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Vol. 6 No. 6 • December/January 2007 • \$6.95

Concrete

The Journal of Decorative Concrete

Decor

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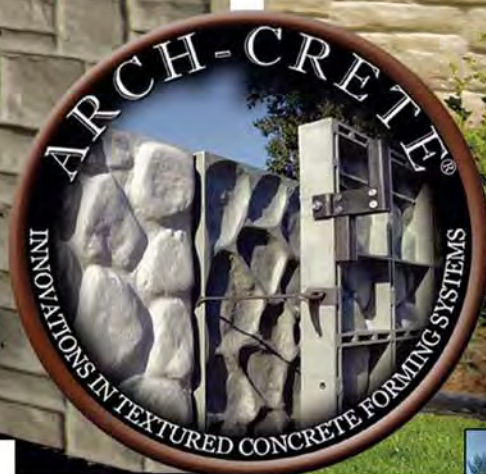
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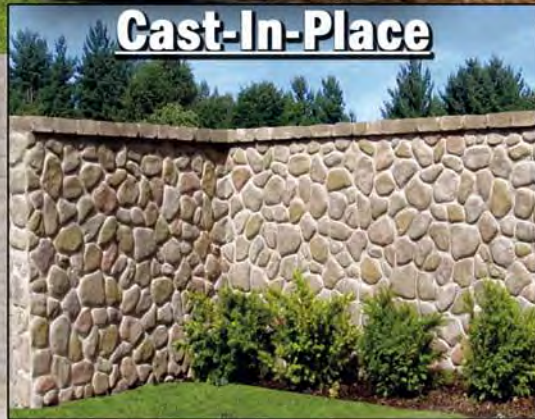


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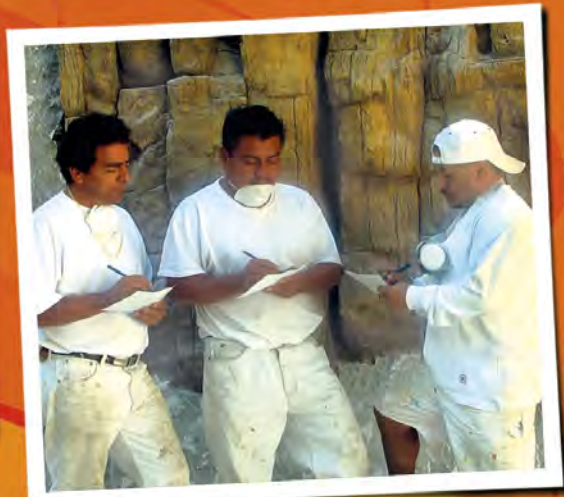
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EMPLOYEE TIMESHEET

NAME: Bill Kemp DATES: 11-15

DAY	START	LUNCH	END	JOB SITE	WORK DONE	HOURS
MON	7:00	1/2	3:30	Brentwood		8
TUE			3:30			8
WED			4:00	↓		8 1/2
THU			4:00	Crestview		8 1/2
FRI	↓	↓	4:00	↓		8 1/2

Employee Signature: Bill Kemp TOTAL HOURS: 41 1/2



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Employee Report

Kemp, Bill

Date Range: 12/11/2006 through 12/15/2006

Day	Date	Jobsite	Start	Stop	Cost Code	Hours	Total
Mon	12/11	Brentwood	7:08 AM	12:05 PM	Prep	4:57	
			12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Prep	2:41	7:38 hours
Tue	12/12	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Formwork	4:55	
			12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Formwork	2:40	7:35 hours
Wed	12/13	Brentwood	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Formwork	4:50	
			12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Formwork	3:03	7:53 hours
Thu	12/14	Crestview	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Prep	5:02	
			12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Prep	2:56	7:58 hours
Fri	12/15	Crestview	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Formwork	4:54	
			12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Formwork	2:55	7:49 hours

Bill Kemp
Signature

Kemp, Bill

Total **38:53 hours**



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Publisher's Letter



Happy Holidays!

As the New Year approaches, I believe it's significant to note that Jan. 1, 2007, marks the start of *Concrete Decor's* seventh year in print. For some, this benchmark may not be so important. However, because *Concrete Decor* is the *original* magazine on decorative concrete, our progress represents the industry's unquestionable growth and the value its products give to concrete as one of America's most preferred building materials.

In a recent phone conversation with a good friend and valued supporter of *Concrete Decor* magazine, contractor Julio Hallack shared his excitement about the business of decorative concrete. "As a concrete contractor, my gratification does not only stem from the sense of accomplishment I enjoy with each passing project. I'm also delighted at the fact that decorative concrete creates valuable new business for my company. Most importantly, however, decorative concrete is unquestionably improving the industry's standards, people's perception of concrete contractors, and the value they afford to our professionalism."

I couldn't agree more! Since that summer day in 1999, when I stumbled onto a construction site where new concrete floors were being colored with acid stains, I realized an opportunity that would likely take the better part of my lifetime just to introduce to tradesmen. Today, decorative concrete, in its many facets, is a practical and profitable step forward for concrete professionals. Tomorrow, if practiced regularly, decorative concrete will set visible new standards for future generations to uphold and build upon.

As you explore *Concrete Decor's* pages, both here and online, you will not only uncover exciting new tools but cultivate valuable new relationships with our advertisers, who, like yourself, are vested in making the industry of decorative concrete great.

If you're planning to attend the World of Concrete show this January, please make a point to stop by *Concrete Decor's* booth in the South Hall (#S11153). We look forward to visiting with you in person and discussing ways we can better serve you in these pages.

From all of us at *Concrete Decor*, we want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

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This password changes monthly. To continue receiving both the print magazine and access to our archives, start your subscription today. *Concrete Decor* is the industry's foremost magazine on decorative concrete.

Concrete Decor now features the industry's ultimate online 'search' tool for finding just about anything related to decorative concrete. Start by logging on to www.concretedecor.net. At the top of the page simply enter a keyword such as "stencil," "integral color," "admixture" or "rock features." In less than a second we'll search more than five years of articles and information from the pages of *Concrete Decor* and provide you with an extensive list of results.



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Diamond grinding is a great way to polish, but these gems can scour and scarify, too.

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The First Concrete Countertop Conference

Our publisher talks about his trip to the Concrete Countertop Institute's first-ever countertop conference, in Raleigh, N.C.

by Bent Mikkelsen

Consider This

"Since the reduced levels have become effective, we have seen many, many formula changes. They are good for our environment, but unfortunately not for the installers who have to use them on a daily basis."

— Bart Sacco. See page 58.



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On the Cover:

The Reflections stamp, from Matcrete Inc. Read more on page 48. Photo by Bill Thomas of Riverside Photography in Riverside, Calif.



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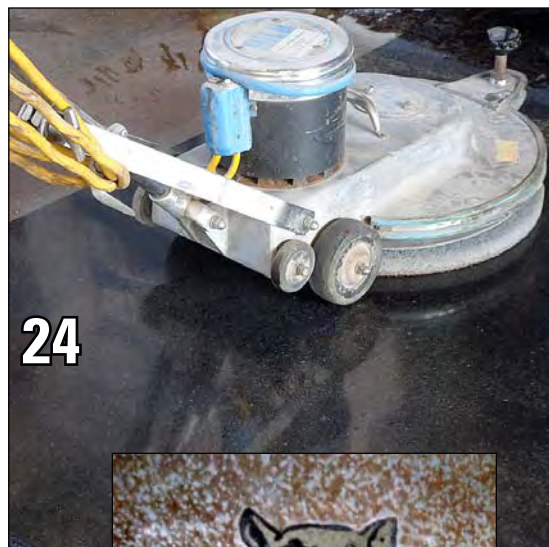
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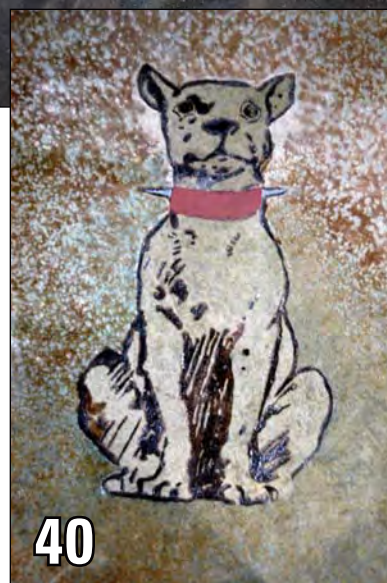
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-Brian Sullivan, Gray Matter Concrete Design, VA

"Cheng & staff did not leave any stones unturned; the workshops far exceeded my expectations from design principles to business building and mold making. I got more than my money's worth."

-John Brooks, On The Level Construction, CO

"This will give me a big jump on my countertop business. I have been to several classes and by far this one is, hands down, the best."

-Richard Brown, Designer Floors, ID

"I learned more in the first day than I thought I would all week! This training is consistent with Cheng Design's reputation for excellence."

-Ian Wyndlow, Liquid Stone Studios, Canada

"The only Ivy League Concrete Countertop School."

-Joel Lavin, Futurelic, Seattle, WA

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-Stan Miller, Stan Miller Construction, Soquel, CA



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Photos courtesy of Method Media LLC



Forms play role in West Point library expansion

The new \$59 million Library and Learning Center at the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., will be state of the art, so naturally, its construction involves decorative concrete. The library expansion will utilize intricate fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) formwork to create unique exterior features such as archways and columns.

The Army Corps of Engineers awarded the design contract to STV Inc., an engineering, architectural, planning and construction management firm based in New York, N.Y. STV's design included a unique arch-and-column facade as a centerpiece to adorn the facilities' main entranceway. The design is comprised of two vertical column arch forms spanning 25 feet from column to column and adorned with intricate cloverleaf-shaped cast impressions. In the final design configuration, the columns had to structurally support some building loads, with the arches supporting their own weight.

Roger & Sons Concrete Inc., of Lagrangeville, N.Y., was awarded a concrete contract that included fabricating, assembling the formwork, installing the reinforcing, and placing and finishing all concrete. Roger & Sons then enlisted their formwork subcontractor, Ceco Concrete Construction of Gladstone, Mo., to find custom suppliers for the entranceway formwork system, and that company secured the help of Molded Fiber Glass Construction Products (MFG), an Independence, Kan., company that manufactures standard and custom one-piece FRP forms.

As the arch forms were at a compound radius, or curved at two angles, computer numerical control cutting was used to achieve the correct dimensions and tolerances from column to column. To satisfy a design aesthetic that mandated a smooth,



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shiny surface, MFG Construction's custom 220-grit sand and buff composite forms gave a smooth, clean finish to the columns, leaving no rebar seams or bug holes.

MFG custom-fabricated two columns and three arches, spanning 16 total pieces, and the forms were shipped to West Point for assembly, rebar and concrete pour completion. Roger & Sons then began rebar reinforcing assembly for a concrete pour of approximately 2,239 cubic yards for the exposed areas of six completed floors. Additional rebar was required because of the design's bends and lapping and to allow for shock absorbance protection in the event of an explosion.

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Blastrac system helps retexture busy bridge

Blastrac Global's largest shot-blasting system, the Blastrac 2-4800 DH, played an integral role in resurfacing the Bernard F. Dickman Bridge, more commonly known as the Poplar Street Bridge. The bridge crosses the Mississippi River, link-



Photo courtesy of Blastrac

ing St. Louis, Mo., with East St. Louis, Ill.

The job called for the removal of a polysulfide epoxy overlay with a broadcast aggregate that had deteriorated over time. It would be replaced with a new overlay of epoxy slurry and broadcast aggregate. Prep work consisted of five steps: milling, sweeping, heating and scraping, sweeping again and shot blasting. The shot-blasting portion of the retexturing job was performed by four 2-4800 DH

machines owned by three companies.

More than 120,000 cars drive across the bridge daily, so the project's success relied on completing it in a time-sensitive manner. And crews did just that. The project, which covered 280,000 square feet, began June 6 and was completed Aug. 10, well before the deadline of Sept. 1. Not only did the 2-4800 machines remove the existing coating from the steel bridge, but their profiling capability increased the surface area and created an anchor profile in the steel to maximize the bond strength and durability of the new coating.

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Learn from Geans

The Rocky Geans Concrete Construction Business School will present two-day seminars in Sacramento, Los Angeles, Dallas, Orlando, and Philadelphia, with The Concrete Network as the presenting sponsor.

These two-day events will cover every aspect of running a concrete business. The seminars will explore marketing, proposals, job site management, bidding, time sheets, inventory control, office job boards, yard management, start packages, closeout sheets, information management, billing, collection, financial statements, and construction equipment. Attendees will also receive a CD with the forms and checklists needed to implement what they learn immediately.

The events have a limited capacity of 50 people per location.

www.rockygeans.com

Reward moves production to Missouri plant

Reward Wall Systems Inc., a manufacturer of insulating concrete forms based in Omaha, Neb., is transferring its Omaha production activity to Diversified Plastic Corp. in Nixa, Mo.

The Nixa, Mo., plant will distribute Reward ICFs primarily in the central Midwest, and will be supplying Ledge, Taper Top and 45-degree corner forms nationwide. The Nixa plant joins six other Reward production facilities that are strategically located around the United States to reduce customers' shipping costs.

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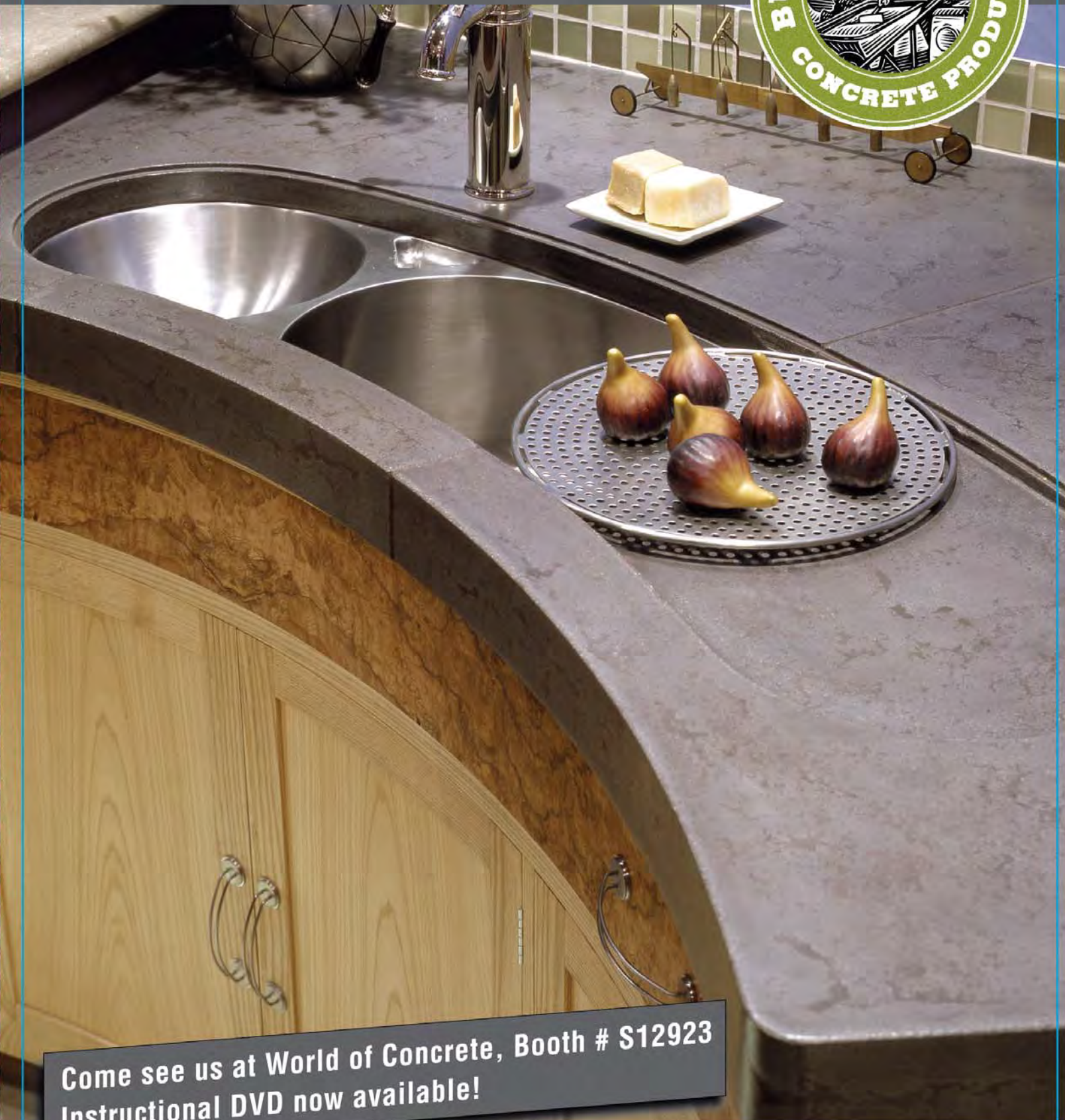
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Blastrac announces SPARC dates

Blastrac Global will offer another round of its Surface Preparation Academic Resource Center classes in 2007 from Jan. 9-11, Feb. 20-22 and March 27-29.

SPARC is a comprehensive training program that covers popular surface preparation methods and equipment. With a class size of 15 students per month, SPARC is beneficial for anyone in the surface preparation industry, from beginners to highly experienced technicians. Participants arrive at the Blastrac factory in Oklahoma City for the three-day class on Monday night and leave Thursday evening.

Factory experts skilled in Blastrac equipment and Sawtec hand tools teach the program, which includes discussion of shot blasting, diamond grinding, scraping, milling and scarification. Participants are taught when to use different surface preparation techniques, taking into consideration job site characteristics, specified coatings, desired results and costs. The instructor also includes discussions of industry standards and testing meth-

ods. Student training focuses on intensive hands-on instruction, including training in the use and maintenance of equipment.

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ICI plans powder polymer plant in China

ICI has announced its intention to build a new Elotex Redispersible Powder Polymers manufacturing plant in China as part of its strategy to grow aggressively in that country and the Asia Pacific region. ICI is currently in the process of selecting the plant location.

The new facility for Elotex, a business unit of National Starch and Chemical Co., a member of the ICI Group, is scheduled to begin operations in 2008 and will have a production capacity of approximately 20,000 tons per year.

The market for redispersible polymer powders, which are used in many construction applications, has been growing for several years and is accelerating, particularly in the newer markets of China and Eastern Europe. According to com-

pany officials, construction techniques that improve energy conservation are major drivers of this growth, and Elotex supplies critical components in thermal insulation systems.

ICI currently has seven major facilities in China producing decorative paint, adhesives and other goods for China and the Asia Pacific region. Three more facilities are to be completed by 2008, including the Elotex plant.

🌐 www.elotex.com

🌐 www.nationalstarch.com

Hirschmann names new dealer for Illinois and Wisconsin

Hirschmann Automation and Control/PAT has named Cranes & Equipment Specialists of Chicago its Premier Dealer for the territories of Illinois and Wisconsin.

Cranes & Equipment Specialists of Chicago is a full-service Premier Dealer carrying Hirschmann's entire line of PAT and Krueger crane operator aids. Headquartered in Palos Hills, Ill., Cranes & Equipment Specialists of Chicago has been servicing the construction industry for more than 28 years.

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Ardex establishes Elite Installer program

Ardex Engineered Cements, a flooring solutions company, has added the LevelMaster Elite Installer program to its array of customer services.

Designed to establish a higher-level partnership with quality installers nationwide, the Ardex LevelMaster Elite Installer program was created to give general contractors and property owners the security of knowing that their job is virtually guaranteed from product purchase through the final stages of the project. LevelMaster Elite installations are backed by both a 10-year extended product warranty on Ardex products and a 10-year installation guarantee. Since January 2006, Ardex has identified 22 installers in the United States and Canada who meet strict professional requirements based on reputation, experience and an Ardex product commitment. The installers are all independent contractors.

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Photo courtesy of Concrete Countertop Institute

Industry conference gets rave reviews

More than 200 attendees from 41 states, plus people from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Canada and Denmark, attended the 2006 Concrete Countertop Industry Conference in Raleigh, N.C.

According to a conference news release, attendees and exhibitors alike raved about the event, particularly about its focus on the concrete countertop niche industry. Because the event was so specifically targeted, exhibitors were

reportedly able to gather highly qualified sales leads.

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🌐 www.CCIC2007.com

🌐 www.concretecountertopinstitute.com

Cemstone debuts Web site for decorative concrete

Cemstone, a leader in ready-mix, engineered and architectural concrete in the upper Midwest, has launched a Web site devoted to decorative concrete.

The site is dedicated to helping homeowners discover the many ways that Cemstone decorative concrete can be utilized for driveways, patios, sidewalks and interior surfaces to achieve a higher level of beauty, functionality and resale value.

The site includes detailed information on various methods used to color, stain and stamp concrete, links to industry experts, a photo gallery of finished projects, a list of recommended decorative concrete contractors, and directions to four Cemstone Architectural Concrete stores in the Twin Cities.

Cemstone operates more than 40

ready-mix concrete plants in Minnesota and western Wisconsin, plus 16 contractor supply stores. The company is the nation's largest distributor of Reward Insulating Concrete Forms (ICFs) used in the construction of concrete homes.

☎ (800) 236-7866

🌐 www.cemstone.com

Powers Fasteners expands global presence

Power Fasteners Inc., headquartered in Brewster, N.Y., has expanded its global presence into five continents with the opening of a new office in Bangkok, Thailand.

The 10,000-square-foot facility will be headed by managing director Charlee Surakavanichakorn. Powers has two locations in Canada, eight in Australia and New Zealand, one in Venezuela and one in the Netherlands. Roughly one third of its sales are in markets outside the United States.

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Photos courtesy of Lafarge

Low-income homes get concrete help from Lafarge

Lafarge partnered with Habitat for Humanity-New York City to provide cement for nine new multifamily residential buildings in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. The low-income families who occupy the residences will be among the first New York City residents to live in homes built with insulated concrete forms.

