crew ran into a problem. The coloration here was too subtle.

The QuickDye system uses C-Series Liquid Colorants, powder pigments that mix with the acetone base at a ratio of one bag per gallon of acetone. So far, so good.

But, says Anderson, “the olive color just wasn’t strong enough to come to the top. The material was absorbing into the other colors, so we figured we had to reduce the acetone to 30 percent in mixing it with the olive.”

A stronger, more vibrant color emerged. Dilemma solved.

Anderson then applied Di-Hard Densifier, a lithium concrete hardener from DiTeq to lock in the colors. He used his Clarke Autoscrubber to pick up color residue, after which his crew applied a coat of DiGuard. They cut the floor with a diamond range from 30/40 to 50/60 to 120 in soft- and hard-bond matrixes.

The final step was to go over the surface with a high-speed burnisher and 800-grit polishing resins, bringing the floor to a glossy finish that could be easily maintained with soap and water.

Anderson’s client was happy. His vision had been realized. The polished floor was perfectly in character with all of the stone and recycled brick used elsewhere in the newly renovated store. While the color palette might be difficult to describe, it’s easy to admire — and as natural-looking as the fresh produce in the well-stocked bins of the new Alfalfa’s Market. 🚗

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# grinding & polishing

## Are Your Diamonds Open for Business?

**W**hen polishing concrete using resin- or metal-bonded diamond abrasives, how do you know that the diamonds under your machine are functioning effectively?



by Jennifer A. Faller

Diamonds are expensive consumables that impact the concrete by removal and flattening during the grind and hone stages or by refining the clarity and shine during the polish. Your polished floor depends on the diamonds doing their job.

### Visual inspection

Many contractors simply order whatever

diamonds are on sale. They open the box at the job site, place the diamonds onto the plates and start the grinder. What could be wrong with that?

I suggest a visual inspection before you grind to determine if your diamonds are open and ready to cut.

If your diamonds are open, you will see shiny sparkles and light refraction, or “bling.” If your diamonds are covered by the resin that holds them in place, a common issue with diamonds fresh from the manufacturer, you will see a smooth, closed surface. Open up the diamonds prior to use. Either run them on rough concrete or use a hand sander to abrade the diamond pads until the bling appears and the bottom is no longer sealed. Now the diamonds will start cutting evenly on your first pass.

Next, inspect your *used* diamonds. Note how many diamonds there are and how uniformly they are dispersed. Manufacturers load their diamond tooling with different amounts of actual cutting diamonds, so quantity and uniformity matter. If you cannot see bling, the diamonds cannot cut concrete.

Some sets will have slick, unused, sealed areas on each segment. Some resin diamonds may have black on the bottom. Diamonds that get too hot and become “glazed,” or burned, do not refine or cut effectively and will leave discoloration on the concrete. Diamonds that open and wear evenly are the most economical, even when you pay more upfront. This same principle works for metal-bond and resin-bond diamonds.

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## Verifying the right grit and bond

Now you know the diamonds are open. But are they the right diamonds for the slab? Turn off the vacuum and make a pass, then examine the dust left behind. If there is little to no dust, your diamonds are just spinning, not cutting. If dust is evenly distributed and representative of the grit level, then the diamonds are cutting and they are right for that step. If there are piles of dust on either side of the machine, then you are using the wrong bond or the grit is too low. Adjusting after the first pass will save you both time and money on diamonds.

Now turn the vacuum back on and listen to the sounds that the diamonds make: swish, swish, swish. If the sound is even and continuous, and the machine is not pulling from "diamond grab," then your cut will be effective.

Similarly, when cutting wet, check to see if the water is cloudy from concrete removal or if it is clear. Remove or "inch up" the skirt and look. After one pass, turn the machine off and adjust as necessary. The sooner these informed decisions are made, the more refinement, clarity and reflectivity the concrete will have.



Resin bond diamonds. Left to right: sealed and unopened; partially open with center untouched; open with visual sparkles. The green diamond on the right is open and ready to cut, and the red diamond on the left is not.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer A. Faller

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## Grinding effectively

During your initial cut with your grinder, the floor should change color from dark gray to light and dusty gray. Generally,

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# grinding & polishing

troweled concrete will be darker in color.

If the diamonds are open and working correctly, the floor will be scratched evenly and the color of the concrete will be uniform. If the color is uneven, the floor has not been cut uniformly in the places where it looks dark. Time to make an adjustment. Either cross-cut or diagonally cut the floor with that same grit, or go wet, or change the bond or grit level of the diamond. The first cut is the most important and produces the canvas for your final polish, so make sure it is done right.



The IG-320 Gloss Checker from Horiba Ltd.

## Polishing effectively

The best way to tell if a resin diamond is polishing effectively is to clean the floor and take gloss meter readings after each grit level. Each new set of readings should average a higher gloss than the previous step. The actual number is less important than verifying an increase (typically 5 to 10 points) after each higher-grit diamond. If there is no increase, inspect to find out why. If the diamonds are open and not glazed from heat, try another diamond brand at the same grit level.

## Keep equipment in good condition

Ensure that your equipment is tuned up and running with equal pressure on all heads. I recently used a rental machine with heads not even close to level. This direct-drive machine cut heavily on the right and barely kissed the surface on the left, requiring serious overlapping to achieve an even cut. Doing twice the work made a significant dent in profit.

## More tips for diamond effectiveness

- Use a carpenter's pencil to mark X's on low areas and areas with random scratches, then use the next grit of diamonds. If the pencil marks are still visible, then the diamonds are not working well enough to remove the scratches, either.
- Weight distribution of the machine matters. Adjust by adding or removing weights or by counterweighting the handle.
- Changing the number of diamonds or the number of segments per diamond tool also affects the weight distribution. This is the principle of high-heeled shoes: One point of pressure makes a greater impact and cuts more aggressively than a larger contact area. By spreading out the pressure, you can change the scratch pattern and the result.
- The machine speed and operator pace can either assist or hamper the cutting. When your operator says the diamonds



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are not cutting, speed and pace should be adjusted first.

- If your grinder can rotate in both directions, changing directions can open up the diamonds to cut more effectively.
- Clean your diamonds after use, then inspect for even wear and diamond exposure. Diamonds have channels for a reason. When wet, these channels allow slurry to run through, and when dry, they allow dust to be picked up by the vacuum. When these channels are clogged, the diamonds ride on top of the slurry or dust and cut less effectively. Also, cleaning your diamonds allows you to monitor inventory, so you can order before your next job instead of having diamonds shipped overnight.

Concrete polishing is not an easy craft, and unless you get lucky, you'd better get educated. There is so much to know about diamonds, chemicals, instruments and equipment, not to mention actually running the business. Inspect your diamonds and see the positive impact that just this one item can have on your bottom line.

Until next time, happy polishing! 🛠️

*Jennifer A. Faller has been in the surface preparation industry for the past 15 years as a decorative concrete contractor, technical consultant and owner of a distribution company. Currently, she is business development manager for Vexcon Chemicals and lead trainer for the Certi-Shine brand of polished concrete materials. Contact her at [jfaller@vexcon.com](mailto:jfaller@vexcon.com).*

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# grinding & polishing

## PRODUCT NEWS

### Repair treatment from Vexcon

Vexcon Fusion from Vexcon Chemicals is an advanced modified-silicate concrete repair treatment for polished concrete floors.

The technology in Vexcon Fusion makes large and small surface imperfections such as crazing, pinholes, pop-outs and divots blend into the concrete. While other types

of repair materials can become brittle and discolor the surface, leaving it blotchy-looking, Fusion repairs and blends into the existing color of the concrete, yielding a consistent, natural-looking glossy floor. It is compatible with all polishing systems and silicate densification treatments.

