

Stripping Floors

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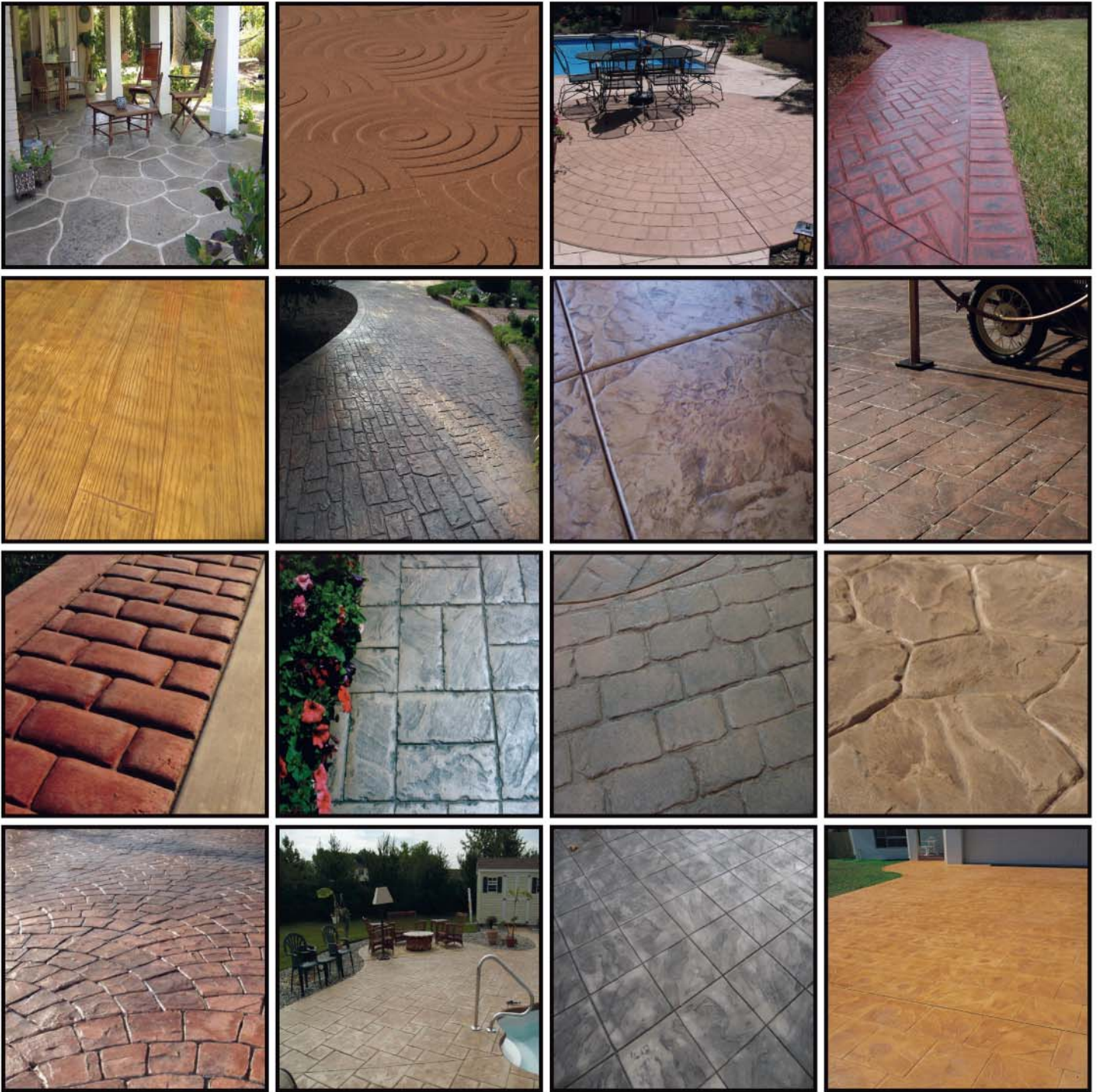
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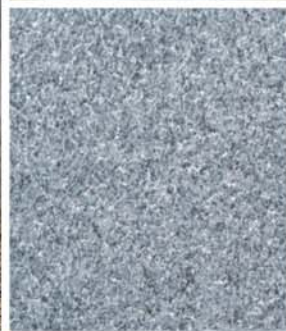
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Publisher's Letter



Dear Readers,

One thing that can be said in favor of this recession is that it's demonstrating that the decorative concrete business has developed roots that are deep enough to sustain turbulent times.

In the past several months I have fielded numerous calls from people in the industry asking for my "temperature read" of the decorative market. In conversations with contractors, stores and manufacturers across the United States and abroad,

I have found that most continue to report optimism and better-than-expected sales, considering the country's circumstances. As a publisher who has served a number of trades over the past 20 years, I speak with confidence when I say that the health of any industry can often be determined by looking at trade magazines serving that industry. I think you'll understand that decorative concrete is performing better than other trades as you begin to turn the following pages.

Granted, this is not a time in which I would encourage anyone to ignore the financial challenges that we are currently facing. Each of us must look for ways to tighten up, and at the same time, continue uncovering opportunities. Training is certainly one option, but getting out in front of potential customers is mandatory. This is not a time to feel sorry for one another, it's a time to get busy doing things for one another. As we've all learned by now, talk is cheap!

When Sheri and I were first married, I was a contractor. I thought that with my skills, I could go anywhere I wanted and great jobs would always follow me. Surprisingly, that was not exactly the case. Add a number of other financial challenges, and I can tell you, I became very creative trying to make ends meet. Sometimes it meant trading labor with someone. Other times it required donating my services to worthy causes, or even helping a competitor on a project they were struggling to complete due to a lack of trained help.

It has been my experience that when I got busy in these ways, I suddenly realized that the sun was no longer stranded behind those dark clouds.

Look closely at this issue and note the multitude of ways decorative concrete is being used. Whether in homes and commercial businesses or alongside our country's highways, decorative concrete is a stimulus package all by itself.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen, Publisher

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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," "stain" or "admixture." In less than a second we'll search our entire archive of articles and information from the pages of *Concrete Decor* and provide you with an extensive list of results.



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From quirky flights of fancy to classic looks, this Canadian contractor can handle it all — even landscaping.

by Christina Camara



42 **Project Profile:** **LDS Temple Walkway, Windermere, Fla.**

Honoring the beauty and grace of a Latter-day Saints church — and making the work site respectable for a wedding — was just another job well done for a Florida contractor.

by Sue Marquette Poremba



46 **Stripping: Mechanical or Chemical?**

When it comes to decorative concrete on floors, sometimes you have to take it off before you lay it down. Take a closer look at your two basic options when clearing the way for new work.

by Amy Johnson

50 **The Upside of Overlays**

For contractors and clients looking to improve an existing slab, fix failing concrete or just put some extra decorative oomph onto a surface, cementitious overlays are tops.

by Elizabeth Gillette



54 **Technology:** **Concrete Comes to Light**

Concrete couldn't possibly glow or transmit light ... right? Wrong. Three head-turning products — LiTraCon, Sensitile, and Ambient Glow Technology — prove otherwise.

by Kelly O'Brien

On the Cover: Todd Rose of ToddRose Decorative Concrete Inc. installed this courtyard at Terra Centre in Sioux City, Iowa, using a Herringbone Brick stencil, color hardener and release agent from Decorative Concrete Impressions. Rose and his crew won an award from the American Society of Concrete Contractors' Decorative Concrete Council for their work. For more, please turn to page 14.

Photo courtesy of ToddRose Decorative Concrete Inc.

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The Grand Prize in the Commercial Exteriors category of the Cemstone 2008 Decorative Concrete Awards went to ThemeScapes Inc. of Forest Lake, Minn.

Cemstone's 2008 Decorative Concrete Awards winners

Cemstone, a Midwestern supplier of ready-mixed, engineered and decorative concrete, has announced the winners of its 2008 Decorative Concrete Awards.

The awards celebrate excellence in design and the use of decorative concrete in residential and commercial construction. Independently judged by Twin Cities landscape architects, winners were recognized for creativity and excellence in four categories: Residential Exteriors, Residential Interiors, Commercial Exteriors and Commercial Interiors. Each of nearly 60 contractor-submitted entries featured Cemstone-supplied colored, stamped or stained concrete.

The Grand Prize winners are as follows: Residential Exteriors: ThemeScapes Inc., Forest Lake, Minn.; Residential Interiors: Foley Construction Inc., Le Sueur, Minn.; Commercial Exteriors: ThemeScapes Inc., Forest

Lake, Minn.; and Commercial Interiors: Nelson Construction Services, Balsam Lake, Wis.

Cemstone operates more than 50 ready-mix concrete plants in Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and northern Iowa.

☎ (651) 688-9292

🌐 www.cemstone.com

ProSpec expands manufacturing capacity in Texas

ProSpec has expanded its manufacturing capabilities with the opening of a Dallas, Texas, plant.

The Dallas facility adds production and inventory capacity for ProSpec's tile installation, flooring repair and rehabilitation, and concrete repair and restoration products.

The ProSpec brand is owned and managed by Bonsal American Inc.

☎ (800) 738-1621

🌐 www.prospec.com



Mapei celebrates expansion

In response to increased demand, Mapei has expanded the size of its Garland, Texas, plant to double its previous square footage.

The new expansion provides more room for the warehousing and shipping departments, and 4 million pounds of products are expected to be shipped from the plant every week. In addition, a state-of-the-art urethane-products production line has been added to the original line to meet a growing demand for wood-flooring adhesives. The second line will allow the plant to double its urethane product capacity. Three old shipping bays now provide space for recycling drums, totes and pallets from raw-material deliveries.

At a party held to commemorate the opening, guests were treated to a luncheon and a tour of the plant.

☎ (800) 426-2734

🌐 www.mapei.com

Webcor Builders and iCrete join forces

iCrete has signed a strategic use agreement with Webcor Builders, a large commercial general contractor and concrete contractor based in San Mateo, Calif. Under the agreement, Webcor will offer the use of iCrete high-performance concrete mixes and quality systems for tall buildings and other major structures.

The companies will work together to win major construction and infrastructure projects on the West Coast, where local and state governments increasingly require stronger, safer, more durable and more sustainable materials with a smaller carbon footprint.

Webcor's current and completed inventory of LEED-rated projects totals more than 20 million square feet, and the company was ranked second in the United States in the Engineering News-Record Top 100 Green Contractors List for 2008.

Founded in 2006, iCrete uses advanced technology and processes to optimize concrete design and production for efficiency, workability and strength, while lowering greenhouse gas emissions produced by the final product.

🌐 www.webcor.com

🌐 www.icrete.com

Northwest supplier plans decorative concrete event

Construction accessory supplier Hardware Wholesale will host its annual Decorative Concrete Event and Contest April

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15-18 in Bremerton, Wash., at the Spurs Riding Club, near the Kitsap County Fairgrounds.

At the event, 15 to 20 decorative concrete contractors will compete using many types of decorative concrete, from flatwork to vertical concrete as well as concrete countertops. Contestants will be allowed to start work Wednesday, April 15, with the public invited to view the results on Saturday, April 18, a day that will also feature vendors and awards presentations.

This event will give attendees a chance to see what decorative concrete contractors from around the Northwest can do, as well as see displays of some of the artisans' past work and talk to each one about any upcoming projects. The event is free of charge.

☎ (360) 779-8814

🌐 www.hardwarewholesale.net

Dust Control Technology earns CE certification for sales in EU

Dust Control Technology has announced that the company's products now meet all established standards for health and safety in the European Economic Area.

Upon receiving the Declaration of Conformity from a certified independent auditor, the company has earned the right to market its products in the European Union and to display the CE Mark as an indication of its successful compliance.

CE labeling is a mandatory conformity mark on many products intended for sale in the EEA. By affixing the CE Mark, a manufacturer asserts that the item meets all the essential requirements of all applicable EU directives and that the appropriate conformity assessment procedures have been applied.

🌐 www.dustboss.com

Husqvarna promises Payback

Payback Points is Husqvarna Construction Products' newest customer reward program.

Within the Payback Points program, customers accumulate points when purchasing most Husqvarna-labeled products (there are a few exceptions).

When a customer makes a purchase from within Husqvarna's dealer network, they enter the purchase online at the Husqvarna Payback Web site. Customers may track and redeem their points online. Items available as redemption prizes include cameras, TVs, jewelry, books, CDs, DVDs, clothing and grills.

🌐 www.husqvarnapayback.com

Husqvarna promotes two

Husqvarna Construction Products has promoted Steve Chamberlin and Chuck Markley to senior vice president, North America, in their respective departments.

Chamberlin will assume the role of senior vice president, North America, Sales and Marketing. He will oversee sales, marketing and customer service. He previously served as Husqvarna Construction Products' vice president of sales and marketing.

Markley manages the daily operations of Husqvarna Construction Products as senior vice president, North America, Operations. His responsibilities include engineering, manufacturing, accounting, finance, information technology and human resources. Previously, he was vice president of operations for the company.

🌐 www.husqvarna.com

Ready-mix promotion at Grace

Grace Construction Products has promoted Michael D. Ragan to vice president, Global Ready-Mix.

In this new global position, Ragan will focus on business strategies for ready-mix concrete in key growth regions around the world. In addition, he will lead efforts to develop key global accounts in the concrete industry and provide guidance and leadership to Grace's newly formed Global Specification sales organization.

Ragan will also retain his current position as vice president and business director for the Americas Concrete and Cement business unit.

Ragan joined the Grace Construction Products division in 1982. He is an advisory board member of the National Ready Mixed Concrete

Association Research Foundation and the National Concrete Industry Management Steering Committee, and he is an outside board member of the Western Construction Group of St. Louis, Mo.

🌐 www.graceconstruction.com

New hire at Nawkaw

Nawkaw has hired Mel Robinson to handle product and service requests for the state of Florida.

Robinson most recently worked for Leesburg Concrete Co., where he worked alongside developers, contractors, architects and project management groups, including those established within the government, county and educational sectors. He has more than 20 years of experience in the design/build, construction and concrete industries in both the United States and Europe.

🌐 www.nawkaw.com

Tindall names prestress manager

Tindall Corp. has promoted Anthony P. Smith to vice president and general manager of the South Carolina Prestress Division.



Smith joined Tindall in 2004 as operations manager of the South Carolina Prestress Division. He previously was regional manager for Metromont Corp. in Atlanta and Nashville. He has also held managerial positions with Dura-Stress Inc. and Consolidated Prestressed Concrete. 🚚

🌐 www.tindallcorp.com

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2008 ASCC Decorative Concrete Council Awards

The Decorative Concrete Council, an arm of the American Society for Concrete Contractors, has selected these projects as the best of 2008 in their categories. These results represent the DCC's first annual decorative concrete competition.

www.ascconline.org

Artistry

Greater than 1,500 square feet

First Place: T.B. Penick & Sons Inc., San Diego, Calif. – Kellogg Park, San Diego, Calif.



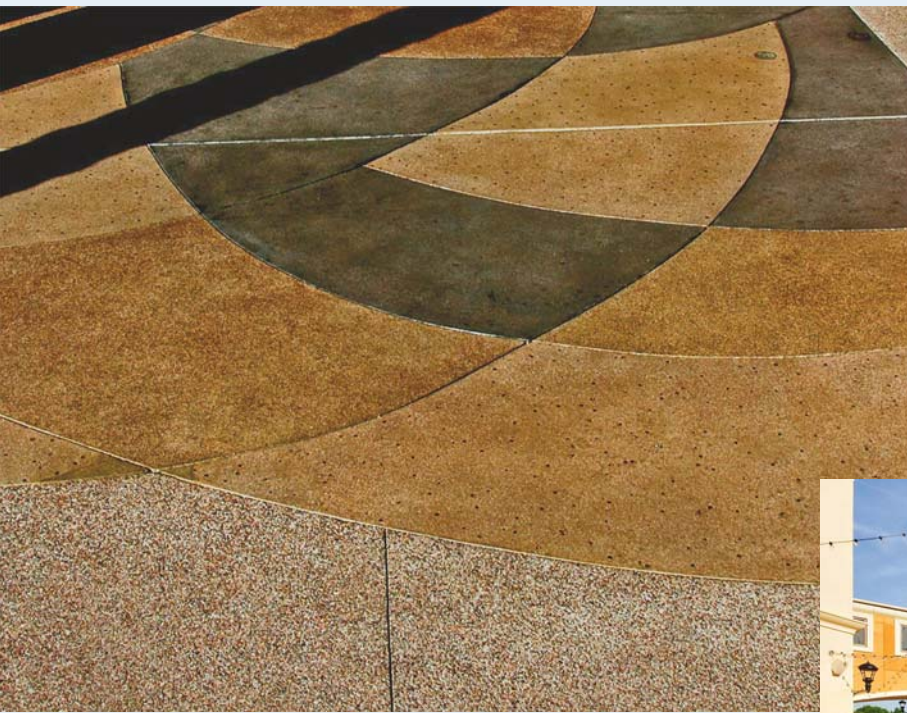
Artistry

Less than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, Calif. – J. Ellington Library, San Jose, Calif.

Second Place: Royal Coat Decorative Concrete Inc., Morehead City, N.C. – Maritime Museum Lobby Floor, Beaufort, N.C.





Cast-in-place, special

Greater than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Progressive Concrete Works Inc., Phoenix, Ariz. – Summit at Copper Square, Phoenix, Ariz.

Second Place: Site Tech, Roswell, Ga. – Renaissance at Colony Park, Ridgeland, Miss.



Cast-in-place, stamped

Greater than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Progressive Concrete Works Inc., Phoenix, Ariz. – Citadelle, Glendale, Ariz.

Second Place: Patterned Concrete of Cincinnati, Fairfield, Ohio – Kentucky Department of Transportation, Fort Wright, Ken.



2008 ASCC Decorative Concrete Council Awards

Countertops

First Place: Tom Ralston Concrete,
Santa Cruz, Calif. – Magid Patio,
Steps and Walls, Aptos, Calif.



Overlay/stamped

Less than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Unique Concrete, West Milford, N.J. –
Hamburg Baptist Church, Hamburg, N.J.



Polished

Greater than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Colorado Hardscapes Inc., Denver Colo. –
UCHSC Education Building, Fitzsimmons Campus,
Aurora, Colo.