Lafarge donated 200 tons of cement to the Halsey Street homes. When ICFs are used in construction, hollow foam blocks snap together like Lego bricks and concrete is poured into the hollow center. The blocks remain in place to provide insulation. The resulting structures are strong, durable, fire-resistant and very energy-efficient.

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Construction education scholarships available

Applications are now available for annual scholarships funded by ConstructMyFuture.com, a Web site initiative that promotes construction as a rewarding choice.



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Three scholarships of \$1,000 each will be awarded, and the deadline to apply is February 5, 2007. The program is open to students and construction industry professionals, with funds to be used for higher-education tuition or the purchase of tools to improve worker productivity. The annual scholarship was launched in 2001 to provide information about the construction industry and its career opportunities to students, teachers, counselors and parents. It was developed by three industry trade groups: the Associated Equipment Distributors Foundation, the Associated General Contractors of America and the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

ConstructMyFuture.com features a database of more than 1,600 post-secondary construction-related education programs with links to school Web sites. It also offers information on industry scholarship opportunities, apprenticeships and other career-building programs, as well as links to allied industry resources and industry job boards.

www.constructmyfuture.com

Refinisher puts polish on WerkMaster deal

Fab-u-Floors Refinishing Services Ltd. is the first company in North America authorized by Werk Industries to employ the new proprietary WerkMaster Concrete Polishing System.

The WerkMaster machine refinishes concrete, hardwood and stone surfaces using segmented diamond abrasives. Its patent-pending Octi-Disc Technology virtually eliminates hand edging in nearly all applications. The system provides a high-gloss mechanical shine on concrete without coatings, chemicals or additives. The machine flattens the floor so that all variations in the concrete surface are removed, allowing for a finer, smoother finish. The WerkMaster was originally developed to polish black granite, and today, the process works on all natural stone products such as marble and travertine, as well as terrazzo and concrete.

Another advantage of the WerkMaster is that it grinds, edges and polishes to within 1/8 inch of the walls. The

system can be used on concrete countertops, and it allows for new unique design capabilities for tilt-up concrete wall construction.

Fab-u-Floors and WerkMaster were commissioned by Storied Places, an Intrawest company, to develop this process for use in their Mammoth Mountain Resort Condominium Development in California. Fab-u-Floors is developing a franchise model that will allow companies the opportunity to expand or enter the business of refinishing concrete, hardwood and stone.

www.fab-u-floors.com

www.werkmaster.com

Artcrete plays role in Katrina rebuilding

Artcrete, the north Louisiana company that manufactures Faux Brick Stenciled Concrete, helped several thousand south Louisiana students displaced by Hurricane Katrina return to their home schools this year in new, stronger classrooms.

The new classrooms, built by Fibrebond Corp. in Minden, La., are made of

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Photos courtesy of Artcrete

precast concrete using Artcrete products and processes that lend brick-like beauty to the exterior.

A total of 168 precast classrooms were delivered in time for the new school year to five south Louisiana schools. Factory-outfitted with carpeting, lighting, air conditioning, plumbing and other amenities, the 768-square-foot rooms are made of steel-reinforced concrete, with exterior walls that are eight inches thick. Erected in a third of the time that traditional construction takes, with no on-site construction, they can be expected to last 50 to 75 years. Relatively maintenance-free, the precast classrooms are fire-resistant and aesthetically pleasing, closely resembling traditional brick schoolrooms.

With the Artcrete finishes, classrooms can be designed to match the existing architecture of a school. A variety of exterior finishes are available to blend the old with the new. 📱

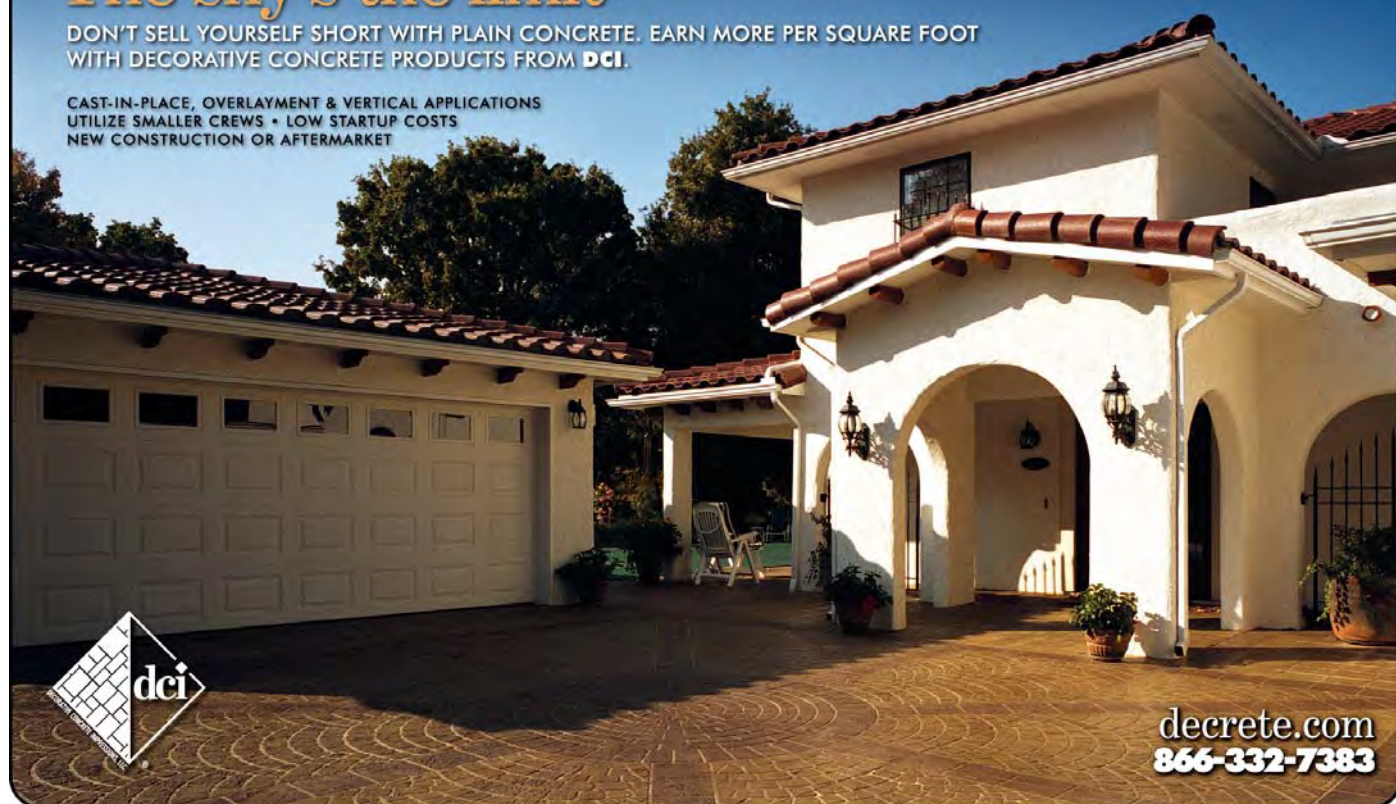
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Decorative Dangers, Part 1:

Surviving the Slowdown

"Mr. Singletary, this is your 10th Pro Bowl and you're a shoo-in for the Hall of Fame. How do you always seem to know where the football is going?" a sports reporter once asked the All-Pro linebacker, Mike Singletary.

"I'm not sure if it is intuition or not, but regardless, I must commit to a direction and react as soon as the play exposes itself," Singletary said.

Man, I'm glad that Chicago Bears player isn't in the decorative business in my town, because the same principles that made this man one of the best players of all time apply to the decorative industry today. The market is certainly exposing itself and we must react to it to keep business moving forward. I'm pretty sure by now everyone has realized the housing market has corrected itself and the winds of change are blowing through most every community. The good news is that the strong housing boom of the past has given the decorative industry a strong foothold. But, we must commit to the direction of the new market. I will outline three options to help shift your company into a market that will continue to stay strong regardless of how well the housing sector performs.

First, I want to share a story that happened early in my career. A friend of mine was working as a receptionist for a custom home builder and mentioned to me in passing that their subcontractors were unable to keep up with the workload.

"This may be the break I'm looking for," I said to myself as I entered my prearranged meeting. I left with a full set of plans and a smile from ear to ear. My small company started the foundation work on a new custom home and we were well on our way to the next level when a strange thing happened. The vice president and superintendent appeared on the job site with another set of plans and asked if we could start

another project when we completed the first.

"Absolutely," I said before he finished his last sentence. That was more than 18 years ago.

Last week my decorative concrete company stamped more than \$30,000 on projects for this same gentleman, and next month we will do close to the same. He has long since moved on and is now working with one of our city's leading remodel firms. Before that, he worked for a family firm and handled all real estate development and construction. Each move this gentleman made up the career ladder led my company to new clients. I'll be willing to bet this one man has led me to well over \$1.5 million of work.

What if I would have been distracted or just simply procrastinated until another company stepped up? Keep in mind, when I went into the first meeting we were only talking about one job. I, like you, had no idea where or if this would lead to something more. This is the whole point of this article today. Make no mistake about it; this is an article about money, your money.

Now let's talk about keeping your company in the profit zone.

Go back to the fundamentals

I realize that in a strong growth mode, like the one we have experienced over the last few years, a contractor could do nearly everything wrong and still stay in business. I'm here to tell you that those days are over, at least for a while. The real estate market has corrected itself across the country with few exceptions. This means only one thing. Contractors must implement the same strong business fundamentals today that built their company years ago.

Simple things such as: Follow up on every call and every lead. Each and every estimate should receive a courtesy call to see if there are any questions

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about the bid given the week before. Let me ask you, did you used to spend more time with the customers? Try to spend a little more time doing what you did when building your business.

Marketing efforts should be geared towards remodel work or improvements to existing homes. Remember, if people can't sell their existing homes, then they will put money, through improvements, into the homes they live in. This is a fact in every downturn of construction that holds true in every market. People will continue to spend money if they can see the value in the service you provide.

Another sector of the construction industry that seems to remain strong is the commercial side. These projects can be profitable but usually move at a faster pace than residential work. Jobs will usually be bigger and owners and architects will be much more budget-minded. This means you may very well sell their socks off with great products and service and still lose the job over a nickel per foot. Don't take it personally. Most project superintendents will require your crew to move in and out quickly — but this is good for the bottom line. Many of these types of projects will require night work for exclusivity.

Do everything the competition isn't doing

Here is something else to consider: Look for the weaknesses in your competition and make them your strong points. If they are poor at callbacks, make sure during your presentation that the potential client is told you are unmatched at customer service before and after the sale. If the competition is poor at returning calls, make sure your phone is answered or the call is returned quickly. Please don't mistake this for dogging your competition because that is not what I'm recommending.

This is simply outperforming the competitor, plain and simple. It may be hard to believe, but many companies' services worsen when their work slows. You would think they would use the free time to service the remaining customers, but not always. Don't let yourself fall into this same trap.

Listen to what your future client is asking for on the first or second sales

Here is something else to consider: Look for the weaknesses in your competition and make them your strong points.

call. Sometimes you may have a better idea at what would look best, but remember that this is about taste, their taste.

The side benefit is that this will give you a chance to sell down the job if they have sticker shock. Try to pick up on signs of sticker shock during your presentation and sell accordingly.

Half a loaf is better than nothing. Your competition is most likely bidding only what the customer is asking for. Take your bids one step further by offering two options, with the second being more affordable. Remember, more affordable doesn't always mean less profitable.

Create and promote a cookie-cutter affordable alternative in whatever type of decorative concrete your company specializes in. An example might be for a countertop company to develop a simple type of counter based on a minimum size. This limited time option could be marketed or promoted during your meetings with key customers or builders from your customer list. Clients may call about the promotional option but some will end up purchasing something nicer. I truly believe most people do not know all the different options in decorative concrete or their affordability. Remember, the goal in a down market is simply to keep the wheels moving and bills paid.

Increase marketing, decrease personal spending


It may be tempting to tighten spending on marketing or promotion in a down market but this is not recommended. Please don't confuse this with spending bigger dollars on advertising. I would hold these dollars until the springtime when people are thinking

about yard improvements — not spend them during the winter. The type of promoting that will be most beneficial will cost less and deliver more than half-page ads.

Pick key customers, builders, architects and subcontractors and invest in a lunch or dinner meeting with them. Talk about projects that they're working on or designing and see if decorative work is a possibility. It is so true that "out of sight means out of mind" in today's business world.

Now is a great time to create or build a database to help build and retain referrals. Use this database to promote specials or maintenance (such as resealing or waxing) of decorative concrete when you are slow. Some bookkeeping software has built-in database abilities and will create client labels for mailers. Better yet, address the mailers by hand for a more personal touch. Get a copy of Concrete Decor magazine into the hands of potential clients and referrals. This will create faith and prove strength in the decorative industry as a whole. Nobody wants to feel like they are part of a test market.

Redirect advertising dollars into publications geared towards remodel work. This market gets less competition and will outlast typical construction cycles. The only decrease in spending should be at a personal level. Now is a good time to sit down with the family and discuss how everyone contributes in his or her own way. My family had our meeting last week. This will also help build a team atmosphere around the home. Your family may decide eating out four times a week is not necessary and a home-cooked meal is something everyone can help with.

The choice is ours. Check out part two in the next issue of Concrete Decor when we will take a look at "Decorative Dangers: On The Job." This article will cover decorative pitfalls from start to finish and how to avoid them. 

Doug Carlton is the president of Carlton Concrete Inc., located in Visalia, Calif. His firm has completed more than 2 million square feet of decorative concrete. Doug is a past speaker at World of Concrete Asia. He can be reached at carltondoug@sbcglobal.net.

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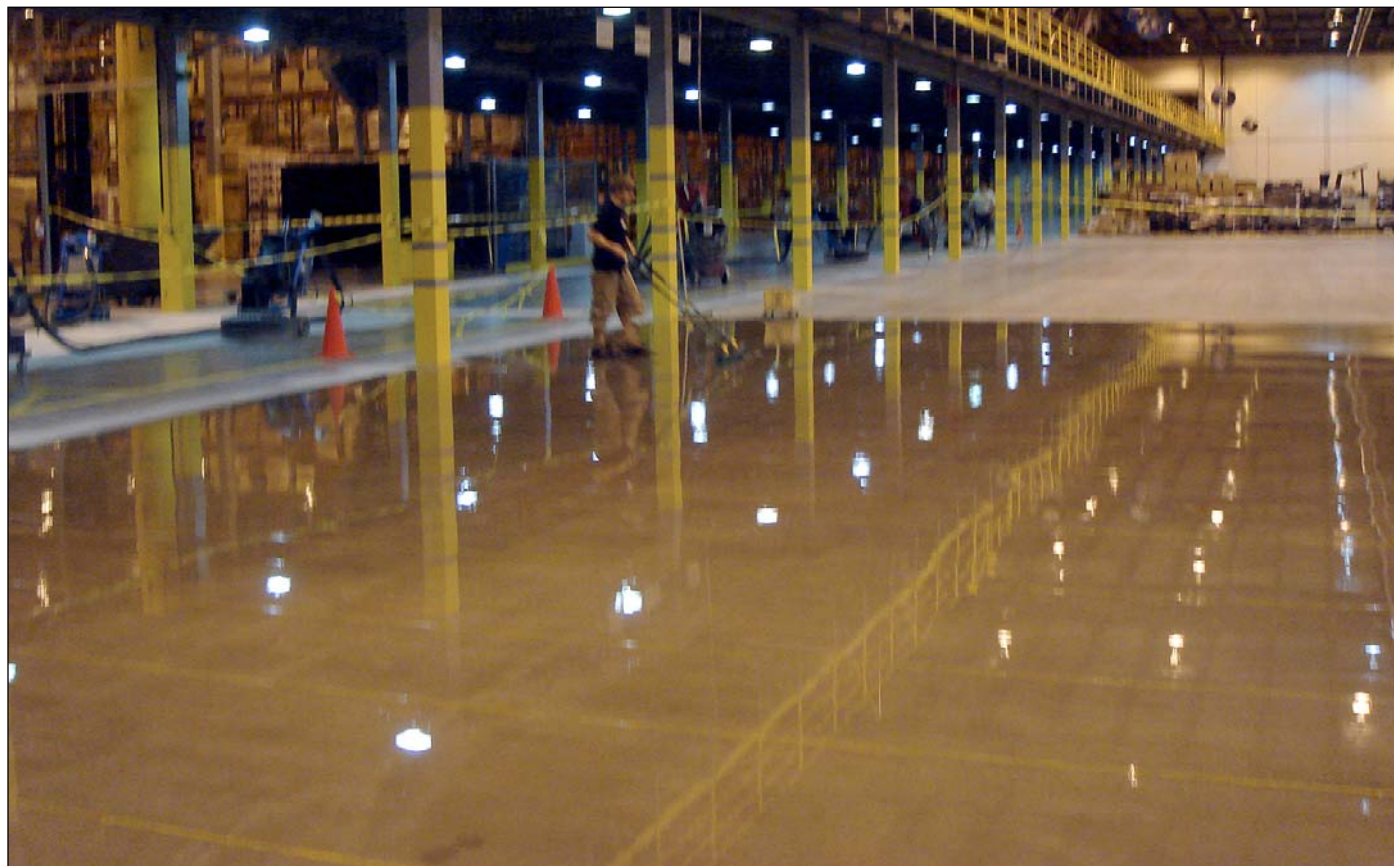


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Photos courtesy of Peter Wagner

A Concrete Floor is a Renewable Resource

“Rebuilt To Last.” That is the title of an article in the September 25, 2006, issue of *BusinessWeek* on remanufacturing. And what are you doing to an existing concrete floor when you restore it? You are remanufacturing, and the term fits polished concrete “to a T.”

Last year at this time I was writing my column that led up to the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Greenbuild show in Atlanta in November. I titled it “Common Sense plus Dollars and Cents equals Green Sense, or so you would think.” The tone and direction of the column led Rosemary Camozzi, my editor at *Concrete Decor* at that time, to call it “my rant.” Whether in jest or not, she wasn’t far off. Well, this year Greenbuild was held in Denver from November 14-16, and I went back a little mellowed and hopefully a little bit wiser.

I again want to focus on how polished concrete is the ideal sustainable floor, but

from the viewpoint of reusing or remanufacturing existing material. Polished concrete in conjunction with densification, such as the RetroPlate System, is the hands-down winner in life-cycle evaluation. It is less expensive over a 10-year life cycle than any other floor coating or covering. Period. It’s a given that a new polished concrete floor meets this criteria, but this year I will focus on a truly renewable floor — the existing concrete floor.

Not only should an existing concrete floor be the poster child of renewable flooring, it is the only renewable flooring that can be renewed on-site. How many miles does a “renewable” carpet travel to be “renewed,” and what about the costs of removing it?

In an article I ran across recently, one of the main carpet tile manufacturers talked about how “it would reclaim its own products and use them as raw material for new textiles.” If that carpet tile were

installed on the West Coast, and it had to be shipped to the East Coast for recycling, that carpet tile must be trucked thousands of miles just to become “renewable.” The existing concrete floor would not have had to move one inch! Tell me, when a building requires renovation, which flooring option is truly sustainable — carpet tile or polished and densified concrete? Don’t get me wrong: I am thrilled when any industry or individual commits to recycling and minimizing their impact on the environment. But the “rant” part of me wants to open the eyes of the designer, the specifier, the owner and end user to the viability of the truly renewable floor — existing concrete!

I will focus on three situations where existing concrete floors can be rejuvenated through the polished concrete process at a dollar cost, and cost to the environment, that is far less expensive than other coatings or coverings.

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Photo 1



Photo 2

Replacement of an existing covering (Photos 1-2)

When the existing concrete floor coating is removed during a renovation or remodel, you may find that the floor is not usable in its existing state. Generally though, any imperfections that exist will be removed, or can be fixed, during the restoration process of patching, grinding and polishing. Typically, when replacing an existing floor covering you must take into account:

- Removal of the existing floor covering.
- Disposal of the existing floor covering, either in a landfill or by transporting it back to the manufacturer thousands of miles away.
- Preparation of the floor for a new installation, sometimes requiring floor profiling.
- Reinstallation of the new product that has been shipped, on average, several thousand miles.
- Have ongoing maintenance costs of \$1.50 per square foot annually.
- Producing a potentially negative impact on indoor air quality.
- Having to repeat the process three to 10 years down the road.

By replacing the floor covering with polished concrete, you are short-circuiting the vicious cycle that is caused by the higher life-cycle cost of carpet in general. The breakeven point for investing in polished concrete, with or without color,

is on average only one to two years, and that comes without the additional costs of tear-up, removal and preparation of carpet replacement. In a recent education case study on Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Kirkland, Wash., a LEED project completed in August 2005, BuildingGreen.com addresses the optimal flooring products for schools, adding the importance of indoor environmental air quality for children. The case study highlights polished concrete as a prime example of the proper flooring. It states, "For example, the RetroPlated concrete floor finish provides the school with an extremely durable finish ... a surface that only requires hot-mopping for cleaning ... and improved air quality (by avoiding applied adhesives and surfaces on which dust and mold could collect)." Old or new, polished concrete eliminates a lot of costs and concerns.

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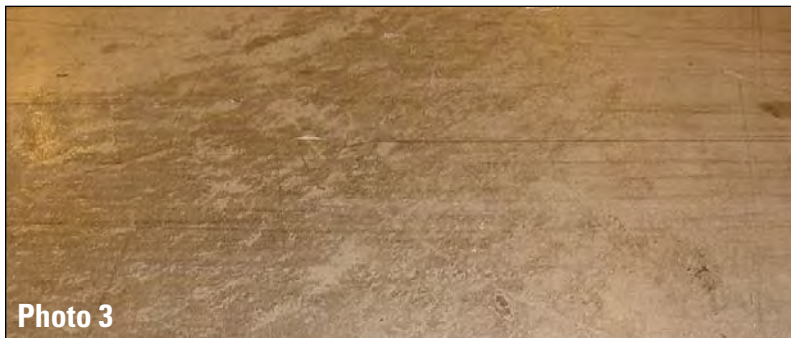


Photo 3



Photo 4

Restoration of a carbonized floor (Photos 3-8)

Sometimes your restoration isn't about replacing another coating or covering, but is instead throwing a lifeline to an existing concrete floor that is failing. Two examples are weather damage and carbonization. Generally, weather damage on floors is evident up front, so you are really "saving" a new slab, while carbonization does not become apparent until the slab has been exposed to daily wear over a period of time.

