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Publisher's Letter



Dear Readers,

During World War II, the first Allied Forces to storm the beaches of Normandy suffered tremendous losses. Had it not been for their courage and undying persistence, these Allied Forces would likely not have persevered.

They also discovered that communication was their fiercest weapon and the tool that would guide them to victories. When communication improved, they could more readily identify weaknesses on both sides of the line and respond more quickly with required actions.

In business, communication plays a similar role. Whether your company is trying to survive the economic woes that our country currently faces or you want to take advantage of opportunities to get ahead in business, your success ultimately depends on decisions that are fueled by adequate and ongoing communication.

Communication comes in many forms. It can take the form of information we've generated for you in this issue of *Concrete Decor* or what you find on the Internet. It comes by way of the radio or from television, books and DVDs. It takes place at conventions or training events, or when we meet with business associates or with friends and family at mealtimes. Which methods of communication best serve your business needs becomes evident when you are exercising this important and God-given ability. Remember, however, communication includes both an explanation of our thoughts and ideas as well as hearing from others.

Talking from experience, communication that helps us make better decisions can often take a back seat because of our perpetual focus on matters that are more pressing. Meetings are postponed, mealtimes turn into a visit to the drive-through — *again* — and worst of all, this pattern of busyness continues to hold us at bay.

As a nation, and particularly as craftspeople and professionals in business, communication is a freedom we must honor and respect. It's no wonder that God gave us only one mouth but two ears.

As a craftsman and a leader of my business and family, I am often encouraged by remembering more perilous events in life, historical or otherwise. Unlike the challenges that the first Allied Forces experienced on those beaches in Normandy, our efforts to develop more effective methods of communication are not hindered by flying bullets, thankfully.

Respectfully yours,

Bent Mikkelsen, Publisher

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by Amy Johnson

On the Cover: Workers from Delta Sand & Gravel Co. of Eugene, Ore., place concrete that was integrally colored with L.M. Scofield Co's Coral Red. They are laying a slab for an outdoor patio at a Panda Express restaurant in Eugene.

Photo by Wendy Ardolino

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picture courtesy of: Total Polish Solutions

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Industry News



Spec-West honors Bill Shorey, industry leader

Artist Robin Vella, his crew of designers, Spec West employees and industry insiders gathered with Estrella Shorey Feb. 19, 2008, at Spec West's Rancho Cordova location for the unveiling of a decorative concrete bench honoring Bill Shorey, "The Color Man," who passed away early last year.

Bill Shorey worked as a product specialist for Spec-West, a construction supply company. He was a key inspirational figure in the early years of the decorative concrete industry.

The decorative concrete bench features Shorey's likeness. Vella, who owns A Concrete Studio in Sacramento, created it using integral color

from QC Construction Products, diamond-polished aggregate, metallic highlights and shadow effects.

A concrete representation of the "Billy Banger," a tool Shorey invented, forms one leg of the bench. The real-life Banger is a high-density urethane hand tamper with a 7-inch by 7-inch base. A pole at its center has a knob at the top and a handle off to one side.

This memorial will join the several hundred square feet of decorative concrete found at "Bill's Patio," adjacent to the Rancho Cordova store.

www.spec-west.com

Clarification: In the February 2008 Issue of *Concrete Decor*, we ran a photograph on page 39 of a coffee table, courtesy of SureCrete Design Products. The photo supplied was of a concrete tabletop created by Daniel Herzner of Topcrete Design Studio using Buddy Rhodes products.

Sika acquires Valspar Flooring

Sika AG has announced that its United States subsidiary, Sika Corp., has acquired the commercial and industrial polymer flooring business of Valspar Corp.

Already a market leader in construction chemicals, including adhesives and sealants, concrete admixtures, and repair and strengthening products, Sika expects that this acquisition will further strengthen its North American position in the polymer flooring market. The parties have agreed not to disclose the sale price.

The Valspar polymer flooring business, with its portfolio of epoxy and polyurethane technology products, fits Sika's focused growth strategy for North America.

The acquisition also creates for Sika one of the most comprehensive ranges of epoxy, polyurethane, and other key polymer flooring products and technologies in the industry.

www.sikacorp.com

www.sikaconstruction.com

New Tindall plant in San Antonio

Tindall Corp., a leader in the design and manufacture of precast, prestressed concrete framing systems, is pleased to announce the construction of its new Texas Division concrete plant in San Antonio. Permitting procedures are under way through a locally hired project manager, and construction began in February 2008.

The 114,000-square-foot production facility, Tindall's fifth plant, will have the capability to manufacture a broad range of precast, prestressed building products, concentrating initially on correctional cell modules. The new plant is expected to be operational this summer.

This state-of-the-art facility will mark a \$25-million investment over 5 years and will employ upwards of 250 when in full operation. Ten experienced Tindall employees will transfer to the new plant, to be joined by new hires in production, engineering, project management, sales, estimating and business development.

www.tindallcorp.com



Courtesy of Dur-A-Flex

Dur-A-Flex business training

Dur-A-Flex has announced plans to expand its traditional Road Show training platform to include a greater training curriculum that will be offered in module format.

The new program will enhance Dur-A-Flex's successful Road Show platform by focusing on issues such as: Strategic job costing, sales training, market development strategic planning,

developing product information, financial training, managing employees, profit-sharing programs, writing a business plan and more. Dur-A-Flex enlisted small-business owners from across the country to help create the program. Modules will be available in the Dur-A-Flex training center in East Hartford, Conn., as well as one-on-one in a client's office.

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Diteq Diamond Tools & Equipment executives, from left to right: executive vice president of sales and marketing Bob Coats, regional sales manager Todd Forbush and engineering manager Mike Orzechowski.

New floor care line from Amano

Amano Pioneer Eclipse Corp. has announced its new PowerStar Division, a comprehensive product line for the care of concrete and stone surfaces from start to finish.

PowerStar offers fully integrated systems solutions without the need for electrical cords or generators. The product line includes durable, versatile, high-performance propane grinding and polishing equipment, as well as chemicals, diamonds and other support accessories.

PowerStar also incorporates Amano's environmentally

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🌐 www.amano.com/floor

Diteq names engineering manager

Diteq Diamond Tools & Equipment has announced the appointment of Mike Orzechowski to the position of engineering manager.

Over his 20-year engineering career, Orzechowski held the position of Engineering Manager for Equipment Development Co. (EDCO), and was a principal in an automation equipment design and manufacturing business. Since 2004, Orzechowski has served as chairman of the Standards and Specifications Committee for CSDA and has presented a number of educational workshops and authored numerous articles. He also serves on the CSDA's Safety and Manufacturers committees.

☎ (866) 688-1032

🌐 www.diteq.com

New ASTM Concrete Committee chairman

ASTM International Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates has named Anthony Fiorato as its new chairman.

Fiorato is senior consultant and nonexecutive chairman of the board of CTLGroup in Skokie, Ill., which provides engineering, scientific and testing services to the construction and related industries. ASTM Committee C09 consists of about 900 members responsible for more than 155 standards published in the Annual Book of ASTM Standards. ASTM International Committee C09, jointly with Committee C01 on Cement, oversees the activities of the Cement and Concrete Reference Laboratory, which operates programs that promote the quality of testing in construction-material laboratories.

In addition to his work with ASTM International, Fiorato is a fellow and past president of the American Concrete Institute.

🌐 www.astm.org

New ASTM standard addresses material compatibility concerns




After its formation in 2004, ASTM Subcommittee C09.48, on the Performance of Cementitious Materials and Admixture Combinations, has just released its first standard: C 1679, Practice for Measuring Hydration Kinetics of Hydraulic Cementitious Mixtures Using Isothermal Calorimetry.

Subcommittee C09.48 was formed to set industry standards for concrete mixtures (as opposed to individual materials standards). By standardizing testing practices for concrete mixtures, the subcommittee has laid the groundwork for future standards on material compatibility in concrete mixtures. The C 1679 standard is geared towards manufacturers of various concrete products, as well as contractors and testing laboratories. 📱

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Dying for Decorative Concrete



Photo courtesy of Doug Carlton

by Doug Carlton

There is not a comforting way to say the word “cancer.” Even in this day of strong chances of recovery and survival, it is a word that gets our attention every time. I realize this isn’t my usual, upbeat article, but the fact is, what we are working with may be killing us. Although the products we use turn normal concrete into extraordinary works of art, some of those products are carcinogenic. Many products become airborne (as particulate) and these silicas have been proven to cause the Big C. This may not worry you, but before you turn the page let me ask this: What about your children? Some doctors say the effects of what we inhale may appear in our offspring. Not a very pleasant thought, is it?

A friend told me of a conversation he had while in the waiting room for his radiation treatment. Sitting next to him was a younger man, and a conversation started between them, not unlike

nervous chatter sometimes heard on airplanes. Both men compared war wounds, and the conversation quickly cut to the chase and straight to the future of each man.

Our guy told of hope and looked forward to getting his treatment behind him and his life back to normal. The rebuttal was not so bright. His new friend told a story less encouraging and felt his future was limited, to say the least. He seemed to accept the inevitable, yet found peace, all while attempting a long shot with this treatment.

As the two men tried to explain the whys and hows of their disease, the new friend explained that his doctor had no doubt the “how” was most likely connected to his line of work. For years the man had worked in a business that bagged cement in preparation for distribution. Many days were busy, and respirator masks were discarded or forgotten. Years of breathing in microscopic cement particles

seemed to be the most likely cause of his disease. A young nonsmoker with terminal lung cancer is not normal. My goal is to keep this from happening to you and your crew.

I'm not going to waste space in this fine magazine with standard safety features like Band-aids and eye flushes. Every business knows by now that this is mandatory. My concern is more about the life-threatening or life-changing situations all decorative installers face daily. Part of the problem is that our society bombards us with ridiculous warning labels to which most pay no attention. You probably see them as a means to curtail frivolous lawsuits and you are right. The other day I saw a warning on an advertisement for a toilet seat, maybe designed for hunting or camping, that attaches to the receiver-style hitch of a vehicle. It warned us not to use the seat while the vehicle is moving down the road. I guess common sense should never be assumed.

Some might ask why folks in the decorative trenches who expose themselves to these dangers continue to do so unprotected. The answer is simple, considering the fact that we all need to earn a paycheck to support our families. Many in our workforce are, let's say, discreet, and will not complain or draw attention to themselves. It is our responsibility to protect them as much as ourselves. Many workers simply don't know the danger because it is not evident at the day's end. Most, but not all, of these dangers are not traumas that bleed or break. The effects are slow and usually affect us later in life, although not always.

Let's look at a few of the dangers and what we can do to protect our crews.

Airborne damage

What do you think of when you hear "airborne"? Is it dust and powder? The lungs are an amazing part of our bodies. They inhale and exhale air that provides oxygen to our bloodstream. Without this fresh oxygen, our time is limited — we all know this. I will not claim to know why and how these silica dust particles damage our lungs, but they do. It appears that our lungs

cannot filter these small particles, and eventually the lungs' capacity and health are jeopardized. The danger can come from tasks as simple as dumping bags into a mixer or broadcasting color hardener onto fresh concrete. Most release agents are light and drift in the air forever, it seems. It also appears that the lungs are not the only areas of our bodies subject to harm. Fumes from many sealers, epoxies, urethanes, release agents and solvents are extremely dangerous for a number of

reasons. Everyone has heard about the effects of overdrinking daily and how this affects the liver. I bet you didn't realize the liver also filters, in some capacity, not only things we eat and drink but also things we breathe.

These strong toxic fumes create grave concerns for a number of reasons. All of these harsh-smelling protective coatings are wrecking our unprotected bodies.



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Airborne protection

I will be honest: I thought the days of using little white dust masks for complete protection were over. I was wrong. While researching for this article I learned not even my crew was completely protected. I was quite shocked at how easy it is to protect ourselves. It really boils down to two mask types in most cases. The first is an

inexpensive disposable paper-style mask that costs about \$1.50. This mask, when used properly, will leave particulates on your job and not in the lungs. This is the mask type to use when throwing colors or mixing powders. Your crew will simply toss them away at day's end.

The other mask type is for the detail and seal guys that are rolling or spraying sealers, especially indoors.

This mask is completely different from the particulate type, but the result is the same. Big improvements have been made in the filter area of these masks. These protective filters eliminate toxic fumes from entering your lungs and bloodstream. Be sure to ask your supplier about layers of protection before investing in a high-dollar system. This respirator system can cost anywhere from \$50 to \$900 depending on how elaborate you decide to go. I interviewed the owner of Guardian Safety & Supply and he had several mask options that fit well with our line of work. They also ship worldwide and seem competitive in pricing.

That was the easy part. Now comes the hard part. Getting your crew to commit to wearing them is the hardest part, I have found. This will require some groundwork, and you will need to stick to your guns, I can assure you. Your crew must understand that you spent hard-earned money on their behalf and these masks must be worn when necessary. A few surprise visits to your site will help ensure their use. Letting a guy sit at home for a day or two will show the seriousness of usage too. Many workers will misplace or lose the masks, so I recommend making one person in charge of them. This will keep you from constantly replacing costly masks. The bottom line is they must be sold on the fact that this is for THEIR protection. 📱

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

For more on masks, Doug Carlton recommends visiting:

3M

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🌐 www.3m.com

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Mark Hudecek,
Hudecek Cement



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Prepping For The Future

by John R. Abrahamson

The best way to predict the future is to learn from history. However, the polished concrete industry is a very young industry. One cannot look to the history of polished concrete to make predictions about its future. One has to look instead at the histories of the established flooring industries and other related industries.

I believe that knowledge from the flooring industry is what is missing in the polished concrete industry. Polished concrete is sold as a flooring choice in so many cases, yet most of those in polished concrete are from a concrete background. The concrete industry is quite different from the flooring industry. While the concrete and flooring industries have joined together in the polished concrete industry, experience and knowledge is only derived from one of the parent industries.

I see companies attempting to differentiate themselves in ways that have already been proven or failed in other flooring industries. I see the polished concrete industry making some of these attempts early in the game, while the industry still remains very small. Carpet, ceramic, wood flooring, and other flooring industries did not take most of these actions until those industries had hundreds of millions of dollars in sales.

The basic question of those in the

industry, whether they are contractors or suppliers to contractors, is, "How do I grow?" The answer to that question is in understanding your end user and related industries, and in changing that question to "How do WE grow?"

What do end users want in a floor? First and foremost, they want a good-looking floor. Secondly, they want a floor that functions, is easy to maintain, and lasts. Thirdly, they want a floor that fits into their budget. They want a good value. To determine if they are getting a good value, the end user has to understand the floor he or she is buying.

With so many companies, both contractors and suppliers, rushing to differentiate themselves to control their market share in such a new industry, the end user has become confused, and the future of polished concrete as a long-lasting industry is actually threatened. The rest of the flooring world learned a long time ago that it was to everyone's advantage to work together to create some standardization to help end users understand what they are buying. The real competition, after all, is other kinds of flooring with which the end user is more familiar, as well as the choice of simply leaving concrete in its natural state. A confused customer will simply go with another floor, or choose to do nothing. As human beings, we tend to be most threatened by those most like us. We fear our direct competitors and

forget our more indirect competitors, who are as much, if not more, of a threat. That is very much the case with polished concrete, because the rest of the flooring industry has a vast history of knowledge from which to draw, while the history of polished concrete itself is much too shallow. Before the various players rush to differentiate themselves from each other, and build a name for themselves amongst each other, they need to pull together to identify their product and all the different variations of polished concrete, both wet and dry. This will help build a name for polished concrete in general. By rushing to the next step, the players are actually stifling the growth.

