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## Publisher's Letter



### Dear Readers,

When the National Bureau of Economic Research declared recently that the United States had been in a recession since late 2007, I wasn't surprised, but rather relieved. Economists traditionally make that call a year or two late, when the numbers are finally in but when business is actually starting its rebound. Had they looked at the November 2007 issue of *Concrete Decor*, they would have seen the R-word already in use.

Regardless of whom you're listening to, one thing is certain: There's going to be some sputtering as we get back to business as usual. Previous recessions were inevitable for the sake of ongoing market corrections. This recession is based on stupidity. What we can learn from this time period, both personally and professionally, is how NOT to act in the future.

That said, I would like to make an announcement that I believe will positively influence both business and industry.

Coming March 16-19, 2010, *Concrete Decor* will host an event in Phoenix, Ariz., that promises to make you smarter in business, more skilled in your craft, and better equipped to show others that decorative concrete is not only an industry that weathers difficult economic times, but also a building material that will compete with and even outperform others.

At the Concrete Decor Show & Decorative Concrete Spring Training, you'll experience decorative concrete like never before. Not only will the most innovative products be on display, they'll be in action, showing you the possibilities for concrete and the potential it holds for your business. Decorative Concrete Spring Training will bring together the most knowledgeable people in the business to provide hands-on learning opportunities for all skill levels. You'll not only learn to become more profitable and promote yourself more effectively, you'll ready yourself for a new season with skills that put you at the top of your game. And if that's not enough, it's our promise that you'll develop relationships and become a part of a community that inspires.

While *Concrete Decor* magazine strives to deliver the best possible stories and ideas for contractors, we're now going beyond these pages in an effort to better support quality workmanship and safeguard the future of this industry. We've decided to step up to the plate and do something more.

Make plans to be in Phoenix in March 2010.

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](http://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 stories and information from the pages of *Concrete Decor* and provide you with an extensive list of relevant articles.



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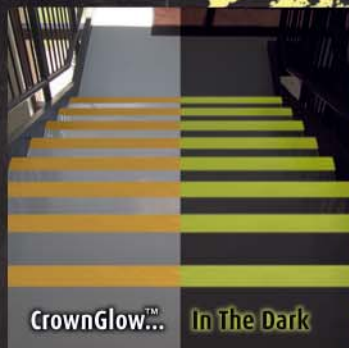
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*by Christina Camara*



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The familiar mottled patterns of these stains are still in demand.

What's more, contractors have new ways to try for that look.

*by Stacey Enesey Klemenc*



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Surface prep is not the most creative part of a decorative concrete project, but it's also rarely the same old grind.

*by Sue Marquette Poremba*

The Concrete Decor Show & Decorative Concrete Spring Training will be held March 16-19, 2010, in Phoenix, Ariz.



Master artisan Fu-Tung Cheng, who will teach at the event, says he is looking forward to it: "Cheng Concrete is excited to support the Decorative Concrete Spring Training, because for the first time in this industry I have a sense that there is a real spirit of authentic education, business networking and relationship development behind it. The different levels of workshops are very conducive to learning and the outreach to various audiences is great for a total networking experience."

Visit [www.concretedecorshow.com](http://www.concretedecorshow.com) for more information, or turn to the announcement feature at the center of this issue.

**On the Cover:** "Where the Tree is Born," by Tom Ralston Concrete of Santa Cruz, Calif., graces the J. Ellington Library in San Jose, Calif. To create this tree, Ralston and his team laid a thin rubber sheet on top of concrete and cut out a tree branch pattern. He sandblasted the area, then acid-stained the sand-blasted branches.

Photo courtesy of Tom Ralston Concrete



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### **Cooks team up for training**

Michael Cook of Concrete Approaches Inc. and Tommy Cook of Absolute ConcreteWorks LLC have announced a joint venture in training. "Absolute Approach To GFRC" will be the first of several training courses offered by the duo. It will be held at Absolute ConcreteWorks' headquarters in Poulsbo, Wash., on May 18-21, 2009.

Drawing on more than 17 years combined experience in the precast field, the Cook brothers will cover the science of GFRC and the art that makes it one of a kind. Mike Cook will present knowledge of mix designs, how they work and which is best for you. Tommy Cook will bring his award-winning design capabilities and explain tricks, process and methods. The course will also cover terrazzo, vertical terrazzo and hand-sculpting of GFRC. A continental breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks and course literature are included.

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🌐 [www.acwusa.com](http://www.acwusa.com)

### **Lafarge sites recognized for environmental leadership**

The Wildlife Habitat Council recently issued certifications to 25 Lafarge sites around North America as part of a global effort to create and preserve wildlife habitats.

Every year, the WHC certifies facilities that have created new habitats. It also renews certifications for those facilities that continue to maintain their habitats.

Among other things, Lafarge was recognized for planting 30,000 native tree seedlings in Georgia, restoring almost 10 acres of prairie land in Mississippi, and creating a safe habitat for red-tailed hawks, northern harriers and American kestrels to live in Quebec.

Since 1990, WHC has certified 489 programs worldwide. The certification program recognizes outstanding wildlife habitat management and environmental education efforts at corporate sites, and offers third-party validation of the benefits of such programs.

🌐 [www.lafarge.com](http://www.lafarge.com)

🌐 [www.wildlifehc.org](http://www.wildlifehc.org)

### **Commercial Construction Show planned for June**

The Commercial Construction Show, scheduled to be held June 2-4, 2009, at the new Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Ariz., will attract architects, interior designers and property managers looking for new service providers, especially those companies offering products and services that reduce operating costs.

The three-day event will feature seminars and more than 200 exhibits.

Concrete industry professionals can improve their knowledge of retail, restaurant and hospitality construction at the show, said Dave Doucette, vice president and editor of Commercial Construction Magazine, which owns and produces the show, in a press release. "There is still new-unit construction underway and in the



pipeline, but builders and architects are placing a newfound emphasis on products that can cut energy costs and reduce maintenance costs while improving the appearance of their buildings. Attendees are interested in affordable ways of upgrading existing facilities, renovating interiors and looking for products that can have an immediate impact on reducing operating costs."

[www.cc-show.net](http://www.cc-show.net)

### Polishing materials supplier launches promotion

To give back to those driving the polished concrete and concrete surface preparation industries, Concrete Polishing Solutions has launched the Pay Back Rewards Program.