Carbonization occurs during the curing process when the new concrete is exposed to excess carbon dioxide exhaust from propane-powered heaters and construction equipment. Generally this condition occurs in colder climates when an enclosed job site lacks adequate airflow to stop the exhaust from settling on the surface of the curing concrete. As the exhaust settles, the carbon dioxide, due to its low solubility in water, interacts with the cement paste and interferes with the hydration process, causing the surface area to dry out. This creates a floor surface that is weak and porous, one that won't reach its normal strength and performance.

A prime example of this is a Target Distribution Center in upstate New York where Surface Tech, a RetroPlate certified applicator, is restoring 650,000 square feet of carbonized concrete in the 9-year-old facility. To simply densify the floor will not provide a permanent fix to the problem, as you would simply be placing a hard cap over a soft lower layer. To effectively solve the problem, you must first remove the soft cap through diamond grinding, and then follow your normal densification and polishing steps. Bottom line: You have eliminated the need to remove and repour the existing floor, saving time, energy and material waste.



Photo 5



Photo 6

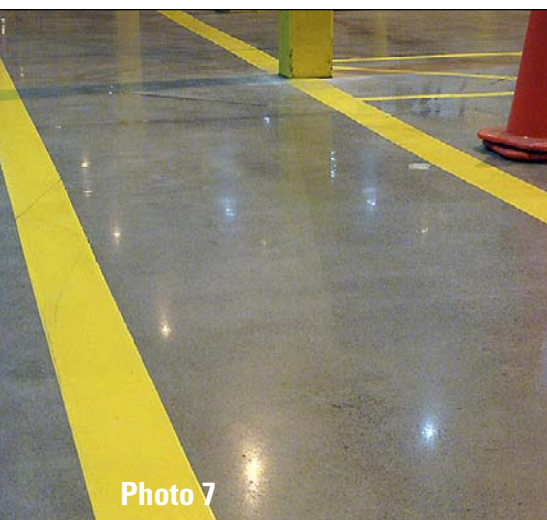


Photo 7

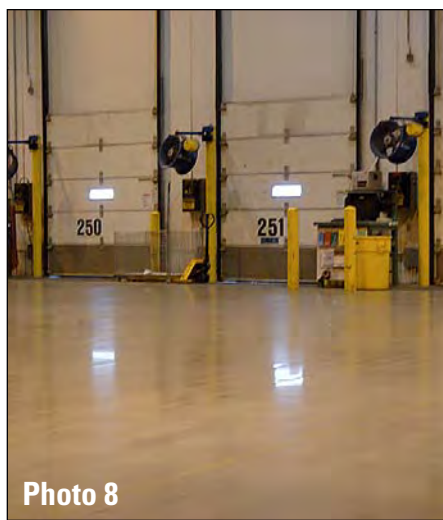


Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

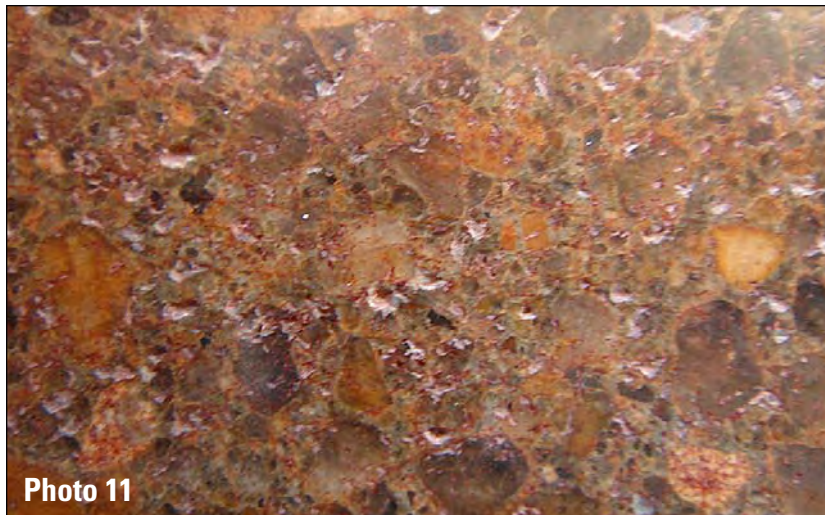


Photo 11



Photo 12

Adding color to an existing polished floor (Photos 9-12)

Last month I had the opportunity to perform testing at the manufacturing facility of American Decorative Concrete (ADC) in Springdale, Ark. In the past couple of years, ADC has addressed two of our most vexing problems when it comes to applying color to polished concrete floors with the introduction of their Ameripolish dyes for polished concrete.

The first hurdle is environmental, and ADC, along with ColorMaker and DCI, have turned to dyes that utilize acetone or alcohol as their carrier, as opposed to acid stains that have a VOC component that is environmentally unfriendly. From a green/LEED viewpoint, it is important to know that although acetone does have a distinct odor, it is VOC-exempt, along with being a Non-HAP (Hazardous Air Pollutant) product per the Clean Air Act. Follow manufacturer safety guidelines during application.

Second, and this where ADC shines, their Ameripolish dyes are shipped in powder form, avoiding the shipping hurdles of acid stains and dyes which are shipped premixed. You neither have the shipping limitations nor high costs related with shipping these products, and you are not paying to ship the weight of a liquid. If you need material to make 250 gallons of dye shipped overnight, Brown can do it, or FedEx or UPS. The shelf life of the dye does not begin until after the product is mixed, and it is offered in 23 standard colors. The dyes can be used stand-alone, or to enhance acid stain.

Although these first two attributes are reason enough to be excited about the dyes, it was the addition of ADC's penetrating agent that really packed a punch. From testing to date, it is being shown that the Ameripolish dyes, when combined with their penetrating agent, can introduce vibrant color into previously polished and densified concrete. Now

that's truly making a product renewable. You now have the ability to take an existing polished floor and add color to it after the fact. The opportunities are endless.

Color or not, polished concrete is the truly renewable floor.

Not all floors will be candidates for this method to add color to an existing floor. As with any polished concrete floors, it is necessary to test the floor before moving ahead, especially with a restoration. You have to establish whether the floor is so tight that it will require diamond steps to open the floor to accepting the color, or whether some type of sealer or stain protection was applied that would create a bond barrier. If it only requires a few diamond steps, you're still way ahead of the curve in time and cost savings. 🛠️

Peter Wagner is the marketing director for RetroPlate. He is responsible for working with RetroPlate's certified applicator network throughout North America. He has more than 20 years experience in the flooring industry.



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Concrete Stain Designs

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Photos courtesy of Shellie Rigsby

When Shellie Rigsby talks about her artistic philosophy, she starts with her company's mission statement. Here it is, right from the Web site: "The mission of our company, Acanthus Inc., is to advance and enhance the building industry with comprehensive design, superior products, uncompromising standards, and unsurpassed craftsmanship. Concrete is treated as an expansive canvas, which will ultimately reflect the essence of the owner and the atmosphere specific to the project."

Rigsby wrote that in late 1998, during her first month of business as a decorative concrete artisan, and she stands by it today. "The mission statement really means something," she says. "Everything we do and every decision we make fits our mission statement."



This floor design at Jacksons Home and Garden in Dallas, Texas, is made to look like a walk in a garden. All paths lead to a concrete fountain, shown on page 34.



This is part of a larger work of art created at the 2005 World of Concrete.

When it comes to decorative concrete, Shellie Rigsby does a lot. She's known particularly for her work with concrete stains. Her first book, "The Complete Guide to Stained Concrete," is published by Thomson Custom Solutions, a unit of Thomson Learning, and will debut at the 2007 World of Concrete exposition.

She makes how-to videos and does training sessions, including an American Institute of Architects (AIA) continuing education program for architects and interior designers she is launching in early 2007. She has appeared on a number of television shows, often at the request

of companies that manufacture decorative concrete products.

She was one of several artists featured at the Artistry in Concrete demos at World of Concrete 2005. She developed and executed a working project for the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing. She even serves as an expert witness for law firms.

Rigsby, 39, started working with decorative finishes on cars, not floors, when she was a young girl in her father's auto body shop. "I spent many hours masking, compounding, sanding and pinstriping," she says, "and doing all the things little fingers could do."

Many of the skills she learned on cars at her father's side translated naturally to what she does with floors on her own. Fiberglass molds are similar to stamps, she says. There's not much difference between pinstriping and laying down tape.

Rigsby has explored Venetian plastering and faux finishes. But for the past decade, since shortly before the youngest of her three children entered school, she has focused on decorative concrete. When she started, she spent two years researching concrete stains, and like many budding concrete artists in the mid-to-late 1990s, was often frustrated



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- Shane Beal, Preferred Builders of the Triad, Greensboro, NC

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by the scarcity of products and information. Concrete stains were just beginning to be seen here and there, she says, and most stores did not carry reactive stains. "I didn't know where to find the product. All I would find were paints."

Her first stain job was a room in her own home, but demand quickly snowballed. "By the time I was finished, I had more work than I knew what to do with," she says.

Rigsby began devouring classes on floating, troweling, and other skills related to concrete floors. "I knew there was so much I could do. I could see it but I didn't know how."

All those bits and pieces of knowledge expanded her reach beyond simple staining. "The skillsets became like tools in my toolbox. You don't need a drill on every job, but you need a drill in your toolbox. You must possess the knowledge within the box before you can think outside the box."

Frankly, she's outgrown her old specialty. "At first I wanted that natural organic polished stone look, and the best for that is reactive acid stain," she says. "Now I understand the opportunities are so much greater than just polished stone. I can go beyond polished stone. I can create works of art."

Rigsby's artistic credo is to start with a fleshed-out conception of what the final floor should look like, then work backward and figure out how to achieve that effect. The floor she designed for the Seabreeze Church youth center in Huntington Beach, Calif., came together exactly that way. Her concept involved compiling and blending full-color designs submitted by area youth. Once she had the designs, she figured out how to best transfer the images onto the floor without losing detail.

Not every decorative project she does is an attempt at a showpiece. "I make a great effort not to overdesign a floor," she



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Top left: Engraved stipple art.
Top right: Color-on-color designs using LesCoat resist.
Bottom photos: Designed with Modello stencils.



says. "Sometimes simplicity is the answer."

Sometimes simplicity is more important than even attractiveness. At the Holocaust Museum in Dallas, she created the floor for an exhibit that features a railcar used to transport prisoners to concentration camps. "A beautiful, glossy, ornate floor would have been all wrong. The design was to look like a ghetto street."

The project was challenging technically as well as aesthetically. The slab Rigsby was commissioned to stain was gypcrete, a lightweight, powdery porous floor system that she calls "funky."

She used black translucent sealer to lock down the floor, applying multiple layers until she had achieved a look that successfully suggested a tired and dirty street in a ghetto. The end result is appropriately somber. "It's really a very unattractive floor, but it was exactly right for that setting," she says. "It's a silent backdrop to a compelling space. It was exactly right in a really ugly way."

Her resume is lined with big names. She has installed floors at a Nordstrom's department store in Dallas, Texas, and at the Dallas World Trade Center. She is currently working with large corporations to create artistic flooring for high-

profile settings, she says.

Rigsby says the big names on her resume come to her through word of mouth, often via recommendations from manufacturers whose products are specified in job contracts. They're more impressed with her reliability than her artistic reach, she says, which makes sense, as their jobs are often routine but exacting. "It's not about how fancy the project is, it's more about how particular they are. Manufacturers don't want to worry that the customer in a high-profile project is going to come back and say, 'Your product failed.'"

However, artistry will continue to



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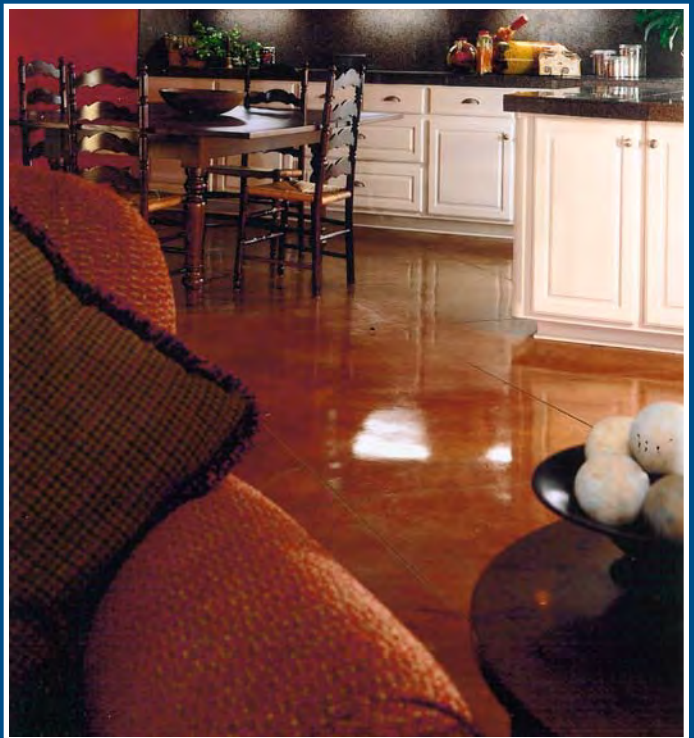


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be a part of whatever Rigsby does in the future. "Demand continues to be for more and more art applications, rather than just, 'Stain one color and move on.'"

Rigsby is keeping an eye on the future of reactive stain. Like many in her niche, she takes water-based stains very seriously. She calls them "hybrid stains," because, she says, they behave like a cross between paint and a reactive stain. Water-based stains are more forgiving than acid stains, she says. "It will do a better job blending old and new. With reactive stains, with the old and the new, you get very different reactions."

Additionally, she is writing a second

book that will discuss the fundamentals of decorative concrete disciplines beyond the art of stain — everything from microtoppings to polished concrete. "An information vacuum is coming," she says. "That's why I'm doing a lot of the stuff I'm doing."

She's doing more and more design-install jobs, she says, and she's even moving toward design-consults. And in those cases, a knowledge gap may pose some problems. "If I design something they don't know how to install, it doesn't help them."

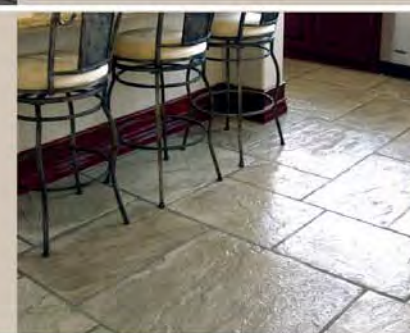
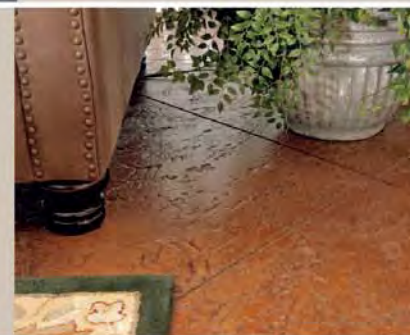
Lack of knowledge is playing into another big issue for decorative concrete,

she says: Failures are giving the trade a black eye. "We see so much work that fails. If you create the most beautiful floor that fails to perform, the floor fails."

If people don't resist the temptation to cut corners, she says, there will be consequences. She's already seen it happen in Dallas. "Either quality will improve or demand will decline."

Beyond quality work, the contractor must educate the customer about proper maintenance, she says. "People often mistake concrete as maintenance-free. There is no such thing as a maintenance-free floor." 🛠️

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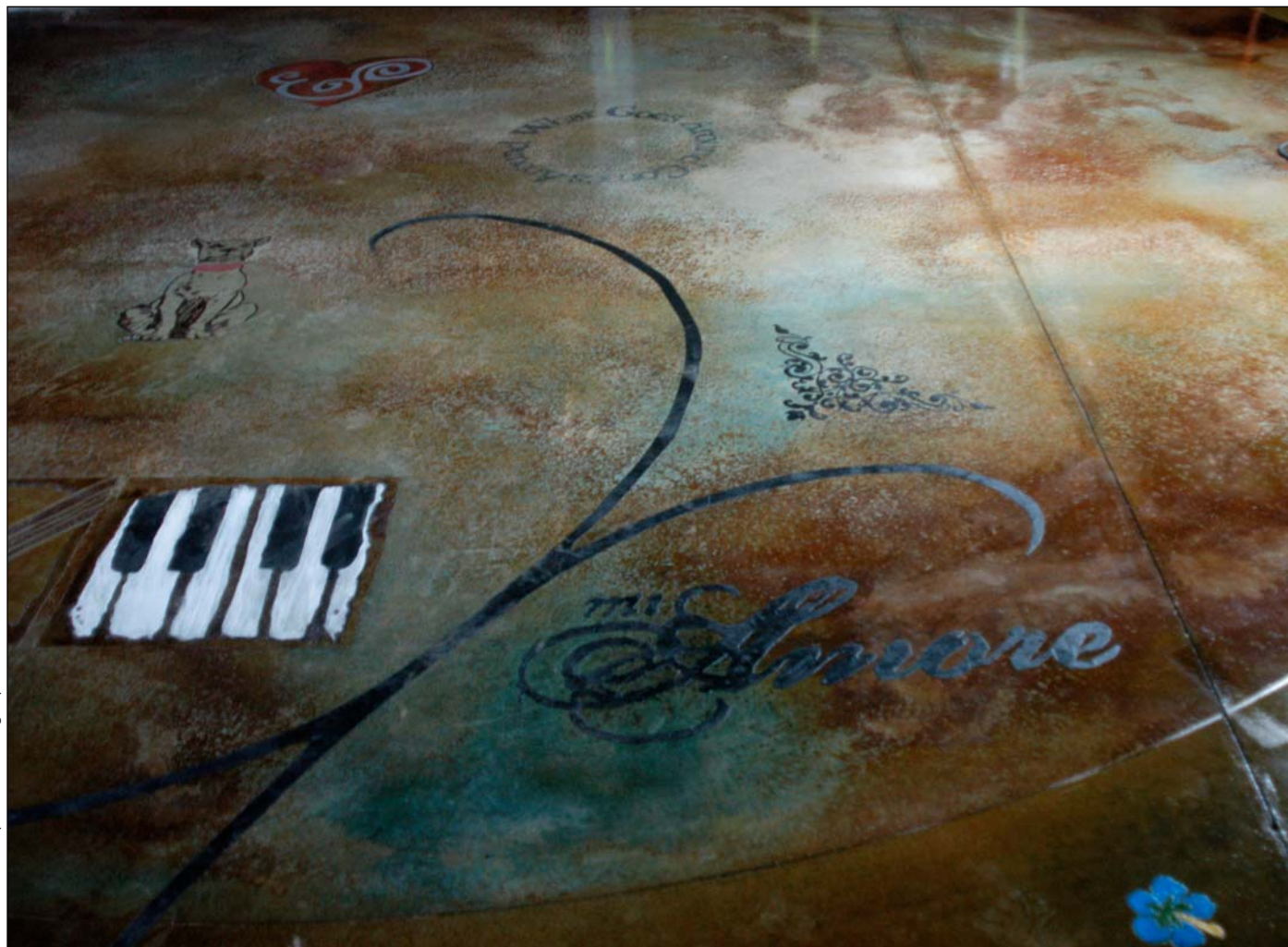
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Photos courtesy of Shellie Rigsby

Teen spirit: "The Warehouse" at Seabreeze Church



Texas artisan Shellie Rigsby, owner of Acanthus Inc., knows as much as anyone about using decorative concrete for artistic expression. So when she took charge of installing a decorative concrete floor at a new youth recreation center, she invited young people to put their own stamp on the place.

The center, called "The Warehouse," is part of a new campus built for Seabreeze Church in Huntington Beach, Calif. As one might expect from its name, The Warehouse generally sports an industrial look inside and out, but Rigsby has designed and installed flooring and other decorative concrete effects

at the site. Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems Inc., a subsidiary of Solomon Colors, supplied materials, including microtoppings, stains and stencils.

Rigsby wanted a walk across the youth center floor to be like an ocean-side treasure hunt. "Because this is a beach community, the theme of this room is a walk on a beach," she says. "It's not limited to that, but that's the theme of it."

She involved young people from the city and the church community every step of the way. First, she asked them to submit drawings and designs for the floor. "I gave them no restrictions except

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that they had to draw normal creatures — no dragons or aliens.”

Then Rigsby went to work. She scanned and resized the pictures, then printed them onto a low-tack adhesive film so they could be stenciled onto the floor. In some cases, she would apply a gel resist over the stencil film, then pull up the stencil, apply a stain, and finally remove the dried gel. In others, concrete engraving tools were used to cut images into the concrete. Acid stain, water-based stain, microtoppings, and other decorative concrete media were layered over one another. Some patterns stand out, and some patterns are pressed in.

She also provided water-based stains, pigments, sealers and engraving equipment for the kids and turned them loose, letting them detail many of the images themselves.

She even asked them to come up with words, phrases and sentences that fit the ambience of the church youth center. She created multiple fonts for Legacy to cut into stencils, then interspersed the words among the designs. The final effect is a floor that is dense

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with images and ideas. "It's very much like graphic design on steroids in concrete," she says.

One of the visual centerpieces of the floor is a 10-foot "Woody Wagon" based on a drawing submitted by Krista Winburn, one of the young artists. To deck out the wagon with chrome, Rigsby used Modern Masters Metal Effects. "It looks like I took polished metal and embedded it in the concrete," she says. "It's very compelling."

Another young artist's picture looked vaguely like a license plate, she says, so she incorporated that into the wagon design as well.

