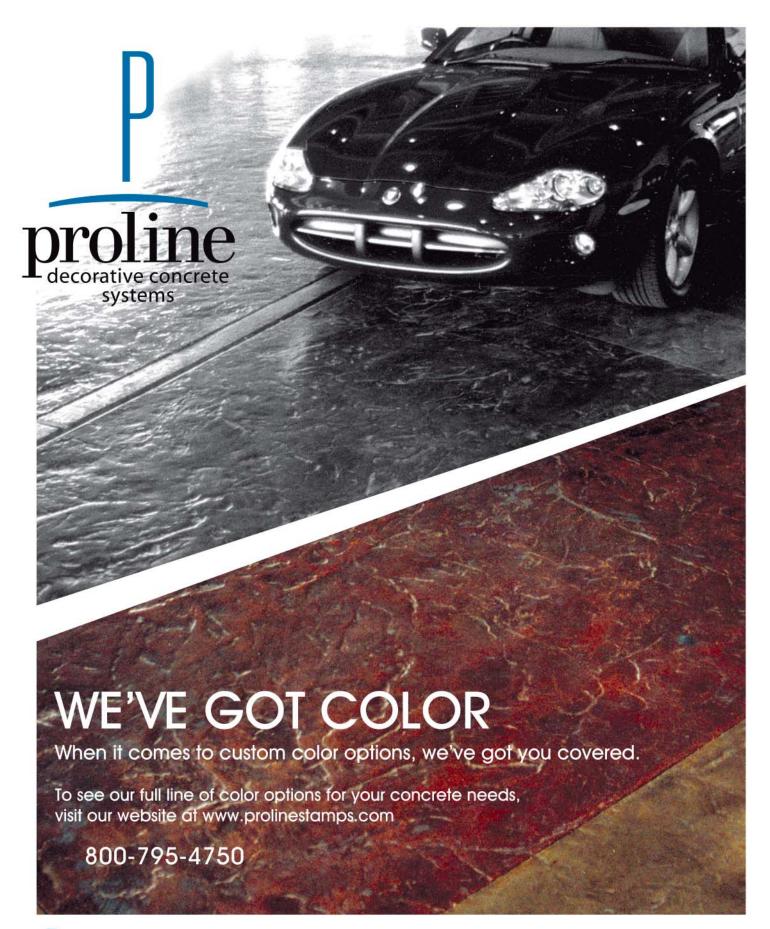
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Publisher's Letter



Dear Readers.

According to a recent survey of Concrete Decor magazine readers, fabricating concrete countertops is the service contractors are most likely to begin offering to their customers in the coming months. This news is not surprising, considering the continual advances that both artisans and product manufacturers are achieving. A visit to the upcoming Concrete Countertop Industry Conference in Sacramento, Calif., on Aug. 21-23 will help many of you to better understand these advances and how they can

add to your success.

If you haven't noticed already, this August issue of Concrete Decor has been packaged with an informative and inspiring new supplement for our subscribers called **Counter Culture.** It sheds new light on why the market for architectural concrete elements such as concrete countertops is steadily growing. Counter Culture is not just designed to whet your appetite — it's also meant to connect your business with a host of reputable companies that can help you take important steps to increasing your capabilities.

Without a doubt, the possibilities of concrete are boundless. However, this attribute could become overshadowed in time if fewer individuals who are skilled in the craft are available to meet this growing demand. Our reader survey also indicates that more than 65 percent of our readers are between 41 and 65 years of age. This statistical finding is common among other construction industry trades, which indicates that as a group, contractors are simply getting older.

I'd like to encourage each of our readers to share this issue of Concrete Decor with their employees. Ask them to read articles you find informative and don't hesitate to question them on what they read. You might find in your midst a youngster who not only likes to sweat but has an unquenchable desire to learn. Unless each of us does our part to inspire and educate the next generation of concrete artisans, we're likely to see our businesses suffering.

This week I had the opportunity to lead a group of middle-school kids at our church's annual vacation bible school program. In a discussion about gratitude, many of the children were perplexed when asked what they had to be thankful for. When I told them that summer vacations were originally established so children could help their families on the farm, it gave new meaning to their leisurely way of life during

Know that I appreciate each and every one of you. Enjoy this issue.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen. Publisher

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

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



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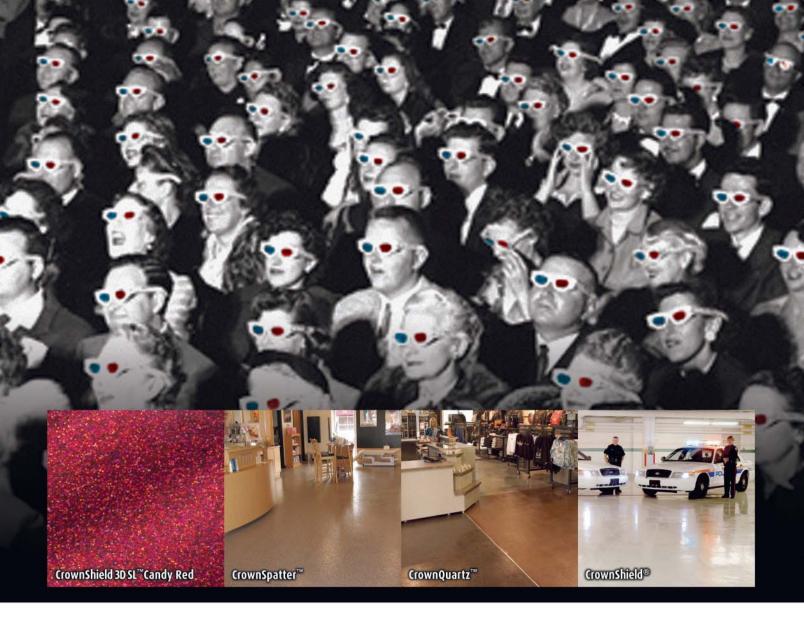
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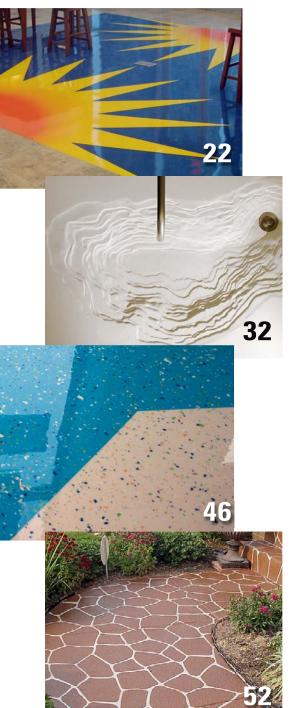


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On the Cover: Jim Ralston, owner of Urban Concrete Design in Mesa, Ariz., sprays a GFRC face coat on a vessel sink. Ralston's company focuses on precast and concrete countertops, and he also leads a training course at Cheng Concrete.

Photo by Tamryn Doolan

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Freshly placed, stained concrete has the added advantage of contributing to LEED points under the regional materials category of the Materials & Resources section. For existing buildings, stained concrete floors may earn credits for materials reuse. Consult USGBC documentation for details.

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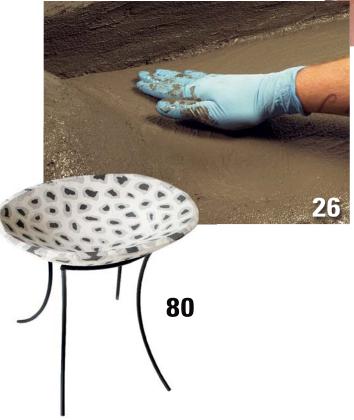
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HTC University - Global Education from the Industry Leader



HTC is a monthly training seminar, established in 2005, to educate interested parties about HTC Superfloor™ polished concrete. HTC University leverages 15 years of experience working with polished concrete, dry and wet grinding and polishing, concrete concepts, polishing techniques, floor preparation, decorative concrete, and maintenance with Twister™. HTC also educates customers on how to market HTC Superfloor™ polished concrete and estimate and bid contracts. Attendees may include existing customers, potential customers, rental companies, end-users, potential end users, architects, spec writers, new machine operators, and facility managers interested in polished concrete from around the world.







Industry News

Lafarge deal provides responsible power for cement plant

Lafarge North America Inc. and Performance Plants Inc. (PPI), a biotechnology company, have announced a multiyear agreement to grow and develop clean-energy biomass grasses and woods for use as fuel at the Lafarge Cement Plant in Bath, Ontario.

Nonfood grass crops were planted in May and June on 25 acres of land owned by Lafarge adjacent to the cement plant. These included perennial species of Miscanthus and switchgrass in addition to high-biomass varieties of sorghum and maize. A local farmer will supervise the growing and harvesting of the plants. Poplar, willow and industrial hemp will be planted on suitable land later in the season. After the bales are harvested, they will be processed into fuel pellets, which will then be used by the Lafarge plant to fire its cement kiln.

The company expects to conduct its first trial use in the fall of 2009.

- www.lafarge-na.com
- www.performanceplants.com

Delta, B&J Colorants merge

Delta Performance Products LLC and B&J Colorants, both of Atlanta, have merged to offer a combined line of specialty pigments, admixtures, and aggregates to the concrete market. The combined product line will be offered through Blueconcrete.com, a division of Delta Performance Products. A redesigned Web site with online ordering capability will be available in the near future.

- **(**770) 464-2515
- www.blueconcrete.com

Bayer scientist examines coating chemistry

Bayer MaterialScience AG senior research and development scientist Raymond Stewart examined the chemical systems used in the formulation of two-component waterborne polyurethane coatings for two industrial market areas, including general concrete surfaces, in his poster presentation, "Waterborne Coatings for the Industrial Market — The Time is Now!" Stewart presented the poster at the recent 2008 American Coatings Show and Conference in Charlotte, N.C.

According to his work, some general features of the coatings' chemistry include low VOCs, toughness, chemical resistance and versatility in formulation, application and performance. However, careful selection of both polyol and polyisocyanate components is required to make formulations that meet varying coating specifications.

Bayer Material Science AG is one of the leading producers of polymers and high-performance plastics in North America and is a subgroup of Bayer Group.

www.bayermaterialscience.com

Permacrete completes code requirements

Permacrete has successfully completed all requirements for compliance with both vertical (AC 219) and horizontal (AC 39) surface application codes as set by the International Code Council's Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) for its high-strength surface coating products.

Permacrete, which is distributed by Quality Systems Inc., is best known for its cementitious surface products, but also offers epoxies, urethanes, sealers, caulks, cleaners, strippers and bonding additives.

- **(**0 (800) 607-3762
- www.permacrete.com

Villar promoted at Scofield

Cam Villar has been named director of marketing for L.M. Scofield Co.

Villar has more than 16 years of experience in the advertising and interactive marketing field. As director of interactive communications at Scofield for the last eight years, he has been responsible for designing and developing Internet, DVD and interactive projects.



(0 (800) 800-9900

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New staff for Architectural Enhancements

Dave Faidley has joined the Architectural Enhancements LLC team, where he will serve as the company's vice

president. Faidley will be in charge of operations, and will also manage other aspects of the company.

Also, Cindee Lundin is a new overlayments and faux market specialist for Architectural Enhancements LLC. A former contractor, Lundin will be focusing on growing the company's faux division, as well as assisting in teaching classes.



Cindee Lundin.

Architectural Enhancements, located in Annandale, Minn., manufactures decorative and faux overlayment products.

() (320) 274-6909

www.decorativeoverlayments.com



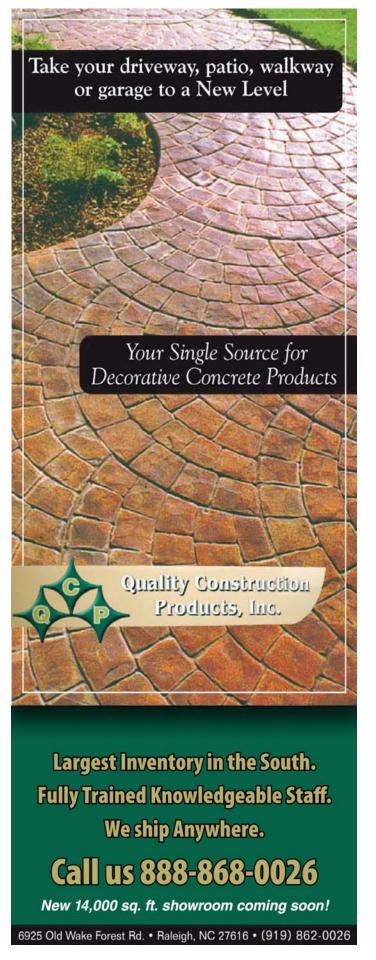
Architectural Enhancements LLC unveils new logo

Architectural Enhancements LLC, a manufacturer of decorative and faux overlayment products, has launched a new logo, which will appear on all of its marketing materials, buckets and bottles.