Contractors can accumulate points throughout the year by buying products they need and use on a regular basis, such as diamonds, chemicals and supplies. These points can be used to purchase items such as vacation packages and additional equipment, grinders and vacuums. The more materials purchased, the more points can be accumulated to put towards higher-tier packages.

[www.go2cps.com](http://www.go2cps.com)

### Concrete Decor publisher names marketer for training event

Professional Trade Publications Inc., publisher of *Concrete Decor* magazine, has appointed Sherry Boyd as director of marketing and communications for the Concrete Decor Show & Decorative Concrete Spring Training. She will collaborate with the company's staff in Eugene, Ore., on promotions.



Sherry Boyd

Boyd headed marketing at L.M. Scofield Co. for nine years. Since then, she has been a regular contributor to *Concrete Decor* magazine and ConcreteNetwork.com. She is also a USGBC member and stays informed on green building.

Boyd brings more than 30 years of national and international experience in advertising, public relations, marketing and event planning to her role in shaping the Concrete Decor Show and promoting the benefits of decorative concrete. She can be contacted at [sherry.boyd@protradepub.com](mailto:sherry.boyd@protradepub.com) for information on sponsorship opportunities.

[www.concretedecorshow.com](http://www.concretedecorshow.com)

### Sto Corp. names new CFO

Sto Corp., a leader in cladding, coating, and restoration systems, has named Christopher M. Thomas as its new chief financial officer.

Thomas has more than 13 years of domestic and international experience in all aspects of corporate finance and accounting. He is a certified public accountant and a certified mergers and acquisition advisor.

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## Ardex promotes from within for new VP and marketing director

Ardex Engineered Cements has promoted Jesse David to vice-president and general manager. He previously served as the vice president of sales for Ardex.

David brings to the position more than 19 years of experience gained at Ardex and a European flooring manufacturer. David will maintain his

direction over sales while adding profit and loss responsibilities for the Ardex Engineered Cements business unit. He will work closely with each functional discipline within Ardex to develop and direct the strategic initiatives necessary to meet the short-term and long-term objectives of the company.

Also promoted was Hendrick T. Goller to director of marketing, a newly created position that will focus

on the marketing efforts required to support aggressive product innovation initiatives planned by Ardex for 2009. Goller previously served as product platform manager for Ardex Tile & Stone Installation Products, where he was responsible for the development and launch of numerous new products.

Goller has worked for Ardex and The W.W. Henry Co. since 1999.

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## Promotions at E.T. Horn

E.T. Horn Co., a distributor, manufacturer and marketer of specialty chemicals and ingredients, has promoted Bob Ahn to president of the Industrial Groups and Vince Anderson to vice president of the Coatings and Building Materials Group.

Ahn was previously vice president of sales for the Coatings and Buildings Materials Group, and has been with the company since 1996. Anderson also started with the company in 1996 and has served as a senior account manager.

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🌐 [www.ethorn.com](http://www.ethorn.com)



Bob Ahn



Vince Anderson

## Tindall names new VP

Christopher Palumbo, P.E., has been appointed to the position of vice president of business development for precast company Tindall Corp.

Palumbo will work closely with senior management and technical and sales representatives to help acquire major projects throughout the United States. He has 32 years of experience in the design-build construction industry.

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## QC Construction Products closes

### A statement from the former national sales manager of QC

by Chris Sullivan

**O**n Feb. 25, 2009, QC Construction Products closed its doors, ceasing manufacturing and sales operations in the United States after 17 years. QC is the latest victim of a poor national economy that has been especially hard on the construction industry.

QC was founded in the early 1990s as a regional manufacturing and sales organization servicing the needs of the rapidly growing decorative concrete industry in the western U.S. Over the next 15 years, QC grew into one of the top decorative names in the industry, with multiple manufacturing plants. It sold products in all 50 states, as well as Canada and Mexico.

While the elimination of QC from the decorative market provides opportunity and windfall for the

remaining decorative manufacturers, no one really wins in this type of situation. Besides the immediate and sudden unemployment for all employees, QC customers are now left to deal with inventory issues, as well as finding new lines to fill the void. To those manufacturers replacing QC, don't take the ease by which you have come by this business for granted. The effects of the closure will be felt in all facets of the industry and will last for some time.

On behalf of all the employees at QC, we want to thank all of our customers for their business and support for the last 17 years. It goes without saying that this is not the way anyone wanted things to end. QC was home to a dedicated and motivated group of men and women who helped enhance and grow the decorative concrete industry these last few years. We sincerely hope that the events of February 25 do not cause any long-lasting effects on your business, and we apologize for any

inconvenience this event may have caused.

On a personal note, I want to thank all the thousands of people I have been fortunate enough to meet and work with over the last nine years. I plan on continuing my career in the decorative industry, and look forward to working with you all in the near future. While QC may quickly become a memory, the lessons learned, relationships forged, and friendships made will last a lifetime. 📞

*Chris Sullivan is settling into his new position as vice president of sales and marketing for Chemsystems Inc. He also writes the "Trowel & Error" column for Concrete Decor magazine. He can be reached at [cpsully224@msn.com](mailto:cpsully224@msn.com).*



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# ■ ■ ■ Carlton's Corner



Photos courtesy of Don Ciesielski, Walt Tools

Cindee's Custom Creations Inc., of Perham, Minn., created this piece for the Artistry in Decorative Concrete exhibition at World of Concrete 2009. It features vertical and horizontal overlays.

## What's New In Decorative Concrete

If you missed this year's World of Concrete in Las Vegas, let me bring you up to date on what is happening in the decorative concrete industry. The decorative all-stars were out in full force and they certainly delivered. The decorative concrete information highway ran straight through Las Vegas, and rumor is it's headed toward Phoenix, Ariz., in 2010.



by Doug Carlton

You are about to read a recap of two WOC seminars that covered what I feel are two of the most talked-about segments of the decorative industry. After we review these two classes I will take a few minutes to pass along how our industry seems to be faring.

### **"The Final Finish: Polishing and Sealing," taught by Robert Harris (Decorative Concrete Institute) and Clif Rawlings (HTC Inc.)**

Before we talk about the nuts and bolts here, let me tell you that these guys have been influential in our business on a global level. Their information is beneficial to all contractors who have segued into the decorative side of concrete.