Stained

Greater than 1,500 square feet

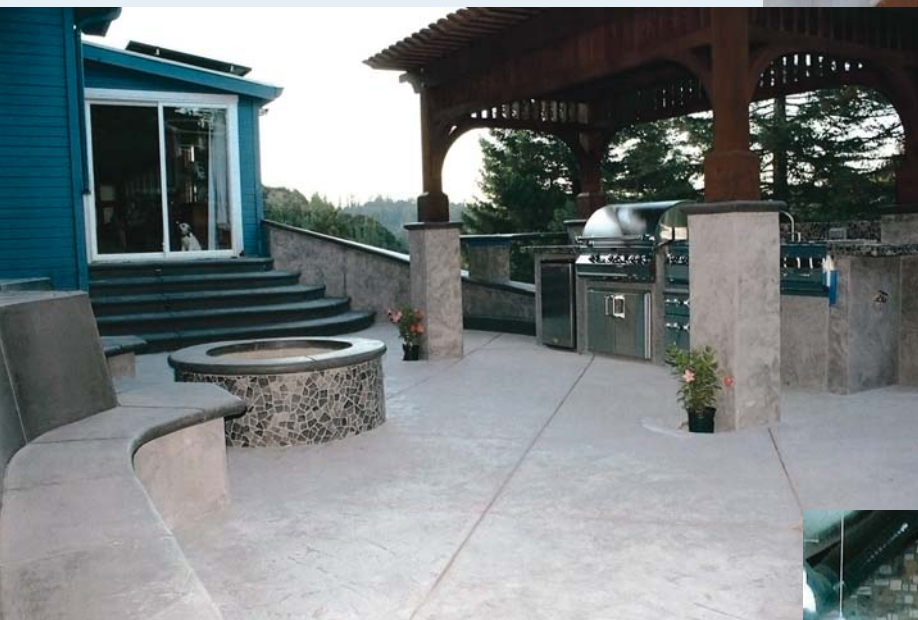
First Place: Colorado Hardscapes Inc., Denver Colo. – Solterra, Lakewood, Colo.



Stencil

Greater than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Todd Rose Decorative Concrete Inc., Lincoln, Neb. – Terra Centre, Sioux City, Iowa



Vertical

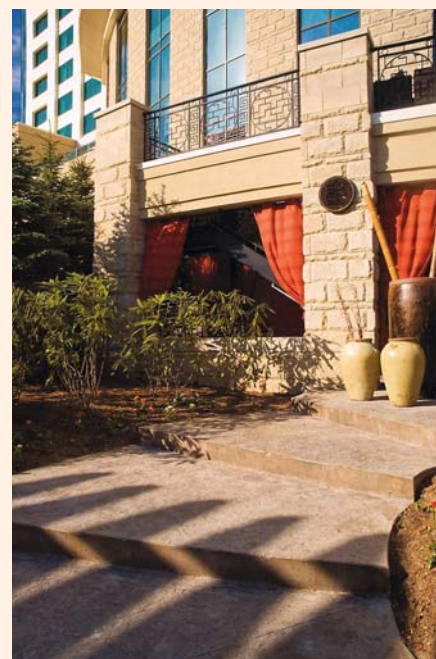
Less than 1,500 square feet

First Place: Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, Calif. – Germany Patio and Wall, Scotts Valley, Calif.

Second Place: Sundek of Washington, Chantilly, Va. – The Potomac Club, Woodbridge, Va.



2008 L.M. Scofield Decorative Concrete Awards



L.M. Scofield Co. has announced a Grand Prize Winner and several finalists in its 2008 Decorative Concrete Awards.

Nine finalists were selected out of 37 entries. For each of three regions of the United States, there was one commercial finalist, one residential and one selected for "Unique Application." The Eastern Region/Commercial winner — J.L. Marshall & Sons Inc., of Pawtucket, R.I. — took home the Grand Prize.

www.scofield.com

Grand Prize Winner

Scott Bulger, J.L. Marshall & Sons Inc., Pawtucket, R.I. – MGM Grand at Foxwoods, Mashantucket, Conn.

The MGM Grand at Foxwoods concrete project consisted of 105,000 square feet of integrally colored, stamped concrete for the hotel porte-cochere, pool deck and exterior walkways of a new casino resort.

The integrally colored stamped concrete — about 100,000 square feet — was created mainly with Chromix Admixtures for Color-Conditioned Concrete in Spring Beige, stamped with Lithotex Pavecrafters Ashler Stone Embossing Skins and using



Lithochrome Antiquing Release in Deep Charcoal color. The balance of the integral colored stamp-work was Chromix Admixtures in French Gray, stamped with Lithotex Pavecrafters Fractured Slate embossing skins and using the Deep Charcoal antiquing release agent.

In addition, there was also 7,000 square feet of stained concrete. The stained concrete was placed without integral color in the fall of 2007 and allowed to cure over the winter. The staining operation began in the spring

with the return of temperatures warmer than 60 degrees, using multiple colors of Lithochrome Chemstain Classic, including Faded Terra Cotta, Antique Amber, Padre Brown and Dark Walnut.

The judges were: Bent Mikkelsen, publisher, Professional Trade Publications; Jim Peterson, president, ConcreteNetwork.com; Mike Harrington, decorative concrete product specialist, Chas. E. Phipps Co.; and landscape architect Matthew Carlile, ASLA, of the Des Moines, Iowa, office of Confluence.



Finalists

Western Region/Commercial:

Brian Ciocci, Lasting Impressions
in Concrete, Petaluma, Calif. –

Ratna Ling Retreat Center, Cazadero, Calif.

Western Region/Residential:

Brian Ciocci, Lasting Impressions
in Concrete, Petaluma, Calif. –

Houtary Residence



Western Region/Unique:

Josh Hostetler, Heritage Concrete
Construction, Kalispell, Mont. –
Concrete "Rug"

Central Region/Commercial:
Shawn Wardall, Specialized Construction
Services Inc., Waterloo, Wis. –
Forest County Potawatomi Cultural Center
and Museum, Crandon, Wis.



2008 L.M. Scofield Decorative Concrete Awards



Central Region/Residential:
Shawn Wardall, Specialized Construction
Services Inc., Waterloo, Wis. –
Berger Residence

Central Region/ Unique:
Gregory Mata, Cutting Edge Decorative
Concrete, Richfield, Ohio –
Hawk's Creek Residence



Eastern Region/Residential:
Nick Sorrentino, Patterned Concrete
of Pennsylvania, Allentown, Pa. –
Dadonna Residence



Eastern Region/Unique:
Michael Cluer, Mathews Nielsen Landscape
Architecture, New York, N.Y. –
Pier 86/Intrepid Museum, New York, N.Y.



Cheng Concrete Circle of Distinction Design Challenge Winners

Cheng Concrete awarded Best in Show in its fifth annual Circle of Distinction Design Challenge to Keelin Kennedy and her Chicago-based firm, Barefoot Design.

Kennedy won for her “Carder Table,” a dining-room tabletop that features a ribbon of sassafras wood running through the center of the concrete.

At an awards announcement held at the 2009 World of Concrete show in Las Vegas, Cheng Concrete founder Fu-Tung Cheng praised the piece’s simplicity and beauty. “The craftsmanship is very elegant,” he said. “It’s letting the natural element come out. And the concrete is actually just acting as a foil for the log. It’s not trying to dominate it. It’s not trying to supplant it. It’s yielding to the wood. It’s such a nice contradiction — it’s almost like stone and wood. It reminds me of how the Japanese use wood and meld it with stone for foundation work and such.”

Cheng was one of three judges of the contest, along with interior designers MaryJo Camp, CKD, CBD, CID, and Lilley Yee, CKD, CBD, CID, ASID. The panel awarded Best in Category and Honorable Mention distinctions in 12 categories.



Each qualifying entrant in the contest was a member of the Cheng Concrete Exchange, a resource group for concrete countertop crafters. There were 143 entries in this year’s contest.

www.chengconcrete.com

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“Best in Category” Winners

Best of Show:

Keelin Kennedy, Barefoot Design, Chicago, Ill. — Dining room table for 10



Cheng Concrete Circle of Distinction Design Challenge Winners

"Best in Category" Winners



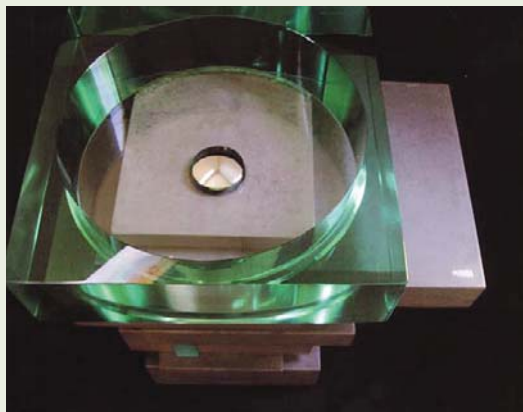
Fireplace:

Eric Pottle, Surfaceworks AZ, Peoria, Ariz. — Sand-colored floating hearth with toe kick



"Funk"-tional feature:

Steve Silberman and Tommy Cook, Absolute ConcreteWorks LLC, Poulsbo, Wash. — Hayvaz Project/countertops and backsplash for kitchen/espresso bar



Sculpture:

Ian Wyndlow, Liquid Stone Studios, Ladysmith, B.C. — Cubes for sink base, with gaps for lighting and plumbing



Furniture:

Michael Littlefield, Melange Studio, Kennebunk, Maine — Chair with formed concrete base and fitted piece of lucite on back



Bath:

Jack Cooper, Jax Custom Surfaces Inc., Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Calif. — Bath including double-basin vanity counter and shower panels



Exterior/Outdoor:

Seth Ernsdorf, Ernsdorf Design Inc., Los Angeles, Calif. — Outdoor coffee table/fire table with pebble and sand striation and vanilla bean finish



Integral Sink:

John Newbold, Newbold Stone Architectural Concrete, Austin, Texas — Minimalist white sink with integrated towel holder



Decorative Finish:

Sean Dunston, Concrete Jungle Design, Colorado Springs, Colo. — Kitchen countertop with river of "creamsicle" colors



Functional Feature:

Sean Dunston, Concrete Jungle Design, Colorado Springs, Colo. — Concrete stairs with decorative texture for slip resistance



Commercial/Retail:

Gabriela Sanchez-Vegas, Concreative4, Miami, Fla. — Countertop for information desk at Dolphin Mall, Miami, Fla.



Interior Kitchen:

Sean Dunston, Concrete Jungle Design, Colorado Springs, Colo. — Kitchen pieces (total weight: 3,775 pounds)



Water Feature:

Randy Rand, Concrete Artisans, Milford, Maine— Waterfall effect in sink 🐾



Photo courtesy of Advanced Cleaning Services

Solving Sealer Problems

There are three things in this world that have room for improvement: cell phones, microwave popcorn and, you guessed it, concrete sealers. There have been more prayers and cuss words offered up regarding sealers than over any other decorative concrete issue. I have always felt this way, and my suspicions have been confirmed during the Q & A part of the “Troubleshooting Decorative Concrete” seminar at every World of Concrete. I’m betting 90 percent of the questions are related to allegedly foolproof sealers that went south.



by Doug Carlton

Well, before you do something drastic, put that sharp trowel down and take note of some successful remedies.

Let me lay some groundwork by saying most, but not all, sealer problems are moisture-related. Moisture issues can include sealing too early, humidity, lawn sprinklers or drainage issues. The bottom line is that you as the decorative installer

inherit all of the above issues because they make your work look bad. Believe me when I say that I have pointed fingers in every direction possible, and inevitably I was still the one that had to repair the problem. This is not to say proper front-end work (prior to beginning installation) will not hold off many of these issues. This type of front-end work is invaluable. But many times, you will find yourself helpless regarding what happens on the job after you’re done. Trust me.

Many sealer problems are not recognized until your client calls for a reseal or rewax. Some customers call for a reseal thinking this will fix the problem areas. It won’t — in fact, it will only make things worse. We must solve the existing problem before we can spray a new coat of sealer. I have been tempted many times to simply clean and reseal, justifying it by saying that the damaged areas were not my fault, but I haven’t. Fixing the issue is the only option, and the good news is that it may be much easier than you think. Remember, guys, that this is a win-win situation, because there is great money

in decorative concrete maintenance. Let's look at some sealer removal methods that will help you get your sealer issues back on track.

Solvent solutions — Using solvents such as xylene will break down most sealers, but I must warn you this is a smelly and messy way of doing it. For years my company used this method, and each job seemed to be worse than the last. My crew, definitely not whiners, got to where they would look like I had asked them to change a baby's diaper when it was time to strip a sealer this way. I can't blame them. If you must use this method, be sure to have your work area well vented and your lungs and eyes protected. Try using cotton sheets to hold the solvent to the concrete surface, and keep them moist. This method is slow but it will work. It will also work best in the cool temperatures of morning.

Soy-based strippers — I have tried some of the soy-based strippers, and I must be honest and say the verdict is still out. I feel they will work, but contractors should realize that this may take some time, especially when stripping multiple coats of sealer. The good news is that the smell is a nonissue, and disposal is a nonissue because of the biodegradable nature of soybeans.

The stripper itself can be expensive unless you have a local distributor in your area. It will be well worth your time to call the manufacturer ahead of

time to make sure you have the right product and instructions. Again, as with most removal methods, the number of seal coats will determine the time needed to strip. The good news is that in most cases not all the sealer needs to go away, just the damaged or failing part. This stripper type definitely has its place in the market.

Hot water — Now this is where the rubber hits the road. This removal method is my favorite. I have found it to be the most effective and cost-saving way to remove sealer yet.

My company will usually outsource sealer removal to a company that specializes in stripping coatings with the use of hot-water pressure washing. The results have been nothing short of amazing and allow my crew to stay focused on moneymaking projects. Many hot-water systems allow for flexible water temperatures until the necessary extraction temperature is reached. This combination of hot water and pressure is hard to beat. Because of this high pressure, little water is used, especially when you factor in that the sealer is removed and the concrete is made clean and ready for a fresh coat of sealer all in one step. Some stubborn sealers may need a light chemical treatment prior to being pressure-washed but most won't. In my opinion, this is the most overlooked method of repairing sealers I know. Obviously, using it on many indoor projects would be a challenge, but I recommend doing

some research on this method of removal.

Dollar consciousness

Most contractors across the country — and the world — are in a preservation state of mind in this current economy, my business included. Some interesting numbers have been released lately, and one thing especially caught my eye and I wanted to share it with you for what it is worth. Two of the few "blue-chip" corporations claiming profits in 2008 were McDonald's and Wal-Mart. I'm sure you know that both of these companies are built on low prices and will service middle- to high-end users but do not market to them. Guys, watch for the trend that this sets, because your services, at least in this economy, must be perceived as affordable and durable. Evaluate your services and promote simple yet basic options for customers that are extremely dollar-conscious. Your high-end customers will buy regardless, but the high end is shrinking with thousands of broke millionaires. The goal should be to provide outstanding service at an affordable price in order to keep fresh cash moving through your business. This is what it will take to come out the other side. 📁

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



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We're good, but we're not perfect. Once we start thinking that we know everything, or that polished concrete is right for every situation, then we are in trouble. In this economy, we cannot afford a single misstep. Now is the time to focus on running a business correctly, and that includes being aboveboard and ethical in dealings with our customers and vendors.



by Peter Wagner, CSI

I've enjoyed earning my living in this industry since 2000, and this column is the start of my fifth year writing for *Concrete Decor*. This year will be the harshest environment for the concrete industry in decades, yet those who focus on polished concrete have the ability to outshine the other areas, as restoration is an integral strength of ours.

It is important to reflect on what polished concrete delivers to our customers. Too often we forget our strengths and foundation, and when we're not thinking clearly, or are too harried, our weakness can cause us to take the easy way out. Please remember that ease very rarely equals performance, and that performance is a key component of our industry.

Recently, L&M Construction

Chemicals completed its first certification training for 2009. Because of existing economic conditions we felt more compelled than usual to stress the foundation and strengths of our industry. Anytime an industry grows, there will be individuals who are going to take shortcuts, knowingly or not. We were committed to providing our new certified installers with a good start to minimize the bumps that they will encounter down the road. Regardless of the industry, all manufacturers should be dedicated resource centers for their customers.

As you grow your business, it will be necessary to make many decisions. With the proper education you will be prepared to make the right decisions. Think about the following four questions:

1) Should you feel comfortable skipping diamond-grinding steps? Not if you understand scratch patterns (See "Polished Perspectives," February/March 2005).

2) Do you understand the chemical activity that occurs between a silicate (sodium, potassium or lithium) and the calcium hydroxide formed during hydration of the concrete? If so, then you will understand the direct correlation between length of time and the ability of the silicate and calcium hydroxide to form calcium silicate hydrate.

3) Do you know that there is a connection between hydration, the creation of calcium hydroxide and the strength of the concrete? You had better, because this process is the basis for the performance that you promised your customer.

4) Can you polish concrete without the addition of a chemical densifier? Sure, but you won't if you truly know what a chemical densifier delivers in addition to strength and increased abrasion resistance — features such as elimination of dusting and increased repellence.

Polished concrete began as a means to fix spalling and dusting concrete. Today polished concrete is also recognized for its ability to deliver strength and abrasion resistance, create a design-oriented floor with concrete dyes, stains, integral colors and dry-shake hardeners, and be the greenest, most sustainable flooring option available. As for life-cycle costing, no one beats us.

For all of these attributes to translate into real-life benefits for

our customers, a performance-driven flooring system has to be delivered. Compromising performance is not an option.

Before you can deliver the product that you have promised, it is essential that you know and understand the basis for the claims that you are making. For instance, the correct means to verify the abrasion resistance of your concrete floor is ASTM C779, aptly titled "Standard Test Method for Abrasion Resistance of Horizontal Concrete Surfaces." Do your homework. Make sure the information that you have provided is correct, and equally importantly, that testing is run correctly. Ask for independent third-party testing such as that from CTL Laboratories. As I stated in this column in May 2008, be wary of unsupported results. Don't do your customer and yourself a disservice by taking the easy way out.

Over the past decade our industry has become more proficient, more professional. As you move forward into 2009, remember what I said about ease not equaling performance. If it is

so simple that anyone can do it, then why should your customer hire you, a certified professional, when they can just as easily call a temporary employment agency?

Through natural selection, our industry will most likely lose more installers than we gain, and that is not necessarily bad. Fight the inevitable by being a person and company with knowledge and integrity. Fight the urge to skip steps or deliver sub-par work, even once, or you could very well become one of those companies we say goodbye to in 2009. Think long-term, not short-term, both for yourself and the industry, so that we may all have a successful year.

I hope you enjoyed this year's World of Concrete in Las Vegas, and good luck in the coming year. 📧

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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Scoring Green Points

"Greenwashing," as I discussed in my November column, means telling your customer that a product or a construction technique is green without being able to back up that claim. Luckily you won't have to worry about that with concrete, since concrete's green attributes are clear and quantifiable.



*by William D.
Palmer Jr.*

To start learning how to describe concrete's green qualities, you need to understand how green points systems work. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the most commonly used green rating system for buildings in North America. There are separate LEED programs for commercial buildings (LEED-New Construction) and residential buildings (LEED for Homes). Both work in the same way, although each awards points for different things.

Any home hoping to gain LEED certification must be designed and built to meet a minimum level of performance by achieving certain prerequisites — for example, by taking

steps to control indoor moisture. Going beyond the basics allows the home's designer to claim additional points. The attributes of a green building and the number of credits available are listed in the rating guidelines. Then, specific features of the building are described that can result in points. In LEED for Homes, there are a total of 136 points available. To be LEED certified, the home needs at least 45 points; Silver requires 60, Gold 75, and Platinum 90.