The new logo was developed to make it easier for contractors to quickly recognize AE products and is designed to be easy to read and recognize.

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Carlton's Corner

Profitable Stamping in Five Steps

Climbers say there is a point on Mt. Everest where most climbers fail. I'm guessing the reason why is similar

to the reason most contractors don't succeed in the decorative industry. Many have good intentions and like the idea of saying they are artists, but few have what it takes to truly take it to the next level.



by Doug Carlton

Make no mistake about it — there are several steps required in order to pull off a successful stamped job, and leaving one out will leave you looking for the nearest demolition contractor.

Profit is the byproduct of a high-quality decorative job. Believe me in saying there is a big difference between learning to stamp concrete and learning to stamp profitable concrete. In this article we will discuss how to set your job up, as well as the installation process. If you combine all of these steps together you will cement your success in the decorative concrete industry.

Step One

Take time to lay out, by paint or chalk, the outline of the stamped area. Be sure to show things like fire pits, planters, seat walls, drains, steps and anything else that can help the decision-maker commit to a design. Believe me when I say that it always looks like a good design on paper, but field marking will save a lot of form moving while your mud is getting hot. My

foreman will go so far as to chalk-draw planned score lines and accent banding to help eliminate confusion. This will also be a good time to double-check pattern and color choices for the third time. No mistakes.

Now is also the time to field measure to make sure your new square footage is on budget with your bid. No one likes surprises and this kind of surprise will make a good job seem bad.

Step Two

The afternoon before preparation is when your crew will do the most important tasks it has for the pour. Have all material loaded and double-checked for accuracy. Confirm concrete arrival, mix design, pump time, and anything else that might cause your blood pressure to spike. Take control of your job well before the first rock hits the ground. Organize your crew to see who will arrive early to wet down the base.

I want to spend a little time on the mix design, because it is my opinion that most stamping contractors use the wrong mix design. You should not and do not have to use pea gravel for your stamped concrete. Many contractors use pea gravel because it is more affordable to pump. However, mixes with bigger aggregate are stronger and will stamp as well with good concrete practices. Try blending aggregates until you find something comfortable for you and your crew.

The other concrete issue is the amount of water added to your load. Adding too much water will weaken



The mix is placed with a low slump and rocks are tamped down.

your mix and make your stamped concrete much more likely to crack. Folks don't like to pay \$8 a foot for cracked concrete.

Let's assume you have the mix issue straight and it is time to lay down concrete. We are pouring at a 4-inch slump and striking off the surface true to slope as necessary. We have a 4-foot level working behind the rod to confirm slope and the pour is going as planned. We have one man falling behind to tamp (or jitterbug, for the guys in the South), making sure the largest aggregate is seated just below the cream surface. This will be critical when it comes time to displace the surface with imprint tools. The surface should be floated smooth with a bull float as the edges are edged. Deep scores should be placed as planned to separate the rock in order to control cracking.

Up to this point your pour is not unlike any other concrete pour, decorative or not. By now you should see the bleed water at the concrete surface, depending on weather, temperature, humidity and wind. This is the point where your job will take a turn to the decorative side. From this point to completion every person on your crew must have the same goal. No distractions and no excuses.

Step Three

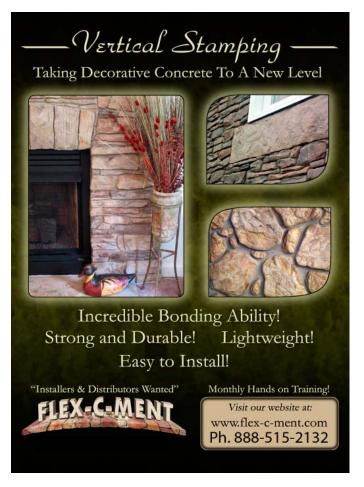
The next step is to add the color to the surface and then float it in. The level of difficulty is directly related to the color choice. Your wet concrete canvas is dark gray, so the lighter the color, the more difficult to cover. Please keep this in mind. Regardless of color, your first broadcast of color should be timed just as the bleed water has dissipated. Color too soon and you will lose expensive color and wear out your arm. Wait too late, and I bet you can guess what the outcome will be. Picture it like this. You and your crew will have several windows of opportunity in the overall stamping process. We covered the first and most forgivable window with the concrete placement. The second window is the coloring window, and this will take practice to perfect. The third window is the actual imprinting window, and this will be the most timing-sensitive.



Color hardener is broadcast across the damp surface.



A wood bull float is used to work color into the surface.



Carlton's Corner



The surface is floated, edged and scored all at the same time.



Stamp tools are pounded lightly. The results are checked for consistency.



Stamp tools rest on the surface. Notice that the accent bands are left unstamped.

Try to cover the surface but not stack the color hardener on the first pass. You will have two or more chances to fill in uncolored areas, so don't worry. Let your color hardener "wet up" before floating it into the surface. A wood float will work the best at this stage. You will find your score lines filling in and overflowing, and this is fine, because we will need to open them up several times before the stamping process. Continue to color (with a respirator on your face) until you are satisfied with the surface color. Remember that your secondary color, in the form of release, will help cover some areas as well.

Continue to trowel color, open score lines, and edge outer edges as your surface dries. Depending on your pour size, you may have to start the imprinting process as other areas dry. Try to keep your release powder from fogging over wet areas that have yet to be troweled completely smooth. Many beginners spend too much time overworking the unstamped surface when they should be stamping it.

Step Four

The stamping process and its degree of difficulty are directly related to the pattern choice. Texture patterns are much easier to handle and will cover more area sooner. Interlocking patterns require more planning and will take more time to imprint. Keep all this in mind when planning your pour because the amount of square footage you pour should be directly related to the pattern choice.

The imprint tools should rest over the untroweled powder release that now covers the colored concrete. The stamp tools should be resting on the concrete surface, and they should be picked up and moved after they have been consistently pounded. Be sure to keep a close eye as each tool is lifted and moved to make sure the concrete is imprinted and not just the release powder. Your window to stamp will dictate the urgency and speed of the stamping process. Again, keep pours small until your crew becomes comfortable with this

Areas along vertical surfaces such as walls will need to be hand-detailed and will take some time. Most tool manufacturers will sell a flex-style mat to help with these areas. Even with one of these mats, hand detailing may still be needed, so it may be necessary to leave a few stamp tools behind to work off while some of your crew moves on with the stamping process. There are many rollers, touch-up mats and detail tools to assist with this form of detailing.

The end of the day should leave you with a job that looks like one solid release-colored surface. Be sure to warn your customer that the base color will be unseen until the surface is rinsed and sealed. This may save you a frantic phone call around dinnertime.



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Step Five

Detailing your concrete is usually the last step to a successful job. This process doesn't really have a window, so it is more about patience and tenacity than anything else. Your first step will be to remove the release powder and dispose of it. As tempted as you may be to blow it into the neighbor's yard, I highly recommend you don't. Disposal of the release powder will be an issue, so be cautious about how this is handled. Pressure-washing the surface is the best method to clean the release powder from the surface. Some of the release will stay in the deep areas, and this will give the stamped surface depth when sealed. Leaving too much of the release will cause delamination of the sealer, so be aware. Some areas may require an acid wash to loosen the release powder, but be sure to neutralize before sealing.

Use a hand grinder to detail score lines and tool lines that need to be finished off. You may need to lightly color some areas or tint your sealer to blend colors together. The purpose of stamped concrete is to replicate an Old World look, so keep that in mind while detailing. Consistency is

Most sealers should only be applied after the concrete has had a chance to cure out. My detail guy waits 28 days, and believe me, this can cause extra work, but it's worth it. Most callbacks are sealer-related and most failures are moisture-related. Try to wait as long as possible and check with your manufacturer to find out what has worked best as far as timing. I like to use a pump-up sprayer to apply two light coats of sealer, with nonskid added, over the entire surface. Try cutting in around walls, rocks, and pool coping edges with a brush and saving the bigger areas for the sprayer. Most sealers want to go down with light coats and seem to handle the moisture better this way.

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





Understanding **Polished Concrete**

t has been nearly a year since I've started off my column with, "I'm

flying at 36,000 feet," and today I'm at it again, this time from Portland to Houston There have been many changes in our industry during the past 8 months, primarily positive, but not always. Our economy has taken



by Peter Wagner, CSI

a dive into the deep end, affecting some regions more than others, but generally affecting us all. So now is a good time to reflect on what exactly polished concrete is, and where polished concrete came from. As you move ahead in 2008, remember that polished concrete was first created to fix spalling and dusting concrete in industrial applications, and as new construction slows down it is natural for investors and owners to look at fixing what they have. "Fixing what they have" is where we came from, so look to your past to predict your future.

As long as we all can agree that polished concrete is the marriage of mechanical grinding/polishing to chemical densification/hardening, than polished concrete can be viewed as presenting a variety of faces. But before we can accept that question, we must first address "What is concrete?" Without knowing the foundation for the industry,

you present unnecessary hurdles to your, and the industry's, successful growth.

Concrete is a mixture of water, sand (fine aggregate), gravel (coarse aggregate) and cement. This mixture, when correctly mixed, poured and finished, will become the canvas for your polished concrete floor, your masterpiece. Due to geological variations throughout North America, you will need to learn how to reread concrete if you travel between regions to work, and sometimes even how to reread slabs within the same job site. Learn this mantra: "Keep your eyes open, and test before you proceed, as no two floors are alike, conceivably even at the same site."

When concrete is finished, proper water-to-cement ratios are as important as proper power troweling. If specifications aren't followed, the natural variances that occur from slab to slab or pour to pour will be magnified and result in a slab that is wavy, has bug holes or is too soft.

When the surface receives a hard steel-trowel finish (per ACI 302), the cement particles are tightly and uniformly being consolidated around the fines that have been brought up to the surface by the power troweling. This face area is the foundation for your work, an area we at L&M refer to as roughly the top 1/8-inch. In fact, Phil Smith, whom I work with, refers to this

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as the near-surface wear zone, and it will never be as tight and dense again once diamonds are utilized to cut the cream.

When you cut the floor surface with diamonds, you are generally eliminating some or all of the tightly packed cream, and in doing so, you expose thousands of micro-pits in the surface. These micro-pits require chemical densification to create a crystalline structure within the slab that mimics the original portland cement hydration process in which calcium silicate hydrate is formed. This process occurs with the addition of a liquid densifier with a sodium, potassium or lithiumbased silicates formulation. (Note: All three silicates begin as sodium silicates, and the potassium and lithium are created through double chemical replacement. There are differences in these products, but I won't get into that today.) Calcium hydroxide makes up 15 percent to 20 percent of cement paste, but it is known to be soft. Without the hardening process that occurs with the addition of silicates to create additional calcium silicate hydrate, the remaining cement paste would wear prematurely.

To fully understand polished concrete, it is absolutely necessary to understand that there is a difference between concrete floors that only receive the mechanical step in the polishing process vs. floors that received the mechanical and chemical steps. If you remember the first paragraph, the concrete polishing industry began as a means to eliminate dusting and spalling of existing concrete floors in industrial applications. It is not unusual to be able to create a polished floor without chemicals, but it is impossible to gain the added abrasion resistance or eliminate the natural deterioration of concrete that we refer to as "dusting" if you do not add the silicate densifier.

Now that you have a deeper understanding of the densification/ hardening process, it should make more sense to you that when someone says, "I don't densify," they don't understand polished concrete. Even if you do not agree as to what diamond steps make

up a polished concrete floor, you now understand that without the addition of the silicate-based densifier, you are not providing your customer with a longterm solution to their long-term need, which is increased abrasion resistance coupled with greater repellency and the elimination of concrete dust.