In the American marketplace, there is one truth that stands above any other. The end user will always look for faster, cheaper and better. Those that do not follow these rules may succeed in a niche market, but they will never become a real player in their industry. I believe the saying is, "Sell to the classes and you'll dine with the masses, but sell to the masses and you'll dine with the classes." That philosophy has certainly worked for giants such as Ikea, Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Lowe's.

A lot of changes will take place in the industry over the next three years. The landscape will change. Factors that were not factors so early in related industries will become factors in the polished concrete industry. The Chinese and Koreans have already entered the marketplace with much less expensive tooling. While quality is sometimes an issue, drastic improvements have been made. Sometimes the expense of labor in the Western world can work against quality. Consider the auto industry. Sometimes corners are cut on quality in order to offset the expense of labor and remain price-competitive. Three hundred million people in China still only earn about a dollar a day. With such low labor costs, a lot of margin is free for product development, even if they are selling for less.

While an industry is usually larger

and more developed before such players enter into the scene, the growth of the industry has been so exaggerated that it has invited such competition early. This is bad for vendors, but actually good for the contractor and the industry as manufacturers compete with unpolished concrete and other forms of flooring.

With more and more manufacturers of equipment and tooling, and more and more companies selling direct to the contractor rather than through distribution, the contractor is, more than ever, in the driver's seat. It is a buyer's market, and a perfect market for establishing best practices.

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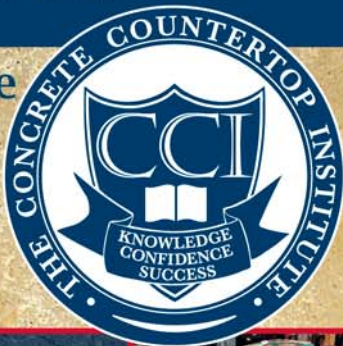
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It will be very interesting to see what develops in the polished concrete industry over the next few years. My friends in the older, more established flooring industries do not believe in the long-term potential of polished concrete. They say it is a flash in the pan — a fluke of an industry that arose from a little work done for Home Depot and Lowe's stores. My friends in the decorative concrete and chemical industries and the polished concrete industry itself believe the potential is huge. I believe the truth is in between. Polished concrete, if managed correctly and collectively as an emerging industry, holds a lot of promise and offers a lot of opportunity. But, to get it to the point of being an established, long-term, viable industry will take a lot of work, a lot of cooperation and a lot of open-mindedness.

As someone who became involved in the very early days, first through a distributorship and then with a manufacturer of equipment and tooling, I know that the polished concrete industry grew through a very narrow crack in the concrete, so to speak. Lowe's and Home Depot did create a large temporary demand. Contractors bought a lot of equipment and tooling to do work for these two companies. However, from that narrow crack it is possible for a decent-sized industry to emerge. Because I feel so personally connected to the industry, I am rooting for it, and I am very hopeful that enough of the players will be able to quickly learn and maneuver in an industry that is changing faster than it is growing.

The American marketplace is gruelingly competitive, and only the fittest survive. The contractor that survives, and the supplier that survives, will find ways to get on and off the job faster, provide a floor for less money, and still provide a quality floor. The successful contractor will establish best practices. One doesn't always have to be the least expensive or the fastest, but one had better at least be in the ballpark. Expectation levels of the end product and service are a must, and achieving them requires education and standardized clarifications. If the end user is confused and fickle, the industry is confused and fickle. There is a saying, "It takes a village." It is going to take everyone pulling together for everyone in the industry to do better. The hurdle is human nature. Before we can overcome our competition, we must overcome ourselves. 

John Abrahamson, our newest columnist, makes his debut this issue. He has been in the polished concrete industry since 2000 and was in the flooring industry for 15 years before that. His former positions include president of HTC Inc., which he helped establish in the United States. He also served as national sales manager for VIC International and regional vice president for Shaw Industries. He is currently starting a new company in the flooring industry.



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How to Keep Your Business Up in a Down Market

by Erin F. Ansley

Analysts have been dissecting the residential and commercial construction industry for months, and though some predict a rebound soon, no clear end to the rollercoaster ride is in sight. But as many in the decorative concrete sector have discovered, a change in the market doesn't necessarily mean a dramatic decline in business. Many have experienced loss, but for some manufacturers and contractors, this has meant only a slight shift in sales or a marginal decrease in bids. More than anything else, it has been a learning experience. It has been a time of reflection, a time to rethink business strategies and reshape companies, not only to survive the downturn but ultimately come out on top.

When the market does actually rebound, Jim Niehoff, director of the Portland Cement Association's Residential Programs, suspects the decorative concrete industry will be more successful than ever before. During his 11-year tenure with the PCA, Niehoff has witnessed great growth, particularly in the commercial and high-end markets. Although he says the housing downturn has had an effect on the decorative concrete industry — as it has every segment of the new-construction residential market — it hasn't made a significant impact on demand, because of decorative concrete's frequent use in custom and high-end projects.

"Relatively speaking, I suspect that decorative contractors have

been affected less than many of their traditional flatwork counterparts," Niehoff says. "Our perspective from attending trade shows and receiving inquiries on our Web site is that consumer interest in decorative concrete hasn't declined at all. This is an industry that has shown extraordinary growth in recent years, and I think decorative concrete will be very well positioned to capture market share in the future."

Brickform's Harry Freis echoes Niehoff, suggesting that while the industry has been affected, there are pockets of strength, particularly in public projects and high-end residential work. "It is difficult to separate seasonality from overall business trends, which include competitive pressures and geography as well as the economy. The days of 30-percent compounded growth in our business will probably not be seen again for a while, but we should continue to enjoy healthy sales. Of more concern is continued inflation on the expense side — energy and materials — which is a serious squeeze on profitability.

"I am also optimistic that the redecoration market will open up quickly as mortgage credit becomes more available. Buyer caution, however, will put a damper on business as usual."

This buyer caution, suggests MAPEI product manager Todd Miller, is a result of a general tightening of the economy, and there is only an indirect correlation between the housing slump and the concrete industry. Location is

yet another driving force behind the success or failure of the trade, adds Miller. "In some regions it doesn't appear the economy has slowed down at all, while in other regions — e.g., Florida and Southern California — there has clearly been a downturn. However, when it comes to restoration work, we (at MAPEI) are almost entirely focused on the commercial market. To date, this market is perhaps just a little shy, but there remains plenty of activity, and we are experiencing very positive growth."

Manufacturers catering to the commercial market may be staying alive, but some contractors — even those who have residential and commercial clients — are singing a slightly different tune. Michael Miller, principal of The Concretist in Benicia, Calif., has experienced the reality of an unstable market for the first time since starting his decorative or "sensory" concrete business 18 years ago. Before the 2007 holiday season, Miller and his team had a steady flow of residential and commercial jobs based solely on referrals, with little to no money or time spent on advertising or proactive marketing. By Thanksgiving, that had all changed.

Miller used the slowdown as a way to develop better relationships with clients. "I still don't advertise, but I have tried to make it a point to take time with the homeowner, designer or contractor to explain everything we do, because many of them don't always know about all of our services," he explains. By building on existing business partnerships, The Concretist has kept afloat while gaining better business practices along the way. "We went from being dead between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and being really concerned, to being comfortable again. For me, all it takes is a simple thing. Make that extra effort to say, 'By the way, this is what we do. You seem to like it, so take a look at what else we do and know about it for the future.' We have missed out on previous jobs because we never took the time to fill our clients in on the entire range of what we do. It's not like it costs a lot or takes a lot of time. It just takes a little discipline to do it."

Contractors aren't just battling the market — they're battling competition, notes Bev Garnant, executive director for the American Society of Concrete Contractors. To compete, particularly in an unpredictable economy, one must be skilled and business-savvy. Over the last 10 years, more and more contractors have entered the market, making it harder to stand out in a crowd. "Good

contractors develop relationships with designers and owners, deliver a high-quality product, and offer a high level of customer service," she says. "When you have the total package, you have a better chance. I'm not a prophet, but the better contractors will hold on and do fine. We will lose contractors who are not as well-trained, and the better contractors will rise to the top and get the work that's

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there.”

One mistake a lot of businesses make when the market is down, Garnant notes, is to cut things such as marketing budgets and customer service because they see them as frills. “That’s when you need to be promoting the most,” she says. “You want to be seen so customers know that you’re out there.”

Garnant suggests exploring diversification without losing control of the business. One possibility is the pervious concrete market, which she says is becoming more popular and could be a good choice for a mid-sized contractor.

Regardless of the approach, she cautions: “If your head’s underwater, it’s too late. You have to consistently do things right. If you’re treading water now and somehow you pull through, you need to do prevent this from happening again. Ask yourself, ‘What can we learn from this down market and from those who didn’t succeed?’ This

isn’t just in the construction industry. This is basic Business 101.”

Water Brothers Construction Inc. of Eugene, Ore., is no stranger to Business 101. Husband-and-wife team Ken Froebig and Susanne Weiss, who began the company in 1996, attended a small business management class for three years, time Weiss considers well spent. “We recommend the class to anyone who wants to start a business. It’s like a support group.”

While they learned many tactics from the class and their mentor, Weiss says she and her husband also practice many principles he carries with him from previous experiences, including surviving a downturn in 2003. One of the most significant, she says, is to build a positive image for your company. This includes paying your employees on time and offering them health insurance. Their philosophy has paid off, and the couple has kept more than half their team on the payroll for 10 years. Weiss

stresses that this is more significant than paying for print ads.

Despite these sound practices, Water Brothers hasn’t necessarily coasted through the downturn. Jobs are down and people have held out or canceled, particularly at the end of 2007. But Weiss notes things are looking up. During times like these, she says it’s important to remain flexible. “We learned a lot in 2003. Be in touch with the market. Attend home shows. That’s how we keep track of the market. Keep track of every phone call. Find out how people hear of us. And stay flexible. Survival is not to be afraid to go into new territory.” 📞

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J&M Lifestyles LLC Randolph, N.J.



Photos courtesy of J&M Lifestyles

by Erin F. Ansley

It's been nearly 80 years since Michelle Radley's great-grandfather helped to erect the eagle heads that grace the corners of the Chrysler Building's 61st floor. When completed in 1930, the art deco structure in Manhattan was the world's tallest building.

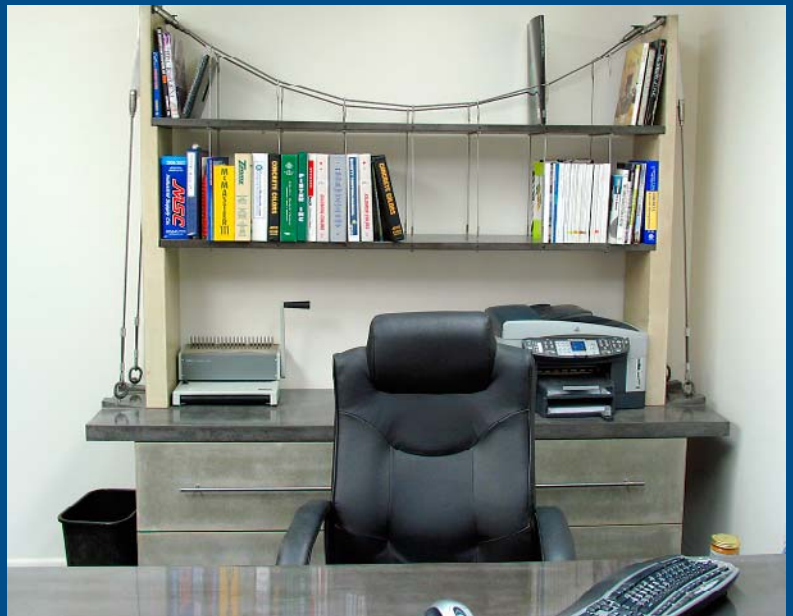
This past January, Radley, owner of J&M Lifestyles LLC, recognized her family's connection to the building in an unprecedented fashion. She and J&M product manager Jeff Kudrick, who has more than 20 years experience in the industry, unveiled what they claim is the world's first iconic concrete coffee table at World of Concrete 2008 in Las Vegas. Constructed of the company's proprietary translucent concrete, plus architectural concrete, fiber optics, wood, glass, and metal, the table features replicas of the Chrysler hood-ornament eagle heads and details of the spire, complete with glowing triangles.

"I don't think there's anything out there like it," says Radley. "We wanted someplace to show it to the public and see what people thought of the design. What better place to do it than at a show for others in the same field?"

The reaction was greater than Radley had anticipated. "People loved it. We have had a response from all over the world. We even have someone interested in putting it in their showroom in Manhattan." J&M plans to produce a 500-piece run of the table.

Although the Randolph, N.J.-based company may have broken the mold with the Chrysler coffee table, modern furniture is just one of its many specialties, albeit an increasingly popular one. Of course, countertops are on the list, but it doesn't end there. Think one-of-a-kind bath tubs, vanities, water features, fireplace surrounds, architectural details, outdoor kitchens, even aquariums. Using glass-fiber





reinforced concrete and embedding materials such as fossils, iron inlays, fruit bowls, drain boards, glass, rocks, shells, coins, wine bottles and personal mementos, J&M has lent character to historic and modern homes, restaurants, bars and other businesses on the East Coast for two years.

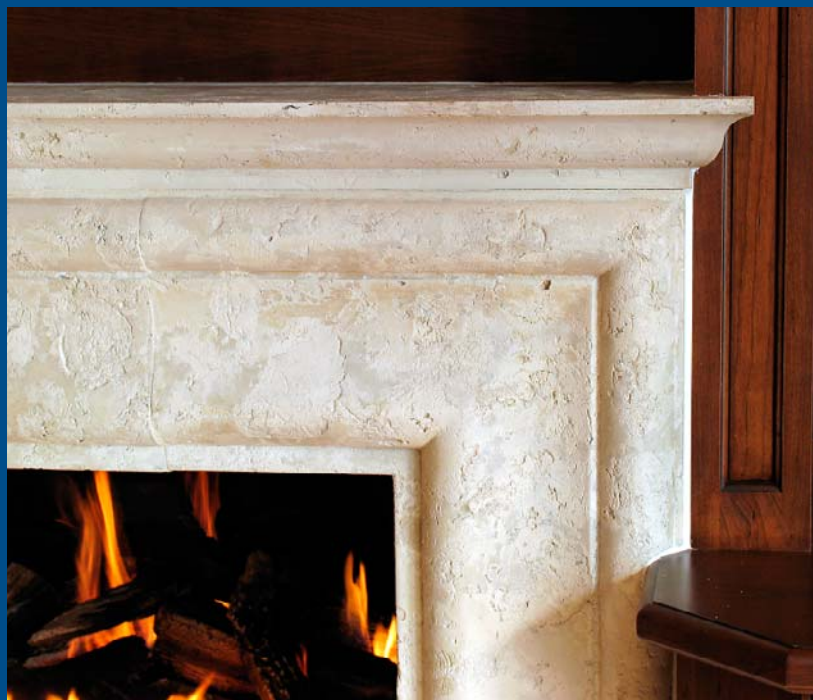
"We are constantly evolving and pushing the limits of the material to accommodate new and abstract ambitions of the client that drive our creative talents," Radley explains. "The ambition behind the company is to create things that have never

been done before and make use of other material to highlight concrete."