Harris broke down a history of the polishing industry at the start of his presentation that was both informative and fascinating. I had no idea that the polishing we do today originated hundreds of years ago, by hand I might add.

We covered what makes polished concrete so special and unique — it provides an extremely low-maintenance



floor without coatings or waxes. The installation process has moved from “wet grinding,” with all its disposal issues, to “dry grinding” with walk-behind and ride-on machines. The class consisted of an overview of what makes a diamond better in relation to “grit” or the size of a tool. The benefit to the contractor can be thousands of dollars in savings when matching up the correct tools to the job.

As determined with a “scratch test,” concrete hardness will help identify the best polishing method. The hardness of the concrete surface will also dictate when a densifier is added and at what step in the grinding/polishing process. These densifiers come in several forms, and Harris spent plenty of time here, but the bottom line is to create a testing method for time-applying the densifiers.

The industry has developed a four-step rating system for concrete shine, which is determined by the stages of grind. This is important when comparing bids and keeping apples to apples. Your competitor could be selling a polished floor at a “Level 1” with less time and money than the “Level 2 or 3” in your bid. As with all decorative types, we learned, a floor sample and the need to visit the site before estimating are important. The introduction of stains and dyes has been huge in increasing the popularity of the polishing process, but picking the right time to apply them is key.

Growth opportunities for the polishing industry are huge in the commercial and municipal markets. Harris warned that this industry could be pricey to enter, so be cautious of your local market and do your homework before jumping in. Great job, guys. Thanks.

### **“Troubleshooting Decorative Concrete Part II: Stains, Dyes and Sealers,” taught by Chris Sullivan**

Chris Sullivan’s classes (yes, he has two troubleshooting seminars) are always a hit. In fact, many attendees attend parts I and II of the Troubleshooting seminar. This class can be summed up in two words, prevention and education. I must admit that I found myself listening when I should



Chindee Lundin works on her Artistry in Decorative Concrete project.

have been taking notes for this column.

This class covers “what-to-do-if” scenarios as well. The seminar started with a big dose of information about avoiding underselling and overperforming our jobs. This can be accomplished by providing accurate job-site samples to bring customer expectations in check. Chris also talked about something else that most of us hear very little about but is so important — compatibility. This is best accomplished by using the same manufacturer from start to finish.

We spent a little time talking about water, the No. 1 enemy of decorative concrete, and how it adversely affects our work. Chris recommends performing a water test over the entire floor to check the porosity of the concrete surface. The porosity, the level of tightness, will play a big part in how the concrete canvas accepts the stain regardless of whether it has a penetrating (acid) or water base. Solvents will always penetrate easier than water-based products. Regardless, less is more when applying stains, dyes and sealers. Light coats are key.

Chris mentioned the importance of developing a system of cleaning, staining and sealing that is followed on each job. This system creates a path from one stage to the other and will help to reveal a problematic situation and what to do to move past it. Many little tips and trade secrets were discussed,

including a quick fix with acrylic spray paint that can be found at most hardware stores. We also received a word of caution that the last person to touch a problem job owns it.

If you ever find yourself asking why your sealer does what it does, than be sure to attend one of Chris’s classes on troubleshooting decorative concrete. By the way, Chris writes an article each issue for *Concrete Decor* called “Trowel and Error.” Good job, Chris.

### **Finally, the local economy**

Plenty of daily information concerning the economy is available these days, and it seems everyone is an economist. Yes, things have and are correcting all over. Yes, some folks are concerned for their future and credit is less available then it once was — but.

Economy experts trying to predict the future of your business is like a weatherman in New Jersey forecasting for the West Coast. My point is this: Your economy is the level of calls for new business that you are experiencing at this time. If you have work on your books, then your earnings have a good shot at being steady. All areas are seeing different levels of calls for new work, so stay true to marketing your business. 📱

*Doug Carlton operates Doug Carlton Concrete in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at [carltondoug@comcast.net](mailto:carltondoug@comcast.net).*





Photo courtesy of Syntheon Inc.

The tiny polymeric beads of Elemix make concrete lighter, more insulating and more durable.

## World of Green Concrete

**G**reen was a hot topic at this year's World of Concrete show. It seemed that every exhibitor had some mention of green in their displays. In some cases this seemed to be little more than lip service, but in other cases, some very real steps are being taken towards greener concrete. And then there was Calera — a very big, very exciting idea that could practically turn concrete into the solution to global warming. Seriously! I'm saving Calera for last, so keep reading.



by William D.  
Palmer Jr.

First for the disappointing part. The World of Concrete's GreenSite was intended to showcase the best of the sustainability efforts being made across the concrete industry. However, this

special area of the show was a series of tiny booths tucked in the very back of the second floor of the South Hall. I doubt that many visitors ever made it that deep into the hall, and even if they did, there was little to see and no one to talk with. I hate to pick on what was a good idea, but in the end GreenSite seemed to be little more than an afterthought.

Another problem with GreenSite was that many of the companies that apparently paid extra to be included were no greener than many other companies throughout the show. There were companies that make cardboard form tubes from recycled paperboard (as does every other tube form maker), a manufacturer of foundation drainage boards (a great product, but I'm not too clear about what's particularly green about it), and DeWalt power tools. I like DeWalt tools and use them myself. They are great tools. But I'm not sure how they are any greener than any other



tools. All of the companies in GreenSite probably have some commitment to green principles, but so do hundreds of companies.

On the positive side, GreenSite had some interesting free presentations — but again, attendance was sparse. There was also a GreenSite luncheon to review sustainable techniques and materials, and this drew about 80 people. A panel of experts discussed how to implement green concepts in concrete design and construction, and the GreenSite Projects of the Year were recognized, including the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center, the Wisconsin project that is the only one ever to have received 61 of 61 possible LEED points.

Meanwhile, there were some truly interesting green products around the show, if we accept that making concrete greener can be as simple as making it more durable and lightweight and incorporating more recycled materials. All those things contribute, and a lot of these small steps add up to a large step.