[www.vexcon.com](http://www.vexcon.com)

### Planetary polisher from CS Unitec

The DS 3011 planetary polisher from CS Unitec Inc. produces a flat, swirl-free finish on countertops, floors, walls and steps. It will grind, hone, polish and clean concrete, terrazzo and other surfaces, using coated abrasives, diamond polishing systems and lightweight diamond wheels. The system operates wet by default and dry with an optional dust cowl.



This is a true planetary-driven tool. The 12-inch platform turns at a lower rate (150 to 450 rpm) than that of the three 5-inch platens (750 to 2,200 rpm). This combination of speeds is optimal for polishing, producing a perfect finish five times faster than a single-head polisher does. A center coolant feed, precision bearings and sturdy construction make this the ultimate tool for perfect finishes and superior polish.

[www.csunitec.com](http://www.csunitec.com)

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### Allen introduces edging rider

The new Allen MP 235 Edger is a complete redesign of the MP 225 Edging Mechanical Drive Riding Trowel. This unique riding trowel has rotating guard rings, which allows the operator to run along edges of walls and around columns and pipes while achieving a hard-troweled clean finish. It allows the operator to

edge within 5/16-inch of the edge of a wall, eliminating the need to hand-finish those areas.

The MP 235 Edger features similar specifications as the MP 215 Riding Trowel, along with a stretched frame for improved productivity and operator comfort. A higher-horsepower gasoline engine and heavy-duty drive train are packaged in an easy-to-service frame. The MP 235 Edger is also equipped with a Torque Converter Clutch that gives the operator full variable speed control of the rotors.

[www.alleneng.com](http://www.alleneng.com)

### GG offers dye for polishers

GG Innovative Products Inc. has introduced a dye specifically formulated for use in the polishing industry.

ENDURable Concrete Dye is unique because it comes in liquid form instead of the typical powder. This allows the contractor to mix up the dye and immediately go to work, as there is no wait time for the dye to go into solution. This dye is compatible with water or acetone.

[www.gginnovativeproducts.com](http://www.gginnovativeproducts.com)



### General Equipment Co. expands Diam-A-Tach diamond segment line

General Equipment Co. offers the new SG24-2300 series as an extension to its line of Diam-A-Tach diamond-segment grinding systems. Designed for a multitude of surface grinding applications, the new attachments feature the largest rectangular diamond segments in their class.

The SG24-2300 attachments install easily to popular models of low-speed surface grinders. The 30- to 40-grit diamond segments feature the Omnatrix single-matrix formulation, which gives them a wider variety of uses. Popular applications include fresh concrete, high-tensile epoxies, thin-film floor coverings

and fully cured concrete. The segments can be operated wet or dry. Other standard items include directional markings, which aid in proper installation, and extra-thick segments.

In addition to the SG24-2300 Diam-A-Tach series, General Equipment offers the SG24-2100 series, which comes with round segment pins rather than rectangular segments.

[\(800\) 533-0524](tel:8005330524)

[www.generalequip.com](http://www.generalequip.com)

### Polishing assembly from US Saws

US Saws 7-inch Polishing Assembly is ideal for polishing concrete and stone.

The system includes a 10-amp electric grinder, dust shroud, eight feet of hose and a backing pad. This assembly uses full 7-inch pads and has a range of 700 to 2,000 rpm.

The unit's shroud is made of durable, nonmarking polyurethane and enables the operator to polish or grind right up to the edge of a vertical surface. The unit may be connected to a variety of dust collection systems for dust containment.

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## PROJECT PROFILE

# Westminster City Center Park Westminster, Colo.

by *Natasha Chilingirian*

In 2007, the city of Westminster, Colo., a suburb located northwest of Denver, began initial planning for a new park that would sit on 9 1/2 acres of open land across from its city hall. City planners sought to build an inviting community gathering spot where children could play and families could stroll, take in art and view live performances. For inspiration, Westminster, Colo., city planners looked to their sister city, Westminster, England, a central borough of London.

Home to British landmarks such as Big Ben and Westminster Abbey, the Westminster across the pond is also home to the Kensington Gardens, which is the original setting of the Peter Pan fable and holds a bronze statue of “the boy who wouldn’t grow up.”

Westminster City Center Park, which opened to the Colorado public in 2010, incorporates an obelisk similar in shape to the Big Ben, a Neverland-themed playground, the street grid of Westminster, England, and a blue concrete path with geyser-like water features that represents the Thames River.

“We wanted to create a park across from our city hall,” says Kathy Piper, a landscape architect with the city of Westminster. “Westminster, England is our sister city, so we actually made a replica of the city.”

### Stylized London

Decorative concrete installed by Denver-based concrete construction company Colorado Hardscapes was among many materials planners integrated into the park’s design.

Headed up by concrete and water feature consultant Keith Craig and rock and water feature superintendent Jerrod Buys, the Colorado Hardscapes team created the street grid, which includes roads and



Children can crawl through this shotcrete log, created by Colorado Hardscapes at Westminster City Center Park.

lettering, in the park’s center plaza using Colorado Hardscapes’ Sandscape Texture finish. “The Sandscape Texture finish is a concrete finish where we reveal the sand, creating a warm, uniform textured finish,” Craig says. Custom stains made by Colorado Hardscapes colored the grid.

Running through the center of the park, between a fountain with lion heads and a feature known as the “bubbling boulders,” is the virtual Thames River — blue concrete that resembles a stream of water. Colorado Hardscapes installed the faux river using Lithocrete, a patented concrete paving process in which materials such as marble and glass are embedded in a concrete matrix. (In this case, workers hand-seeded blue glass into the concrete matrix.)

Workers applied a custom-blended blue

stain to finish the Lithocrete surface.

The team used Sandscape to finish

### Project at a Glance

**Client:** City of Westminster, Colo.

**Decorative Concrete Contractor:** Colorado Hardscapes, Denver, Colo.

**Architect/Designer:** Architerra Group, Littleton, Colo.

**General Contractors:** Arrow-J Landscape & Design Inc., Denver, and city of Westminster, Colo.

**Project Specs:** 9 1/2-acre park across the street from Westminster’s city hall featuring textured and stained concrete surfaces, a lion-head fountain, “bubbling boulders” and custom-made concrete playground structures.

**Timeline:** One year

**Materials Used:** Sandscape Texture concrete finish (developed by Colorado Hardscapes), Lithocrete



The plaza at the Westminster City Center Park, which Colorado Hardscapes surfaced using Lithocrete and Sandscape Texture, includes an obelisk similar in shape to the Big Ben clock tower in London.

surfaces around the street grid, around the Thames River path and at park entrances.

For the Neverland theme play area, Colorado Hardscapes crafted lifelike structures using glass-fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) and shotcrete. The “Neverpeak Mountain” is a climbing structure that features a built-in slide and shade structure, which Colorado Hardscapes workers constructed by casting GFRC panels in their shop and taking them on-site for assembly. “Neverwood,” a life-size climbing log and tree stump, were made on-site using shotcrete.

Colorado Hardscapes created a realistic look of bark on the shotcrete tree stump and log by imprinting the shotcrete with some of the company’s custom-made textures. “We have amazingly skilled employees who

have an eye for this type of work and years of experience,” Craig notes. “When you are trying to create a natural look, you have to understand how it would look in nature and how people expect it to look in nature, and those two are not always the same.”