Such was the case with a recent kitchen countertop project, which exemplifies J&M's creative use of color and inlays. The end result didn't just please the clients — it grabbed the attention of Cheng Design Exchange judges for the 2008 Members' Circle of Distinction Design Challenge at the World Of Concrete in Vegas, where the company took home the Best Decorative Finish award. Another J&M show-stopper was a wine bar with an embedded fiber-optic

bottle chiller. The playful yet functional design garnered an honorable mention.

The awards may serve as an indication of the company's ability, but the proof is in the diverse body of its work, which can often be classified as functional art. "Concrete is durable and design-specific and has many uses," Radley says. "We bring it to a functional art form, and the medium not only gives you the ability to make things that are artistic, inanimate objects like a painting or sculpture, but also gives you the ability to make things useful and functional." Take,



for example, a custom concrete tub that features a fluid design reminiscent of water. The concept is extended with the bathroom's vanity and his-and-hers sinks, which are separated by a concrete "wave."

J&M's work is often inspired by the outdoors, particularly running water. In fact, Kudrick originally became involved with concrete by using it to create immersion environments, such as rock waterfalls incorporated with murals. "It's all about immersing yourself in a natural environment," he notes. Kudrick took

this notion a step further when he began constructing aquariums. Currently J&M is working on an aquarium for the Chelsea Diner in Manhattan, one of the two aquarium jobs they tend to do each year.

Radley and Kudrick also find time to teach an American Institute of Architects course on all aspects of concrete. As affiliate members of the AIA, they started teaching the course in December to help architects understand how to design with concrete and what it can do. "Everyone benefits, and they then have another tool to design with,"

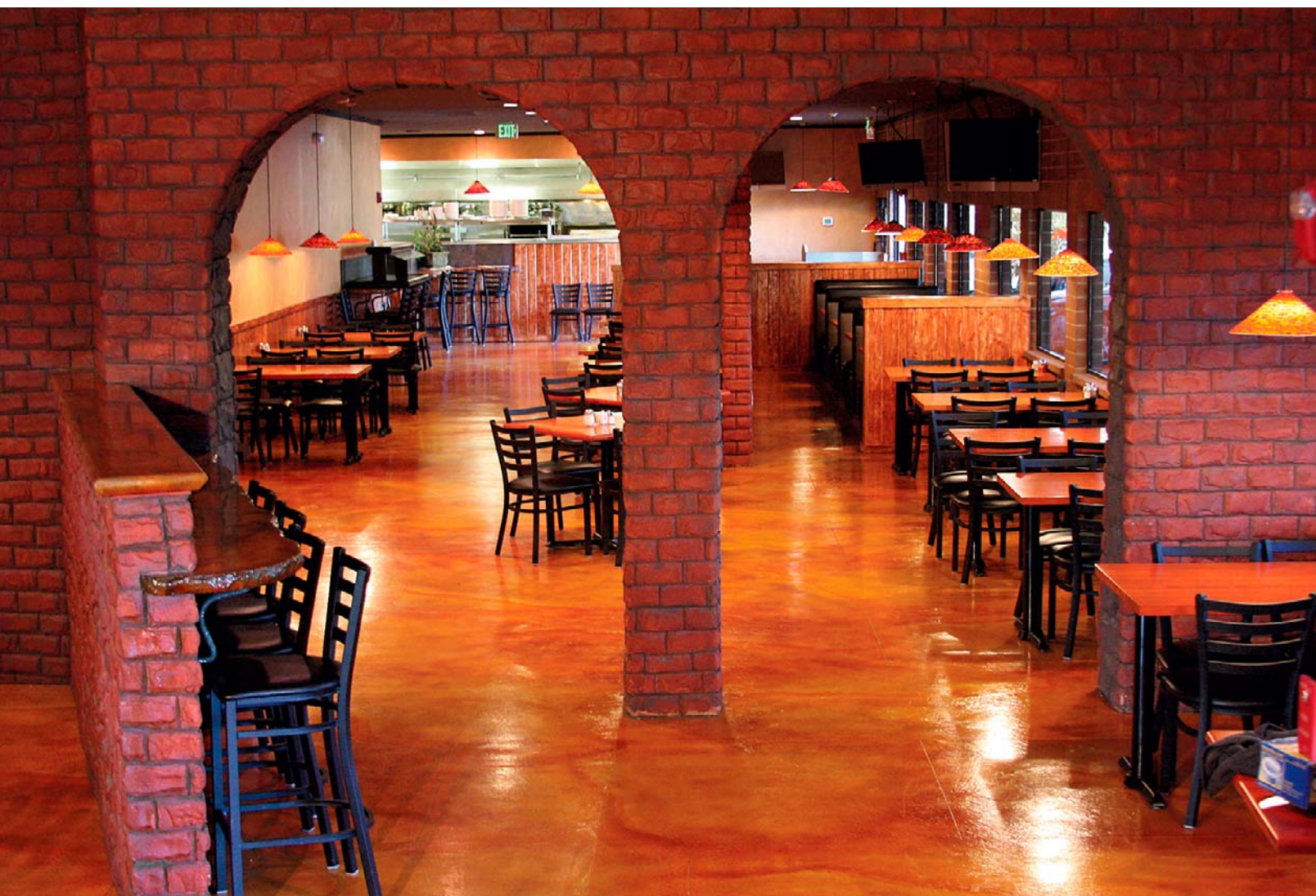
Radley says.

One thing's for certain — J&M is just getting started. Business is picking up as more and more people become familiar with the company's design achievements, especially its furniture. Many new projects are in the works, Radley says. And as the trend to create outdoor kitchens and dining areas gains momentum on the East Coast, Radley and her team may see even more of an increase in clientele. 🚚

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■ ■ ■ Project Profile



The Brick on Trosper, Tumwater, Wash.

Photos courtesy of Forrest Huff



by Mike Dawson

It pays to know your limits. Kevin Winkler proved it when he came up against a brick wall, several of them, the size of which he'd never tackled before.

"I'm not too bashful to ask for help," says Winkler, who is enjoying the success of The Brick on Trosper, a restaurant that serves as a decorative concrete showpiece in Tumwater, Wash., near the state capital, Olympia. Walk through the place and there's as much chatter about the interior as about the food.

Winkler displayed his talent and professionalism not only in his applications, but in his ability to recognize when he needed guidance from more experienced hands. The Brick project includes 4,000 square feet of floor microtopping and 2,000 feet of vertical stamping, as well

as 172 linear feet of counters, a tree, a combination blown-glass and decorative concrete sink, a bridge and a walk-in refrigerator.

The Brick is a story of decorative concrete selling itself, of an applicator and a customer collaborating on design, of decorative concrete professionals coming together for common cause, and of lessons learned along the way.

The story begins with a baby. One day in September 2007, restaurant owner Mike Barrett returned to The Brick from the local hospital, where his wife had given birth. If that wasn't enough change in his life, he was shutting down his restaurant that night for a major remodel.

Winkler, owner of KW Specialized Construction LLC, based in Olympia, was there to discuss a small floor overlay. When Barrett explained that he was looking for a warm brick-and-stone interior for the place, Winkler pulled out a picture book and FossilCrete brochures. The customer later visited Winkler's home, itself a decorative concrete showcase, to see and touch this material he had seen in the pictures.

The restaurateur liked what he saw. "One thing led to another, which led to two, which led to four," Winkler says.



The customer approached it as an art project. He visualized what he wanted, and Winkler created it in concrete. Here's a look at the features and some of the challenges.

Floor overlay

The original 80-square-foot overlay job turned out so well that the owner wanted the entire 4,000 square feet done. Winkler felt a job of that magnitude would stretch the limits of his experience. "It would have been risky," Winkler says.

He hired Scott Hogue, operator of

Artistic Concrete Surfaces in Spokane, Wash., to spend three days on the job site. Miracote technical rep Tony Christopher also joined in.

They poured the floor, and Winkler finished it with an acetone-based dye from Brickform, using torn-paper edges for one-of-a-kind lines and a high-volume low-pressure sprayer for fine detail. The floor is sealed with a 30 percent acrylic lacquer from White Mountain.

Creature feature

The first FossilCrete feature the customer ordered was the tree trunk. The old snag includes a hollow with the lighted eyes of an owl peering out. This so impressed Barrett with the possibilities of FossilCrete that he abandoned plans for thin brick veneer for vertical surfaces.

Hitting the bricks

Instead, Barrett selected FossilCrete's Shanghai Stone, which are impressions lifted directly from old walls in China that were assembled from hand-chiseled blocks. When stained the colors of brick and mortar, the impressions are a ringer for early American construction.

Winkler is an experienced vertical stamp applicator, but this job presented new challenges and required application approaches he'd never tried with





Project Profile



Using torn construction paper and three colors of Dye-N-Seal applied with an HVLP gun, Kevin Winkler of KW Specialized Construction gave this floor a multilevel effect.

FossilCrete. First, the walls were 10 feet high, which leads to messes raining down on finished work. Second, neither the floors nor ceilings were level. To get patterns to match, it was critical to locate the right starting points. Once the start points were identified, Winkler began the vertical overlay at the top, rather than the typical bottom-up approach, so that finished work was out of danger from ongoing application. For color, Winkler applied an acrylic pigment sealer from FossilCrete's Nature's Pallet.

Building the bar

For the bar and counters, the customer wanted something smooth and durable, but comfortable. He wanted concrete to project a feeling of warmth. Winkler achieved this by using the enCounter system, developed by Doug Bannister of The Stamp Store in Oklahoma City, to create the look of a polished wood slab with an irregular, heat-tempered edge.



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Glowing success

In the restrooms, applicator and customer collaborated to create an innovative way of incorporating glass and concrete. The design centered on hand-blown glass sink basins, which Barrett commissioned from a friend who is a protégé of world-renowned glass artist Dale Chihuly, based at the Museum of Glass in Tacoma. The glass is red, streaked with yellow spirals. Lit from below, the sink bowls create a glow in the restrooms.

Setting sinks in a FossilCrete counter is not particularly challenging for Winkler. But once again, the client threw him a curve, this time compound curves. Besides some tricks with the plumbing fixtures, each of the four sinks was an individual dimensionally — none was exactly true round or level. “It pushed that



KW Specialized Construction installed custom spun-glass sinks to create this bathroom countertop. LED lights make the sinks glow in the evening.



Project Profile



Above: Winkler carefully pins a FossilCrete form to give this countertop a natural-looking edge.

Right: To achieve his clients' request for the counters and bartop to project a feeling of warmth, Winkler used the enCounter system to create the look of a polished wood slab.



concrete to the limits," he recalls.

Caulking was out of the question with glass, and some of the tape would not be removable. With light emanating from beneath the bowls, the slightest imperfection would come shining through. "That was a big fear spot for me," Winkler says. "When I stripped it out and turned the light on, what was it going to look like?"

After a lot of work fitting each bowl just right, he set them using clear hot glue and clear tape. His friend, housemate and frequent collaborator, electrician Justin Farley, installed the bulbs. When the lights came on, it was perfect the first time.

In all, the project that started with a patch of overlay went on for three weeks — the ideas kept coming, and Winkler's vendors kept him supplied. Bary Crites of Accent Building Specialties in Olympia did whatever needed to be done to get materials to the site. Miracote and Miles Sand & Gravel, a major ready-mix supplier in the Northwest, supported the effort with prompt deliveries and technical assistance.

Miles also sold Winkler the insulating concrete forms he used for

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Top left: Ryan Siebol of KW Specialized Construction uses a flat trowel to apply a vertical application.



Bottom left: Because of unevenness in the floor and ceiling, KW lead finisher Todd McMaster uses a reference line to stamp a brick pattern.



Below: Kevin Winkler works with a FossilCrete stamp and a reference line.



Project Profile



Kevin Winkler applied a structure coat of FossilCrete to this concrete tree.



another innovative design: a walk-in cooler made from ICFs.

Eating it up

Now complete, the restaurant is serving customers in what has become a local destination. It's also become a great marketing piece for decorative concrete. Winkler has already landed two jobs from clients who have experienced The Brick. That's where asking for help pays off.

"I would not have been able to maintain the quality by myself, and that's bad for my business and it looks bad for the industry," Winkler says. By hiring help and recognizing limits, he

produced a showpiece for which he can take credit. In fact, Miles Sand & Gravel Manager Bob Thompson nominated Winkler and the project for an Excellence in Concrete Construction Award from the Washington Aggregates & Concrete Association.

Winkler learned much of what he knows from Ken Heitzmann, owner of Decorative Concrete Systems in Milton-Freewater, Ore., and continues to attend seminars there. One thing he learned on The Brick project: "Stick to your training. If you go off on your own, reinventing the wheel, you're going to get in trouble." 📱


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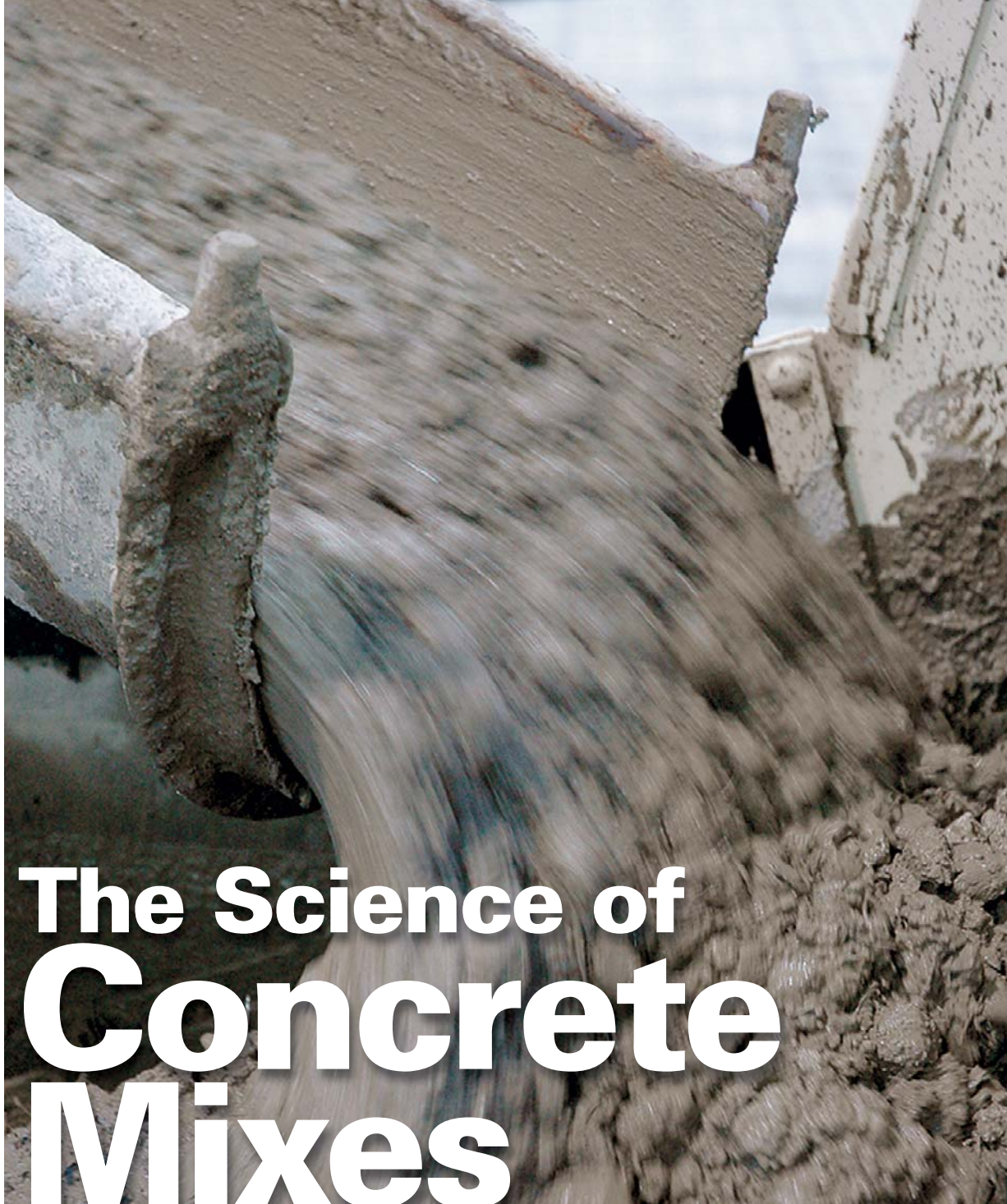


Photo courtesy of Grace Construction Products

The Science of Concrete Mixes

“Contractors don’t do enough experimenting.”