Take Elemix, tiny nonabsorbent polymeric spheres that are added to concrete. Compared to typical concrete, the result is lighter in weight (about 120 pcf versus 150 pcf), has a higher R value (about 25 percent higher) and has increased durability because it is less permeable. Not only that, the “ball-bearing” effect of the beads allows the concrete to be pumped and finished easily, and it can be proportioned to get all the structural properties required. Traditional lightweight concrete uses lightweight aggregate that needs to be soaked at the ready-mix plant and that can be difficult to work with due to the increased water demand — leading to scaling and shrinkage. Elemix has overcome that problem at a price that is competitive with other lightweight mixes. “Would a ready-mix producer charge a premium for this product? The answer is yes,” says Debra Van Holst of Nova Chemicals Corp., which makes Elemix through a subsidiary, Syntheon Inc. “But ready-mix producers currently charge a premium for lightweight structural concrete because it is more expensive to produce and handle. One of the attractive things about

Elemix concrete additive is that it is significantly easier than lightweight expanded aggregate to store, handle and use in concrete.”

Another interesting material on display at WOC was Ekocrete. This new kind of concrete uses crushed recycled concrete as aggregate. A high percentage of fly ash, some cement, and

nanofibers for reinforcement are added to produce concrete with compressive strength of between 2,000 and 10,000 psi. It finishes like traditional concrete and can be colored, stained or stamped. Ekocrete says that 90 percent of the material is recycled. Currently, Ekocrete comes in 50-pound bags available from Buddy Rhodes Artisan Concrete,



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although they expect to soon begin working with select ready-mix producers. "Ekocrete is stronger and easier to work with than traditional concrete," says Berkeley architect Rachel Hamilton. "I plan to use it extensively in my future jobs." This material may have limited use unless they can figure out how to make it using local materials, but the idea is certainly sound.

And then there is Calera, which, if successful, could make concrete a net consumer of carbon dioxide rather than a producer. Can't you see the headlines? Concrete saves the planet! The brainchild of earth sciences expert Dr. Brent Constantz, Calera's process combines the flue gas from a coal-fired power plant with seawater to create a new kind of cementitious material that is similar to the material ocean coral uses to create its hard skeleton. The effluent from the Calera process is clean air (with a normal carbon dioxide level), demineralized water and a supplementary cementitious material. This may seem like a pipe dream, but Constantz is not some wild-eyed professor: He made a fortune by inventing a rapid-setting cement that is used in nearly every operating room in the United States to set fractured bones. The primary investor in this company is Sun Microsystems founder Vinod Khosla, and Calera's technical team includes the likes of Terry Holland, former president of the American Concrete Institute and a highly regarded international expert in concrete chemistry.

Currently operating a pilot plant adjacent to California's Moss Landing Power Plant, Calera is testing and refining its materials. The basic idea is that rather than trying to reduce or somehow dispose of carbon dioxide, why not use it as a raw material for a manufacturing process? "The goal is not to replace cement," says Constantz, "but to store carbon dioxide in the built environment and lower the carbon footprint of concrete." The cementitious material created by what Calera calls carbonate mineralization can replace a large percentage of the cement in a concrete mix and can also be used to create a synthetic aggregate that sequesters even more carbon dioxide. In the extreme case, this can all add up to concrete that actually consumes much more carbon dioxide than it produces.

Calera plans to have a full-scale plant operational within a few years and multiple plants worldwide within 10 years.

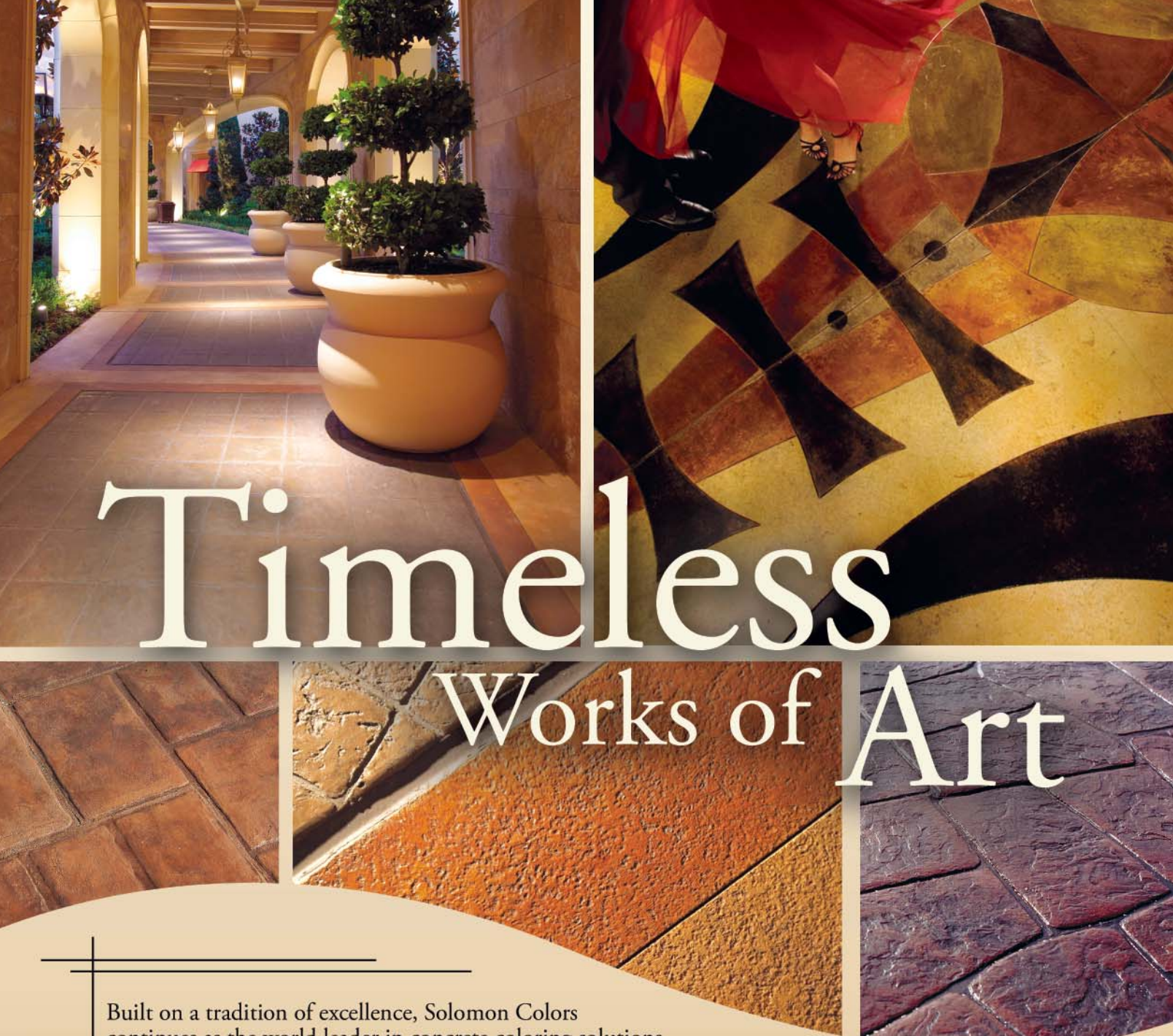
So green ideas were everywhere at World of Concrete 2009. Let's hope the difficulties can be solved and concrete can emerge as the world's greenest building material. 🚧

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## CSolutions Atlanta, Ga.