In one corner of the room is a "sun," a 13-foot quarter circle outlined by an 8-inch wide band of embedded lights. Rigsby cut a trench into the concrete so an electrician could embed the lights. Then the trench was backfilled with pigmented epoxy.

No beach is complete without the ocean, and a 10-foot wave near the Woody was installed by Randy Klassen, a decorative concrete contractor from Canada who lent his expertise to the Seabreeze job.

Rigsby and her skills in decorative concrete have come in handy in other parts of the project too. She recommended finishes and design touches for the walls and built-in furniture at The Warehouse, including the idea of using galvanized metal for countertops and shelving, supported by metal pipes and flange.

She installed a more traditional concrete stain on a floor in a multipurpose room adjoining the Warehouse room. Together, the two floors total 4,500 square feet.

She's also helping outdoors. The church is being constructed on the site

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of a former tennis club, and the top hard layer of the tennis court area has been blasted off to expose the concrete beneath. The old concrete has been cut and trimmed into an oval crossed with rays, and Rigsby has provided the finishing touch: staining the oval amber with hickory accents.

Rigsby's decorative philosophy of starting with the design and working backward came in handy at the Warehouse. "In a residential setting, the intensity of this design would overwhelm the space — this would be unappealing and inappropriate," she observes. "The floors should cohesively compliment and serve the comprehensive design. If you overdesign a space, you fail to have

regard for the best interest of the space. You can design something in keeping with and consistent with the whole property, the whole space."

But more than Rigsby's philosophies, the Warehouse floor expresses the voices of the young people of Huntington Beach. The kids who worked alongside Rigsby can even put designing a commercial decorative concrete floor on their college applications, she notes. "They have put their mark on their space. It embodies them. It represents who they are as a community."

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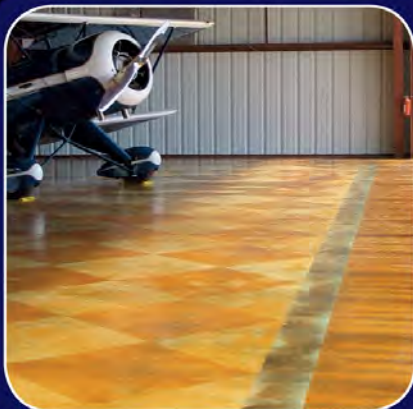
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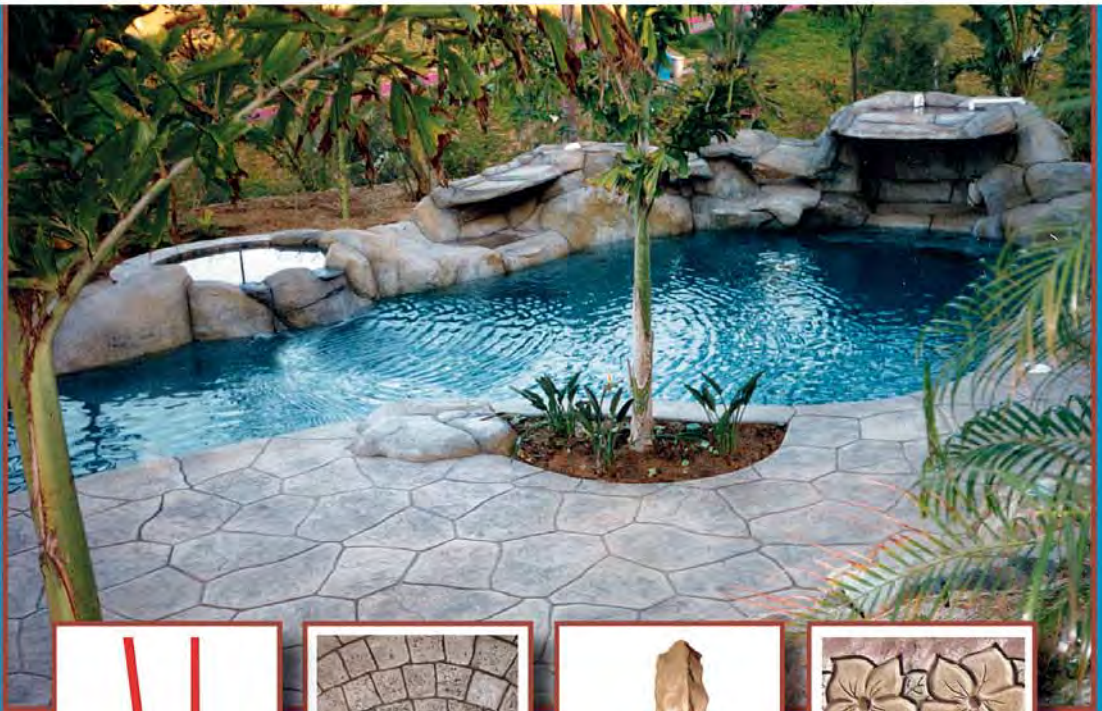
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Product Profile



Photos courtesy of Bill Thomas



Reflections Stamp

After more than 25 years, Rick Smith, owner and president of Richard Smith Custom Concrete in Canoga Park, Calif., says he has tried all the tools designed for stamping concrete. He says that stamps have hit the end of the road in designs — every pattern that can be done has been done. So last year he decided to do something about it. Smith went to Matcrete Inc. in Ontario, Calif., with his idea of a stamping tool that creates a design on concrete using light and shadow rather than relying on secondary colors to make its mark.

After one year of designs and prototypes, Matcrete manufactured Reflections. The 36-by-36-inch stamp has a “three-dimensional” design that looks like four overlapping concentric circles, with a bite taken out of either side of each circle — shapes described as bull’s-eye

hourglasses. “Ordinary stamps other than brick and smooth tile patterns or detectable warnings have various degrees of elevation due to the natural materials they are replicating,” says Matcrete senior vice president Kris Kaitanjan. “The only consistent entity within those patterns are the grout lines or the joints — those will usually have the same depth. The bull’s-eye hourglass is a two-dimensional object, but we added pitch to their outer edges to make them three-dimensional. If we took the same bull’s-eye hourglasses and applied or grooved a joint into their outer edges instead of adding pitch, we would not achieve the true third dimension you see in the photos. Instead, you would see something flat and without life.

“The pattern incorporates the effect when light encounters two adjacent sides of an individual circle,” says Kaitanjan.

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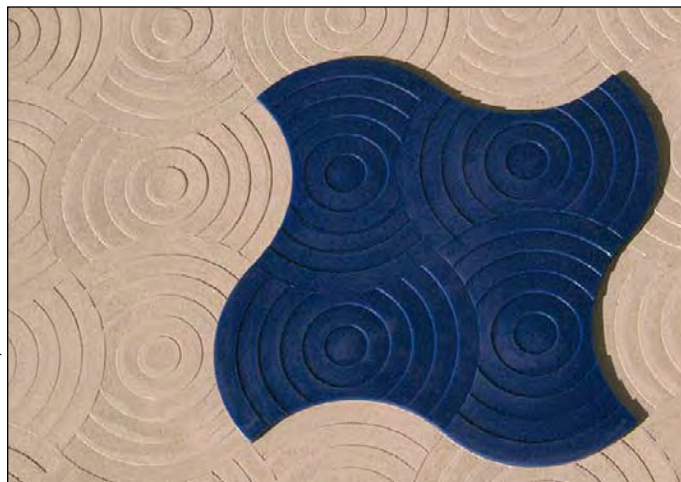


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Photos courtesy of Rick Smith



When used on sand-finished concrete, the stamp creates depth that catches light and adds shadow, so the design without color is quite impressive. "There are many ways to bring concrete to life," says Kaitanjan. "Coloring it, saw-cutting, stamping — there are many ways to add character to hardscapes. We are unlocking the doors so that stamped concrete will trick the eye into thinking that there is an actual pulse or rhythm within the patterns."

Due to the interaction between pattern, light and perspective, the design only requires a single base color, says Kaitanjan. It is intended for use with a clear liquid release agent, since the highlights and shading that are normally achieved with a powder release agent are not needed.

"The difference between natural flagstone and flagstone-looking stamped concrete is something that only a trained eye could tell and is often overlooked by the naked eye," says Kaitanjan. "With this new style of patterns, there is a distinguished beauty. Through aspect and lighting, the Reflections pattern can alter its effect based on the accent of the sun or merely by the angle in which it is looked at."

Smith says he hopes this new creation will open the door to a whole new way of looking at stamped concrete and inspire a younger generation of contractors to come up with more innovative tools for decorative concrete.

Right now, only one design is available, but more are in the works and will be introduced in 2007.

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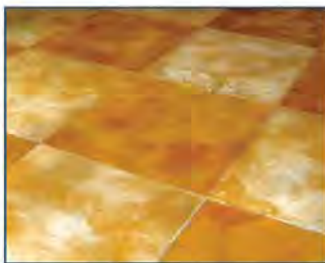


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1. The challenges the contractor faced in rehabbing the project, taking into consideration the state of the original concrete and obstacles that threatened to derail the work along the way.
2. The level of creativity that went into the final look of the project.
3. The ways in which the look of the restored piece compliments or contrasts with its surroundings, an important element to consider when rehabbing any preexisting concrete feature.

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Premier Veneers, based in Frankfort, Ill., for restoration of an indoor pool patio in Crete, Ill.

While the design elements of this project were not as complex as some other entries, the contractor conquered a number of extraordinary challenges. This entry also shows that sometimes in decorative concrete, imperfections can reflect the emotions of a project and create something that is more powerful.

IN THE ARTIST'S WORDS: Jeff Donius, Premier Veneers


In October 2005, I was called by the owner of the home, Cindy Hamilton, to do an estimate for the repair of their stamped pool patio, which she said had been installed by their pool contractor but was beset by structural and aesthetic problems, the most notable of which were that it was delaminating throughout and was, on the whole, visibly unappealing.

I went out to do the estimate a couple days later and met with Cindy's retired husband, John. He took me on a tour of the installation, and I was shocked by what I saw: 1) delamination of large portions of the overlay; 2) alligator cracking in isolated areas due to the use of too much mix water in certain batches of overlay material; 3) the control joints of the original slab were filled with cement instead of being left opened ("honored"); 4) the depth of the overlay was too shallow in many areas, with the original concrete showing through; 5) the overlay covered only part of the interior lip of the pool and terminated with large drip marks in many areas; 6) stamping of the overlay was done at inconsistent depths and in some areas not at all; and 7) accent coloration of the overlay was spotty and much too dark for the light integral color of the overlay.

Unfortunately, John told me that not just the patio but the whole

pool project, for two long years, had been fraught with problems. ... This project required a complete tear-out of the existing overlay, down to the concrete substrate, and the installation of a new overlay. The added tension of a new overlay on top of the old one would likely only have resulted in further delamination.

... Cindy and John were ecstatic about the results of their new patio. ... But what made the project especially rewarding to me was the friendship I developed with John. You see, the reason John was retired was that he had terminal cancer. When I met him, he had been fighting the disease for two long years, after the doctors had initially only given him months to live. He would overcome the cancer in one area of his body, only to have it surface somewhere else. But he had a great, inspiring, positive attitude about it all. He was grateful that he had been able to do all he wanted to during his life, happy for each day he had left, and his last wish was to resolve the two-year-long patio problem so that his wife could enjoy it after he was gone. I felt honored and privileged to be able to provide this wish for him. Almost every day, he and I would sit down and have a beer together and reminisce about his life, as another section of overlay material was setting up for stamping, a coat of sealer was drying, or just to take a break. ...

 www.concreteveneers.com

INTERIOR: SECOND PLACE

Polished Concrete Images, a division of K. Johnson Construction Inc., Sauk Rapids, Minn., for the Eich Motor Co. luxury auto dealership showroom in St. Cloud, Minn.

This project is both a classic commercial restoration and an innovative take on restoring a luxury auto showroom floor to showcase quality. By choosing to go with a polished floor, the contractor pursued an environmentally friendly approach to rehab, and the results couldn't look better.

IN THE ARTIST'S WORDS: Josh Theis, Polished Concrete Images

This building has a long history as a car dealership. It started out as a Studebaker dealership many years ago. Over the years many additions and remodeling occurred. Throughout the years there was always some type of floor covering over the concrete. ... The owner was looking for something that would give them a high-end showroom while preserving the history of dealership. When we brought polished concrete to them as an option, the result was a beautiful floor that preserved the history of the building while providing a durable flooring solution that would hold up to the traffic of a showroom.

The challenges that we experienced were several different con-

crete pours over many years, with one addition being poured just prior to the polishing. There were also many cracks, chip-outs from previous walls, and "uneven" control joints. To correct the cracks and chip-outs we used a patching compound (meadow patch) to fill the voids and then grind them level. In the case of the "uneven" control joints we ground them level and in extreme cases we had to raise the slab to better level the floor prior to polishing.

To grind and polish the floor we used an HTC 800 HD with diamond tools from HTC. During the process we used Pentra-Sil as our densifier and Pentra Guard as our stain resist. Both of these products are made by Convergent Technologies.

 www.pcifloors.com



EXTERIOR: FIRST PLACE:

Unique Concrete, based in West Milford, N.J., for pool deck restorations in Butler, Greenwood Lake and Lake Denmark, N.J.



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If concrete restoration means taking a failing slab of concrete and thoroughly restoring it to health, these pool decks are terrific examples.

IN THE ARTIST'S WORDS: Barry Fisher, Unique Concrete

The resurfacing or restoration of existing concrete surfaces is a cost-effective way to upgrade areas that have failed due to spalling, settling, cracking, and so on, while creating a more decorative appearance at the same time. After we address structural problems, we cover everything with a minimum of 1 1/2 inch of integrally colored, steel-and-fiber-reinforced concrete that we texture and imprint with deep impressions. These impressions are created with our own "cookie-cutter" stamping tools, of which we offer 14 different patterns. The impressions are later grouted. The existing concrete is considered nothing more than a superior sub-base. By not removing it, we are more forgiving to the landscape areas and are less likely to disturb the structural integrity of pools.

The integral color is made with synthetic iron oxides purchased from Lanxess. The synthetic fibers are 3/4-inch and 1 1/2-inch purchased from Nycon. Sealers are purchased from QC Construction Products. The imprinting tools we make ourselves.

In one project (shown in the top two photos at right), the objective was to eliminate the diving board area and resurface the remaining concrete in a decorative way. By pouring a minimum thickness of 1 1/2 inch and pouring certain areas thicker when necessary, we were able to reestablish proper pitch over settled and patched areas. We considered the existing concrete to be

nothing more than a superior sub-base.

The two photos below them show a second project. Here, the objective was to eliminate the wooden deck on grade and add on to all sides of the pool to create a larger entertaining area. The work produced one continuous visually appealing look without endangering the structural integrity of a 25-year-old pool. The deck was removed and replaced with a concrete slab that corresponded to the height of the existing concrete. Everything was then covered with 1 1/2 inches of integrally colored fiber and steel-reinforced concrete.

In another project (not shown), the objective was to resurface the existing concrete and old metal coping. The new surface reestablished pitch on areas that didn't drain well and other areas that had excessive pitch due to settling. All existing concrete was basically structurally sound (except the perimeter brick, which was delaminating), thus providing a superior sub-base to resurface. The concrete in a fourth project (also not shown) was cracked and settled in some areas, creating sections that didn't drain. Additionally, certain areas were poured with no pitch, and others had settled extensively. With our process, we were able to reestablish the surface in a decorative way to shed water properly.

 www.uniqueconcretenj.com

EXTERIOR: SECOND PLACE:

Emerald Coast Concrete Resurfacing Inc., based in Milton, Fla., for backyard pool area in Golf Breeze, Fla.



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Some concrete rehab projects are bigger deals than others, but every project is a big deal to somebody. The work of this husband-and-wife outfit addressed and transformed this backyard pool area from fountain to fireplace.

IN THE ARTIST'S WORDS: Corinne Brown, Emerald Coast Concrete Resurfacing Inc.


We had a unique opportunity come up from a customer. We needed to perform a miracle on an area that was adjacent to a pool deck ... The miracle was to correct this very boring and unattractive area. He wanted his children to be attracted to play and run through his sprinkler fountain.

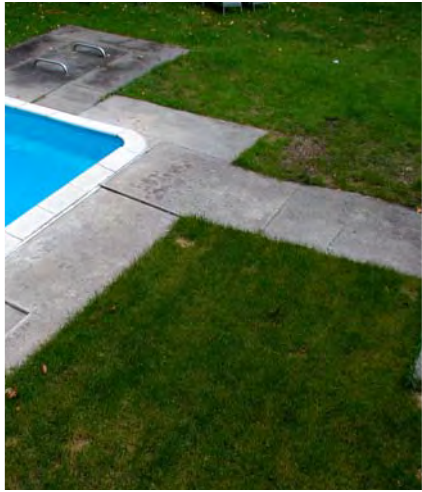
The challenges we encountered ... just a few! What job doesn't have them! Well to start with, we had a very large drain in the center that was black (not white) which really stood out. We had eight sprinkler box heads to incorporate into the design that were not centered across from each other perfectly. And to top it all off, the sprinkler fountain area was not centered to fit the slab.

The solution ... we needed a good design that: 1) would help hide

the problems areas, 2) would attract children to the area to play in the sprinklers, and 3) center the pad area so it looks like it was designed this way.

After some careful thinking, and a lot of input between the customer and I, we both believed we nailed it down! We thought like kids: Seashells ... Bubbles ... Dolphins ... Oh My! ... We decided to inlay seashells at every sprinkler box as if the shells were shooting the water out when the fountain was on. The bubbles were added to fill the area between the seashells and to give the design some type of form to help hide the offset boxes. ... We decided to put the dolphins swimming around the drain as if, God forbid, the dolphins were swimming away down the drain! Besides just having fun with the design, we needed the dolphins to tie the bubbles to the shells to complete the work with balance in color ...

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Sealer Trouble

by Bart Sacco

Sealers ... Who would think yesterday's simplest installation task would be today's biggest headache? It sure seems that way. In the past few short years since VOC law changes came into effect, sealer issues have been the most common type of technical question we receive at the Concrete Kingdom Decorative Training Center.

The problems that most guys are having are pretty much the same throughout the entire AIM (Architectural and Industrial Maintenance) coatings-compliant region. I have received calls from as far north as upper Maine and along the entire East Coast all the way down to Maryland, Delaware and Virginia, almost to North Carolina, not to mention going east to west from Long Island to Ohio. Everyone you talk to about sealers would just about give you their right nut for some of the good old stuff before the new VOC laws came into effect.

Let me provide you with some background on how the products have changed: Prior to the end of 2004, VOC levels for many sealers were in the range of 600 to 700 grams per liter. Heck, some of them in the 1990s were even knocking on the door of 800 grams per liter. Today, the current VOC-compliant sealer gives off less than 400 grams per liter.

Since the reduced levels have become effective, we have seen many, many formula changes. They are good for our environment, but unfortunately not for the installers who have to use them on a daily basis. One sealer manufacturer's premium-quality acrylic, once the best on the market, turned into total garbage with the VOC formula change. They made the changes needed to become compliant and the result was poor adhesion quality. This resulted in numerous problems for a lot of consumers who had used the product; after the first winter the stuff started to come right off the surface it was applied to. It did not matter if the new formula was applied to new concrete, previously sealed

concrete, manufactured stone or natural stone, the end result was the same: peeling, delaminating and hot tire pickup. Some contractors have even gone to the trouble of ripping out and replacing the entire slab due to bad sealer issues.

We have also seen a different sealer company, which manufactured a lower-grade product in its class, have trouble with their material after the changes to present-day compliance. Their products had turned very thick as a result of becoming VOC-compliant. The thicker-viscosity product, coupled with higher acetone levels, made their product skin over very fast, and as the product set, it would trap thousands of little bubbles in the coating. Also, large bubbles would form as a result of the product being applied in the sun and pooling in low areas of the pattern. If it was hot at the time of installation, this product suffered bonding abilities as well. This made for even more problems to correct.

The high solid content of this type of sealer, loaded with acetone as a carrier, means it takes a bit of skill to install. A special T-bar applicator is needed to apply the material to the slab at the proper mileage rate needed for a successful coating. If the product is applied with a sprayer, you need acetone-resistant seals in the sprayer. Then the installer still needs to go over the material with the T-bar applicator to spread the product thin.

The poor performance issues described above have caused a lot of grief for installers throughout the entire VOC-compliant region. Ultimately, the sealer issues made a lot of homeowners gun-shy of pattern-stamped concrete. These issues have given our industry a black eye, but hopefully we can change that with better products and proper education on how to use them correctly.



Examples of sealer delamination, possibly due to the use of salt or de-icing chemicals.



The sealer puddled in low areas and was overapplied as result. The sealer turned white every time it got wet.

Working with sealers

I got sick and tired of seeing all of our customers getting killed with sealer issues, so I set out on a personal quest to find a good, reliable product, one that we would be proud to sell. Along this journey we have looked into a bunch of different types of sealers, including water-based, solvent-based, and a new generation of hybrids.

Some of the new water-based sealers are very good. They look great, bond well and are economical. However, they can be a bit of trouble if not applied properly. Water-based sealers must be applied very thinly — about 250 to 300 square feet per gallon, with no puddling. Remember to back-roll excess material out of low areas of the pattern if necessary.

Then the first coat of sealer must dry completely and properly before the second coat is applied. The amount of time this will take depends on the environmental conditions at the time of application. Once the first coat is completely dry, repeat the process again to apply the second coat. This is good practice to use with all sealers, but it is extremely important when dealing with the water-based type. The industry in general is so used to the older solvent-based formulas where the timing to recoat was not critical. We used to apply the first coat, let it tack up, lay down another coat and jump in the truck and drive away. Today's VOC-compliant formulas need time to allow the first coat to dry before recoating.