— Gabriel Ojeda
president, Fritz-Pak Corp.

by Christina Camara

It pays to be part artist and part mad scientist when mastering the fickle nature of concrete.

Although it seems like a simple formula — cement, sand and water — every decorative concrete contractor knows it’s far from it. Decorative concrete mixes are often altered to lend the contractor some control over durability, efflorescence, its response to high or low temperatures and seemingly a million other factors. The problem is how altering the mix changes can be handled for various decorative techniques. What’s a contractor to do?

Let’s say you’re starting a large stamped concrete project. At first, the concrete is exactly the right

consistency to accept a well-defined imprint. But as the project goes on, the concrete starts drying out.

"If you order a full truckload of concrete, that means all of it is ready to stamp at the same time, so you need to have enough people and enough stamps to be able to do it all within that window of time," says Gabriel Ojeda, president of Fritz-Pak Corp. "Often, they'll start at one end, and by the time they reach the opposite end, it's too hard already."

Or how about if you're using dry-shake color hardeners on a patio deck? You know you need the concrete to be fairly wet to absorb and activate the colors. What if the temperature starts to rise, the moisture begins to evaporate, and suddenly the colors aren't so colorful?

These common problems can be avoided with lots of testing. That's where being a mad scientist comes in. But those contractors with a more artistic bent may also turn to the experience and scientific knowhow of manufacturers, who can help them eliminate some of the guesswork.

Contractors often turn to admixtures. These can include chemicals that reduce water content, speed or slow set time, or reduce shrinkage. Mineral admixtures include fly ash, slag and pigments.

Ojeda says trial and error is unavoidable. Know your products, he advises, understand how they're going to

work, and have a solution in mind if the unexpected occurs. "Contractors don't do enough experimenting," he says, "They do it on the job, and sometimes it works great, but sometimes it doesn't."

For example, in the summer, concrete dries quickly. In the winter, the opposite occurs. Ojeda says most people will



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simply work faster in the summer, “as opposed to saying, ‘Hey, we don’t have to rush everything, we can retard it and have plenty of time to finish the job properly.’”

He offers a solution to the contractor with the big stamped concrete job. Because workers have a small slice of time to make distinct impressions in the concrete, he advises placing half the concrete and adding a retarder to the second half, which buys time to work on the first half before the second half starts to set.

Ojeda also has an answer for the contractor losing too much moisture to evaporation to allow for proper mixing of the dry-shake hardeners. He sells a “finishing aid,” which loosens up the top of the quick-drying concrete to make it more workable.

Another common problem, he says, is concrete that either flows too quickly or is too stiff. As with everything else involving concrete, getting it right is tricky. Adding water will increase flow, but it will weaken the concrete. Ojeda offers a superplasticizer that makes concrete flow without adding water.

Charles LeLand, director of training and product development for SureCrete Design Products, says reactive acid stains can present challenges. The higher the cement content, the higher the alkalinity, which acid stains need to react.

Overlay and topping mixes need to have the correct water content and level of permeability. A driveway overlay project can present problems if the weather is warm and the top is drying much faster than the bottom, LeLand says. An evaporative retarder will make the surface more plastic, allowing contractors more time to work with the product.

Minerals and salts migrating through an overlay can be a nightmare, he says. A product such as SureCrete’s Hydro Block can improve nearly any overlay by preventing efflorescence.

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When Weather Gets Into the Mix

by Mike Dawson

While Phoenix bartenders made their last pours of the night, Peter Boccaccio of Peter Boccaccio Decorative Concrete Design was getting ready to make his first of the day. A 2 a.m. start is the first step to beating the heat on an acid-stain job in the desert.

Boccaccio and other contractors working in extremely hot or cold climates face a range of challenges affecting set, color applications and strength. And they have discrete techniques that work for their own regions.

Boccaccio once created a colored floor on a new home when daytime temperatures were 105 degrees and humidity was next to nothing. The job called for a light-reflective, dry-shake, nonmetallic surface hardener. The surface would be acid-stained in different tones and diamond-polished to reveal some small aggregate. Boccaccio was looking for the metallic salt stain to produce vivid colors from a light-colored concrete.

The mix, at a 4-inch slump, included a mid-range water reducer and polyethylene fibers. The pour commenced at 2 a.m., followed by some techniques that you might not find on a label.

"Standard practice is to broadcast hardener upon bleed-water evaporation and prior to bull floating," Boccaccio says. "But low humidity speeds surface evaporation and may cause delamination due to insufficient hydration of dry-shake hardener."

To get the jump on evaporation, dry shake was applied immediately after screeding and bull floating, but before bleed water appeared on the surface. (Notably, thanks to low humidity and water reducers, very little bleed water was evident.) Then he immediately worked the surface again with the bull float.

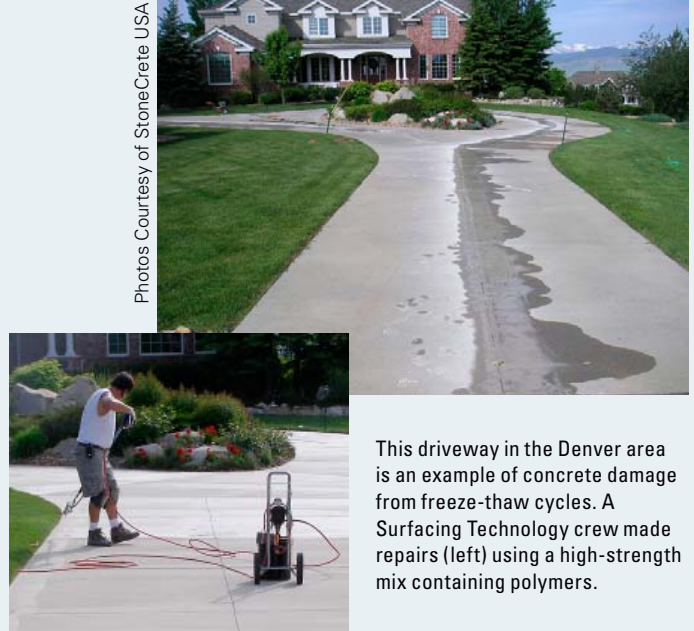
Keep in mind, deviations from standard practice may result in deviations from typical reactions. While applying hardener immediately when bleed water appears is a great way to head off delamination, the color also becomes diluted into the surface layer, rather than forming a distinct color layer, Boccaccio says.

"I cheated a little bit and added some titanium dioxide in front of the pan float. This really lightens the surface," he says.

Once finishing was complete, the concrete was allowed to harden for three hours. Then wet curing commenced. This started with a manual wetting-down, and continued five hours later with wet-curing blankets. Ghosting from the blankets was not a concern, because surface grinding was on the agenda later in the job. The curing continued for seven days.

Meanwhile, several hundred miles to the north and a proverbial mile higher, Rob Sonders works around winter temperatures in Denver. Sonders, an installer and product manufacturer under the names Stonecrete

Photos Courtesy of StoneCrete USA



This driveway in the Denver area is an example of concrete damage from freeze-thaw cycles. A Surfacing Technology crew made repairs (left) using a high-strength mix containing polymers.

USA and Surfacing Technology, installs concrete and develops mixes.

The best practice is to wait until temperatures are consistently above 40 degrees without the threat of freezing at night. But in this region, it can be 65 one day and snowing the next. "It's extremely tough," Sonders says.

The first cold-climate consideration is strength. Spalling is a major issue in the Denver area because of the high number of freeze-thaw cycles each year. Moisture seeps into the concrete, then freezes. One cycle is not an issue, but several times over a short period of time causes thousands of microscopic fractures under the surface.

Sonders recently commissioned a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which confirmed that concrete strength in the region should be at a minimum of 3,500 psi. He recommends 4,000 psi when pouring in cold weather. When working around that temperature threshold, Sonders recommends nonchloride accelerators to head off trouble with efflorescence.

Some other techniques are less complicated. "Pick your days," he says. "Tent when you can, but that's easier said than done." Blankets can be rolled over a slab before the temperature drops below freezing, but an acid wash is required to remove the efflorescence.

Mix design can be boosted for cold temperatures with a nonchloride accelerant, Sonders says, but there are limits.

For microtoppings and coatings in harsh climates, Sonders' company, Surfacing Technology, makes products that include polymers in the mix. The polymers keep the water out and provide some elasticity to absorb the expansion caused in freeze-thaw cycles.

But mix designs can only take you so far when the climate is not cooperating. As with any decorative concrete work, Sonders says, "it comes down to common sense and a lot of experience."



An employee of Delta Sand & Gravel Corp., based in Eugene, Ore.

Creating high-performing concrete with consistent, rich color is particularly important in concrete countertops. B&J Colorants can produce any color on the Benjamin Moore color chart. Owner Murray Clarke offers detailed information on his Web site about how to add liquid pigment to a mixer, how to get complete dispersion of each ingredient, how much pigment to add and more.

Clarke says top-quality concrete, once created, can be sticky and difficult to work with, but there are ways to minimize the water content. He recommends Super Sealz, a dry white powder, at 10 percent of cement content for countertops. Super Sealz and Super Flowz will produce stronger, less permeable concrete and brighten the final cured concrete color. His Liquid Z admixture adds stain-proofing properties.

Not every contractor has the same commitment to high performance and zero loss of color. Clarke says he's seen hundreds of poor exterior stamped-concrete projects, for example, where perhaps half the pigment was faded or washed out by rain.

Clarke says that most contractors want to concentrate on marketing their skills and not on mix-design details. "A lot of our customers like that we take the guesswork out."

Test pours, experimentation, training classes, seminars and more testing can also help take the guesswork out. As Ojeda put it, "Concrete is cheap. What decorative concrete contractors are selling is their skill. The more skillful they are, the better off they will be with competitors." 📱

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Water-based Stains:

Will They Last?

by Amy Johnson

Water-based stains hold tantalizing promise for the field of architectural concrete — low VOCs, low odor, simple application and cleanup, and bright hues not possible with reactive acid-based stains. But do they deliver the wearability, durability and ease of application that would help make concrete colored with water-based stains more appealing to customers?

How they work

To the newbie, water-based stains may seem to be just the “green” counterpart to acid-based or reactive stains. After all, both are applied in a similar manner. In fact, understanding the differences between how these two products function is the first step to setting accurate expectations for a water-based stain project.

Acid stains work by reacting with the ingredients on the surface of the concrete to create a chemical change that results in variegated, natural-looking color. Water-based stains color concrete with pigments, not by chemical reactions. The most important ingredients are water, binder and pigment, according to Chuck Brunner Sr., owner of Smith Paint Products. The water

is the carrier — it allows the material to flow. The binder, which can be, for example, an acrylic polymer or a silicate, locks or “glues” the pigment into the cement matrix. The pigment imparts the color.

In other words, water-based stains perform by flowing into the concrete pores and bonding with the cement, but they do not chemically alter the concrete itself. This means that by definition they are not permanent — if a sealer is not applied they can be worn away. So what are applicators and manufacturers doing to make sure that customers get and keep the vibrant colors they want?

The 80-percent solution

“There are two key things about using water-based stains like our Rembrandt Polymer Stain,” says Barbara Sargent of Kemiko Concrete Products. “Problems come if there is not a proper surface profile or if there is not a good topcoat.”

Because the pigment must be carried into the pores, it is important that those pores be open to receive it. “You have to have a good profile for a successful outcome,” Sargent says. “It cannot be slick or smooth. You have to have profile for colors to bond.”

Cam Villar, director of marketing for the L.M. Scofield Co., agrees. “Surface prep is very important,” He says. “The surface must be absorptive but durable. If not, the stain will sit on the surface and the film strength is not strong enough to keep it intact.”

It is possible to trowel a surface so tightly that the stain fails to penetrate. If that happens, Ron Cottingham, vice president and general manager of Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems Inc., recommends opening the surface by sanding lightly or applying a profiling product.

Cottingham points out that the surface for either a water-based stain or a reactive stain must be clean and free of curing agents, sealers, paints or other foreign materials. The work of other trades can be the culprit — for example, overspray from lacquering cabinets can impede penetration. “The main issue is the surface preparation,” Cottingham says. “There can’t be anything that would prevent water penetration.” He recommends a simple test. If concrete darkens when sprayed with water, that indicates that it is ready to accept stain.

Cleaning the substrate is the most important phase of a stain installation, according to Brunner. He says his company’s product, Smith’s Color Floor, can actually adhere to polished concrete, sealers and even glass, though the more porous the substrate, the deeper the stain will penetrate into the surface. But he is adamant that the floor



Photos courtesy of Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems



Smith Paints' Hugh Monteith demonstrates Smith's Color Floor water-based stains at this year's Northwest Decorative Concrete Events in Milton-Freewater, Ore. Monteith is applying CF-250 Desert Sand while Mike McDonald, Smith's Northwest regional manager, shields a slab stained with CF-630 Amber.

must be clean. "The biggest problem that we see is surface preparation," he says. "Eighty percent of the time on a project should be spent on surface preparation, including taping and masking walls." He recommends applying a cleaner and buffing the floor with a Mal-Grit abrasive brush. The objective is not only to get calcium hydroxide powder out of the pores and off the floor but also to remove curing agents, release compounds and other foreign materials. "Water does not work well with powders," he says. "You can't just put the cleaner down and mop it up. You have to aggressively agitate the cleaner and then vacuum it up to remove latent materials lying on top of the concrete. You have to reach a point where the water you vacuum up looks as clean as the wash water you're putting down."

Another factor that can impact some water-based stains is acidity. Brunner explains that water-based products have a high pH — eight to nine and a half. "If you're going over an acid job, you want to be sure it is totally dry and neutralized," he says. "Otherwise the acid will knock the water-based right out of solution."



Photo courtesy of Kemiko Concrete Products

These two floor designs, one residential (above) and one retail (right), were created using various colors of Rembrandt Polymer Stains and Kemiko Sealers.

