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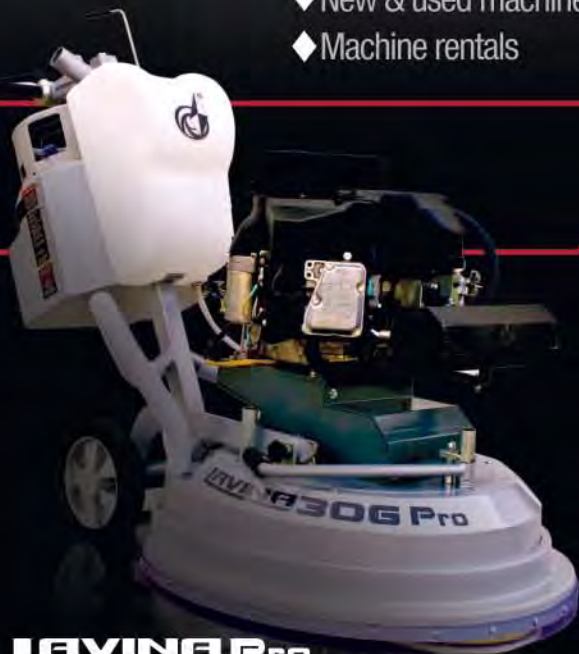
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MEMBER OF



publisher's LETTER

Dear Readers,

Sunday morning before Columbus Day, the OAR Masters rowing team participated in a “head race” at Dexter Lake here in Oregon. A head race is a long-distance row compared to sprint races that are normally held in the spring. I’m proud to report that our Men’s (8+) completed a 5,800-meter course in 21:52. I was in the No. 5 seat.



Rowing for nearly 22 minutes would be grueling if it were not for a coxswain who knows how to keep all eight rowers focused and working consistently throughout the race. Before the event that morning I was telling Sheri (my wife) that it was 24 years ago when I last participated in a collegiate head race and I didn’t recall it being a pleasant time at all. Yesterday’s race was a fresh reminder, but the victory was ever so sweet.

Back in the office today our monthly board meeting felt similar in some ways. It’s tiring to push hard every day.

Fortunately, for those of us who are in the business of decorative concrete, the 2012 Concrete Decor Show in San Antonio is right around the corner. This is the place where we can assess where we’ve been, where we can recharge our batteries with enjoyable networking activities and outstanding business and technical education, and where we can set our course for the year ahead. In challenging times, this is an essential retreat for the industry.

In 2012 our new Green Matters Conference will focus on providing you with intelligent ways to promote your business in an age of sustainability. An exciting new Demonstration Pavilion will put into action the best and most innovative products, tools and equipment, while numerous hands-on workshops will transform the SAY Si youth arts facility in San Antonio. And if that were not enough, a complete lineup of seminars, panel discussions and industry keynotes will bookend exhibit hall hours and provide companies with fresh new perspectives on ways to grow personally and professionally.

If, by chance, you’re feeling a bit fatigued or discouraged by foreseeable business opportunities, look no further than the pages of this current edition of *Concrete Decor* for inspiration. Consider also the enormous progress the decorative concrete industry has made in the past 10 years. Granted, there are many good soldiers who have fallen in this economic battle, but we are the country in which this industry was established and we are the people who will see it to a successful future both at home and abroad.

Today there are more companies than ever asking us how big this industry has become. To them I simply respond by saying — how big would you like it to be? We are an industry of doers and I have yet to come across a person or a nation that wants to stand in the way of that kind of person.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher

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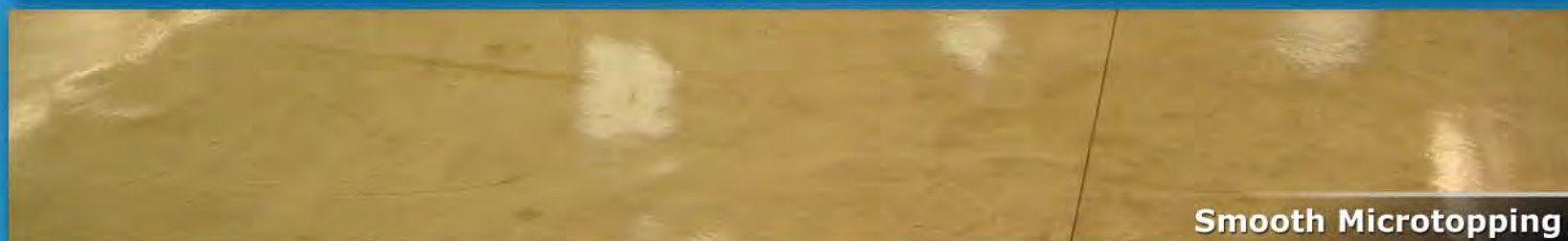
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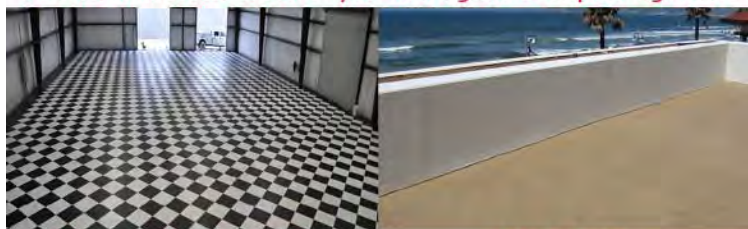


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Brian Anderson has held nearly every job possible at Concrete Coatings Inc., from installing overlays to his current position, director of operations. Contact him at brian@concretecoatingsinc.com. See Brian's article on page 31.



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Brian Graham is president of Hard Rock Developments Inc., based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He can be reached at hdrock@telusplanet.net. See Brian's article on page 10.



Michael Miller is managing principal of the concretist, a California-based association of artists, craftspeople and others producing sensory-concrete art and architecture. He can be contacted at miller@theconcretist.com. See Michael's column, "the concretist," on page 22.



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Talk back! Weigh in online at ConcreteDecor.net

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Standard proposed for lightweight aggregates and internal curing

ASTM International C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates is developing standard ASTM WK34078, Specification for Lightweight Aggregate for Internal Curing of Concrete. The proposed standard is under the jurisdiction of Subcommittee C09.21 on Lightweight Aggregates and Concrete.

 www.astm.org

New shotcrete educational tool

The American Shotcrete Association has released Shotcrete Specifiers Education Tool, Version 2, which is designed to provide specifiers with a better understanding of the shotcrete process. Topics addressed include definitions, processes, uses, the history of shotcrete, and important components of a shotcrete specification.

Materials include video, PowerPoint presentations and ASA's "Sustainability of Shotcrete" document.


 www.shotcrete.org

Engrave-A-Crete CFO takes on sales

Faron Adamson, CPA, has been appointed sales manager for Engrave-A-Crete. Adamson has served as the company's chief financial officer for the past five years. He will now assume the additional duties of managing national and international sales.

 www.engageacrete.com

Dur-A-Flex names sales and support VP

Dur-A-Flex Inc. has named Patrick J. Meade vice president of sales and technical support. In addition to sales and architectural consulting channels, Meade is responsible for technical service and strategic accounts. 

 www.dur-a-flex.com

event calendar

Free Sealer Workshop

The Concrete Countertop Institute
Nov. 7, Raleigh, N.C.

 www.concretecountertopinstitute.com

1-Day GFRC "Crash Course" in Raleigh, N.C.

The Concrete Countertop Institute
Nov. 8, Raleigh, N.C.

 www.concretecountertopinstitute.com

Water, Light & Fire: Advanced 3-D Concrete

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Nov. 9-11, Raleigh, N.C.

 www.concretecountertopinstitute.com

CSDA Slab Sawing and Drilling 201 Training

Nov. 14-15, Clearwater, Fla.

 www.csda.org

CSDA Estimating Training

Nov. 15-16, Clearwater, Fla.

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CSDA Wall Sawing 201 Training

Nov. 16-17, Clearwater, Fla.

 www.csda.org

CSDA Wire Sawing 201 Training

Nov. 18-19, Clearwater, Fla.

 www.csda.org


CSDA Winter Meetings

Dec. 1-2, Park City, Utah.

 www.csda.org

ASTM International Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates

Dec. 4-7, Tampa, Fla.

 www.astm.org

ASTM International Committee C27 on Precast Concrete Products

Dec. 6-7, Tampa, Fla.

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ASTM International Committee C01 on Cement

Dec. 7-9, Tampa, Fla.

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The Hard Rock Developments store in Calgary, Alberta, showcases decorative concrete finishes on its walls and floors.

Photos courtesy of Brian Graham

A Store That Helps Its Customers Sell, Too

How a Canadian construction supply retailer promotes decorative concrete

by Brian Graham

My father was a concrete contractor, and I remember going into a concrete supply store with him for product when I was younger. I remember how dusty, dirty and disorganized the store was. You could not see what you were buying, as all the products were stored in the back behind two swinging steel-panel doors.

What a cold experience that was.

When I built my store, Hard Rock Developments, in Calgary, I made absolutely certain the store was going to be like a boutique of sorts. Touch, feel, smell while you shop, and even listen to music. In fact, you can even eat popcorn and have a quality cup of coffee.

The store was built solely with two groups in mind — contractors and their customers, usually homeowners. I made absolutely certain the store would help contractors sell their work. I built a place for them to send their respective clients to, a place that shows the potential of decorative concrete products in a real-life, real-time setting.

As a supplier,

we need to support contractors. They need a place to showcase their product. The cost of the infrastructure required for contractors to showcase their product on their own property, in most cases, does not justify them doing it there. As a result, our showroom is their showroom.

Our main focus is samples, proper literature and visual aids to assist in the decision-making process. Our staff is fully trained to help everyone ensure proper application methods are followed.

The store is merchandised with real concrete color samples, and the counters are built with concrete and vertical product. The walls are textured. The floor is stained and cut into tiles. We try to cover as many applications as possible to ensure a healthy real-life experience when you come in. These applications help the contractors and homeowners make decisions. They help buyers visualize these applications in their own homes and contractors bring new concepts and ideas to the job site.





Every year we try to make changes to the store. Last year we removed the point-of-sale counter and built a new one using all the latest technologies. Again, we do this for the sake of contractors and homeowners. It's like running a paint store — you need to have the latest trends in the store.

This was my vision from the start. I wanted a place that portrays comfort, showcases current styles, and has a certain appeal to it that is not expected when you walk into a store in this industry. One comment that I hear, almost every day, is, "Wow, this is not at all what I expected." They were expecting what I experienced with my father.

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I made absolutely certain the store would help contractors sell their work.

for a smooth, efficient relationship between everyone involved, and it enables us and the contractors to put forth a more upscale presentation to end users. We show homeowners that they are dealing with a professional group of people who know the business. This puts potential customers at ease and encourages them to make a sound decision with the right people. Let's face it — word of mouth is your best form of advertising. Use it!

The repeat business we create is the single biggest form of compensation one could ask for. The contractors continue to use the store as their showroom, thereby using our products. The homeowners often return for concrete sealers and even for things

such as do-it-yourself countertop products. We are constantly seeing new customers who start buying simply because of previous exposure to us. And if the experience wasn't theirs directly, it was the experience of someone who they associate with.

It takes time to build a store and create a model that works for your client base. It is also crucial to have manufacturers that support your cause, protect you from oversaturation, and are willing to participate in the essentials of product growth. 📱

Brian Graham is president of Hard Rock Developments Inc., based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He can be reached at hrdrock@telusplanet.net.

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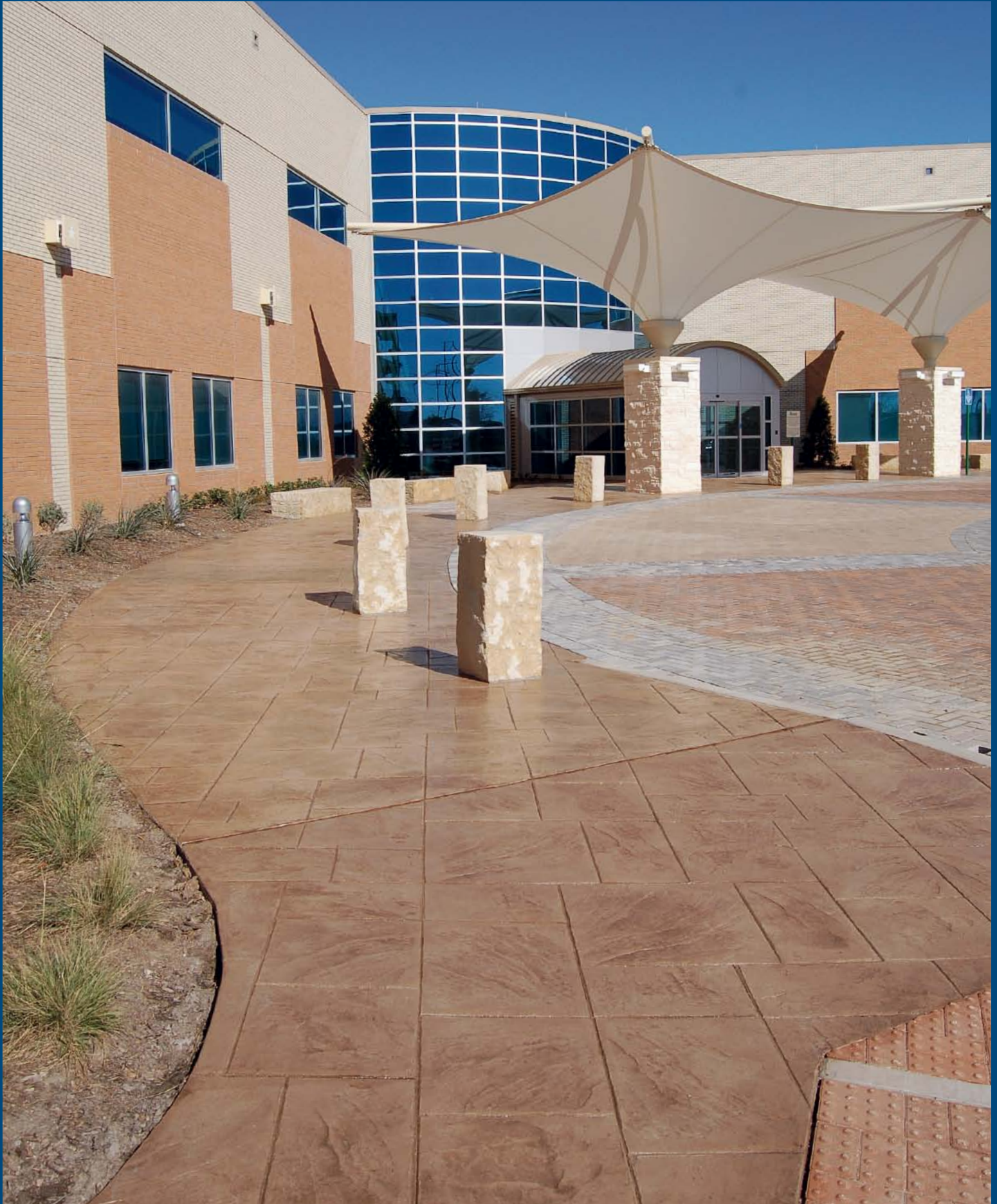
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Photos courtesy of Lonestar Concrete Systems



Brad Walker, Lonestar Concrete Systems Watauga, Texas

by *Natasha Chilingirian*

It's hard to picture a slow day at Lonestar Concrete Systems — the decorative concrete installation company completes an average of 2,500 projects per year, has anywhere from 70 to 100 projects going at all times and works regularly for big-name clients, including Walmart, McDonald's and Family Dollar, explains owner Brad Walker.

But Walker isn't one to brag about it. He describes the Watauga, Texas, company as a collaborative, driven environment, a place where contractors roll up their sleeves and get to work.

"We're kind of those blue-collar contractors," Walker says. "Our culture isn't one that's run by one owner, one dictator. It's like a family."

Walker, 43, took a nontraditional route to decorative concrete company ownership. Growing up on a family farm, Walker was accustomed to labor and working with his hands. However, he did not pursue construction as a profession. Instead, he entered the world of sales and marketing after college and did outside sales and management in the metal industry for 10 years.