With the newer epoxy/acrylic hybrid sealers, it is very important to follow the proper steps of installation: Apply thin, then allow the first coat to dry completely before moving on to the second application. If the proper application technique is not followed, you will end up with a milky white appearance in the sealer. This usually goes away in a few days, but the bigger problem is that the product will take on a milky white appearance

every time the sealer gets wet. The sealer will turn back to clear once the moisture has evaporated, and this oddity seems to have no effect on durability. But it is a shocking experience for the homeowner who has a dark-colored stamped driveway. Taking corrective measures are not difficult, but this does cost money and time to fix.

I have been asked if there is any kind of sealer out on the market that is foolproof. The natural-look penetrating types are just about as foolproof as you can get. You just apply to saturation point, broom the excess material out of low areas and control joints and leave it alone. Once this type of sealer has dried, you don't even know it is there. The concrete will turn back to its natural color and it will give the appearance that nothing has been applied ... until it gets wet. That is when you will see it work. Water will run right off. The drawback is that the penetrating sealers don't pop the color up like the film-forming type sealers. However, they are highly effective for keeping water and surface contamination out of the pores of the slab.

To eliminate or reduce problems during application it would be best to start with knowing what type of material you will be using: solvent-based, water-based, or silane/siloxane types. This will give you an indication of how the product should appear and what type of problems can pop up during installation.

The no-gloss penetrating silane/siloxane type of sealer should be applied to concrete that has been cured at least two weeks and that has no other curing compounds or sealers applied.

Starting with a clean dry slab, apply the product to the concrete in a single, uniform application, saturating the surface. Next, broom out the excess material from the low-lying areas and control joints with a clean soft-bristle push broom. If a second application is specified or desired, the second coat may be applied in the same way after the first one has visually dried.

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Sealer delamination, possibly due to salt or de-icing chemicals.

The only thing to avoid is allowing the product to puddle in low-lying areas, as this may cause discoloration of the surface. Clean-up is generally done with soap and water before the product has had time to set up.

Water-based cure-and-seals can be applied directly to a fresh concrete slab or to a slab that has been installed for an extended period of time. On a fresh slab, it is advisable to apply the product after the concrete has set enough that it won't be marked by the spray of product or by the application technique. An older, fully cured concrete slab must be clean and have no standing water on it. Apply thin, uniform coats by sprayer or roller, but the product must dry completely before a second coat is applied. Generally this is a low-gloss to medium-gloss product, and it cleans up with soap and water immediately after use.

Epoxy/acrylic hybrid sealers are similar to standard water-based sealers, but must be applied to concrete that has no standing water on the surface. They can be applied to fresh or cured concrete. The key to success with hybrid sealers is to apply them very, very thinly — 250 to 400 square feet per gallon — and the first coat must dry completely before the next coat is started. This type of sealer is available in a satin or gloss finish and cleans up with soap and water while the product is still fluid. They have a VOC level of about 100 grams per liter.

Solvent-based sealers are available in breathable-type cure-and-seals and also straight sealers that are not breathable. With this in mind you have to be informed of what type of sealer you have so you can apply the proper product to the substrate you are sealing. Fresh concrete requires a cure-and-seal product that is breathable. If you apply a straight sealer to a freshly poured slab you will most likely experience the sealer delaminating or blowing off the substrate due to the moisture content of the slab affecting the bond. Concrete cured more than 28 days can take either a straight sealer or a cure-and-seal product. Coverage is

about 200 to 300 square feet per gallon.

No matter what type of product your project requires, it is advisable to apply thin, uniform coats. If it is a straight sealer, make sure the surface is completely dry at time of installation. Next, allow the first coat of sealer to dry until you can walk on the surface without being tacky. Then recoat with the final coat of product.

This type of sealer is generally a high gloss. To reduce slip-page, Shark Grip anti-skid additive can be introduced to the final coat of sealer. Be careful about fumes. If used indoors, make sure the room is properly vented. If applied outdoors, beware of bright sunlight. Early-morning installation and a very hot day could very likely cause the product to bubble up. If you are applying on a day that the sun is very strong, apply the product before nightfall and let the sealer cure into the cooler part of the evening.

Cleanup of a solvent-based product is usually done with a solvent, and the normal application equipment is a sprayer fitted with the proper tip size or a roller.

This is a partial list of some of the problems that occur with newer VOC-compliant sealers. Even the best material can become a problem when placed in the wrong hands. It is important to keep all members of your crew informed, to the best of your ability, on product knowledge and application procedures. Check to be sure what type of product you are installing and make the effort to keep yourself and your crew educated. 🛠️

Bart Sacco is owner of Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply, a retail showroom and training center based in Throop, Penn.

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This underbelly view of an HTC four-head grinder illustrates the concept of "planetary" grinding. Each plate, or "planet," rotates, and they also orbit because the "universe" they are all mounted on turns at the same time. As the machine is moved along the floor, this performs a very uniform, stripeless grind.

Diamonds are a Prepper's Best Friend

by Steven H. Miller

Diamonds aren't just for polishing. Many surface prep jobs that are traditionally done with methods like scarifying or shot blasting can be accomplished better and faster by diamond grinding. The word "diamonds" is inevitably associated with the concept of "big bucks," but like many other things about diamond grinding, this is something of a misconception. Diamond grinding can be completely competitive if you know how to do it.

Until recently, most people in the concrete industry have thought of diamonds only in terms of polishing. More mundane tasks, like removing coatings or prepping a stained and chipped surface for a new coating or microtopping, are easier to associate with brute-force methods. There's a certain irony in this perception, since concrete polishing came about because of the availability of machines designed for grinding.



The Omega grinder comes in 115-volt and 230-volt electrics and also with a 5.5-horsepower gas-powered Honda engine.



An HTC "EZflex" plate with interchangeable tooling segments installed. EZflex is a system for fast segment changing.

Hard choices

Concrete is a hard material by design, and changing its surface requires force. Mark Elliott, a sales manager for Supra-brasive Inc. in Atlanta, Ga., puts it this way: "Anytime you grind or shot blast, you're doing damage, but it's controlled damage." The old methods use vertical force. Shot blasters fire a steel shot downwards, hammering the concrete. Scabblers pound up and down with tungsten carbide tips. Scarifying rotates a series of carbide tips downwards like a soil cultivator digging into a field. They all strike vertically to fracture the top layer or break through the coating, and the concrete they leave behind is also microfractured. These methods are very aggressive, and each one has only a narrow range of profiles it can achieve.

Grinding wears away a hard surface by cutting across it with something harder. Diamonds are the hardest natural substance known, and their edges scratch into the surface while moving parallel with it. The size of the diamonds determines

the depth of the scratches. The International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI) defines 10 levels of Concrete Surface Profiles (CSP) from acid etching to milling. Diamond grinders can produce all of them.

Grinding is done with the same machine as diamond polishing. Most grinders use three or more spinning heads in a planetary arrangement: The discs spin on their axes in one direction, but their axes also orbit around a central point in the other direction, like rotating planets orbiting the sun. This produces a very even pattern across the entire path of the grinder. "You get a very flat, monolithic surface," says John Abrahamson, president of HTC Professional Floor Systems. "You get a beautiful floor — you remove all the imperfections."

Diamonds aren't forever

There's a wide variety of abrasive tools. The diamonds may be fixed directly to discs or cup-wheels, or attached to interchangeable segments. The diamonds themselves can be a single layer, attached either by electroplating or a pressurized brazed system (PBS), or they can be mixed in a matrix that gets gradually worn away. A metal matrix is used for grinding grits, plastic or resin for polishing.

In all cases, the diamonds work by wearing down. Crystals break, exposing new, sharp edges for cutting. In a matrix, diamond chunks eventually fall out and the metal holding it quickly wears away, exposing fresh diamonds. This is one reason to pay more for better diamonds. Low-grade diamonds break off in slivers that get caught under wheels and dig deeper scratches than desired. Good diamonds break in chunks,



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Two cup wheels sowing single-row and double-row arrangements of abrasive segments. Counterintuitively, the double row is less aggressive, because it is distributing the weight of the grinding machine over more surface area of abrasive, so each square inch of abrasive is applied with less downward pressure. The placement of gaps between the segments is critical to allow the wheel to clear dust or wet slurry.

get swept away, and leave sharp edges to do fresh cutting. But the bigger the chunks, the faster they fall out. "A 6-grit diamond will probably last 5,000 to 8,000 square feet," says Kyle Wiggins, who does sales and marketing at Innovatech Products & Equipment, Everett, Wash. "A 60-grit to 80-grit diamond will last 15,000 to 20,000 square feet."

The exception is a recent innovation called a polycrystalline diamond, a very hard, highly aggressive, multipointed, man-made diamond attached to a tungsten carbide holder. It costs considerably more but can outlast some ordinary diamonds by a factor of 10. "Polycrystalline diamonds take you to the whole next level," comments Wiggins. The first polycrystalline was equivalent to 6-grit or coarser, producing a profile



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almost like a milling machine. In the last few months, Innovatech has introduced smaller-grit poly segments that replace ordinary diamonds but can last 40,000 to 50,000 square feet.

Diamond grits are classed like sandpaper, with the exception that diamonds are usually expressed as a range, 6-grit to 8-grit being the coarsest available. Matrix material comes in different kinds of hardness for different types of concrete, although the application is somewhat counterintuitive. Softer concrete — 1,500 psi to 3,000 psi — is ground with very hard-matrix tooling, so the dust won't eat away the matrix too quickly. "If the metal is too soft, it releases the diamonds before they're used up, so you cut service life," explains Abrahamson. Conversely, grinding very hard concrete produces so much heat that the diamonds break off soft instead of rigid, becoming one solid sheet with the matrix, a process called "glazing over." It needs a softer matrix, so that glazed-over diamonds will fall out more quickly, keeping you cutting effectively.

"When they power-trowel the floor, it may be too hard



to be ground," notes Wiggins. "You might have to use a shot blaster or scarifier to open the concrete up."

A beautiful profile

The greatest advantage of diamond grinding is the quality of the job. A diamond-ground profile is far more consistent than a shot blast. There is no "blast pattern," no hot spots, no lightening of the cut at the edges of the grind path. The grind profile is totally even. "The shot blaster digs ditches that consume a lot of that coating," comments Joe Cooper, national sales manager for the Stone & Concrete Systems division of Gran Quartz in Tucker, Ga. "When the proper diamonds are used, you use less coating and you get the proper adhesion."

And you don't have to have specialized training to use a diamond grinder. "You need a more trained worker with a shot blaster, because you can do a lot of damage to a floor with 'cornrows' or 'zebra stripes' if the operator overlaps passes," notes Wiggins. "You can put almost any laborer behind a diamond grinder." Grinders can typically work right up to a wall; a shot-blaster often leaves several inches untouched, which then have to be worked with a hand grinder or a special edging machine. "Our customers who've done shot blasting say they prefer the diamond surfacing," says Dennis Stoscher, vice president of engineering and co-owner of Leitch & Co. and Intertool, located in San Leandro, Calif. "It's a whole lot smoother and you get just as good a grip. Fifty-grit will give you a tenacious surface for a coating or topping."



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Wet versus Dry

When it comes to diamond grinding, the choice between wet and dry grinding is probably the biggest area of controversy.

John Abrahamson, HTC Professional Floor Systems —
“Dry is preferable because you can see your work and it’s environmentally friendly.” He adds: Wet ground slurry is classed as hazardous waste in many states and must be dried out before it can be disposed of legally.

Mark Elliott, Superabrasive Inc. —
“It’s not much of a debate. Always wet if you can. The diamonds keep themselves cleaner, cooler, they last longer. Dry takes up to one third longer.”

Joe Cooper, Gran Quartz —
“Dry is absolutely the way to go. With wet, you can easily do more work than you need to. Also, there’s the labor of cleaning up the mess. Diamonds that are made for dry grinding last just as long.”

Dennis Stoscher, Leitch & Co. and Intertool —
“We like to run wet. Wet extends diamond life by a factor of three to four times. You get a better surface with no fissures in substrate.”

Kyle Wiggins, Innovatech Products & Equipment —
“The trick is to figure out what kind of concrete you have. What grit to use wet, when to switch to dry. If you grind 40-grit wet and then switch to 60-grit-to-80-grit dry, it won’t take out the 40-grit scratch marks. You have to grind 40-grit wet, then 40-grit dry, then 60-grit-to-80-grit dry.

“Dry is always going to be easier. The vacuum sucks up the dust and you see the exact profile and the exact removal. But there are situations where you’ll have to cut wet. For harder concrete, with the glazing over of the diamonds, wet is better. You dissipate heat, the diamonds stay cooler, cut better, last longer. The same 40-grit diamond will cut deeper wet than dry.

“In Florida, where they use a lot of shell in the concrete and it’s soft, they’ll probably never have to go wet in their life. Go up into the mountains where they use a lot of river rock and granite in the concrete and the guys could never dry-grind if they wanted to.”

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The grinding machine is also versatile. Different tooling provides different profiles, and the desired profile can often be achieved in a single pass. It can resurface old concrete, or remove coatings, paint, mastic, and almost anything but steel bolts. Innovatech makes a plate with spring-loaded diamonds that can take coatings out of low spots without having to grind the entire surface down to meet the lowest areas. The floor can be changed to a rougher or smoother profile and even restored to a surface emulating a power-troweled finish. With more passes, it can be polished to a mirror-like surface using the same machine. The machine investment is very efficient, and can open up new lines of business for a contractor.

"I don't know of a situation where I wouldn't want to use diamond grinding," says Cooper. "It used to be with some of the thicker coatings or carpet glue, it would ball up under the diamonds. But now, with the polycrystalline diamonds, that's not a problem."

Contractors have innovated in the field, too. One technique involves mixing two different diamond grits on the same disc. By alternating 6-grit with 16-grit-to-18-grit segments, they get the faster cutting of the coarse grit, but a finish almost as fine as the smoother grit.

"Diamond grinding is much more environmentally friendly than any other method," Abrahamson says. Unlike acid etching, there are no hazardous chemicals involved. The dust from dry grinding can be disposed of legally in all 50 states. The machine is relatively quiet, too.

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The calculation of cost effectiveness is tricky because it involves so many factors — machine price, tooling price, work speed, maintenance downtime, labor rates — but most experts seem to agree that diamond grinding is generally a good deal.


Relative to other machines, grinders are cheap, ranging from a 12-inch machine with vacuum extractor for about \$7,500 to a 36-inch, 4-head remote-controlled powerhouse for about \$37,000.

The consumables, or diamonds, are not cheap. Because there is such a wide variety of tooling, price generalizations are impossible. Cup wheels run \$80 to \$150 per wheel. A plate that takes up to six segments can also be run with only three, so a four-head machine might take anywhere from \$500 to \$1,500 to equip with one grit of diamonds.

Ultimately, the figure that matters is the cost per square foot, and this is where diamonds shine. The high price up front gets a lot of use. Ordinary diamonds last long enough to get the cost down into the range of \$0.05 to \$0.06 per square foot. Polycrystalline diamonds, while more expensive, are so long-lasting that they bring the cost down even further.

"The cost of tooling is minimal," Abrahamson says. "The biggest cost is labor." Relative job speed depends a great deal on the particular job. Grinders typically cut a wider path than other machines, needing fewer passes to cover the floor, but they're not as fast. When simply grinding exposed concrete, a shot blaster might be as fast or faster. But if taking a 30-mil coating off the same floor, the shot blaster could take five times as long. "You might have to do two or three passes," says Wiggins, "or you might need to blast so hard you have to diamond grind it afterwards."

Shot blasters and scarifiers also have long downtime for complicated maintenance, and need well-trained workers to utilize them. Grinders are low-maintenance and the tooling can be changed very easily and quickly. Grinders also can be used by less-trained laborers.

There's general agreement that the final cost of a job is as low or lower using diamonds. Combine that with the more uniform, more reliable finished surface, and it would definitely seem that diamonds have the edge. 

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Polishing: Tough Questions

by John Strieder

Polishing concrete seems to be the Next Big Thing in decorative concrete, and why not? Polishing a floor can give it a glossy, rich finish that shines in a Wal-Mart or a luxury auto dealership. Even better, polishing is chemical-free, which makes it a godsend in this age of crackdowns on volatile organic compound emissions.

But a decorative concrete contractor will have some tough questions to ask about this trendy technique. How well does it work with other decorative techniques? What about maintenance? What is the real reason big discount store chains and other commercial clients are specifying polished finishes on their floors?

Let's take that last question first.

The number one reason stores are turning to polished concrete is cost, says Kyle Wiggins, sales and marketing manager at Innovatech Products & Equipment. "The average store spends \$1.70 per square foot per year maintaining their vinyl composite tile floors," he says. "VCT floors have a lifetime of five to six years and have to be replaced as well. Polished concrete costs about \$0.10 per square foot per year to maintain, and polished concrete will never need to be replaced. If a store properly maintains their concrete floors then they should never need to be repolished."

Not only does polished concrete last longer with cheaper maintenance than other finishes, but it increases the ambient light in a store to boot. "A polished floor provides a finished floor with light reflectivity that is still durable and easy to maintain," says John R. Abrahamson, president and managing director of HTC Professional Floor Systems.

Getting slippery

Of course, cost savings don't mean much if shoppers keep slipping and falling on floors. It's a fair question: Is a high shine slippery? Does a higher diamond grind finish compromise slip resistance?

"I guess you would have to define 'slippery,'" Wiggins says. "A polished concrete floor at 3,000 grit has better slip resistance than a waxed VCT floor."

A higher shine does not make the floor less slip-resistant, Abrahamson says, because in the absence of any wax coating or sealant, the concrete is still in a natural state, and friction still takes place on the surface. "The shine factor is misleading. We have learned that shine means slippery because we have been walking on wax and other such topical coatings when we've seen shine. If we lived in Europe, and walked on diamond-polished natural stone rather than waxed surfaces, we would not be so conditioned. Shiny isn't necessarily slippery. Waxes and coatings are."

A higher shine does not mean more maintenance either. Actually, a highly polished floor is easier to maintain, says Poinsettia Byrd, who does senior technical sales and support with VIC International Corp. "The higher polished floors hold their shine better," she says. "And in independent testing, a high diamond grind finish can be more slip-resistant than a

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power-troweled floor.”

Wiggins agrees. “The maintenance of polished concrete is the same at every level. It is not a maintenance-free floor but a low-maintenance floor. The floors need to be cleaned on a regular basis. There are several products that can be added to the cleaning water to keep the floor shine at a maximum.”

However, Abrahamson sees it differently. “It’s very easy to maintain a high shine, but a higher shine does require more dedication than a low shine.”

RetroPlate marketing director Peter Wagner, for his part, says yes and no. “In actuality, a floor that is polished to a higher level is closed up tighter, lessening the ability of soil or spills to adhere to the floor. Perceptually, the higher the shine, the more visible soil or spills will appear to the eye, raising the need to clean more often. An 800-grit or 1,500-grit’s higher reflectivity will ‘visually’ require more frequent cleaning.”

A finish to 800 grit will meet or exceed OSHA and ADA recommendations

for static coefficient of friction, Wagner says. “Although some floors at 1,500 grit may also pass, RetroPlate has third-party testing showing that an 800-grit finish passes both dry and wet, for leather, neolite and rubber.”

Polishing standards vary even within chains, observes Wagner. “Some stores receive a full-blown ‘metals to resins’ grinding and polishing, while many others only receive resins. The difference, in addition to the cost, is that the lower-end metal-grit diamonds are generally required to remove all the laitance, inclusions, and so on. These steps are what produce your final clarity in your floor, while the resin polishing steps are literally only addressing the surface. A floor which receives both metals and resins will deliver a floor with both clarity and shine, while the floor just with resins only provides shine.”

Considering color

Another question of particular interest to decorative concrete contractors is how polishing interacts with other decorative techniques.

Wiggins says polishing can change the color of integrally colored and color-hardened concrete. “Depending on what types of diamonds are used and the process — wet or dry — the color could come out a shade or two lighter or darker.”

Wagner agrees. “The floor always lightens during the removal of the top cream.”

However, the challenges of polishing integrally colored and color-hardened concrete are no different than the challenges of polishing standard grey concrete, Abrahamson says. “As long as the concrete is solid and structurally sound, any concrete can be polished,” he says. “Polishing enhances and enriches the color, and allows you to choose the level of shine.”

The effect depends on the diamond tooling used to polish, Byrd says. “Some tools leave a darkening effect on the floor. With good diamond tools, the color of the floor is enhanced.”

However, Byrd warns, the color-hardened top layer of concrete can be removed through too much grinding. “You must be concerned with the cosmetics of

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the integrally colored concrete.”

Grinding off part of the color when polishing a stained or dyed slab is also very easy to do, Wiggins says. “This could leave an uneven or blotchy look in the slab when finished. It is very important to know at what step in the process to dye or stain, harden and seal the concrete slab.”

Also, consider flatness and levelness when polishing colored concrete, says Wagner. “With dry shakes, an uneven floor, and potentially uneven broadcast and placement of the dry shake, you can end up with areas where you grind through the dry shake entirely, exposing the base slab.”

It’s important to apply a densifier or hardener prior to polishing colored concrete surfaces, Wiggins says. “When diamond grinding is done before the polishing process, it will grind away the power-troweled surface, leaving a surface with a lot of pores in it. This surface makes it very easy for a concrete dye or stain to penetrate farther down into the slab. The problem with doing this is the surface is left very weak and prone to wear with traffic. The solution to this problem is to harden or densify the surface to prevent this wear.”

Densifying the concrete makes the wear surface much more abrasion resistant, keeps the concrete from dusting, and helps it retain shine, says Abrahamson.

Byrd is also bullish on densifying. “As an integrally colored floor is consistent throughout the slab, the wear pattern can alter the color of the floor. Shake-on color hardener can actually get worn off. Densifying will increase abrasion resistance, protecting both surfaces from excessive wear patterns.”

Wagner says that while the addition of a densifier before polishing helps both integrally colored and dry shake floors, the integral floor will benefit more. “Integrally colored floors tend to be softer than regular concrete, whereas dry-shake floors are going to be two to three times harder. The densifier provides abrasion resistance, oil and water repellency and dust-proofing for the integral, while the main benefits for dry shake, in addition to the polished look, are the increased oil and water resistance, along with the dust-proofing. Dry shake is a

high percentage cement product, so the dusting is important.”