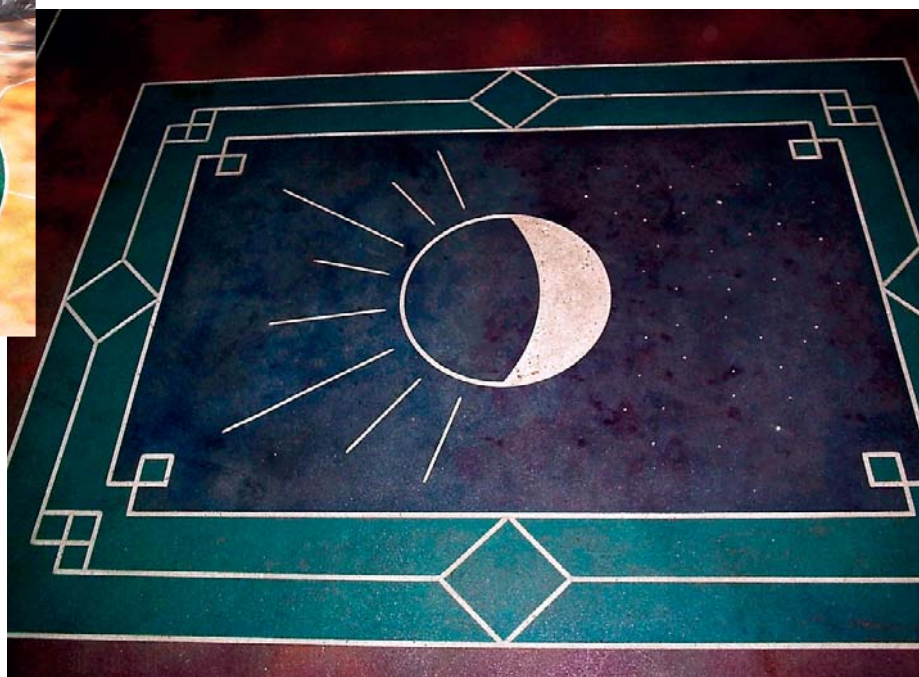


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Will it fade?

The biggest question about any color application is whether the original color will last. This is especially true for anything that will be used outside and exposed to harsh ultraviolet rays. Water-based stains are known for their capacity for bright colors, but can they really stand up to sunlight?

Pigment selection plays the most important role in preventing fading,

according to Smith Paints' Brunner. "Most of what we sell are inorganic, iron-oxide pigments," he says. "These are very lightfast and durable, as good as it gets when it comes to UV stability. We use the same phthalo-blue and phthalo-green that are used in swimming pool paint. They are very, very resistant to fading. We use reds that are automotive grade. They won't turn brown or that pinkish brown that red fades to. We've

chosen pigments that will last outside."

Unlike many brightly colored water-based stains, Legacy's Tinte d'Acqua water-based product is designed to replicate the mottled patina of reactive stains. Cottingham points out that the polymer formulation allows for a standard palette of 28 colors, compared to only eight for acid-based stains. "These colors are UV-stable," he says. "They are not like reactive stain, where blues, greens or light yellows have a tendency to blacken under UV exposure."

When loss of color does occur, it is more likely due to wear and abrasion than to UV exposure. Kemiko's Web site states: "Rembrandt is formulated for both interior and exterior use. It has excellent UV stability and wearability, but should be protected with a clear topcoat for additional abrasion and chemical resistance and for easier cleaning."


Essential step: the topcoat

That brings us to the critical final stage of the project — the sealer or topcoat. The right topcoat is required to prevent colors from being "walked off" or worn away. "Sealing is important for all decorative concrete applications," says Cottingham. "The critical factor is designing and using the right product in the right place. Water-based stains can be used in high-traffic, low-traffic, horizontal or vertical applications. The key is using the right sealer for the application."


"The Tintura formulation is stable," says Scofield's Villar. "It needs to be protected from abrasion. If that is done, the project has a long service life. Our required sealer is a urethane with a UV-blocking mechanism. It blocks the infiltration of ultraviolet light, so the system is very UV-stable."

Brunner concurs. "The choice of topcoat depends on what your application is," he says. "How much traffic will it see? Will people be tracking in street dirt? Beach sand? Parking-lot grit? If anyone is going to walk on it, you've got to put protection on it." Topcoats may be one- or two-component materials, acrylic urethane, polyurethane or epoxy.

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Photo courtesy of Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems

Above: Students in a Dealer Training Class at Legacy Decorative Concrete Systems headquarters apply Tinté D'Acqua stains over Venetian MicroTop.

Left: A floor stamped with Legacy's Ashlar Slate pattern, stained with various colors of Tinté D'Acqua and sealed with Legacy Signature Seal VOC.

The bottom line is that the right topcoat is required to preserve the beauty of any decorative concrete finish, including a water-based stain. And, equally importantly, that coat needs to be maintained. "There is no miracle product — I wish there was," says Cottingham. "I don't know of a product you can simply apply and never have to maintain it." He compares the sealer to the clear-coat on a new car. A car will look dingy and dull if it is not kept clean and waxed. A sealed concrete floor will be dulled by foot traffic or scraping furniture, but washing and waxing can restore the gloss.



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Using an airless sprayer, Hugh Monteith of Smith Paints applies Smith's Color Floor to an exterior pool deck in Pennsylvania. The color is CF-250 Desert Sand.

Photo courtesy of Chuck Brunner



Smith Paints' Hugh Monteith rolls a two-component sealer over a pool deck colored with CF-250 Desert Sand and CF-700 Fawn highlights.

"A dull look doesn't mean the sealer or the color is gone," Cottingham continues. "It just needs maintenance. And the higher the gloss the more maintenance is required."

System approach

Manufacturers are improving the reliability of water-based stains by developing systems of products that work together. Scofield, for example, has engineered its products to optimize the performance of each component and avoid negative interactions. "There is no guarantee, when you start mixing and matching competing products, that they will work together," Villar explains. "A family of products — curing compounds, stain, sealer — can be engineered to work together. We know our products within each system are totally compatible, that there are no ingredients that will negatively impact curability, color or penetration."

Contractors can ensure the success of their water-based stain projects by selecting products designed to be used for their specific applications — interior, exterior, heavy traffic or harsh weather. They can further avoid problems by choosing a system of products proven to be compatible with each other. Finally, they should control what they can control, spending time on adequate cleaning, surface preparation and sealing. 🛠️

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Product Profile



Photo by Wendy Ardolino

enVisions Casting Mat from PreiTech Corp.



Photo courtesy of PreiTech

It's hard to describe enVisions using words alone. The plastic casting mat, which is laid into a countertop form before the concrete is poured, creates a genuinely unique, shimmering visual effect on a concrete surface.

Maybe the names of the four patterns in the enVisions line will help clarify what an enVisions surface looks like. There's Irregular Italian Glass Tile with 5/8-inch squares, Shimmering Stone, a pebble design, Shimmering Tile with 1/8-inch squares, and Snakeskin.

In any case, the end result is a countertop with a pattern that reflects



Photo courtesy of Bob Harris



Photo by Wendy Ardolino



Photo by Wendy Ardolino



Photo courtesy of PreiTech



Product Profile

or refracts light. A 5/8-inch enVisions Glass Tile square, for example, contains 63 microscopic grooves, all slanted in one direction with the direction varying from square to square. Concrete, with the proper additives, consolidates into those microscopic lines.

The end result is not dissimilar to the striped visual effect you get when vacuuming carpet. Lines in different

squares slant different ways, so light and shade bend accordingly.

The engineering that went into creating the mat is one of a kind, and so are the mix products that help make it work.

The casting mat was developed by PreiTech, with the patent application submitted jointly by David Rainess and PreiTech president Michael Eastergard.

The product is currently being imported from Europe, but PreiTech plans to take on manufacturing at its production facility in Georgia.

The mats are marketed as part of the enCounter line of products for concrete countertops. The mat was tested using a variety of concrete mixes without success until Doug Bannister developed enFlow, a modifier that improves the pouring properties of his enCounter mix. "The additive Doug had developed produced an amazing finish," says Eastergard. "Further, because of the strength of the enCounter mix, the microscopic lines held up to abrasion when fully cured. Most concrete mixes cannot withstand the testing we put to the surface."

Also, enVisions can be cheaper than the alternative. Eastergard says the materials cost \$12 per square foot for mix, additives, the casting mat and forms, compared to real Italian glass tile, which he prices at more than \$30 dollars per square foot.

Introduced at World of Concrete 2008, enVisions is available to distributors through enCounter's and PreiTech's wholesalers. The 15-mil vinyl mats are cut from 150-foot rolls.

As Bannister discovered, the mat does test the ingenuity of mix designers. If a concrete mix is not strong enough, the intricate design might pull away upon release or wear away quickly, Eastergard notes. Also, a countertop poured with the enVisions mat can't really be properly vibrated.

"It's clear there is a domino effect as a result of these products," Eastergard says. "One of the most significant developments as a result of the PreiTech products is that manufacturers are going back to the drawing board on mix design, specifically the admixtures."

"For years it has been acceptable for contractors to build their molds like a fortress and then vibrate like crazy. The realization is that water reducers and plasticizers can eliminate 95 percent of vibrating while strengthening the concrete."

 www.encountertop.com

 www.preitech.com



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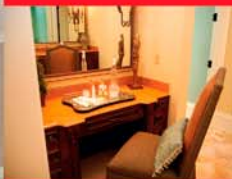
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Photos courtesy of Stone Roots Inc.

“It Looked Like the Horse Had a Rash”



by David Searls

When you’ve just created art on 256 square feet of concrete entryway, you do not want to have it described as a “horse with a rash” two days before the opening of your client’s new retail establishment. But that’s what Tony Victor and partner Ben Washburn were up against last October.

Victor and Washburn co-own Stone Roots Inc. in New Cumberland, Penn., where they specialize in decorative concrete. They’d been commissioned to stencil and stain an

immense logo, virtually the first thing customers would see upon arriving at CJ Pony Parts, a dealer of new and used Mustang parts just outside of Harrisburg. For owner Creed Stammel, installing the design would be the final touch leading up to the grand opening of his new location.

“We wanted to focus attention on the entry because, quite frankly, the rest of the concrete flooring didn’t look too sharp,” says Stammel. “We’d tried a terrazzo effect that just didn’t work out.”

So he asked Victor and Washburn to work from a miniature rendering of a powerful horse — a mustang, naturally — designed by one of his employees.

“We had a 2-inch logo blown up to 256 square feet,” says Victor. The template, provided by Surface Gel Tek of Mesa, Ariz., was shipped in 20 giant vinyl adhesive strips.

“But first, we had to deal with a big red dot,” Victor recalls.

The color had been applied to the entry floor with a solvent stain by another company before Stammel had decided he wanted something a bit more exciting.

“The red stain had been applied four hours before they called us in,” says Victor. “Fortunately, we got to it before they sealed it.”

Still, it took six hours with a power buffer and cleaning agent before the partners’ real work could begin. “We scrubbed till we couldn’t get any more of the red out,” says Victor.

Another day was spent applying three coats of a floor stain from Smith Paints and testing to make sure the color was locked in.

So far, so good. Next, it was time to lay out the stencil, a virtual 20-piece jigsaw puzzle. That took the two of them another eight-hour day.

And finally, the fun part: spraying color. It was incredibly detailed work. If you look closely, you can see a Mustang automobile reflected in the horse. “We worked on that for a week and a half, on our hands and knees,” says Victor.

They went in on that final Saturday to seal, wax and admire their handiwork before the grand opening on Monday.

Because they were working in a high-traffic area, the partners needed a very durable sealer. “So we used a polyurea two-component sealer from Flexmar Coatings, recommended by Smith Paints,” Victor recalls.

It sprayed horribly. The sealer congealed where it hit, giving the art a dimpled appearance. When they returned four hours later, the men looked in horror at a pony that seemed struck with bright red measles. The sealer, it seemed, had been so high-strength it had cut through all





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three coats of stain and grabbed what remained of the original red solvent out of the floor's nooks and crannies, bringing it to the surface in blotches.

The first lesson learned was to spot-test everywhere. They'd tested their sealer against patches of black and red stain, but not against the lighter sections. Naturally, that's where their problems stood out like some dreaded equine disease.

"I sat down on the bumper of my truck, put my head in my hands and tried to figure out how to deal with this without starting from scratch," says Victor.

First, the partner had to explain to the client — a man whose mind had to be already frazzled by the million details remaining two days before a grand opening — that his signature pony was terminal.

"I had to call Creed up at his car show and tell him his floor was ruined," says Victor. Stemmell's immediate reaction was laughter. "He thought I was kidding."

"The joke," says Stemmell in recalling that moment, "was that the store had to have been built on Indian burial grounds. But in the end, it's just a floor. It wasn't anyone's fault."

Victor and Washburn then called Smith Paint. "Their representatives were very responsive," says Victor. "They showed up on the scene and we all put our heads together."

After talking to a Smith chemist and a Flexmar

expert, they learned that the polyurea they'd used could reconstitute a solvent-based stain, making it bleed and move until the sealer set up. When the sealer was dry, it would be impenetrable.

But once the sealer was cured, it wouldn't let anything through, so Victor and Washburn could lock up all imperfections under another coat of polyurea.

The partners sanded and rolled on a fresh coat of sealer, eliminating the dimpled effect and giving them a new canvas from which to work. After that, they reapplied a new stencil and stained directly over the sealer, then tested the lightest area with the sealer. No bleeding. It worked. They finished with two more coats of polyurea and waxed the floor for ultimate protection.

It took another 35 hours or so, and the work wasn't completed for the store's opening, but that didn't matter. "We just roped it off and let customers watch us," says Victor. "In the end the logo turned out better then the first time."

And they'd fixed the problem in half the time it would've taken if they'd restarted from scratch.

All worth the trouble, according to their appreciative client. "It looks great, it's wearing well and we're getting many favorable comments," Stammel reports. "The art is the focal point. These guys did a terrific job."

 www.stonerootsinc.com



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Consolidation Equipment

Denver Concrete Vibrator — U1-500

Designed for small applications, the U1-500 from Denver Concrete Vibrator is ideal for decorative work such as countertops, figurines, cultured stone and any cast-in-place application where an architectural finish is

desired. Whether the job uses forms, molds, shaker tables, bins or hoppers, the U1-500 can provide high-frequency vibration for it.

The U1-500 is an external high-speed electric vibrator that can produce up to 9,000 vibrations per minute. It is sealed with O-rings to keep out moisture and dust and incorporates adjustable eccentric weights. The compact U1-500 weighs in at 14 pounds, and is available in either a 115-volt or 230-volt model. Denver Concrete Vibrator also makes a Speed Controller attachment for the U1-500 that comes separately.

(800) 392-6800

www.denverconcretevibrator.com



DeWalt — DC530KA Pencil Vibrator

The DC530KA cordless heavy-duty pencil vibrator from DeWalt is equipped with a 48-inch flexible shaft vibrator, making it suitable for small-scale jobs where contractors need high-frequency consolidation with small volumes of

concrete. Like all the tools in the DeWalt cordless power tool line, the DC530KA is powered by rechargeable batteries. Two 18-volt batteries come standard with the DC530KA, as does a 1-hour charger.

Operating at 14,000 vibrations per minute, the vibrator delivers high-



frequency vibration with a 1 1/8-inch vibrator head to quickly consolidate concrete. The DC530KA weighs 9.3 pounds, providing contractors with a portable alternative to electric and gas-powered concrete vibrators.

(800) 433-9258

www.dewalt.com

Dynapac — AA Series Mechanical Poker Vibrators

AA Series mechanical poker vibrators use Dynapac's balanced single-piece rotating pendulum system to generate vibrations at 12,000 rpm. The vibrator heads are available in a large range of sizes, from 25-75 mm, and all of them are mounted on a 6-meter flexible shaft.