When he decided to make a move to a new field, he

considered various niche business concepts.

"A friend from my hometown told me about stained concrete, so I did some research online, did my due diligence in learning about what stained concrete was, and started doing some back-patio staining," Walker says.

He began taking on small jobs around his community, and within six months, landed his first commercial gig.

Working as his own boss appealed to Walker, but as an artistic individual, he also felt a particular draw to concrete staining. "I had some training in the arts, so the stained part of the business was interesting because it lets you use your creativity," he says. "I had a lot of that in my repertoire. I could draw and paint, and I understood colors."

After a year in business, Walker hired his first full-time employee and expanded from offering just stained concrete services to doing concrete countertop installation. Several years later, he added stamped concrete to his list of services, which led to more hires.

"Because the stamped field is so technical, I had to bring people on board who had been trained," Walker says. "A lot of my success has been dependent on the





people I've brought in."

Concrete polishing came next, and Walker says Lonestar has done a substantial amount of it throughout Texas.

Today, Lonestar employs 35 people, including three outside sales reps. Walker says he is primarily a manager now and rarely an installer, although he does put in the occasional concrete countertop.

Lonestar began as a company that served the residential market. "At one point we were doing stained concrete in about 500

homes a year, and that was the catalyst that helped us grow," Walker says. "As our staff and level of expertise grew, we started getting bigger jobs in the commercial market, and in the past couple of years we have become commercially driven."

The company travels outside of the Lone Star State for projects. Wherever it goes, it often lands multiple jobs in one area thanks to word of mouth. Once, a job in a Texas town led to about 100 more in that town the same year, Walker says.

In an industry where many color products are billed as creating the look of a traditional acid stain without the harsh chemicals, Walker stands by tried-and-true acid, praising it as an industry staple that produces permanent results.

"The industry as a whole has gotten more advanced in its product lines, and that's made our job easier," he says. "We're seeing decorative coatings that weren't available 10 years ago, and it's helped us put out a better product."



When he approaches a new project, Walker takes the client's vision as well as the design and colors of the existing space into account. He's heavily involved in the design and color selection process of Lonestar's jobs, but he notes that sometimes, clients already know exactly what they want or enlist the help of another designer.

A recent, significant Lonestar project took place at the Gaylord Texan resort's Paradise Springs water park in Grapevine, Texas, and comprised 65,000 square feet

of integrally colored, textured outdoor concrete, plus an epoxy floor coating and two shuffleboard courts that were integrally colored, polished and stained. Other noteworthy projects include 55,000 square feet of stained concrete at the Fort Worth Zoo in Fort Worth, Texas, 75,000 square feet of diamond-polished concrete at Lewisville High School in Lewisville, Texas, and 40,000 square feet of stamped, colored concrete at the Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center in Waco, Texas.

Naming diversity of service offerings and a high-quality staff as two keys to his success, Walker says he looks forward to a future of continued growth and hopes to open a second facility in Austin or Houston.

"Your service is a byproduct of your people, and I'm really proud of the people involved," he says. "You also have to keep up with the ups and downs of the industry, which is why we don't just offer one thing." 🚚

🌐 www.lonestarconcretesystems.com



Marketing Decorative Concrete

How you can find new business in a sluggish economy

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

These days, making a living in any trade associated with building is tough. Companies new and old have been forced to close up shop because of lack of business and dwindling capital. But some have found ways to hold their own, while others are even prospering.

Concrete Decor contacted a few successful artisans to ask how they market their services in their respective communities. Besides being adamant about promptly delivering a quality product and maintaining a good relationship with past clients, many of them say the key is finding inventive ways to let their potential customers know they're out there.

Network.

Elizabeth Maurer, owner and designer for Liquid Stone Concrete Designs LLC in Bucks County, Pa., encourages contractors to “press the flesh” at free events whenever they get the chance. She coerced her reluctant husband into going with her to a local chamber of commerce open house where members and nonmembers were welcome. It paid off.

“They had a card exchange at a really nice hotel,” she says. “Gerry met a designer who had been in our showroom but he hadn’t spoken to him. Before you know it, he was telling Gerry about five different jobs he had going.”

These types of meetings allow people to put a face with a name,

she says, and they’re great venues for possible business. “Don’t be afraid to sell yourself, or they won’t know what you do,” she advises. “You have to be confident. If you’re not comfortable walking up to people and shaking their hands, take a public speaking class.”

Along with chamber events, attend meetings hosted by local affiliates of organizations such as the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, the National Association of Home Builders and the U.S. Green Building Council. They’ll try to recruit you, Maurer says, but you can attend a few meetings before you have to commit to anything. They can be great networking resources if you get in with the right bunch.

Also, Lee Levig, owner of Concrete Works in Fairfield, Calif., suggests forming a tight-knit “exchange group” in which tradesmen refer each other for jobs. His group, he says, consists of a tile layer, a framer, a drywall plasterer, a painter, a stucco applicator and a general contractor. “We’ve developed a good working network, but the referral just puts you in line. You still have to bid.”



Photos courtesy of Liquid Stone Concrete Designs LLC

Networking helps Liquid Stone Concrete Designs LLC land projects like this one.

Play the green card.

To get decorative concrete in front of the environmentally aware, Elizabeth Maurer of Liquid Stone belongs to the Delaware Valley Green Build Council, a USGBC subsidiary, and the Green Collaboration, a Pennsylvania grassroots association made up of environmentally friendly small businesses. “Concrete is green,” she says, “and you should take advantage of that. A lot of people are willing to spend the extra money to go green.”

Green Collaboration members, she says, have banded together and printed discount cards accepted at member businesses. “The cards cost us \$5 apiece and we give them to really good clients,” Maurer says. Offers range from “buy a countertop and get a free sink” to “get 50 percent off your first housecleaning.”

When Maurer hosts open houses at Liquid Stone’s design center, liquor and food are a must. She cut corners for one by joining forces with a Green Collaboration member with an organic food business that supplied all the hors d’oeuvres.

As for attending trade shows, Maurer has narrowed her scope to small, environmentally oriented regional ones, where she gets the most from her investment. “When you’re doing a show, always go for a corner spot,” she advises. “You get two access points and you can spread out a bit. Be sure to make the exhibit three-dimensional and interactive. Give them stuff to touch.”

However, in keeping with the green focus of these shows, the company has done away with the bulk of its printed literature and instead hands out rack cards with their name and address. “People don’t want to lug around big bags at trade shows.”

Liquid Stone Concrete Designs LLC exhibits at regional, green events, which owner Elizabeth Maurer thinks offer the best return on investment.



Look professional.

Cathye Rankin, director of marketing and sales for GLC3 Concrete and Couture Concrete Systems in Plantation, Fla., believes companies that want to succeed in today's competitive market should always present their best face in public. "Image is everything," she says.

GLC3 crews wear clean, embroidered T-shirts on job sites. "People notice a clean work crew. If you're a little classier than the guy behind you, people notice. That's why I'm pretty particular on how my guys look when they show up for a job."

Rankin — whose husband, George Lackner, founded GLC3 in 1999 — is also steadfast about taking professional, good-looking pictures of completed work. "If you have good 'after' pictures, complete with a fully decorated room, you'll get published more often. That's why I'll spend the money and send a photographer out to take pictures. I mean, would you rather show potential customers pictures taken with a cell phone or ones that make them say, 'Wow! That could be in a magazine.' Perception is 90 percent of what they buying into."

Michael Littlefield, owner of Custom Concrete Design in North Berwick, Maine, since 1996, is also a proponent of professional photography. "Sometimes we just need to focus on what we're good at and let a professional handle our photography. Though it can be a bit of an investment, when concrete is captured effectively it helps sell the product."

Besides the obvious marketing materials of business cards, direct mailers and a brochure, Littlefield thinks one of his most valuable marketing assets has been his trucks and trailers. "Though we currently only have two trucks on the road, we've taken full advantage of our mobile billboards," he says. "Between the vibrant colors and the consistent messaging, we're reaching an audience that likely would not have found us otherwise."



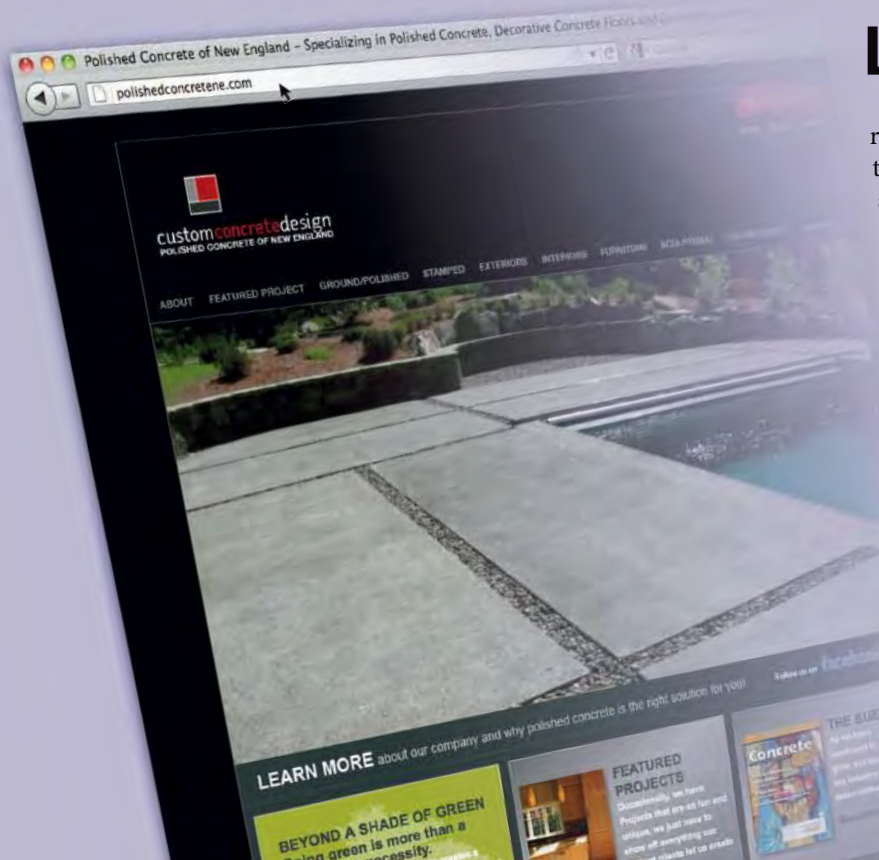
Photo courtesy of GLC3 Concrete

Launch a website.

A good website is a must when it comes to building brand recognition and reputation, Rankin says. "Nobody picks up the Yellow Pages these days," she says. You need to invest in a website to get your name out there. "You'll get your money back out of it if you do it right."

Littlefield also banks on the Internet. "Our website is our primary platform for marketing and showcasing our work," he says of his company site, PolishedConcreteNE.com. "We've recently pulled all magazine and phone book ads as the majority of our target audience is either finding us online, through referrals and word of mouth or on our mobile signage."

His company has put considerable effort into improving its website content by incorporating keywords, meta tags and descriptions that relate to its services so it gets better search engine rankings. "We've included search phrases our audience is likely to use when searching for polished concrete, green flooring solutions, that type of thing," he says.



Expand.

Lee Levig of Concrete Works is a holdout, as far as websites go. He says he hasn't had the need to create one yet — "I guess I've been lucky." But he has had to change his company's business model to survive.

"I have a repair and maintenance crew now," says the man who used to make his bread and butter off one-of-a-kind high-end residential projects. "We also do pavers and overlays, and we travel a lot farther than we used to. We do a lot of little jobs I wouldn't have taken on five years ago."

Instead of playing in the mud, Levig now finds he spends a lot of time on his laptop communicating with customers. "I've changed from being an artisan to becoming a manager," he says. "I don't get my hands as dirty as I used to."

Levig also likes to do conceptual drawing for larger projects. "And that's huge. People are willing to pay a little extra for things like that."



Photo courtesy of Custom Concrete Design Inc.

Polished Concrete of New England, a division of Maine-based Custom Concrete Design Inc., was conceived in response to growing demand for polished concrete. The mobile signage on the company's trucks and trailers put the division's name in front of a wide audience.

Court property managers.

Lee Levig suggests that contractors looking for new customers should seek out companies that manage rental homes or commercial properties. "You need to find them and go after them, but don't expect to retire on that money," he says. "It's only one part of my business model. Right now, it generates me an income because repairs are a continual thing."

He says he cold-called one such company four or five times before he finally was hired to do a little patchwork. "The first few they made me bid on," he remembers. "I had to come out and bid on a \$200 repair." But after about six to eight months of delivering good, consistent work on time, the company now regularly calls him for any job they have that relates to concrete repair. To help gauge the cost, Levig has a price sheet for repairs based on square footage.

"These repairs are problems for the companies, too," he says. "They don't want to go through an elaborate process to get things fixed. They're just looking for that guy who will make their job easier." 🛠️

THE concretist

Using Brass and Glass to Create Concrete Poetry

As concretists, each of us defines ourselves as “one who practices concrete poetry.” As we craft this material, we are crafting a poem. At the most basic level, that poem can be a haiku — deceptively simple.



by Michael Miller

The Hooks residence was the site of a deceptively simple residential project we tackled last winter in Las Vegas. This very large home is on the most exclusive golf course in Vegas. Really, it's more like an ultraprincey boutique-style resort hotel. I wouldn't choose to live there. I couldn't choose to live there. However, for what it is, it is really well-designed — spare, rich. It's deserty, Asian-inspired and done in a Frank Lloyd Wright style. The spaces, while large, are human in scale and still quite liveable.

Our principal emeritus, Kelley



The brass wave features. Legs were brazed to temporarily support waves during the placement of the concrete. After the concrete is cured, the features provide a positive mechanical bond.

Burnham, was the designer. We were working on the porte-cochere, an area of less than 500 square feet with disproportionate importance, as it was the “welcome mat” to the home. There was a spa and pool in the backyard, visually linked to a water feature at the front entry by wave forms on an impressive interior sculptural plaster wall. Kelley needed to maintain this theme.

Also, the house was “stacked,” composed of block shapes in a rectangular style. At the porte-cochere, the house intersected the driveway, which was composed of tumbled rustic concrete pavers that meandered. The style of the driveway was really different from that of the house. So it was also Kelley's job to make sense of this juxtaposition.

Her solution was to construct a composition of long, rectilinear, cast-in-place concrete paving elements that would float amidst the pavers. The idea here was that there would be no similarity between the shape and grain of these elements and the pavers. Kinda like the difference between a boat and the ocean. They belong together, they're comfortable together, but they're definitely not the same.

To guarantee that there would be no inclination to place the pavers in any way that subconsciously related to the concrete, the 4-inch-thick pavers were placed first by a totally separate crew. Then, the composition of the concrete elements was laid out and saw-cut through the pavers. After a bit of excavation and subgrade reparation, the cut-out pavers would be



Photos courtesy of the concretist



Brass wave forms stabilized in mortar beds prior to the integrally colored pour.



Waves hang from wood and wire as stabilizing mortar beds are placed.

replaced by 8 inches of concrete.

Additionally, there was to be a graphic subcomposition within the concrete elements. These were wave forms of brass (cut by water jet) and seeded amber crushed glass. This would further integrate the more organic natural elements with the geometric ones. It would also maintain the theme of water from back to front. We mocked this up, full-scale, in Northern California, out of paper, brass and glass. Bitchin'! It was smart. It was simple. It made sense, and the owner loved it.

When most people think of concrete, they think of it as one simple thing. This is wrong, for even in its most basic form, concrete is a complex material. It's not one thing! At the very least, it's cement melding stone. And here, at the Hooks residence, we had cement, stone, steel and nylon fibers, AND iron oxide pigments AND an air-entraining agent to prevent freeze-thaw damage AND a myriad of other admixtures to facilitate placement.

This is where I got more involved. Typically, the girls in our group are the design-heads, and I try to stay out of their way. I'm the more technical field-head, and they choose to stay out of



"The boys" place, vibrate and screed the reddish-brown pigmented concrete.