To sign off, I am going to start addressing one industry myth or misperception at the end of every column. Today's misconception is that you are making the floor "tighter" through your mechanical polishing steps. Remember when I described the micro-pits that are exposed during the grinding process. It is not unusual to hear an installer refer to using the upper polishing grits as "tightening up" the floor. In fact, your mechanical steps do nothing to close up those micro-pits. Rather, they are reducing the profile of the scratch pattern your diamonds have

created. Our visual sense of something being "polished" is in fact the increase in a surface's ability to uniformly reflect light, rather than refract it in an uneven, unparallel pattern. "Tightness" is a function of the crystalline structure growth that occurs during chemical interaction between the silicate and the calcium hydroxide, not the reduction of scratch pattern during the polishing stages.

Good luck in the coming months. Remember that being properly educated is the foundation of your success.

Peter Wagner is director of marketing and sales support for L&M Construction Chemicals. He has more than 20 years of experience in the flooring industry and is in his eighth year in the polished concrete industry. He can be reached at pbwagner@lmcc.com.





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Business Strategies

Designing Decorative Concrete



A well-designed project should contribute to, but not dominate, the property regardless of whether the design is ornate or simple.

by Shellie Rigsby, with Randall Klassen

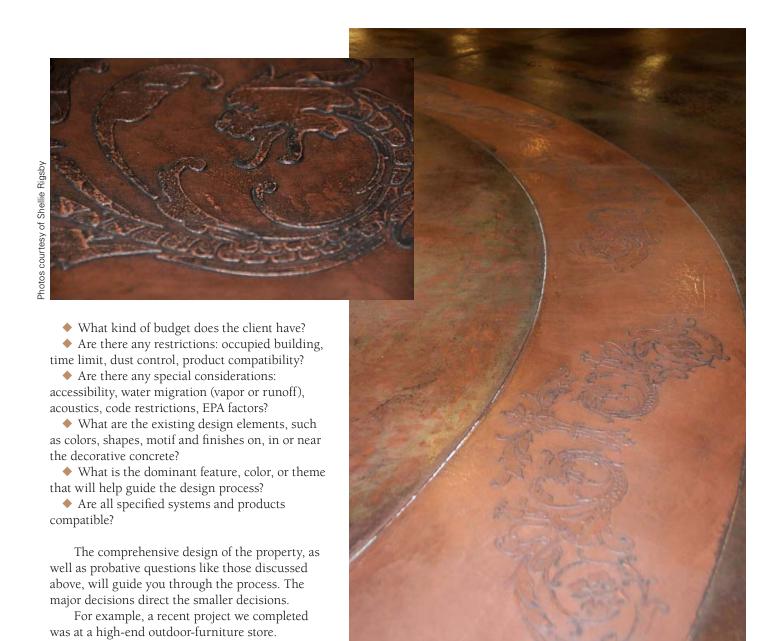
y daughter, home from college for the summer, suggested that the family go out for dinner. The kids and I piled into the car. As I pulled away from the curb, I asked, "Where are we going?" I continued driving a block or so waiting for a consensus to direct my course.

Finally, I pulled the car to the side, put it in park, and worked through the seemingly simple process of getting three teenagers to agree on a place to eat with the typical series of questions: Does everyone have time for full service or are we going for drive-through? What do you want to eat: burgers, barbecue, Mexican, Italian?

With a little discussion, we were able to narrow down the wants and needs to make a decision that ultimately got me back on the road with an agreed destination without endlessly driving in circles.

Designing decorative concrete is no different from any other process that has endless options. The first step is to ask the questions that define the project and guide the design. Examples of the defining questions are:

- ♦ What is the property: residential, commercial, industrial, public or private?
- ♦ What is its intended use: home, indoor shopping mall, restaurant or public park?
- What type of decorative concrete does the client want: flooring, flatwork, a fountain, countertops, walls?
- ♦ Who is the user or target customer: children, women, adults, an exclusive or high-end clientele?
- ♦ What kind of traffic will the property support: light residential, heavy outdoor like at a theme park, vehicles?





They wanted stained concrete floors with tasteful artistry that complimented but did not overwhelm the showroom. Their target customer is middle- to upper-class homeowners. Their budget was about 50 percent above the going rate for stained concrete. The floor is 13,000 square feet of open space.

They selected mid-earth tones for the walls. Knowing that the property is an outdoor furniture store, we recommended penetrating finishes rather than film forming to minimize scratching. We recommended a deep terra cotta as it visually anchored or weighed down the room. Terra cotta is the most popular color among homeowners (the store's clients) and it nicely complimented the earth-toned walls.



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Commercial projects often welcome an "air of excitement." Strategically placed artistic elements offer occasional interest to the customer. We used stencils to create a stunning antiqued copper medallion in the entry. The decision to antique the piece was based on the business owner's concern that the floors serve as a backdrop of interest to their merchandise. A shiny copper design at the entry might have commanded attention rather than subtly yielding presence to the merchandise. Much of the detail in the medallion came from the designs of the furniture.

When selecting the colors for decorative concrete, we look to the structure for direction. What are the colors of the property? Usually there is a dominant color and a secondary color. For example, the exterior of a house or building has a dominant color — the brick or facade. Secondary colors would be the roof color, shutters and trim. The roof or trim is often a darker color. Assigning the secondary color of the roof or trim as the primary color of the flatwork gives continuity, balance and much-needed visual weight to the property.

Shapes and designs usually develop in much the same manner. Square windows, ornamental iron, eyebrow arches, and overall structural style are all points of inspiration.

In the end, a well-designed field of decorative concrete, no matter how ornate or simple, should contribute to, but not command, the whole property. The best compliment is when a passerby remarks, "What a beautiful place."

Shellie Rigsby owns Acanthus Inc. Randall Klassen owns Klassen Concrete Inc.

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Chief Concrete Inc. Las Vegas, Nev.



by David Searls

ho quits a stable job with a government pension for the insecurity of selfemployment in a field where you have no formal training or experience? To put it another way, who in his right mind would give up a career in electronic engineering in a weapons program at the Nevada Test Site for ... concrete work?

That's what Monte Walker did, and he doesn't believe a sound mind has anything to do with the decision. "Middle-age menopause and temporary insanity," he says with a chuckle.

In 1979, Walker went into partnership with a rebar contractor who specialized in swimming pool decks.

That company, now known as Chief Concrete Inc., has gone on to handle showcase project work for such signature Vegas clients as MGM Mirage properties, the Silverton Casino Lodge, Allegiant Travel Co., The Milton I. Schwartz Hebrew Academy and many of the city's most exclusive residential developments, not to mention some of its ritziest country clubs.

Jack Finnan, the company's general superintendent, has worked for Monte Walker since 1980, and is one of several employees of the Las Vegas-based company who have devoted many years to the family business. "It's like working for family," he says. "To Monte, you're



a name, not a number. He's old-school that way."

But, like curing concrete, Chief came together slowly, over time.

Picking up and turning down work

The young company bought its first cookie-cutter stamping tools in 1981. "When we diversified into stamping," Monte Walker says, "that tripled our business."

The company's first stamp jobs were for Jack in the Box fast-food restaurants. Eventually, they signed contracts with such major homebuilders and developments as Del Webb Corp., The Howard Hughes Corp. and Pardee Homes, bringing the company into the Vegas high-end real estate market.

Monte Walker was on his own by then, having bought out his partner in 1986. Multicolor acid staining, overlayments, selfleveling cements, epoxy coatings, surface preparation, enhanced architectural concrete and countertops ... it all was added to Chief Concrete's toolbox of capabilities over time. Walker's people handled project work for shopping centers, spas, country clubs and public areas, including 25,000 square feet of stamped concrete streetwork for The District at Green Valley Ranch, a mixed-use lifestyle center.

Monte's son, Matt Walker, joined the company full-time out of college in 2002. "He developed a real rapport with homebuilders and commercial contractors," says his dad, proudly.

Remember not so long ago when people were actually building — and selling homes in Las Vegas? Back then, all of three or four years ago, the local real estate market looked like even more of a sure thing than four aces and a wild card.

"We were very involved to the point where we had to turn down work," says Walker. "We didn't have enough people to handle it. We had about a three-year period where it was hot like that."

Things are a little different in Vegas now, of course. "It's been a little slow over the last year and a half," Matt Walker admits.

His father has the numbers at his fingertips. "We've got 54 people in the field and six in the office. Two years ago, we had 110 people in the field."



The Walkers have had to scurry to adapt, but that's pretty much what they've been doing over the entire history of the company. "We had to shift gears from residential to more commercial work," says Monte. "We've got an envelope of activities now."

And the residential business hasn't completely evaporated. But it's more in the line of enhancement and beautification work than major new construction.

Commercial projects such as restaurants, hotels, nightclubs and the grand foyer of the Silverton Casino Lodge are paying the bulk of the bills today.

In the case of the Silverton, their beautification of the 3,800-square foot fover started with pre-leveling the recessed floor. "Then we coated it with a chemically reactive stain and concrete dye to mimic water

flowing out of a free-standing fish tank that's in the foyer," says Matt Walker.

The wet, glistening appearance is an attention-grabber. "It's received a lot of foot traffic in the four years since we completed it, and it still looks great," Matt says.

Another recent project, at the Mirage, is what Monte calls "one of the most challenging jobs we've ever done."

As part of the south entrance renovation, Chief Concrete laid 6,000 square feet of Lithocrete, an exposed aggregate product, on the walkway where the casino faces the very busy Las Vegas Boulevard. "They had to keep the casino entrance open, so it was always a matter of working around people," says Matt.

In other, less bustling towns, the crew might have simply waited until closing time and worked the graveyard shift. In Vegas,

there's no such thing.

"It was kind of a hopscotch job," Matt recalls. "We'd start it at 2 a.m. and we were still working around foot traffic."

"It slows down from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., but then you're dealing with the drunks," says project manager Bill Somyak from Westar Architects, the project's architectural firm.

The challenge, in addition to the city's insomnia, was matching multiple color mixtures and staying true to a pattern of recycled glass that was broadcast into the mix.

"The design was amorphous, very meandering," says Somyak. "There were multiple color aggregates and three different backgrounds."

A lot to keep track of in the middle of the night — with a few passersby who



are meandering even more wildly than the pattern. So how'd Chief Concrete do?

"They were phenomenal," reports Somyak. "Their project management was great and Monte is very knowledgeable."

According to Somyak, the Walkers worked on the first Lithocrete installation in the city. But that's no surprise. "We were one of the original architectural contractors, and we were local pioneers in concrete stamping," states the younger Walker.

Jackhammer University

One more noteworthy recent project

involved installing the distinctive sunburst logo on the floor of Allegiant Air's Las Vegas headquarters.

"We had to start by pre-leveling the floor with Ardex SD-T self-leveling cement because it was recessed two inches," says Matt Walker. "We used 1 1/2 inches of fill and then capped it with a coat of smooth Ardex SD-T."

After hand-sawing the two 20-by-15 sunburst patterns, they applied pigmented epoxy urethane for a base color, then handsprayed airplane paint. The final step was to grout and seal their showcase creation with

a number of coats of clear epoxy urethane and wax.

"It was painstaking, but we're very proud of it," says Matt.

To this day, most of what father and son have learned about the business — from stamping to Lithocrete installation — has been self-taught. Picked up along the way.

"The price of education comes hard," says Monte Walker. "Sometimes you learn with a jackhammer."

Sometimes there's just no better way. 🧀

www.chiefconcrete.com

Technique



GFRC Application

by Brandon Gore

n the June/July issue of Concrete Decor magazine, we covered how to put together three kinds of mixes of glass-fiber reinforced concrete. This time, we're going to show you how to apply the GFRC

after you've prepared it.

GFRC part one, in the previous issue, offered a lot **two-part series** of mix design recipes and lists. This lesson can be told mainly with pictures. Step-by-step instructions

Part two of a on glass-fiber reinforced concrete

can be found in the captions of each photo.

If you want the whole story, information from last issue's Technique section is available online at Concretedecor.net. A back issue of the magazine can be obtained by contacting Concrete Decor.





Step 2: Mix your face coat.



Step 3: Check the consistency. It should be similar to a milkshake.



Step 4: Load the hopper with 2 to 3 quarts of the face-coat mix. Turn on the air and do a test spray on a piece of scrap. Set the air flow so the spray is just above "spattering."