This year, LEED 2009 is being rolled out. This will radically change the point structure of LEED for New Construction, although LEED for Homes is not scheduled to change this year. This new LEED-NC program does not drastically change what points are awarded for, but it changes the weighting of points to emphasize carbon reduction and increases the total number possible.

For residential construction, in addition to LEED, there is the National Association of Home Builders' National Green Building Program. NAHB and the International Code Council are currently in the process of turning this program into the National Green Building Standard by using the ANSI consensus process. The NAHB Guidelines also provide a point system for various aspects of green

construction. This program is growing dramatically — since its introduction in 2005, more than 1,500 homebuilders have earned NAHB's Certified Green Professional designation, indicating that they understand how to build homes in accordance with the program's guidelines. (Note: When or if NAHB and ICC get ANSI approval on the National Green Building Standard, the numbering system and categories will completely change from those in the Model Guidelines — we'll keep you informed of progress on that.)

The biggest obstacle for concrete construction both with LEED for Homes and the NAHB Guidelines is that both are written with timber construction in mind. In many cases, concrete construction of any kind is either ignored or downplayed. For example, NAHB provides credits for durable design that “minimizes degradation and weathering of materials and enhances life expectancy.” The specific things that it says can be done to meet that requirement never include the most durable material of all, concrete.

In this column, I am going to focus on decorative concrete floors and how they can contribute to green points, although many of the same arguments can be made for concrete walls or even concrete countertops. A potential customer (whether an owner or an architect) might ask how a concrete floor could possibly be considered environmentally friendly. If that question arises, here are your talking points.

Thermal mass: Concrete takes a while to heat up — and also a while to cool down. That's because it has what's called thermal mass — heat storage capacity. A concrete floor has



Photo courtesy of Colorado Hardscapes

The University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center utilizes polished concrete floors because a polished finish offers durability, low maintenance requirements, and green attributes.

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lots of thermal mass, which allows concrete to dampen out the highs and lows of temperature fluctuations in a room, reducing the overall heating or cooling load. That saves energy and also allows a size reduction in heating or cooling systems. Properly designed, concrete floors can also contribute to passive solar heating and cooling. Energy performance in LEED for Homes is worth as much as 34 points (Credit EA 1), so this is potentially a huge contribution. In the NAHB Guidelines, this would qualify for points under Section 3.2.1.

Radiant heating: Concrete floors, whether elevated floors or slabs on grade, are the perfect medium for radiant heating. Utilizing embedding plastic tubing in the concrete, radiant floors provide quiet and comfortable heating and cooling that can result in energy savings of 10 percent to 30 percent, according to the Portland Cement Association. Another advantage of radiant heat is that it easily integrates into solar heating systems. Again, the

added energy efficiency contributes to credit EA 1 in LEED or Section 3.2.1 in NAHB.

Recycled content: Both LEED and NAHB encourage the use of recycled content and award points for doing so. Concrete can easily incorporate fly ash and slag as supplementary cementitious materials. In some cases, it's even possible to go beyond that and use recycled concrete as aggregate, although that is seldom done — a ready-mix producer once told me that the problem with crushed concrete aggregate is that if it gets wet it begins to set up early due to its proximity to unhydrated cement in the concrete, so it is difficult to work with. But using fly ash and locally produced aggregates yields LEED credits for environmentally preferable products (Credit MR 2.2). NAHB Section 2.4 provides points for using recycled materials without being specific about what that means.

Indoor air quality: Concrete floors make a huge contribution to indoor environmental quality, simply

because of the fact that cured concrete is completely inert and implies the absence of carpeting or vinyl that can release volatile chemicals into the air. In LEED, points can be claimed under Credit EQ 1 by complying with the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Indoor Air Package. In the NAHB Guidelines, claiming this credit is more difficult, although a case could be made under Section 5.4, Innovative Options for Indoor Environmental Quality. Points are, however, awarded for using a vapor retarder beneath the slab (Section 5.3.3) — and they only require a 6-mil barrier, which is actually an inferior barrier by current standards. I never recommend less than a 10-mil barrier.

Creative designers can probably find some other ways to convert concrete floors into a few extra points. Credit could be claimed for a durable structure that requires little maintenance. Termite and mold resistance are other areas where concrete has big advantages. Waste reduction is another potential credit — there's little scrap generated by concrete construction.

So the next time you hear potential clients say that concrete isn't green, hit them with these facts and you might just get the job. 🚧

William D. Palmer Jr., P.E., is with Complete Construction Consultants, where he develops technical and educational resources for the construction industry. He can be reached at wpalmer@cee3.com.

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Anymore, the world we live and work in moves so fast, just going through the motions seems to have become the norm. Taking time to really understand how or why a product works is not even on the radar screen. Over the last 12 years, I have seen this lack of knowing how and why show up as a common thread in my conversations with installers when troubleshooting problems. I have always been an inquisitive person, and have made it a central point of my trainings, presentations and conversations to not only provide answers, but to try to explain, in everyday language, the process of why and how a product or process works, and therefore, why it is important to follow all the steps outlined in the application guidelines.



by Chris Sullivan

With that in mind, give me a few minutes of your busy day, and let's dig a little deeper into the three most common concepts that affect decorative concrete applications. Not surprisingly, these concepts factor into most of the problems we encounter in the decorative industry.

If you have spent any time in our industry, I am sure you have either heard or said one of the following statements: "It all wiped off, and we were back to gray

concrete!" "It was flaking off!" "I could scratch the sealer with my fingernail!" "The concrete has been down for months, but the color just keeps coming off!" What do all these statements have in common? Yes, the title of the article says it all — porosity, penetration and adhesion.

Porosity — Will the material absorb into a substrate?

Penetration — Did it absorb into a substrate?

Adhesion — Did it stick to a substrate, and how well?

These three very basic questions are the keys to success for almost every decorative finish. You will find references made to one or all of these three terms in almost every piece of decorative concrete product literature or installation guide. Since they are such common and critical factors to successful installation, I want to spend some time simplifying these terms and processes, and explaining why they are so critical to long-term installation success.

If we look up the definition of the word "porosity," we find the following: Porosity is a measure of the void spaces in a material, and it is measured as a fraction or a percentage. The term "porosity" is used in multiple fields, including ceramics, metallurgy, materials, manufacturing, earth sciences

and construction. OK, so what exactly does that mean, and how does it relate to decorative concrete? Anytime a stain, dye, sealer, coating, primer, underlayment or overlay is applied, porosity comes into play. Specific to our industry, porosity in decorative concrete is a measure of how much stain, dye or coating will soak into the concrete, and how fast. Using a simple analogy, imagine the concrete in question as a series of rooms with doors. How big those doors are, how many are open, how open each door is, and how big the room is on the other side of the door will determine the porosity and how successful the stain, dye or coating application will be. In a perfect world, all those doors would be big and wide open, and the rooms on the other side would be large and empty, connecting to each and every other room in the concrete slab. We don't live or work in a perfect world, which is why surface analysis and surface preparation are so very important in any application. This includes, but is not limited to, water tests, moisture vapor transmission testing, sanding, grinding, acid etching and scarifying.

These days, we see concrete that is very dense, finished very tight, chemically modified and/or membrane cured. All of these factors create better concrete, but also close those doors and fill the rooms. This means that surfaces where stains, dyes, sealers or overlays are being applied MUST be prepared. To once again simplify, we need to make sure enough doors are open and the openings are big enough to allow the product being applied to get in.

Now that we all have a better understanding of what porosity is and why porosity is so important, let's look at the next process, penetration. The two really go hand in hand, and in a lot of instances cannot be separated. Once again, let's use our analogy of rooms and doors. If porosity is a measure of how much and how fast the stain, dye, sealer, or overlay is going to get into spaces through all those doors, penetration is the measure of how deep or far the stain, dye, sealer or overlay will penetrate. If the rooms behind the doors

are small or full (of chemicals, dirt or some other contaminant), the ability of any applied product to penetrate will be affected. Penetration is measured in terms of depth of penetration and the percentage of the amount of the material that penetrated into the surface.

There should now be more clarity as to how porosity and penetration go hand in hand. It does not really matter how empty those rooms are if the doors

are closed or so small nothing can squeeze through the opening. On the other hand, the doors can be wide open, but if the rooms are full, the material is not going to penetrate very deeply. Understanding porosity and penetration is especially important when applying stains and sealers.

The other things to consider are the particle size of the colorant (stains are much larger than dyes) and the



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percentage of solids in the sealer (low solids requires fewer open doors, while high solids requires lots of open doors). All of this information needs to be taken into consideration when determining the type of surface preparation that will be used.

The last of the three critical processes is adhesion. Simply put, adhesion is a measure of how well one material sticks to another. There are two forms of adhesion, chemical and mechanical. Some materials adhere to another based solely on one method of adhesion, while others rely on both methods.

Chemical adhesion is all about chemistry — adhesion at the molecular level, where two molecules become one by the process of sharing electrons or electric charges. Chemical bonds have different strengths, and chemical adhesion is the lesser of the two forms of adhesion. A great way to get a better understanding of chemical adhesion is to watch what happens when two drops of water come in close proximity to each other. They literally jump together and become one — voila! Chemical adhesion at work.

Mechanical adhesion, which is the more common form of adhesion when applying decorative products, is all about filling voids. Going back to our door and room analogy, I think you can now see why it is so important for those doors to not only be as open (porosity) as possible, but lead to rooms as big and empty (penetration) as possible. When a stain, dye, sealer or overlay can get into those rooms, fill them, get hard, and literally lock itself in place, that is adhesion.

Now that we have simplified the three processes, it should be clear how they work hand in hand. If you only take one thing away from this article, let it be that every job is different, and you can't expect a stain, dye or sealer to work without some type of surface preparation. Always do a sample, and use what you have learned to make sure the surface is porous, the product is penetrating, and you have achieved proper adhesion. 🗑️

Chris Sullivan is national sales manager for QC Construction Products. He has presented seminars and product demonstrations throughout North and South America, including at the World of Concrete convention. Sullivan is a member of National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), American Society of Concrete Contractors (ASCC), and is certified with the American Concrete Institute (ACI). Contact him with technical questions or issues at trowelanderror@concretedecor.com.



Photos by John Anderson

Artisans at Lithuanian company Art Projects created this piece with vertical carving and texturing.

Decorative Concrete Booms Across the Atlantic

by John Anderson

The interest for decorative concrete is reaching new heights all over the world, and with this comes a need for education and training. Many countries are looking to the United States for products, information and support.

Over the past few years there have been training and educational events in countries such as England, France, Italy, Greece, Lithuania and Georgia. As part of the search for training and education, these countries have been host to some of the most respected industry leaders in the decorative concrete business.

Join me as we take a trip around the world to see what is happening with decorative concrete.

Great Britain

Great Britain is one of the veteran countries when it comes to stamped concrete. However, the country has been slow to pick up on new technology within the decorative concrete industry.

Recently, Mike and Rebecca Green moved from the U.S. to England. Having worked in decorative concrete in the U.S., they saw a gap in the market for their applications and techniques.

Not being able to find the right products or the type of quality they were used to, they decided to start importing materials from the States. It was at this point that Greencrete was formed as a specialty supplier to the decorative concrete market in the U.K.

With these new product lines came a need for training. Greencrete is a supplier for Speciality Concrete Products. In July 2008, SCP sent technical director Marshal Hoskins to the south of England to assist in a training event and demonstration for the U.K. market. The three-day training covered stamped overlays, acid stains, concrete countertops and vertical texturing systems. Reportedly, attendees were impressed with the knowledge and experience that Hoskins provided during the training course.



The first day of training in France with Modern Method and Bob Harris.



Stamped concrete with an acid stain in Georgia.

France

France was invaded by decorative concrete when Disney chose Paris as the European city where it would open a theme park in 1992. Mike Archambault, former president of Patterned Concrete Industries Ltd., was instrumental in the design and construction for all the flatwork at Disneyland Resort Paris. Mike became so attached to the European way of life, he chose to leave the U.S. and stay in France to develop decorative concrete even further.

Mike and his business partner Frederic Young now run a successful decorative concrete training and distribution company, Modern Method. Now in their third year of business and growing quickly, they have joined forces with Bob Harris of the Decorative Concrete Institute to form Decorative Concrete Institute France.

Bob Harris and Mike hosted their first DCI France training in December 2007. This event covered microtoppings, stamped overlays, vertical stamping, polished concrete, acid stains and dyes. More than 35 attendees at the four-day class found a lot to see and learn.

Georgia

Burji Limited is one of the largest construction companies in Georgia, a small sovereign country that borders Russia. When Burji Limited decided they wanted to start out in the decorative concrete business, they also looked to the United States for training and education. After many hours scanning the Internet and trying to qualify the companies they were talking with, they came across Decorative Concrete Resources and trainer Todd Scharich.

Scharich was invited to come from the U.S. to present material and train employees in the basics of decorative concrete applications. Stamped concrete was the main focus of the training, starting at the very beginning with concrete basics and mix design and proceeding to placement and finishing techniques.

Starting from the beginning is the most important aspect of training in a country that has a weak understanding of concrete and concrete placement. Working from the ground

up is the only way to go — people need to understand and master the basics before they attempt the high-end decorative work. This has been where other companies have gotten it wrong in the past.

Todd Scharich is used to the trials and tribulations of decorative concrete in the U.S., but during his visit to Georgia the political pressure between Georgia and Russia came to an all-time high. Within a few days of Todd leaving Georgia, the Russian army invaded Georgia, a crisis that lasted for 12 days.

Greece

We should all recognize that the Greeks were at the very beginning of architectural concrete, with work dating back to 4,000 B.C.

Vicky Shambular invited Bob Harris of DCI to come to Athens to educate her design-and-build team about decorative concrete applications. The design-and-build company wanted to know everything possible about decorative concrete so they could use the techniques in their future projects. The training that Harris presented covered concrete countertops, skim coats and Modellos, decorative wall plasters, and decorative saw cutting with acid stains and dyes.

Events like this are unusual but important to the growth of the industry. Most companies focus on contractor training, but designers and architects need to understand the potential of decorative concrete to enable them to specify our systems.

Decorative concrete has been widely specified throughout many of the Greek Islands and mainland Greece, and the market continues to grow.

Italy

The Italians are no strangers to hosting international events that draw huge crowds. Ideal Work, my company, is pushing the boundaries and developing new products all the time. In July 2008 Ideal Work held two international conferences at its 3,000-square-foot training facility in Veneto, a town in northern Italy. The conferences showcased its new systems for stamped overlays, microtoppings and decorative epoxies.



A microtopping over Modello stencils during an Ideal Work international conference in Italy in 2008.

I conducted the international conference. At the two events, there were more than 30 contracting companies, eight Ideal Work distributors and four architects that attended, totaling more than 90 people.

We invite guest speakers and trainers to host events throughout the year. Bob Harris of DCI, Clark Branum of Scofield, Trevor Foster of Miracote and Bent Mikkelsen of *Concrete Decor* have all presented at the facility, offering their knowledge and experience.

Lithuania

One of the Baltic states, Lithuania is home to a small company with huge talent called Art Projects that has taken vertical stamping and texturing to unprecedented heights. The company's three founders are well-known in the world of sculpture and they wanted to show the rest of the country what they had been working with.

Art Projects invited me to join them in March 2008 to host a seminar with a

demonstration for more than 40 artists, designers, architects and contractors. What was intended to be a three-hour seminar actually ended after eight hours. There was so much interest in the possibilities of decorative concrete that Art Projects is going to hold more training events around Europe to help spread the word about vertical stamping.

Conclusion

The market in Europe is becoming strong, with more countries joining the European Union each year. Better-known European countries such as England, France, Italy, Holland, Spain and Germany are overdeveloped and new construction is declining. However, decorative concrete has been used throughout these countries with success, which has paved the way (no pun intended) for the use of decorative concrete in other European countries.

In and around Europe there are many countries that have great potential but lack the financial capital to develop

themselves. Becoming a member of the European Union gives these countries access to huge capital investments for support to grow and develop their country. Many countries that have joined the EU have used this capital investment to build infrastructure to allow commercial growth and tourism.

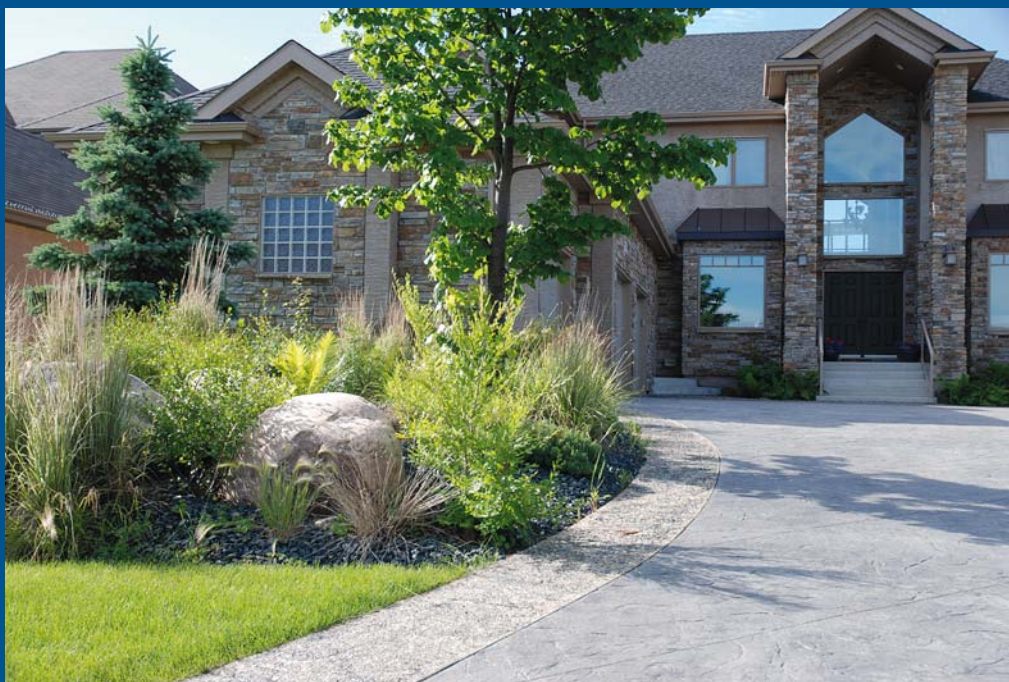
When using EU funds, one of the provisions is to use proven construction practices and systems. This is where decorative concrete comes into play: in roads, tramways, hotels, shopping malls and housing developments.

Training and education are ensuring that decorative concrete is considered a quality construction practice that has and will continue to stand the test of time. In the long run, decorative concrete may become the paving system of choice across the whole of Europe. 📱

John Anderson is international sales manager for Ideal Work. He can be reached at janderson@idealworkeurope.com.