Exposing brass, glass, and fine aggregate in the reddish-brown concrete.



The grain of the concrete pavers cuts against that of the cast-in-place blocks.

mine. Good choice, as this smart, simple design was about to become progressively more difficult.

Brass tacks

Prior to concrete placement, the brass wave forms had to be secured in just the right place and at just the right elevation. There was no room for error. I'm a much better finishes guy than a concrete-forming and placement guy, so I got good advice

from both Mike Price, my Northern California go-to guy, and Eddie Gray, finisher extraordinaire (and available in a pinch, as he resides in Vegas). Mike suggested presetting the waves from below with securely fixed posts. Ed thought it best to hang, with wire around straightedges, from above.

This was also tricky as the driveway sloped in multiple directions, and we were embedding what, for the most part, were

flat and rigid elements.


We ended up using both systems. We hung the brass pieces the day before the pour and locked them in place from below, with the welded posts supported by minimortar beds. To prevent scratching, we also protected the brushed brass with multiple layers of blue tape.

Then there was the glass. These elements were to be "looser" versions of the waves. Kinda like a reflection of the brass in ripply water. These would also help ease the transition from the more architectural house to the more natural landscape.


Would the glass be integral? Would it be seeded? How would it be exposed? I pushed for integral glass, replacing a portion of the large aggregate, with an overall troweled finish and the glass exposed by sandblasting. Kelley insisted on the density of seeded glass and that its clarity be maintained through washed exposure. We have this love/hate thing, never seeing things from the same angle. This benefits our clients, as all avenues are explored.

She won and I was further challenged. We would seed the crushed amber glass (two sizes, for maximum visual density) through plasma-cut thin steel templates, float and two-pass trowel, apply a "light exposure" top-surface retarder, and gently water-wash, using a pressure washer (operated by someone with a light touch), a hose and trigger nozzle, a soft-bristle broom and a small wire brush (for a more aggressive exposure of the glass waves, if required). This would happen the morning after the pour.

Finally, along with our client, we decided that the reddish-brown integrally colored concrete would be patina-stained too.



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This would produce a worn, layered effect, similar to the desert sandstone look of the house. It also softened our rectilinear construction, again easing the transition between architecture and landscape. And, finally, we thought, it would also patinate the waves of brass. (It didn't — we ended up having to very carefully apply a brass-specific patination formula, turning the brass from a brassy yellow to something much darker and more similar to the amber of the glass.)

When all was said and done, we also applied a very light transparent dye wash (another layer of color and richness) and sealed with a thinned-down (to encourage penetration) solvent-based acrylic.

There was no room for error here, no visual fudge factor. This was not like an applied-finish job, where problems could be disguised with a bit more tint or another layer of skim. Nor was it like a stamped job, with distracting visual noise such as joints and variegation from texture and release agents built in. Here, all there was was concrete, and where the concrete interacted with the brass and glass. And

this interaction was right in your face, right where it was easy to judge critically.

The client challenged Kelley. She challenged me. We challenged the local contractors. Together, we produced deceptively simple concrete that we could all be proud of.

I like to think of the project as concrete poetry...

*Footfalls in red mud
Forever frozen, therefore
Be mindful of steps*

This is good advice for any concrete job but was especially true on the Hooks project. Good advice, just in a bad haiku! 🐾

Michael Miller is managing principal of the concretist, an association of artists, craftspeople and others producing sensory-concrete art and architecture in cement, stone, glass and steel. the concretist is headquartered in Benicia, Calif, with additional locations in north-central Nevada and Southeast Asia. Miller can be contacted at miller@theconcretist.com.



Project designer Kelley Burnham seeds crushed amber glass, aided by plasma-cut steel templates.

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CARLTON'S CORNER

Disorganization Is Hurting Your Business

Let me ask if this sounds like somebody you know — you put in years perfecting your decorative concrete craft and consider yourself an expert in your field. Past customers appreciated your skill, courtesy and professionalism, and they refer friends and relatives to your services. But recently you have noticed something is changing, and this change makes you uneasy. Sure, you have sharpened the pencil, but it seems most months come and go leaving you asking where all the money is going.



by Doug Carlton

I understand this perfectly, because my own contracting business feels the same effects of a down economy. The culprit is efficiency, or I should say, the lack of it.

I personally know two contractors running inefficient decorative businesses. Both are considered to be in the top 10 percent of their chosen decorative trade. If you were to ask them if they are organized they would say yes. But the truth is that they are far from it. Disorganization has become a way of contracting for them, and I believe they don't know the difference anymore. I see it when I visit, and all I can think about is how much production and profit melts away with each project. Just to be clear, their projects are top-notch, they're just not profitable.

Unfortunately this could cause both of them money and clients if change doesn't come soon. Today's construction industry leaves little room for inefficiency or the unorganized.

Here are a few skills that will guarantee your jobs will finish in as organized and efficient a manner as possible. These practices help your job start off on the right foot, ultimately leading to a satisfied

customer and a profitable year.

Step 1: Sign contracts and agreements.

I'm still amazed at how often, when a contractor calls me complaining about a project gone bad, no formal project agreement exists. This may sound basic, but the foundation of a successful project is a signed agreement. Take the time to get signatures on documents describing the job, exclusions and method of payment, if nothing else.

Step 2: Plan before the job.

Most decorative concrete projects require time for colors and materials to be ordered. Use this time to organize things such as staging of materials, sequence and progression of work, traffic control, and notifications. At first these tasks seem time-consuming but soon they are second nature. If you have ever shown up to work on a project to find other subs working over your area, then you know the importance of planning beyond your work.

Step 3: Start right.

Our foreman and salesman have mastered the transition from selling a job to starting one. This transition starts usually a day or three before the crew arrives, so that when the morning comes to begin work no one is stressed by not knowing what is going on. Take the time to walk through each job ahead of time, regardless of how small, picturing where to start and how to proceed. The time to do this is always before a crew of workers arrives.

Step 4: Keep customers informed.

No one likes surprises in the construction industry. Keep your customer in the loop of each phase, explaining what they should expect.

Years ago I had problems with customers not understanding that new stamped concrete looked pale and washed out before

it was sealed. Since I wait several weeks to seal, some customers lost faith, with many doubting we made the right color choice. To correct this confusion, our salesman now explains the importance of the sealer and educates new buyers on the look of an unsealed project compared to the finished product.

Spend time by face or phone each day bringing your customer or architect into the project. This could be nothing more than a voice mail or as in-depth as a half-hour on-site visit. Some customers roll with it and some want to know every move as it happens. Take the good with the bad and always communicate with your buyer.

Step 5: Don't leave the job for supplies.

I can't tell you how many in our industry make three trips to the local hardware store each day while their crew waits for supplies. Nothing costs contractors more money than a failure to organize supplies and materials during off hours. Take time to look ahead of your crew regarding what is needed and make sure materials are waiting for them.

Step 6: Finish the job.

I once had a lead guy who grew bored with a project just before we finished. His idea was usually to take a guy or two and move on to another project before the last one was completed. This sometimes works well — if you're very organized, I might add — but in any case, make sure manpower and time allow for a completed project as promised. A finished project is cleaner than when started and protected from foot or vehicle traffic until dry. Tell your customer when traffic can resume and answer other questions concerning their project. Invoice your project immediately after it's completed. 📄

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

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Magnalight releases light tower

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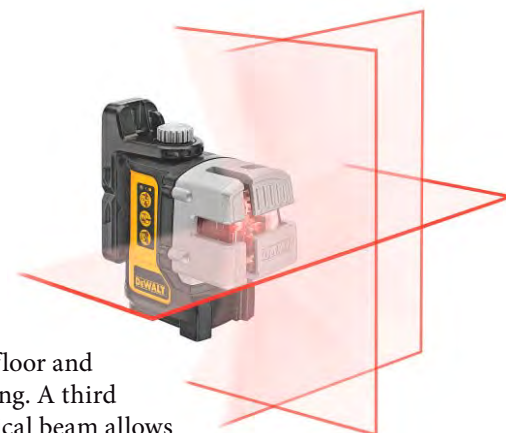
The LED light head can also produce a well-focused wide spot beam 900 feet in length.

www.magnalight.com

New three-beam line laser

DeWalt has launched its new line laser (DW089K), which features multiple design enhancements to improve productivity on the job site.

Unlike many line lasers on the market, the DW089K features a second plumb line that forms a 90-degree intersecting line on



the floor and ceiling. A third vertical beam allows contractors to use the tool for layout applications without needing a second laser.

www.dewalt.com

New diamond blade from Husqvarna

Husqvarna Construction Products has unveiled its latest high-speed diamond blade, the Husqvarna Versa-Cut.

The Versa-Cut blade features alternating turbo segments that enable the blade to cut faster. The Versa-Cut is a general-purpose blade made to cut a wide variety of materials.

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New scrapers from Hyde

Hyde Tools Inc. has unveiled four new Pro Brass Scrapers.

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Blastrac adds to dust collector line

Blastrac has introduced the BDC-1330DBP, a heavy-duty dust collection system that is quiet and designed for multipurpose uses.

Standing less than 6 feet tall with a weight of 280 pounds, this powerful industrial vacuum is perfect for contractors who must utilize a dust collection system to satisfy environmental concerns. It offers high performance with relatively low energy consumption. A quick release-and-attach dust bin easily dismounts for debris disposal and has a capacity of 143 pounds.

☎ (800) 256-3440

🌐 www.blastrac.com

Sterling Wheelbarrow receives updates

Metal Forms Corp. has improved their Sterling Wheelbarrow. Highlights include a welded, one-piece leg unit for superior strength and an increased capacity of 7 cubic feet.

🌐 www.metalforms.com

Maxwell Systems, American Compliance Systems enter partnership

Maxwell Systems Inc. has partnered with American Compliance Systems to provide services for construction professionals.

Maxwell Systems customers will now have access to a number of safety management products and expert capabilities to help them streamline job-site safety compliance and simplify related paperwork and record-keeping.

🌐 www.maxwellsystems.com

Update for management software

Maxwell Systems Inc. has released Maxwell Systems ProContractorMX version 2.7, which offers valuable new construction management capabilities.

The 2.7 version delivers a new safety manager module and new tools to increase takeoff speed and accuracy, comply with OSHA safety regulations, easily manage equipment maintenance, simplify processes and eliminate redundancies.

🌐 www.maxwellsystems.com

Bosch wall and floor scanner uses radar

Bosch Measuring Tools has incorporated ultrawide-band (UWB) radar technology into its new Bosch D-tect 150 Wall/Floor Scanner.

The Bosch D-tect 150 can display material type, depth and relative width information regarding ferrous and nonferrous metal, nonmetal objects (such as wooden studs and plastic pipes) and live AC wires in concrete and other materials.

☎ (877) 267-2499

🌐 www.boschtools.com



Hand-held saw from EDCO

Equipment Development Co. Inc. is now offering a hand-held saw. This 16-inch saw contains CARDI Smart Electronic Technology that protects motors against overload, ensures smooth starts and provides added electrical safety.

Equipped with a powerful motor, this saw cuts concrete, masonry, asphalt, stone and metal. Its maximum cutting depth is 6 inches.

🌐 www.edcoinc.com

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Water Cannon updates website

Water Cannon Inc. has launched a new user-friendly website. Features include a powerful search feature, an updated layout and product reviews. A filtering feature lets customers sort the thousands of items Water Cannon sells by pressure per square inch, gallons per minute, price, manufacturer and more.

www.watercannon.com

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Attachments for Husqvarna cutters

The K3000 Dust Reducer and the WT 15 water tank are two new attachments from Husqvarna Construction Products for the K3000 line of electric power cutters.

The K3000 Dust Reducer easily attaches to the K 3000 Vac power cutter to minimize dust while sawing. The K3000 Dust Reducer works exceptionally well on flat surfaces.

When a job calls for a switch between dry and wet cutting, the WT 15 water tank is a convenient tool to have on hand. The tank holds enough water for you to cut continuously for 20 minutes before refilling. It can also be used with other Husqvarna power cutters and drills.

www.husqvarna.com



Demolition hammer from Dewalt

Dewalt's new 40-pound demolition hammer (D25960K) has been designed to offer contractors elite performance, comfort, durability and ease of use. The D25960K boasts a low vibration level while still delivering 1,460 beats per minute.

www.dewalt.com

Tales of the Tape Three Tips when Using Tape with Decorative Overlays

by Brian Anderson and Cory Christensen

After painstakingly laying out a grout pattern for your acrylic overlay, meticulously masking and re-masking surrounding areas, and then spraying or troweling in just the right color and texture scheme, you stand back and admire your handiwork, and the job looks great.

With the customer standing beside you, you lean down and begin pulling pattern tape. As you do so, you notice residue clinging and overlay bleeding into your beautiful grout lines. Just as you're about to let loose with an array of profanity, you bolt awake and realize it was all a bad dream.

We've all had the same recurring nightmare. And in order to avoid living through this nightmare, here are three helpful hints when choosing and laying pattern and masking tape:

Use quality pattern tape. Skimping on your pattern tape can ruin an otherwise perfect job. This is especially true with hand-troweled overlays where bleed is a common problem. NEVER use duct, masking or cellophane tape as pattern tape. We recommend using a quality filament pattern tape designed specifically for overlays. The filament fibers in these tapes provide strength while the specially designed adhesives stick to your overlay for the duration of the job and come up without leaving residues behind.

Pay attention when you're laying pattern tape. Make sure you don't leave gaps between lines or cut your pattern tape too long, ending up with tabs where lines meet.

Use appropriate tape. While duct tape has its place (duct work, permanent automotive repairs to your 1972 AMC Gremlin, etc.), know that there are times when duct tape is not appropriate. If you plan on being on a job for a few days in mid-summer Phoenix, masking with duct tape will be effective right up until you try to remove the tape. Try using blue painter's



Photo courtesy of Concrete Coatings Inc.

tape instead.

Speaking of masking, always mask off your surrounding areas. Nothing ruins a great job (and your reputation for good workmanship) quicker than unsightly overspray.

Apply and remove tape at the right time. Whenever we've seen problems with pattern tape, it has usually been due to improper timing. Avoid applying pattern tape when your skim coat is still damp or cool to the touch. Removing pattern tape too soon may cause bleed or damage the integrity of the overlay. Removing the tape too late may cause a jagged and broken pattern or grout lines (not to mention sore fingers).

On a hand-troweled application, pull your pattern tape as soon as the overlay is dry enough to walk on without damaging it. Never leave pattern tape overnight on a hand-troweled application.

Get your customer to come watch when pattern tape is being pulled. You'll find that they love it so much, they'll usually end up doing it for you!

Pattern tape can make or break your overlay job. By following these helpful hints (and using a little common sense) your grout and pattern lines will be crisp and clear — a lasting signature of your work. 🛠️

Brian Anderson has held nearly every job possible at Concrete Coatings Inc., from installing overlays to his current position, director of operations. Contact him at brian@concretecoatingsinc.com.

Cory Christensen is business development manager at Concrete Coatings Inc. He can be reached at cory@concretecoatingsinc.com.

coating & topping CONCRETE :

Tales of the Tape

Choose Your Tape Carefully — and Watch Where You Put It

by Cathye Rankin

When it comes to the application of decorative concrete finishes, it is the smallest (tackiest) details that will make or break your project.

We always have on hand different kinds of tape: three sizes of blue (painter's) tapes, black tape, and when all else fails, duct tape.

Your decorative application will dictate

the tape choice. For example, blue tape with plastic is one of your best weapons against overspray. It keeps additional cleaning to a minimum and, when removed in a timely manner, it will not leave a residue. We use 2-inch and 4-inch blue tape to secure the plastics, to leave our edges clean and to protect painted walls, trim and other surrounding surfaces.

It only takes one time on lacquer and most faux finishes to give you the painful realization that tape should never be used on these surfaces. While we sometimes use black tape and duct tape on top of a blue tape application, you don't want to apply these directly. When we need a heavier form of protection that blue tape can provide on its own, we blue-tape an area and secure the

protection to the blue tape.