Step 5: Spray. Begin by spraying into the corner of what will be the front edge of your piece. Your spraying technique will be the primary factor in the quality of the finish. When spraying GFRC, you always want to spray into a corner and work your way back, spraying into the face coat you've already sprayed. By doing this, you compact the face $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left$ coat and force out any air bubbles. This is the secret to a superior finish for GFRC.

Step 6: Work in small areas, always being mindful to work your way back, spraying into the face coat you have already sprayed.



The mold, completely sprayed with the face-coat mix.



Step 7: Mix your vertical back coat. See the June/ July issue of Concrete Decorfor more details.



Add fibers slowly while maintaining a slow mixer speed.



Check the consistency. It should be similar to thick cookie dough.



Step 8: Wait for the face coat to become stiff, but not dry, and then apply a thin application of the vertical back coat, an application also known as a scratch coat. Add a small amount of water, if needed, to thin the consistency of the back coat and make it more workable. Applying this thin scratch coat helps to prevent any air pockets from forming between the face coat and the back coat.





Step 9: Once the scratch coat has been applied, begin the application of the vertical back coat. Starting from the bottom, build the concrete up the vertical wall, holding the wall with one hand and using the other hand to smooth the top. You want to pull the mix over the top of the wall. This helps to keep the vertical back coat from pulling away or slumping.

If the vertical back coat does initially slump a bit, do not despair. Simply continue working your way around the mold. After a few minutes the section that was slumping should be firm enough for you to apply a second coat.



Step 10: Mix your self-consolidating back coat. Again, see the June/July issue of Concrete Decor for more information.



Step 11: Scrape the excess face coat off any walls where the self-consolidating back coat will be poured up to them. This will ensure consistent, accurate thickness in your piece.

Step 12: Slowly pour the selfconsolidating back coat into your mold. Work the concrete around the edges and corners to release any air pockets.



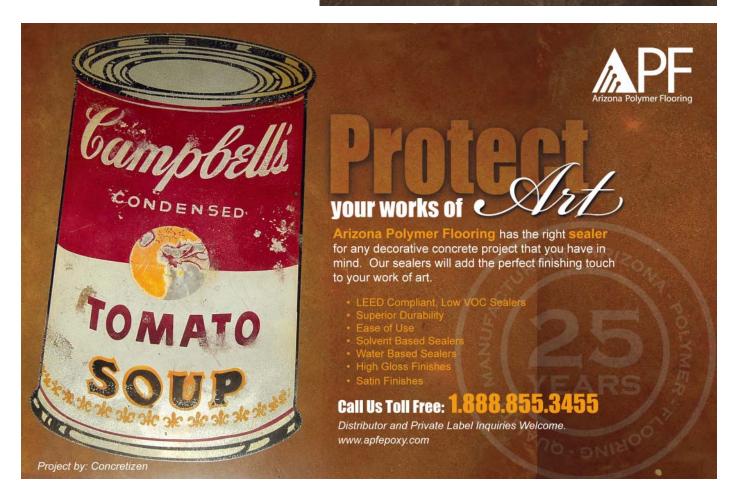


Step 13: Once the back coat has firmed up, you can smooth it to give it a more polished look. Simply mist or sprinkle the surface with water and smooth it with your hands.

Step 14: Allow the concrete to cure for 24 hours, then proceed with mold removal and finishing the concrete.

Brandon Gore operates Gore Design Co. LLC, based in Tempe, Ariz. He can be reached at info@goredesignco. com. He also offers hands-on training workshops at GFRCworkshop.com.

Part one of Brandon Gore's GFRC process, including mix design recipes, can be found in the June/July 2008 issue of Concrete Decor.





is one of the most green products out there," McIntyre notes.

And as the public embraces the whole green concept and clamors for sustainable products, they are discovering the many uses of colored concrete, from countertops and furniture to fireplace surrounds and floors. And that puts an even bigger spotlight on white cement.

Whiter whites, brighter colors

White cement, proponents say, offers many advantages over its gray counterpart. The No. 1 reason contractors choose the product is that its results are more aesthetically pleasing. "You'll never get 'Target' red if you add a red pigment to gray cement," McIntyre says. "At best, it'll be a murky red."

Buddy Rhodes of Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products has been using white cement since the early 1980s. Today, he uses nothing but the white stuff. "You're able to color and control color so much better with white," says Rhodes, whose company packages its own bone-white Concrete Counter Mix. "With gray, you always get a different shade and are constantly fighting the grayness."

And if its gray you're looking for, he adds, "you can get a really beautiful gray with white." The same holds true for a piece that is intended to be black.

Rhodes uses white because he's assured of consistent color, he explains. "It keeps the variables out of the mix design. I just change techniques for different finishes."

Besides more vibrant and purer colors, Rhodes continues, the white medium shows off aggregates such as recycled glass, oyster shells and marble chips much better. "The colors really pop," he says.

Matt Hine, president of Progressive Concrete Coatings in Wilmington, N.C., agrees. The contractor specializes in

acid-staining countertops and floors. "The advantage for me is to have a brighter base color," he says. "The colors are more vibrant and bold on a white base, and there's a sharper contrast among the variations of colors and tones. These slight variations are enhanced to create a more striking mottled appearance."

If on the other hand, the customer is looking for a muted, subtle or solid color, Hine uses gray cement. "Not everybody likes the variation in color and contrast," he says.

Sometimes, Hine uses a combination of the two. Brandon Gore of Gore Design Co. in Tempe, Ariz., does too. While he uses pure white cement to make many of his renowned erosion sinks, he regularly employs a 50-50 blend of white and gray to create a color he calls limestone. Gore says he isn't a big fan of brightly colored concrete and discourages his customers who request it. Instead he focuses on white, charcoal, natural gray and his limestone mix.

He also shies away from using



There are only slight chemical differences between gray and white portland cement. Manufacturers usually control the color of white cement by limiting the amount of iron and manganese oxides.

pigments of any kind, preferring to color his products with portland white or gray cement. "I like to keep everything natural," Gore says.

The dark side of white

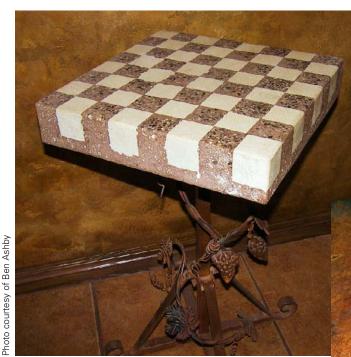
Unlike other contractors interviewed, Ben Ashby, owner of Concrete Encounters in Utah and a partner with Concrete Solutions, is not a fan of white concrete. "I hate it," he says, "and I don't understand the big fascination with it. It's more susceptible to cracking."

An acceptable concrete mix should have a minimum of five gradations of sand, Ashby explains. "The more gradations of sand, the tighter the mixture. (If it has less,) the matrix isn't tight enough and it leaves holes like Swiss cheese. Those



Arizona-based Gore Design Co. is best known for its signature erosion sinks, which are made with white portland cement and white marble sand. Owner Brandon Gore says that at any given time, he has back orders for five to 10 of these sinks, which cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

Photo courtesy of Brandon Gore



Left: This rotating chess table, made by Ben Ashby of Concrete Encounters as a Christmas gift, was constructed using two colors of concrete poured separately. A terra cotta mix with seeded aggregate was poured first, followed by white concrete. Then, the table was polished to expose the seeded and white aggregates.

Below: Matt Hine of Progressive Concrete Coatings resurfaced this floor with multiple layers of a white-based microtopping before he acid-stained the floor with a custom-blended color. The Gaines and Associates logo was created with a stencil and an airbrush-applied custom-colored dye.



Photo courtesy of Matt Hine

holes have to be filled with something and that something is cement."

Proper-sized white aggregates can be hard to find, so they are sometimes left out of some mixes. When that happens, cement fills the voids where the aggregate should be.

And cement is the weakest part of the mix, Ashby says. It's in these areas that cracks are likely.

Cement also has a tendency to go off-white, Ashby continues, so pure white aggregates are needed to create a brilliant white concrete. "These aggregates are hard to find and are expensive. I mean, when was the last time you saw a white mountain?"

To get the proper-sized white aggregates requires a special order, which could mean high shipping costs and fewer profits.

Besides that, Ashby contends, white cement lends itself more to contemporary colors. "And I'm not contemporary," he says. "I like earth tones." He can create earth tones just fine with regular gray cement, he says.

"If you're not familiar with white cement, it may act a little differently than the cement you're used to," says Bernie Igusky, director of logistics, marketing and technical services for Federal White Cement, an Ontario-based company that distributes its product throughout the United States. Others won't notice a difference. This perception, he adds, varies depending on what part of the country you're in.

"But for all practical purposes, it acts similar to gray

Left: This cube sink and vanity, fabricated by Concrete Concepts and Design, is made from Buddy Rhodes Bone White Concrete Counter Mix, which is specially formulated for making countertops, fireplace surrounds, bathroom vanities, sinks, concrete furniture and other architectural elements.



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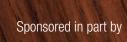
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concrete," maintains Igusky, who also chairs the PCA White Cement Subcommittee. "White cement may be ground finer and may set faster, but there's no general rule."

Gore says in Phoenix, where it gets really hot, white cement sets up quicker and it's a little trickier to work with. "You have to move faster with it," he says, "but it's a little easier to finish." To help slow the set, he says he and his staff use ice water.

But the biggest challenge surrounding white concrete is its cost. "We pay \$30 to \$35 for a bag of white as opposed to \$7 or \$8 for gray," says Gore. "It depends on where you are, where they quarry and the shipping costs."

Rhodes says white cement usually retails for about three times that of gray, maybe more depending on where you are. Hine says he pays three to four times more for white than gray in North Carolina.

"That's one of the hurdles that has to be cleared," says McIntyre. "In the long run, it's more expensive and contractors know that, but the end result is worth the price. You're paying more for a premium product."

White cement also needs its own storage bin separate from the gray, notes PCA program manager of masonry and special products Jamie Farny. And ready-mix trucks that carry white cement concrete must be thoroughly cleaned to prevent color contamination.

When working with white cement, you have to use the right finishing tools so you don't discolor it. "It will show the marks of a magnesium trowel," Rhodes says. Use a stainless-



In North America, white cement is largely produced by three manufacturers: TXI, Federal White Cement Ltd. and Lehigh Cement Co. - White Cement, according to the Portland Cement Association's program manager of masonry and special products Jamie Farny. White cement is readily available throughout the United States and Canada.

Of the five basic types of portland cement conforming to ASTM C150, white cement is generally produced as I, II, III or V, with general-purpose Type I and high-strength Type III being the most common. Types II and V are, respectively, moderate and highsulfate-resistant cements, which offer protection against sulfate attack from soil or groundwater.



One advantage of using white cement for decorative concrete is that it provides a neutral tinting base and consistent color results. Every color is possible with it, from white and black to blue and pink. This blue sink was created by Concrete Concepts and Design.

steel trowel or, better yet, a Plexiglas trowel. Also, your mixing drum should be made of a poly material rather than metal. "Metal will wear and turn the mix gray, defeating the purpose," Rhodes says.





This bar top, created by Matt Hine of Progressive Concrete Coatings, started as a white concrete base and was treated with a custom-blend, multiple-application acid stain. It's been sealed with two coats of a clear polyaspartic coating.



Hidden talents

Whereas most proponents of white cement will agree that its aesthetic qualities have fueled the product's rise in popularity, it has other redeeming qualities when it comes to safety and how white-cement concrete behaves when exposed to sunlight, Farny says.

White cement used for pedestrian walkways and parapet walls on bridges, for example, offer improved safety because of their high visibility. Lighting requirements in projects such as parking lots are reduced because of the product's reflectivity. Finally, white cement used on buildings in big cities can help to reduce urban heat islands, because the buildings don't absorb as much heat as their darker counterparts. They're cooler both inside and out.