The bubbling boulders, a group of rocks that sit in and around a pool of water at one end of the Thames River path, were also constructed using GFRC, and Colorado Hardscapes custom-built molds to create the GFRC lion heads for the fountain.

Colorado Hardscapes became involved with the project when architects from Architerra Group — the Littleton, Colo.-based firm hired to design the entire park — enlisted the company’s assistance with the project’s decorative surface finishes. “Architerra Group came to us with

questions about the concrete finishes, and that progressed into having us look into other aspects of the project,” Craig says.

The decorative concrete design process began with the approval of color and texture samples for the park’s plaza and other decorative surfaces. Then, Colorado Hardscapes built a scale-model maquette of the Neverpeak Mountain climbing structure and Neverwood’s log and tree stump. (Architerra Group had already included these elements in its plans, but only identified their locations — no details of what they would look like.) Architerra Group then turned the project over to Piper and her team of city of Westminster designers, who approved all final details.

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## Nature and play

Colorado Hardscapes artist Philip di Giacomo played a large role in the design of the play structures, and Craig says di Giacomo's primary concern was ensuring the structures would be conducive to play and effectively encourage interaction between kids and parents.

"As he designed, he really considered the age group of the kids who would be playing on the structures and how their parents would be sitting around and interacting with them," Craig says. "For example, the fallen trees have holes in them so parents can look through and see their kids playing."

Nature also influenced the design of Colorado Hardscapes' play structures. For instance, Neverwood's hollow log is not only textured on the outside to look like bark, but is positioned partially on top of a rock-like feature, similar to how a fallen tree might sit in a forest.

"We really wanted them to look like natural features, not concrete," Craig says. "For instance, we thought, if this tree were to fall naturally, how would it fall and land?"

Piper also notes that the park's rock and tree features turned out very lifelike.

"(The Neverpeak Mountain climbing

feature) really looks like a rock that's been there," she says. "It looks really natural."

With so many construction workers and artists on-site, coordination posed the biggest challenge to Colorado Hardscapes, Craig says. The park encompassed many other small projects, such as a performance amphitheater, various lighting elements, a rubberized play surface with a tricycle track and more Peter Pan-themed playground equipment, such as a pirate's ship play structure and a sandstone crocodile.

Despite the presence of numerous vendors in one space, Craig says his team did their part with few problems, and he notes no specific roadblocks throughout the process.

"For us, it went pretty smooth," he says. "Scheduling is always a challenge, but we worked well with the general contractor out there and made it happen."

Piper says the city was very fortunate to have hired Colorado Hardscapes. "I told



The GFRC "Neverpeak" climbing structure at Westminster City Center Park features a built-in slide.

them what my vision was, and they came up with what we needed."

Craig notes that on the Westminster City Center Park project, each person he came in contact with shared an emotion: Passion.

"It was a blast working with both Architerra Group and with Kathy and her team with the city. Everyone was as excited and intrigued with faux rock work as we are," he says. "It is breath of fresh air when our clients have the same passion as we do about concrete and what you can do with it."

[www.coloradohardscapes.com](http://www.coloradohardscapes.com)

## PRODUCT NEWS

### Mine Mate shotcretes underground

Blastcrete Equipment Co. has introduced the Mine Mate, a machine designed to mix and pump concrete material for underground mine sealing and stabilization, grouting and various other shotcrete applications. It's a convenient solution when ready-mix concrete is not an option.

The Mine Mate utilizes a wet-mix shotcrete process. In contrast to dry shotcrete, the wet shotcrete process minimizes dust emissions and improves visibility, making it much safer, particularly for underground use. Featuring a compact and extremely low-profile configuration, the Mine Mate is designed for operation within a 4-foot ceiling.

The Mine Mate includes Blastcrete's X-10 3-inch,

high-pressure swing tube pump and a high-shear continuous mixer. The unit is capable of mixing and pumping 12 cubic yards per hour and can handle up to 3/8-inch diameter aggregate. Offering the highest piston face pressure in the industry at 2,200 psi, it can pump material in excess of 500 feet, horizontally and vertically.

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# staining & coloring CONCRETE

## TROWEL & ERROR

### Fixes for Common Surface Color Problems

Unfortunately, complaints about how color turns out are an all-too-familiar topic of conversation.

Complaints can involve but are not limited to integrally colored concrete, color-hardened

concrete, stamped and textured concrete and stained concrete. People claim the wrong color, inconsistent color, blotchy color, color that is too light, color that's too dark, and the list goes on and on. When you really think about it, it does make sense. What is the biggest difference that separates decorative concrete from regular concrete? Color!



by Chris Sullivan

I have often found that when a gray sidewalk, patio or driveway is poured, you can have multiple tones of gray, discoloration and blotchiness and no one takes a second glance. Add a small amount of color to the very same pour, and even the smallest color differences have ended up in a courtroom at a cost of thousands of dollars.

So, with the understanding that surface color issues will occur no matter how well a job is planned and or executed, let's look at some popular and successful remedies for correcting these color problems.

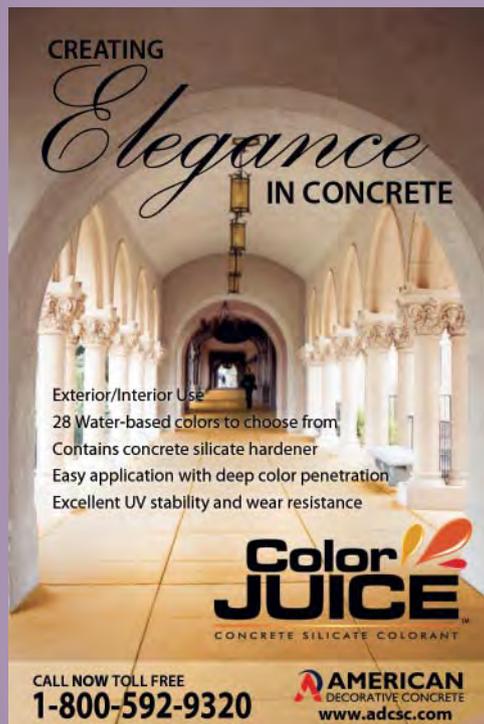
Without fail, the call comes at the worst possible time. "The color is wrong," states the voice on the other end, with the confidence and understanding that color in concrete is a sure thing, just like paint from a can. After the complaint is researched, it

is determined that something, somewhere along the line went haywire. The concrete is structurally sound, but indeed the color is some fashion of wrong. The customer can't or won't live with it, so what are you going to do about it?

STOP! Before we go any further, let me interject. At this time in our little make-believe scenario, salvaging the job and making money or losing money hangs in the balance. If you discussed with your clients in advance (and put in writing) the possibility of color variation and how it can occur due to the natural variations of raw materials found in concrete, you are way ahead of the game. This is called managing expectations, and if you have read any of my previous columns you know I am a huge advocate. If you did not discuss

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these possibilities, experience has shown you are in a bad place and chances are that you are going to end up getting stuck with some or all of the repair bill. No matter how your customer's expectations were managed, stay calm and communicate that this can be fixed — and don't ever say, "I have never seen this before." That statement does not instill confidence in your ability to resolve the issue.

When dealing with surface color issues, the type of repair is going to be determined by a few key factors.

What is the final look you are after? For example, the solid-color look of integrally colored concrete or the natural-stone look of stamped concrete?

How big is the repair — small random spots or a thousand square feet of continuous slab?

What type of performance is expected? No repair is as good as the original. What type of maintenance is acceptable?

The following is an overview of the most common and successful repair products and systems for surface color issues that I have worked with over the last 15 years.