In overlayment applications where we meet up to the drywall, tape does double duty in protecting the drywall from absorbing the moisture in the mix. Without this protection you are compromising the mix and the drywall. To further address this problem, after your overlayment has set, run a utility knife gently around the perimeter and remove the excess.

After staining and sealing, overlaying and polishing, we always preach (not too strong a word) that the floors must be protected. You can use curing blankets and black or duct tape, or use paper with a slight overlap, taped well using blue tape. (Never tape the paper to the floor.)

We have generally found that taking the time to properly apply and use the right tape is always worth the effort. Those pieces of tape assist you in keeping your job clean without hindering the other trades that have been before you, and they protect you from the trades coming in behind. The right tape leaves your job sites clean, your punch list empty and the clients calling you back. 🛠️

Cathye Rankin is marketing and sales director for GLC3 Concrete, a contracting company based near Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Couture Concrete Systems, a manufacturer of decorative concrete materials. Reach her at cathye@coutureconcretesystems.com.

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Aurora Epoxy Dust from McKinnon Materials Inc.

Pearlescent metallic effects are the latest hot trend in epoxies, and Aurora Epoxy Dust from McKinnon Materials Inc. is the most recent product to join the 3-D party.

Aurora Epoxy Dust is a powdered “nanopigment” that can be mixed into 100 percent solids epoxy. It is available in 12 standard colors.

“It has pearlescence, mica and powdered pigment, so when you combine everything together you get color effects you can’t normally accomplish,” says McKinnon product specialist Buster O’Steen.

While the effects Aurora Epoxy Dust produces certainly look advanced, the installation process is actually quite simple.



The first step is to put down a primer, which is typically a dark color such as black. Once that dries, simply apply a 20-mil spread of Aurora and wait approximately five to 10 minutes




Photos courtesy of McKinnon Materials Inc.

for the material to self-level. Once the time has passed, trowel, squeegee, or even blow the epoxy around the floor. This will redistribute the mica, creating the metallic look. Also, as the material settles, the dark primer shows through in the higher spots on the floor, creating additional visual depth.

“I’ve tried to mess this up, and the only thing you can do to do that is spread it on the floor and take a long lunch and go back out on it too late,” O’Steen says.

You aren’t just limited to a single color of Aurora either. You can mix in one shade of Aurora during the initial blending process and apply another during the redistribution stage. You can also add more or less to the epoxy to create varying shades.

Aurora Epoxy Dust is sold in a 16-ounce container, which is the recommended amount to mix into 4 gallons of epoxy.

“Even if just one person is applying the product, they will still have enough time to complete the job before it’s no longer workable,” O’Steen says. 

 www.mckinnonmaterials.com

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PRODUCT NEWS

Brush added to Wooster Prep Crew line

Many of the brushes meant for masonry work are 5 inches or larger so they can efficiently apply coatings to wider areas, but these tools are too big to use with waterproofing coatings and other materials straight from the can. To solve this problem, Wooster has just unveiled the Masonry Coater Jr. This 4-inch brush can easily fit



in a standard 1-gallon can, but it still offers high production.

The brush features a mix of tampico

and polypropylene. Tampico provides great pickup and release, while polypropylene bristles allow the brush to maintain stiffness. The fast and thorough coverage that the Masonry Coater Jr. achieves with all thick-bodied paints and waterproofing, foundation or roof coatings can be attributed to its special fiber blend.

A built-in clip at the base of the handle allows the brush to drip back into the can or bucket.

www.woosterbrush.com

New line of membranes from Stonhard

Stonhard's newest product family, Stongard, consists of four waterproofing and decking membrane products formulated to address moisture issues in mechanical equipment rooms and indoor spaces. To form the Stongard product line, Stonhard rebranded some of its already successful products and developed new ones.

Stongard MR protects mechanical equipment rooms and other indoor spaces that cannot tolerate moisture. Stongard MD provides the same waterproofing solution as Stongard MR, but puts an additional focus on style to meet specific design expectations. Stongard MX includes fiberglass reinforcement where specified.

Finally, Stongard TM is designed to preserve parking structures. It withstands harsh elements and heavy traffic and is easy to clean. It brightens dimly lit parking garages and can provide a helpful marking system. It can also be used on stadium concourses, helipads and pedestrian bridges.

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www.stonhard.com

Mica flakes new to Roll on Rock system

The award-winning Roll On Rock system from Versatile Building Products now features mica flakes. These unique mica flakes provide a natural metallic luster. They are derived from a group of sheet silicate minerals known as mica.

The new mica flakes are only available



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as part of the Roll on Rock system. The system includes a mica flake kit (available in six colors and offering 500 square feet of coverage), two kits of pigmented epoxy primer, a polyaspartic topcoat primer and a polyurea high-gloss topcoat. 🛠️

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PROJECT PROFILE

Mille-feuille Bakery & Cafe Countertop Greenwich Village, New York City

by Kelly O'Brien

During a visit to the interior of Mille-feuille, a tiny bakery and cafe in New York City's Greenwich Village, is a massive pale beige countertop, all smooth concrete curves and subtle flecks of off-white marble. The piece is the work of Passaic, N.J., decorative concrete contractor Remigiusz "Remik" Iwuc, owner of Concrete Shop. In Remik's eight years as a concrete fabricator, he's done his fair share of complex projects. But with two architecture firms involved, a pair of hands-on clients with engineering degrees, and a design with extreme performance requirements and no margin for error, the Mille-feuille project represented something of a perfect storm.

A tasty concept

First, there was the countertop's origin. Bakery owners Olivier and Nathalie Dessyn visited New York on vacation from Paris, back in 2009, and promptly fell in love with the city. Although both of the Dessyns were career engineers, Olivier had also trained at a prestigious pastry school in Paris, and he and Nathalie had always dreamed of opening a pastry shop someday. Well, their trip to New York convinced them that the time was now, and the place was New York. Olivier spent a year preparing things: procuring a location, finding investors, and developing with a preliminary design for the space — and the countertop.

"My view was to open up the pastry shop's interior," Olivier says. "I didn't want to work in the back and be separated from people. I wanted to be able to talk and interact with the customers."

Olivier took his concept to Agence Jouin-Manku, a Paris-based architecture firm and rising star on the international design scene. Olivier pitched not only his concept for the space, but also his passion for pastry and his family's plans to open



Photos by Tom Gryz

a cafe in Manhattan, confident that it would resonate with the jet-setting design luminaries. "I bet that they were going to like such an entrepreneurial project," Olivier says, and he was right.

After a couple of months, the firm came back to Olivier with drawings. "Their idea was to make just one big countertop," says Olivier. With a display area for their pastry at one end and a large work surface at the other, the mammoth countertop would form the focal point of the entire shop.

Making the design a reality

Steve Hoffman, an architect with W.I. Van Campen Architect, the Manhattan firm the Dessyns hired to handle things stateside, says he approached Remik for the project specifically because of the contractor's reputation for GFRC work. "The clients' design called for this very

Project at a Glance

Clients: Olivier and Nathalie Dessyn, owners of Mille-feuille Bakery & Cafe, Greenwich Village, N.Y.

Countertop Fabricator: Remigiusz Iwuc, Concrete Shop, Passaic, N.J.

Design Architect: Agence Jouin-Manku, Paris, France

Architect of Record: W.I. Van Campen Architect, Manhattan, N.Y.

Project Architect: Steve Hoffman

Project Specs: 40-inch-wide, 24-foot-long GFRC countertop for a French bakery and cafe in New York City. The counter serves two purposes, providing a display area for baked goods and a work surface for bakers.

Timeline: Design finalized in January 2011. Countertop installed in March 2011.

Materials Used: Custom pigments, fiber reinforcement and ICT reactive sealer from Blue Concrete, marble chips and white marble dust from Arim, Teaneck, N.J.



thick edge and curvilinear profile, which you would never be able to make up out of stone or synthetic stone," Hoffman says. "Remik was chosen in particular because of his GFRC approach. GFRC could give us the appearance of massiveness, but really be thin and lightweight."

Even though the design had been through two engineers and two architects, Remik worked with them to make some final changes to account for the particulars of doing the top in concrete. First off, he helped them adjust the design so the whole thing could come together in just three pieces. Next, they relocated the seams. "Since there are two levels of the countertop, we were able to put one of the seams where it changes height, so there's only one seam



visible," says Remik.

They also had to adjust for the countertop's returns, which give it its monolithic look. The original design assumed a solid, 4-inch-thick countertop, but Remik's plan substituted a 4-inch return in the front, a 2-inch return in the back, and a slab that's only 1 1/4 inches thick at the center. Remik helped them adapt the wooden base to keep the countertop's final height the same.

When it came to the display cases and appliances that the countertop was designed to wrap around, there was literally no wiggle room. Olivier had pored over the designs in AutoCAD and had visited with Hoffman and Remik to make sure it could be executed accurately. "With all that the computer lets you do," says Hoffman, "there's an expectation that there's a way to get perfect fabrication." To get there, though, they ended up using an "old-school

technique," he says. Using the digital specs, Hoffman printed out a 1:1 template of the countertop's shape, which Remik used as a basis for his forms.

The finished product

Once Remik had worked out all of the design kinks, the fabrication process went off without a hitch. Remik polished the surface slowly, up to 400 grit, and was thrilled with the results. "I polished it so much I got a surface that was glass-like," he says. "I've never reached such a nice and tight surface as I did with this piece. It felt like it was sealed already."

The installation was also straightforward, impressing Hoffman. "The lovely thing was that, with relative ease, it went right into place and there it was," he says.

But it was only after the countertop was

(Continued on page 39)

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PRODUCT NEWS

The Providence Reinforced Corbel

Federal Brace has added to its line of reinforced corbels with the release of the Providence Reinforced Corbel. This sleek, low-profile corbel brings a touch of understated elegance to hardware décor and countertop support.

The Providence is a finished exterior corbel with a 1/4-inch steel countertop support bracket for a backbone. The Providence Corbel has a brushed stainless steel finish that shows no fasteners. It is sized to support countertop overhangs that are 10 inches to 12 inches deep.

www.federalbrace.com

New countertop support bracket

Federal Brace has released the Harmony Support countertop island bracket, a 2-inch

by 24-inch cantilever-type bracket designed to support countertops on cabinet-based kitchen islands.

Painted and ready to use right out of the box, Harmony is exceptionally easy to install and adjusts to fit overhangs ranging from 8 inches to 14 inches deep. Made of thick 1/4-inch steel, Harmony provides both massive strength and maximum knee clearance under any island counter.

www.federalbrace.com

Metabo's new cordless angle grinder features rotating battery pack

Metabo Corp. has introduced its first professional-grade cordless angle grinder, complete with a rotating battery pack, making it ideal for grinding and cutting applications in hard-to-reach areas.



This 4 1/2-inch grinder's slim motor housing and ergonomic side handle make it easy to use throughout the day. It features a robust, debris-resistant four-pole motor with easily replaceable carbon brushes, plus a removable dust filter. It has a no-load speed of 8,000 rpm.

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New air stonecutter from Applied Diamond Tools

Applied Diamond Tools has introduced a 5-inch air stonecutter.

A modification based on the popular wet air grinder GPW-215, the GPW-215C is an excellent lightweight air tool for precise stonecutting. It will accept a 5-inch diamond blade, and is used for wet hand-cutting of granite, marble and concrete up to 1 1/4 inches thick.

www.toolocity.com



Metabo offers new angle grinder

Metabo Corp. is now offering the 5 inch WEPA14-125 Quick angle grinder, featuring Metabo's autobalance system that extends tool and wheel life while making the grinder safer and more comfortable to use.

The WEPA14-125 Quick, ideal for heavy-duty cutting and grinding applications, features a long-lasting 12.2-amp motor, 1,450 watts of power, 29.2 inch-pounds of torque and a no-load speed of 10,000 rpm.

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PROJECT PROFILE

Mille-feuille Bakery & Cafe Countertop

(Continued from page 37)

installed that its real test began. Because half of the counter serves as a work space for the bakers, the surface has to hold up to daily abuse. "We hit the countertop a lot," Olivier says, with hands, dough and rolling pins. So far, though, the only damage sustained was on the day they decided to make lemon cake on the counter instead of on one of their stainless steel tables. "There was lemon juice sitting on the surface for several hours," Remik says.

But even that was quickly undone.

Remik refinished the area and reapplied the ICT reactive sealer, and the work space looks good as new.

In the end, despite all the challenges and complexities of the project, the countertop functions just the way Olivier envisioned. Every day, he and his staff work at one end to produce mouthwatering French pastry, all the while chatting with their customers on the other side of the counter. "It's really just what I wanted it to be," he says.

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Compass Rose Medallion Table Top Mold

from Proline Concrete Tools

What if there was a way to take the leftover concrete from a job site and turn it into a moneymaker instead of throwing it away? Thanks to Proline Concrete Tools' Compass Rose Medallion Table Top Mold, there is.

Incorporating Proline's most popular medallion design, the Compass Rose, the tabletop mold is 4 feet in diameter and produces a 2-inch-deep tabletop.

The idea for the mold actually arose after the company heard of contractors using the standard Compass Rose stamp for tabletops. "Most of our line has been driven by the needs of contractors," says Tyler Irwin, sales manager for Proline. "It goes all the way back to our first seamless skin."

The intent behind the tabletop mold is for contractors to take the concrete they'd normally throw away, add polymer or fibers if necessary, and make a product out of it. However, the mold is starting to be used for more



Photo courtesy of Proline Decorative Concrete Systems

than just making something out of surplus materials.

"We've got a customer in Wisconsin that has been making the tabletops and selling them in the wintertime," Irwin says. "It's spawned a side business for some of the more aggressive, forward-thinking guys."

It's also spawning a whole new line of molds for Proline. The company is planning on introducing additional tabletop textures and patterns, as well as molds for fire rings.

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Plastic Forms: A Reusable Solution for Curves and Circles

by Chris Mayo

The days of the straight-lined concrete walkway, patio or driveway are waning. Designs that incorporate sweeping curves or tight radiuses are more popular now than ever.

Contractors who want to form for curves and tight circles have a few options to choose from. Masonite siding has often been an option for forming curves — it's stiff, yet bendable. Some contractors use landscape edging material made out of metal. Others cut "kerfs" (grooves) into two-by-fours to allow the wood to bend, or they rip thinner plywood to the heights that they want their forms to be.

All of these options have advantages and disadvantages. One advantage: They are easily found. A quick trip to the local building materials store and you have the

materials you need for forming, and your crew is working on the forms right away. Some disadvantages: Masonite and wood forms are reusable, but even with the best care, a contractor will probably use them only a few times before they're too scarred or warped to be reused. Cleaning eats up valuable work time, as does transporting the materials and disposing of them afterward. Metal forms last longer, but they're cumbersome and they don't retain their original shape very well once they've been bent.

As with many innovations in construction, reusable plastic forms are intended to answer a couple of questions: What if there's a better way? And can something be superior to what's being used now?

The first plastic forms hit the market in the late 1980s. Now there are several plastic form companies offering a variety of products.

But why use them when wood, masonite and metal have worked for years? What are the advantages of plastic?

Reusability is one obvious advantage — most plastic forms last for years. Reusable forms reduce job-site waste, and what's more, several brands of reusable plastic forms are made using recycled materials.

Additionally, they are lighter than wood and easier to work with, significantly decreasing the time it takes a crew to assemble formwork. They are more bendable for tight radiuses and generally easier to clean than wood, metal or masonite.