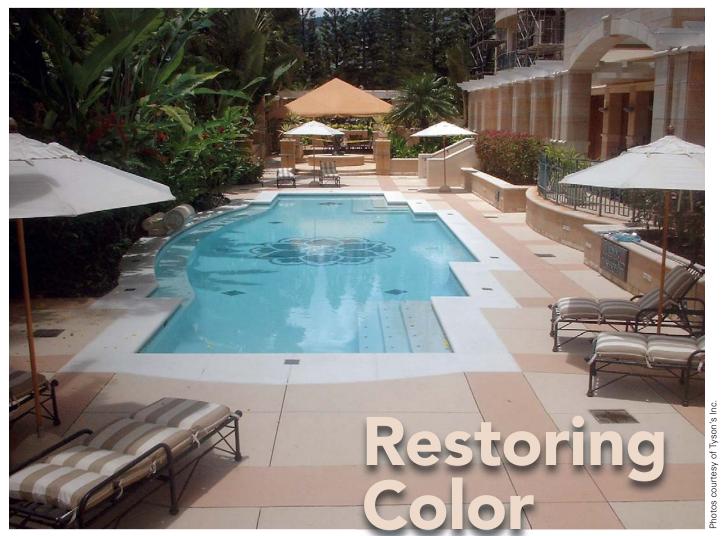
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cement







A swimming pool restoration using Newlook products.



The pool shown above, before restoration.

in previously installed concrete

by Chris Mayo

n 1915, Lynn Mason Scofield, the man who gave his name to L.M. Scofield Co., introduced his company's first concrete coloring techniques. His products included color hardeners, integral color, sealers and chemical stains. Colored concrete has grown in popularity ever since.

But while colored concrete has been used in commercial construction for years, its popularity in private residences has grown significantly over the last several years. It is no longer unusual to stroll up a colored concrete walkway to a private residence, knock on the door and enter to find that the floor, countertops, patio and garage floor have all utilized colored concrete construction.

With the growth in popularity, it probably comes as no surprise that customer expectations have risen as well. The uninitiated often view concrete as an impervious product that will remain unchanged for hundreds of years. And can we really



blame them? Concrete is all around us, and much of it has been in place for decades. Why wouldn't a homeowner or businessperson assume that colored concrete in a home or office will last for centuries?

They will assume just that, and be shocked by reality, unless the concrete contractor tells them the truth: Colored concrete may require some maintenance and care to keep looking fresh.

Glen Roman, owner of Staintec Decorative Concrete Systems, of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and director of training for stain manufacturer Newlook International Inc., notes that decorative concrete has transitioned from very high-end applications to what is now mainstream. Contractors have to transition too.

A lot of contractors don't communicate well with their customers, Roman says. "I find a lot of contractors don't really discuss the product choices that are available or the application techniques they will be using with

their customers until it's too late," he says. "Then it becomes an issue. You always want to have a straightforward, honest discussion with your client about product or application expectations regarding overall appearance, color combinations, longevity and so on."

Clear communication is an advantage, he says. "I don't sugarcoat it. I tell them plain and simple right up front, that (for example) 'Your colored concrete will require periodic maintenance' at their discretion. And they tend to accept that."

Good advice, but the devil is in the details. How much explanation is too much? How much is not enough? If the contractor has a clear understanding of what kind of end result the customer wants, is it really all that critical that the client understand the differences between dyes and water-based stains, integral coloring or acid stains? Do they need to understand efflorescence and water migration, or the difference in acrylic and polyurethane sealers vs. a

wax topcoat?

They do, Roman says. "I try to explain the products and processes to the customer, and I let them make a educated decision on what is most costeffective for their project."

Fade to gray

Chris Sullivan of QC Construction Products says that when it comes to restoring colored concrete, there are a lot of things to consider. "A myriad of products can be used," he says, "and you really need to ask the customer questions like, 'How much do you want to spend and how long do you want it to last?" For instance, if the customer simply desires a quick fix, a relatively inexpensive colored curing compound may be in order.

One should also consider the environment, which the concrete will continue to weather. "Stains are more UV-stable, while organic-based dyes tend to fade with exposure to the sun," Sullivan says. He recommends grinding



The downtown area of Camarillo, Calif., underwent a large-scale renovation.

or chemically removing the top layer of an exterior colored slab and then utilizing acid-based, salt-based or solid-based

Determining the cause of fading is critical. It's an especially complex question when considering integrally colored concrete. "(The appearance of) fading in integrally colored concrete may be the result of weather, traffic, moisture and efflorescence, individually or in any combination," Sullivan says.



Newlook International provides new magic to Disney

There's more than one way to stain a slab, and Newlook International Inc. has found a way that is unique. Its products are modified polymer stains that require no sealer and are easy to maintain.

The most popular types of concrete stains in the marketplace are chemically reactive stains, solvent-based dyes, and acrylics, says Newlook president and CEO Reid Langston, and these stains usually require a sealer to hold the color within the concrete. These traditional stains or dyes are mostly translucent and available in only a limited range of colors. Newlook's water-based polymer product comes in a broad range of solid colors. "It's an old technology, but new to the concrete coloring world," says Langston.

Newlook coloring products have been put to use by Disney World, Mall of America and the Santa Clara Convention Center in Santa Clara, Calif., among others. One thing these locations have in common is heavy and consistent foot traffic. They also share the desire to maintain concrete without disrupting their crowds. "If Disney decides they want to brighten up a high-traffic area, they simply pressure-wash it when the park closes, apply new stain, and customers are walking on it by 9 a.m. the next morning," Langston notes.

Newlook offers 80 different solid colors as well as 80 translucent colors. "With the translucent colors," boasts Langston, "we are able to mimic acid stains and faux finishes with better color control and without dangerous fumes or strong odors."

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Photos courtesy of Glen Roman, Staintec Decorative Concrete Systems

Another restoration project before (left) and after (right) completion of the work. The front entry of this home had suffered differential curing caused by two separate pours.

Most homeowners and even some contractors don't understand that iron oxide pigments in concrete don't break down or fade, Roman says. Despite the facts, alleged integral fading is one of the oldest complaints among customers, he says. The fact that most standard colored concrete jobs aren't sealed doesn't improve the situation.

"If you wet the concrete, you can easily see that the colors haven't changed," he says. "It's the minerals around the color that change the look. Consequently, the surface appears to be chalky or hazy. And the customer is unhappy. If they choose to, sealing the concrete will enhance the look and can easily restore the once-vibrant color."

Fading is most often due to surface effects, Sullivan says. "So if the sealer is maintained, coloring shouldn't fade."

James L. Schwartz, president of Concreteworksdesign in Norman, Okla., agrees. "Outside colors don't typically fade," he says. "The culprit of a dull and faded slab is usually sealer-related. Most good quality 30-to-40-percent solids sealers can take a great amount of abuse, but there is a limit."

In Oklahoma, moisture is a persistent problem in colored concrete,

he says. "We experience extremes in weather in this part of the country. Our clay soils are like a sponge, and they ebb and flow below the surface, resulting in unpredictable and at times rapid moisture migration. This rapid moisture migration brings about excessive minerals being trapped within the sealer itself, commonly called efflorescence, leaving a cloudy, chalky look and ultimately no color."

Another factor regarding moisture and concrete is that concrete is typically alkaline, James says. "The rapid rising and high amounts of moisture rising through the slab lead to a high surface pH, which will aggravate most waterbased colors or sealers and in some cases cause pigment delamination."

Even when moisture is the cause. the methodology for repair is basically the same — remove the sealer, restain or re-dye if necessary, and apply new sealer. Schwartz uses citrus-based or alkaline strippers to remove most

sealers. Tests help him determine the appropriate sealer, usually a modified acrylic. Lower-solids acrylics (15 to 25 percent) typically last about 12 to 18 months, he says, while modified acrylics (25 to 40 percent) last three to five years. "Some UV-protected polys are doing well at five years now," he notes.

Looking out for the client

Roman and Reid Langston, president and CEO of Newlook International, claim that their Newlook products provide an easy and costefficient fix for restoring colored concrete. "Newlook is designed to oxidize without calcification," Roman says. "So, it transitions to a nice finish with consistent color and a natural look."

But even with Newlook, Langston says communicating is key. "There is really no sense in repairing colored concrete without first having a detailed discussion with the customer about warranties and maintenance," he says. "What we try to do, and what we explain to our customers, is to extend the life of a product in a way that will increase the longevity of the concrete and minimize future maintenance needs while maintaining an ecologically responsible approach."

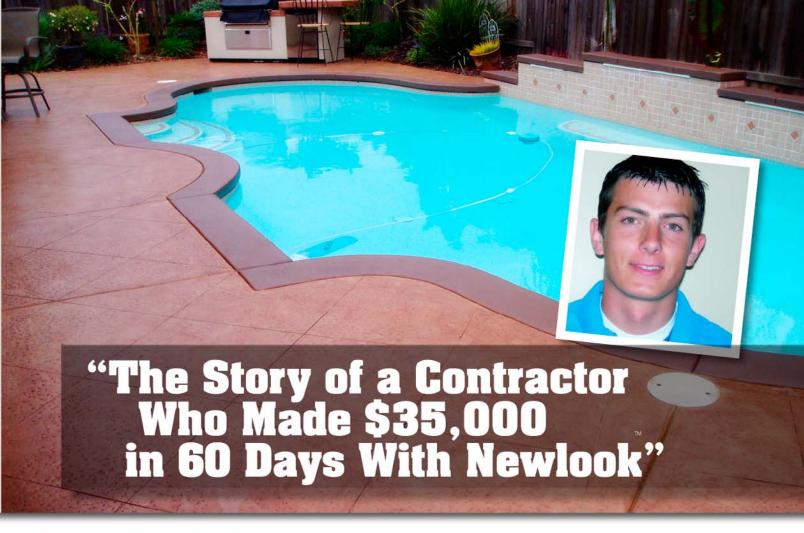
Schwartz and Roman subscribe to the green approach as well. Both utilize green products as often as possible, and Schwartz stresses collection and disposal when a project requires the use of acids and environmentally unfriendly driver agents.

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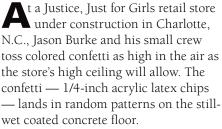




Justice Blue is one of two custom colors created by PPG Industries for the concrete floors at Justice, Just For Girls stores nationwide.

Justice, Just For Girls Retail Floor Charlotte, N.C.

by David Searls



"The higher the ceiling the better," says Jeff Sledge, project manager at Management Resource Systems, the High Point, N.C., general contractor that is building the Charlotte store. "They'll throw it as high as they can to increase the randomness of the way it falls."

By the time Burke and his crew from Columbus, Ohio-based CPI Industrial Co. check out of their motel at the end of the week, the hard, glossy finish looks festive and welcoming but it will also be easy to maintain. Store managers will love that.

The concept of fun, as it relates to preteen girls, is critical to the development of the growing Justice chain. According to the corporate profile of Tween Brands Inc., parent company of Justice, the stores sell moderately priced sportswear for "tween" girls aged 7 to 14, plus accessories, intimate apparel, jewelry and lifestyle items. "Justice celebrates tween girls through an extraordinary experience of fashion and fun in an 'everything for her' destination," states the profile.

As Debbie Rowe, design manager



Photos courtesy of Christopher Kimball Photography





in store planning for Justice at Tween Brands, describes the floor's color scheme, a cream base with color chips of orange, green, white and two different blues, "fun" seems to be the operative word.

And that's before she mentions the iridescent glitter and star-shaped sequins in the PPG MegaSeal SL (Self-Leveling) Crystal Clear, one of four types of PPG MegaSeal epoxy used in the Charlotte store and new Justice stores across the country.

It took three months of trial and error and many flooring samples before PPG Industries and Tween Brands came up with a concept for a unique and attention-grabbing floor prototype. It had to be as cost-efficient as it was striking.

"When we were developing the concept, we knew that carpet wouldn't hold up too well in strip centers," Rowe explains. "And tile didn't look fun and different."

The visual hook is the eight-foot wide, bright blue drive aisle that delivers foot traffic from the front entrance to the customer service counter.

Five pieces of advice on working with retailers

The perspective of a marketing specialist for a decorative concrete product manufacturer by Brandon Carpenter

In recent years the decorative concrete and coatings market has made its way over to the retail market. Retailers have unique needs that they have to address, and decorative concrete and coatings are becoming a more and more popular method for filling those needs.

Five of the biggest issues facing retailers are: installation time, consistency, maintenance, odor and cost.

Every week, day and hour that a retail store is open, it is making money. Therefore, it is no wonder that there is no bigger factor to a retailer than installation time. Time is money. All retail stores being built are fast-track. Store openings are always set to coordinate with another event, such as holidays, mall openings, or the old-fashioned grand opening. Store openings simply cannot be delayed, and there are often liquidated damages when they are.