**Translucent penetrating stains:** This family of stains produces a color tone that ranges from a very

## PRODUCT NEWS

### Brickform releases antiquing agent

Antique-It from Brickform, a division of Solomon Colors Inc., is a water-soluble antiquing agent designed to impart a secondary color or highlight over stamped concrete or textured overlays. It is easy to apply, dries quickly and provides a durable color that resembles the look of release powder.

The antiquing agent is available in 40 standard colors and comes in powder form. It will cover 2,000 to 3,000 square feet for every 3 pounds of product, and it can be sealed two to four hours after application.

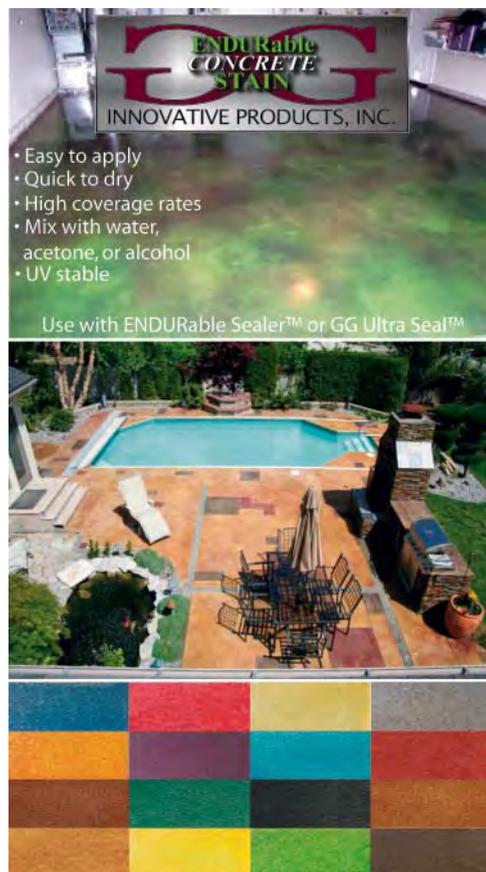
[www.brickform.com](http://www.brickform.com)

### Brickform introduces wax-modified colored coating

Brickform's Color Wax is a water-based, wax-modified, colored concrete coating that is formulated for exterior and interior concrete surfaces. It has excellent adhesion properties and is resistant to ultraviolet light as well as acids, oils, mildew and alkalis.

Color Wax is ideal for both fresh and restored concrete. It can be used over smooth and textured concrete, integrally colored concrete, and concrete treated with color hardener but not a release agent. Color Wax is made to order and is available in all of the standard integral colors offered by Brickform and Solomon Colors Inc., Brickform's parent company. 

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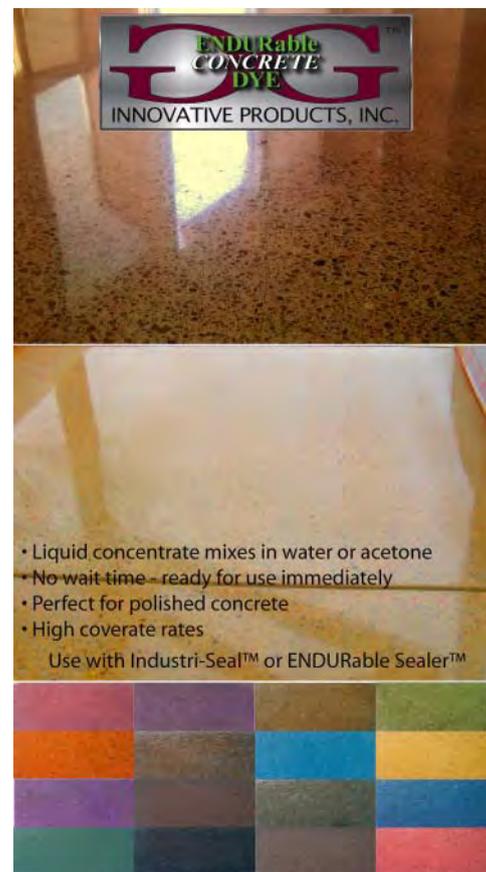
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# staining & coloring CONCRETE

light color wash to semiopaque. These types of stains work best on less severe surface color issues (minor blotchiness, minor discoloration and minor surface contamination) where significant hide of the underlying color is not required. They also work well where some level of marbling or variegation is desired. The most common of these products are acid stains, water- and alcohol-based acrylic stains and dyes. The biggest limitation is their need to penetrate, which means the surface being repaired needs to be free of all sealers and coatings.

**Solid-color penetrating stains:** Unlike their translucent cousins, solid-color stains

provide 100 percent hide and are opaque. They are the desired fix for more severe color issues where full coverage and hide is required. The most common of these problems include discoloration from curing blankets, faded or severely washed-out color, and batch-to-batch color inconsistency. Once again, the biggest limitation is their need to penetrate, which means the surface being repaired needs to be free of all sealers and coatings.

**Tinted or colored sealers:** This method of coloring concrete differs from stains in that the color is contained in a film or membrane. They can range from very

translucent to opaque. Colored sealers are often used for repairs where a sealer already exists, eliminating the ability to use penetrating stains. Depending on the product used, they can be applied almost immediately after the concrete is placed and tend to have a lower price point compared to other repair products.

**Highlighting tints and washes:** These products are used specifically for repair of stamped or textured concrete. They all work on the same principle. A nonreactive colorant is suspended in a liquid carrier — most often water. When applied to textured or stamped concrete, the “colored

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water” seeks the low areas of the surface, concentrating color in those areas. The carrier (water) evaporates, leaving the color behind. These color washes have no bond to the concrete and require a sealer to lock them into place. Their biggest limitation is lack of depth of color. They are designed to change or further accent highlights, not change the overall color of the concrete. Overapplication can result in excess color acting as a bond breaker when the sealer is applied.

**Toppings:** The nuclear option when a stain or colored sealer will not work is a topping. When the color or surface are so bad that a new concrete surface is required, microtoppings are the option of last resort. These thin polymer-modified coatings are typically used when the concrete is damaged or contaminated to a point where stains or colored sealers will not work. Graffiti, construction paint, oil and grease are the most common of these contaminants. The biggest limitation would be the amount of preparation required prior to application, as the surface needs to have a certain profile for proper adhesion. They also tend to be expensive when compared to the other options.

It’s never good when problems occur, but armed with these repair options, you now have the ability to solve the problem, satisfy the customer and save your paycheck. 🛠️

Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has presented seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Contact him at [trowelanderror@protradedepub.com](mailto:trowelanderror@protradedepub.com).

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# staining & coloring CONCRETE

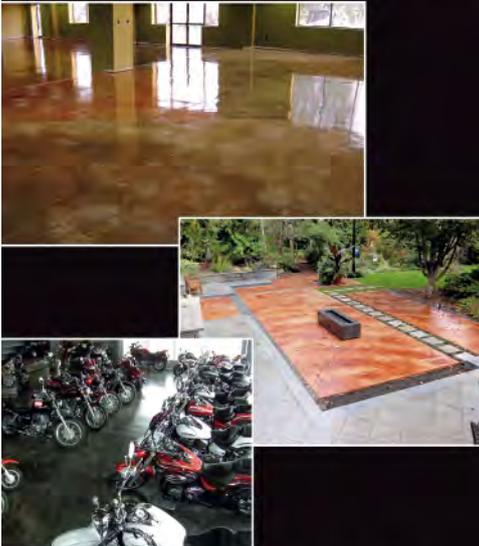
## Use Underpainting Principles to Make Your Colors Shine

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

How is a puddle of water like a colored concrete slab?