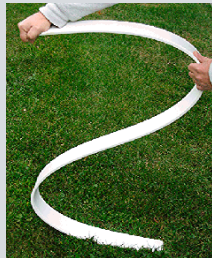
Flexible Plastic Forms Comparison Chart

| Brand Name | Manufacturer | Material Type | Lengths Sold | Heights Sold | Minimum Bend Radius | Stakes and Support Required | How Long Should They Last? |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| BendyForm | Techtonic Corp. <i>bendyform.com</i> | A blend of plastics, including up to 14 percent recyclable material | 50-foot rolls and 16-foot lengths | 2 inches, 3.5 inches, 5 inches, 6.5 inches, 9.75 inches | 6 inches | Designed for standard stakes as determined by the cement contractor | Indefinitely, depending on the cement contractor |
| Flexiform | Frank Wall Enterprises LLC <i>frankwall.com</i> | 100 percent recycled high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastics | 50-foot rolls, 12-foot planks | 3 1/2 inches | 6 inches | Works with wood, metal and the Moblo 3 1/2-inch general plastic stake | Designed to hold up for many reuses (20-plus times) as a form board |
| KetterForms | Ketter Forms LLC <i>ketterforms.com</i> | Recycled plastic | 50 feet | 4 inches, 6 inches, 12 inches, 18 inches, 24 inches | 24 inches (4-inch), 31 inches (6-inch), 38 inches (12-inch), 45 inches (18-inch), 48 inches (24-inch) | Wooden or metal stakes 2 feet apart | First form is still in use, purchased in 2005 |
| Metal Forms Xtra Flex Radius Forms | Metal Forms Corp. <i>metalfirms.com</i> | High-density polyethylene (HDPE) | 10 feet | 4 inches, 6 inches, 12 inches | 9 inches | Designed with stake pockets for use with standard stakes | Multiple uses |
| Metal Forms Poly Plastic Concrete Forms | Metal Forms Corp. <i>metalfirms.com</i> | High-density polyethylene (HDPE) | 12 feet | 4 inches, 6 inches | 3 feet | Designed with stake pockets for use with standard stakes | Documented reuses of 150 times or more |
| Metal Forms Poly Plastic Curb and Gutter Forms | Metal Forms Corp. <i>metalfirms.com</i> | High-density polyethylene (HDPE) | 12 feet | 4 inches, 6 inches | 3 feet | Designed with stake pockets for use with standard stakes | Documented reuses of 150 times or more |
| Plastiform (Green Plastics) | Plastiform by Green Plastics <i>plastiform.net</i> | 100 percent white virgin polyethylene resins | 12 feet, 16 feet | 4 inches, 6 inches, 8 inches, 10 inches, 12 inches | 3 feet | Cam-lock mechanism allows for use of everyday wood or metal stakes | 10-year guarantee, more than 1,000 uses |
| Plastiform (The Plastiform Co.) | The Plastiform Co. <i>plastiform.com</i> | High-density polyethylene with UV protection and silicon | 12-foot and 16-foot form boards, 50-foot rolls | 3.5 inches, 4 inches, 6 inches, 12 inches | 3 feet for 3.5-, 4- and 6-inch form boards, 4 feet for 12-inch form board | Cam-lock clamps designed for 3/4-inch-diameter steel stakes but also fit wood or rebar stakes 1/2 inch to 5/8 inch in diameter | More than 300 times over 10 years, as reported by several users |

Different Flexible Forms for Different Needs

Bendyform, from Techtonic Corp.

"Bendyform is a tool, not a formwork system," says Techtonic vice president Bob Stuff. "By that, I mean that the concrete contractor doesn't need to change the way he sets his forms. Bendyform simply allows the contractor to set forms simply and quickly with tight radiuses or more gentle curves."



Like other plastic forms, Bendyform is reusable, lightweight and flexible. On the market since 1997, Bendyform forms are available in a variety of heights and lengths.

www.bendyform.com

Flexi-Form, from Frank Wall Enterprises LLC



"I put a lot of thought and 31 years experience into the design of the Flexi-Form," says Frank Wall. "I tried to make it user-friendly, allowing the contractor to have a method of coupling the forms together without any additional expense. The 50-foot long roll allows the contractor the ability to form more edging with fewer splice joints. It also allows for easy transporting by virtue of being able to be rolled into a 30-inch coil. The 12-foot boards are for smaller jobs, making those easier to form."



One feature that sets Flexi-Form apart is the tight radius contractors can achieve — as small as 12 inches in diameter. Even when bending the form that severely, Flexi-Form maintains its original shape for reuse on the next job. Flexi-Form has been available since 2009.

www.frankwall.com

Ketter Forms, from Ketter Forms LLC



Ketter Forms, introduced to the market in 2005, are available in 50-foot rolls. These forms include a "shut-off" piece that allows contractors to easily finish the formwork without cutting pieces to length. Unlike many other plastic forms, Ketter Forms are designed so that contractors don't need to order any specialty stakes, clamps or splicing material. These forms can be attached with screws or nails to standard wooden or metal form stakes. Ketter Forms offers forms in a variety of widths.

www.ketterforms.com

Plastiforms, from Plastiform by Green Plastics

Pat Pawlicki, president of Plastiform by Green Plastics, started toying with the idea of bendable plastic forms in the early 1980s. In 1986, collaborating with a local plastics company, he introduced what he says were the first bendable plastic forms.

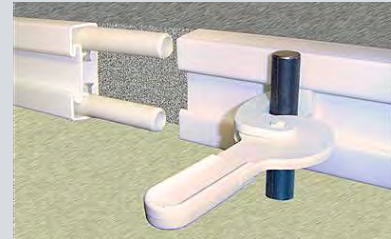
"Plastiforms can be used to form pretty much anything you would form with wood forms," says Pawlicki. "Most contractors have found that they can set up, pour and strip these forms in one day."

Plastiforms are one quarter the weight of lumber and are guaranteed for 10 years. Pawlicki has continued to improve on the original design as well as develop new products. The company just rolled out a new curb and gutter system and has several patents pending.

www.plastiform.net



Plastiform, from The Plastiform Co.



Made by a different company than Plastiform by Green Plastics, these Plastiform plastic forms have been on the market for more than 20 years. They feature cam-lock clamps that allow contractors to secure the forms to a variety of stakes, such as wood, rebar or round steel. End connections, to splice one form to the next, can be made with schedule 40 PVC pipe, eliminating the need for customers to special-order misplaced or damaged parts.

Plastiform forms are stackable and available in a variety of face heights.

www.plastiform.com

Poly Forms, from Metal Forms Corp.



Xtra Flex is one of several specialty lines of poly forms from Metal Forms Corp. Designed for tight radius jobs, these forms feature bolt-on steel stake pockets with a grip-locking knob, allowing for easy setup and tear-down as well as simple grade adjustments.

Another line from Metal Forms is called Plastic Concrete Forms. Designed for flatwork, these forms can be bent to achieve curves down to a 3-foot radius or used on straight work when bought with aluminum inserts.

Plastic Curb and Gutter Forms are plastic forms with steel stake pockets and overhead hangers that help users place all kinds of concrete curbs. Stacking pockets allow contractors to achieve varying heights. These forms also utilize optional aluminum reinforcing inserts on noncurved pours.

www.metalforms.com

PRODUCT NEWS

Lafarge introduces portland-limestone cement to Canadian market

Lafarge recently introduced portland-limestone cement (PLC) to Canada. Widely used in Europe for more than 25 years, PLC is a new category of cement that provides performance similar to conventional portland cement with up to 10 percent less carbon dioxide emissions.

Approved for use by the Canadian Standards Association, the National Building Code of Canada, and the British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec Building Codes, PLC is produced by intergrinding portland cement clinker with between 6 percent and 15 percent limestone. The new GUL cement with up to 15 percent limestone should perform comparably to regular portland cement in terms of concrete workability, set time, durability and all ages of concrete strength development.

Lafarge will start the transition from regular portland cement to PLC this year. Customers in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec are currently being supplied PLC. Product introduction to other provinces will occur as additional testing and updates to local building codes are completed.

www.lafarge-na.com

Proceq adds to Pundit Lab line

Proceq has introduced its Pundit Lab+, the latest addition to the Pundit Lab family of concrete testing instruments.

For years the Pundit brand has set the standard as the leading ultrasonic non-destructive test instrument for concrete. New features of the Pundit Lab+ include compressive strength measurement, an integrated amplifier, time stamp, results on display and a complete transducer ranger.

Pundit Link Analysis software is included with purchase.

www.proceq.com

Dew Point Meter from Defelsko

Defelsko Corp. has introduced its new PosiTector DTM Dew Point Meter, which measures and records climatic conditions, including relative humidity, air temperature, surface temperature, dew point temperature, and the difference between surface and dew point temperatures.

This rugged meter features a large, easy-to-read screen, audio and visual alarms and a fast response time. Smart Trend Indicators identify rising, falling or stable readings. The meter also contains an internal memory and a USB port, and it is compatible with the free PosiSoft software. Additionally, its universal body accepts PosiTector coating thickness probes, surface profile probes and environmental probes.

www.defelsko.com

Low-carbon cement discovered

A proprietary geopolymer binding agent from Blue World Crete Inc. called Geo-Blue Crete II is intended as a low-carbon-footprint alternative to portland cement. It looks like, acts like and works like portland cement, and can be distributed in the same way with the same equipment, at a fraction of the manufacturing cost.

Geo-Blue Crete II is less dependent on water in its concrete mix and can reach much greater compression and tensile strengths than the original Geo-Blue Crete. The product results in a high-performance concrete that may top 10,000 psi. It is water-retardant and acid-retardant, discourages the oxidation of rebar, and has a near zero coefficient of expansion, which makes it helpful in below-freezing temperatures as well as in tropical regions of the world. It does not transfer heat very well, which makes for great insulating properties. Finally, it is made of post-industrial waste materials.

The company is currently seeking manufacturers and distributors worldwide.

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PROJECT PROFILE

Polished Concrete Floor at Meadowdale Middle School Lynnwood, Wash.

by Chris Mayo

Pictur e the elementary school you attended. The floors were probably concrete covered by institutional-style vinyl tile or commercial-grade carpet. In a word, boring.

Thanks to the work of Kyle Wiggins and his team at Flooring Solutions LLC in Woodinville, Wash., Meadowdale Middle School has an entirely different kind of floor.

Meadowdale, a new school in the Edmonds School District, in the suburbs north of Seattle, boasts nearly 100,000 square feet of floor surface, about half of which is state-of-the-art polished concrete.

"The school is two stories," recalls Wiggins. "They wanted the corridors and some of the classrooms to be polished concrete."

The first floor is a normal concrete slab, while the second floor is a post-tension slab supported by posts set on 2-foot by 2-foot footers that encroach into the first floor, he says.

The scale of the job and the tight schedule imposed by the school district's goal of opening in time for the upcoming school year posed some minor challenges.

Wiggins' team (typically three or four employees on any given day) tackled the



Photo courtesy of Flooring Solutions LLC

job by breaking it down into six separate phases — usually keeping two 32-inch grinders operating all day and using additional manpower to fill cracks, hand-grind, and ultimately dye, densify and seal. Paying close attention to scheduling goals helped them finish on time.

However, getting the floor to a point where the dyeing would look uniform proved to be the most challenging aspect of the job. The footers on the first floor didn't blend well with the slab. Grinding exposed a lot of cracks, which had to be filled with epoxy. Due to the lack of expansion cuts on the upper floor, grinding exposed cracks there too.

"The more grinding we did, the more cracks appeared," says Wiggins. "The school district wanted a light gray polished finish, which doesn't hide cracking very well, so we

had to do more grinding and routing than we expected to do."

Project at a Glance

Client: Edmonds School District, Lynnwood, Wash.

Contractor: Kyle Wiggins, Flooring Solutions LLC, Woodinville, Wash.

Project Description: Polish, dye and seal 50,000 square feet of concrete floor surface in a new middle school.

Challenge: Complete the work on schedule while maintaining consistency of color and slip resistance.

Grinding/Polishing Equipment Used: Innovatech Predator Grinders, Innovatech P-850 Edge Grinders

Products Used: L&M Construction Chemicals materials (Vivid Dye light gray dye, FGS sodium-based hardener, LiON Hard lithium-based hardener, Permaguard water-based sealer), Crown Polymers Flexible Joint Epoxy, Universal Concrete Forming Products EZ Cover



Attention to detail

A job such as this involves a striking number of smaller, detailed tasks: grinding, filling cracks and expansion joints, more grinding, dye application, densifying, polishing, sealing, finishing, and finally protecting. Each step requires attention to detail.

The grinding was done with Innovatech Predator grinders, which feature a four-headed planetary design as opposed to the more common three-headed design found on a lot of commercial concrete grinders. The crew started with 40-grit metal-bond diamond segments (also by Innovatech), graduating to 150-grit segments over the course of several additional passes, spending extra time where needed to maintain a consistent appearance. Hand-grinding in corners and tough-to-reach areas was minimized by using Innovatech P-850 edge grinders.

"The people from the school district were very pleased with how we achieved consistency right up to the edges of walls and in corners," says Wiggins. "They had done polished concrete in other schools prior to this one, but they said they had never seen that kind of uniformity."

For the dyeing, densifying and sealing, Wiggins stuck with products from L&M Construction Chemicals Inc. He used their Vivid Dye line of dye to attain the light grey color the customer wanted. Prior to densifying the surface, they hit the dyed concrete with 800 grit to further lighten the color.

Densifying was accomplished using two applications of different kinds of hardener. The surface was cleaned, and L&M FGS sodium-based hardener was applied, agitated and scrubbed in using agitators and brooms. Then the floor was washed again, and L&M LiON

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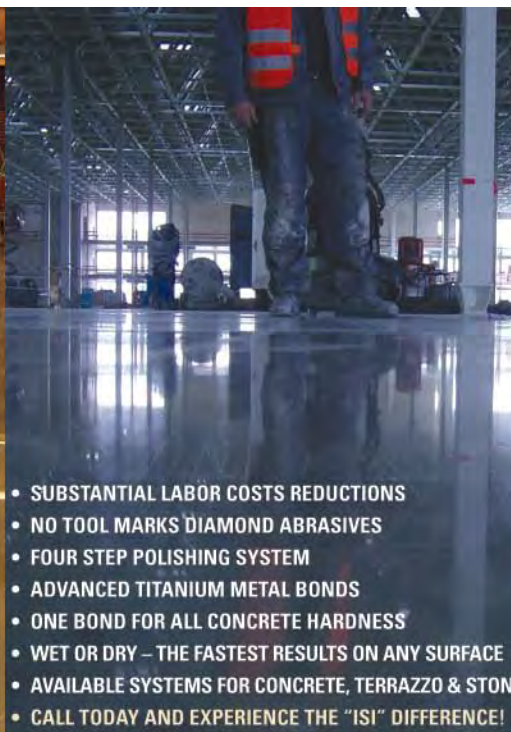
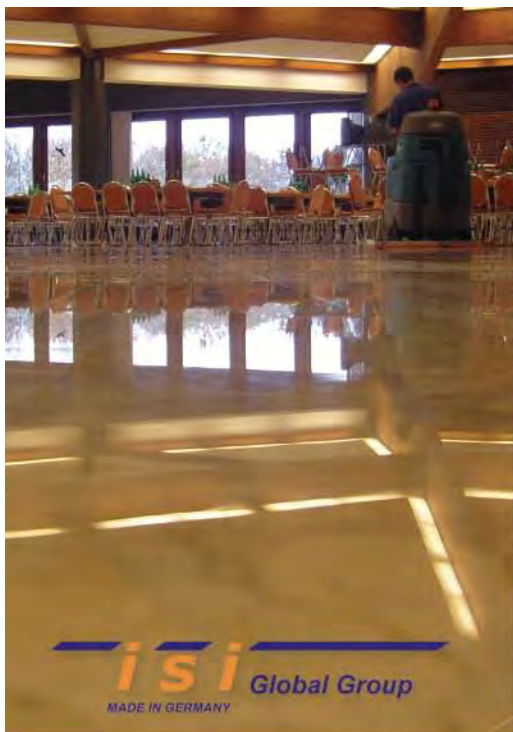


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grinding & polishing :

Hard lithium-based hardener was applied and allowed to dry. The floor was scrubbed clean yet again, and the surface was sealed with L&M Permaguard water-based sealer.

A final complication arose at the tail end of the job. The floor was finished, but work on the building was scheduled to continue for months — HVAC, electrical, painting and so on. How to protect a finely polished concrete surface from construction traffic or dents and scars from dropped tools and building materials?