Klassen Concrete Winnipeg, Manitoba



Photos courtesy of Klassen Concrete

by Christina Camara

When Randy Klassen showed up at a home to quote a simple garage-floor pour and found he was the sixth in line, with the homeowner looking for the cheapest guy, it struck him: "There has to be something better than this."

At that point, he rejected the idea of quantity over quality and started seriously experimenting with decorative techniques. It was 1990, the first year he attended the World of Concrete trade show.

Klassen made a simple cobblestone roller and did a few jobs at cost, and the pattern caught on. "It just exploded after that," he says.

He invested in rubber texture skins and even more patterns. Today, he is well known in his native Winnipeg for taking on jobs that are challenging, creative or just plain strange.

"If you've got a weird job and you can't figure it out, inevitably we're the ones who get the phone call," he says.

Consider his latest project. An engineer bought a condo in a trendy upscale area and wanted Klassen to pour two sets of free-standing stairs, each with 16 treads and weighing 2,800 pounds. Each stair would be 3 inches thick and 4 feet wide. The heavy stairs are not in place yet, but Klassen looks forward to the challenge.



“That’s a really cool job,” he says.

His attitude comes from his father, Ed. Randy Klassen grew up in the business, tagging along with his dad, who he says loved meeting new people and trying new things. When Klassen graduated with an education degree in 1986, there weren’t any teaching jobs, but a housing boom gave him the opportunity to fall back on what came naturally — working at his dad’s concrete business. “It’s a drug,” he says. “You can never really kick it.”

His dad suffered a ruptured appendix that summer, and Randy had to run the

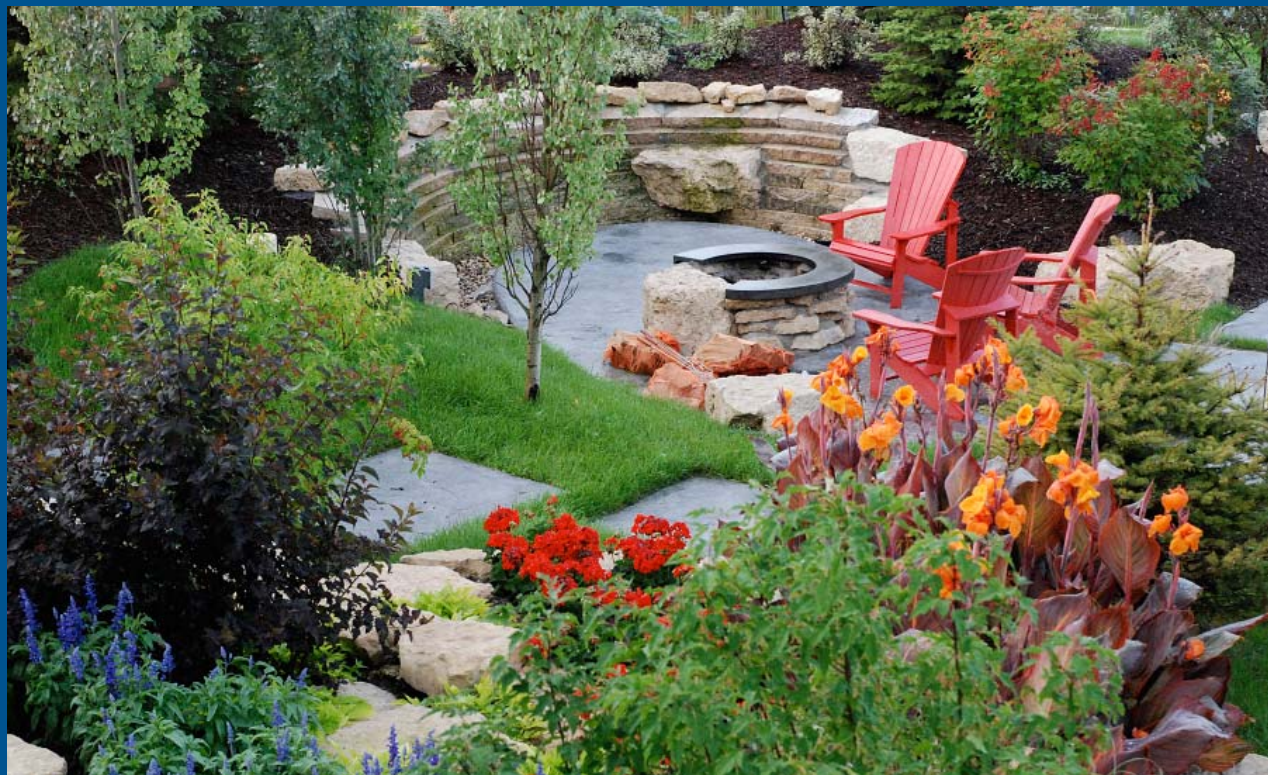
business during his recovery. Now the elder Klassen works for his son. “That guy is 75 and he shows up every single day to work and it’s awesome,” Randy says. “We have a great relationship, and he gets along fantastically with all of my guys.”

A look at Klassen’s Web site, Klassenconcrete.com, reveals that he doesn’t take himself too seriously. The “About Us” section states, “We like loud music, bands with attitude and motocross.” Cartoons, motocross photos and Klassen’s new snowboarding helmet (labeled “Super Rando”) share space with pictures of the

company’s pool decks, patios, countertops, sinks, massive planters, tables and interior floors. According to Klassen, the site appealed to at least one e-mailer, who commented that Klassen Concrete appeared to have a “hilarious work culture.”

“I sort of said to myself when I got into it: If I can’t have fun doing this and I can’t have the kind of equipment I want to have, and I can’t be with the people I want to be with, I’m not doing it,” Klassen says.

Klassen works hard to keep the atmosphere loose and the ideas flowing, he says. A wall full of whiteboards is constantly



covered in scribbled ideas. Not surprisingly, Klassen favors jobs that give his team lots of flexibility. He says the “most fun in the world” is to get a phone call from a client who has seen his work and will give him free rein to transform a backyard. The company can make a transformation complete because Klassen has incorporated landscaping into his decorative concrete business. He can not only put in a pool deck, which basically wrecks the backyard, but design and complete a landscaping plan that makes it whole again. Walkways, seating areas, patios, fire pits, walls and beautiful plantings

are featured in the company’s work.

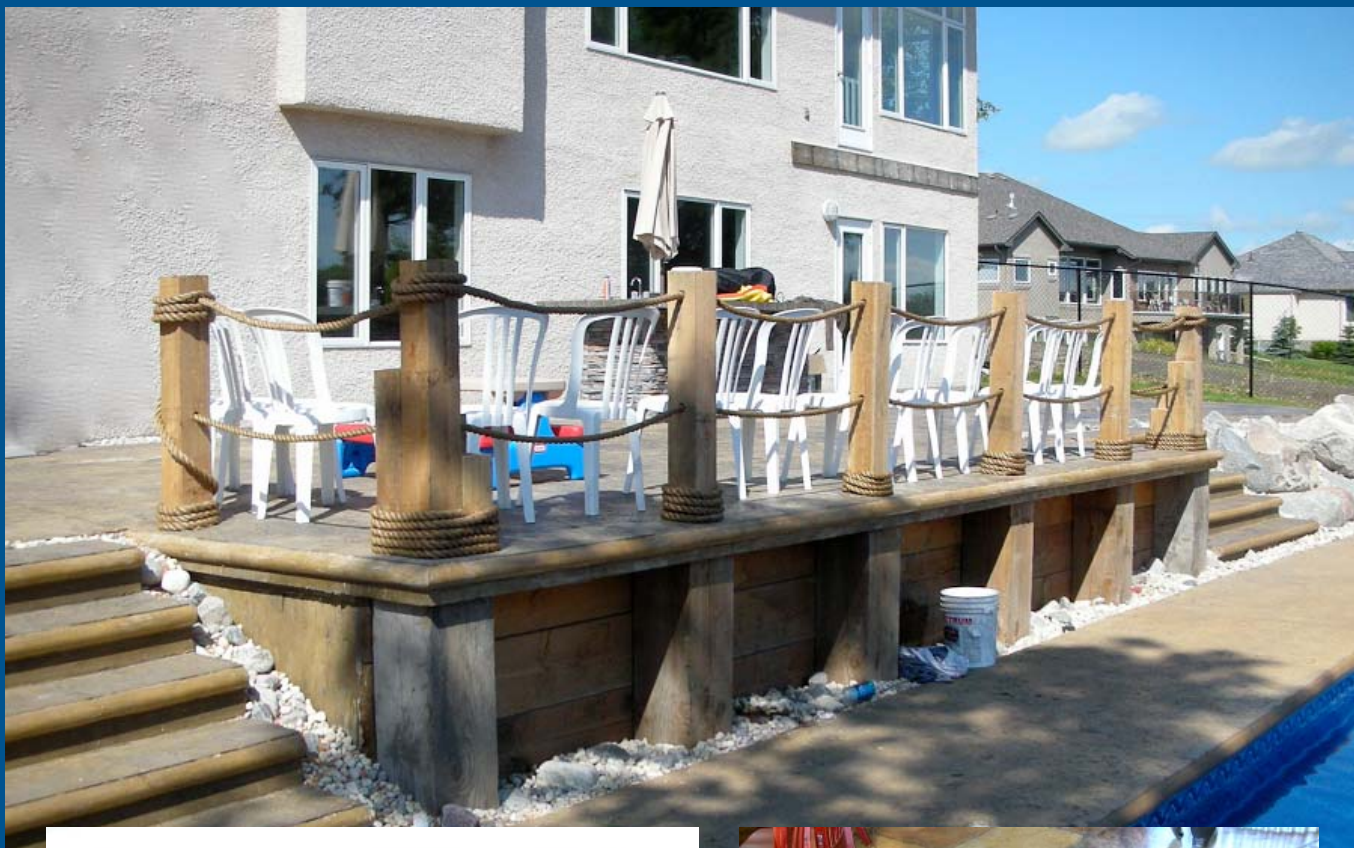
Landscaping and decorative concrete are a natural fit. Most of the equipment used in concrete is also used in landscaping, Klassen explains, and he can lay sod and plant trees when rainy weather makes concrete work impossible. It extends the job and allows Klassen to control his costs more easily.

One of the company’s most recognizable projects is the logo for the 1999 Pan American Games that Klassen embedded in a sidewalk near a Winnipeg arena. The project was memorable too,

thanks to a one-week deadline combined with two huge rainstorms and lettering that had to be done by hand. “We were so ahead of schedule, and it came out great,” Klassen says.

His company also created a concrete bathroom sink that weighs 150 pounds, yet appears to be suspended in mid-air. It was commissioned by a homeowner who wanted something unique, Klassen says.

His team of 12 to 15 craftspeople include woodworkers, mechanics, designers, welders, sign makers, four ice fishermen and three guys who study jiu-jitsu. “I’m only as



good as my people," Klassen says. "If I didn't have these guys, it wouldn't be the same."

He researches new techniques, travels often to see new applications and experiments on his own. However, he warns new decorative concrete contractors against overdoing it. You don't have to use every single technique you ever learned on one floor, he says. It's OK to put the border tool aside every now and then, or to pass over the ashlar slate mat that's been used on almost every job. "There's nothing wrong with one color of acid and a simple grid pattern," Klassen says. Also, don't buy into trends, he


says. "Less is definitely more."

The company has no advertising program, Klassen says, but word about his work has spread among high-end architects and builders in Manitoba, one of Canada's more conservative provinces. He says that home and business owners in his area prefer classic looks rather than something trendy, and they look for high quality. "There's got to be value for the people. Otherwise, you're done."

Klassen has learned to suggest colors and textures that work together harmoniously. Personally, he wouldn't

want a new driveway to be the focal point of attention at his home. "I want people to tell me how great the home looks, not the driveway."

Klassen loves to try new things, but not just for the sake of newness alone. "The most important thing is to find out who your clients are, and what's important to them, and make a design that will stand the test of time. Long-lasting, classic designs are always a good thing."

 www.klassenconcrete.com

Project Profile



Photos courtesy of Edwards Concrete Co.

LDS Temple Walkway, Windermere, Fla. Contractor: Edwards Concrete Co.

by Sue Marquette Poremba

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Temple in Windermere, Fla., is a magnificent structure. Opened in 1994, the 70,000-square-foot temple sits on 13 acres and serves LDS members not only from Florida, but also from neighboring states and several Caribbean Islands.

The first LDS Temple to be built in Florida, the structure is perhaps best known for its dazzling pure white exterior made of precast white concrete and marble chips. To keep the temple sparkling white, the facade must be cleaned on a quarterly basis.

However, the lift that holds the pressure washer is extraordinarily heavy. Over the years, the weight began to destroy the original walkway, which was made of concrete pavers. It was

eventually determined that a new walkway had to be designed and installed to withstand the weight of the lift and washer.

When David Edwards, president of Edwards Concrete Co., went to take a look at the job, he bumped into John Walker, the project manager for LDS building jobs in the Southeast, and the two men began to talk about finding a better alternative to the pavers. LDS had a very tight deadline, Edwards says, and church leaders were skeptical that the contractor could meet it.

Another issue that made this project a unique challenge is the LDS church's view on what they wanted. "They look at things a little different than other clients," Edwards explains. "They wanted a surface that is going to last 150 years."



Above: The walkway before installation of its concrete replacement.

The Winter Garden, Fla., contractor and LDS brainstormed on some ideas and began pouring samples. It was decided the best solution would be a thick, solid slab of concrete.

The next challenge was to find a concrete mix that would complement the white exterior of the temple. The natural stone in Florida is limestone, Edwards says, so a mixture of Bomanite and crushed lime rock was developed, making concrete that was extremely white.

Work on the 36,000 square feet of walkway officially began on Jan. 9, 2008, after, as Edwards says, “We got over the hurdle of what the concrete would look like.”

The concrete was poured 9 inches thick, strengthened with No. 5 rebar on 12-inch centers and cut into 4-foot squares. The concrete and reinforcement was designed to withstand the lift for the pressure washer, which Edwards says weighs 35,000 pounds. In all, 753 cubic yards of concrete were poured over 34 tons of steel. A decorative saw blade was used to cut the lines. “There won’t be any problems with the squares,” Edwards says. “There won’t be a single uncontrollable crack.”

To match the facade of the temple, 2-inch diamond shapes were cut out of the concrete with and replaced with marble chips in Bomanite Aggretex. Each 2-by-2 diamond had to be chipped out by hand using chipping hammers, and afterward, it was all sealed with a solvent-based sealer. To ensure perfect-looking cuts, the tool Edwards Concrete used gave the cuts a concave edge, which added a shadow line. Some of these cuts were up to 240 linear feet long. All in all, the project required more than 10,000 linear feet of saw-cutting.

Parking concrete trucks at the temple was impossible, Edwards says, because of the logistics of the building site and LDS-related restrictions, so a boom pump was used instead to pump the concrete to the site.

About 20 employees from Edwards Concrete worked in shifts, alternating between different parts of the project (subcontractors were used for the rebar work and the





Project Profile



Workers apply retarder, cut with a soft-cut saw and a decorative beveled edge blade, and pressure-wash to expose aggregate in the new walkway.

boom pump). One day, they would pour a section of the walkway, and the next day they'd do part of the bands that created borders around each 4-foot square. The bands were made of regular-grade concrete with a charcoal color hardener. This created a picture-frame look around the exposed lime aggregate finish.

Once a section was set, Grace Top-Cast chemical retarder was applied to expose the limestone aggregate. Because concrete sets from the bottom up, Edwards explains, adding the retarder delayed the hardening of the membrane on top of the concrete. "The next day, we would come back and wash that top layer off, which exposed the aggregate and the sand and other materials added to the mix, giving the surface its unique look."

Being able to have parts of the walkway ready for use as soon as possible was imperative to the overall project. After all, while the concrete work was taking place, the temple needed to remain open. So work on the entry area was given priority. And that led to what was perhaps the biggest challenge of the project, according to Edwards.

"This temple is used mainly for weddings and special ceremonies," he says. "We were on the project for only a short time, about a week, when on a Wednesday we were told there was going to be a wedding taking place that Saturday."

The church leaders planned to put down a plywood walkway, but Edwards didn't want to see that happen. The wedding party expected to stroll along a beautiful walkway, not through a construction zone. So Edwards Concrete stepped up production, working every hour possible, and when the wedding ceremony took place, 5,500 square feet of walkway at the church entrance was finished, and, Edwards points out, the bride did not have to walk across a makeshift plywood sidewalk.

This was the moment that proved to LDS leaders that Edwards Concrete was a company that could produce high-quality work in a timely manner.

"The LDS leaders were upset with the original walkway project because it was poorly done from the beginning," Edwards explains. "We came in with a very detailed schedule and detailed plans, but leaders were skeptical that it would work."

Church leaders were involved in every step of the project, inspecting the work on a daily basis. The leaders were also very pleased with the final product, Edwards notes, largely due to the company meeting the wedding deadline.

"Working with a church is another challenge that made this project different from working with other clients, like theme parks," Edwards says. "In a church, everyone's opinion counts, and you have to take all of those different opinions into account while planning the project."

Nearly 3,700 labor hours were spent on the project, which was completed on April 11, 2008. There were no

injuries on the job site, a remarkable feat considering the scope of the project.

Edwards Concrete Co. has been in business since 1982. In 1988, the company became an official Bomanite franchise partner. Edwards Concrete specializes in colored stamped concrete, developing walkways, patios, interior flooring, driveways and courtyards, among other projects. The concrete company has worked on residential, commercial and municipal projects, as well as for Florida theme parks such as Disney World and Sea World. 🚚

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Cuviello Concrete achieved the clarity of reflection in this floor by fully refining the surface. "We do not skip any grits in our eight-step grit sequence, and we always drop back one grit size with a separation of at least 50 when we transition from metal to resin abrasive," says owner Jim Cuviello.

STRIPPING: *Mechanical or Chemical?*



Grinding is the most common way to mechanically strip a concrete floor before a new sealer or finish is applied. It is also the first step in polishing.

Photos courtesy of Cuviello Concrete

by Amy Johnson

While a declining economy is closing the door on a lot of new construction, it is opening a window for renovation. Refurbishing and reusing is an attractive option for homeowners and commercial enterprises that might have built from scratch in more extravagant times.

This is a window of opportunity for decorative concrete contractors who can help customers make an old floor look like new again. And since most buildings have a concrete floor somewhere, from a home basement to a commercial warehouse, the potential market is sizeable.

Of course, the first step in making an old concrete floor look new is getting rid of everything that makes it look old. In this case, past is prologue. The original floor covering or finish not only determines what is required to strip and prep the floor but may impact the look of the finished project as well.

Materials that may need to be removed or repaired

include grout, sealers, polymeric coatings, and adhesives and mastics for carpet or tile. There are two general methods for stripping concrete floors: mechanical and chemical. The choice between the two depends on several factors, including what material must be removed, job-site limitations, and what equipment and expertise are available.