Retailers are very aware of their tight time needs, and the time that it takes to install a particular floor will often make the difference when creating the specifications. Fast-track construction can be an issue for decorative concrete coating applications, which usually require that no other trades be working during the installation. For this reason, it has become commonplace in the retail environment to have decorative concrete coating applications completed over nights and weekends. Because of this concession, retail projects often go to smaller, more flexible installers rather than larger, less responsive companies.

Another hurdle concrete coating contractors have had to overcome regarding retail work is consistency. The aesthetic beauty of concrete coating work is crafted diligently by hand. It is not the repetitive placing of pieces or gluing covers to the ground. Concrete-coating work moves, flows, lives and breathes. That is perfect for residences and even wonderful for the mom-and-pop single outlet retailers, but it does not work at all for chain stores. Most chain stores strive to have consistency in their stores.

There are a couple of things that can be done to help a coating customer achieve that cookie-cutter repetitiveness throughout a chain. The simplest is to have all of a retail chain's store floors installed by one contractor. It is far easier for one contractor to repeat the same decorative concrete coating job over and over. The floors may not be identical to each other,

but as they are not right next to each other, they can get close enough. At some point it is not practical to have one installer complete all of the applications for a chain of retail stores — at that point, consistency or something with a reasonable resemblance to it can be achieved by using a small network of contractors who are all familiar with the application and are using the same products and finishing techniques.

Having a maintainable floor is also important to retailers. This can be a strength for decorative systems, as there are a wide variety of high-performance sealer options that allow for limited maintenance on a floor. However, if a retailer wants a high-gloss, shiny floor, they have to do something to maintain it. To minimize maintenance, most retailers prefer a low-gloss or matte finish. This is recommended, because it not only reduces maintenance, it also avoids the inevitable wear patterns that show up when retailers rearrange racks. Even if not requested, providing a simple plan for recommended maintenance will be appreciated and save you time answering the unavoidable maintenance questions.

As with any business or residence these days, **odor** can be a serious issue for retailers. Many of the best sealers, stains and products for the decorative concrete and coatings industry have odors. Even if they are not harmful, they can be a problem if they are offensive.

If the retail store is unattached to other structures and is empty during new construction, this may not matter. But if the retail store is in an indoor mall and the mall is open for business, there will likely be an issue with any products that produce an offensive or harmful odor, even if the store is empty. Plan for this ahead of time, and don't gamble on the mall not noticing.

What is the **cost** of time, consistency, maintainability and green products? It's not cheap. Often, the quality of the products and applicator end up being a casualty of cost. Gorgeous decorative concrete or coatings work far too often gets topped with inadequate sealers or coatings, and inferior installers are brought in to give their bungled renditions of beautifully crafted samples or mock-ups.

In any case, the cost of a quality sealer should always be accounted for. There are few things as senseless as a decorative floor finish that is "walking off" due to an inadequate sealer, something far more likely to occur in the high-traffic environments found in retail stores.

Even with quality sealing products, decorative concrete coatings are affordable, and that is why they are showing up now more than ever in retail stores.

Brandon Carpenter works in brand development for Urethane Polymers International. He was previously employed by Floric Polytech Inc. PPG worked with Tween Brands and CPI president Charlie Flanagan to formulate a coating system that would meet the retailer's design needs.

The system they created is installed by CPI workers on a new concrete floor in a sprawling mixed-use Charlotte development called Blakeney Town Center. Monday is a relatively easy first day. Foreman Jason Burke and his crew of two shotblast and thoroughly grind the floor before applying a coat of moisture remediation sealer. Justice shares a standalone building with two other retail spaces, but at the time the work is being completed, only one is occupied. With no immediate neighbors, noise or dust isn't a concern.

Later in the week, they spread PPG's MegaSeal 100-percent solids epoxy floor primer. That's followed by either a cream-colored 16-mil coat of MegaSeal SL Epoxy for the bulk of the floor or a bright blue coat of the same product for the drive aisle. These colors — dubbed Delicate White and



Justice Blue — were developed by PPG specifically for Justice stores.

Then it's time to spread a whole rainbow's worth of those vinyl color chips, manufactured for PPG and Justice by Torginol Inc.

The Delicate White is spread and flaked first. While the epoxy's still wet, Burke and his men don spikes that have been duct-taped to their shoes, a simple invention for making minimal contact with the wet floor while they let the

confetti flakes fly. It takes a good eye to know how to evenly toss color. You don't want to see either clumps or bare patches.

After the floor dries overnight, Burke's team has to scrape and clean off its mistakes, including flakes that land on edge or stick above the base colors. "It's like an ice skating rink when they're done," says Sledge. "It's such a flat surface and high-gloss sheen that anything sticks out."

They then apply the Justice Blue, throw the flakes into this coat, and scrape and vacuum it.

Finally, the crew applies a topcoat of MegaSeal SL Crystal Clear Epoxy spiked with cupfuls of shimmering sequins and glitter — about 7 cups worth for every five gallons of topcoat.

Unlike the colored coats, Crystal Clear is a standard version of MegaSeal. PPG recommends it for decorative concrete over another variation. MegaSeal Clear, because Crystal's proprietary resin package helps it hold up particularly well over time.

The roughly 3,500-square-foot Charlotte location is among the newest of the 300 stores in the Justice chain, which sprang to life in 2004.

CPI is a major contractor for the project, having installed floors for 100 to 150 of Tween Brands' Justice locations across the country. Jeff Sledge of Management Resource Systems has used CPI Industrial on all of his Justice flooring contracts.

The way CPI starts the job makes the installation look simple, Sledge says. "These guys are really great at what they do because they take their time with the prep work. That's the most important step."

Burke has laid floors for the chain in California, New York, Florida and elsewhere. "I like these," he says. They're a change of pace from the more conventional commercial and industrial projects he typically sees, he says.

Still, he knows better than to take anything for granted. Old tile might have to be pulled up, or glue scraped free. "There's always something at every location, but we always get through it," he says.

Except for a slight deviation of the drive aisle to fit the contours of the space, the Charlotte installation goes off without a hitch. The five-day business trip is over. Burke and crew pack up their spikes, glitter and confetti and head off down the road to the next Justice store in the next town.



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Photo courtesy of Surface Gel Tek

Daryl Dansby of The Beauty of Concrete in Leander, Texas, added depth to this star design by etching with more acid stain in some areas and less in others.

Vinyl, paper, plastic, tape or "Flattoo": One of these options might work for you

by Edward J. Winslow

tenciling on concrete opens the door to a world of design options that personalize and enhance a decorative concrete project.

The results can be simple or complex depending on the design you are seeking. Stencils can be used to create tile or stone patterns, corporate and company logos, and unique works of art.

So where do you start? There are a few different types of stencils for creating your pattern, and lots of techniques and products.

The most common use of stencils has been for creating tile, brick and stone patterns with the use of concrete overlays. The process is: Apply the first coat in your grout color, then when that coat is dry, lay out your stencil pattern.

Stencils for this application are vinyl with or without a sticky adhesive backing. Most applicators will likely use ones with adhesive backing, augmented with additional adhesive from a sticky putty placed randomly in little balls to help keep the stencil flat.

Once the stencil is down, the second coat is



Photo courtesy of SureCrete Design Products

applied with your finish color. For instance, a reddish mix can be sprayed on for a brick color. Accents of blacks or grays can be sprayed on top to create a more authentic brick color.

You can also use fiber or strapping tape to create your design. Fiber and strapping tape will not tear when pulled up to expose your pattern. The benefit of using fiber tape is that you can create numerous textures without the risk of bleeding under the stenciled pattern. You can use a trowel, squeegee, broom or any tool to create texture or to work in additional colors.

When you're looking to create logos or highly decorative custom designs, you can work with Flattoos, created by Surface Gel Tek LLC. Flattoos are not just custom stencils, but a system created to make designs with stains and dyes.

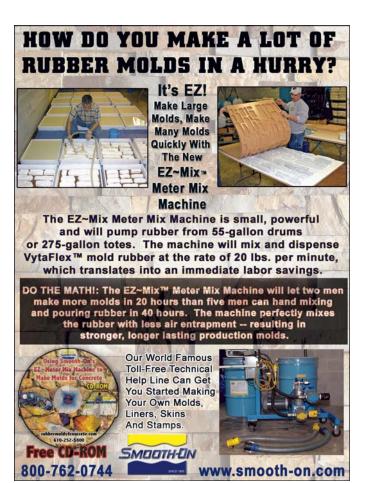
Flattoos are excellent for creating accents, borders and logos. They can be used for vertical wall applications and horizontal floors. You can apply them on ceilings if you have the patience.

Vinyl and paper stencils won't get flat enough to prevent stains and dyes from bleeding under them. When you work with Flattoos, you can use Surface Gel Tek's gelled acid to apply color without it bleeding under the Flattoo stencil. If you are working with acid stains, the gelled acid can be used to pull the stain out of the floor. The stain can be completely removed from within the Flattoo, enabling you to apply custom colors.



Photos courtesy of Surface Gel Tek Denis Wryn of Rose City Bomanite in Portland, Ore., was able to create this "fighting duck" logo with one

Flattoo on a residential garage floor in Cornelius, Ore. With other systems, the applicator has to apply masking to cover up the areas that are completed. In the Flattoo system, the areas to be worked on first are exposed or weeded out. The other areas are cut but left in place. When the applicator has completed one area, that area is sealed before the next area is weeded out. The Flattoo system uses gelled acids, which do not etch on sealed surfaces, eliminating the need for masking.



There are a few more options when working with stencils. Artcrete Inc. has a stencil system that can be used on freshly poured concrete, then rolled and floated in. They have textured rollers that create a result that looks like stamped concrete. Then, color hardener is broadcast over the surface. When the stencil is pulled up the result has a natural look

Engrave-A-Crete Inc., another innovator in the decorative concrete market, has a plastic stencil system that works with their engraving tools.

It's important to understand with stenciling that just because you can doesn't mean you should. Stenciling is a great asset when designing and enhancing concrete, but like with any property improvement, design requires proper balance. Proper design choices and application will add value to a property. In the end that's really what it's all about.

Edward J. Winslow is a partner in Metrocrete.com, a blog that covers decorative concrete products, coatings and related products. His venture also creates online media for other companies.

Want to learn more? Search online at www.concretedecor.net

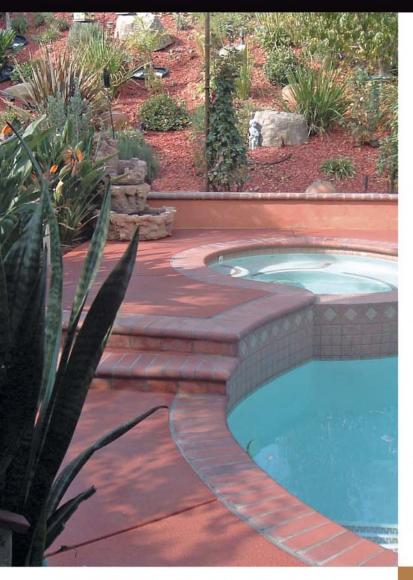
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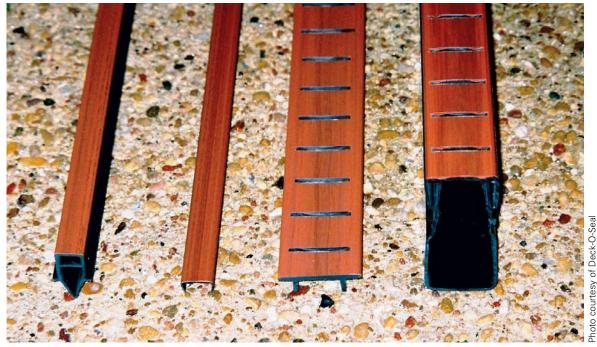
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Signature Series Redwood components: the expansion joint, Renu-Strip expansion joint cap, drain top and deck drain.

Signature Series Redwood Deck Components from Deck-O-Seal

by Emily Panter

fter spending thousands of dollars on a new swimming pool in your backyard, you want to make sure it looks distinctive, and Signature Series Redwood deck drain and expansion joint components are designed to do just that.