The Dynapac pokers feature high frequency and amplitude for maximum output. All AA series vibrators can be driven by either electric, petrol or diesel drive units, also available from Dynapac.

(210) 474-5770

www.dynapac.com

Houston Vibrator — VTT Vibrating Tables

Houston Vibrator's VTT series of vibrating tables deliver a high-quality surface finish for precast projects while reducing production time. Although Houston Vibrator does offer the tables in four preset sizes, they commonly custom design tables to suit the specific needs of a client.

All VTT series tables come standard with an adjustable air isolation system



and the option of either electric or pneumatic vibration. Tables can be built with either a flat deck or a grid deck, and they are available with variable

speed controls, foot pedal controls, and electronic or pneumatic timers. All VTT series tables are built with durable, high-quality materials designed to withstand a tough manufacturing environment.

☎ (800) 320-4044

🌐 www.houstonvibrator.com

Multiquip — MGX Vibrators

Multiquip's MGX series of concrete vibrators are handheld units that can deliver from 200-15,000 vibrations per minute. Ideal for short pours, small walls, footings and decorative applications, the MGX series offers concrete contractors a lightweight alternative to larger units.



The MGX series comes in two models — one 120-volt and one 240-volt — with six head sizes ranging from 0.9 inches to 1.5 inches. Both models weigh only 6.4 pounds and are available with vibrator heads of up to 9.5 feet. The MGX series also features double-insulated motor housing, a die-cast aluminum motor case and a front-end enclosed motor design to prevent material intrusion. The units' shock absorbing rubber handle minimizes vibration and operator fatigue.

☎ (800) 421-1244

🌐 www.multiquip.com

Multivibe — Vibrating Finisher

The drill-powered Multivibe Vibrating Finisher is a compact, easy-to-use solution for consolidating concrete countertops, and incorporating cast-on hardeners. The Vibrating Finisher produces more than 7,000 vibrations per minute and runs off the battery power of a cordless drill.



Though designed for use with a Milwaukee V28 drill, this handheld vibrating system can be attached to other cordless drills as well.

The Multivibe Vibrating Finisher comes with three attachments. The flat trowel is ideal for consolidating countertops and other flat surfaces without separating the aggregate. The edger delivers smooth finished edges for countertops or curbs. And the groover attachment — a smaller version of Multivibe's Sidewalk Buddy tool — makes smooth control joints easy.

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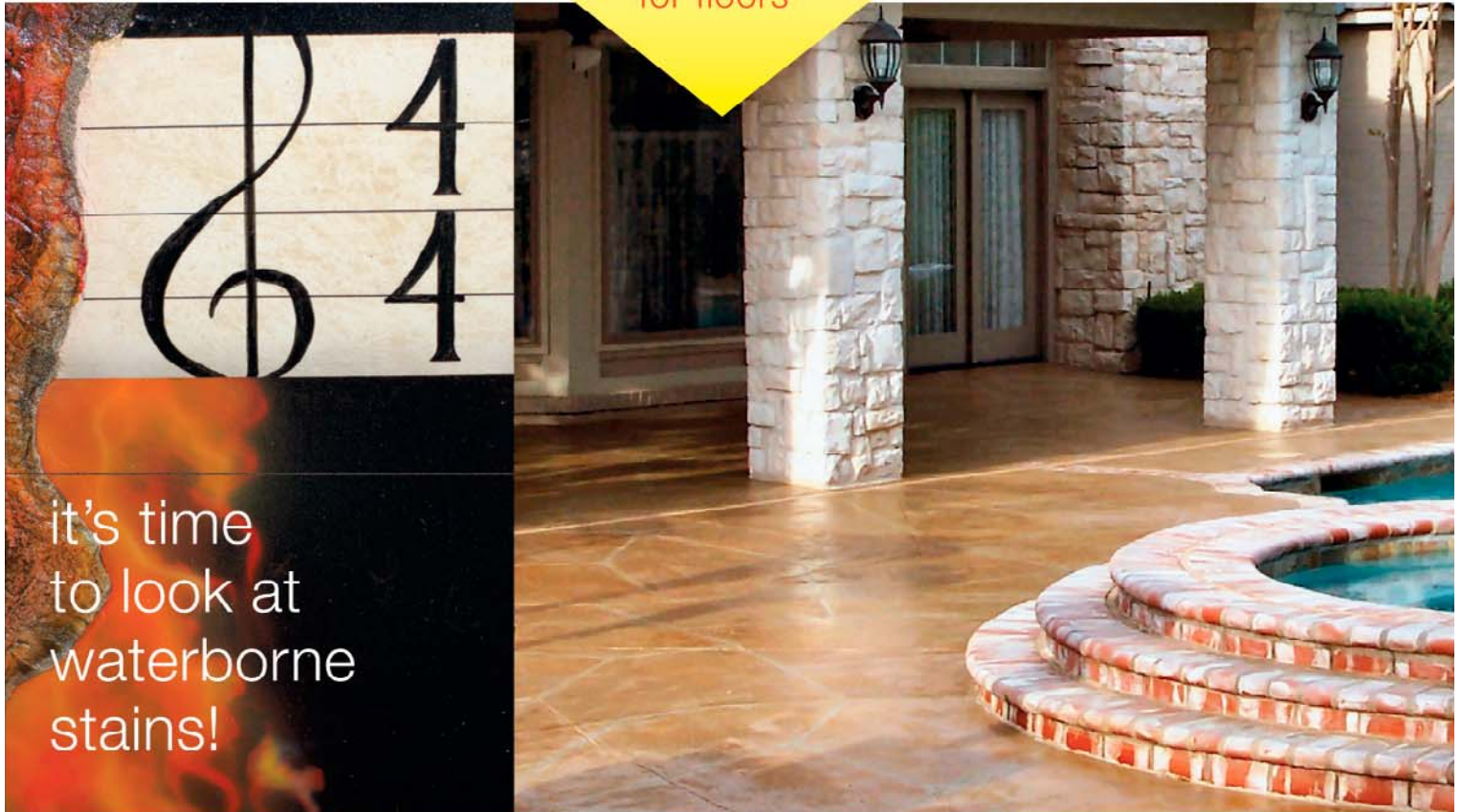
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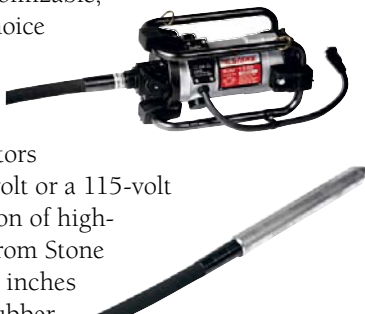
Stone Construction Equipment — Concrete Vibrators

Stone Construction Equipment's line of concrete vibrators offers professionals a wide array of options, making them suitable for any job. The Stone concrete vibrator line includes four electric-powered motors and one gas-powered, in addition to eight vibrator head sizes and eleven different shafts. The line is fully customizable, offering contractors their choice of power, shaft and head configurations.

The 1.5-, 2- and 3-horsepower electric vibrators are available in either 220-volt or a 115-volt configurations. The collection of high-amplitude heads available from Stone runs from 3/4-inch to 2 1/2 inches and includes a 1 7/8-inch rubber-coated head designed for concrete reinforced with epoxy-coated rebar. Stone's eleven Flexshaft models run from 3 feet to 21 feet and are easily swapped out thanks to Stone's quick-disconnect system.

☎ (800) 888-9926

🌐 www.stone-equip.com



VIBCO — US-RD Vibrating Tables

VIBCO's US-RD line of vibrating tables provides even, vertical vibration across all areas of the tabletop to provide consistent and reliable consolidation. US-RD tables are available in sizes from 24-by-24 inches to 48-by-48 inches. They can also be doubled up for larger projects. VIBCO's tables are suitable for many decorative applications including tiles, statuary and other precast projects using decorative molds.

The US-RD line is available with a variety of premounted vibrators. The most popular is the US-900 heavy-duty electric vibrator, which provides 10,000 vibrations per minute.

The US-900 features adjustable eccentrics with three force settings that provide up to 600 pounds of centrifugal force. It also comes standard with a variable speed control unit.

In addition, this February VIBCO announced an upgrade to their production process that cuts back dramatically on delivery times. VIBCO's US-RD tables now ship within 10 business days.

☎ (800) 633-0032

🌐 www.vibco.com



Wacker — HMS Internal Vibrating Systems

Produced by the Wacker Group, the electric-powered HMS internal vibrating systems are extremely versatile. With 12 heads ranging from 1 inch to 2.75 inches in diameter and 11 flexible shafts from 3.3 feet to 29.5 feet, the HMS systems can be adapted to a wide array of applications. The full line of high-amplitude hybrid heads features an exclusive design that provides excellent consolidation and movement of concrete.

The heads and shafts are easily interchanged and usable in many different combinations.

The HMS systems are available in 1.3-, 2.3- and 3.1-horsepower configurations, all of which are grounded for safety. Dual air filters ensure extended motor life and provide for easier maintenance. The HMS systems are ideal for on-site vibration of foundations, walls, columns and slabs.

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Decorative grates spruce up drain system

The Dura Slope trench drain system from NDS Inc. is now available with decorative grates.

The decorative grate collection offers a wide selection of geometric styles, including a brick design, diamond design, slot design, tile pattern design, and square and circle patterns. Constructed from ductile iron with an electrostatic coating, the grates are aesthetically pleasing and built to last.

The Dura Slope system is engineered to intercept and collect surface water runoff and is compatible with 3-inch, 4-inch, 6-inch or 8-inch pipe. By incorporating central collection through the use of a catch-basin assembly, the Dura Slope system can be extended to lengths up to 266 feet to accommodate a range of drainage needs.

☎ (800) 726-1994

🌐 www.ndspro.com



Sprayer gets rolling

The new Cleform Roll N Spray system is on a self-contained dolly that allows users to spray areas that were once inaccessible. What's more, the 12-volt DC pump permits spraying when there is no other power source.

The Roll N Spray system easily handles high-solid and high-viscosity products. It can spray acids, cleaners, bleach solutions, fertilizers, herbicides, stains, deck sealers and cleaners, form oils and other release agents, and some sealer compounds and curing compounds. It comes with cart, pump, 50 feet of chemically resistant hose and a spray gun with three tips. The system can reduce contamination and spillage by dispensing products directly from their packaging, including bottles, buckets and drums. Simply insert the suction line from the unit.

☎ (800) 253-3676

🌐 www.cleform.com



Surfacing product features rubber

RubberDek, new from PDCS LLC, is a topcoat resurfacing product comprised of EPDM rubber mixed with a specially formulated resin. It can be troweled onto a variety of substrates to create a seamless, nonslip surface.

RubberDek can be applied at any thickness, but for most applications RubberDek is installed at 1/4 inch to provide a durable, nonslip walking surface over virtually any substrate, such as wood, concrete, tile, asphalt or plastic. The resurfacing product allows for a reasonable amount of movement in the substrate without causing cracking, peeling or flaking in the topcoat surface. RubberDek also provides a select



number of colors. There is no detailing, antiquing, or sealing needed afterwards. Weather conditions in extreme hot or cold climates do not affect product performance.

☎ (866) 531-9779

🌐 www.rubberdek.net



PVC countertop forms

Tsunami Countertops has released new PVC countertop forms. The forms are 2 inches tall and 8 feet long. Each features flat 90-degree sides, tight radius corners and predrilled screw holes. These hard PVC forms could be used for the backing of a detailed edge. They would be used to make the outer form, and edge-form liners with detail patterns could be placed into the forms. They are sold in boxes of 10 forms and are easy to use, clean and store.

☎ (801) 310-0936

🌐 www.tsunamicountertops.com

A two-hour primer and a green deck overlay

SSM Inc. has announced SeamsPerfect, a two-hour surface prep product for overlays. In addition, it has released Rubber Decky (EPDM-F), which can be installed in a short period of time.

The universal primer reduces the need to grind, etch or remove existing flooring, cutting prep time for the average overlay job. SeamsPerfect can be used to prime and encapsulate painted or sealed concrete, as well as tile, linoleum, VCT and wood. Any acrylic, cement, or epoxy overlay system can be installed. The substrate and overlay bond as one.

Rubber Decky (EPDM-F), also

new from SSM, is billed as the "world's fastest overlay system." It allows the user to install fast, easy waterproof decks directly over any surface, including painted or sealed concrete and even other membranes. Applied with a roller, the green system is seamless, breathable and tints to any color. It applies quickly and easily with no special tools onto any clean, dry and tight surface, indoors and out. The Rubber Decky system never needs to be removed and creates an environmentally desirable "cool deck."

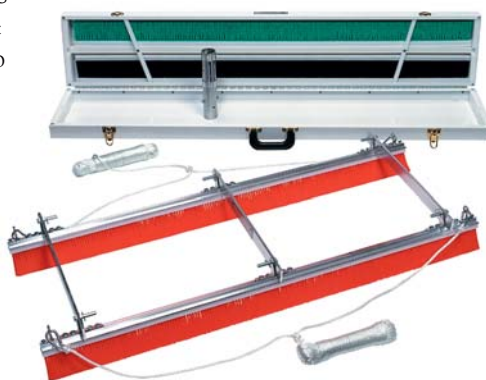
☎ (718) 736-8477

🌐 www.ssmincorporated.com

A customizable finishing brush

The new Chameleon Trac II Kit from Marion Brush Manufacturing Co. is a handleless concrete finishing brush that allows customization.

There are five different brush inserts available: white (super-soft), black (soft), orange (medium), green (stiff) and a rough texture brush. The Kit comes complete with Trac II hardware. The user chooses three sets of brushes, a heavy-duty aluminum carry case and a multi-use adapter to go with one of the



brush assemblies and extension handle. The brush comes in 4-foot, 6-foot and 8-foot widths.

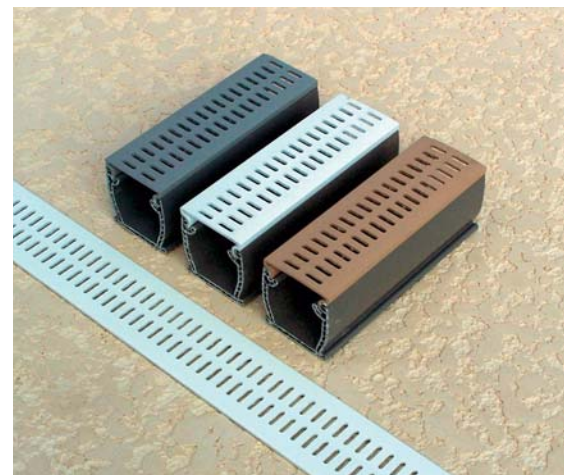
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🌐 www.marionbrush.com

New drain for big jobs

The new Flowmaster 3 deck drain from Stegmeier Corp. is a 3-inch deck drain designed to remove large quantities of water in commercial and large residential deck applications.

This drain comes in 10-foot



sections. It features a removable top that snaps into place without the need for screws as fasteners. This user-friendly drain installs with the tops lapped past the joints, making the joints extremely rigid and virtually invisible. Flowmaster 3 is available in three pastel colors.

☎ (800) 382-5430

🌐 www.stegmeier.com

New reactive-stain colors from Chem-Coat

Chem-Coat Industries Inc. has introduced three new colors of reactive stain, bringing its total to 12. The new colors are Gold Rush, Camel and Santa Fe Red. As before, special colors are available on request.