"We struggled a little with this one," says Wiggins. "At first the school district wanted

to use plywood, and then they decided on masonite. Finally, I suggested a product called EZcover. It's a fiber composite with a dense membrane on top and a softer, feltlike cushion on the bottom. It performed very well, and saved us the labor involved in using plywood or masonite."

LEED in mind

Wiggins chose his dye, densifiers, and sealer with LEED requirements in mind.

Greg Schwietz, president of L&M Construction Chemicals, says the company has developed products to specifically

meet or exceed LEED specifications and regulatory caps on volatile organic compounds.

"We do a lot with independent testing to ensure that our products don't contain hazardous components that would create VOC or interior environmental issues later. In fact, many of our dyes, sealers and cleaners are approved under CHPS criteria," says Schwietz.

CHPS (the Collaborative for High Performance Schools) is a green-building rating program especially designed for K-12 schools. CHPS criteria were published in 2002.

With chemical restraints taken care of, the only other LEED challenge was dust containment.

"Really the biggest environmental issue we had on the job was dust containment during the grinding and polishing phases of the job," Wiggins said. "That's one of the reasons I like the Innovatech grinders. They have powerful Ermator (T-12600) dust collectors with HEPA filters that keep the dust under control."

"We have definitely seen an increase in the use of polished concrete in institutional and governmental buildings over the past several years. And it makes sense when you think about it. Utilization of concrete is simply a very desirable option from an environmental point of view," says Schwietz.

Wiggins couldn't agree more. "Every school has concrete floors. It comes down to a matter of whether they want to cover the concrete with carpet or tile, or simply use what's already there. From a long-term point of view, concrete requires less maintenance.

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Compete for Work, But Do It Respectfully

My grandfather was a Marine in World War II. When he came back from the Philippines he started an air conditioning company in Houston. His business grew fairly large and he was very successful.



by David Stephenson

As a child I used to sometimes go with my grandfather to breakfast. We always went to the same place and he sat with a regular group of guys. The interesting thing about this is that the group of men that my grandfather had breakfast with were all in the air conditioning business and were his biggest competitors. It didn't strike me odd

at the time, but if you think about it, these guys fought against each other all day for every customer or available dollar, but they drank coffee together every morning. They had respect for each other.

One of the major issues that I have noticed in the decorative concrete industry is that most contractors in our business do not seem to have any respect for each other. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part this statement is true across the board.

I am going to describe a couple of examples of this that I have seen repeated over and over through the years.

Let's say that a job is up for bid and the customer wants to get pricing from several contractors. Two contractors are asked to come out and view the project at different times on the same day. The first contractor gets on-site and does a project walk-

through. He discusses all the issues that he can think of with the customer and then sits down to put together a price.

Before he leaves the parking lot contractor two arrives. He sees contractor one in the parking lot, and all of a sudden his game plan changes. Now when he walks the job he is thinking, "I wonder what contractor one said. I need to make sure that I say things that will lower their value in the customer's eyes." So he does.

The customer becomes totally confused about what is right or wrong. The contractor choice is now based on a trust issue, whether the customer thinks that contractor two is being honest. There is no respect here. The bid award doesn't come down to price or experience. It comes down to backstabbing and misinformation.

The second scenario that I see happen

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time and again is that contractor one does a hard bid project. The customer feels that the floor is not up to expectations. So what does the customer do? They ask contractor two to come out and give them an opinion about the project. They do this because contractor one is not telling them what they want to hear.

Contractor two comes out and walks onto the job like a hero. He has no idea what has transpired to get the job to this point, and he wouldn't think of calling contractor one to discuss the project. Instead contractor two proceeds to tell the customer, "I would do this and that, and that right there should never have happened. Our company never has problems with poor-quality concrete work because our company does whatever it takes to make the floor meet your expectations."

All that contractor two has done is hurt part of our industry. When the customer faces their next project, they will think, "I don't want to do decorative concrete again. I remember what happened on that other project, and I can't ensure that we will get the floor that we want, so let's go another route." This happens every day. I have seen this happen on small one-time projects and with huge commercial clients that move away from decorative concrete in favor of other materials that have a more consistent installer base. This type of disinformation goes a long way toward hurting the future of decorative concrete.

The saddest part to me is that due to contractors' lack of respect for each other it seems that many have lost respect for themselves. The projects keep getting cheaper and the quality of the end product goes down accordingly. Architecturally polished concrete should be \$8 to \$12 per square foot based on the amount of work that goes into the floor. Our floors require just as much work as high-end tile, our materials cost a lot of money and the fine detail that goes into a high-end project is amazing. So what is a typical price for this type of work right now? It's around \$3.50 a foot. And we wonder why polished concrete contractors are struggling even when the market for our work is on the rise.

We should view competition as healthy. Without Larry Bird, would Magic Johnson have been as good a player? Probably not. In the face of competition, human nature compels you to work harder to become better. In our industry most contractors have instead gone the route of hurting our opponents' reputations and cutting our prices.

My advice is to get to know your competition on a personal level. Most of the time, you will find out that they are just like you. They have drive and passion for decorative concrete. They are responsible for employees and dream of success. As you get to know them you will develop respect for them as people and contractors. Eventually this will result in sharing thoughts and ideas and, yes, even helping with processes. I am not saying don't compete. I am not saying to lie down and always play nice. Go hard, but respect your fellow contractor. Without competition your company will never be as strong as you dream about it becoming. 📱

David Stephenson is president of Cave Springs, Ark.-based Polished Concrete Consultants. He can be reached at dstephenson@polishedconsultants.com.

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by Kelly O'Brien

Slam Dunk

Colour, Placerville, Calif.
colourconcrete@sbcglobal.net

This technique incorporates an embossed team logo, handsome basketball-inspired line art and a beautifully rich planking pattern into one stunning polished and engraved floor.

Ingredients:

Colledi Designs 22 mil sandblast stencil (you can use any pattern, but in this case the stencil was cut with the Sacramento Kings logo)

AmeriPolish Solvent-Based Dyes: Midnight Black, Maroon, Patriot Blue, Gold, Sand, Chocolate Brown, Walnut

Acetone (for diluting the dyes)

SealSource International Harden X lithium densifier

SealSource International SS DuraGloss 50+ polish guard

Special Equipment Required: Polishing machines (Colour uses the HTC 800 classic and HTC 500), full range of grinding discs from 40-grit metal-bonded up through 800-grit resin, masking tape, plastic sheeting, Blastrac 1-9DEZ 9-inch shotblaster with steel shot, Makita 4.5-inch Angle Grinder with a 4-inch Concrete/Masonry wheel, Engrave-A-Crete Cobra engraver

Directions:

► There are three elements to this floor: the embossed logo stencil, the line art in the shape of a basketball's seams, and the plank pattern across the entire floor, mimicking the look of an indoor court. Each part of the technique is done separately, but they all come together for a unified look.

► It all starts with grinding your concrete surface, beginning with 40-grit metals and stepping up to 80-grit from there.

► Apply one coat of lithium densifier once you've finished with your 80-grit discs, and let the surface absorb it completely.

► Continue grinding, progressing up to 400-grit resin pads.

► Once you've finished a pass with the 400-grit pads, clean the surface thoroughly to remove all dust and debris. Let the floor dry completely.

► Apply the logo stencil design to the surface carefully, following the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that you have an even, secure transfer of the pattern. For this pattern, the initial stencil transfer will leave only the outline and shadows around the lettering exposed. This is the area you'll be embossing and staining first, and then you'll stain the rest of the lettering a few steps later.

► Mask the area from the edge of the stencil outward with masking tape and plastic sheeting, protecting the surrounding concrete from unwanted shotblasting.

► Shotblast the stencil pattern, making three or more passes, until the desired amount of material is removed, leaving the design embossed on the surface.

► Vacuum to remove dust and any stray shot from the design area.

► Apply Midnight Black dye at full strength and spray it over the stencil so that all the embossed areas are dyed black.



Photo courtesy of Colour

► Remove the stencil pieces for the logo's letters and apply a mixture of roughly three parts Patriot Blue to one part Maroon with a sprayer to create the royal purple of the team's logo.

► Let dyes dry for a minute or so before removing the rest of the stencil.

► Clean any residue off the surface.

► Chalk out the basketball line art, and engrave those designs with the angle grinder.

► Measure out 4-inch wide "planks" in random lengths, to mimic a real wood plank floor, and snap chalk lines to mark them.

► Use the Cobra to engrave the long, straight lines between planks. Use the angle grinder for the small lines and to detail intersections, being sure not to cut through the logo area or the large basketball line art.

► After all the engraving is complete, clean the entire floor thoroughly.

► Mix several batches of Gold, Sand, Chocolate Brown, and Walnut dyes heavily diluted with acetone. Apply to random planks to achieve the look of a wood-planked basketball court.

► Once those dyes have dried, mask off the basketball line art and apply the same mix of Patriot Blue and Maroon that you used on the logo's detail work.

► Once all your coloring is complete, continue to polish the floor, stepping up from 400 grit to 800 grit to get the high-gloss finish.

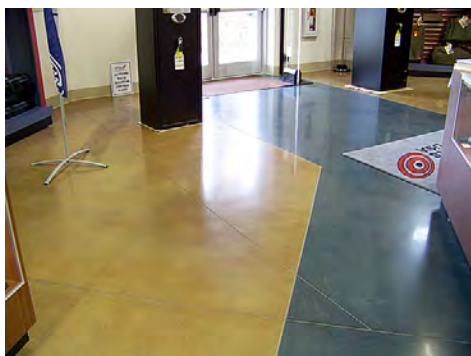
► Clean your floor very thoroughly and apply two coats of polish guard, burnishing after each coat. 🛠️

grinding & polishing:

PRODUCT NEWS

New Scofield Formula One Guard-W

New from L. M. Scofield Co., Scofield Formula One Guard-W is a water-based finish used in conjunction with a high-speed burnisher to enhance the gloss of ground and polished concrete surfaces. It was developed to provide a fast turnaround time, a measure of protection against water intrusion, excellent image clarity and easier maintenance.



Scofield Formula One Guard-W is VOC-compliant and cost-effective. It contains lithium silicate, which will improve the gloss level and surface durability of ground and polished concrete when used with a high-speed burnisher. After polishing, concrete surfaces treated with Guard-W will demonstrate enhanced clarity, and the final color will generally be deeper than that of the original installation. Used after the substrate is treated with Scofield Formula One Lithium Densifier MP, Guard-W further reduces liquid permeability while being breathable.

Scofield Formula One Guard-W is part of Scofield's Formula One Polished Concrete System.

www.scofield.com

New pads from Applied Diamond Tool

Applied Diamond Tools has introduced 4-inch Metal Bond Flexible Diamond Polishing/Grinding Pads.

These metal-bond flexible diamond grinding pads are designed for heavy to medium grinding of concrete, granite and other stones. They uniquely combine the

aggressive, long-lasting features of cup wheels with the flexibility of diamond pads. These aggressive, purely metal-bonded diamond pads are flexible and ideal for sinkholes and many other curved areas.

The pads are available in 30 grit, 50 grit, 100 grit and 200 grit, and they feature a color-coded Velcro back. Wet use is recommended, but they can be used in dry applications as well.

www.toolocity.com

Cup wheel for removal, prep

Dynamic Diamond Tooling's new six-segment 7-inch cup wheel is used to remove coatings and provide for aggressive surface prep.

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"I've never seen such depth and brilliance with a water soluble dye...incredible" Pro Polish, IA

"The Raven Black was simply outstanding - we won the bid just on color rendition" ATS Studios, MD

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PROJECT PROFILE

Bay-Colored Pool Santa Cruz, Calif.

by Chris Mayo

Imagine this: You own an estate in the California hills overlooking Monterey Bay. You are a lover of art and natural beauty. You want a swimming pool complex with a large concrete deck and pool house. You want it to accentuate the surrounding landscape and incorporate the feel of the bay, but you're not sure how you want to achieve that. Who do you call?

Tom Ralston Concrete.

Ralston bases his work on a few firmly held tenets:

- Understand what the customer wants — even if the customer doesn't quite know what he or she wants.
- Time spent on preparation and planning always pays off.
- Appreciate your surroundings and, if possible, incorporate them into the job.
- Nothing is impossible.

Project at a Glance

Client: A couple with a private residence in the hills overlooking Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay

Concrete Contractor: Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, Calif.

General Contractor: Schultz Construction Inc., Santa Cruz, Calif.

Project Description: Construct a pool complex, including 3,850 square feet of concrete deck, a 500-square-foot pool house and barbecue area, and a 2,125-square-foot pool colored to reflect the colors of the bay. All finished concrete was colored and textured.

Challenges: Color the pool and deck in such a way as to be harmonious with the surrounding landscape.

Products Used: Matcrete color hardener: Pacific Blue; Brickform color hardener: Shadow Slate; L. M. Scofield Co. color hardener: Stone Grey and Weathered Sage; Alcantar color hardener: Stone Green and Platinum Grey; The Stamp Store Caesar Stone texture mats; Super Stone Inc. Clear Concrete Sealer; Heritage Glass recycled glass aggregate: Amber-9 and Forest Green



Photos courtesy of Tom Ralston Concrete

Ralston recalls the initial interview with these art-loving clients. "The couple travel frequently to Africa and often return with beautiful carvings and artifacts. They had already created a hilltop jungle of exotic plants and sculptures mixed in with indigenous growth, and they wanted the pool area to emphasize the setting. Their main request, however, was kind of vague but involved the free usage of color. They wanted us to use an artful and colorful approach."

Perfect, thought Ralston.

"Walking the property, I noticed that there are places from which you have a 180-degree view of the bay. It's really a stunning location," he says. "After brainstorming with the client we came up with a general idea of coloring the inside of the pool with colors that would mimic the array of colors in the bay. Though I'd never attempted anything quite like that before, I loved the idea. More importantly, so did the customer."

After several conversations, the project began to take shape, says Ralston. "A contractor friend of mine, John Wilgus, had cast a stamp from real trilobite fossils embedded in rock. A trilobite is a crustacean that has been extinct for about 245 million years. I also have a cast of baby Tyrannosaurus rex footprints from the La Brea Tar Pits that I obtained through another friend. We decided to incorporate the trilobite stamps in the deck, make several T. rex footprints to disperse throughout the surrounding gardens, and stick with the idea of broadcasting colors in the pool."

Lots of prep

All concrete jobs require prep work. This one was unique by virtue of the sheer volume of site preparation and underground work involved. The site had to be graded and compacted for 3,850 square feet of pool deck, footings needed to be dug for the 500-square-foot pool house and barbecue



area, trenches for plumbing and electrical lines had to be dug, and the 2,125-square-foot pool had to be excavated and gunited.

Once the gunite work and the foundation for the pool house were done, Ralston and crew poured more than 450 square feet of coping (the edges that serve as a transition between water and deck) around the pool, the kiddie pool and the

hot tub. They used Douglas fir two-by-fours attached to the pool's bond beam around the pool and 3/8-inch masonite lap siding around the kiddie pool and hot tub to provide simple cantilevered square edges.

The customer wanted a color that would be in keeping with the water color of the Monterey Bay — a green-blue that gets greener as fog rolls in. To achieve this, they blended three parts Matcrete Pacific Blue with one part Brickform Shadow Slate color hardeners. The coping was textured with the trilobite stamp and a Caesar texture mat from Doug Bannister's Stamp Store.

The pool deck came next. Ralston was going for a definite offset in color, but he also wanted to maintain

continuity with the patterns inside the pool. He expected the colors in the pool to bleed into one another. He wanted a similar drifting of colors in the deck. "The drifts ended up looking a lot like wind-blown sand, like what you see at the tops of sand dunes on a windy day, especially with the L. M. Scofield color hardener that we used," says Ralston.

The deck was sealed with two coats of Super Stone clear sealer, between which Ralston used a 30-minus blend (about 100 grit) of glass from Heritage Glass, with equal parts Amber-9 and Forest Green colors. The glass provides slip resistance.

Throwing color around the pool

The coping and deck finished, it was finally time for Ralston to put his idea to the test. He had presented the customer with five color samples, the idea being that she would choose one or two. She liked them all.