Photos courtesy of CSolutions, a Division of Middle Georgia Concrete Constructors Inc.

by Christina Camara

**C**oncrete laborer, labor foreman, finisher, laser screed operator, assistant superintendent, shop foreman, purchasing agent, estimator, project manager, architectural concrete division manager, operations manager.

Tim Blankenship has held all these jobs in his 23 years of pouring concrete. Each position has contributed to his enthusiasm for decorative applications and his commitment to continuous learning. His keen attention to detail can be seen in the field or behind a desk at CSolutions in Atlanta, where he oversees sales, estimating and project costs.

CSolutions specializes in decorative concrete, such as stained and polished concrete, exposed aggregate, stamped concrete and pavers, and is a licensed Lithocrete installer.

It's a relatively young company, but CEO Scott Truax, who recruited Blankenship to join him, is proud of the projects CSolutions has completed and the strong relationships it has forged with distributors and the Atlanta design community.

Architects and designers are accustomed to contractors trying to sell a particular line of products, Truax says. CSolutions goes further — it educates them about the wide range of possibilities decorative concrete can offer. "It's unique for a contractor to promote an array of products and finishes," he says. "It's like eye candy to clients."

Truax's wife Caroline originally founded CSolutions as an amenity distributor in Atlanta in 2000 and continued to operate the company when the couple moved to Vail, Colo., for a couple



of years. After they decided to move back to Atlanta, Scott, who believed the area needed a leader in decorative concrete solutions, shifted the emphasis of the company from distribution to decorative work.

He called an old friend in the business, Paul Mandall, who had started Middle Georgia Concrete Constructors Inc., for some advice on starting a new business. "I looked him up just to have a cup of coffee and see what mistakes he made so I wouldn't make the same ones," he says. Instead, he ended up getting an offer to buy out Mandall's partner.

Now, co-owners Truax and Mandall focus MGCC on work for schools, jails, hospitals and churches. Truax is CEO and Mandall is president. CSolutions is a division of MGCC.

Blankenship, who had known and worked with Truax for years, joined him in 2005, with the intention of growing and developing CSolutions. ("I started beating on him to come join me and he gave in," Truax explains.)

Blankenship says he came into decorative concrete "backward" — from the front office to the project site, not the other way around. An accident gave Blankenship a fuller exposure to the "business" side of the concrete business. In 2000, he crushed his foot and was out of work for a year and a half recovering from three surgeries. He was with Precision Concrete Construction of Alpharetta, Ga., at the time. The company's services were vast, from restoration and demolition to concrete frame fabrication

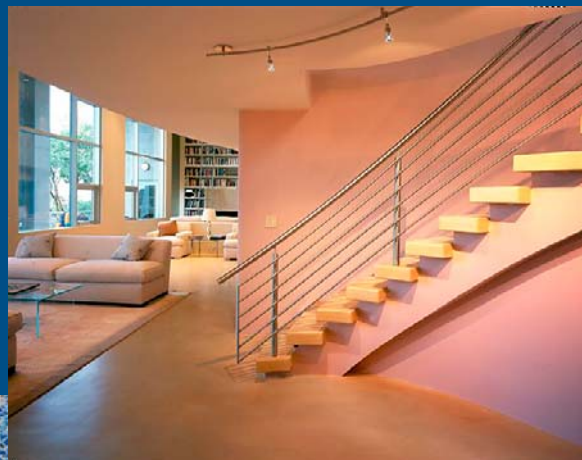
for high-rise buildings to a huge range of decorative applications. At one point, Blankenship was one of the Southeast's largest installer of architectural concrete.

Blankenship eased back into work by doing some estimating for Precision's new decorative division, which was headed by none other than pre-CSolutions Scott Truax.

As Blankenship's foot healed, he began experimenting with various decorative techniques. By the end of his 14-year tenure at Precision Concrete, he was architectural concrete division manager. The division employed 50 people in six crews on projects around the country.

Blankenship missed the feel of a more personal business, so when Truax invited him to join CSolutions, he did. Although he





calls it one of the hardest decisions he's ever made, he does not regret it. Blankenship figures he spends about half his time in the field, about 30 percent meeting clients and 20 percent estimating. "When I came into the office I learned a lot more about the details of specifications," he says. "I got more into sales too, and started learning and dealing with customer expectations."

According to Truax, Blankenship's passion is making educational presentations. He hosts "lunch-and-learns" a few times a month. His constant striving for better quality and new challenges and his ability to work well with architects and designers has

served CSolutions well.

"Fifty percent of our leads come through the design community," Truax says, adding that it sometimes takes just a few weeks for a presentation to translate into new work for CSolutions.

One of Blankenship's favorite projects is a 1,200-square-foot stained concrete patio he created in 2007 for homeowners in central Georgia. It features a 26-inch diagonal grid pattern with 6-inch black diamonds, which Blankenship says were scored by hand over the Fourth of July weekend. "We did the whole thing in three days," he says. "We had fun doing it."

Blankenship and a crew of three used L.M. Scofield Co.'s Lithochrome Ash White color hardener for the overall tint, along with Scofield's Tintura water-based stains (Beige, Steadman Buff and Deep Charcoal). The homeowners picked exterior paint color to match the patio. "They were ecstatic," Blankenship says.

The company has also enjoyed positive reactions for its work on the Cherry Street restoration in Macon, Ga. CSolutions was called in when the original contractor could not meet the budget. The project features a large fountain with a base of Lithocrete, which allowed the crew to surface-seed





multiple colors of glass to give it a glittering effect. Two city blocks were torn up, the existing cobblestones were set aside, and the area was transformed. The cobblestones were used for the parking lines, decorative brickwork was installed throughout, and two new crosswalks mark each end of the project.