Mechanical stripping

Mechanical techniques for abrading a floor include shot-blasting, sandblasting, grinding and scarifying. Of these, shot-blasting is the most aggressive. Tom Sylcox, production manager for Floorgen, based in Newburgh, N.Y., says shot-blasting is typically used to remove acrylic coatings. “The challenge is making sure not to go too deep,” he says. “Removing ‘craters’ is not an enjoyable process. It takes time and increases the cost to the customer.”

The uneven surface left by shot-blasting can cause other problems as well, explains Jim CuvIELLO, director of the Concrete Processing and Polishing Technical Institute and owner of CuvIELLO Concrete, based in Stevensville, Md. Shot-blasting can be used for prepping concrete, but it’s best used by an experienced operator and under certain circumstances, he says. “In most cases, an inexperienced operator will leave deep cornrows that are problematic if the floor is going to be polished. This is not the best way to prep a floor for polishing. Cornrows can even telegraph through a thin overlay.”

Sandblasting is a similarly aggressive technique for removing tough coatings, and it’s best suited for outdoor projects or large, unoccupied indoor spaces.

Another aggressive mechanical stripping technique is scarifying. This can be thought of as a compromise between blasting and grinding. A scarifying machine looks like a grinder, but its “star cutters” operate in three dimensions, breaking up the surface below. This makes scarifying well suited for removing tough materials such as mastics, epoxies and nonskid coatings. It also profiles the concrete for better adhesion of overlays or for thick coatings.

The most widely used mechanical technique for stripping is grinding. As grinding is also the first step required for a polished concrete floor, it often serves a dual purpose. “We strip mechanically whenever we want to profile the concrete surface for an overlay, epoxy or polished concrete project,” says Thomas A. Jagger, owner and president of Jagger Scored/Stained Concrete Inc. in Texas.

Shawn Halverson of Surfacing Solutions Inc. in Temecula, Calif., adds: “For an overlay, grinding or scarifying is great. It cleans the sealer off and profiles the floor in the same step.”



Photo courtesy of CuvIELLO Concrete

The light epoxy coating on this floor was initially ground with a 70-grit metal abrasive in an aggressive pattern with lower surface contact and higher psi. This was followed by 70-grit metal with more surface contact.



Photos courtesy of Surfacing Solutions Inc.

A chemical stripper was applied to remove chalk lines and the clear enamel spray coat that had been used to protect them.



Even though the chalk and enamel are gone, a faint dark line where the chemical stripper was applied “ghosts” through this stain finish. To avoid this, stripper should have been applied to the whole floor.

"We go through eight levels of grit to grind and polish a floor," says CuvIELLO. "The one we start with depends on the condition of the floor. Removing coatings or glues requires lower (coarser) grit. The lowest available is 6, but we usually start at 30 to prep. The coarser the grit you have to use to prep the floor, the longer it takes for the next grit to refine the concrete and the longer the overall process takes. The higher the starting grit, the less work it is for the contractor."

Sylcox recommends grinding to give old concrete a fresh, clean look. "The cream layer takes so much abuse," he says. "Start with a 30 grit to take the cream off and get to the nice exposed aggregate that you can now polish or seal."

Halverson agrees. "If you're going to stain, grinding can add to the look," he says. "For example, you may need to grind to get carpet glue off, but then do a nice clean grind to expose a little aggregate and you get a beautiful effect."

Chemical stripping

Despite its rather fierce-sounding name, chemical stripping can be safe for the environment and leave less of a mark than mechanical means on finished concrete. "We strip chemically whenever we don't want to change the concrete surface, say for an acid-stain project," Jagger says.

Chemical stripping is by far the most common method of removing a sealer to prepare concrete for resealing or refinishing, according to Chris Sullivan, national sales manager for QC Construction Products. He explains that there are three families of chemical strippers: solvent-based, caustic and biochemical.

The most commonly used chemical strippers are solvent-based and typically contain methylene chloride. These are also the most aggressive. "This is a very reactive, flammable, strong oxidizer, and needs to be treated with respect," Sullivan says. "Contractors must wear rubber gloves, long sleeves, and respirators, as this will burn skin and lungs."

While such an aggressive stripper is not required in every case, methylene chloride does have its uses. "If you've got four layers of 20-year-old epoxy and you can handle the fumes and removal, this is your choice to get it stripped with just one application," Sullivan says. These solvent strippers work from underneath a coating by breaking down the bond between the coating and the substrate.

Caustic chemical strippers are water-based alkaline materials that are very reactive. The alkaline active ingredients react with esters and oils in certain sealers, breaking down the materials and turning them into soap, a chemical reaction known as saponification. "While caustic strippers are readily available, we don't see them much in decorative concrete because we don't see many oil-based sealers these days," Sullivan says.

Biochemical strippers, the newest chemical strippers, are growing in popularity. They are based on oils or esters derived from natural raw materials such as soybeans, pinesap and citrus trees. These take off most coatings, according to Sullivan, but might take longer or require multiple applications to work on high-performance coatings

Stripping Tips and Tricks

Sage stripping advice from the experts

Chris Sullivan, QC Construction Products:

A warm or windy day can make strippers dry out too quickly. Dampen a piece of absorbent material such as an old cotton sheet or towel, place it over the stripper, put plastic over that and leave it overnight. This creates a humidity chamber that keeps the reaction running for a long time. It also makes cleanup easier, because as the sealer breaks down it wicks into the towel, and you can just throw the towel away, sealer and all.

Shawn Halverson, Surfacing Solutions Inc.:

Lines where carpet glue was removed can ghost through a new finish. Spreading a chemical stripper over the whole floor instead of applying only to the glue lines can help achieve a more even finish.

Jim CuvIELLO, CuvIELLO Concrete: Be aware that if you liquefy glue on soft concrete, it can penetrate the pores, resolidify and prevent absorption and proper reaction of a densifier. This will also prevent proper penetration of dyes. There is no way to remove the liquefied and resolidified glue unless you grind the concrete past its penetration depth.

Thomas Sylcox, FloorGen: When grinding, clean the floor with an autoscrubber between steps. This will show any missed spots. It will also show uneven scratch marks that would cause nightmares in the polishing stages.

Halverson: Carpet glue, mastics, epoxies and urethane sealers are all pretty darned hard to remove. And the harder the concrete is, the more difficult it is to grind these off. Work back and forth between the material you're trying to remove and areas of clean concrete to clean the sealer off the diamonds.

Sullivan: There is a big difference between a chemical stripper and a solvent. Solvents like mineral spirits should not be used to strip sealers or coatings. Instead of destroying and removing the material, solvents simply re-emulsify it, so when the solvent evaporates the sealer reforms on the surface.

Halverson: When you remove tile, whether you prep the floor by grinding or chemical stripping, the grout lines will ghost through a stain. Grout has different vapor transmission properties from tile, so it changes the nature of the concrete underneath. We put down an overlay before staining a floor that had tile before.

Sullivan: One common misconception I hear all the time is that if you want to strip a coating you need an acid. Muriatic acid (a dilution of hydrochloric acid), phosphoric acid and sulfuric acid cannot be used as strippers. They will have no effect on a sealer. Think about it — the container the acid comes in is made of a plastic similar to the material you're trying to strip away.



The epoxy on this lighting factory floor was removed with a scarifier.



The factory floor (at left) was then ground and polished to a high gloss, finishing with a 3,000-grit polish.

Photos courtesy of Floorgen

such as thick epoxies and polyurethanes. These materials clean up with water and often have a citrus smell. While they are not hazardous, Sullivan still recommends the use of gloves when handling them, as they do contain chemicals as active ingredients. These create a reactive stripper that Sullivan claims is more environmentally friendly than solvent-based and caustic strippers. They are made from renewable resources and do not produce hazardous byproducts. They are similar to caustic strippers in working time and application.

Aside from protective clothing as recommended on the product label, no special equipment is required for chemical stripping. "The process of applying the stripper is simple," Halverson says. "Just pour it out, squeegee or broom it evenly and wait. The harder the surface is you're trying to remove, the longer it will take to break down." He recommends removing the stripper after an hour and applying a fresh batch if there are multiple layers of coating on the floor.

Most chemical strippers are supplied as gels. Gels stay in place and dry out more slowly than liquids, keeping the reaction working longer. "Gel is also easier to clean up," Sullivan says. "If it is a smooth surface, just scrape it off with a large blade scraper. On a textured surface, use a brush. Citrus- and soy-based gels can go directly into the regular dry waste. Methylene chloride stripper waste should be allowed to dry to a solid state before disposal. Never put any chemical stripper down the drain."

While the choice between mechanical and chemical

stripping depends on several factors, it is certain that a floor must be thoroughly stripped and cleaned of contaminants such as adhesives and old sealers for a concrete renovation project to succeed. 🛠️

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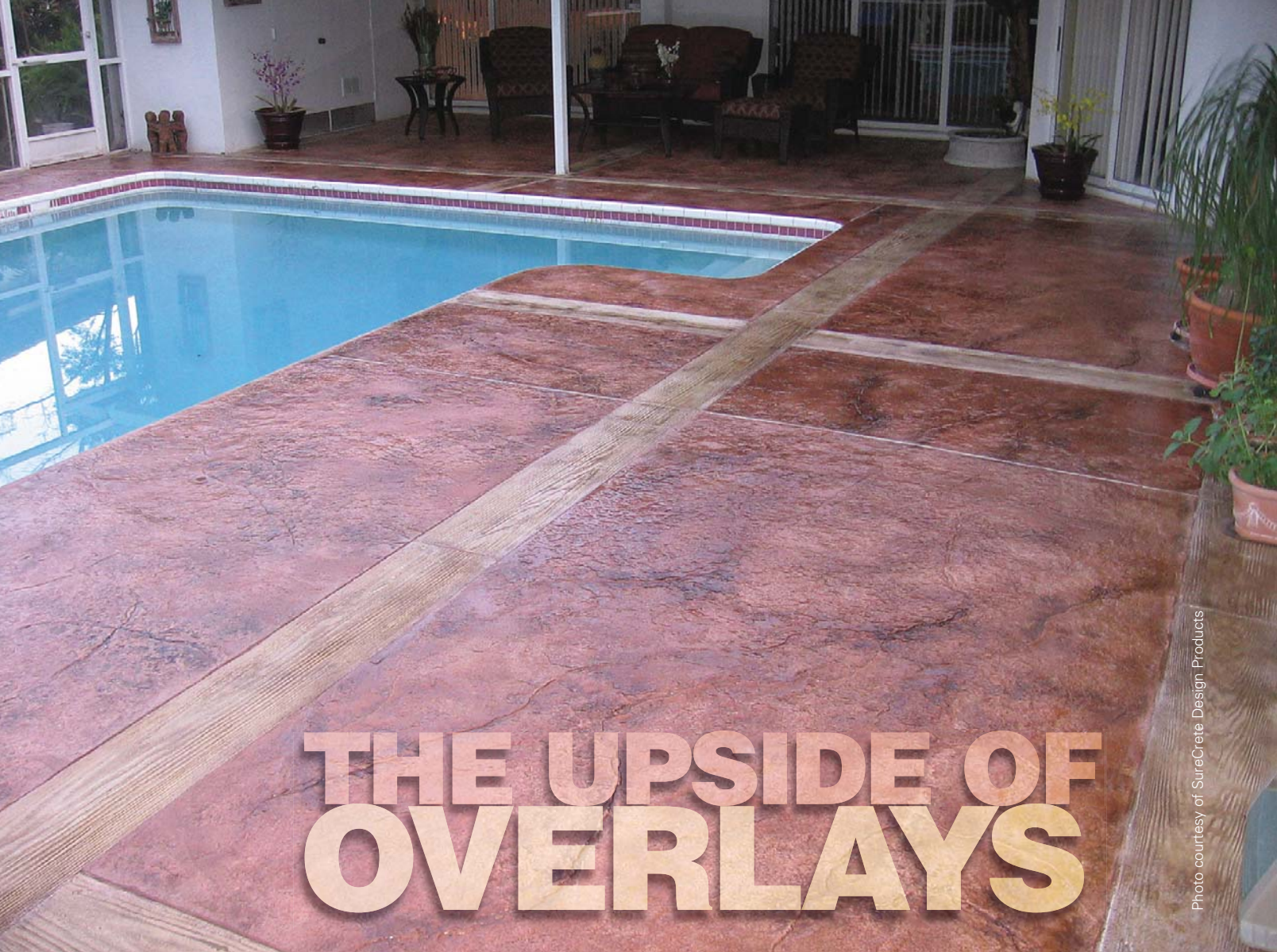


Photo courtesy of SureCrete Design Products

This deck was created using stamped overlays from SureCrete Design Products. Stampable overlays and spray coatings are SureCrete's bestsellers.

by Elizabeth Gillette

As the number of products available for concrete refinishing has multiplied in recent years, it has become increasingly simple to obtain almost any finish imaginable for concrete surfaces. Overlays are one of the many options. An overlay is a thin, permanent layer added to the top of a concrete slab to cover imperfections or add interest and beauty to a plain surface.

Overlays are popular with contractors, who are often hired to deal with a large, plain slab that the customer wants to be both attractive and durable. These surfaces usually need to be turned around on a tight timeline, which overlays allow.

While overlay products can be used

to create almost any desired finish in a short timeline, the challenge lies in selecting the right type of overlay for your specific purpose. Cement-based overlays have been on the market for years, but they are only one of several types of overlay finishes. Most of today's new products are made from a combination of polymer resins, cement, sand and other additives. These combinations improve the durability of the overlay surface and allow for a wider array of decorative finishes. Polymer overlays in particular adhere well to existing concrete, can be added in very thin or thick layers, and resist damage from the elements in most climates.

Manufacturers who create various

combinations of acrylics and polymer resins for overlays end up developing proprietary products, each of which has its own specific characteristics.

Before determining which product is right for a particular project, it must first be determined if the concrete surface is worth fixing or if it should be replaced. The slab must be sound and not have severe damage to the structure or surface. Heavy damage to a slab resting on an unstable base will not be fixed by applying an overlay, and neither will severe spalling.

Self-leveling overlays are 1/4 inch to 1 inch in thickness, and texture can be added via engraving or saw cutting. Dyes can also be used with self-leveling overlays, as can integral pigments, tints and stains. Self-leveling overlays need to be applied to fundamentally sound concrete surfaces, but can be used to level uneven floors.

Jeff Patterson of Muller Construction Supply in San Jose, Calif., says that stampable overlays are a popular product for his company. Stampable overlays are available in thicknesses from 1/4 inch to 3/4 inch and can be stamped just like new concrete. The thickness covers the original substrate, allowing imperfections to be permanently hidden. The color of the overlay can be incorporated via dye, colored liquid or powder, or by using a tinted sealer on top of the overlay.

Decorative acrylic overlays are popular because of their versatility, says Brian Anderson, director of operations with Concrete Coatings Inc. They can be used on new or existing concrete and can help create a wide array of looks, such as brick, tile, and other textures, for a fraction of the cost of the real thing. "Acid stains and decorative acrylic overlay systems are two of our most popular products," he says.

Charles Leland, director of training and product development at SureCrete Design Products, says spray coatings are his company's most popular product due to their ease of application. Spray coatings create a thin film, are inexpensive compared to other systems, and have a short learning curve, allowing anyone to try them at least once.



Photo courtesy of GST International

This walkway in the Phoenix, Ariz., area was created with Ultracrete2k, a stampable, trowelable overlay from GST International. The overlay can be used in both interior and exterior applications.

Leland also joins Patterson and Anderson in saying that stamp overlays are very popular. They may not be as easy to apply, he says, but they give a beautiful look that can't be achieved any other way.

Newer options on the overlay market combine versatility and ease of application for an all-around innovative

product. GST International LLC of Santa Rosa, Calif., makes Ultracrete2K, a stampable, trowelable overlay that goes on top of almost any surface. "We wanted it easy and user-friendly and wanted it to go over every surface — tile counters, showers, anything," says GST International owner Jim Glessner. While most overlays require waiting






Photo by J. Richards

A deck at a historic Pennsylvania property was given an overlay treatment that included Sand-Rich from Specialty Solutions Inc. Sand-Rich is a noncementitious, aggregate-containing overlay.

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for a surface to firm up before stamping, this one allows stamping immediately, saving time and labor costs.

Leland says that while weather and climate shouldn't be an influence on which products are their bestsellers, they are. Spray coatings and stamp overlays, SureCrete's most popular products, perform well in any conditions, but sell best in the Sunbelt. "People don't believe (they'll) work in freeze-thaw conditions, even though (they) will," he says. "The temperature swing is the most important factor, which is why they test them in Miami — it could be 98 degrees and fall to 40 degrees at night. That is worse than in Iowa, where it could be 2 below zero and go up to 10 degrees."

While Leland says climate isn't much of a factor, since the elements don't affect the finishes, he says there are still regional differences in what products are used. This is due mostly to what he calls "acceptance" — product popularity and trends spread across the country. Some types of overlays are popular in certain parts of the country, but just haven't spread to others yet.

Certain kinds of overlays are also in demand for specific applications. For example, acrylic overlays can be more popular outdoors because of their texture. Sprayed applications that create a finish similar to an orange peel are also popular around pools and for sidewalks because they offer traction.

Leland says SureCrete is constantly developing new products and tweaking the old standbys, creating products that, in addition to being easier to apply and less expensive, now work in situations where they never would have in the past.