"On the day of the plastering, I came to work with these colors," recalls Ralston. "The plasterers had been told what I would be doing — but it was quickly apparent that they weren't ready for how much color I was going to spread. I jumped into the pool





and began to throw color hardener into the plaster — blue, green, platinum, weathered sage and so on. Like many plastering crews in my part of the country, these guys spoke only Spanish, but there is no language barrier when it comes to disapproving looks. They weren't overjoyed to have a guy throwing colors around while they were plastering. Finally, it seemed as if one of them channeled Roberto Duran in his bout with Sugar Ray Leonard as he emphatically said 'No mas.' I was able to convince them that this is what the customer wanted and they begrudgingly allowed me to continue."

To avoid cracking, pools are filled immediately after plastering. Ralston was worried about the colors adhering properly underwater. He contacted a chemist from Richard James Specialty Chemicals Co. who agreed that the colors would need to be sealed sooner rather than later. The chemist recommended draining the pool after two days, sealing the inside, and then quickly refilling the pool.

The finishing touches

Ralston cast the pool cover lids (to match the coping) and the dinosaur feet at

his shop. The cover lids were cured for 10 days, brought on site, and fastened on top of the pool cover trough with stainless-steel mesh. Each pool cover lid has a 3 1/2-inch-thick front edge to match the pool coping and a 3 1/2-inch back edge to help hold it level, with the bulk cast at 2 inches thick to minimize weight.

The dinosaur feet were cast in a variety of earth-tone colors and strategically placed

in the gardens surrounding the pool area.

Ralston is justifiably proud of the job. "A giant tide pool," he says. "I've never seen anything like this before or since. All in all, an incredibly fun job, great clients and a great general contractor to work with." 🛠️

🌐 www.tomralstonconcrete.com

PRODUCT NEWS

Fire Ring mold from Armcon

Armcon Molds USA has introduced a Fire Ring mold system. The system includes two molds: one for the base circle and one for the cap.

The standard size is 12 inches high and has an inside diameter of 35 inches. More courses can be added for extra height. Each course is 4 inches high. An optional steel segmented liner is available. 🛠️

🌐 www.armconmoldsusa.com



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Film-Forming Sealers and Their Effect on Color

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

If you think clear sealers won't affect the color of concrete, you're right in some instances and wrong in others.

While it's true penetrating sealers offer invisible protection against moisture and some chemicals after they settle into a concrete slab, film-forming sealers — which are often used on decorative concrete — are a different story.

There are three primary types of film-forming sealers, all of which are available in water- and solvent-based versions. From the thinnest to the thickest — acrylics, polyurethanes, epoxies — these protective coverings can produce sheens of varying intensities that highlight the beauty of a decorated surface and often enhance its color.

Although high-gloss finishes, like the ones produced by solvent-based acrylics, are very popular because they really bring out the color, "you won't have that gloss forever unless it's maintained," warns Bart Sacco, president of Concrete Texturing Tool and Supply, in Scranton, Pa.

Film-formers with a low-gloss or satin finish, which appeal to folks who want a more natural look, usually don't require as



Photos courtesy of Floric Polytech

much maintenance. "They tend to make colors more muted," says Daniel Owen, vice president of Arizona Polymer Flooring Inc. "That's because the coatings are flattened with fumed silica so you have tiny pieces throughout. You don't perceive it on lighter colors, but if you put it on a real dark floor, the result can be a whitish dull gloss."

Of the three film-forming sealers,

acrylics are the most widely used indoors and outdoors, with solvent-based a popular choice among contractors.

Acrylics

As a general rule, solvent-based acrylics will enhance colors more than their water-based cousins, says Sacco. "I think that may change in the next year, year and a half, as manufacturers are changing some technology in waterborne products to make colors pop," he adds.

Gaye Goodman, managing partner of installation company Faux Real LLC in Albuquerque, N.M., says today's solvent-based acrylic sealers enrich hues beautifully. "I was doing a countertop where the client wanted a reddish terra cotta to match the tiles on the kitchen floor. But our colors were going toward orange," she says. "Even though we stained the counter three times with a mahogany, it still wasn't red enough."

She thought about trying a topical red dye but decided to see what an acrylic

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solvent-based sealer would do. “I brushed on the acrylic and wiped it off like you would a wood stain. As I was doing this, the color shifted from orange to a deeper orange-red. Even though it wasn’t an exact match, it spoke to the other tiles in the room and blended well with it. It fixed the problem.”

Goodman says a solvent-based acrylic sealer also will bring out warmer colors, such as yellow and orange, and increase color contrast. “If an area contains mottling between darker and lighter versions of the same color, that will be emphasized by any sealer, but more so by a solvent-based acrylic or epoxy sealer,” she says.

Goodman says she predominantly uses solvent-based and water-based acrylics to seal her projects. Which one depends on the clients’ taste.

“I usually will run a wet mop over the slab and tell them that’s what it will look like if we go with a solvent-based sealer,” she says. “It will be this dark but not this gray. It’ll be richer but more golden than what you see now.”

If her clients love the present color and don’t want it any darker, or if they prefer the look of the dry portion of the floor over the wet, Goodman uses a water-based sealer topped with a protective acrylic polish or wax coat as the final finish. “The floor will scratch a little easier and the homeowner will have to reapply the final finish about once a year,” Goodman says. But the color won’t change, and a protective finish is easy to apply, dries in about an hour and will keep the floor looking like new for many years.

Polyurethanes

Polyurethanes are applied nearly twice as thick as acrylic sealers, forming a high-build protective film that enhances the color of stamped or exposed aggregate surfaces, as well as countertops.

According to Owen, his company’s two-part Polyurethane 250, which he says “is our workhorse for guys doing architectural concrete,” really stands out compared to solvent-based acrylic sealers. Its color-enhancing qualities are similar, he says, but “it’s so much more chemical-, abrasion- and stain-resistant.”

The product, which has been on the market about 10 years, bonds directly to the concrete. “It’s very dependable and does exceptionally well on dense concrete. Its long-term performance is its biggest thing.



Photo by Faux Real LLC

Solvent-based acrylic sealers are particularly popular among decorative concrete contractors.

It keeps the color protected and the gloss is easier to clean.”

Florinc Polytech offers a similar product called Polythane 250. Florinc Polytech senior

sales representative Josh Scott recommends two coats to really bring out the color and even out the finish. Polythane 250 is available in gloss or matte.

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Epoxies

The thickest film-forming sealers are epoxies, and a 100 percent solid epoxy will darken a surface's color more than a solvent-based acrylic, says Owen. "Certain epoxies can have an amber hue to begin with," he says, "which can be an issue if it's used over light-colored decorative concrete. If you see yellow in the pail, it's going to show on the floor."

He says his company has two water-based epoxies. One is very clear and barely darkens the substrate, and the other will

darken it substantially. "You can really see the difference in color if you use it over white or light tan," he says.

Scott says his company's water-based epoxies don't enhance colors and have less gloss than high-solid epoxies, urethanes or solvenated acrylics. Its high-solid epoxies, on the other hand, really spruce up the color and make floors shine. "The high solids," he cautions, "are not UV-stable and will amber up in the sun. They should be used as a topcoat indoors only." 🛠️

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On patios and pool decks at Paradise Springs water park, part of the Gaylord Texan resort in Grapevine, Texas, Lonestar Concrete Systems installed integrally colored concrete in a custom-blended buff shade and troweled in millet seeds for texture. For more about this project, see page 65. To read more about Lonestar, this month's Artisan in Concrete, see page 14.

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TROWEL & ERROR

How Stains and Dyes Color Your Concrete

Do you really understand how the products you use on your decorative projects work? Step number one of my “Seven Steps to Success Before You Start a Project” (*Concrete Decor*, February/March 2010) states that you should “understand the products and process.” Using the product is not enough. You have to really know what it is, what it’s made of, how it works, and how to properly use it.

In today’s hypercompetitive world, with media, advertising and so many options coming at you from all directions,



by Chris Sullivan

following this rule can be confusing and just plain hard to do. I find that the concrete stains and dye market is one of the most competitive in our industry. Seemingly every manufacturer has them, and in some cases stains or dyes are the only product a company may be selling. Each product has a story as to why it is better, greener and easier to use than everything else on the market. So, with so many choices, how do you decide which stain or dye is best for you?

Or, maybe you’re the guy or gal who buys a specific product because it’s what you have used for years, it’s what’s available locally, or you have never had a problem — never mind that you have no clue what it’s made of and how it really works.

When it comes to concrete staining, in most cases, the job and your paycheck

are riding on the final color, tone and look created by the stain. It’s important that some time be spent learning about the products you use to make a living.

Let’s start with the basics. Stains and dyes are penetrating products by definition. This automatically eliminates the cheap imitators that call themselves stains but in essence are colored coatings or colored sealers. Be wary of these cheap imitators, as they will use the buzzwords “stain” and “penetrating” but form a film on the job. If it requires an acid etch prior to application, it is probably not a true stain. True stains do not form a film and can range from opaque to translucent.

In regard to composition, all stains and dyes are comprised of the same core components: a carrier (liquid) and a

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colorant (pigment or dye). There are other ancillary ingredients that can be added to enhance performance, but the two core elements remain the liquid carrier and the colorant. With that piece of information in place, we can now look at how different carriers and colorants offer different outcomes and why you would use one over another depending on the project.

The carrier (liquid)

In the most simplistic way, the liquid carrier allows us to get the colorant from the bottle to the floor. It “carries” the colorant and allows it to penetrate into the substrate. Visualize the liquid carrier giving the colorant a piggyback ride into the concrete. Once the carrier has completed its job of carrying the colorant, it is free to go away — and this is exactly what it does. In most cases it evaporates, with some carriers moving on to perform other functions such as hardening the substrate.

Here are some common stain carriers and their key attributes.

Water: Cheap, easy to access, no odor, high surface tension, requires a porous surface.

Acetone: Costly, high odor, high flammability, low surface tension, penetrates very dense tight surfaces, fast-drying.

Alcohol: Cheap, low odor, medium flammability, low surface tension, penetrates dense and tight surfaces, dries at medium speed.

Penetrating sealers: High cost, low odor, medium surface tension, requires a porous surface.

Some stains will use a blend of these carriers to gain the benefits of different liquids. Since these are all “simple solvents,” they are miscible, meaning they can be mixed together.

The colorants (pigment or dye)

There are two different common colorants used in decorative coloring products — pigments and dye. The difference between the two is that a pigment is insoluble in the carrier liquid (resulting in suspension), and a dye is soluble in its carrier liquid (resulting in a solution). Without getting into too much chemistry, the important factors to consider and be aware of with stain colorants are color palette, solubility, particle size and UV stability. The bigger the particle size, the



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more porous the substrate needs to be, while small-particle colorants can squeeze into tight spaces and dense substrates. Here are some common colorants and their key attributes:

Mineral salts: Metal-based, large particle size, found in acid stains, deep earth-tone colors, limited color palette, react with cement-based materials to become permanent, some may have toxicity issues, UV-stable.

Organic pigments: Vivid colors, wide color palette, large particle size, some UV stability, no toxicity issues.

Inorganic pigments: Metal-based, limited color range, large particle size, excellent UV stability, some toxicity issues.

Dyes: Metal-based and organic, wide color range, bright colors, very small particle size, poor UV stability, no toxicity issues.

Pigments dispersed in acrylic resin: Organic and inorganic, wide color selection, large particle size, good UV stability, no toxicity.

We now have a better understanding of the makeup of stains and dyes, so let's look at some choices.

If color palette is important, organic and acrylic colorants used in water-based systems make sense. The downside with these is their large particle size requires a very porous surface for them to gain penetration.

If UV stability is important, look for metal-based or inorganic colorants that will stand up to the harshest UV rays. If penetrating a dense, hard surface is important, lean toward dyes in alcohol or acetone (or a blend of the two) to get into those tight surfaces. Dyes in acetone have become the staple colorant for polished concrete.

Also keep in mind that water, while being the cheapest and most widely available carrier, also has the highest surface tension and will tend to float on the surface if it's overapplied or if the surface is too tight or dense.

In my experience, all the stains and dyes on the market work. What your choice comes down to is understanding the product makeup and then matching the right stain to the surface or substrate you are working with on your particular project. As always, the most important step is to perform job-site samples or mock-ups. Since every concrete substrate is different, sampling on the actual floor to be stained is the best way to predict the final outcome. 🛠️

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@protradehub.com.

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PRODUCT NEWS

Engrave-A-Crete introduces stains with pearlescent pigments

Engrave-A-Crete Inc. has introduced Concrete Resurrection Polychromatic Stain, the latest addition to its line of decorative concrete stains. Polychromatic Stain is infused with pearlescent pigments that offer options for upscale effects.

Concrete Resurrection Polychromatic Stain is available in both interior and exterior versions and is easy to use and ready to apply. Use any of the four colors — gold, silver, copper or bronze — singly or in a combination.

www.engageacrete.com


Preval introduces airbrush system

Preval's latest product, the vFan Airbrush, is a portable system that offers a fan spray pattern up to 3 inches wide. It also includes a 0.66-millimeter standard air cap that will deliver hairline details. The compressor units offer more than 150 linear feet of paint coverage, or more than 15 square feet of coverage.

The vFan Airbrush sprays paints, specialty coatings, dyes and stains. The system includes the vFan Airbrush, two compressor units, a 6-foot braided air hose, pressure regulator, fan air caps, standard air caps, additional needles and multiple product containers.

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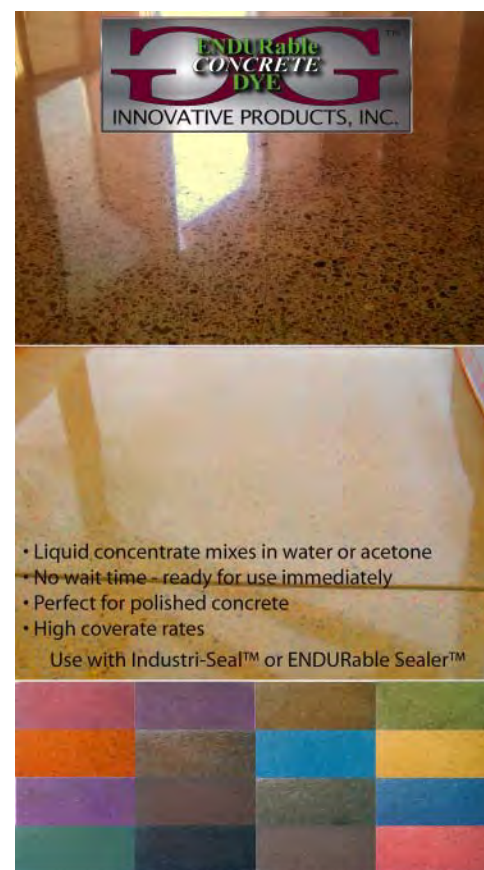
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PROJECT PROFILE

Paradise Springs at Gaylord Texan Resort Grapevine, Texas

by *Natasha Chilingirian*

During a hot summer in northern Texas, a cool dip in a pool or ride down a water slide can be the perfect remedy, and that's exactly what you'll find at Paradise Springs, a new water park that opened for the 2011 summer season at the Gaylord Texan, a Grapevine, Texas, resort owned by luxury hospitality chain Gaylord Hotels.

Paradise Springs boasts a 27-foot-tall water slide, a 600-foot-long "lazy river" pool, a 6,000-square-foot lagoon — and 65,000 square feet of decorative concrete surfaces designed to ward off heat, earn LEED points and meet the comfort and safety needs of the many bare feet they come in contact with.

To keep the outdoor surfaces as cool as possible and reduce the risk of slipping and falling, project managers chose light-colored concrete with four different types of texture treatments: a hardwood plank stamp, a



Photo courtesy of Lonestar Concrete Systems

cleft granite stamp, a broom finish and a troweled-in millet seed finish. Hired for the job was Watauga, Texas-based Lonestar Concrete Systems, a 10-year-old decorative concrete installation company specializing in polishing, stamping, acid staining

and countertops.