Introduced to the market three years ago by Deck-O-Seal, a division of W.R. Meadows Inc., the Signature Series Redwood line offers an alternative to the plain-looking plastic materials commonly used in poolscapes.

"The Signature Series Redwood visually enhances the look of the deck or patio by providing a fresh wood look instead of the old standard white, tan or gray plastic look," says Jim Dill, division manager for Deck-O-Seal.

Because of its superior look, Dill says,

the product line has been well received by the swimming pool industry.

Currently there are four products in the series: Redwood Deck Drain, Redwood Expansion Joint, Redwood Drain Replacement Top and Redwood Renu-Strip. Together they make up the Deck-O-Drain drainage system, which is also available in traditional plastic.

The system collects and carries water away from pool decks and other patio areas. With Deck-O-Drain, there are no trenches to dig or deep excavations to make.

The Redwood Deck Drain and Redwood Expansion Joint can be installed during remodels and new construction. Both products must be cast into the concrete.

The Redwood Deck Drain is a

nondirectional drainage system for decks and patios, while the Redwood Joint acts as a control joint that provides a point of weakness to help control concrete cracking.

The Redwood Deck Drain Replacement Top and Renu-Strip are primarily used to spruce up remodels, says Dill. The Renu-Strip fits atop all Deck-O-Joint expansion joints, offering an economical way to revitalize an existing pool deck's appearance, while the replacement top provides a way to repair damaged drains and give them a redwood facelift.

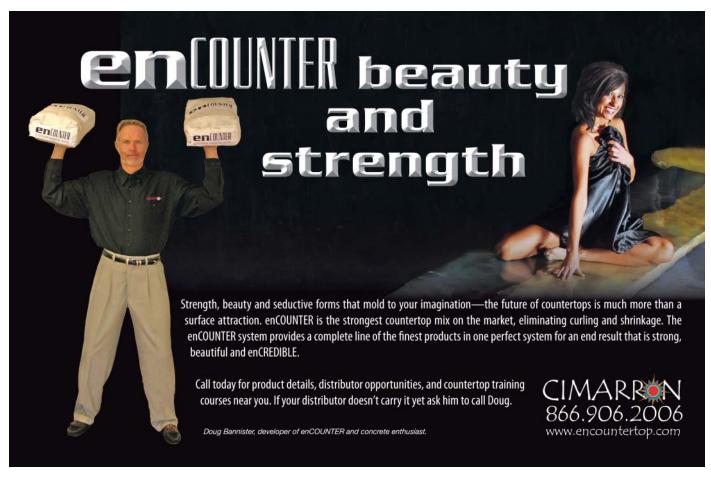
"The products can change the existing from the old look of white, tan or grey plastic to a more pleasing redwood look," says Dill.

In addition to the aesthetic strengths of the Signature Series Redwood product line, the system also provides greater UV stability and better chemical resistance through the use of a superior plastic resin. "The product is co-extruded using standard PVC plastics for the base and a superior plastic resin for the top. The two plastics are heat-fused together during the manufacturing process," says Dill.

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Allen Engineering Co. — HDX 600

The Allen HDX 600 is a new hydraulic-powered riding trowel from Allen Engineering Co. Designed to provide the power and torque demanded for panning by today's concrete finishers, this rider packs a powerful punch in a compact package. The weight-to-horsepower ratio and hydraulic components (including one patent pending device) make the HDX 600 stand out from other hydraulic riders. Standard features include rotor speeds of up to 135 rpm, all-hydraulic drive and steering, and two 46-inch diameter, five-blade rotors that do not overlap.

The HDX 600 is the first in the new series of Allen Hydra-Drive Extreme (HDX) All Hydraulic Riders.

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The newest in the Husqvarna Construction Products trowel line, TR series trowels are designed with the operator in mind.

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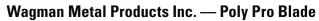
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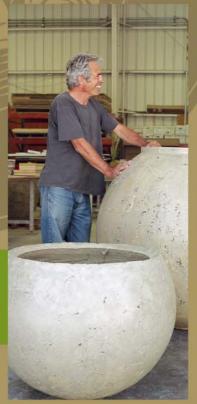
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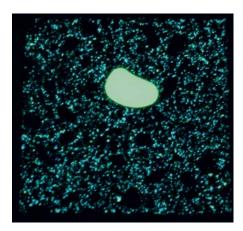




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Product News





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Ambient Glow Technology is available in sand, 8-mm, 10-mm and 12mm stone. It can be applied by methods ranging from hand broadcasting and GFRC to integral finish-coat batch mixing. It can be purchased in quantities of 1 pound, 5 pounds and 20 pounds.

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Mineral stains and stone stamps

Architectural Enhancements LLC has released new vertical stamps. The stamps are designed to look like real stone and have realistic veins and ridges to create an authentic look.

Architectural Enhancements also offers mineral stains that have marbling characteristics like acid, but don't require neutralizing or rinsing. This realistic-looking faux acid stain is environmentally friendly and UV stable. Available for both interior and exterior applications, the mineral stains come in a full spectrum of colors, and custom blends are available.

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New Chem-Coat stains

Chem-Coat Industries has expanded its line of Reactive Concrete Stains by adding four new colors: Gold Rush, Old English, Camel and Santa Fe Red. Variegated and translucent color effects are possible because of the stain's unique formulation.

Chem-Coat Reactive Concrete Stains are available in a total of 12 unique colors, all sold ready to use. Special colors may by available upon request.

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Sakcrete launches leveler

Sakrete, a dry cement mix manufacturer, has added B-1 Trowel Grade Leveler and Underlayment to its range of building and repair products.

B-1 is a high-performance leveler used for interior applications to level and prepare areas for final flooring installations. Polymer-modified and cement-based, the leveler is designed

for a wide variety of surfaces, including concrete, cementitious backer board, exterior-grade plywood and embossed vinyl tile. The leveler is fast-setting and has nonshrink and featheredge qualities that make it convenient and versatile for many applications. It is available in 25-pound bags.

(0 (866) 725-7383

www.sakrete.com

blade action provides double the mixing speed.

EZR 21 S mixing paddles are made of robust welded steel and are galvanized for protection against corrosion and resistance against abrasion. Each paddle is 4 3/4-inch in diameter with an 8 1/4-inch working width. They mix the product from

the bottom up to prevent air bubbles from being sucked into the material. A maximum free speed of 680 rpm and an output of up to 1,200 pounds per hour allow this unit to handle up to 5 bags or 25 gallons of material.

(0 (800) 700-5919

www.csunitec.com



Low-VOC epoxy finish

International Paint LLC has introduced Intergard 1033, an advanced low-VOC chalk-white epoxy finish developed to help maintain a clean white appearance on steel or concrete surfaces in industrial environments.

The new epoxy technology helps prevent the coating from yellowing with unique self-cleaning properties that work when exposed to sunlight. Intergard 1033 has exceptional application performance and can be brushed, rolled or spray-applied directly onto concrete or over primed steel.

> CS Unitec's EZR 21 S Mixer is easy to handle, even while

www.internationalpaint.com

A heavy-duty mixer

mixing the most demanding of materials. This dualpaddle mixer is quick and efficient when mixing heavy products such as mortar, flooring compounds, epoxies, fiber-filled cements, ceramics, granulates, pastes and putties. The blades rotate in opposite directions, eliminating counter torque and making the unit easy to handle, and the contra-





A cooler angle grinder

Metabo Co. has introduced the new W8-115 Quick angle grinder, featuring "cool flow" technology with repositioned brushes for unrestricted airflow and a fan that pulls 35 percent more air through the tool to keep it running cooler during operation.

The 4 1/2-inch angle grinder features an 8-amp motor with 800 watts of power, 19.5 inch-pounds of torque and a no-load speed of 10,000 rpm. Epoxy-coated windings and other features protect the motor and other essential components from harmful dust and debris, extending motor life up to five times that of competitive models.

www.metabo.com

Mesh added to FibaCrete line

Saint-Gobain Technical Fabrics had added FibaCrete Concrete Reinforcement Mesh to its FibaCrete product line.

The new FibaCrete Concrete Reinforcement Mesh is an alkaliresistant fiberglass material designed to



fortify concrete applications. It bonds effectively and evenly for improved tensile strength and ductility to improve stress load transfer, minimizing crack width and spread. It is ideal as a replacement for wire mesh in sidewalks, patio pads, concrete countertops and driveways.

FibaCrete Concrete Reinforcement Mesh is available in 36-inch-by-150inch rolls as well as 36-inch-by-8-foot precut rolls.

(0 (800) 762-6694

www.sgtf.com

Enviro-King unveils four cleaning products

Enviro-King has released four new biodegradable cleaning products that are

The Super-Green-Wash Heavy Duty-Degreaser (SGW-1000), Kitchenclean Cleaner-Degreaser (KC-2000), Multi-Purpose Cleaner-Degreaser (MP-3000), and Tool and Equipment Cleaner (TE-4000) are all concentrated. They are designed to be diluted with water.

© (800) 511-2769

www.enviroking.com



Marshalltown releases texture sprayer

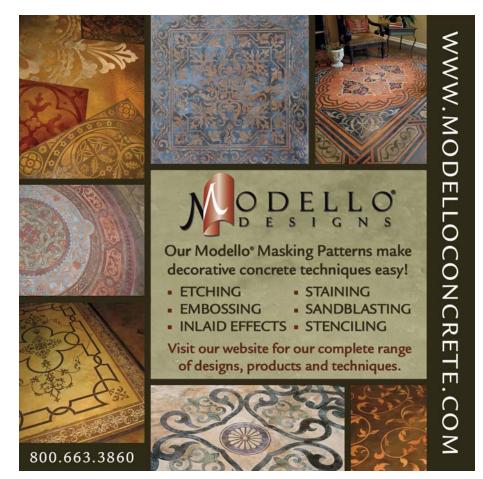
Marshalltown Co. has released the Enforcer Portable Texture Sprayer, which is ideal for spraying concrete overlays.

The Enforcer features a unique power hopper design, allowing for vertical and horizontal spraying without worrying about dripping or spilling material. A pressurized tank feeds material through the new Sharpshooter 2.0 gun, ensuring a consistent spray from beginning to end.

The Enforcer will spray a number of products, including cement-based materials.

(0 (800) 987-6935

www.marshalltown.com





HTC unveils vacuum system

HTC Inc. has introduced a new vacuum system that consists of three models of "industrialized automatic dust extractor": the HTC 5 iAD. HTC 10 iAD and HTC 15 iAD.

The cyclone in this vacuum has been designed to maximize the separation of micro dust particles that are produced when grinding,

minimizing the emission of dust into the air. All models have an automatic purging system that cleans the internal filters, and all have an integrated preseparator that reduces the strain on the filter.

The primary difference between the three models is that the HTC 5iAD has one Longopac unit, while the HTC 10 iAD and HTC 15 iAD have two and three Longopacs, respectively.

- **(**0 (877) 482-8700
- www.htc-america.com

Strong epoxy from Powers

Powers Fasteners Inc. has introduced a high-strength twocomponent structural epoxy anchoring system that meets the new International Building Code for Strength Design (Cracked Concrete).

The new PE1000+ pure epoxy features 3-to-1 holding power and is designed for anchoring threaded rod, bolts, reinforcing bars and smooth dowels into concrete and other solid base materials. The system also can be



used to anchor into hollow masonry materials using threaded rod and screen tubes. The adhesive is a premium, highstrength epoxy that can be installed in both long-term and short-term loading applications.

- **(**0 (914) 235-6300
- www.powers.com







Underlayment pourable before permanent installation

USG has announced that its Levelrock brand CSD Early Exposure floor underlayment can be poured up to 60 days before a building's permanent windows and doors are installed in geographic areas not subject to freezing conditions. The limit in areas subject to freezing conditions is 30 days.

Specific requirements must be followed in conjunction with early-exposure underlayment pours.

Levelrock CSD Early Exposure underlayment can be applied at a much lower thickness than pouredin-place concrete, reducing dead load and allowing a greater number of floors per building for increased square footage. Its self-sealing technology typically eliminates the need to seal the underlayment.

(0 (800) 874-4968

www.levelrock.com

mJobTime offers GPS time tracking, Spanish interface

mJobTime Co., a provider of work-hour and attendance tracking software, has announced two new advanced features in its software system.