Regardless of what overlays are popular and why, learning about the array of overlay products available and what will best create the desired appearance is a task that takes time and dedication. 🛠️

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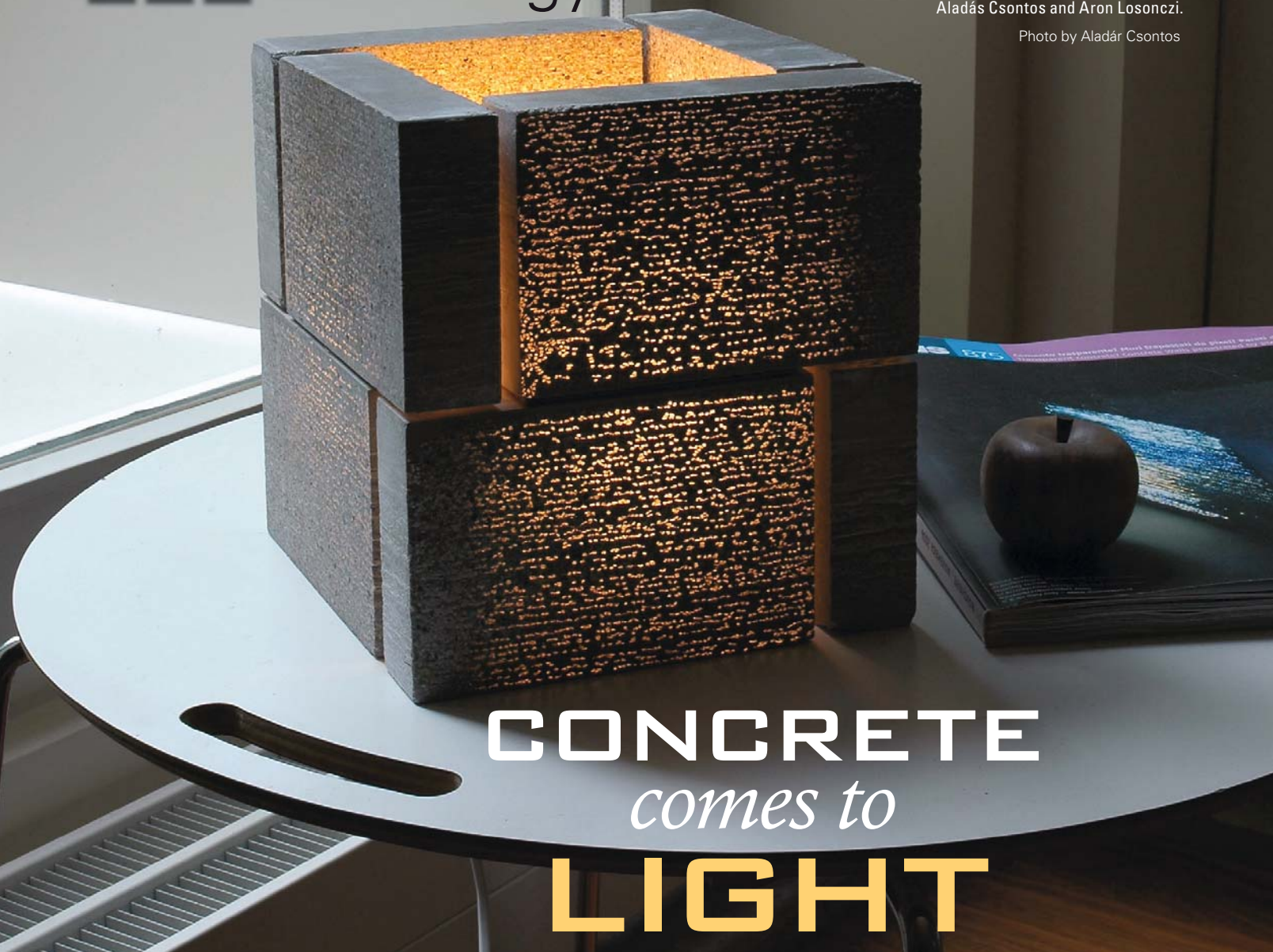
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CONCRETE *comes to* LIGHT

by Kelly O'Brien

Glossy and smooth, textured and patterned, stained, stamped, stenciled — sometimes it seems like when it comes to decorative concrete, it's all been done. But then along comes a contractor (or an architect, or an engineer) who dreams up an entirely new way to work with the medium.

Take, for example, the ingenious ways that people have found to explore the relationship between concrete and light. The three products below — LiTraCon, Sensitile, and Ambient Glow Technology — testify to the fact that there's virtually nothing you can't do with concrete.

LiTraCon — light-transmitting concrete

Chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the Coolest Inventions of 2004, LiTraCon has garnered a lot of attention in the last 10 years. And no wonder —



Photo courtesy of LiTraCon

This interior wall in a private German home was made out of white LiTraCon blocks. The 10-centimeter-thick wall was designed by Lohmann Architects.

translucent concrete is, as *Time* suggests, undeniably cool. LiTraCon was invented by Hungarian architect Áron Losonczi when he was a student at the Royal College of Fine Arts in Stockholm, Sweden.

"I started to think about light-transmitting concrete after having been inspired by an artwork," says Losonczi. The artwork in question had incorporated glass into a concrete surface, and the filtered, shifting light through the glass gave the piece a unique quality, he says. Losonczi was thereafter determined to bring this same effect into the realm of architecture. And so he has.

Losonczi's product — for which he holds United States and international patents — uses fiber optics to transmit light from one side of a concrete block or panel to the other, creating a unique filtered light effect.

But that's not the only thing that makes LiTraCon remarkable. The light transmission isn't affected by the thickness of the wall. Fiber optics are used in telecommunications because they can transmit data with minimal loss, and the same is true when transmitting light. "Thanks to the low loss of light in the fiber optics we use, there is no difference between, (for example), a 1-centimeter and a 1-meter thick wall," says Losonczi.

LiTraCon comes in prefabricated blocks of 11.8 inches by 23.6 inches that range in thickness from 1 inch to 19.7 inches. The fiber optics, distributed organically throughout the blocks, make up only 4 percent of the total mass, leaving the blocks with a compressive strength of more than 7,000 psi. The blocks have a glossy polished finish, ensuring, says Losonczi, that the light comes through to the surface clearly. The material is available in three different colors, and LiTraCon also offers the option to order custom sizes and colors.

With that kind of versatility, the range of applications for LiTraCon is considerable. The product has been used in projects all over Europe and Asia that range from illuminated pavement in Sweden to a translucent logo wall in Hong Kong. Most recently, LiTraCon was incorporated into an award-winning veterans' memorial in Iberville, La., which, Losonczi says, is one of his favorite projects yet. "I like the Iberville Memorial, as LiTraCon became an important and symbolic piece of a poetic architectural project," he says.

Although LiTraCon is new to the States, Losonczi says the company is working on getting a rep here within the year. For now, the Hungarian company remains ready to help you make translucent concrete part of your next project.


☎ (011) 36 30 2551648

🌐 www.litracon.hu



Photo by Áron Losonczi


The very first LiTraCon showpiece, built in 2003, was exhibited at Arkitekturmuseet in Skeppsholmen, Sweden. The piece is now part of the permanent collection of the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.




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Sensitile Terrazzo tiles respond to changes in light.

Sensitile Terrazzo – terrazzo with embedded light transfer materials

The technology employed in Sensitile Systems' Terrazzo products plays with not only the relationship between light and concrete, but also the relationship between light, concrete and you, the observer. Creator and Sensitile president Abhinand Lath came to the idea when he was working on his thesis project in architecture school. "I was trying to take a poetic idea and translate it into a physical manifestation," he says. He chose as his inspiration a Japanese poem describing

a woman in a young bamboo forest: "...the stalks were so fresh that her passage near them would set them in motion, producing a constantly changing pattern of shadows on the ground beneath."

In order to recreate this in a concrete surface, Lath's design features embedded "light channels" — U-shaped fiber-optic pieces that are sunk into the concrete so that only their ends, or terminals, are visible on the surface. "As you move on the surface and block random terminals," Lath says, "your shadow is literally transmitted and reimaged within the material, causing a larger 'ripple' effect." The Sensitile Terrazzo experience is therefore dynamic, depending not only on light, but also human interaction to achieve its effect.

Sensitile has also recently expanded its concrete offerings to include Terrazzo Lumina, which uses similar technology to turn a single light source into many distinct points of light across the surface. This effect is also achieved with embedded fiber-optic channels, which branch out from an external light source installed behind or alongside the tiles.

While the Terrazzo Lumina tiles have a fairly involved installation process (since the light source must be incorporated), the standard Terrazzo tiles "install very much like regular tiles," says Lath. "They are self-contained, prefinished and sealed. In short, they are ready to be put on the floor, wall or any other surface."

The Sensitile Terrazzo tiles are available in small (6-inch by 6-inch or 8-inch by 8-inch) tiles that are just an inch thick. Also, larger 1.25-inches thick tiles range from 1 to 4 square feet. Terrazzo Lumina tiles are 1.25 inches thick and come in a standard size of 24 inches by 48 inches. Both products are also available in 10 standard



Photos courtesy of Sensitile Systems

A vanity top using Sensitile Terrazzo.

colors. Still, while these preset options are available, Lath says Sensitile is mainly a contract manufacturer and does a lot of work to specifications. He says they manufacture a lot of custom countertops and slabs in their Detroit plant that are then delivered as a sort of “a kit of parts, ready to be seamed on-site.” The chances are good that any use you can dream up for light-transmitting terrazzo, Sensitile’s products can accommodate.

☎ (313) 872-6314

🌐 www.sensitile.com

Ambient Glow Technology – photoluminescent concrete

Peter Tomé, creator of Ambient Glow Technology, has taken a different approach to incorporating light into concrete. His photoluminescent aggregates can turn literally any concrete surface into a glow-in-the-dark design or safety feature.

Made by Toronto-based Universal One Corp., AGT is sold as either sand or stone aggregate and can be applied in a number of ways. The sand, which comes in two grades, can be broadcast directly over the surface or mixed into a finish coat to produce a photoluminescent appearance. The stone aggregate is available in 8 mm or 12 mm sizes and can be used in a wide variety of poured, precast or cast-in-place surfaces.

Universal One president Peter Tomé says clients have used AGT products in projects ranging from concrete countertops and floors to patios and pool surrounds, achieving very striking results.

“Contractors out there are looking for something new to position with their potential clients,” says Tomé. And AGT can certainly give them that.

These light-energized aggregates need only brief exposure to a light source — any light source — to produce a steady glow for hours thereafter. Specific times and light outputs depend, of course, on the strength of the light source and the type and concentration of AGT aggregate used. In any case, AGT used in an outdoor placement can glow all night powered only by the day’s exposure to the sun, Tomé says.

These “energized surfaces” are not only a creative way to bring light into a project, but they’re also very eco-friendly. The patented aggregate is nontoxic and emits zero VOCs. This is a side of the product that Tomé is very excited about. AGT can make a positive contribution to a project’s LEED performance. “Our product is sustainable, eco-friendly and LEED-friendly,” Tomé says.

The aggregates effectively reduce levels of light pollution and energy consumption. Tomé’s favorite example is an outdoor landscaping project. “If you have your outdoor lights on for 8 hours, at 60 minutes an hour that’s 480 minutes of electricity,” he says. “With AGT’s energized surfaces, you can



Photos courtesy of Tip Top Lofts, Toronto

A bathroom wall with a gray cementitious overlay energized with AGT sand and stone. It has a starry glow-in-the-dark look when the lights are off.

have those same landscape lights on timers set to go on for 10 minutes every hour — that’s 84 percent less electricity used.”

Providing not only a “passive light source” option for the eco-conscious consumer, but also an array of decorative effects for contractors, AGT’s product line is full-featured. It takes photoluminescent concrete projects to the next level. 🚚

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Product Profile



Photos courtesy of Bob Harris, Decorative Concrete Institute

Paladiano “Wonders of the World” Stamp Line from Paladiano LLC

There is something that could be said about the connection between wine and the invention of a great idea.

This certainly holds true for Bob Harris, president of the Decorative Concrete Institute. During a recent trip to Italy with his wife, Lee Ann, he was discussing the current stamped concrete market with three executives of Ideal Work over a bottle of Italian wine and what Harris says was unbelievable pasta.

“There had been no new creations for several decades relative to innovative tools,” Harris says. “During our relaxed evening it dawned on us — why not come up with our own inspirational line of stamping tools capturing the local feel of some of the most historic regions in the world?”

The end result was the Paladiano “Wonders of the World” stamping tool line, inspired by locations such as Paris, Athens, Yorkshire and Venice. The first

six patterns that are being produced — Pavimento of Paris, Hammered Sofia Stone (inspired by Bulgaria), Yorkshire Cobble, Fractured Cypress Slate, Rotating Venetian Marble, and Stones of Athens — are expected to be available for sale this spring. The patterns are patent-pending, and more are in development.

The stamping tools are cast with patterns taken from natural stones, which served as models for authentic textures. Each set boasts a unique set of shapes as well as unique texture patterns.

In all, the team visited 28 cities to obtain copies of more than 450 textures from 33 different types of natural stone, including granite, limestone and marble. “We took the samples from local quarries, exterior plazas, walkways and interior floors,” Harris says. “We also studied how the stones were laid,

which allowed us to replicate the architectural characteristics of each location.”

Bob Harris and John Anderson, Luca Seminati and Maurizio Pontello of Ideal Work are business partners in Paladiano LLC, which owns the rights to the stamps. Brickform, a division of Solomon Colors Inc., is the exclusive manufacturer of the Paladiano line, and it will also take responsibility for training and joint marketing. “Overall, our exhaustive research and development work involved more than 45 people, more than 800 hours of experimentation, 650 hours of flight time, and the use of over 2,500 pounds of urethane and 40 cubic yards of concrete, the addition of many grey hairs and for some of us, the loss of hair,” Harris says.

During a brainstorming session to pick a name for the company, Harris came across the term Paladiana in the glossary of a book. The team liked the name, but they were unaware of its importance to architecture. It refers to the style of 15th-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio.

Although authenticity was the main goal in producing this line, the team also considered the practical and creative needs of those who would be using the tools. With many of the patterns, they have encouraged random-looking results by increasing the number of stamp tools per set. Handles were placed so that when the artisan lifts the tool from the fresh concrete, the edges of the stamp don't bow and mar the surface. The team also reduced the need for hand tooling and simplified the creation of monolithic borders by designing sets of stamps that have top, bottom, and left and right halves.

Another unique feature of the stamps is the fact that they are made of urethane, which expands the time frame for imprinting. They can be used for stamping earlier, and what's more, if the concrete sets too quickly or stamping begins on a firmer surface, they cause less joint fracturing.

Each pattern will be available in a boxed set with as many as eight unique patterns per set, along with accessories and matching flexible tools. Having the appropriate amount of tools gives craftspeople a fair chance to stamp the area before the concrete sets, Harris says.

Harris adds that he and John Anderson were able to pull from their experience as professionals to create a valuable product. “Quite frankly, we were sick and tired of how convoluted the market had become. There were too many failures from the wrong approach.” 🛠️

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🌐 www.decorativeconcreteinstitute.com/whatsnew.html



Grinders



Alpha Professional Tools — Ecogrinder

Alpha Professional Tools has developed the Ecogrinder as the first product in their new series of tools for the concrete industry.

The Alpha Ecogrinder is a high-performance grinder with a built-in vacuum system. It allows virtually dust-free grinding without the need for an external vacuum system or expensive dust collector. The tool is designed for continuous production in fabrication shops as well as job sites. Its unique slide cover allows the grinding wheel to grind right up to a wall.

www.alpha-tools.com



Eagle Solutions — SP13

The SP13 30-inch cordless grinder from Eagle Solutions is a heavy-duty industrial grinder for commercial applications.

The grinder utilizes three 13-inch counter-rotating heads and a total of 12 diamond discs. Propane fuels a 22-horsepower Robin engine that is certified to meet EPA and CARB requirements. The addition of an emission shut-down system and catalytic muffler make for a greener approach to concrete polishing.

The SP13 comes standard with centrifugal clutch, kill switch, two vacuum ports, a 12-gallon water tank, service alert meter, adjustable handle, and a safety-fill fuel cylinder with an overfill prevention device.

www.eaglefloorsolutions.com



EDCO Inc. — CONTRx Systems Dual-Disc Concrete Polisher

Equipment Development Company Inc. has introduced the CONTRx Systems Dual-Disc Concrete Polisher.

Features of the Dual-Disc Concrete Polisher include a 5-horsepower, 230-volt Baldor TEFC motor, four 40-pound removable weights and a 23-inch working width. It also includes a hand-crank surface leveling fork assembly and counter-rotating flexible-head disc assemblies with a directional lock-in accessory system.

www.contrxsystems.com

General Equipment Co. — SG12/E

Designed for smaller-scale surface preparation projects, General Equipment Co.'s SG12/E single-head surface grinder offers high performance, durability and ease of use, making it ideal for professional contractors.

Powered by a totally enclosed, fan-cooled 1.5-horsepower electric motor, the SG12/E features a single rotating disc with a 12-inch working width. Offering a top disc rotation speed of 250 rpm, the SG12/E can be used for applications that include grinding concrete surfaces, removing mastics, adhesives, epoxies and urethanes, breaking up deposits of grease and dirt, removing

rubber carpet backing and industrial residues, and polishing delicate terrazzo and marble floor surfaces.

Built for portability, the SG12/E includes a folding handle that makes it easier to transport in today's smaller vehicles. Additionally, the compact frame design and wheel position allow for simple maneuvering up and down stairwells. The fully adjustable handle height better accommodates the user, providing a more comfortable operating experience.

 www.generalequip.com



GrindAll Surfaces Inc. — BS-600

The BS-600 floor grinder from GrindAll Surfaces Inc. performs with superior productivity for concrete floor preparation and coating removal, and it is equipped with a 7.5-horsepower electric motor.

The machine features two counter-rotating heads, which allows for an aggressive cutting action. With a 23-inch working width the unit can prep concrete floors at a rate of 700 to 800 square

feet per hour. The BS-600 is capable of running diamond-trapezoid segments as well as standard 4-inch diamond cup wheels. Other features include a 3-inch vacuum port, an adjustable handle and removable weights.

The unit is available in 208-volt/three-phase or 220-volt/one-phase power versions.

 www.grindallsurfaces.com



PremierGrind.com — Replacement hubs and diamond tooling

PremierGrind.com has developed advanced replacement hubs and diamond tooling for WerkMaster grinders.

The system utilizes a smart hub system that contains four rubber grommets that hold diamonds discs in place via friction against four stainless-steel pins attached to the underside of the discs.

This new system completely does away with the original, problematic Velcro two-pin configuration. The rubber grommets also provide

needed flexibility during the grinding process to improve machine performance.

PremierGrind diamond discs are available in 20/30 and 30/40 grit, in both soft and medium-bond diamonds, and in both a 4.75-inch and 5.75-inch disc diameter.

The system is also available for OnFloor16 grinding machines. What's more, PremierGrind offers a hub conversion kit for those who may already own discs that still have plenty of diamond life.

 www.premiergrind.com





SASE Co. Inc. — Edge-Pro 180

SASE Company Inc. has introduced a new high-production, user-friendly edge-polishing machine: the SASE Edge-Pro 180.

The SASE Edge-Pro 180 is a specialized, 110-volt, variable speed (up to 1,200 rpm) walk-behind machine for polishing the edges of concrete floors. This unit is engineered with directional controls allowing you to easily polish on the left or the right side. The SASE Edge-Pro 180 also comes standard

with removable weights to control head pressure and allows the operator to get the polisher under obstacles as low as 6 inches off the ground.

These unique features of the SASE Edge-Pro 180 present the operator with the tools necessary to maximize production and match concrete polished edges to the overall polished floor. 

 (800) 522-2606

 www.sasecompany.com



L.M. Scofield introduces Formula One Lithium Densifier MP

L.M. Scofield's new Formula One Lithium Densifier MP (short for multipurpose) is a chemically reactive, colorless treatment designed for colored concrete floors, especially those that consist of ground and polished architectural concrete.

The densifier produces a floor surface with improved abrasion resistance, greater gloss retention, higher surface compressive strength and reduced dusting. This formulation can be diluted with clean water when treating high-quality, hard, steel-troweled concrete floors. Porous or low-quality floors, or floors whose characteristics are not known, are best treated full strength.