On 29,000 square feet of Paradise Springs' patio and pool deck areas, Lonestar workers led by Steve Sanchez and Alvaro Camarillo installed integrally colored concrete in a custom-blended buff shade,

Project at a Glance

Client: Gaylord Texan, Grapevine, Texas

Decorative Concrete Contractor: Lonestar Concrete Systems, Watauga, Texas

General Contractor: D.F. Chase, Nashville, Tenn.

Architect: TBG Partners, Austin, Texas

Project Specs: 65,000 square feet of integrally colored, stamped and textured concrete at Paradise Springs water park, plus 4,500 square feet of epoxy flooring in the water park's food service facility and two integrally colored, polished and stained 522-square-foot shuffleboard courts

Timeline: Four months

Material Suppliers: ChemSystems Inc., Kemiko, Concreation Inc., Seal Pro, Tnemec Co. Inc., Gateway Concrete Inc., Proline Concrete Tools, Butterfield Color Inc.

Materials Used: ChemSystems Integral Color and Release Powder, Kemiko Stone Tone Stain, Concreation Color Hardener, Seal Pro 300, Tnemec Series 222 Deco-Tread Colored Quartz-Filled Modified Polyamine Epoxy, Gateway Concrete 3,500-psi concrete mix, Proline Concrete Tools Random Boardwalk 6-inch Wood Plank stamp, Butterfield Color River Bottom texture mat





troweled in millet seeds to add texture to the concrete and sealed the surfaces with Seal Pro 300, a penetrating acrylic sealer that's designed to provide UV resistance and was used throughout the project. About 24,000 square feet of concrete was integrally colored in the same shade, stamped to produce the look of cleft granite using Butterfield Color's River Bottom texture mats and highlighted with white color hardener. To recreate the look of a boardwalk on 8,000 square feet of outdoor surfaces, workers used release powder in a walnut shade and Proline Concrete Tools' Random Boardwalk 6-inch Wood Plank. The remaining 4,000 square feet of outdoor concrete was broom-finished and broadcast with white color hardener. Lonestar added a unique touch near the park's entrance by stamping the area with horseshoes in addition to using River Bottom texture mats.

Lonestar also installed epoxy flooring in the park's 4,500-square-foot food service facility, which included restrooms, locker

“... concrete was the product of choice.”

— Jason Davis, Cement Colors

rooms, kitchens and walk-in freezers, using Themec Co.'s Series 222 Deco-Tread Colored Quartz-Filled Modified Polyamine Epoxy, an epoxy and colored quartz floor-topping system.

Finally, installers created two 522-square-foot shuffleboard courts. They poured integrally colored concrete in the park's uniform buff color, diamond-polished the courts, put down sheets of vinyl as stencils for the courts' lines and numbers, then filled in the lines and numbers with a black acid stain from Kemiko.

Lonestar landed the job through D.F. Chase, the general contractor hired to complete the water park's construction, says Lonestar estimator Jason Hardcastle. Lonestar and TBG Partners, the firm hired to design the park, chose materials for the project's decorative concrete elements. They then worked with Jason Davis, owner of Cement Colors, a Fort Worth, Texas, distributor that supplied many of the materials for the project, to select specific colors.

Aside from choosing light colors, which absorb less heat and keep surfaces cool, and textured finishes, which provide traction and help control heat by casting small shadows, project managers made sure the custom-blended integral color matched the limestone used in many of the park's buildings and retaining walls.

“The colors that the architects originally chose were much darker than what we ended up using,” Hardcastle says. “We were trying to match it as closely as possible to limestone.”

Davis says decorative concrete provided the sturdiness and color choices project managers were after. He also says they selected mostly Texas-based vendors for availability and to gain local support.

“The designers for Gaylord knew they wanted concrete as the primary material based on its durability, solar reflectance and color options,” Davis says. “With the high summer heat that north Texas experiences, along with rain and occasional ice storms,

concrete was the product of choice.”

Color consistency can be an issue while covering such an expansive space with integrally colored concrete, Davis says,

but ChemSystems' integral color product is designed to ensure even distribution of color. Each dose of pigment is packaged in an individual, disintegrating bag, which

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makes it easy to add an exact dose of color to each batch of concrete.

"With so many batches of colored concrete being poured, slight color variations can become an issue," Davis says. "ChemSystems' integral color was selected because of the high standard of quality control used in each batch."

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The creative choice of millet seed, a common birdseed, as a texture agent in 29,000 square feet of concrete required a bit of trial and error. A larger-grained seed the size of a BB was originally chosen, but the smaller millet seed produced the preferred consistency, Hardcastle says. "They didn't just want broom-finished concrete. They wanted something with texture in it for tracking."

Hardcastle says the job's biggest challenges included coordinating schedules with other contractors, such as plumbers and electricians. Weather also threw schedules off a bit. Grapevine saw some days of snow and ice in January, which left workers pressed for time toward the end of the project, Hardcastle says.

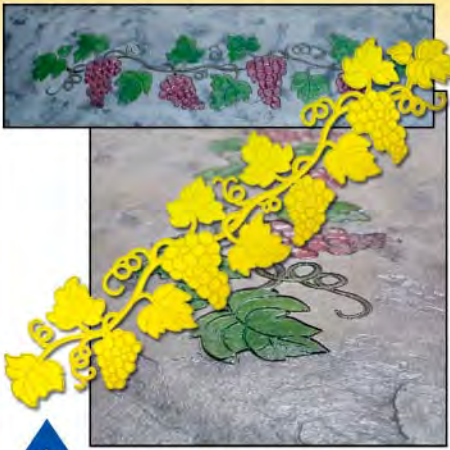
And Lonestar, a company that averages 2,500 projects a year, faced a full plate of work during the installation process at Paradise Springs. "Just the large scope of it was unique," Hardcastle says. "You typically don't see that much stamped concrete in one setting, so it was a larger project that our guys pulled together. Plus we were doing several other jobs at the same time — we did 19,000 square feet at a Wal-Mart and 20,000 square feet at a school. It all came at the same time."


Reactions to Lonestar's work at Paradise Springs have been very positive. The Gaylord Texan is interested in having the decorative concrete contracting company back for additional work. "The relationships we built during this project have been great for us as a company," Lonestar Concrete Systems owner Brad Walker says.

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PRODUCT NEWS

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Chemists formulated Release Coating 7643 to provide exceptional slip and ease of release from latex forms without damage. It is applied easily by spraying, brushing or wiping, and it leaves minimal buildup, extending the time forms can remain in production before being cleaned.

The release coating is available in 5-gallon containers and 55-gallon drums.

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Increte launches paver pattern tool

Increte has introduced a Running Bond Brick Paver stamping tool. The new pattern creates the tightly seamed, beveled look of brick pavers.

The complete set contains five rigid stamps, one liner and one texture skin, but each item can be purchased individually. The rigid stamps and the liner are 54 inches by 18 inches in size.

🌐 www.increte.com

Proline adds QR codes to packaging

Proline Concrete Tools has become an active user of QR codes, as the company is now putting them on every EZ-Tique bucket and EZ-Accent gallon.

If you have a smartphone, all you need to do is download a free scanner application to read the code. Then, simply scan the QR code on a Proline container to be directed to a free how-to video.

The video shows Proline experts coloring a job using Proline's water-based EZ-Accent and EZ-Tique coloring system. It helps teach simple techniques for achieving a natural stone look in concrete through staining, antiquing and sealing. 📱

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PROJECT PROFILE

Old-World Wine Cellar Naperville, Ill.

by Kelly O'Brien

For high-end homebuilders, the inclusion of a private wine cellar in the blueprints is not exactly a groundbreaking idea. But while most cellars consist of pretty straightforward temperature control and wine-racking systems, Nathan Giffin, owner of Creative Rock Forming and the creative powerhouse behind a recent wine cellar project in Naperville, Ill., has rather a different idea of what a private wine cellar can be.

Based near Chicago, Giffin is an expert at carved vertical concrete installations, and lately he's specialized in immersive hand-sculpted concrete wine cellars. Although Giffin didn't start out doing cellars, he's found them to be a very healthy market for his work. "When people realize it's within their grasp to create something that's truly fascinating and fantastic, where you can just lose yourself from the modern world," says Giffin, "they just find themselves enamored with it."

Dynamic duo

One such person is Ray Haniacek, owner of Chicagoland custom homebuilding firm Mancari & Associates. Haniacek had a client come to him four years ago who wanted one of Giffin's wine cellars installed in his house. Ever since that first project Haniacek has not only included a Giffin wine cellar in the majority of his new homes, but he also started a separate company, Genuwine Grottos, to focus exclusively on the wine cellar market.

You might think Haniacek would be a cellar enthusiast himself, but he says if it weren't for Giffin's vertical concrete work, he wouldn't even bother with ordinary wine cellars. "They're a dime a dozen," he says. "Anybody can do racking and glue half-bricks on the walls." But Haniacek and Giffin have discovered that with the former's general expertise — "he's got all



Photos courtesy of Verticalartisans.com

the knowledge for the cooling, HVAC, carpentry, plumbing," says Giffin — and the latter's concrete sculpting abilities, they can create wine cellars that are well-built, aesthetically stunning and far from run-of-the-mill. Handily enough, those three qualities were just what one homeowner was after for his basement renovation.

Solving the elevator problem

The client came to Haniacek looking to install a wine cellar in two rooms, a 10-by-12-foot card room and 12-by-14-foot gaming room (complete with pinball and Pac-Man machines). There was only one problem: Between the two rooms was an elevator shaft and a mechanical room for the elevator's hydraulics.

"They asked me if I could just take out the elevator, but I said no, that it would really be too costly," Giffin says. "That's when Ray came up with the idea of moving all the hydraulics." By moving all the

elevator's power and hydraulic systems into a much smaller space on the opposite side of the shaft, Giffin was able to create a hallway that joins the two rooms.

Now that the space was defined, it was

Project at a Glance

Client: Homeowner with a substantial wine collection

Vertical Concrete Artisan: Nathan Giffin, Creative Rock Forming, Hickory Hills, Ill.

Vertical Concrete Crew: Morne Durant, Luke Case

General Contractor: Ray Haniacek, Mancari & Associates and Genuwine Grottos, Frankfort, Ill.

Project Specs: 300-square-foot hand-sculpted decorative concrete wine cellar designed to mimic an old-world catacomb.

Timeline: July-September 2011

Products Used: SpiderLath, Concrete Earth's Speccrete Wallbase and Vertifaux Vertical Carving Mortar, Waltools' Tru-Tex Complete Contractor's Kit for Vertical Concrete, ArcusPlaster from ArcusStone, a variety of coloring systems from Concrete Earth, Waltools and Smith Paints.

a matter of determining how to make the best use of it. "I wanted people to basically lose themselves in a new experience," says Giffin, so he designed an elaborate cellar that immediately transports visitors to a subterranean tasting room beneath the hillsides of a centuries-old Italian vineyard.

Masters of illusion

The cellar space starts out in the basement's hallway, with an elaborate glass and wrought iron door set in a beautiful faux-finished wall. The technique is a new one, of Giffin's invention. Using molds he's designed, Giffin precasts a grouted-stone facade and then mounts it on the wall. Then a coat of limestone plaster goes down over the stones, which stick out from the wall at varying depths. When the wall is complete, "it is a dead ringer for a Tuscan exposed-stone plaster look," he says.

Once you're in the door, the old-world ambience only intensifies. Giffin's hand-carved concrete stonework covers the walls and ceilings throughout the cellar, transforming the space into a vaulted catacomb, complete with arched wall sconces and arrow-slit windows.

The thing that really sets a hand-carved finish like this apart from a stamped vertical surface, says Giffin, is the level of detail. If a cellar like this were done with stamps, the repetition would rapidly become apparent, and the wall wouldn't hold your attention, he says. If each stone is unique, says Giffin, "it holds you. Your mind is constantly absorbing new information, and it just never gets tired of it."

"A lot of time and thought goes into making nice rocks for good eye candy."

Not willing to settle for an ordinary corridor, Giffin added a series of red oak risers and raised the floor of the narrow



passage into the next room. As you traverse the passage, you catch glimpses of the main cellar room ahead of you through small pass-through alcoves. "Once you get in there, you kind of lose your bearings," says Giffin. "After you make a couple of turns you don't know where you are. You're thinking you're in another level of the

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basement.” But after that moment’s disorientation, you find yourself stepping down into the main cellar room, where the stonework is even more stunning than before.

In addition to Giffin’s faux dry-stacked stone walls, the design also incorporates several theme walls. One features a mural of a sun-drenched vineyard. Another conceals several compartment stones, completely indistinguishable from any other stone when closed, perfect for storing particularly prized bottles.

The last theme wall was a blank slate. Giffin went to the client and said, “This wall can be anything that you want it to be.” The client asked if stones could jut out from the wall so bottles could be displayed on them. “Not a problem,” Giffin replied, and that’s exactly what he delivered.

It’s that creativity and possibility that Haniacek likes best about working with Giffin. “You cannot match what can be done with concrete and a talented person like Nathan,” Haniacek says. “We can do anything with it.”

Not surprisingly, it’s Giffin’s favorite part, as well. “Our clients expect originals, so that’s what we do. I literally sit down and get to dream up stuff that’s never been done before,” he says. “That’s the thing that makes it really exciting.” 📱

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PRODUCT NEWS

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Could Owning the “Fastest Machine on the Planet” Also Add to Your Bottom Line?

Fact is, the number one variable and the single biggest factor in how much cash you add to the bottom line of each concrete floor-polishing job is labor.

In other words, if you can save time on each and every job, then you will make more money on each and every job.

**Purchase a new LAVINA PRO machine
and get a 9565CV Makita® Grinder Absolutely FREE!**

It's not enough to lower the cost of your pads and chemicals. You have to get your labor costs under control to really make money in the floor polishing business.

Here at Braxton-Bragg, we could sell concrete polishing systems from anyone. Yet, we chose to stand behind LAVINA by Superabrasive.

Why? Quite simply, it's a better-built machine.

Because LAVINA PRO machines:

- Grind, hone, polish and burnish – no other machine needed.
- Offer the option of polishing just the cream, or exposing the aggregates for polishing – no need for separate equipment.
- LAVINA 32" features 6 heads – covers more ground more easily making it the fastest machine on the planet.
- Tooling is interchangeable across several product sizes – less tooling to carry to each jobsite.
- LAVINA hugs to within 1/8 inch of the walls – fewer labor intensive passes with a smaller machine.
- One-of-a-kind "quick change" tooling system – change tooling in seconds not minutes.
- Headlights for working in dark warehouses or low light situations – no more skipped or missed spots.
- Works Dry – less time between steps, less clean-up time, less hazardous by-product, cleaner jobsite.
- 20" and 25" models available in single phase for smaller jobsites – great for residential and small commercial jobs between those big projects.
- Plus many more quality, time saving and money making features...

Call one of our in house LAVINA experts at **1-800-575-4401** today for more on how you could increase your bottom line by giving one of the LAVINA PRO machines a try on your next job.



*"We ALWAYS publish
our prices Up Front!"*

| Item # | Description | Everyday LOW Price |
|--------|--|--------------------|
| 18991 | Lavina 7N Pro Floor Grinding/Polishing Machine 208-240 V, 1-Phase, 50-60 Hz, Var. Speed 500-1,100 RPM, 3 HP, 15 Amp, LV-7N-PRO | \$3,290.00 |
| 18998 | Lavina 25" N Pro Floor Grinding/Pol. Machine 208-240 V, 3-Phase, 50-60 Hz, Var. Speed 300-1,100 RPM, 15 HP, 45 Amp | \$13,990.00 |
| 19000 | Lavina 32" Pro Floor Polishing Machine, 230V, 3-Phase, 50-60 Hz, Var. Speed 300-1,100 RPM, 20 HP, 32 Amp, LV-32-PRO | \$18,490.00 |
| 10463 | Lavina 1150 Vacuum, 110V Head, Tank Assembly w/ Filters, 2" x 25' Hose | \$3,314.36 |

F.O.B. Atlanta, GA

Call 800-575-4401

BB **Braxton-Bragg**
www.braxton-bragg.com

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