What's next for CSolutions? One of the biggest projects on Blankenship's to-do list is an open-air mall in Kansas City that will involve 180,000 feet of flatwork, including stamped concrete, broomed finishes, pavers and flagstones.

The company is also building a new office that will include a 1,000-square-foot

lab showing samples of colored aggregates, glass and more. Truax has hired a full-time marketing professional to promote CSolutions' work. As the big projects of GMCC have slowed with the economy, more time and energy is being poured into the CSolutions decorative division. Truax hopes to increase CSolutions' percentage of overall GMCC revenues from 10 to 15 percent to 25 to 40 percent.

Truax and Blankenship don't believe in keeping their skills to themselves. They are happy to share what they know with fellow contractors, architects and designers and are more than willing to work collaboratively.

Both are very active in trade associations, and they have nurtured and maintained strong relationships with distributors. Truax credits the networking of trade associations with a new opportunity to become a Sundek installer in the area.

"No matter what I've done, it's been a challenge and I've loved it," Blankenship says. "I'm just up for the next challenge, I guess."

 [csolutions.cc](http://csolutions.cc)



# Project Profile



Photos courtesy of Szolyd Development Corp.

## Hotel Rialto Restoration Victoria, B.C. Contractor: Szolyd Development Corp.

by Chris Mayo

**T**he Hotel Rialto (originally known as the Prince George Hotel and later the Hotel Douglas), built in 1911 in Victoria, B.C., suffered years of exposure to the elements. Efforts at maintenance and rehab often made things worse rather than better.

The Rialto is an excellent representation of the commercial style of architecture common in western Canada during the period leading up to World War I. That, coupled with its downtown Victoria location and the fact that it has remained a hotel as originally intended, made the building an attractive restoration prospect to the City of Victoria's Heritage Committee. Renovating the Rialto was something of a pilot program for the committee.

"Until the Hotel Rialto, all the Heritage

projects involved tax incentives to convert upper floors of commercial buildings to residential use," explains Steve Barber, senior Heritage planner for the City of Victoria. "The Rialto is unique in that we wanted it to remain a hotel. The upper floors will still be hotel rooms and

**Project:** Hotel Rialto Restoration, Victoria, B.C.

**Originally Built:** 1911

**Original Architect:** L.W. Hargreaves

**Restoration Architects:** Ann Murphy, John Keay

**Exterior Recreation Contractor:**  
Szolyd Development Corp.

**Materials Supplier:** Lafarge North America

**Scope of Work:** Replace four large and seven small first-floor columns, plinths and curbs



the first floor will still be retail shops.”

Barber says that because of the pilot aspect of the project, the City Council had to be convinced that renovation would be economically viable and that the renovation would have a positive impact on the area around the hotel. “Ultimately the City Council enthusiastically embraced the project,” he says.

### The challenge

Early in the assessment stage, the Heritage Committee determined that the upper four exterior stories of the Rialto, which consist, for the most part, of brick cladding, were in good enough condition to require only cosmetic repairs. The first story was the problem.

The first floor of the building was designed with an open look, achieved with masonry columns faced with terra cotta that make the hotel look as if the upper floors are supported solely by the columns. During previous attempts at renovation and repairs, nearly all the terra cotta was removed. Most of the corners and details were either knocked off or damaged over the years. While terra cotta is a building material that has stood the test of time, replicating and replacing it is an extremely expensive proposition. Alternatives needed to be explored.

### A Szolyd solution

Founded in 2006, Szolyd (pronounced “solid”) Development Corp. in Victoria, B.C., has already garnered a reputation for making innovative use of environmentally sustainable materials while creating stunning architectural features. It’s no surprise that the proposed Hotel Rialto restoration, located in their own backyard, was attractive to them.

Nolan Mayrhofer, owner and president of Szolyd, says

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the Rialto project intrigued him from the start, and he was pretty sure he had an answer to the challenge of finding a material that would realistically mimic the original terra cotta cladding.

Szolyd has used Ductal to create precast architectural features as well as sinks, countertops and furnishings. Ductal, developed by the LaFarge Group and available through Lafarge North America, is a high-strength, flexible, durable and virtually impenetrable alternative to concrete. "It's an amazing product," says Mayrhofer. "When I first became aware of Ductal, I had to try it."

Before the Rialto restoration, Szolyd used Ductal to create ornate architectural features on a fairly small scale. Mayrhofer saw the potential to use it in the Rialto project. "Because it was a restoration, everything was different. We couldn't use traditional concrete, for instance, because it would be too heavy. Though we had never done a project of this scope, in theory we knew Ductal would work, and we knew we were capable of doing the job."

### **Putting theory to practice**

Being awarded the contract was only a small aspect of the challenge, according to Joel Blaicher, lead fabricator for Szolyd. "We had to create a replacement for the original terra cotta as well as the plinths and curbs on the building," he says. "Fortunately, there was one undamaged original column inside the building. That column, combined with historical research, photos and drawings, served as a kind of template for all the exterior columns and enabled us to create accurate molds."

Some original terra cotta details on the upper stories gave the team an additional benchmark to work from, Blaicher says. Four large columns are 35 3/8 inches across and 146 1/2 inches tall with a 35 3/8-inch return, while seven small columns are 25 3/8 inches wide. Referencing the data they had collected from their research, Szolyd built wooden composite versions of each column. Once they were convinced they had created accurate depictions of the columns with wood, the next step was to manufacture molds.



The original columns consisted of 4-inch-thick terra cotta over a masonry substructure of stone and brick. "Ductal is strong enough that we were able to cast the new column facing at only an inch thick ... and realistically, three quarters of an inch would have been strong enough," says Mayrhofer.

Because the Ductal columns would be only 25 percent as thick as the original terra cotta, Szolyd had to come up with a means to fasten the new column facing to the existing brick and stone substructure. They decided upon a system by which they attached quarter-inch plates to the back of the columns with half-inch stainless steel bolts embedded in the Ductal. Ultimately, they used 19 fasteners per column. Regarding the fastening system, Blaicher says: "It helped that the building was built very robustly for its day. That enabled us to attach the Ductal facing to the existing substructure with confidence. We worked closely with engineers to achieve acceptable mechanical strength and to meet attachment requirements."