The timing of when the densifier goes into the floor varies between integral and dry shake, and even between dry shake applications, Wagner says. “In looking at integral, you will want to perform your grinding up through 100-to-200 grit, and then apply the densifier. The reason for this timing is that a harder, densified floor will polish in a better, tighter scratch pattern. As with natural stone, the harder the surface, the tighter

the scratch pattern, and the tighter the scratch pattern, the more abrasion resistance and higher gloss to your finish.

“With dry shakes, the less grinding the better. The method with which the floor was finished, whether pan-troweled or plastic blade, will change how you have to perform your grinding step, and what grinding steps you have to perform will dictate when to apply your densifier.”

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Floating

by Elizabeth Gillette

One of the most basic yet important steps in finishing concrete, floating is as much of an art as it is a science. After the heavy lifting and digging involved in preparing a site for pouring concrete, floating it contrarily requires precise tools and a light hand.

Floating is typically done after a section of concrete has been leveled using a screed, but before it is troweled to a finish. Steve Jarred of Mason Supply, based in Eugene, Ore., explains that “floating” means smoothing concrete for curing.

“After you’ve poured your mud, and rodded your concrete, a float comes in and levels it and opens the mud up so it can dry,” says Jarred. “This has to be done in every job — whether a huge slab, stairs, decorative or any other situation.”

A float, generally, is a flat metal, wood, or laminate tool that smoothes the surface of freshly laid concrete. The term “floating” refers to the application of pressure so a float sits lightly and flatly just on top of the surface of the poured concrete and pushes the aggregate down, allowing the liquid in the concrete to rise, dry, and create a smoother surface.



Concrete





There are a range of shapes and sizes of floats available for different types of projects. Bull floats come in many sizes, but generally are larger in surface area and made to float across an entire slab of concrete to level it. Hand floats are smaller and used to smooth, tighter surfaces and level concrete against the side of the forms it is poured into. Channel floats are made for use on larger-scale paving jobs. All of these are available in a range of sizes and in several types of materials.

Square is the most popular shape of float for both hand and bull floats, Jarred explains. While round ends leave less of an edge line in the concrete, square floats work better when leveling next to a side form, so they are necessary on any project. Magnesium is the most popular type of material for

hand floats. The smooth metal surface does not create as much friction with wet concrete as wood or laminate floats do, so it leaves behind a smoother surface. If the concrete surface has begun to dry, however, using a wood or laminate float may be a better choice.

"Wood floats are used less often as they can muck your concrete up faster," explains Jarred. "But if your concrete is starting to set, mucking it back up is useful to help it get into place." For example, when you pour concrete for a series of steps, it is often beginning to get hard by the time you get back to the first step. Using a wood float will muck up the surface more than a magnesium float would, giving you more control over the drying surface. Additionally, wood floats leave

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surfaces open to better receive additional finishing products, such as dust-on color hardeners. Laminated floats work well for green-stripping steps, Jarred says, as they muck the mud to cream when the concrete starts to harden too quickly.

There are regional differences in float use throughout the country as well in what types of trowels are used in certain situations, but this is mostly due to the types of concrete that are available in different regions. In areas such as eastern Oregon, where the crushed aggregate is grittier than in many other areas, using a trowel that has impressions on the surface will push the aggregate down further, allowing the liquid to float to the top. These impressions can create grooves and ridges in smoother concrete where a smooth-surfaced magnesium float could be the best tool for the job.

When integrating color into the mix in any concrete job, a magnesium float is again the most commonly used, as it will improve the color's consistency. But with a dry-shake color hardener, using a wood float will allow the color to fold in better and faster.

A floated slab will take stains and sealer better than a hard-troweled slab. However, special care must be taken, Jarred cautions. If all of the float lines aren't taken out, the stain will be more apparent in those places and appear uneven.

Regardless of the range of concrete projects a tradesperson works on, Jarred claims any true concrete finisher has a magnesium float and a wood or laminated resin hand float on their rig at all times. 🛠️

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Harris recreated the look of an old Italian floor on this exterior area by using acid stain, then following it with layers of water-based acrylic stains.

ACRYLIC Concrete Stains

by Mike Dawson

Acrylic stains offer an alternative to trickier acid etches, but the most unique decorative concrete designs created with water-based stains may come when the two methods are used in concert.

Acrylic stains can be used to create accents or glazing effects like faux marble or stone. When contractor and instructor Bob Harris was in Italy this year, he took inspiration from some of the historic Venetian floors, which he recreated with the color-upon-color process that is a large part of his business. This layering is possible only with water-based stains, Harris says.

Many applicators like to work with acrylic stains simply to avoid using acid stains, which generally give off more odor, require more cleanup, and provide less margin for error. Another factor on the plus side for acrylics is color selection, according to many contractors and dealers, including Doug Bannister, owner of The Stamp Store in Oklahoma City, which produces a line called SS Rainbow Stain System. When acid staining, color selection is limited by the concrete canvas you have to work with, Bannister says.

The color section of water-based stain helps ensure that concrete will remain a top choice of designers. Like most water-based stains, Rainbow can be used to enhance or even rescue acid colors that didn't turn out as planned. Colors can be modified, intensified or diluted by adding more or less pigment to the base.

Another attractive feature of these stains is cost. They generally cost less to buy and apply than acid stains. The cost, combined with simple application methods and a forgiving nature, make acrylics a popular alternative to acid staining. Experts in acrylics say this is all true. But if you are looking to cut corners, don't do it on prep, sealing or maintenance. "You almost need to be an extremist when it comes to preparation," Harris says.

Like any topical coating, stains require a properly profiled concrete surface. If the surface isn't mechanically and chemically ready to receive, the coating is likely to fail, says Chuck Brunner of Smith Paint Products.

Acrylic stains come in two basic categories. One penetrates the pores and bonds, the other fastens to the surface.

continued on pg. 84



Soy: An Alternative to Acid Stain

A manufacturer of eco-friendly products has created a soy-based concrete stain that represents more than just the opportunity to market a green building product. The penetrating stain offers the simplicity of acrylic topcoats with performance that is closer to acid etching.

Eco ProCote SoyCrete Architectural Soy Concrete Stain is the only professional-grade soy-based stain of its kind on the market, according to John Bennett, president of Eco-Safety Products LLC.

SoyCrete is an acid-free, non-toxic stain for interior and exterior porous surfaces such as concrete, brick, stucco, fiber cement and natural stone. It has been certified by major national and international programs such as the U.S. Green Building Coun-

cil. It qualifies because it contains no acids, it does not react with surfaces, and it is VOC-free.

As a stain for hardened surfaces, it fits somewhere between acid etching and water-based acrylic topical coatings. It is applied topically, but as a completely penetrating stain it leaves no membrane on the surface.

This gives it characteristics more similar to acid-etched coloring, which does not leave a surface that can be removed by wear or damage. "There is nothing topical to remove. It is all subsurface," Bennett says.

He said the product is essentially made up of three components. The first is the soy-based soy ester, which is an oil. The second is modified acrylic latex. The third is a vegetable-based pigment.

The result is something that has no odor, but penetrates the surface like an oil-based stain. Think of motor oil on a driveway, but in a good way. The semitransparent colors offer the variegated appearance that is common among water-based stains.

At \$39.95 a gallon, it's not cheap, but the company markets it as an economical alternative to acid staining. Bennett says application takes about half the time, as does cleanup and waste disposal. There is less time and expense involved in handling the product as a hazardous material. If an applicator makes a mistake with SoyCrete, the product can be removed within four hours of application with soap, water and scrubbing, or a pressure washer. The excess does not need to be captured and disposed of

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SoyCrete is also used in vertical applications, as seen on this exterior wall.



SoyCrete, a nontoxic penetrating stain, was used to color this scored floor design.



An artist used SoyCrete to create this compass design on an outdoor patio.

as a hazardous material, but can be washed down a drain.

As for application, preparation is similar to that of a traditional concrete stain. The soy stain needs a clean, dry, open surface in which to penetrate. That means abrading or etching the surface. Eco-Safety also sells an alternative to acid wash called eco-procote Eco-Etch Gel Concrete Etch & Sealer Remover, about which the company says "the depth of etching is the same as hydrochloric or muriatic acid, but with a more uniform etch

and a lot less odor."

And, like most coloring products, the job with the soy stain isn't done until sealer goes down. Eco-Safety has that covered, too, with a couple of products in the Acry-Soy Penetrating Sealer line.

But for those whose taste for soy has its limits, you can still pick from the traditional menu of urethane sealers for a final coat over the soy-based sealer.

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From pg. 81

Both require porosity to do their work. The first consideration is to know exactly what profile the product requires. "That's paramount," says Harris, who uses a variety of acrylic stains.

Sources for this article said that most products require an International Concrete Repair Institute concrete surface profile of one or two. Getting there is the tricky part. To take a surface down to this relatively shallow profile, muriatic acid usually comes to mind. However, those with the most experience advise those with less to steer clear, or at least be aware that it's harder than it looks.

Brunner says he does not recommend muriatic acid etching by anyone with less than 10 years experience. The reason is that it is prone to backfire. First, there is the mess and odor and hazardous materials regulations, all of which are compounded in interior settings. Second, he says, he often sees inexperienced contractors fail to neutralize the acid properly. Any leftover acid builds chalk on the surface of the concrete, which forces the topical stain to fail, costing the contractor a lot of money.

For interior surfaces, Brunner recommends simply using citric acid mixed with water. The white powder is available through food suppliers. He says this nontoxic acid has the power to etch the profile, but can be washed down drains.

The cost, combined with simple application methods and a forgiving nature, make acrylics a popular alternative to acid staining.

Harris recommends a more traditional approach with muriatic acid, but agrees that even experienced contractors have been known to fail. His process is pres-

sure wash, rotary scrub, wet down, sprinkle with acid, rotary scrub again, pressure wash again, neutralize with ammonia bath, and finally, rinse. An alternative on interiors is a dustless grinding machine, which is not readily available to most contractors. Shot blasting is not recommended for this profile.

For exterior work, Brunner has another common-sense approach. He advises contractors to start the project by first hiring someone to clean the driveway, specifically someone with a 10-gallon-per-minute machine, a zero-degree rotating tip, and the ability to run hot water. This ensures a good cleaning as the first step before profiling.

Once the surface is prepped, water-based stains can be applied in a number of ways. When staining over acid stain, Harris often uses a pump sprayer. However, airless and compressor sprayers, rollers and brushes can be used, depending on the desired effect.

Inferiorities to acid staining that are less debatable come into play after water-based stains are applied. They are topical, they leave membrane that is exposed to traffic and wear, and the color coat has to be sealed.

Barbara Sargent of Kemiko Concrete Products Inc., which distributes the Rembrandt line of acrylic-urethane polymer stains, says these types of stains should be thought of as an



This grapevine design shows how Bob Harris uses water-based acrylic stain to accent acid-stained stamped vertical concrete.

equal part of a three-part product, and each third must be of good quality. The first part is the properly profiled surface, the second is the stain and the third is the sealer.

For a topcoat, acrylic urethane, polyurethane, or epoxies are commonly used. Some stains cannot take a solvent-based sealer, Harris warned, so as usual, be sure to know the manufacturer's recommendations.

For high-traffic areas, Sargent recommends a sacrificial layer. Like others in the industry, she recommends that con-

tractors sell the installation with an annual maintenance contract, or at least make sure that the customer is well-informed on how to maintain the piece.

Harris agrees. He advises colleagues to either sell a maintenance contract with the installation or teach the client how to do an annual deep scrub, rinse and reseal on exterior surfaces, and on top of that, how to wax interior floors each year.



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Concrete Countertop Institute hosts first ever conference for fabricators

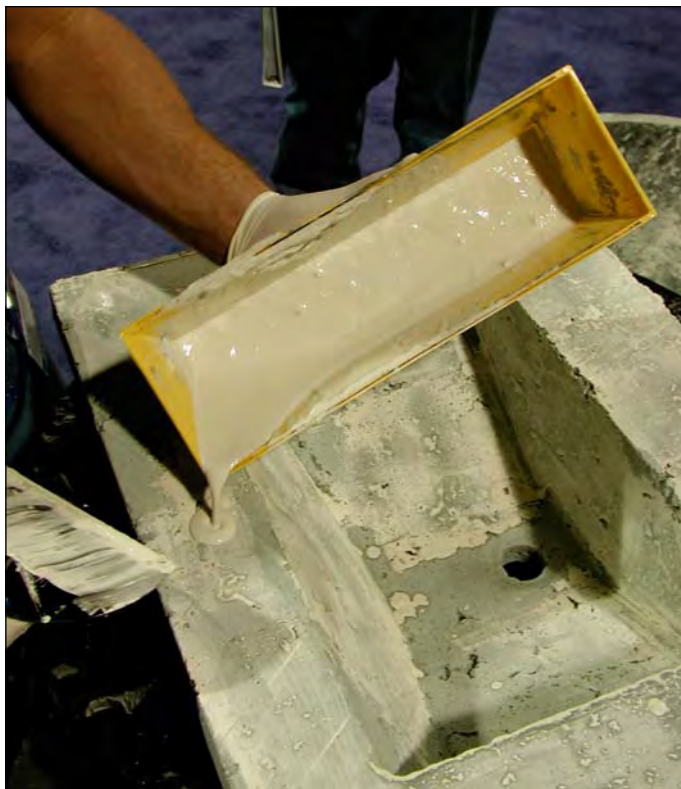
by Bent Mikkelsen

This past November, I had the enjoyable opportunity to visit Raleigh, N.C., for the first ever Concrete Countertop Conference, hosted by Lane Mangum and Jeff Girard of the Raleigh-based Concrete Countertop Institute. Also attending this inaugural event were nearly 300 concrete countertop fabricators and related product manufacturers from across the country.

This conference marked an important first step in establishing a recognizable body of professionals in the decorative concrete industry whose association and collaboration are helping to formulate and articulate quality standards for countertop professionals and the building industry they now serve.

The conference included many informative seminars by recognized industry experts such as Buddy Rhodes, Tom Ralston, Bobby Harris, Jeff Girard, Craig Smith of Dex Studios, and Steve Rosenblatt of Sonoma Cast Stone. Special guest speakers included Max Isley of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, business speaker Rocky Geans, and keynote speaker Jim Peterson of The Concrete Network. The breaks between these information-packed seminars offered a valuable networking opportunity





for everyone who came to this event.

Of particular value to the conference was a strong show of support from many notable manufacturers, including Buddy Rhodes, Interstar, EnCounter, Bon Tool, Stegmeier, Illumistone, Fritz-Pak, TechFab, B & J Colorants, Klein & Co., and Flex-C-Ment. Many of these exhibitors offered product demonstrations, which were an ongoing attraction.

Unlike traditional countertop products such as Formica, ceramic tile, marble and granite, concrete is still a material that both architects and consumers must come to trust as a preferred surface on which they can prepare meals and entertain guests. While we know that the aesthetics of concrete countertops can exceed other countertop options, the market, in order to grow, requires ongoing assurance through a reputa-

ble organization that this type of concrete product is an added value to any environment.

Concrete Decor, as well as other decorative concrete magazines and online services, make it possible for consumers to easily attain lots of photos and information on beautifully crafted concrete countertops by contractors across the country. However, a conference such as this is a unique opportunity to participate in developing an organization filled with talented, trained professionals who instill credibility and uphold quality.

To learn more about getting involved, or about the next Concrete Countertop Conference, visit the Concrete Countertop Institute's new Web site at www.concretecountertops.org or call (888) 386-7711. 📞






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Multiquip's DuoScreed

Power Screeds

Screeds reduce air voids and settle aggregate so concrete is easier to stamp. As far as what to look for in a power screed, a decorative contractor will get the best results from a screed that is lightweight, portable, durable and produces excellent consolidation of the concrete, says Multiquip product manager Warren Faler. Given that many decorative contractors are working in confined areas, weight and portability are paramount, he says.

Multiquip's DuoScreed

Multiquip's new one-man DuoScreed sports a unique blade profile that enables a single operator to strike off concrete floors without help. This model uses blades that are 50 percent lighter than those on its predecessor for greater maneuverability, faster finishes, and stronger

slabs, all with less effort.

The DuoScreed features an integrated lifting bar that is now part of the control handle. The unit's advanced blade reverses in seconds without tools — one side is used for standard form-to-form screeding while the other is utilized for wet screeding. Made from extruded aluminum alloys, the blades are available in widths of up to 20 feet. The machine also features a maintenance-free flexible drive shaft, ergonomic fingertip throttle control for easy speed adjustments, portable design for simple storage and transportation, a height-adjustable control handle, and shock mounts to minimize operator fatigue. The unit is powered by a four-stroke, 1.5-horsepower Honda GX-31 gasoline engine and weighs 32 pounds.

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TTI Screedright Pro

Some concrete contractors prefer screeding with a wooden board because wood better allows the water content in the concrete to bleed to the surface, cutting down on spalling or scaling. The latest addition to the Trade Tool Innovations product line, the TTI Screedright Pro, was developed with those contractors in mind. It uses a single two-by-four piece of wood as a screed blade instead of costly metal screed bars.

The steel-frame screed runs its wood blade on two forms. A four-stroke engine vibrates the board, and clamps can bend the board to create a curve for screeding sloped concrete. In addition, the TTI Screedright Pro is designed to be operable by one worker. Because the contractor is using a wood blade, he or she can cut the board to suit the size of any job.

Trade Tool Innovations LLC specializes in the design and manufacturing of specialty tools for professional contractors. Each screed is built, boxed, sold, and shipped from TTI's shop in Laramie, Wyo.

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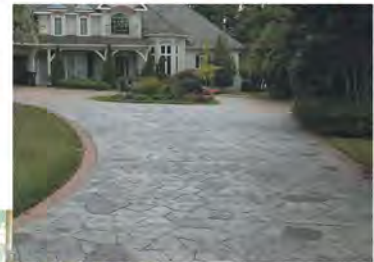


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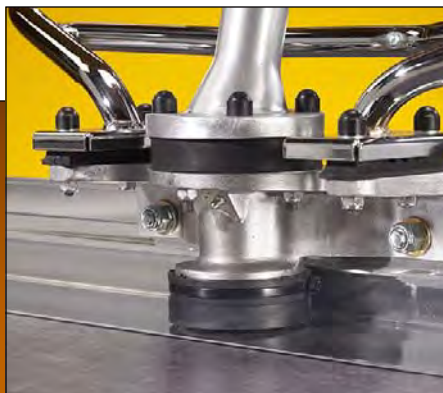
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Magic Screed

The Magic Screed helps contractors get a better grip on their leveling tasks by letting them use two hands to do it. The twin-handle grip enhances user control of the power screed and improves accuracy too.

The magic of the Magic Screed doesn't stop at the grip. Its vibrating blade does not require any support to float on the concrete surface, while its high-frequency system uniformly distributes vibrations over the blade's entire length. Integrated antivibration supports reduce handle vibration, while a smooth-operating throttle on one handle guarantees instantaneous response for varying operating speeds. The screed's unique design makes it possible to cut and smooth concrete at the same time. Its four-stroke Honda engine turns out 1.6 horsepower at 7,000 rpm. Finally, at roughly 24 pounds, this is one of the lightest portable units on the market.

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Lindley Inc.'s Vibra Strike

Lindley Inc.'s Vibra Strike takes on the power screed market with two choices: the original and the sequel. The original Vibra Strike single-handle screed is called the Vibra Strike I. Billed as "the original horizontal vibrating power screed," it gives a honey-comb-free, first-bull-float finish as fast as concrete can be poured. It's powered by a 1.5-horsepower Robin engine, and it features an adjustable vibrator head and a rubber hand grip with a fingertip throttle control.

Vibra Strike II has two handles. It's as quick and versatile as the original, delivering performance with a four-stroke engine.

The screed can be fitted with Lindley's two-in-one float. The float's unique geometric shape allows it to be used as both a float and curl edge when screeding from the top of forms. A one-piece extruded magnesium shape also makes for easier cleanup. 

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Lura Enterprises Inc.'s Lightning Strike Power Screed

The key feature of the Lightning Strike power screed from Lura Enterprises Inc. is its adaptability.

Tubes can be attached to one another for customized lengths. Attachments allow the tool to wet screed, crown concrete, slope concrete, screed next to a wall, screed a circular pour, screed

pervious concrete and screed normal pours with ease. Up to six tubes can be put together for a length of up to 30 feet, but the number of tubing sections the user has to work with depends on which package he or she buys from the manufacturer.

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Photo courtesy of Joe Fettig

Creating Sand-Etch Finishes



About four years ago, I had a client tell me about a finish he had seen on a project that he really liked. It was about three hours south of where we lived. To make a long story short, we took a drive to view this finish and found it to be an acid burn finish.

It had the appearance of old weathered concrete, where Mother Nature and time had eroded the top to create a light sand finish. It was gray in color, and the consistency of the sand appeared to be semi-spotty.

What my client liked about the finish was that it had a natural look. So we set out to achieve this sandy effect ourselves.

What he didn't like was the inconsistency of light sand to heavy sanded areas. So we worked with this technique a lot, trying to find the best approach to achieving a deeper and more uniform exposure of sand.

We also stumbled across a second obstacle using this finish with colored concrete. As the acid

was burning the top away, it was changing the integral color. We finally found a solution: concrete surface retarders. No more color problems, no more nasty acid fumes, and a controlled sand exposure. What a breakthrough. Throughout the next year, we researched and tried many different surface retarders, and we finally found what worked best in our area.

This product allows you to create a finished surface that is comparable to the feeling you would get by taking off your shoes and walking down a sandy beach beside the ocean.

As you work toward this goal, keep in mind that as with all concrete you place and finish for an exposed look, your finished product lies under the surface you see.