“The color (of a puddle) is dependent on what is underneath it, suspended in it or reflected upon it,” says Steven Ochs, professor of art at Southern Arkansas

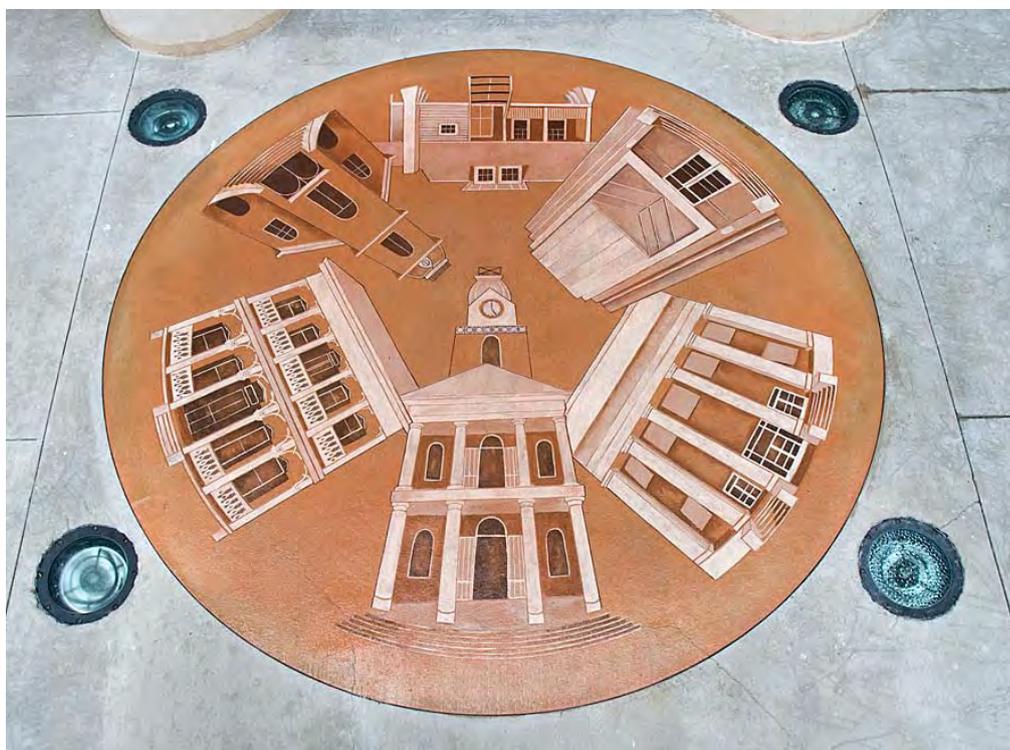
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Photos courtesy of Steven Ochs

This entire design was painted in black and white. Then, gold and copper metallics were rolled over the top.

University and owner of Arkansas-based Public Art Walks. The same holds true to concrete when it's colored with transparent dyes and stains, he says.

A concrete slab's base color largely determines the lightness and intensity of everything that follows. So, rather than starting with an all-gray substrate, you might try something different. “If you really want colors to be bold and bright, consider a lighter mix — or use the 14th-century Italian technique of ‘underpainting,’” Ochs says. “Just stain it white to start with. Then, the light will pass through the color and will illuminate upward through the layers of pigment and sealer to provide more intensity.”

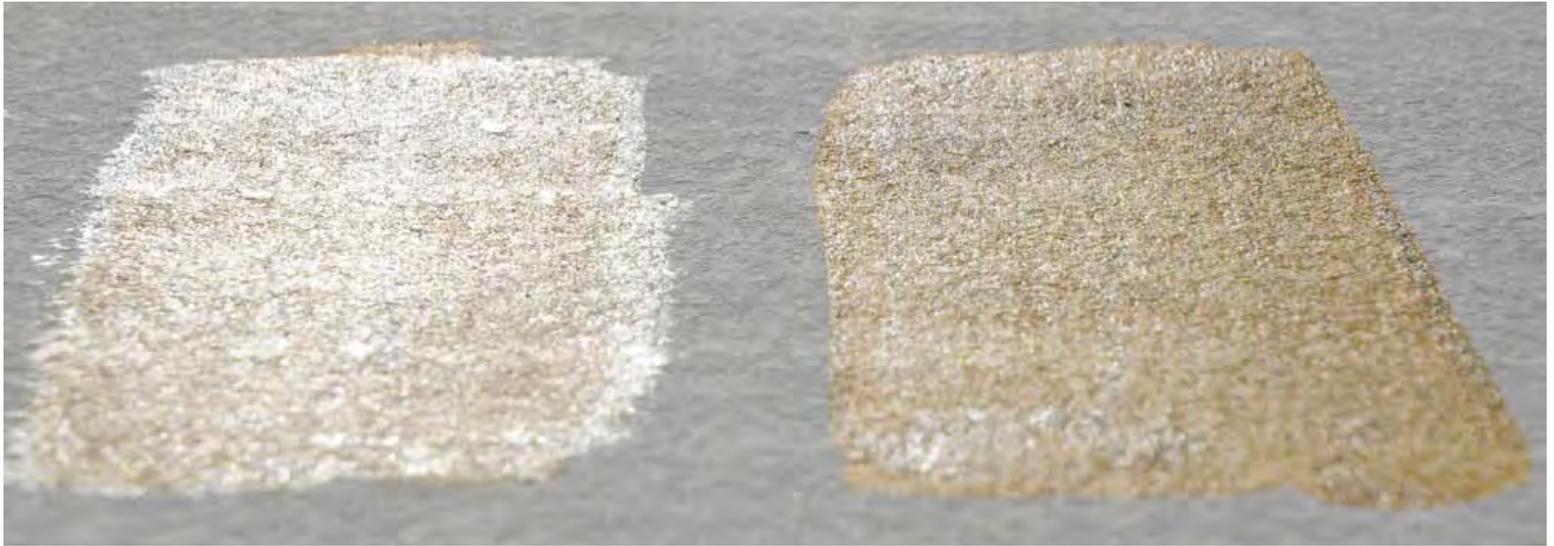
The most practical reason Ochs can think of for decorative concrete contractors to try an underpainting technique is cost

savings. “Some contractors have been using a white portland in order to get brighter colors once they stain,” he says. “They could use a standard mix, then stain it lighter before adding the final colors.”

The origin of underpainting dates back to 1,500 B.C. when Minoan artisans in Crete applied layers of plaster as a foundation for their wall paintings or murals. Eventually called fresco, this technique usually involved painting on moist plaster but not always.

In the years that followed, frescos spread to Egypt and beyond. “Frescoes could be found in ancient palaces, temples and even pyramids,” says Ralph Larmann, associate professor of art at the University of Evansville in Indiana.

The technique continued to evolve during the Renaissance, where artists



The difference between applying pigments and metallics in separate layers and mixing them together before application is noticeable here. On the left side, a yellow ochre stain was used first, then metallic gold was layered over the top. On the right, the yellow ochre and gold were mixed together and applied as one layer.

created paintings in a series of layers, with each layer a different color. In the end, some of each layer would show through, creating a depth to the painting that a single layer of color couldn't achieve.

The most popular type of underpainting today is a grisaille, a monochromatic picture or geometric design that often resembles a black-and-white photograph and usually involves shades of gray. "This involves a methodical process where the artist thinks about darks and lights first," Larmann says. "The color would come later."

One of the main reasons an artist would use this process is to create a guide for the future layers of the painting, he says. "By using an underpainting technique, you're less likely to have to fix a mistake because you would have already worked out the problem. If you know you have multiple layers, you can experiment a bit and make the design better. Even Michelangelo didn't get everything perfect the first time through."