Scofield Formula One Lithium Densifier MP has zero VOC emissions and is an economical product capable of providing longer life and higher reflectivity for colored concrete and ground and polished concrete floors of all types. Treated and finished concrete will have a surface that is nontoxic, easy to maintain, and environmentally sound with a low to moderate sheen.

www.scofield.com

New sealers from H&C

H&C Concrete Coatings has introduced three new sealers for protecting concrete projects: an oil-based clear gloss sealer, a water-based wet-look sealer and a waterproofing sealer.

H&C Concrete Wet Look Concrete Sealer is a 100-percent clear acrylic sealer that will enhance previously coated bare concrete or other masonry surfaces. This wet-looking sealer is a single-component, VOC-compliant product and is ideal for many project

uses, including patios, driveways, pool decks, lanais and interior floors.

Silicone acrylic-based for a high-gloss finish, H&C Concrete Oil-based Clear Gloss Sealer seals and protects concrete against harsh UV rays, pool chemicals and water seepage. It has 23 percent solids content, making it ideal for use in high traffic areas.

Finally, H&C Concrete offers Concrete & Masonry Waterproofing Sealer, a VOC-compliant, economical flat finish sealer that is ideal for use in colder regions. Its ability to protect against spalling, repeat freeze-thaw cycles, deicing salts and general weathering makes it an excellent choice for both indoor and outdoor applications in cold climates. Depending on the porosity of the surface, it can cover from 100 square feet to 250 square feet per gallon and offers numerous advantages, including easy application and soap-and-water cleanup.

[\(800\) 867-8246](tel:8008678246)

www.hcconcrete.com

New colors available in H&C's Infusion line

Four new colors are now available in H&C Concrete Coatings' Infusion line of stains, sealers and floor finishes. The new colors are Mustard Seed, Shore Gray, Midas Gold and Sienna Red, giving the Infusion line a total of 12 ready-to-use colors.

Infusion Reactive Concrete Stain is an acid-based product that provides a unique mottled and variegated look on either new or aged concrete. It is ideal for large commercial applications such as grocery stores, restaurants, retail outlets and office buildings, as well as residential homes.

[\(800\) 867-8246](tel:8008678246)

www.hcconcrete.com



QC introduces Imprint Technologies

QC Construction Products has announced the introduction of Imprint Technologies, a complete line of premium quality imprinting tools, seamless texturing mats and accessories.

With a variety of patterns and textures ranging from Random Blue Stone and Toscana Ashlar to Used Brick and Boardwalk, QC's line of Imprint Technologies tools allows contractors to create remarkable textured concrete surfaces designed to look like natural materials. The Seamless Texture Mat System provides more variation in texture than competitive products and is designed to imprint an exacting texture of natural stone or slate onto concrete surfaces.

☎ (800) 453-8213

🌐 www.qcconstructionproducts.com

Green products available from QC

QC Construction Products has launched the QC EcoSoy System, an eco-friendly staining system.

The innovative bio-based decorative concrete staining system is made from environmentally friendly renewable resource materials. Comprised of QC EcoSoy Stain and QC EcoSoy Seal, the EcoSoy System is used for interior or exterior applications on virtually any type of hard porous surface, including gray concrete, colored concrete, stamped concrete, polymer-modified overlays, stucco and brick pavers.

QC EcoSoy Stain is a true

penetrating stain that can create natural color variations and marbling depending on the surface it is applied to. It is available in 15 standard colors. QC EcoSoy Seal is a water-based, environmentally friendly acrylic-modified soy sealer. Available in gloss or satin, it creates a durable finish with lasting protection.

QC Construction Products has also announced a new "QC Goes Green" line of low-VOC, eco-friendly, LEED-qualifying products. A total of nine products make up the line. They are: QC EcoSoy Stain, QC EcoSoy, Renew by QC, QC CemTint, QC Concrete Dye, QC Cemseal VOC 100, QC Ultra Seal VOC 100, QC Surpro WB Matte, and QC Floor Finishes. A "QC Green" seal will be used as a designation on QC products that are part of the line.

☎ (800) 453-8213

🌐 www.qcconstructionproducts.com

UGL introduces high-gloss sealer

United Gilsonite Laboratories recently introduced WetLook High Gloss Sealer to the Drylock family of masonry care and repair products.

WetLook High Gloss Sealer seals the pavement surface and brightens and enhances the natural colors of masonry with a luxurious wet look. SaltLok Technology helps this coating hold back naturally occurring efflorescence. The product improves surface durability, enhancing the colors of the masonry and protecting the surface from salt, acid and staining.

☎ (800) 845-5227

🌐 www.ugl.com

H&C debuts flakes, epoxy colors

Shield-Crete Epoxy Concrete Garage Floor Coating from H&C is now available in four new finish colors: Safety Yellow, Royal Blue, Jade Green And Night Sky. The new Shield-Crete factory pack colors are just as durable as the line's previous color offerings of Pewter, Beige, Ivory And Firebrick Red.

H&C also added to the Shield-Crete line up with new pentagon-shaped, holographic flakes. These can be mixed with Shield-Crete's existing deco flakes.

🌐 www.hcconcrete.com

Dur-A-Flex releases time-defying products

Dur-A-Flex Inc. has released Hybri-Flex and Cryl-A-Stain.

The Hybri-Flex system contains a built-in moisture mitigation system that continuously handles moisture issues throughout the life of the floor and eliminates the need for installing the separate system required by most moisture-fighting solutions.

Cryl-A-Stain is a topical concrete coloring floor system boasting a 1-hour cure time. It is available in seven standard colors. Capable of being layered, the Cryl-A-Stain system can be offered in a variety of patterns and designs.

☎ (800) 253-3539

🌐 www.dur-a-flex.com



Eagle machine does it all

Eagle Solutions has developed the EcoScrub-n-Buff, a floor scrubber, burnisher and vacuum recovery unit powered with an EPA and CARB approved engine. It can be used on many floor surfaces, including tile, VCT, polished or unpolished concrete, marble and terrazzo.

Features include the ability to clean and burnish in the same pass, steel frame construction, twin high-flow vacuums, a zero turning radius and high capacity tanks.

The machine is powered by propane and includes an emissions monitor that will automatically shut the machine down if the engine is not running at optimum.

🌐 www.EagleFloorSolutions.com



Additive improves consistency

New from Syntheon Inc., Elemix concrete additive utilizes advanced polymer technology to consistently deliver energy-efficient, durable, lightweight concrete.

Comprised of specially formulated polymeric spheres, Elemix distributes uniformly in concrete, helping to create lightweight, durable concrete for structural and nonstructural applications. With a closed-cell honeycomb-like interior structure, Elemix has the ability to absorb energy, which reduces cracking and improves thermal energy efficiency in concrete applications. Manufactured to exact tolerances, the additive reduces the variability in concrete mixtures, helping to deliver a more consistent batch. Concrete formulated with Elemix allows the producer to customize lower unit weights.

www.elemix.com



Material designed to restore

Sakrete has introduced Flo-Coat, a flowable concrete resurfacing material designed to restore the appearance of worn or discolored concrete surfaces.

Sakrete Flo-Coat is an alternative to concrete removal and replacement. Flo-Coat restores existing, structurally sound slabs, walkways and driveways to like-new conditions.

Touted for its superior workability, the flowable material can be easily applied using a squeegee, with no troweling required.

www.sakrete.com



Three new niches from ProSpec

ProSpec has introduced three new styles of its PreFormed Niches: a medium combo niche, an eight-inch square niche and a rectangular niche. These new options round out ProSpec's four existing styles — a 12-inch square, a six-inch square soap, a narrow combo and a wide combo.

ProSpec Niches have sturdy, single-piece construction that prevents leaking or degrading over time. They are easy to install and ready to tile in minutes.

www.prospec.com

Restoration kit from Kraft

Kraft Tool Co. now offers professional concrete restoration tools. Its Self Leveling Kit comes complete with all the items required to mix and install self-leveling products. The kit includes a mixing barrel, measuring pitcher, mixing paddle, spiked shoes, gauge rake head, wood-framed steel smoother and a 5-foot three-piece aluminum handle to fit the gauge rake and smoother.

[\(800\) 422-2448](http://(800) 422-2448)

www.krafttool.com

Mixing stand from CS Unitec

Designed for simple setup with no clamping required, CS Unitec's Model 25GP-WD mixing stand saves time by allowing the operator to run mixers independently.

The Model 25GP-WD mixing stand is ideal for use with 5-gallon pails and CS Unitec's EHR 20 R, EHR 23/1.2R or EZR 21 S mixers, as well as all CS Unitec pneumatic mixers. Rear wheels and robust steel construction allow for easy portability to the job site. While product is being mixed in the stand, workers can perform other work.

CS Unitec's portable mixers offer high-torque motors and other features

to handle high-viscosity materials such as concrete, mortar and epoxy. The company's heavy-duty galvanized steel mixing paddles have a helical design that mixes the batch from the bottom up.

[\(800\) 700-5919](http://(800) 700-5919)

www.csunitec.com



Station allows fast mixing

CS Unitec's new Automix 1150 Z twin-paddle mixing station has two interlocking paddles allowing very fast mixing and homogenous batches without clumps.

This mixer, with a 10.5-amp motor and load speed of 450 rpm, is ideal for mixing two components, including epoxy resin, floor-leveling compound and more. Batches of up to 110 pounds can be mixed without supervision.

[\(800\) 700-5919](http://(800) 700-5919)

www.csunitec.com



A grinder for tough jobs

CS Unitec's EBS 1801 concrete grinder handles the toughest jobs, like removing epoxy, paint and other coatings, and it smooths rough concrete surfaces before applying new paints or coatings.

The grinder's 16-amp, 1,800-watt motor enables a high load capacity. It is especially suited for hard jobs, such as the grinding of two-component adhesives or leveling concrete. It comes with a built-in vacuum port for dust-free operation when connected to an industrial vacuum such as CS Unitec's CS 1225 or CS 1500. To increase the life of the grinder, the high-performance motor is located above the diamond grinding wheel, away from dust. An adjustable brush shield matches the



height of the grinder to the wear of the diamond wheel to protect against dust and debris. The front edge of the dust guard is removable to allow grinding right up to a wall.

📞 (800) 700-5919

🌐 www.csunitec.com

CPS launches Extreme Series

Concrete Polishing Solutions has introduced the arrival of its newest and most powerful line of equipment and tooling to date: The Extreme Series.

The Extreme Series line consists of equipment and tooling that are designed for the highest levels of performance. It includes the G-320D Planetary Grinder, G-320D Pro Series Planetary Grinder, The Edger Floor Grinding and Edge Machine, Xtr Metal Bond Diamond Tooling, and RezElite Resin Bond Diamond Tooling.

CPS testing has proven that the Extreme Tools cover up to 40 percent more square feet than their standard and premium metal bond lines. They are great for most floors and are available in 16, 40, 80 and 150 grit.

The Xtr Metal Bond Diamond Tooling product is designed to take the guesswork out of determining the softness or hardness of concrete.

🌐 www.go2cps.com

POD Technology included in new grinder and polisher

Blastrac, NA has debuted its POD (Point of Development) Technology with its new high-performance grinder and polishing machine, the Diamatic BMGP-600-R.

POD Technology collects dust and debris through a tool, consequently cooling the diamond and polishing heads. Resulting benefits include a cleaner work path with increased

visibility of the work surface, extended tool life of resins and diamonds, and a decrease in cleanup time.

The new Diamatic BMGP-600-R features a proprietary 208/220-volt, 7.5-horsepower single-phase motor, eliminating the need for a buck and boost system. This powerful motor delivers a tooling speed of 400 rpm, which utilizes varying grits of 2 1/2 inches and 3-inch diamond plugs. With variable head pressure made available by its easily adjustable pivoting weights, the BMGP-600-R offers a 23-inch working path. Dust extraction occurs through a 3-inch hose connection, with secondary ports that can be employed for heavy coating removal.

🌐 www.blastrac.com

Long Reader allows easier measuring in thick slabs

Measuring five inches in length, the new Rapid RH Long Reader makes it easier than ever to use Wagner's Rapid RH method for relative humidity measurement in concrete slabs.

As with the original, Short Reader, the Long Reader is used to read Rapid RH Smart Sensors. It was specifically designed for measuring the relative humidity in slabs thicker than 4 inches. It is available in three different packages: Rapid RH Kit with Long Reader, Rapid RH Smart Sensor and Long Reader Pack, and Rapid RH Long Reader.

🌐 www.rapidrh.com

A new UV floor-cure system

Jetlight Co. Inc has introduced the JFC-426 UV floor-cure system.

The system offers a 26-inch cure width and includes a 300 watt-per-inch mercury-vapor UV curing lamp. It is designed with an ultra-low profile and cantilever control arm, and it is capable of traveling under obstacles with clearance as low as 14 inches.

Jetlight Co. produces ultraviolet products for scientific, industrial and research applications.

📞 (949) 380-8774

ICF vibrator designed for residential applications

Wyco Tool has introduced the EZ Vibe ICF Concrete Vibrator designed to

meet the specific demands of residential applications.

The unit is made with a long shaft and small head size to easily fit insulated concrete forms. A tachometer was also added to track operating hours as well as vibrator speed. Other features include a four-cycle Robin engine and an adjustable shoulder harness. It is available in 8-foot and 12-foot shaft lengths with a 13/16-inch or 1-inch square head.

🌐 www.wycotool.com

Saw products from Husqvarna

Husqvarna Construction Products has introduced a high-cycle wall saw and a new line of silent core blades.

The WS 440 HF high-cycle wall saw is light and flexible, but also powerful. It is based on new technology that gives the user increased possibilities for fast and efficient sawing. The powerful, water-cooled electric motor generates a total of 17 horsepower to the shaft, despite the fact that the saw only weighs 55 pounds. The blade-shaft speed is electrically adjustable and can be operated with remote control. Other features include a short distance between blade and track for a straighter cut.

Husqvarna's F4000E series of silent core blades for wet cutting of cured concrete were developed to mimic the low noise level an electric saw produces, keeping the entire operation at the lowest sound level possible. The blades include steel cores made with "sandwich" technology that prevents harmonics in vibrations, specifically the high pitch/frequency range, resulting in a noise level drop of 7 to 10 decibels. Designed for medium-to-high horsepower saws, these blades come in three grades of bond hardness.

In packaging news, Husqvarna has debuted a new coding system that takes the guesswork out of blade selection. Five core colors and four silkscreen colors are used on blades that are 12 inches to 20 inches in diameter. The diamond blade core color represents the material to be cut, while the blade silkscreen color is specific to the level of the blade.

🌐 www.husqvarna.com



DustBoss DB-45 controls airborne and surface dust

Dust Control Technology has unveiled the DustBoss DB-45, a mid-sized unit that delivers control of airborne particles and surface dust while using less water and manpower than traditional hand-spraying techniques.

The DB-45 keeps RCC materials moist and below 76 F with a series of brass nozzles that atomize water droplets to the optimum size for dust suppression, cooling or both. Despite its compact size, the oscillating DB-45 can deliver a virtual dust barrier that covers as much as 12,000 square feet from a single location, with a throw of nearly half a football field. With its 15-horsepower fan, the DB-45 generates 18,000 cubic feet per minute of airflow to maximize its reach. The new design

features adjustable elevation from 0 to 50 degrees, with 40 degrees of oscillation, and can be ordered on a wheeled carriage mount or on a frame with a skid mount.

www.dustboss.com

Grinder/polisher attachment stays dust-free

The DG-50 Diamond Grinder/Polisher attachment from BW Manufacturing Inc. includes floating grinding heads and a specially designed shroud that keeps the machine virtually dust-free when connected to the BW SCB-1600 shotblasting and scarifying machine.

The DG-50 removes all material off the floor, reducing cleanup costs. Quadruple one-piece 16-inch grinding heads (without planetary gears) are adjusted up and down by air pressure. Diamond segments can easily be changed from coarse diamonds for coating removal to fine resin pads for polishing. The DG-50 has four independent heads that provides a grinding width of 50 inches.

www.bwmanufacturing.com

Thawzall unveils Heatzone heating systems

Thawzall LLC has developed two new portable heating systems that will aid in winter construction projects. The new H150LS (Long Shot) and H250SL (Single Lever) systems both utilize the



company's Heatzone technology.

The new H150LS (Long Shot) utilizes innovative Embed & Abandon technology, achieving significant labor savings over traditional curing methods. To use it, the contractor embeds hydronic tubing in the concrete form before pouring the concrete. The carefully modulated temperature-controlled fluid circulated by the H150LS provides good curing temperatures in winter conditions. Left in place as the concrete cure completes, the tubing can also be used for in-floor heating.

The H250SL (Single Lever) was designed for simplicity of operation and ruggedness in the field. This self-contained multipurpose machine was designed to thaw frozen ground as well as cure concrete. Contractors can go from thaw to cure by simply positioning a lever in the Heatzone system.

www.thawzall.com

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Electronic sensor added to CDCLarue vacuum

The new Pulse-Bac PB-2150 vacuum from CDCLarue Industries is the first portable vacuum to use an electronic sensor that detects when the collection tank is full and ready to be emptied.

The PB-2150 allows the user to collect and discard dust and debris simultaneously without turning off the vacuum or stopping production. The PB-2150 allows the user to empty dust and debris into a 6 mm plastic bag while the vacuum continually operates, without the bag collapsing in on itself or being sucked up into the collection chamber. After emptying the debris into the bag, the user seals the upper vacuum chamber, removes the bag and replaces it with a new one without turning off the machine.

The PB-2150 comes with award-winning Pulse-Bac Technology, an exclusive filtration technology that stops the filters from becoming caked with dust or debris and prevents them from clogging during operation. It flushes them internally, using only ambient air and vacuum.

Producing 450 CFM with 70 inches of lift, measuring 63 inches tall and 28 inches wide, and weighing only 200 pounds, the PB-2150 is a maneuverable and lightweight machine that can easily fit through any standard door or elevator.

www.cdclarue.com

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Product News



Metabo releases lightweight chiseling hammer

Metabo Corp. has introduced the SDS-Max MHE 56 chiseling hammer for precision removal and chipping of concrete and stone.

The German-engineered tool's D support handle and compact design — only 18 inches long and less than 17 pounds — gives users more control over the tool, while the 14-amp motor provides powerful operation. Flexible design elements enable the tool to be used in virtually any working position, including hard-to-reach spaces. Metabo's VibraTech handle, which reduces vibration up to 60 percent and enhances user comfort via an integrated damping system, can be fitted at three different points on the tool, and the chisel is lockable in 12 positions. Vario Tacho Constamatic (VTC) electronic soft start offers precise chiseling starts, constant speed control for increased performance under load and a 9-foot rubber-clad power cord.

www.metabousa.com



Rebar cutter from Bosch

Bosch Accessories has announced its Rebar Cutter for making larger holes, faster, cleaner and with longer bit life.

Designed to work with rotary hammers in rotation mode, Bosch's Rebar Cutter has a unique flute geometry that employs a steep spiral design that quickly removes debris.