The company recently announced the addition of integrated GPS technology to its latest version of mJobTime. This feature lets field foremen transmit wireless time-cards with no extra effort using GPS coordinates. The GPS readings pinpoint each employee's exact location at the moment they clock in or clock out.

The company also released a Spanish-language interface that enables field personnel using mJobTime on PDAs or "smart phones" to view all menu items, labels and messages in Spanish.

(0 (800) 387-1109

www.mjobtime.com



On DVD

L.M. Scofield releases training kit in Spanish

The L.M. Scofield Co. has announced a Spanish-language version of its Lithocrome Chemstain Classic DVD Training Kit, which includes audio and onscreen text in Spanish.

Scofield's Lithocrome Chemstain Classic DVD Training Kit contains a concrete color stain chart, technical literature, and an interactive DVD with video clips of work in process, start to finish. It's ideal for crew training or as a refresher for experienced contractors.

© (800) 800-9900

www.scofield.com

Gore Design Co. releases GFRC DVD

Gore Design Co. LLC has released "Gore Design Co. GFRC: The [r]evolution of Concrete," a DVD that covers glass-fiber reinforced concrete.

This DVD introduces pioneering GFRC techniques that



will help concrete craftspeople produce industry-leading pieces that weigh 30 percent to 75 percent less, require no rebar, and can be formed and cast in a fraction of the time compared to traditional precast. All information is covered, including required materials and equipment, forming techniques, GFRC mix designs and application, as well as finishing and sealing.

((490) 209-4241

👣 www.goredesignco.com

www.ConcreteApothecary.com

On the Web

Green info added to Vexcon Web site

Vexcon Chemicals has recently added "green" pages to its Web site.

The section provides valuable information about the company's eco-friendly product choices and detailed guides for understanding and implementing Vexcon products within the LEED point system.

www.vexcon.com

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Association News



Representatives of the ACI Foundation and the Charles Pankow Foundation finalized their memorandum of agreement during the ACI Spring 2008 Convention in Los Angeles.

American Concrete Institute ACI Foundation develops partnership with foundation

The American Concrete Institute has announced a partnership between its ACI Foundation and the Charles Pankow Foundation for the purpose of delivering innovative, commercially viable applications for the design and construction of concrete buildings.

Under the terms, the ACI
Foundation's Concrete Research
Council, with input from its Strategic
Development Council, will help identify
the research needs of the industry and
will recommend qualified research
projects to the Charles Pankow
Foundation for possible selection,
funding and management. When
research projects are completed, the ACI
Foundation will work to disseminate
the results to the marketplace through
printed and electronic means, plus
possible inclusion in ACI reports,
guides, specifications, and codes.

The ACI Foundation and the Charles Pankow Foundation are currently accepting research proposals for possible funding under the new agreement.

www.ACIFoundation.org

www.pankowfoundation.org

ACI announces new publications

The American Concrete Institute has announced the availability of five new publications to educate and inform industry professionals.

They are: Code Requirements for Residential Concrete and Commentary (332-08), Guide for Modeling and Calculating Shrinkage and Creep in Hardened Concrete (209.2R-08), Guide for the Design and Construction of Concrete Parking Lots (330R-08), Guide to Durable Concrete (201.2R-08), and Guide to Shear Reinforcement for Slabs (421.1R-08).

Publications are available in hard-copy and PDF formats.

(248) 848-3800

www.concrete.org

American Society of Civil Engineers

University of Nevada, Reno, takes Concrete Canoe title

A team from University of Nevada, Reno captured the university's first national Concrete Canoe title at the American Society of Civil Engineers' 21st Annual National Concrete Canoe Competition in Montréal.

The Wolf Pack's 19.5-foot-long, 160-pound white canoe with blue and silver stain defeated entries from



top engineering schools from across North America. The races counted for 25 percent of the teams' overall score. The remaining 75 percent was based equally on a technical design paper, a formal oral presentation and the end product.

The team's closest competitors were from the University of California, Berkeley, and the host school, École de technologie supérieure.

www.concretecanoe.asce.org

Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association CSDA issues new documents

As part of its Specifications and Best Practices for the sawing and drilling industry, the Concrete Sawing & Drilling Association has released two new documents: a Specification entitled "Polishing Concrete" and a Best Practice entitled "CSDA Diamond Cutting Tools for ADA."

CSDA Specification CSDA-PC-113, Polishing Concrete, covers the proper codes and standards to be applied on polishing projects, as well as polishing setup procedures and equipment operation.

CSDA Best Practice CSDA-BP-005, CSDA Diamond Cutting Tools for ADA, provides a quick overview of the ADA standard and outlines the types of concrete cutting tools that could be employed to stay in compliance with the standard.

The Concrete Sawing & Drilling Association has been the leading association for issuing standards, specifications and best practices for the sawing and drilling industry since its founding in 1972.

() (727) 577-5004

www.csda.org

RMC Research & Education Foundation Foundation releases updated Pervious Concrete **Research Compilation**

The revised Pervious Concrete Research Compilation from the RMC Research & Education Foundation is now available.

The new version includes information on pervious concrete research studies completed and underway since the original compilation was published in June 2006. It includes abstracts of study findings and links to study information on the Internet where applicable. The compilation was updated by its original author, Dr. Heather J. Brown, with the Concrete Industry Management Program at Middle Tennessee State University.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees commissioned the compilation to better understand the wide range of pervious concrete research already in existence and to ensure they would not approve funding for duplicative research. As it turns out, the study also gave them the opportunity to partner with one of the CIM program universities, noted RMC Research & Education Foundation chairman George Gregory of Essroc Cement in a press release.

The compilation is available online and in hard copy.

www.rmc-foundation.org

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Initiative urges G8 leaders to adopt sectoral approaches

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development's Cement Sustainability Initiative, currently cochaired by Lafarge and Taiheiyo Cement, has called on G8 members and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to accelerate the creation of a policy framework that will allow the development of effective sectoral approaches.

At a meeting in Paris, Bruno Lafont, chairman and CEO of Lafarge, was joined by the President of the WBCSD, Bjorn Stigson, in encouraging the concept of sectoral approaches to be tabled at the G8 Summit.

The cement sector is best positioned to adopt a sectoral approach on carbon dioxide emissions, thanks to a measuring and reporting protocol developed in 2002 by the WBCSD's Cement Sustainability Initiative. This protocol is now being used by 80 percent of the world's cement industry.

👣 www.csiprogress2007.org

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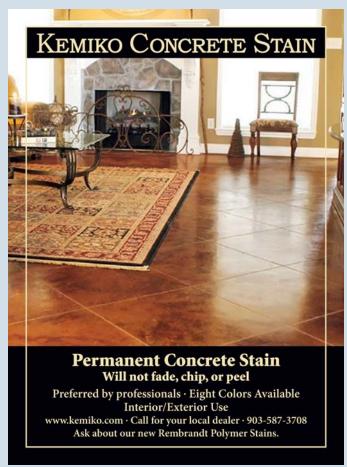
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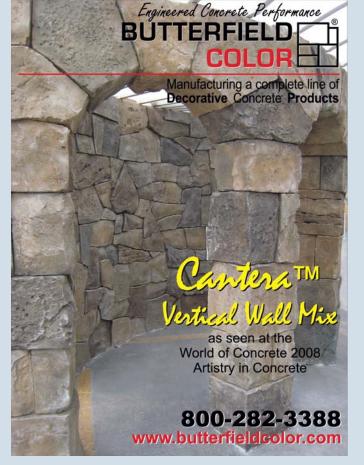
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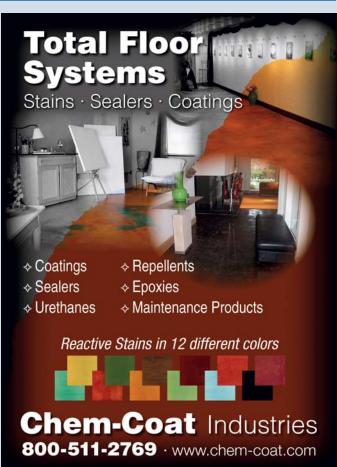
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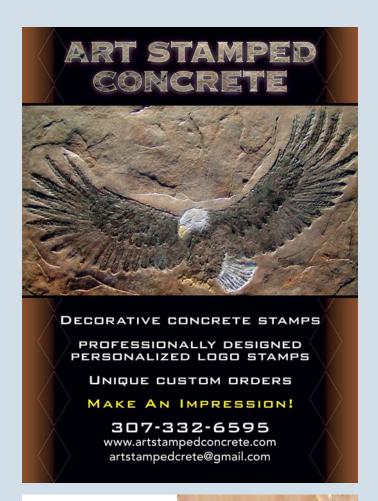














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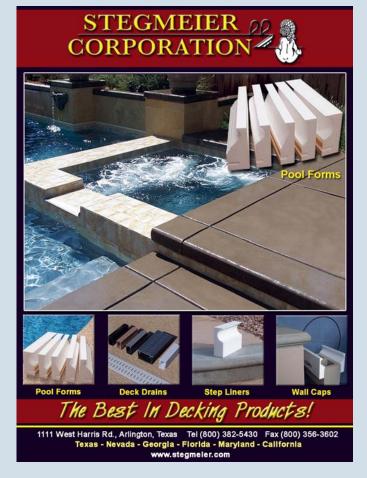














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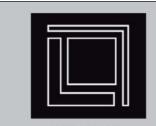
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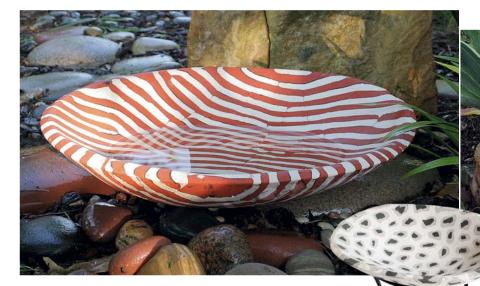
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Samuel Pour Pour



Bowled Over

eborah Brackenbury is no stranger to art — she's been a photographer since the 1980s. But after a search for the perfect birdbath fell short, she made herself into a concrete artisan.

"With an extensive garden, I wanted to provide birds and wildlife with abundant water, but when I began to look for birdbaths I was at a loss to find any that had the sleek, elegant look I wanted," says Brackenbury.

So she decided to take matters into her own hands and create a birdbath using hypertufa, a combination of cement, sand and lightweight aggregate such as peat moss or perlite.

From there, Brackenbury's love for art inspired her to read about constructing small-scale concrete pieces and experimenting with different mixes and forms. Now she is owner of Impure Vessels, a company that specializes in concrete vessels, primarily bowls, vases and plates.

Brackenbury makes her vessels by mixing white portland cement with white sand, lime and metakaolin, creating a clay-like consistency. Then she divides the cement mixture into two to four portions, adding a powder colorant to each section. Next, inspired by her love of baking, she rolls out the colored portions like cookie dough. Depending on the piece, she will use cookie cutters to cut out shapes or stack different colors of concrete and form them into a cinnamon roll shape. After the concrete rests for a few hours, Brackenbury will scrape and carve the vessel, then clean the bottom side with a file after it has time to set.

Having never worked with concrete before, Brackenbury ran into many challenges.

"Since the vessel needs to be cleaned while still green, it is very easy to unmold too soon and destroy the piece," she says. "Also, before discovering scraping and carving the green piece, I attempted to work by keeping each piece of cut concrete clean — that was an insane process."

Now Brackenbury has mastered the process and is able to create two pieces per day, excluding the fact that each piece must cure and be waterproofed, a process that takes about three weeks. She estimates that she has made around 40 successful pieces.

"Perhaps, as with most artists, my

favorites tend to be my most recent successes," says Brackenbury. "Every time I resolve a new design it's an exciting moment and helps me build on the next piece. I rarely make two pieces alike, because the most interesting part about working the way I do is creating a new form and design."

Because each vessel is treated with food-safe waterproofing, it can be used for everything from a birdbath to a serving platter. Indoor pieces can be washed with soap and water, but when washing an outdoor vessel a bleach solution should be used to destroy algae growth and bacteria harmful to animals.

Although Brackenbury says the most exciting part about creating the vessels is the planning and execution of the design, she also enjoys the reaction of her customers.

"Most people think of concrete as a simple, crude building material, the stuff of grey sidewalks and building blocks, so I love the surprise that comes when people see how it can be used to make intriguing works of art," she says.

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