☎ (800) 511-2769

🌐 www.chem-coat.com

New acid-stain colors from H&C

H&C Concrete Coatings has released four new colors of acid stain, bringing the company's total to 12. The new colors are Shore Gray, Sienna Red, Midas Gold and Mustard Seed. All four colors are available for interior or exterior use.

☎ (800) 867-8246

🌐 www.hcconcrete.com

Aliphatic, corrosion-resistant joint sealant

The Steelcote Division of Chemline has started offering Chemthane 1350, a 100 percent solids, aliphatic polyurethane concrete joint-filling compound for applications requiring high elongation.

Chemthane 1350 is a corrosion-

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resistant, two-component (2:1 mix ratio) elastomeric polymer that holds up in moist, mildly acidic or mildly alkaline environments.

The compound is suited for interior and exterior concrete floors such as aircraft hangars, factories, retail stores and warehouses. It will protect against freeze-thaw dynamics and is UV-stable. However, this product should not be used in high-wear areas, since the high elongation is more suited to moderate- and light-wear applications.

☎ (800) 737-0282

🌐 www.steelcotemfg.com

New chalk reel saves time

The Chalk Hog 100 from C.H. Hanson is a chalk reel that uses less chalk by providing cleaner and sharper lines. The tool features a built-in cleaning pad and a high-density, poly-braided line that resists fraying and breakage. Chalk bottles can be screwed directly into the tool.

The Chalk Hog 100 comes equipped with a built-in pencil sharpener and End-Mate, a line hook that provides added gripping power and enables users to easily snap straight or angled lines. The chalk reel also features a six-times-faster retrieval system, a crank handle clutch release for retracting the line without the handle spinning, and a soft rubber grip.

☎ (800) 827-3398

🌐 www.chhanson.com

Pads aimed at polishers

Superabrasive Inc. released the V-Harr System, a new generation of pad systems developed exclusively for polishing and restoring concrete floors.

The V-Harr System for Polishing and Restoring Concrete Floors is a dry-application system for planetary-movement floor grinding and polishing machines. V-Harr features a natural-wool flexible backer with excellent scrubbing and polishing qualities, large resin segments with a high concentration of diamonds, strong wool-diamond adhesion, spiral movement that ensures efficient waste disposal, and diamonds that work to the edge of the pad. The V-Harr pads come in sizes

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ranging from 5 inches to 27 inches. Dry application is strongly recommended, and the pads are best suited for concrete and terrazzo floors.

☎ (800) 987-8403

🌐 www.superabrasive.com

Skil sells diamond blades

Skil's new Diamond Blade series features a continuous-rim, segmented, and turbo blade in two sizes, the 4 1/2-inch for angle-grinder cutting and the 7-inch for use with circular saws or angle grinders.

The blades last up to 85 times longer than standard abrasive blades. Other features include a hardened steel core to prevent warping, a high diamond ratio in the cutting edge, diamond knock-out on the 7-inch segmented and turbo rims for use on worm-drive saws, continuous rim blades for wet or dry tile cutting, turbo rim blades for fast and clean cuts in general masonry products, and segmented rim blades for fast, rough cuts.

☎ (877) 754-5999

🌐 www.skil.com

Mortar changes at ProSpec

ProSpec has reorganized its line of thin-set mortars for tile and stone installation, updating product names and organizing the line into three categories. ProSpec's entire line of thin-set mortars is suitable for commercial or residential projects as well as interior or exterior applications.

Pro-Spec's polymer-modified high-performance mortars are Superior PermaFlex 600, PermaFlex 500, and PermaFlex 400 (formerly Superior PermaSet 400).

Their polymer-modified high-performance specialty mortars are Stayflex 590, for setting large-format tiles, Quick PermaFlex 570, a rapid-setting mortar, and Medium Bed PermaFlex 550, designed to help overcome irregularities in the substrate or in tile thickness when setting large

format tile.

Their non-polymer-modified mortars are PermaSet 300 and PermaSet 200 (formerly PermaFloor 200), which offer excellent workability and are an economical option for setting tile on concrete substrates.

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🌐 www.prospec.com

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ProSpec helps with prep

ProSpec has introduced PreFormed Underlayment Components that offer quick and easy installation for substrate preparation in both new-construction and remodeling jobs.

The four preformed components featured are niches, shower seats, curbs and slopes. They are available in four styles — square, narrow comb, soap and wide combo.

☎ (800) 738-1621

🌐 www.prospec.com

Xylene and acetone sprayers

SMK has released the new HOSS-Xylene cordless sprayer, which sprays xylene-based cures and sealers. The HOSS-Xylene contains internal components that resist the damaging chemical effects of xylene.

The 36-volt, 60-psi cordless sprayer can connect to a five-gallon bucket, a 55-gallon barrel or other containers. The new HOSS-Xylene sprays material consistently and evenly with no pressure drop. The expanded tip selection includes TeeJet fan and hollow-cone tips. Materials containing 30 percent solids are no problem for the HOSS-Xylene.

SMK has also introduced the PONY-Acetone, a cordless sprayer specifically made for spraying acetone-based materials. The PONY-Acetone is a 40-psi, 1 gallon-per-minute cordless sprayer.

The internal components of the PONY-Acetone resist the damaging effects of acetone and acetone-based materials. It is designed to securely fasten to the lid of a five-gallon bucket and dispense material right out of the bucket through the pouring spout hole.

Finally, SMK has begun offering a Speed Control option for its PONY and HOSS cordless sprayer systems. The



Speed Control option gives the user the ability to “dial down” the speed of the motor to match the flow rate of the tip being used, while maintaining the desired pressure and extending the battery life.

☎ (641) 622-2506

🌐 www.smkindustries.com

Ardex debuts patching system

Ardex Engineered Cements has introduced the Ardex Wall Patching and Finishing System, a multipurpose finishing system for large and small area repairs in overhead and vertical concrete wall applications.

The all-inclusive system includes Ardex OVP, with up to 90 minutes of pot life, and Ardex TWP, a quick-hardening and fast-drying product ideal for fast-track repairs. Both can be used to skim-coat or deep-fill any type of surface defect or imperfection on a concrete or masonry surface. Since they dry internally, the products are formulated to provide a hard, sandable surface ready for painting or sealing without shrinking, cracking or spalling.

Ideal for large-area repairs, Ardex OVP can be sanded, painted and sealed in two or three hours, and is tougher and more durable than latex patches. Ardex TWP, designed for small area repairs, dries fast and hardens quickly and can be painted and sealed within 15 to 60 minutes. Both products can be troweled to a true feather edge for smooth transitions or retempered, and they do not require special curing or drying agents and procedures.

☎ (888) 512-7339

🌐 www.ardex.com

Shotcreters from Allentown

Allentown Shotcrete Technology Inc. is introducing the SLU Pro 60 HP and SLU Pro 80 to its full line of wet-process and dry-process shotcreting and concreting equipment.

The SLU models are rotor/stator pumps for mixing, conveying and placing self-leveling underlayment, floor screeds and mortar. They offer a highly modular design, are easy to disassemble, and accommodate different components to vary mixing and pumping

capabilities. The SLU Pro 60 HP handles fine or coarse-grain material up to 6 mm with pressures of up to 370 psi, which means greater vertical or horizontal distance. Standard features include outputs of up to 16 gpm and 130-foot to 200-foot maximum delivery distance.

Offering maximum volume capabilities, the SLU Pro 80 has a mixing chamber and shaft that promise superior shear energy. Standard features include pressures of up to 215 psi, outputs of up to 21 gpm and 100-foot to 130-foot maximum delivery distance.

☎ (800) 553-3414

🌐 www.allentownshotcrete.com

Wheelbarrow with pour power

The new EZ Pour Spout Wheelbarrow from Jackson Tools offers a distinctive design that allows for more accurate, efficient pouring. Its unique pour spout feature puts more material on target in less time.

The wheelbarrow's durable, corrosion-proof 6-cubic-foot poly tray is built for demanding commercial applications. Heavy-duty H-brace and steel cross strips provide superior stability, while unique tubular tray braces offer additional support for heavy loads. The EZ Pour also features the patented Jackson leg stabilizers, which make the wheelbarrow up to 40 percent more tip-resistant.

Jackson Tools is an Ames True Temper brand, and the EZ Pour Spout Wheelbarrow is available under Ames's Jackson and Razorback Professional Tool brands.

🌐 www.amestruetemper.com





Hilti attacks dust

Hilti's DG 150 Grinding System removes paint, adhesives and epoxy coatings from cementitious surfaces.

With its dust-resistant brushless motor, automatic self-cleaning vacuum and up to 95 percent dust-free performance, the DG 150 might help professionals with dust-critical applications or in occupied facilities. The four-part DG 150 system includes the DG 150 Grinder, DPC 20 Power Conditioner, VCD 50 Vacuum Cleaner and a specially designed diamond cup wheel. Since Hilti's exclusive brushless technology helps prevent dust from wearing out the motor prematurely, the DG 150 Grinding System lasts up to 30 times longer than conventional grinders. In addition, the patented, automatic self-cleaning vacuum saves time that would normally be spent cleaning the filter. The diamond cup wheel removes adhesives and coatings and allows debris to pass through without loading up the wheel.

☎ (800) 879-8000

🌐 www.us.hilti.com

Elastomers go mercury-free

Pathway Polymers Inc. intends to release a newly developed mercury-free system for the company's trademarked Por-A-Mold line of polyurethane elastomers.

The new mercury-free Por-A-Mold 2100 line will replace the current Por-A-Mold 2000 line and is scheduled for release in early 2008.

☎ (800) 251-7642

🌐 www.pathwaypolymers.com

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Tape gets flashy

Carlisle Coatings & Waterproofing has released Barritape exterior joint tape.

Barritape is a 20-mil, self-adhering flashing consisting of a flexible polypropylene film laminated to an aggressively tacky rubber-modified



asphalt adhesive. Good for use around windows, doorways and other cavity wall penetrations, Barritape can be used as a stand-alone flashing accessory. When used in conjunction with CCW's

Barriseal fluid-applied air and vapor barrier, Barritape helps create an airtight and watertight system around the entire building. It is available in 100-foot rolls that are 4 inches wide.

☎ (800) 527-7092

🌐 www.carlisle-ccw.com

A high-powered water-jet lance

A new 40,000-psi water-jet lance from NLB Corp. makes the company's 60-second cartridge change and other operator-friendly features available for ultra-high-pressure applications.

The NCG40-286 lance is lightweight and ergonomic, weighing just 13.5 pounds. Its patented trigger design requires just a light squeeze to initiate water-jet action, and the operator can immediately dump pressure by pushing the trigger forward. A one-finger latch is designed to prevent accidental actuation, and the hand grip and shoulder stock are adjustable to suit



the operator. When used with NLB's Viper 40 self-rotating head, the NCG40-286 produces rotating water-jet action without compressed air.

☎ (248) 624-5555

🌐 www.nlbcorp.com

Popcorn texture from Homax

Homax Products Inc. has announced a new Popcorn Ceiling Texture for patching and repairing commercially applied acoustic popcorn textures.

Perfect for touching up stained or damaged ceiling texture, this new aerosol is easy to use and provides results fast. It contains acoustic chips that blend with polystyrene or perlite ceiling textures that were



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www.DramaticSurfaceProducts.com

commonly applied in the 1960s and 1970s with a commercial hopper rig. Unlike other aerosol ceiling textures, this product uses a lower-pressure propellant, which provides greater spray control, less chip bounce-back, longer spray time and greater coverage. One 14-ounce aerosol can cover up to 6 square feet and allows the user to spray multiple coats to match the original texture.

Homax Popcorn Ceiling Texture joins the line of Homax aerosol wall textures that includes Orange Peel, Color Changing and Knockdown.

☎ (360) 733-9029

🌐 www.homaxproducts.com

Wet vac from CS Unitec

CS Unitec recently released the CS 2000, a water-recycling and slurry-containment vacuum. It is ideal for contractors using wet working tools, such as diamond core drills, masonry saws, and wet grinders.



The CS 2000 functions as a portable water supply. Slurry is trapped in a porous filter bag for easy disposal, and a continuous loop system returns

clean water back into the tank for delivery back to the power tool. An integrated submersible sump pump can either discharge the water or recycle it back to the 13-gallon stainless steel canister for reuse. The vacuum pumps 78 gallons per minute at ground level and has a maximum water lift of 18 feet. For normal wet/dry vacuuming, the motor and pump operate from two independent switches.

☎ (800) 700-5919

🌐 www.csunitec.com

Bosch releases new blade and concrete drill

Bosch has expanded the lineup of its SpeedWave Diamond Blades for concrete and other materials to include a 7 1/4-inch blade with a diamond arbor knockout. The new blade allows users to cut not only with an angle grinder, but also with any worm-drive circular saw.

Features of the Bosch SpeedWave include a wave-shaped ridge along both sides of each segment that reduces blade friction and drag. The design also helps clear dust. In addition, SpeedWave benefits from a center cooling disc. The disc uses the blade's rotation to draw in air and then evenly distributes it, allowing the blade surface to cool, which increases the blade life. Further, the cooling disc's unique design and position on the blade help it absorb vibration for a smoother cut.



Also, the new 11258VSR Concrete Drill from Bosch Power Tools and Accessories powers its way through concrete with 1.4 foot-pounds of impact force and a 4.8-amp motor. The drill performs up to 50 percent faster than a high-price-point, two-speed hammer drill when drilling 3/8-inch holes into concrete, all with significantly less impact to the user. And compared to a hammer drill, the 11258VSR offers significant reductions in both noise and vibration. The 11258VSR offers two modes of operation: hammer mode and rotation-only mode.

☎ (877) 267-2499

🌐 www.boschtools.com

Attachments control silica dust

Three new families of grinder attachments from Bosch Power Tools and Accessories aim to help angle-grinder users control silica dust.

Color Hardeners and Antique Release Agents

Decorative Concrete Stamps

Concrete Countertop Edge Forms

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Compatible with all Bosch One Touch Guard System angle grinders between 4 1/2 inches and 7 inches, the new attachments install tool-free when used in both cutoff and surfacing applications.

Bosch's SG-Series attachments are designed for concrete surfacing applications where aggressive dust removal is a must. Optimized for use with Bosch's AirSweep vacuum system, the SG-Series attachments keep concrete dust out of the air. A removable nose-piece enables up-to-wall surfacing, while a replaceable brush ring maximizes the attachment's lifespan in grueling environments. The SG-Series attachments are good for concrete restoration work and other surfacing applications.

For efficient dust removal and collection in masonry-cutting applications, Bosch's DC-Series attachments feature a large, stable footplate and fast single-screw depth adjustment. The DC-Series attachments allow for full depth of cut and outstanding line of sight in



precision concrete-cutting applications. Like the SG-Series attachments, the DC-Series attachments are also optimized for use with Bosch's AirSweep system.

Both the SG-Series and DC-Series attachments are designed in accordance with anticipated OSHA standards regarding the reduction of crystalline silica.

Bosch's CG-Series Cutoff guards are ideal for applications where safety is the primary concern, such as in exterior concrete cutting, grinding and metal cutoff applications. With a wraparound profile designed to protect users from flying debris, the CG-Series guards boast visibility and ease of use.

(877) 267-2499

www.boschtools.com

New hammers from DeWalt

DeWalt has announced new heavy-duty demolition hammers: D25899K, D25901K and D25941K. These new demolition hammers are designed to perform a wide range of heavy-duty concrete removal applications.