Two major challenges remained: matching the original color and determining what to use to depict the mortar that was originally used with the terra cotta blocks. "We had to nail the color first and then, because graffiti had been an ongoing issue at street level, we had to come up with a translucent coating that would discourage future graffiti," Blaicher says. After a good amount of research, experimentation, and trial and error, Szolyd was able to accomplish both goals with an epoxy-like proprietary coating. In fact, the coating they used tended to replicate the original glaze and seems to have richened, or warmed, the subtle impregnated tones in the Ductal. The "mortar joints" were replicated via a flexible construction adhesive, which was also coated with antigraffiti glaze.

The original plinths and curbs were not built with terra cotta. Szolyd created replicas of them with traditional concrete and an exposed fine aggregate.

## The final analysis

A satisfied customer, in this case the City of Victoria, tends to be the best barometer of the quality of a project. "Szolyd did an amazing job," Barber says. "They were thorough, kept us up to date, and were easy to work with."

Mayrhofer and Blaicher seem to be equally pleased. "We're pretty proud of what we did," Mayrhofer says. "As far as we know, no one in the world has ever done this before. There is huge potential here with cladding projects from a restoration standpoint."

Blaicher echoed those sentiments. "We believe this is the first building of its kind to be restored in quite this way and using these materials."

Mayrhofer pointed out an added advantage: "By virtue of Ductal's durability, this renovation should last for generations. When you think of that, and the fact that it enables a contractor to use so much less material, by default it's a green product."

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# ACID STAINS: *Still Strong*

Photo courtesy of L.M. Scofield Co.

This surface, colored with L.M. Scofield's Lithochrome Chemstain acid stain, has a mottled and irregular appearance that is intended to closely resemble the shadings of nature. The stain allows surface imperfections to become part of the distinctive beauty of the floor.

***One of decorative concrete's best-known effects, acid staining has inspired legions of fans — and some look-alike alternatives***

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

**A**s unpredictable as they are beautiful, acid stains can transform an ordinary slab of concrete into a breathtaking piece of art. Contractors who have learned to successfully use acid stains say no other products on the market measure up to the stains' performance. The special handling, prepping and extensive cleanup acid stains require are worth it.

Acid stains are nothing new. They've been around since the 1920s, says Scott Thome, director of product services for L.M. Scofield Co.

And even with nonacid stains gaining a foothold in today's market, diehards maintain acid stains and their prized visual effects aren't going away anytime soon.

"As more people clamor for Old World-looking pieces, I think the market is going to drive more contractors to offer acid staining," says Tom Ralston of Tom Ralston Concrete, a company founded by his grandfather in 1928 in Santa Cruz, Calif. "It looks antiqued, weather-worn, anything but new." And, many think, it's well worth its troubles because it rivals the variegated stone creations of Mother Nature herself.

Even though its initial makeup is hazardous, acid stains



have an environmentally friendly upside. There are no VOCs to contend with while applying them. There is no off-gassing from the finished product, no place for allergens to hide and, if cleaned up properly, no harsh chemicals left behind. Compared to carpet or vinyl, a concrete floor's sustainability is hard to beat. And contrary to what some might think, its hazardous content won't necessarily affect a building's LEED certification.

### How acid stains work

Acid stains consist of a mild acid — usually hydrochloric acid — mixed with water and metal oxide additives, also called mineral or metallic salts, that penetrate the surface and generate a chemical reaction with the free lime (calcium hydroxide) in the concrete.

***"I love acid stains.  
They're tried and true."***

— Shellie Rigsby  
Acanthus Inc., Plano, Texas

"When it comes to reactivity, the acid has little to do with it," says Chris Sullivan, vice president of sales and marketing for Chemsystems Inc. "The active ingredient is the mineral salt. But if you tried to dissolve the salts in just water, they would just break down into smaller pieces. You need the acid in the water to make these salts soluble."

The mild acidic solution also lightly etches the surface, he continues, which allows the mineral salt to penetrate into the concrete, react with the free lime and form a chemical bond. The metallic salts fill the pores in the paste layer of the concrete, permanently changing the color of the surface.

Thome provides further explanation. "The acid in the acid stain is (mostly) neutralized by the alkalinity in the concrete. The higher the alkalinity, the better the color development will be. Once the acid becomes neutral, the metallic salts fall out of suspension and then react with the calcium hydroxide to produce the color. The color development



Photo courtesy of Kemiko Concrete Products

The look of this floor was achieved by using a diluted batch of Kemiko Malay Tan stain, along with a bit of Cola stain and diluted black accents. It was finished with a clear sealer.



Photo courtesy of SureCrete Design Products

This concrete was covered with SureCrete microtopping, then stained with a mix of two or three diluted Eco-Stain colors. The floor was then sealed with Dura-Kote 100, a 100 percent epoxy sealer.





The colors in the H&C Infusion Reactive Acid Stain line are touted as extremely vibrant and can be easily mixed to create custom hues.

Photo courtesy of H&C Concrete Coatings



is a total chemical reaction and is concrete-dependant.

"Not all concrete slabs have the properties to be stained with every color. What's more, every color has a different chemical reaction and requires different levels of alkalinity."

It's the varying amounts of calcium hydroxide that cause the mottling and marbling variegation in the translucent acid stain pattern, Sullivan says. "That's why every job is different — because every piece of concrete is different."

"There are ways to alter the final color, to make it lighter or darker, by changing the initial (amount) of water in the stain," says Barbara Sargent, representing Kemiko Concrete Products. You also can adjust the amount you spray to achieve different looks and tones, she adds.

Still, in the end, some factors about acid staining remain constant, says Shellie Rigsby, owner of Acanthus Inc. in Plano, Texas. "Acid stains can be manipulated but not controlled. They can be anticipated but not guaranteed."

### Safety and other concerns

With acid stain — also called reactive, chemical or penetrating stains — customer expectation is a big hurdle to clear, Rigsby emphasizes. "You can give customers a sample board, but they've got to realize acid stains won't reproduce exactly as seen."

Temperature and humidity affect color development, says Thome. If you apply the same color on the same slab at different substrate temperatures, say one at 45 F and the other at 70 F, the resulting colors will differ. "If you have low humidity, the water in the acid stain will evaporate at a faster rate and not allow the full chemical reaction to take place," he explains.