A relief hole is incorporated into the cutting surface to dissipate heat and facilitate slug removal. The body design and shank are tapered to reduce weight for smoother drilling and to reduce the amount of vibration that often leads to fatigue.

All bits are 12 inches and range in diameter from 3/8-inch to 1 1/2-inch.

www.boschtools.com

ProSpec reformulates resurfacer, adds Rapid Cure Technology

ProSpec, Bonsal American's brand of professionally specified products, has reformulated its Concrete Resurfacer. It has also added Rapid Cure Technology to the Resurfacer and 10 other products.

The Concrete Resurfacer now offers a corrosion inhibitor for surface renewal of old or worn concrete, including concrete structures exposed to deicing salts. The polymer-modified, single-component product is self-curing and easy to install on horizontal concrete surfaces. It requires no priming and provides excellent bonding strength from featheredge to 1/2-inch thickness.

Rapid Cure Technology is ProSpec's next generation of cement technology, beyond portland cement systems. It improves the strength, curing, workability and performance of ProSpec underlayments, toppings, concrete repair and tile products. Advantages of RCT over systems based on portland cement include fast, high-strength development and fast curing without any sacrificing of workability or working time. RCT also prevents efflorescence, controls the shrinkage during curing and provides better long-term performance.

www.prospec.com



FastTrakker improves tracking of work activities

Exakttime Inc. has launched FastTrakker, a new solution to the problem of tracking dozens or hundreds of work activities for every employee and work site.

With FastTrakker, a thumbwheel and LCD menu display show activities in either English or Spanish. Workers select a cost code, then touch the FastTrakker to the JobClock to clock in for the selected activity. To begin another activity, workers simply choose a different cost code and touch the FastTrakker to the JobClock again. The system keeps track of every activity at every location for every worker.

www.exakttime.com

Glue guns for precast forms

Two advanced glue gun systems introduced by Power Adhesives can secure structural and architectural elements in precast concrete forms.

The TEC 3200 is a high-output, 400-watt all-electric applicator that applies adhesive in a bead or dot format to the precast form. An adjustable temperature controller and a high-efficiency heater housing can apply the adhesive at temperatures of 202 F, 319 F and 355 F. The non-stick PTFE barrel, easy-action trigger and flow adjustment options allow smooth and precise free-flow adhesive application. Melt rates are up to 5 1/2 pounds per hour.

The TEC 6300 is a self-contained 500-watt electric-pneumatic applicator that requires compressed air and electricity to operate. The applicator reaches its maximum operating temperature of 356 F in just 10 minutes starting cold and can deliver up to nine pounds of molten adhesive each hour.

www.poweradhesives.com

BlendCrete in 50-pound pails

ProSpec now offers its BlendCrete patching compound in 50-pound pails for accessible and safe outdoor storage in freezing temperatures.

ProSpec BlendCrete is a polymer-modified concrete and masonry patching compound. This multipurpose product is ideal for patching vertical, overhead or horizontal surfaces from 1/2-inch to one-inch depths. It can be used as a coating or used architecturally to shape beams and columns.

ProSpec BlendCrete provides a strong bond to substrates and reaches nearly 2,000 psi within one hour, with an ultimate strength of 6,500 psi. BlendCrete also features an integrated corrosion inhibitor and ProSpec's Rapid Cure Technology. It is available in white or three shades of gray with 15-minute or 30-minute set times.

 www.prospec.com

BASF introduces coloring admixtures

The Admixture Systems business of BASF Construction Chemicals has introduced its Rheocolor L brand of liquid coloring admixtures for decorative concrete.

The formula is available in 50 colors, which range from warm reds and golds to cool grays and browns. They help create a unique look and feel for ready-mixed or precast concrete applications such as driveways, pool decks, patios and architectural décor. In addition, the four Rheocolor L base colors — light red, medium red, yellow and black — can be used to make a wide range of custom colors.

Added during the batching process, Rheocolor L liquid coloring admixtures are integral, showing rich coloration from any angle and providing color uniformity, fade resistance and long-lasting vibrancy. Their unique chemistry allows for excellent batch-to-batch color consistency, color accuracy and quick dispersion into concrete.

 www.masterbuilders.com

Binder introduced by Rohm and Haas

Rohm and Haas Co. has introduced Rhoplex CS-100 Emulsion, an environmentally advanced protective barrier binder, to the North American architectural coatings market.

This new thermoplastic, water-resistant binder provides excellent resistance to water blushing, is VOC-compliant, and exhibits an excellent balance of early block resistance and low coalescent demand in masonry and cementitious sealers and stains. Formulators can easily meet new VOC standards of 100 grams per liter while maintaining excellent performance in their clear and lightly pigmented coatings.

 www.rohmmaas.com



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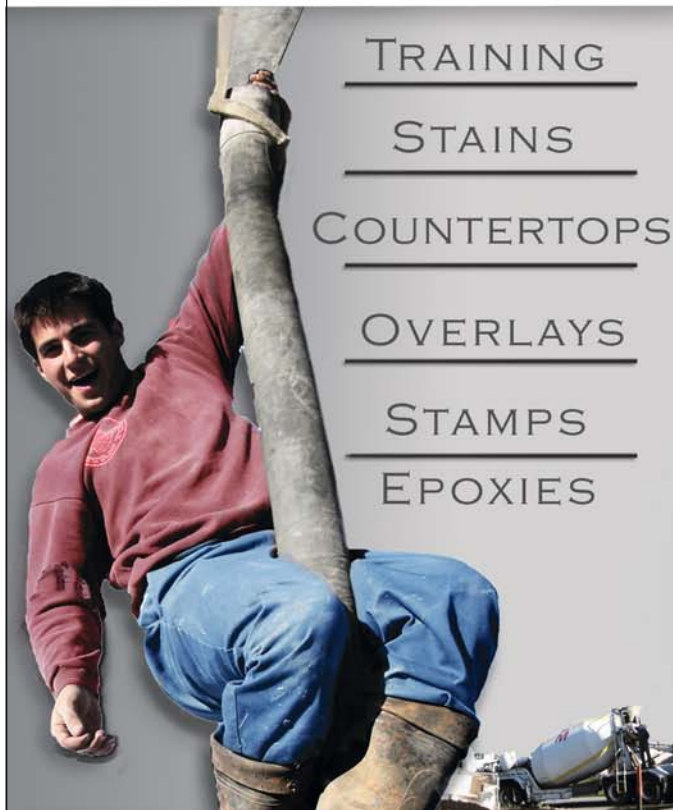
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On DVD

Gore releases fabric-formed sink mold DVD

Stretch, elongate, wrap and warp fabric into industry- leading sink molds — this method is revealed in Gore Design Co.'s newest DVD, titled "Fabric-Formed Sink Moulds." Materials, tools and the process required to fashion fabric forms are shown in detail. The DVD is available for purchase through Concrete Apothecary.

Gore Design Co. is a leading GFRC concrete artisan firm and a pioneer in the use of GFRC for interior precast. Gore offers quarterly hands-on GFRC workshops covering advanced topics ranging from concrete bathtubs to architectural elements.

www.ConcreteApothecary.com

In Print

Artisan publishes design workbook

Scott Cohen, owner of contracting outfit The Green Scene, has just released a new book titled "Scott Cohen's Outdoor Kitchen Design Workbook."

Included in the publication are demonstrations of Cohen's methods for creating cast-in-place concrete barbecue counters accented with fiber optics and casting glass. The book's layout guides and templates help readers visualize a new space. Templates are scaled to represent grills, tables, barbecue counters, outdoor seating, fire features and other elements popular in backyards.

Cohen's work is frequently featured on HGTV, and he was the Artisan in Concrete in the September/October 2008 issue of *Concrete Decor*.

The book will be available in the *Concrete Decor* online bookstore.

www.greenscenelandscape.com

www.concretedecor.net

Quikrete publishes comprehensive guide

A new book from The Quikrete Companies titled "Guide to Concrete, Masonry & Stucco Projects" provides accurate, detailed project instruction for homeowners with novice or advanced skills.

Written with straightforward language and hundreds of full-color illustrations, the 160-page softcover book offers a comprehensive collection of concrete, masonry and stucco project information and techniques. The book addresses six principal topics: Walkways, Patios & Steps, Outdoor Home & Landscaping, Walls & Wall Finishes, Indoor Projects, Concrete & Masonry Repairs and Tools & Techniques.

The new book is the first in a series of Quikrete books that will be written in cooperation with Creative Publishing International.

[\(800\) 282-5828](tel:8002825828)

www.quikrete.com

American Concrete Institute

ACI launches eLearning program

The American Concrete Institute, in partnership with Elsevier Inc., has launched a new online training program, ACI eLearning. Through ACI eLearning, concrete industry professionals have the opportunity to participate in ACI training programs on a variety of industry-critical topics and earn CEUs online.

Currently, participants can take ACI Certification training programs for Concrete Field Testing Technician – Grade I. A program for Concrete Strength Testing Technician will be available soon. Both courses include practice exams, demonstration videos of tests covered in the certification programs, and a final assessment test of overall knowledge of the ASTM standards covered in each module.

Participants can access the training programs and their resources as needed, and a training acknowledgement document will be issued by ACI. Each of these courses include modules that prepare individuals for the in-person written and performance examinations required to receive ACI Certification.

By 2011, ACI plans to launch eLearning courses covering up to 70 instructional modules.

 www.ACIELearning.org

New publications announced

The American Concrete Institute has released 10 new publications and CD-ROMs to educate and inform industry professionals on concrete-

related information and technology.

The new publications are:
 Guide for the Analysis, Design, and Construction of Elevated Concrete and Composite Steel-Concrete Water Storage Tanks (371R-08); Troubleshooting Concrete Construction (SCM-17 (08)); Nanotechnology of Concrete: Recent Developments and Future Perspectives (SP-254); Designing Concrete Structures for Fire Safety CD-ROM (SP-255); Internal Curing of High Performance Concrete: Lab and Field Experiences CD-ROM (SP-256); FRP Stay-in-Place Forms for Concrete Structures CD-ROM (SP-257); Code Requirements for Reinforced Concrete Chimneys and Commentary (307-08); Guide for the Design and Construction of Concrete Parking Lots (330R-08); Guide to Fiber-Reinforced Shotcrete (506.1R-08); and Guide for Specifying, Proportioning and Production of Fiber-Reinforced Concrete (544.3R-08).

 www.concrete.org

Spring convention slated for San Antonio

The American Concrete Institute has announced its upcoming Spring 2009 Convention in San Antonio, Texas, at the Marriott Rivercenter, March 15-19, 2009.

This spring's convention will feature a CMC Steel Texas technical tour, a "Night in Old San Antonio" Concrete Mixer, a Student FRP Composites Competition, daily sessions on sustainability, and a full day dedicated



to local contractors. Additionally, a book drive will be held during the convention in an effort to fight adolescent illiteracy. ACI attendees are encouraged to bring new or gently used children's books K-12 to the convention. Donated books will go to the San Antonio Youth Literacy Council.

☎ (248) 848-3795

🌐 www.aciconvention.org

Sustainability announced as a focus

The American Concrete Institute has announced goals, programs, and initiatives to provide knowledge on the sustainable properties of concrete to its members and the concrete industry as a whole.

Together with ACI's Technical Activities Committee, Education Activities Committee, and Certification Programs Committee, ACI's Board Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development (BAC-SD) is taking the lead to ensure the fulfillment of sustainability goals stated in ACI's Strategic Plan. These goals include the expansion of the understanding of sustainability issues among ACI's membership and the increase of sustainability-related content in ACI's documents and products.

A new technical committee, ACI 130, Sustainability of Concrete, held its inaugural meeting during the ACI Fall 2008 Convention. Its mission is to provide technical knowledge on the sustainable properties of concrete and concrete applications, and its goals include developing a report that will contain current information regarding concrete's

environmental footprint, data to input into evaluation models or calculators, and strategies or methods to reduce that environmental footprint. ACI also launched a member survey to obtain more information on perceptions of sustainability.

At the upcoming Spring 2009 Convention in San Antonio, Texas, ACI is planning a series of sessions on building sustainability with slag cement and concrete as a sustainable material, plus LEED training with special emphasis on concrete.

ACI agrees with the Brundtland Commission's 1987 definition of sustainable development: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

🌐 www.green.concrete.org

American Society of Concrete Contractors

Officers and directors elected, including for ASCC's Decorative Concrete Council

Paul Albanelli, president of Albanelli Cement Contractors Inc. in Livonia, Mich., has been elected president of the American Society of Concrete Contractors for 2009-2010. Scott Anderson, Houston, Tex.; Clay Fischer, Jupiter, Fla.; Mike Poppoff, Moxie, Wash.; and Thomas Zinchak, Woodbine, Md., were elected vice presidents. Harry Moats, Douglasville, Ga., was elected secretary/treasurer. Robert Dalrymple, Valley View, Ohio; Steve Lloyd, Forest, Va.; Phil Noel, Albuquerque, N.M.; Peter Ruttura, West Babylon, N.Y.; Scott Winkler, Hamilton, Ohio; and John Ylinen, Tempe, Ariz., were elected as new members of the board of directors.

The Decorative Concrete Council, a specialty council of the ASCC, elected Frank Lewis, regional manager, The Coatings Group, Arlington, Tex., as council director. Paul Schneider, Cincinnati, Ohio, was elected secretary/treasurer. Ray Brooks, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Clark Branum, Marrysville, Wash.; Ed Benus, Seffner, Fla.; Clyde Cobb, West Columbia, S.C.; Priscilla Dunn, Murfreesboro, Tenn.; Dionne Hutchings Ojeda, Dallas, Texas.; Byron Klemaske II, San Diego, Calif.; Steve Lloyd, Forest, Va.; Jim Mullins, Naperville, Ill.; Joe Nasvik, Addison, Ill.; Kevin Percy, Walpole, Mass.; Rob Sousa, East Providence, R.I.; Scott Thome, Douglasville, Ga.; and Wes Vollmer, San Antonio, Texas, were elected as members of the DCC advisory board.



Also, the ASCC Safety and Risk Management Council elected a new council director: Chris Plue, director of construction for Webcor Concrete in Hayward, Calif.

The ASCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of those who build with concrete, and to providing them a unified voice in the construction industry. Members include concrete contracting firms, manufacturers, suppliers and others interested in the concrete industry, such as architects, specifiers and distributors.

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International Concrete Repair Institute

2008 Project Awards winners announced

The International Concrete Repair Institute has chosen "Restoration of Arkwright House — 10 Years Later" as the ICRI 2008 Project of the Year as part of the 2008 Project Awards. ICRI presented the award to C-Probe Systems Ltd. at the ICRI 2008 Fall Convention in St. Louis, Mo.

The Arkwright restoration project was submitted in the Longevity category. The Arkwright House, a historic landmark in central Manchester, U.K., was saved following a unique \$9 million repair project completed in 1998 after a 24-month restoration period. The now 81-year-old building had been suffering from corrosion of the building's steel frame. Cracks in the Arkwright House had been beginning to appear in external masonry. If not remedied, they could have caused serious structural problems. A painstaking repair program involved carefully removing the building's stone and brick cladding to treat the embedded steel frame underneath.

ICRI awarded 11 2008 Awards of Excellence. Detailed descriptions of the winning projects can be found in the November/December 2008 issue of the Concrete Repair Bulletin and at the ICRI Web site.

www.icri.org

Post-Tensioning Institute

New officers, board of directors announced

The Post-Tensioning Institute has announced the election of new board members and a new slate of officers.

The new officers are as follows:

Kenneth Bondy, a consulting structural engineer, is now president, Edward Hohman of Post-Tension of Nevada Inc. is vice president, Russell Price of Suncoast Post-Tension Ltd. is secretary, and Larry Krauser of General Technologies Inc. is treasurer. All will serve two-year terms in their respective positions.

The Executive Committee includes the above officers and Scott Greenhaus, VSL (past president); Paul Hohensee, Enerpac (associate member representative); and James Cagley, Cagley & Associates Inc. (professional member representative).

Joining the board are the following individuals: Cary Kopczynski, Cary Kopczynski & Co. Inc. (professional member representative); Thomas Mathews, Thomas F. Mathews Co. LLC (affiliate representative); Andy Kochis, Ready Cable Inc.; Guy Cloutier, Harris P/T; Dawn Kori, Post Tension Cables Inc.; and Travis Gilpin, Consolidated Reinforcement LP.

www.post-tensioning.org

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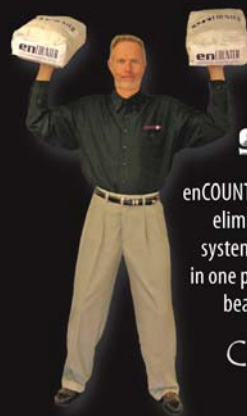
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Final Pour

Concrete With Class

The 50-foot elevated water rill at the Cornerstone Montessori School in Stratham, N.H., separates the toddlers' activity area from the older students at the school — and more. Conceived by Terra Firma Landscape Architecture of Portsmouth, N.H., and completed by Mélange Studio of North Berwick, Maine, in 2007, the rill is intended to integrate the Montessori teaching philosophy into the landscape of the property. And, of course, it's art.

In a written report for *Concrete Decor*, Michael and Meghan Littlefield of Mélange describe the fossil-flecked installation as a unique educational tool: "From layers of color, decorative aggregates, and inlaid fossils, to the hand-carved granite transitions and completely unrestrained form, the rill was designed to stimulate and engage students both intellectually and creatively."

The rill certainly stimulated and engaged its makers. Mélange worked closely with master boat builder Phil Dushkewich in fabricating the mold. Each of more than 100 unique form profiles was cut freehand with a jigsaw, and the profiles were joined with strips of luan and wire lathe.

For a mold coating that would be malleable and durable without any bond issues, the Littlefields tuned to another colleague, experienced mason and long-time friend Richard Roy, who provided a recipe for a hand-mixed, fiber-reinforced mortar.

The mold was installed in 20-foot sections on a foundation at the site, and fossils were glued to or cut into it. The first two layers of color were poured on one day. Then, hand-carved granite troughs for three cascading waterfalls were suspended in place at elevation transitions, and the crew was ready for the final pour.

Though the last pour was only one load of concrete, that day was a stressful one for the artisans. The weather was very hot, the concrete had been on the road for an hour, and they were using a 4,000-psi mix, leaving them with a very small window to get it right.

The team, including Terra Firma owner Terrence Parker, poured the concrete, scooped and smoothed out the trough and catch basins, and placed the remaining fossils in the bed.

"It wasn't the most attractive structure at first," the Littlefields report, "but the entire piece was wet-ground and polished, revealing color aggregates and enhancing



Photos by Michael Littlefield

the layers of integral dye designed to represent sedimentary layers of earth."

To complement the rill, Mélange Studio built a colorful curved amphitheater seating area, circular sand boxes and a climbing wall. The final touch was a complex terraced flatwork and step system. 🛠️

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