DeWalt equipped the new demolition hammers with spring-loaded dust seals that keep ingress and contaminants from entering the tool, helping to extend the tool's life. A non-air-pumping beat piece keeps debris from being vacuumed into the hammer mechanism, preventing contamination of its internal components.

DeWalt has built its demolition hammers with an in-line design instead of a traditional L-shape design. The D25901K and the D25941K boast a comprehensive electronics package that provides users with the ability to start the tool softly on contact and maintain optimum performance under load throughout any rigorous demolition application. This new line of demolition hammers is engineered with 14-amp and 15-amp motors. The D25899K and D25901K generate 18.5 foot-pounds of impact energy, while the D25941K offers 22 foot-pounds of impact energy. The D25901K also has a variable impact control dial with 19 settings.

www.dewalt.com

A Metabo drill

Metabo Corp. now offers an 18-volt lithium-ion hammer drill, the SBZ 18, that weighs only 4.4 pounds and provides up to 40 percent greater performance than cordless tools with traditional rechargeable batteries.

The cordless drill features a torque-adjusting sleeve with five settings, drill and hammer drill settings, and a gear box that delivers up to 26,800 blows per minute. In second gear, the tool features up to 1,450 rpm, making the drill suitable for fast-impact drilling into brick, block and concrete. The SBZ 18 offers a drilling capacity of up to 3/8 inches in concrete. The hammer drill's distinctive Z shape provides the



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Hitachi releases rotary hammer and impact driver

Hitachi Power Tools has introduced the DH45MR, a 1 3/4-inch SDS Max rotary hammer featuring patented Internal Double Insulation technology and a best-in-class impact energy of 11.4 foot-pounds.

The DH45MR claims to provide the fastest drilling and chiseling speeds on the market and is engineered to go through concrete, mortar, tile and other hard materials. Hitachi's patented IDI technology enables the aluminum housing to be integrated with an injection-molded inner nylon core. This technology combines the durability of a metal-bodied tool with the double insulation advantages of today's plastic housings. The tool bearing sits in die-cast aluminum instead of plastic,


improving tool reliability and greatly extending tool life.

The hammer comes with a powerful 11.6-amp motor that delivers 1,200 watts of input power. Using a highly efficient striking transmission, the DH45MR produces 30 percent faster drilling speeds and 15 percent greater chiseling performance than competitors. Electronic variable speed control gives the tool from 120 rpm to 240 rpm full-load and an impact rate of 1,200 bpm to 2,500 bpm. This rotary hammer has an easy-to-use dial for two modes of operation: hammer-drilling and drilling by itself.

Hitachi Power Tools has also announced a new cordless 18-volt 1.5Ah impact driver, the WH18DFL, which combines the high torque of automotive wrenches with the precision of traditional driver drills.

This 1/4-inch hex impact driver includes an electric brake and is ideal for fastening, driving and drilling



applications. The 3.3-pound driver features a no-load speed of up to 2,500 rpm and a 3,000-bpm impact rate. 

☎ (800) 829-4752

🌐 www.hitachipowertools.com



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American Concrete Institute Strategic Development Council to host sustainability events

The concrete industry's Strategic Development Council announced two upcoming events concerning its ongoing concrete sustainability initiative.

In conjunction with the American Concrete Institute's Spring 2008 convention in Los Angeles, the SDC will host a concrete sustainability workshop on Saturday, March 29, in the Olympic 1 room of the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza. The full-day workshop will provide all interested persons, whether involved in SDC or not, an opportunity to review and debate the proposed sustainability strategy from the Concrete Sustainability Vision Document. This involves industry sustainability targets, key initiatives, and work plans proposed for coming decades. There is no charge to attend the March 29 sustainability workshop, but please RSVP.

SDC will also hold its regularly scheduled Session No. 23 at the Omni Mandalay Hotel at Las Colinas in Irving, Texas, April 22-23. This session for SDC member organizations will feature presentations and breakouts on several current SDC initiatives, including the Concrete Sustainability Project, the Vision 2020 Repair/Protection Council, and consideration of Building Information Modeling and its potential impact on the concrete industry.

 (248) 848-3737

 www.concreteSDC.org

American Society of Concrete Contractors

ASCC names technical director


The American Society of Concrete Contractors has named Ward R. Malisch as technical director.

Malisch has been a member of the ASCC board of directors since 2001 and has been responsible for fielding technical questions from concrete contractors on the ASCC

technical hotline. In addition, Malisch has been responsible for publishing the ASCC's Troubleshooting Newsletter.

As technical director, Malisch will continue to shoulder his previous duties, but he will also assume responsibility for reviewing construction-related ACI documents, writing and editing technical papers, coordinating research projects, providing contractor input on technical matters to other organizations, and developing programs for the technical education of contractors.

In addition to his long-term service with the ASCC, Malisch was the editor of Concrete Construction magazine for almost 15 years and a university professor for nearly 20. His previous positions also include senior managing director of the ACI, managing director of engineering for the ACI, and director of construction information services for the Portland Cement Association.

 (314) 962-0210

 www.ascconline.org



Board and council appointments announced

Donald M. Marks, president of Form Works Inc., has been re-elected to the position of president of the American Society of Concrete Contractors for 2008. Marks' executive officers have also been appointed: Paul A. Albanelli, of Albanelli Cement Contractors has been elected first vice president, Clay Fisher, Rocky Geans and Mike Poppoff have been re-elected vice presidents, and Glen Shamblen has been re-elected secretary/treasurer.

Former board members Scott Anderson, James J Dolente Sr. and Frank Lewis have all been re-elected to the board of directors, and Keith Wayne, of Kannapolis, N.C., has been chosen as a new board member.

Appointees to the Decorative Concrete Council, a specialty council of the ASCC, include Jay Fangman of Colorado Hardscapes as council director, Glen Shamblen as secretary/treasurer, and Priscilla Dunn and Frank Lewis as members of the DCC advisory board.

Finally, the Safety & Risk Management Council has elected Chris Plue of Webcor Concrete as council director, Steve Pereira as secretary/treasurer, and Scott Winkler as a new director for the SRMC advisory board.

☎ (314) 962-0210

🌐 www.ascconline.org

Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute

CRSI appoints new Atlantic regional manager

The Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of Mike Mota, PE, as Atlantic regional manager.

Mota will be responsible for managing all CRSI activities in the Atlantic region (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, eastern New York, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland) and within the region's individual chapters.

Prior to joining CRSI, Mota spent seven years with the Portland Cement Association as regional engineering manager for the eastern United States. He is an active member of the American Society of Civil Engineering, the Masonry Society, and the American Concrete Institute, serving as secretary of ACI Committee 314: "Simplified Design of Reinforced Concrete Structures." In January, he was named to the Editorial Board of Structure magazine.

Mota is the current Chairman of the New York City Concrete Promotional Council's High Rise Committee and serves on the board of directors of the Concrete Industry Board of New York City. He is a frequent speaker with ACI's seminar series on Simplified Design of Concrete Structures and the Post-Tensioning Institute's half-day seminar series on Fundamentals of Post-Tensioning Design.

Mota is a past recipient of a CRSI Foundation Scholarship and is a registered professional engineer in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He will be based out of Philadelphia.

☎ (847) 517-1200

🌐 www.crsi.org

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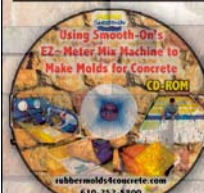


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International Concrete Repair Institute

ICRI elects 2008 president, board members

The International Concrete Repair Institute membership elected Monica Rourke of DryWorks Inc. as its 2008 president.

To support Rourke in 2008, the ICRI membership also elected the following officers: president-elect: Randy Beard, Walker Restoration Consultants; vice president: Charles Knight, Sto Corp.; secretary: Don Ford, C.A. Lindman Inc.; and treasurer: Garth Fallis, Vector Corrosion Technologies. The 2007 president, Marty Sobelman of Atlas Restoration LLC, will continue his service on the board as immediate past president.

In addition to the president and officers, the membership voted in five new board members who will serve three-year terms: Katherine Blatz of BASF Building Systems Inc., Heidi Braverman of H. Braverman & Associates, Jason Dunster of Walker Restoration Consultants, Keith Harrison of Capital Restoration & Waterproofing Inc., and Pierre Hebert of MAPEI Corp.

www.icri.org

Post-Tensioning Institute

PTI names program director

The Post-Tensioning Institute — a nonprofit organization for the advancement of post-tensioned, prestressed concrete design and construction — has named Thomas F. Mathews as director of certification programs and construction technologies.



Mathews is responsible for the management, marketing and promotion of plant and field certification programs and will also serve as a technical resource related to field practices, components and materials. He has specialized expertise in concrete reinforcement installation and post-tensioned concrete construction, as well as in training methods.

Mathews recently served as the vice president of sales and marketing for SURE-LOCK Inc. He has been a member of PTI since 1987. 📞

www.post-tensioning.org

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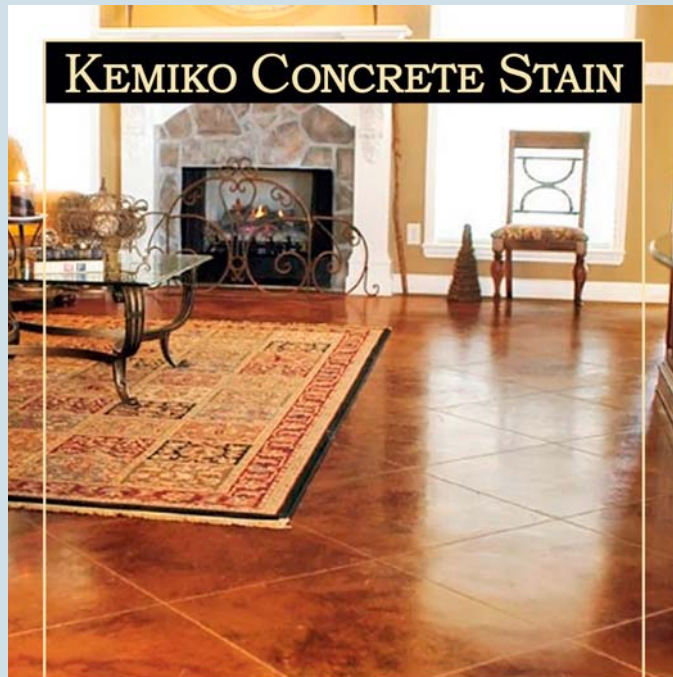
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Photo courtesy of Concrete Jungle

Like any good business owner, Kelly Carr of Concrete Jungle, Frederick, Md., is always on the lookout for new ways to serve his customers. So when Carr got wind of manufacturers selling the “guts” of range hoods for making custom cabinetry, he saw a prime opportunity. Kitchen countertops being the core of his business, range hoods made from custom concrete were a logical next step.

Concrete hoods are an easy sell for customers who are already buying countertops, but this hood — Concrete

Jungle’s first — was purchased by a homeowner with a kitchen in mid-renovation who had already committed to granite countertops. When she came into the Concrete Jungle studio, she immediately regretted not choosing the company to do her countertops — which is when they suggested creating a concrete range hood.

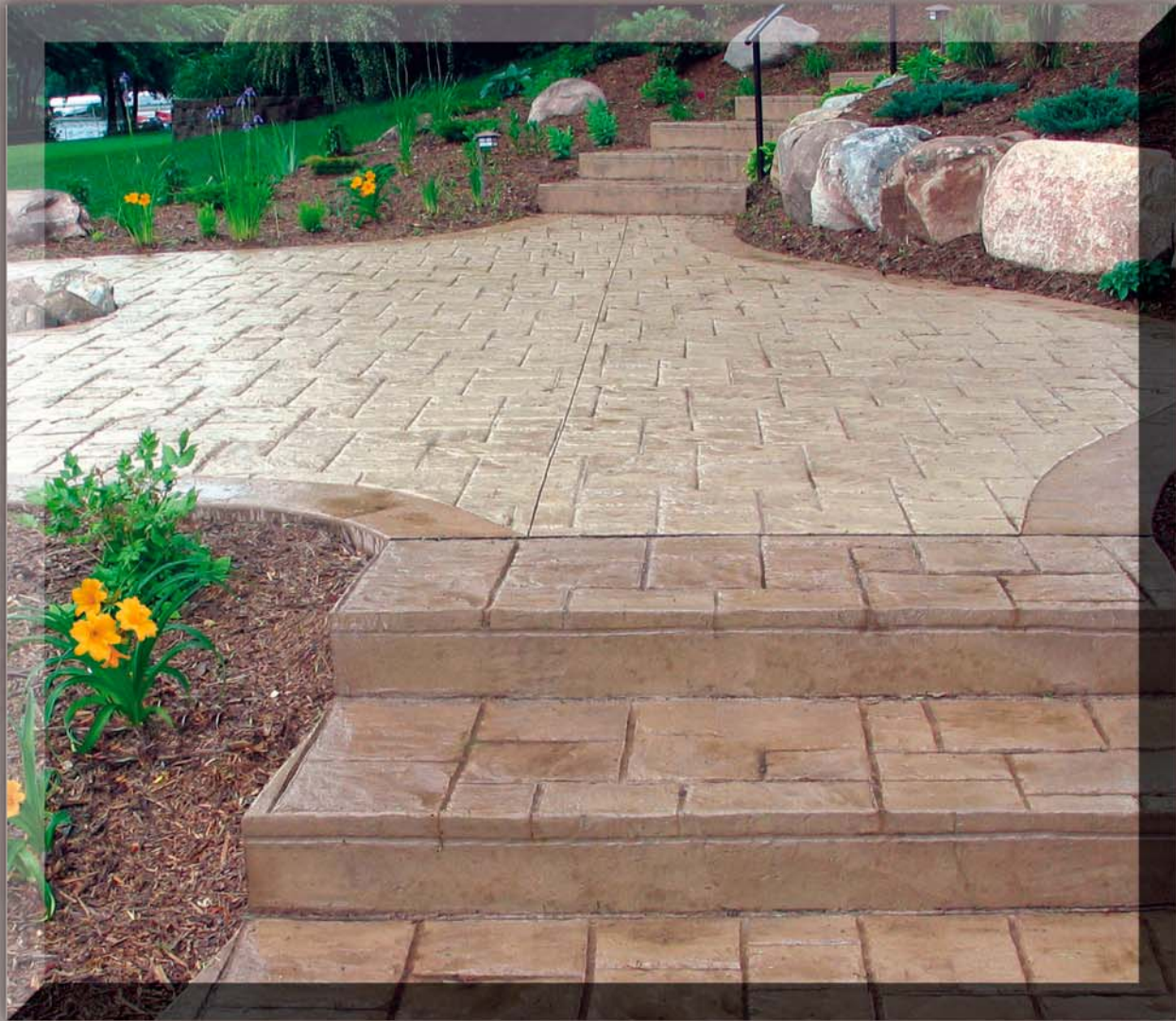
In place of a cold stainless-steel hood, Carr crafted a warm, organic element, integrally colored with pigments from B&J Colorants that

preserved the style and tone of the rest of the kitchen. Working with the kitchen designer to ensure the wall could bear the weight, Concrete Jungle had a local steel fabricator come up with a custom support frame for the hood, giving it a free-floating look. To get a thinner, lighter piece, Concrete Jungle used Buddy Rhodes’ signature concrete mix for the range hood. 📱

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