Ochs, who has painted a number of images on concrete, says he uses underpainting principles for more than just getting colors to pop. If the finished product calls for a metallic, pearlescent or other specialty paint, he works on the initial value scheme and gets everything looking great in blacks, whites and grays before applying the topcoat.

"You don't want to muddy up the specialty paints by adding color to them," he says. "They need to stay pure." When you apply them over a black and white design, "the surface color is crisp and clean, and you still have all the details and the 3-D effects of the shading of the image underneath. And the surface will shine."

For the more adventurous and artistically inclined, underpainting also can include color on color. "A lot of contemporary artists like to use a bright color underpainting and layer lighter or contrasting colors over it, allowing bits and pieces of the underpainting to come through," Larmann says, describing a process called "scumbling."

"This process could definitely be applied to concrete work with great results," especially on rough or textured surfaces, he says. 📱

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More than 20 different colors were used to differentiate the stones in the cobblestone fan, located at the Memphis Botanic Garden in Memphis, Tenn.  
Photos courtesy of Baltz & Sons Concrete Services

# stamping & texturing CONCRETE

## PROJECT PROFILE

# Memphis Botanic Garden Memphis, Tenn.

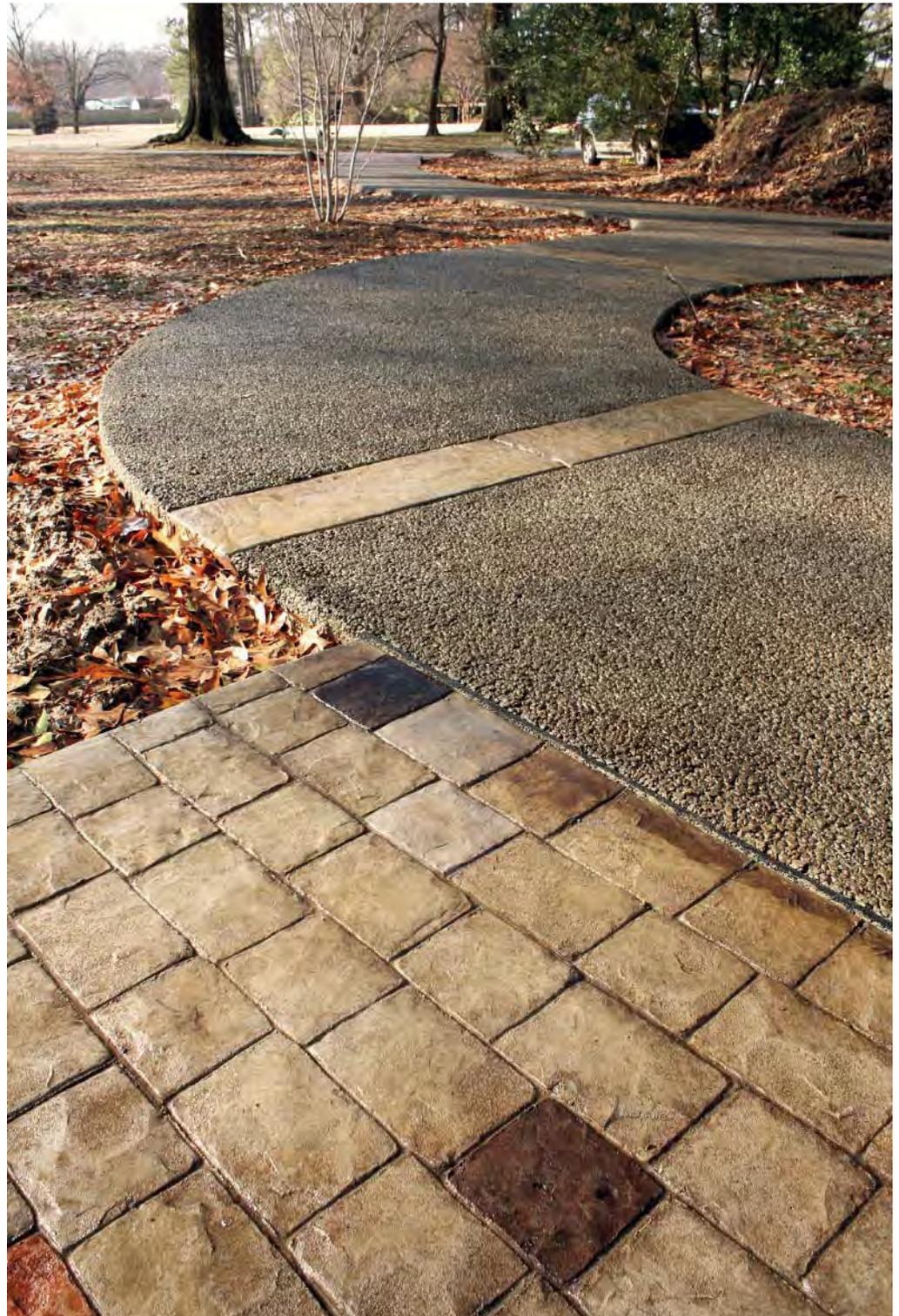
by David Searls

The project originally given Kevin Baltz, president of Memphis, Tenn., company Baltz & Sons Concrete Services, was a lot simpler than the one he ended up with. “I was first approached to do some hardscape and subbase for a network of brick or paver stone terraces,” he recalls. “The connecting walkways were going to be asphalt.” He can’t hide the disdain in his voice when he makes that last statement.

The project was a new herb garden, a pocket of about three-quarters of an acre graciously carved into the 96-acre Memphis Botanic Garden. The undertaking, which began to take shape late in 2010, was the latest of the Botanic Garden’s 23 specialty gardens located in the heart of the city and predicted to become the largest herb garden in the South.

“I convinced them that they could save money and flip the asphalt to pervious concrete,” he says. “I told them, ‘If you’re going to go to the trouble of pouring concrete anyway, you might as well make it work harder.’”

Beside the switch to pervious, Baltz pitched the idea of converting brick and stone construction plans to stamped concrete, which would have the same look



### Project at a Glance

**Client:** Memphis Botanic Garden, Memphis, Tenn. (The property is owned by the city of Memphis.)

**Decorative Concrete Contractor:** Kevin Baltz, Baltz & Sons Concrete Services, Memphis, Tenn.

**Project Manager:** Kevin Baltz

**Project Specs:** Design multiple terraces, footbridge and walking path through new herb garden.

**Materials Used:** Proline Concrete Color System from Proline Concrete Tools, Kemico Decorative & Industrial Coatings, Contractor Source Tru Impressions Decorative Concrete Stamps, Buckeye UltraFiber 500 concrete reinforcement cellulose from Buckeye Technologies

but offer better ADA compliance. “Good photos were important. I had to show them that I knew what I was doing, and I had a nice portfolio. That really helped.”

So did a little numbers crunching. Baltz demonstrated with a calculator how he could handle the entire job — walkways, a footbridge over a slight natural swale, and multiple terraces — for about 60 percent of the hardscape budget set aside for the entire job. There’d be plenty of room in the budget to convert that dreaded asphalt walkway to pervious concrete.

### Methodic madness

The job was a decorative concrete contractor’s dream. For this Baltz credits Jim Duncan, executive director of the Memphis Botanic Garden. “He came to trust me and to embrace new materials. I was pretty much given autonomy on this. He just stipulated that they didn’t want anything garish, and that’s about it.”

Baltz says he was able to achieve “eight different looks with one material.”