Here's how you do it:

1. Research your local supply houses and see what products they offer in your area. There are many different manufacturers and

- many different choices of depth and exposure of aggregate. You will need to consult with your client and supplier as to how deep a finish you will be trying to achieve.
2. Spend some time with your local ready-mix supplier and have them help you create a mix design that will allow you to achieve your client's expectations.
 3. Start experimenting at your shop — I cannot express this enough. You may have the perfect mix design, the best surface retarders and a seasoned finish crew with years of experience, but give your crew the opportunity to work with these products before you send them out. You will all appreciate this learning time.
 4. A proper lay-down technique is the key to success. Strike the surface off very carefully so you have the least possible amount of seeding back once you bull-float the surface. Some installers prefer wood bull floats while others prefer magnesium. We use both depending on weather and site conditions. Allow the bleed water to rise and the surface to go plastic.
 5. Now, run your edges, cut your control joints and make sure you mag out any edger and jointer marks. Remember every mark and little divot you leave in your lay-down stages will transfer through in your final wash.
 6. We prefer running through the finishing steps, including edging, joints and troweling, at least two more times. This has proved to be successful for us.



Step 4

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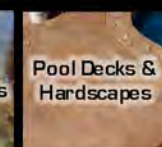
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Step 7

- 7.** Once you are satisfied with your finished surface, it is time to apply the retarder to the surface. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations prior to applying product. Protect all surrounding work from overspray. The surface retarder can be difficult to remove.

If you have allowed the crew to experiment with the product you are using, this is the moment in time that will give you great success or costly failure. If you apply the retarder too soon you can actually dimple the surface. But if you wait too long to apply the product it will not penetrate and give you that consistent etch you are looking for.

- 8.** How long do you wait before you wash the surface? The manufacturer's recommendations will tell you that you can rinse the same day or pressure wash the next morning.

The timing of this step is critical. A lot is going to depend upon your weather conditions. Are you in direct sunlight? Is the wind blowing? Are you dealing with sunnier and shaded areas of your pour? Did you have your pour plan designed to eliminate cold joints between loads? Most importantly, were the multiple loads of concrete placed at a consistent slump?

There is an easy way to test different wash times. If you are placing multiple loads, have a small test panel set for each load. Follow the same finish steps to placing the retarder with that load. This will allow you to wash the sample panel to see if your timing is right.

You may find you can easily wash the surface with hose pressure and get the desired finish you are looking for. Or you may find that a soft to medium broom will do



Step 8

the trick.

If you are planning on coming back the next day to wash, use extreme caution.

It may not be a bad idea to go back to the job and check that concrete before you put it to sleep. If you don't, you may not like the surprise that will be waiting for you in the morning.

- 9.** Once the surface is washed, we like to wait at least three to seven days, depending upon the time of year, before we come back to final wash and seal the concrete.

Again, this is a time to lean on your local supplier for the proper cleaning materials and sealers. If you prefer to use acid to cut any efflorescence that has surfaced, I would start with a very light ratio. You can always go stronger.

- 10.** Once you are satisfied with your final wash, neutralize the slab. We prefer the Johnson & Johnson Neutralizing packets. Apply this to the slab, brush it in, and rinse with water. Use a pH test strip to make sure the concrete has a neutral reading of seven.

- 11.** Finally, allow the slab to fully dry and apply the sealer of your choice. 🛠️



Step 9

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Applying Color Hardener as an Accent

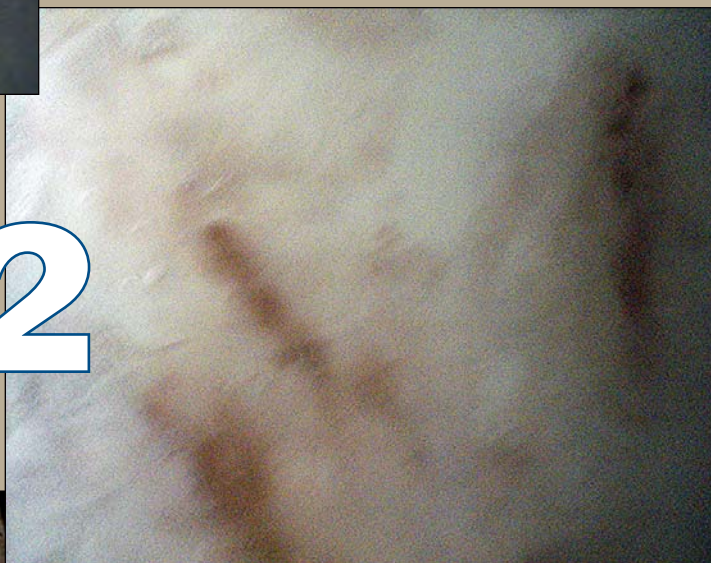


1

In this picture we are using a drastic difference in color for the sake of this example. The base color is a very light beige and the highlight color is terra-cotta. Lightening or darkening your base color will add depth and quality to your work.

In this picture we have floated and steel-troweled the highlight color into the surface.

2

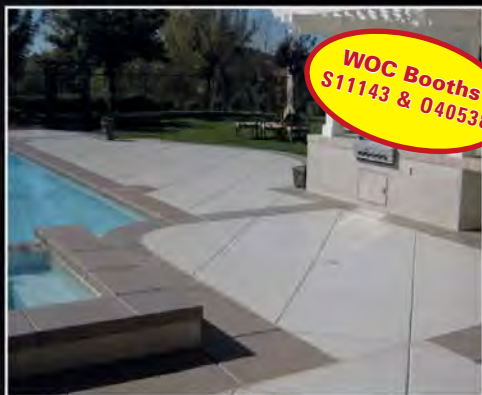


3

This is the finished product. You can see the color change in the stamped surface. Remember, this picture is showing drastically different colors for this example. Ordinarily, we would use colors that blended better for an earthy look.



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We all have seen how to place color hardener. But what you maybe haven't thought about is how you can use color hardener as an accent color for a base slab.

Here's how it's done:

1. After you place the concrete, you bull-float it. (I tell my crew to make it flat every time they touch it.)
2. Distribute the color. We use a color basket.



3. Let the color sit until moisture has moved up through the powder, then bull-float again. By the way, no steel trowels or fresnos have touched concrete yet — only wood, fiber or magnesium.
4. At this point, you have shadow spots, and you can either cover those areas with the same color or add some drama. Add another color to the surface to lighten and darken your base color.
5. Finish out like a regular stamp job. 🛠️

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Product Profiles



Patriot Spraysafe System

The Patriot Spraysafe System, which will make its debut at the 2007 World of Concrete, is billed by its manufacturer as the first professional low-pressure sprayer. Initially developed to spray acid stain, it allows the user to apply acetone dyes, acid stains, cure-and-seal compounds, and other topical treatments and coatings with consistency and safety that is lacking in the typical sprayer.

What sets Patriot Spraysafe apart is carbon dioxide. The system uses carbon dioxide cartridges to propel liquid through its nozzle. The uniform pressure applied by the gas provides consistent atomization of the liquid, something you don't get with pump-up sprayers whose force gets weaker in use or compressor-powered sprayers that overatomize the material.

Additionally, onboard spray tips that are an integral component of the system come in five sizes, allowing the user to control flow. The ceramic spray tip inserts have precise openings, emitting fine mists in conical spray patterns. Just as importantly, the patent pending system has the ability to apply almost any dye, stain or sealer safely. By incorporating carbon dioxide, the Spraysafe System has helped keep electricity and propane off the job site. This is a god-send to contractors who are spraying solvent-based dyes and other materials that could catch fire.

The applicator has the ability to continually add more dye without stopping, as the base system comes with a 5-gallon container that holds more than the traditional pump-up container. The manufacturer also sells 1-gallon and



3-gallon pump-up sprayer containers equipped with valves that can connect to the regulator of the carbon dioxide system. A separate unit can be attached to any standard industrial drum, with a 50-foot coiled hose ready to disperse spray in any direction. This system supports two wands from one unit.

The Spraysafe System features an ergonomically designed cart with an adjustable handle. Twenty-ounce carbon dioxide containers can attach directly to the cart, or be released from the cart and attached to the 1-gallon or 3-gallon containers, utilizing the Patriot's cradle pouch. A 10-pound carbon dioxide container can be used with the large drum to support the two spray wands.

Interchangeable pumps are available for different chemical needs, and the wand system's ball valve cutoff provides precise control.

Patriot Sprayer Systems (PSS) was founded in 2005 as an offshoot of American Decorative Concrete Supply Co. in response to the frustrations of applying acid stains on large commercial projects. The initial focus was to address large job capability, consistency in spray pattern and coverage, and the ability to keep a wet edge from a 5-gallon container instead of a pump-up sprayer. It turns out that the consistency offered by the Patriot is even more important when applying dyes than acid stains.

Patriot president Clint Howle has a background as a certified aircraft mechanic. He was able to identify application needs missing from the industry and design the Spraysafe System to address them.

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PowerCoat One

Vexcon Chemicals Inc., which has manufactured epoxies under the PowerCoat brand for more than 15 years, has become the first company to introduce breathable epoxies to the market. Their breathable technology allows moisture to pass through the coating, preventing common epoxy and urethane problems such as adhesion loss, blistering and peeling.

"With this knowledge our sales and marketing people asked our product development staff if it was feasible to take our epoxy technology to the next level, that being a single-component, easy-to-use breathable epoxy coating," according to Clifford Platt, vice president of the Philadelphia-based company.

So in January 2006, PowerCoat One was introduced. A single-component, water-based, light-duty epoxy, PowerCoat One provides the performance of a two-component epoxy in an economical coating that is strong, long-lasting, and resistant to stains, gasoline, and marks from hot tires.

The epoxy comes in a clear gloss and a variety of colors. It can be used on any concrete surface where a premium long-lasting coating is desired. "It can be applied to existing concrete and on fresh concrete when PowerCoat primer is applied, which will cure the concrete and prime it for PowerCoat application," says Platt.

PowerCoat One utilizes proprietary cross-linking technology. "Two-part epoxies require mixing and have an induction period where you have to wait for the epoxy to react, or cross-link, and start to harden up," says Platt. "And they have a limited pot life. With some products the pot life can be as little as two hours. So if you don't get all the material down on the floor, you've wasted materials and money. With PowerCoat One, there is no component mixing or induction waiting time, and the product has an unlimited pot life. Also, it helps contractors minimize user errors by not having them mix two components together and keep track of each component in the field."

PowerCoat One has little odor and is ideal for use in low-VOC states. It also qualifies as a low-VOC product for "green" building points. It is sold in 1-gallon and 5-gallon pails and drums, and in a 2-gallon kit. The kit includes a color base coat, deco chips and a gallon of clear topcoat.

According to Platt, this differs from other epoxy kits on the market for three reasons. First, you get two gallons of product instead of one gallon. Second, with other products on the market, you apply the base color coat, then broadcast the colored chips over the top. "This leaves the colored flakes as part of the wear surface, which eventually will wear off. With our product, after you apply the base coat and broadcast, you apply a clear topcoat, which locks in the chips. This clear topcoat acts as the wearing surface."

Third, colored floors typically have little or no shine. "A PowerCoat One floor, when a clear topcoat is applied, has a pleasing shine to it."

www.vexcon.com

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Sophisticated Finishes



There have always been ways to make new projects blend into their older surroundings, but Sophisticated Finishes by Triangle Coatings Inc. offers a truly aged look.

Sophisticated Finishes is a unique line of metallic surfacers and patina antiquing solutions. When used together on just about any substrate, the two products create the look and feel of solid metal that has been around for years. The surfacer can be used on an amazing variety of substrates, from concrete to candles, from grapefruit to garden gates. "The metallic surfacer is manufactured with a fairly unique resin system that adheres well to just about anything," says Triangle president and CEO Ned Kisner.

In the Sophisticated Finishes family, there are 12 metallic paints that can be used to achieve the look of silver, iron, platinum, gold, bronze, and a variety of other metals. These paints can be used alone or with any of four antiquing solutions that give the substrate an aged look of rust, a green patina, a blue patina, or a black or blue tint. When the antiquing solution is applied to the metallic paint, the patina look is created by a reactive process that causes a metallic salt to form just the way it does naturally, except that the process occurs in a number of hours instead of a number of years. You can watch the patination occur right before your eyes.

The 12 metallic surfacers and four antiquing solutions can be combined to achieve a huge variety of appearances. Various protective sealers can be used, depending on the look you are trying to achieve. And cleanup is simple, as Sophisticated surfacers and solutions are water-based and clean up easily with soap and water.

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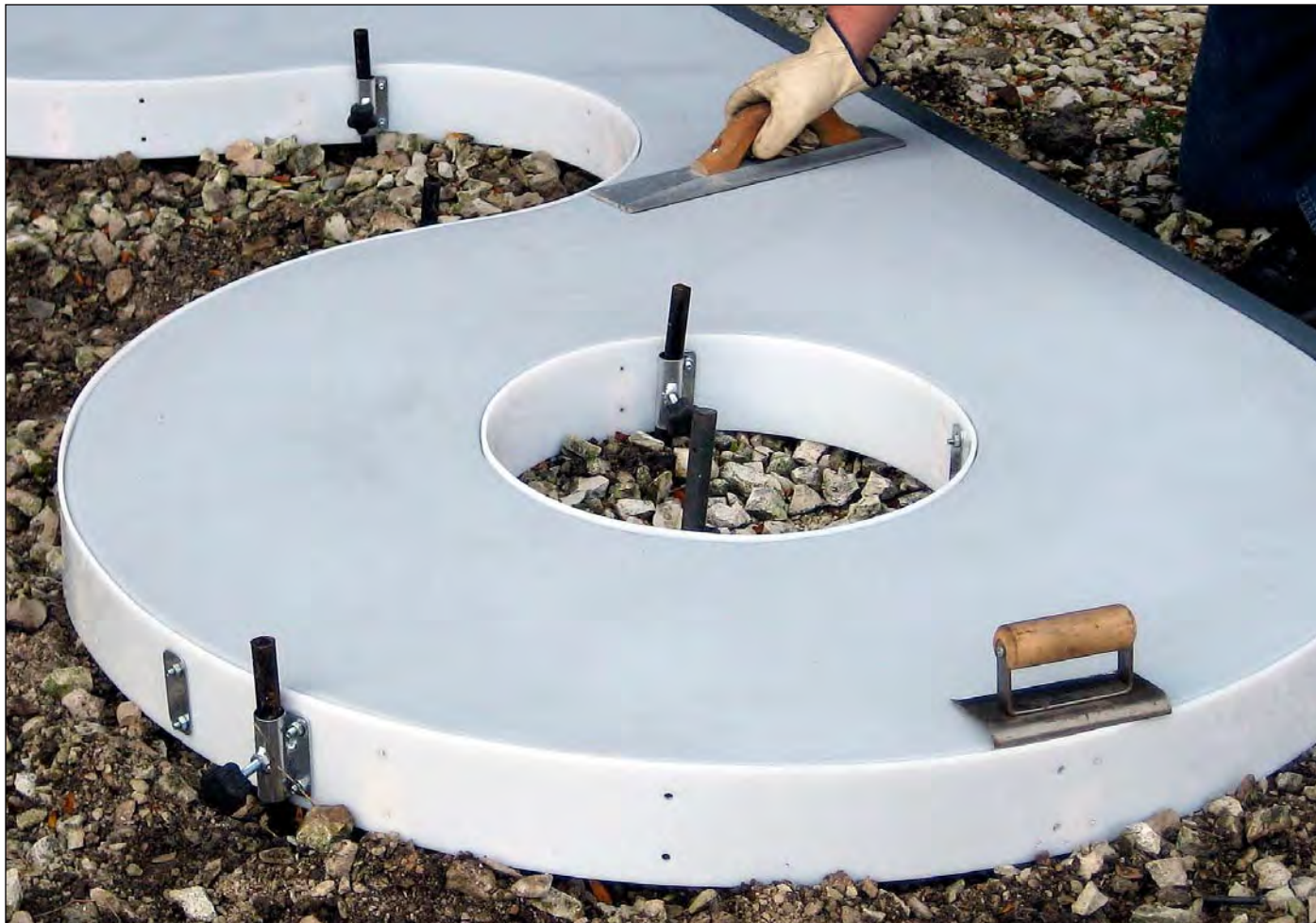
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XTRA-FLEX

People who work with concrete know that creative forming is essential for a high-quality finished product. It can sometimes be the most arduous part of concrete work, especially when curves and circles are involved. Now there's a totally new concept in radius concrete forming. It's called Xtra-Flex, and it will be introduced at the World of Concrete industry trade show in January 2007.

Created by Metal Forms Corp., the new system is designed to be extremely flexible so it can form extra-tight radii, returns and circles. A standard 10-foot length can easily form a circle 38 inches in diameter and can be further bent to achieve a radius as small as six inches. The standard 10-foot length will be available in both 4-inch and 6-inch heights.

Xtra-Flex is made out of high-densi-

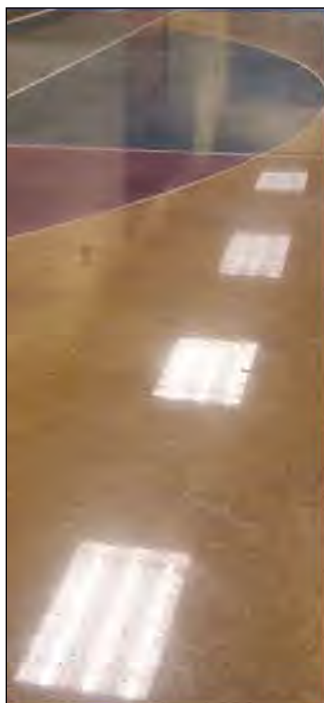
ty polyethylene (HDPE), which does not absorb water and will not rot or splinter. That means there is no need to constantly replace materials that disintegrate with repeated nailing and exposure to harsh job site conditions. The stake pockets and end connections are made of special analysis steel, which means they will last virtually forever. Contractors traditionally use less durable and more labor-intensive materials such as Masonite, plywood, or "bender board."

There are several advantages to the new Xtra-Flex system. It is more durable — it can be used well over 100 times. It is easy to set and strip, it makes grade adjustment easy and quick, and its splice-type steel end connections make convenient and tight joints between forms, with no leakage. The Xtra-Flex system is also easily maintained — just spray form oil on it before use and hose it off afterwards.

The 10-foot-long forms are pre-drilled with holes on 1-foot centers for easy positioning of the bolt-on steel stake pockets required in various sub-grade conditions. Each stake pocket has an easy-grip locking knob for securing the form to either a 3/4-inch or 7/8-inch diameter stake. There's no need for nailing to set forms or nail removal to strip forms. The stake pockets locking knobs also permit fast vertical adjustments of the form without tools. 🛠️

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More choices from Versatile

Versatile Building Products has introduced five new coating products.

The 4001 High Performance "Wet Look" Waterbased Epoxy Clear Sealer is a two-component, high-gloss floor sealer designed to be used directly over concrete or decorative overlays of all types. 4001 replaces the need for a flammable lacquer sealer while improving the finished look of your decorative floor. The sealer is below 50 VOC.

The 5400 High Performance Water-based Chemical Resistant Urethane is a two-component waterborne CRU that is available in a clear or pigmented formula and is below 50 VOC. Film build, gloss, abrasion resistance and chemical resistance are comparable to solvent-based systems. The water-based product is much higher in solids (62 percent) and boasts a thicker film build with no out-gassing problems than its predecessors.

Available in gloss and matte finishes, 5400 provides an extra layer of topcoat protection to decorative work, protecting it from abrasion and wear in medium- to heavy-traffic areas. 5400 is fit for use on interior or exterior applications and it is resistant to hot tire marks.

Versa-Crete 1/4-Inch Stamped Concrete Overlayment is a polymer-modified stampable overlay system that is designed for easy installation. VBP has completely stabilized the polymers, resulting in a stamp mix that has plenty of working time. And Versa-Crete will not bubble up as a result of unstable polymers during application.

Polyurea 5000, a high-performance clear floor sealer, is new technology in the urethane arena that is 100 percent solids and allows film thickness to build in excess of standard systems. The cross-linking of the film in the cure makes it exceptionally tough and

durable, helping it maintain its gloss far beyond that of comparable systems. The chemistry is based on polyurea and much attention has been given to the application characteristics in its design.

Roll On Rock, an MVE-resistant epoxy chip system, can be applied to concrete surfaces with as much as 15 pounds of MVE. This system includes a line of basecoat epoxies that do not require mechanical or chemical surface prep. If the concrete surface absorbs water, only cleaning will be required. VBP gives the applicator a choice of clear topcoats and stocks 1/4-, 5/8- and 1-inch chips in a wide range of colors.

☎ (800) 535-3352

🌐 www.garagecoatings.com

The wet look and a glow floor

Versatile Building Products is now offering its Versa-Glaze solvenated acrylic in a 100 VOC formula and its

Liquid Release in a 350 VOC formula. Both products meet the strictest AQMD rules and can be applied anywhere in the United States. Versa-Glaze is clear as water and designed to provide a "wet look" over concrete surfaces.

VBP's liquid release has also been retooled into a 350 VOC product, which allows it to be used in the toughest AQMD areas as well. The revised formula has resulted in a price increase.

Finally, VBP has introduced After Glow Chips in three standard sizes. The chips will glow in the dark for up to eight hours after being charged by standard lighting. When blended with standard colors, After Glow will provide a one-of-a-kind decorative floor that glows in the dark. When the chips are applied at rates of one pound per 16 square feet, they will emit enough light to read a book in a dark room.

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🌐 www.deckcoatings.com

Strip and scrape



Blastrac has released two new stripping products.

The Blastrac BS-180 stripper removes ceramic tile, wood, VCT, carpet, sheet vinyl, rubber, adhesives, roofing materials and coatings. The BS-180 is self-propelled, with a variable-speed drive that travels at up to 30 feet per minute. The BS-180 is designed for heavy-duty use. The motor and heavy-duty motor shaft provide greater torque for efficient removal, and the unique swivel head keeps the blade in contact with the floor. The choice of a 22-degree or 30-degree angle attachment helps the user find the best angle for fastest removal.