That was the advantage of stamped concrete. In addition to the pervious



concrete, he was able to mimic the appearance of

London cobblestone,

Arizona flagstone, a European fan-design cobblestone, Southwest slate, fractured granite and timber — all at a fraction of the cost of the actual materials. (He also incorporated the Presidential Slate texture from Contractor Source’s Tru Impressions line into the design.)

One of Baltz’s concrete stamping sources was the Proline Concrete Color System from Proline Concrete Tools. He calls the

Arizona Flagstone stamp from Proline “one of the most realistic stamps I’ve ever seen.”

His Boardwalk Timber texture came from Tru Impressions. “They’re all beautiful stamps that perfectly fit our needs,” Baltz says. “I’ve seen people standing on the boardwalk and swearing it’s timber.”

The two cobblestone terraces required a dedication to what Baltz refers to as “methodic madness. It was like painting a 3,600-square-foot canvas.” The challenge was to create a mosaic of natural grays and earth tones subtly enhanced by 22 muted colors. “We started by undercoating each ‘stone’ beige, and then we individually went

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# stamping & texturing CONCRETE

over each with a different topcoat. It took a lot of time and patience.”

Baltz’s most detailed work was in the compass rose design stamped into the presidential slate terrace. After pouring the textured mix, he used a GPS to align himself directionally and pressed in wrought iron scrollwork for ornamentation. He used rubber mat templates for directional letters and coated the surface



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with five or six different acid stains. He also used custom acrylic stains with powdered metallics and a sealer infused with metallics for a glittery finish.

He credits the use of Buckeye UltraFiber 500 as a secondary reinforcement in the concrete for the visual appeal of his terraces and walkways. In addition to reducing shrink cracks, the cellulose supplement “pulled in the pigment. It takes colors in so well that it made a dramatic aesthetic difference,” he says.

#### Pervious was the greener choice

The connecting tissue between all of these various terraces is the pervious concrete walkway. The use of this material was critical since the paths would thread through tall old-growth trees. Pervious concrete was the greener choice, by far, over asphalt, which would have blocked proper drainage to the root system below. When water can’t get to roots, the roots go in search of water, buckling hard surfaces in the process.

That need for proper drainage also affected the stain choice. Baltz’s normal course of action on a walkway would have been to use an acid stain with a high-solid sealer, but that would have blocked water run-through. So he used a low-viscosity water-based stain from Tru Impressions that had such a high concentration of pigment that he didn’t have to use a sealer at all.

The pervious concrete solved another critical concern regarding the choice it replaced. Asphalt contains petroleum. “It’s a toxin in a garden area. Under the heat and humidity conditions of a city like Memphis, asphalt melts and leaks oil.”

Furthermore, the pervious concrete provided a better-gripping surface, making it ADA-compliant and an aid to canes, walkers and wheelchairs.

**"I've seen people standing on the boardwalk and swearing it's timber."**

— Kevin Baltz, Baltz & Sons Concrete Services



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What could be more natural for an herb garden walkway than the inclusion of herbs? It was the client's idea to include the relevant thematic visual cue, so Baltz

chose to run a periodic crossbands, stamped with actual herbs, across the width of the pervious concrete walkway.

"We knew that we were going to need to imprint herbs in the wet concrete long before we began to work, so we started collecting trimmings before winter," he says. "We freeze-dried them to preserve them, but it also made the plants more rigid and

easier to imprint with."

It was a painstaking job to stamp real herbs into his creation, but well worth it.

The Memphis Botanic Garden's Herb Garden is a welcoming patch of serenity that actually came in under budget — an added attraction in these challenging times. 📱

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## PRODUCT NEWS

### Pacific Concrete Images creates, adds to stamp lines

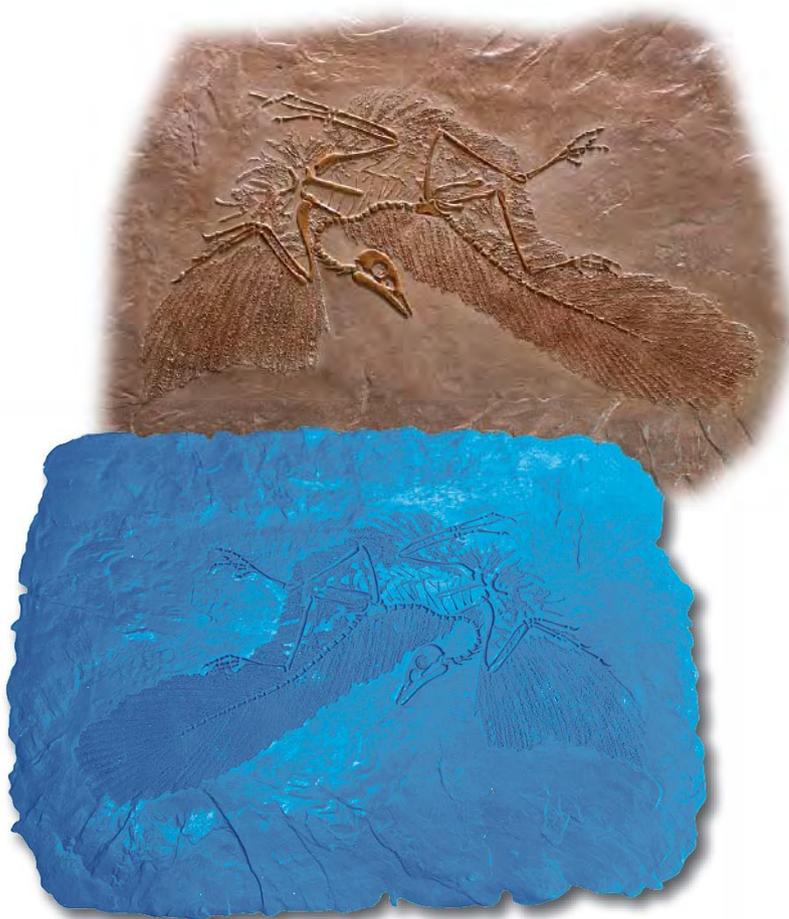
Pacific Concrete Images has launched a new series of animal tracks and added to its fossil stamp collection and border tool collection.

The new animal tracks collection is comprised of 43 different footprints from animals such as coyotes, grizzly bears, striped skunks, prairie dogs, armadillos, common zebras and African elephants. The pancake-style polyurethane stamps can be positioned to create a variety of gait patterns, such as walking, running or trotting.

Added to the border tool collection are stamps of turtles, butterflies, garden roses, grapevines, koi fish, lilies, sport fish and sunflowers. The stamps range from 43 inches to 48 inches long, depending on the pattern.

Added to the fossil stamp collection are stamps of Archaeopteryx, Phareodus, Diplomystus dentatus, Shunosaurus, a turtle, a sea floor and trilobites. The addition brings the total number of fossil stamps to 12.

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### Engrave-A-Crete tools for borders in one set

Engrave-A-Crete Inc. has released its newest business opportunity, the Border Package. With this job-ready set, decorative concrete engravers can frame interior decorative concrete floors with sophisticated border designs or add function and flair to patio and walkway renovations.

Contents include three decorative concrete engravers — the Mongoose 411, the Barracuda and the Wasp. Also included are 14 of Engrave-A-Crete's most popular border templates and two corner templates.

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### Slam-dunk package from Engrave-A-Crete

Engrave-A-Crete has announced a new business package, the Basketball Court Creator Kit. The kit features Mongoose and KaleidoCrete Wasp concrete engravers, along with an impressive list of additional components that make it possible to permanently engrave a regulation-size basketball court layout into concrete.