The Blastrac BMS 220BX battery scraper is an upgraded model with improved battery performance for higher productivity and longer run times between charges. This compact ride-on scraper is used to remove a wide range of materials from concrete surfaces, such as epoxies and urethanes, thin-set mortar, roofing material, and floor coverings such as VCT, carpet, marble or ceramic tile, vinyl, wood flooring and rubber.

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Shear and grinder solutions from Makita

Makita USA Inc. offers the JS8000, a fast-cutting variable-speed Fiber Cement Shear Kit. The tool offers precision-machined blades and a powerful motor to cut straight and contour lines quickly and quietly with less dust.

Makita's Fiber Cement Shear has solid steel blades for making faster precision cuts. Its single-piece cutting head is machined to ensure blades are con-



sistently cutting at the optimum angle. The solid steel center and side shear blades cut straight and contour

lines with up to 5/16-inch cutting capacity. The 1/2-inch protected spindle withstands heavy torque loads from the 6.5-amp motor.

Makita has also added three new models to its growing line of angle grinders: the GA7020 (7-inch, 8,500 rpm and AC/DC), GA7021 (7-inch and 6,000 rpm) and GA9020 (9-inch and 6,000 rpm). All three grinders feature 15-amp motors.



The GA7020 has a no-load rpm of 8,500 for faster work with more efficiency, while the GA7021 and GA9020 have no-load rpm speeds of 6,000. The rotatable gear housing can be positioned at every 90-degree angle for cutting and grinding applications. On model GA7021, the wheel guard features a "toolless" clamping system for easy adjustment.

Finally, Makita is offering two new electronic angle grinders, models GA7040S (7-inch) and GA9040S (9-inch). Both grinders have 15-amp motors. A torque limiter disengages the motor if the grinding wheel binds, and it protects the lock nut from overtightening in startups and heavy-duty operations.

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🌐 www.makitatools.com

Adapting for an easier reach

Hitachi Power Tools offers a Power Reach adapter system that extends the reach of a rotary hammer or hammer drill. With this system, a user can drill into concrete overhead without the use of a ladder or scaffolding, drill all the way through a 6-foot slab of concrete, and generally get into otherwise inaccessible places without trouble.

The Power Reach, which consists of an adapter, extension rod and any SDS max bit, was designed to expand the capabilities of concrete drilling tools.



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A good shave

VIC International has introduced a multipurpose concrete floor corrections machine capable of up to 1,000 square feet per hour.

Named the VIC (SM 320) ShaveMaster, the powerful machine was specially designed for concrete contractors. It uses 50 diamond blades for coatings removal, correcting curled joints and joint repair, slurry cap removal, lippage removal, spalled-out areas, concrete grooving for antislip and nonskid areas, correcting poorly placed concrete slabs, and paint striping removal. The number of diamond blades can be reduced for grooving ramps and sidewalks, for helping to make blind access areas for the

white stick to follow, for areas requiring wheelchair traction and in other areas designed for personal safety and accident prevention.

Powered by a 15-horsepower, 460-volt, three-phase motor, the ShaveMaster cuts a maximum 13-inch path. Weighing 716 pounds, the unit features a dial-down crank that provides a cut of up to 1/8 inch per pass. Coupled with the VIC



vacuum system, the machine generates only 0.003 microns of airborne dust. It comes with a complete set of blades.

☎ (800) 423-1634

🌐 www.vicintl.com

Stick it to caulk

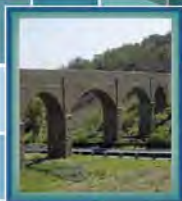
Fomo Products Inc. has developed Handi-Stick, a durable, pressurized polyurethane foam construction adhesive that is said to outperform caulk adhesives.

Handi-Stick is a fast, strong-bonding and durable pressurized polyurethane foam construction adhesive. It bonds with polystyrene substrates without having any adverse effect on the polystyrene. The fast-curing adhesive is free from VOCs and solvents, and allows ample time to set all types of substrates. It also provides an absolute airtight seal that meets American Air Barrier Association standards for air barrier construction materials. Handi-Stick is even versatile enough to function in multiple climates because as a polyurethane adhesive, its durability is not affected by harsh environmental conditions.



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Fomo developed the Handi-Stick Polystyrene Construction line with an extremely quick working time specifically for the ICF construction and architectural foam shape markets. Fomo also developed Handi-Stick Subfloor with a longer open time of 20 minutes, which is needed for laying subfloors. Handi-Stick General Use offers an open time of 5 minutes.

Fomo will launch Handi-Stick at the 2007 International Builders Show in Orlando. It is packaged in pressurized cans.

www.fomo.com

New to the grind



Innovatech's new 19-inch planetary grinder, the Predator 1900, is available in 110-volt (2 horsepower) and 220-volt (4 horsepower) versions.

The grinder was designed to excel at grinding and polishing concrete wet or dry on residential and light commercial jobs. This machine will yield more production in the single-phase version.

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Little Red cleans up a big, bad mess

Ruwac has introduced the durable, fully portable, dual-motor Little Red WNS 2220 vacuum for the concrete industry.

As Ruwac's most compact machine, Little Red is easy to use for picking up both concrete chips and fine powders, and can be adapted for use with vacuum assist tools, pre-separation systems, point of source extraction, or general maintenance. The easily maneuverable vacuum is capable of moving 200 cubic feet of air per minute. Little Red's oversized, long-lasting MicroClean filter is 99.9 percent efficient at 0.5 microns, allowing large quantities of fine material to be collected without loss of suction,

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We also manufacture Glitter Glaze, a spray applied interior glitter coating. This is a proprietary, shimmering metallic glitter look, textured coating in liquid form. Glitter Glaze is frequently used for Special Events, Visual Merchandising and in the Theatrical industry. The glitter component is frequently used with chips in flooring applications.

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Xtreme dust collectors



CDCLarue Industries Inc. is set to debut two new dust collection machines at the upcoming 2007 World of Concrete. The PB1500X and PB2500X are the first dust collection machines that allow the user to discard and remove dust and debris while the machine is running, and the first to continue to collect dust and debris without stopping production while collection tanks are emptied.

The new Pulse-Bac PB1500X delivers up to 450 cubic feet of air per minute and is equipped with Pulse-Bac technology

that automatically cleans the filters and prevents clogging. The PB1500X includes a "screw on-off" filter with PTFE coating and an exclusive dust extraction feature that eliminates contact with debris and allows the user to extract containments without turning off the vacuum or stopping production.

The new Pulse-Bac PB2500X delivers up to 850 CFM and is also equipped with Pulse-Bac technology, the "screw on-off" filter and the dust extraction feature.

www.cdclarue.com

A barrier from the elements

Northwestern Ohio Foam Products, which manufactures high-performance insulation materials and building products, has released MicroLT, a cost-effective, high-performance reflective foil radiant barrier and vapor retarder that is designed to reflect radiant energy and retard moisture migration in a building.

The core of the product is made of flexible two-ply polypropylene foam that provides excellent insulation characteristics. This unique core has state-of-the-



art pure aluminum foil film laminated to both sides. The aluminum foil films provide the high-reflectance radiant barrier properties, the vapor-retarding performance specifications, and the superior physical attributes of this new product.

MicroLT can reduce the radiant heat gain of the sun under metal roofs by reflecting up to 97 percent of the radiant energy, reducing the energy consumption of the building envelope. It's tear-proof, moisture-proof, bug-proof and nontoxic, and it can be used for retrofits as well as both commercial and industrial jobs. In addition, 1/8-inch MicroLT and 1/4-inch MicroFoil can be used in any application that requires insulation and a vapor retarder.

[\(800\) 339-4850](tel:(800)339-4850)

www.thebarrier.com

www.nofp.com

The effects are real

Faux Effects International Inc. has introduced RsCrete, a patent-pending durable finish that's ideal for both interior and exterior decorative concrete applications.

RsCrete incorporates superior advanced polymer technology that is formulated to work in environments that require a highly durable finish. RsCrete is translucent, yet tintable and versatile. All RsCrete grades form a durable veneer over any properly prepared substrate, especially concrete. This versatile, water-based product contains low VOCs, is environmentally friendly and can be special-ordered in colors and metallics.

RsCrete is marketed under the Faux Effects Pro Line and is available through Faux Effects Licensed Training Stu-

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dios to professional finishers. It's sold in RsCrete, RsCrete Fine and RsCrete Super Fine grades. Floors require the standard coarse grade of RsCrete, while countertops utilize the finer grades. When a surface is properly prepared and sealed, RsCrete is an ideal application for floors, pool and patio decks, countertops, furniture, and even glass.

www.fauxfx.com

Green stripper gets tougher



Back to Nature's Tough2-Strip has all the advantages of Multi-Strip, yet takes it one step farther.

Where speed of removal is critical, a lighter coat of Tough2-Strip will remove one to four layers in 15 minutes to four hours. For tougher jobs or coatings, a heavier application will remove up to 20 layers of paint in one application. This product is environmentally safe, biodegradable, nonflammable, and contains no methylene chloride. It is odor-free and can be easily cleaned up with water. For application, it can be brushed, rolled or sprayed, and it does not require pH neutralization.

☎ (800) 211-5175

www.backtonatureprod.com

A new product for an old look

Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems Inc., a subsidiary of Solomon Colors Inc. that manufactures concrete resurfacing and restoration products, recently launched Tinté D'Acqua, a full line of innovative water-based stains.

Tinté D'Acqua stains achieve a very natural appearance on concrete floors and other porous mediums. Users can

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create unique coloring effects on finished cement surfaces and reproduce the natural shadings and aged appearances of stone and masonry. The stains contain no acids or harmful chemicals and work as an alternative to typical reactive acid stains.

The Legacy Tinte D'Acqua line consists of 28 standard colors that may be blended to create additional colors. Legacy stains are designed for concrete and have a particle size that is much smaller than those in early water-borne stain formulas. They penetrate into the concrete, providing a long-lasting wear surface.

Legacy's Tinte D'Acqua can be applied over new and existing concrete floors, patios, driveways, smooth-troweled or textured concrete, cement-based overlays, vertical or horizontal concrete, masonry surfaces, artificial rock displays, water features, and themed finishes.

www.legacycolor.com

A new squeeze



SQUEEZEit is a new caulking gun from D.A.L.E.S. Corp. in Toledo, Ohio.

The gun features a 10-to-one thrust ratio and a handle with a head that moves forward as it cuts through a tube. It has a hardened bar, diaphragm poker, ladder hook and front trigger release. It also doubles as a clamp.

☎ (800) 545-0573

New sealer for countertops

Cheng Sealer, from concrete artisan Fu-Tung Cheng, is a nontoxic, water-based, high-performance sealer for concrete countertops.

The food-safe sealer has a proprietary formula that provides a streak-free finish and dramatically improves stain and abrasion resistance. Its nonyellowing barrier provides exceptional adhesion and durability while maintaining the



natural luster of concrete.

www.concreteexchange.com

No dust, no mess

The newest product line from Dustless Technologies combines the widely used Dust Muzzle with a superior Dustless Vac system. It arrives one step ahead of looming OSHA requirements that require the use of better dust collection systems.

The new Dustless Vac system looks similar to other wet/dry vacuums on the market — until it's in action. There's no blow-by dust. It boasts a lifetime guaranteed primary filter that can be "shaken out" or washed without taking the lid off. A second optional Micro-Prefilter bag boosts the filtration to collect particles as small as 0.5 microns, and the user can opt for a HEPA certified unit for collecting particles as small as 0.3 microns. A tough 12-foot hose attaches to the regulated-flow drain to drain liquids up to four yards away. Combined with the Dust Muzzle, this system eliminates more than 95 percent of construction dust.

An all-new universal adapter for the Dust Muzzle puts all saws, sanders, tuck pointers and crack chasers in OSHA Silica Dust Compliance regardless of brand. An optional Drywall Sander uses the incoming air as a turbine to power the sander head, and the sanded dust is sucked right past the turbine into the vacuum. With the extension poles, workers can sand ceilings up to 12 feet high without scaffolding.

☎ (800) 568-3949

Life goes on



The Life Deck brand of products will now be known as Westcoat Concrete Infiltration Coatings.

Backed by 25 years of industry experience, Westcoat offers premier concrete coating products and systems organized within four categories: Waterproof (WP), Epoxy Coat (EC), Texture Coat (TC) and Surface Coat (SC). WP products and systems provide waterproof and customizable solutions for an array of plywood and concrete surfaces. The EC product line delivers strong and durable flooring solutions with epoxy coatings, including water-based, 100 percent solids, high-build, and epoxy technology innovations. TC products and systems offer a variety of depth-defying finishes to new and existing concrete surfaces and overlays, adding dimension to surfaces without the removal of existing substrates. Last but

not least, the customizable SC product line combines a wide variety of stains and sealers. SC products are supported by exquisite training techniques and design capabilities, and they deliver unlimited surface coating options.

This all-inclusive line of step-by-step "Concrete Infusion Coatings" is engineered by on-site chemist Gary De Boer. The coatings are available through specialty coating distributors throughout the western United States.

☎ (800) 250-4519

Create a barrier with Barriseal

Carlisle Coating and Waterproofing Inc. is offering Barriseal, a liquid-applied air and vapor barrier system.

Barriseal is a water-based asphalt emulsion modified with a blend of synthetic rubbers and special additives. It cures to form a flexible, monolithic air/vapor barrier for many substrates in cavity wall construction. The system also acts as a watershed damp-proofing membrane. This air and water vapor barrier is a nonflammable, solvent-free product that performs with excellent elongation and recovery, offering exceptional bonding. Its seamless membrane features a smooth, clean finish. It also alleviates difficult installation, lowering the cost of installation when compared to traditional peel and stick self-adhesive air barriers.

This above-grade system adheres to concrete, green concrete, CMU or exterior gypsum structural walls that are to be covered with an exterior finish wall system. Barriseal-R is roller-applied and Barriseal-S is applied using special spray equipment.

Carlisle Coatings and Waterproofing Inc. is a division of Carlisle SynTec Inc.

☎ (800) 527-7092

🌐 www.carlisle-ccw.com

Concrete pin design could help with form work

InventHelp announces that one of its clients, an inventor from Northfield, Ohio, has designed an accessory for use with concrete forms. The original design was submitted to the Cleveland office of InventHelp, and it is currently available for licensing or sale to manufacturers or marketers.

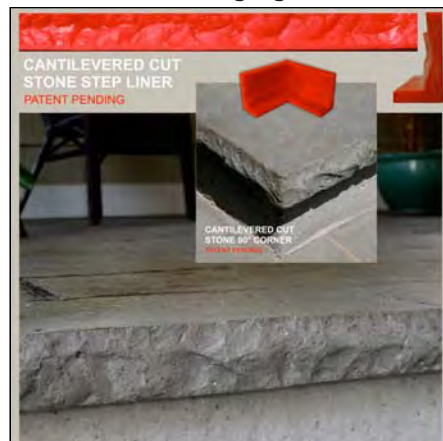
The invention is a concrete form pin

developed to hold forms in place and prevent them from bowing out as the concrete cures. This device would allow forms to be used around finished surfaces more efficiently and effectively. Also, it would be ideal for use when installing sidewalks and curbs.

☎ (412) 288-1300 ext. 1368

🌐 www.inventhelp.com

New cut stone edging for concrete



Butterfield Color has developed Cantilevered Cut Stone Step & Form Liners for use in decorative hardscapes and paving.

The form-liner tools allow a rough cut stone texture to be transferred to tread edges, corners, and risers of cast-in-place steps. They can also be effectively used for countertops, pool coping and wall caps, or as an edge treatment for most concrete slabs. The polyurethane form liners can be easily attached to standard 1 1/2-inch dimensional foam or form lumber. They can also be used for edging 2 1/2-inch or 4-inch thick concrete installations. These tools are flexible, reusable, and will not crumble or break.

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Association News

American Concrete Institute

Trade group wins recognition for distinguished achievement

The Colorado Ready Mixed Concrete Association (CRMCA) has been honored with a Distinguished Achievement Award from the American Concrete Institute.

CRMCA is being recognized for advancing the concrete industry through education, certification, and the promotion of innovative uses of concrete throughout Colorado.

The group's activities emphasize education, product promotion, safety, and technical assistance, and it is active and fully engaged in the promotion of new and exciting uses of concrete. Through its promotion of insulated concrete forms for energy-efficient homes, CRMCA highlights the advantages of using colored and stamped concrete for residential and commercial markets. The organization also took an active role in finding a suitable site for Colorado's first pervious pavement project.

The ACI Distinguished Achievement Award is presented to nonmember individuals or associations that have made notable contributions to the advancement of the concrete industry. Recipients must reside in the region of the Institute's conventions. CRMCA managing director Paul Schauer accepted the award at the ACI Fall 2006 Convention in Denver.

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More new references for concrete professionals

The American Concrete Institute announces the availability of four new publications.

SP-237 CD-ROM: Finite Element Analysis of Reinforced Concrete Structures — This CD-ROM is a collection of 19 papers presented at a 2003 workshop in Maui. Topics include the development and validation of plain, reinforced, and fiber-reinforced concrete constitutive models, new approaches to simulating the response of reinforced concrete continua, new element formations to enable improved simulation of component response, the creation of new experimental data sets, and new computational techniques.

SP-238: International Symposium on Confined Concrete — This publication contains 28 papers that were presented at a symposium held in China in 2004. Topics include performance-based design and seismic analysis, confined concrete models, finite element modeling, confined concrete in steel and concrete composites, and FRP-confined concrete.

SP-240 CD-ROM: Performance-Based Design of Concrete Building for Wind Loads — This CD-ROM contains six papers that were presented at a technical session held in San Francisco in fall 2004. Topics include an overview of performance-based design, the nature of wind loads and wind tunnel testing, structural modeling assumptions, components of lateral deformations in buildings, and types of concrete structural systems to be considered when figuring for wind loads.

302.2R-06: Guide for Concrete Slabs that Receive Moisture-Sensitive Flooring Materials — This guide contains materials, design, and construction recommendations for concrete slabs-on-ground and suspended slabs that are to receive moisture-sensitive flooring materials. These flooring materials include sheet rubber, epoxy coatings, vinyl composition tile, sheet vinyl, carpet, athletic flooring, laminates and hardwood. Several chapters provide an understanding of concrete moisture behavior and drying, and show how recommended construction practices can contribute to the successful performance of floor covering materials. This background provides a basis for recommendations on how to improve performance of floor-covering materials in contact with concrete moisture and alkalinity.

These publications can be ordered from the American Concrete Institute.

☎ (248) 848-3800

🌐 www.concrete.org

Construction Specifications Institute

CSI announces new professional education program

The Construction Specifications Institute has initiated the development of its new Construction Education Network (CEN), the first of its kind to offer a comprehensive provider program that encompasses the complete building industry spectrum, from architects and engineers to building owners and contractors to product manufacturer representatives.

The CEN will provide an automated system for tracking continuing education credits, as well as assuring quality educational programs and recognition of these programs in the building industry.

try. The automated CEN program will bring together a number of existing educational initiatives within the Institute, creating several new opportunities for education delivery, as well as making it easier for all involved by centralizing and automating most of the functions related to the registration and tracking of educational credits. Through this network, CSI will offer a variety of support options for education providers, instructors and students. The infrastructure for the CEN will be formalized over the next few months and officially launched at the 2007 CSI Show in Baltimore.

☎ (800) 689-2900

🌐 www.csinet.org

🌐 www.csinet.org/provider

Concrete Sawing & Drilling Association

CSDA/OSHA alliance hosts free seminar at WOC

The Concrete Sawing & Drilling Association and Occupational Safety and Health Administration invite World of Concrete 2007 attendees to a free seminar, "Outreach Programs for Construction," on January 24 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The seminar is presented by OSHA's director of the Office of Construction Services, Stewart C. Burkhammer.

This seminar will highlight OSHA Cooperative Programs such as the Alliance Program and the CSDA/OSHA Alliance. It will also provide a regulatory update of current construction activities and review how participation in OSHA outreach programs can add value to a company's safety and health programs. This session will also cover the elements of an environmental, safety and health (ES&H) management system and review OSHA's success in obtaining professional certification for its compliance officers and management staff.

As part of an alliance forged in 2006, CSDA and OSHA intend to work together to achieve outreach and communication goals with presentations at major industry events.

🌐 www.csdas.org

☎ (727) 577-5004

Portland Cement Association

PCA elects new chairman

The board of directors of the Portland Cement Association elected Charlie Sunderland as chairman during the association's board meeting in November 2006. Sunderland will serve a two-year term, succeeding James Repman of California Portland Cement Co.

Sunderland is CEO and chairman of the board of Ash Grove Cement Co., based in Overland Park, Kan., and assumes the role of PCA chairman with a lifetime of experience in the cement industry. He has served as PCA vice chairman for the past two years, has chaired its Public Works Committee, and has served on the Market Promotion Council, the Paving Committee, the Regional Promotion Committee and the Residential Committee.

Enrique Escalante of GCC of America was elected vice chair. The director of GCC's United States division, Escalante was elected to the PCA board in 2001. 📄

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Grab Your Golf Clubs

The Green Scene in Canoga Park, Calif., is owned by president and supervising designer Scott Cohen. The high-end landscape design and building firm is nationally recognized for creating custom pools, spas, fireplaces, concrete stamping and staining, ceramics and tile, outdoor kitchens, rock waterfalls and much more.

This particular project was for the side yard of a repeat customer, an avid golfer. The company has also installed a concrete pool, fountain, driveway and pour-in-place counter-top for an outdoor BBQ on the customer's property.

The golf ball patio, which was designed by Cohen, took about two to three weeks to finish. First, the team applied white color hardener to natural gray concrete and let it cure. They used an oyster white stain from Kemiko Concrete Staining with a touch of acrylic stain for the color of the ball.

Then, they made a template for the Titleist logo, engraving the letters with a KaleidoCrete engraver system from Engrave-A-Crete. They stained the letters with a black stain and the number with a red stain, both from Kemiko. They followed by engraving the circles, which took on the grayish color of the concrete, making the golf balls' dimples stand out.

The project was finished off by sealing the patio.

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