The Basketball Court Creator Kit is ideal for a start-up business or as an add-on to an established decorative concrete business. Training videos, detailed instruction sheets and worksheets, and ongoing tech support from Engrave-A-Crete make this affordable business package suitable for all levels of experience, from the novice to the highly accomplished. 🛠️

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### Rztore from Concrete Earth LLC

Across the country stamped concrete jobs are beginning to show wear. To help restore the worn surfaces, Concrete Earth LLC has developed a three-step system to re-color, accent and seal previously installed jobs. Rztore (pronounced restore) is a fast, efficient system that revives old stamped concrete and return it to foot traffic in as little as eight hours.

Previously when contractors needed to repair a stamp job, it was costly and time-consuming to strip the surface of the color and sealants. Rztore is able to work around remnants of product, saving time and reducing client costs.



“Our system is not affected by partially remaining sealers or color,” says Patrick Soler, CEO of Concrete Earth. “It’s designed to work around those issues.”

Once the surface is cleaned, the first step is to apply Rztore’s color base, which is available in 15 shades of earth tones. Although Rztore was initially developed to enhance the existing color, it can also be used to completely change the color of the concrete.

“If the original color is no longer desirable, Rztore can completely change the color base,” Soler says. “It’s been used to go from a pewter gray to a dark walnut before.”

He also noted that if the color is still in good shape, which is often the case with integral color, the first step in the system can be eliminated.

Rztore’s second step is Accent Antiquing. Not only does it create the popular antique or mottled look, but it also provides additional color to compliment the new or original hues. Available in eight accent shades, multiple colors of Accent



Photos courtesy of Concrete Earth LLC

Antiquing can be used on the same project to create unique looks.

“Your ability to create different tones is only limited by your imagination and artistic ability,” Soler says.

Rztore’s final component is Surface Seal, which is available in a matte or glossy finish. It is formulated with a hard acrylic resin for maximum protection.

“When you’re done, you’ve got a brand new concrete look either by reestablishing the original colors or creating new ones,” Soler says. “Once the surface is restored, we recommend the surface be kept clean and the sealer be reapplied as needed.”

Rztore contains no VOCs and can contribute to LEED points. Contractors should use acetone-resistant sprayers when applying.

“We worked very hard making the system as green as we could,” Soler says. “Unfortunately there was no way to make it waterborne and still perform like we wanted.”

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# CONCRETE walls:

## PROJECT PROFILE

# Carved Walls at Hard Rock Developments Inc. Calgary, Alberta, Canada

by Chris Mayo

When Brian Graham opened Hard Rock Developments Inc. in Calgary in 2000, he wanted the concrete tool and supply shop to be different from your standard concrete store. “My Dad was a concrete contractor, so when I was growing up, I went with him to concrete supply stores pretty often,” he says. “They always had a similar kind of look and feel — dusty, cluttered, not really appealing to anyone, including a concrete contractor.”

Graham pictured a place where decorative concrete contractors would be comfortable sending their potential customers to see what a product or technique really looked like. “I wanted a store where people could see and touch and feel what a concrete countertop is, for instance,” he says. “A setting where they can see what stained and polished concrete looks like, or where they can visualize a stamped concrete patio in their backyard.”

Now, even the walls at Hard Rock fulfill this purpose — because about half a year ago, Graham had a Calgary contractor install carved vertical concrete in the store.

The artisan he chose was Jason Dyck, owner of Jadee Contracting Ltd. Dyck had been focused on foundation work when



Photos courtesy of Jaydee Contracting Ltd.

the economy slowed down. To diversify, Dyck took some training classes at Hard Rock Developments with the idea of adding overlay work to his repertoire.

While the classes did, in fact, help him expand his business, he also discovered an appetite for learning more about decorative concrete. He started exploring. When he found a site called VerticalArtisans.com, he was hooked.

“I took a few more classes, bought some additional tools, and started doing some vertical work,” says Dyck. “I was in Brian’s store one day and we got to talking. He had no idea that I was doing decorative vertical work. I showed him some pictures of a chimney I had done and I guess he was impressed. A few weeks later he asked me if I’d be interested in building some walls in the store to showcase my work.”

“The deal we agreed on was that Jason

would do the work and I would supply the materials,” says Graham. “In return, I recommend him to anyone who sees the walls and wants to know more about them.”

### The art of the wall

Dyck ultimately put up six of the wall installations, with varied patterns and features. One he made to resemble a rock wall, another to resemble brick, and the



### Project at a Glance

**Client:** Brian Graham, Owner, Hard Rock Developments Inc. Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**Contractor:** Jason Dyck, Owner, Jadee Contracting Ltd. Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**Project Description:** Build several carved walls in a concrete construction supply store as a means to illustrate to customers the potential in decorative work.

**Challenge:** Complete the work while minimizing the impact on normal store business.

**Products Used:** Con-Force mix (base/scratch coat), SureCrete Wall Stamp Bag Mix (carve/finish coat), Waltools Tru-Tex texture rollers, SureCrete Eco-Stains

# CONCRETE walls:



others a combination of rock, brick and plaster. All of them evoke old-style traditional masonry.

On the walls in which he incorporated the plaster look he created an appearance of deteriorating plaster, pieces of which have fallen off, exposing brick or stone underneath.

The base material was the same for all six walls: CodeMix, an Alberta-made material obtained from Target Products Ltd. Dyck describes it as “a specially designed base coat that incorporates shrinkage compensators and fibers with natural and manufactured sand.” Often used as a base coat for stucco, the mix dries slower, which reduces cracking and shrinking, he says.

Dyck applied the mix about 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch thick. He used metal lath against drywall walls but not on block walls. The carve coat came from SureCrete.

To do the stone pattern, Dyck started by marking lines in fairly wet material to outline the shape of each stone. “If I don’t like any of the lines, or a section of the pattern, I just trowel it smooth and try again,” he explains. “The texture is done with texture rollers —



usually I’ll set down one texture, and then add additional textures on top for more depth. When the material sets up a bit more, I dig out the lines of the stones a little deeper.”

He got the brick pattern by using a flatwork brick stamp, then detailing. “When the material sets up enough, I dig out the faux mortar joints with a pointing trowel. I come back later and use a grout bag to fill in the mortar joints,” Dyck says.

The colors on the walls were achieved with SureCrete’s water-based Eco-Stains. Dyck diluted stains to varying degrees to achieve the subtle differences in color seen in the stone and brick.

“For the color, I usually mix up a few base colors which I dilute with varying amounts of white color. I spray each textured rock or brick and then start adding colors on top to provide depth and contrast of colors. Overspray tends to add depth to the work rather than mess it up. Then I add additional touches with a stipple brush and sponges. Of course you have to pay attention to what you’re doing, and it’s important to step back once in a while for a different perspective, but it’s really a pretty straightforward process.”

Dyck agrees that there is an artistic aspect to coloring the patterns of stone or brick to make them look realistic, but he doesn’t consider himself a particularly artsy person. “I’ve found that almost everything involved with decorative vertical work is pretty forgiving,” he says.

Most concrete contractors or masons already have the basic tools needed for vertical work, according to Dyck. Add just a few specialty tools and you’re ready to go. He says he got pretty much every additional tool he needed by buying a vertical contractor’s tool kit from Waltools.

Graham seems pleased with the results. “Our goal is to present customers with full-sized visualizations of the scope of possibilities in decorative work,” he says. “In this case, it was wall stamping. It’s really a win-win. I can show a customer what a stamped wall looks like instead of handing them a brochure with pretty pictures, and Jason is displaying his work without absorbing the expense of building and maintaining a showroom of his own.”

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