Ralston agrees acid stains are hard to control. "They're messy and can be labor-intensive because you often have to make multiple passes to get the color that's desired," he says. Also, there are really only about 10 basic colors, he says, give or take a few depending on the manufacturer. These can be mixed and matched.

You must wait for the stains to react, Sullivan notes, sometimes up to



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# Acid Alternatives

## Water-based stains that promise a faux acid look

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

**T**oday's contractors who love the look of acid stains but loathe the labor and time required to get the job done have more ways than ever before to bypass the troublesome application using safer-for-all water routes.

"The green movement has something to do with the growing popularity of water-based stains," says Chris Sullivan, vice president of sales and marketing for Chemsystems Inc. "But the newer dyes and acrylics on the market are mainly becoming more popular because they are not as labor-intensive. They're easier to apply, the prep goes way down and the hazardous issues go away. Overall, there are less problems to deal with and less callbacks."

Sullivan estimates 30 to 40 percent of the labor and time are reduced when using water-based products to create acid-stain-mimicking patterns. "The cost per square foot goes down substantially," he says.

Here are a few water-based products that can do the trick:

**Eco-Stain**, from SureCrete Design Products, is a water-based, eco-friendly green product with zero VOCs that doesn't require any cleanup after application. When dry, the surface just needs to be sealed.

Eco-Stain works off of concrete's natural tendency to accept moisture, says Tony Leff, regional sales

manager. "As it pulls in our product, it pulls in our pigments and gives the concrete that typical, mottled acid-stain look."

Since no chemical reaction takes place, there is no extended wait time for the color to fully develop, no residue and no neutralizing afterward. Color may be built up without worrying about spending all a slab's alkalinity. "It puts the applicator in control of the color instead of the concrete dictating what happens," Leff says.

The line has 29 UV-stable colors that can be brushed, sponged or sprayed on interior and exterior surfaces. You can apply them wet on wet, mix or blend colors to create your own, or correct or enhance a color by applying wet on dry.

Leff says he doesn't feel contractors need training to use the SureCrete product. "They just need an open mind to visualize the color schemes they want to create."

**Reflector Enhancer**, from Elite Crete Systems, is a new product designed for contractors who are looking for something different. From a distance, the "enhanced" floor looks like a conventional acid stain or dye, but as you get closer the colors change and, ever so subtly, sparkle.

Engineered as a fine powder derived from an aluminum bismuth oxychloride, it can be added to water-based clear sealers or specialty coatings as a subtle transparent color or as a variegated opaque finish. It is neither an oxide-based pigment nor a powdered dye.

"It's so hard to get a good picture," says Gene Dean, regional director of training and tech support for Elite Crete Systems. "Its shimmering and glimmering effect is pretty amazing. When you walk

Photo courtesy of Elite Crete Systems of Indiana

Two colors of Elite Crete Reflector Enhancer in clear epoxy, installed on a gym floor.

around and look at it, it'll change color depending on how light refracts off of it."

Reflector Enhancer, introduced in summer 2008, is currently available in 12 colors, with 10 more coming on the market shortly.

**H&C Semi-Transparent Decorative Stain**, from H&C Concrete Coatings, will soon be on the market. The nonreactive, environmentally friendly stain, which will be available in 24 standard colors, is designed to mimic acid stains.

"It will debut by the end of the first quarter," says Justin Brazie, product manager, "and will give contractors another option to make their installation easier." He declines to release further details until the product is formally introduced.

**Elements**, from Butterfield Color, penetrates the surface, binds to the concrete and creates a mottled look, says sales manager Keith Boudart. "It's used in place of acid stains where green products are requested or on older floors where the chemical reaction doesn't produce the desired results," he says.

The product, which is available in 16 standard colors, should be applied with a high-volume, low-pressure sprayer or an airless sprayer. Proper surface preparation is essential, and after the product is applied it must be sealed.

You can mix the product to create your own colors, he says. Elements can be used for interior and exterior surfaces, with the exception of red and purple, which can only be used inside.



SureCrete Eco-Stain

Photo courtesy of SureCrete Design Products

**Tintura**, from L.M. Scofield Co.'s Lithochrome line, is a low-VOC acrylic and lithium silicate product for interior use that's available in thousands of colors, including vivid reds, yellows, blues and even grays. The environmentally friendly waterborne stain, which has been on the market for about five years, penetrates and bonds with porous concrete or cementitious toppings for permanent, nonfading, predictable colors.

Tintura chemically bonds with cured concrete. The product contains a silicate that reacts with the calcium hydroxide (free lime) to produce calcium silica hydrate (CSH), which is the same material that forms when water is added to cement. CSH is the "glue" produced when cement hydrates.

"It can mottle or variegate depending on how you put it on," says Scott Thome, director of product services for L.M. Scofield. To achieve a mottled effect, contractors should apply the material with an airless sprayer or a cup gun in a circular motion to create multiple thicknesses. Tintura is formulated to build more color with each additional layer. If the applicator applies it in a random motion, the varying-depth layers will give the floor a variegated look from the same color.

For a multicolored acid-stain appearance, contractors should first apply a darker color, leaving voids in the pattern. Next, the voids should be filled in with a different color. Finally, the entire area should be coated with a lighter color, which blends the first two together and provides a common tone over the entire area.

Up to three coats may be applied to increase color intensity. The color treatment system can produce either a translucent or an opaque appearance.

Tintura needs to be finished with a compatible Scofield sealer, Thome notes.

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This floor employs two of Butterfield Color's Perma-cast Sierra Stains: Stygian and Cordovan Leather.

12 hours.

When the staining is done, you must take extra care to neutralize any remaining acidity with copious amounts of water. And that water should never go down the drain. "The wastewater needs to be collected and disposed of properly," Sullivan stresses.

The water-intensive cleanup is necessary to get rid of the residue on the surface that has not reacted, as well as the byproducts of the reaction. "It's a hazardous material until it's all cleaned up," Sullivan says. The brown residual material typically contains chrome, which is right up there with mercury, lead and other heavy metals, he says. "OSHA and other government agencies don't want that to get into our streams or groundwater."

By law, contractors must follow local regulations on how to deal with the wastewater. Compliance could involve vacuuming it up and treating it. Some contractors mix the residual water with kitty litter or cement and throw it away. Once dry, the residue is no longer a threat.

There are also hazardous-material shipping concerns, says Keith Boudart, sales manager for Butterfield Color, which means an additional cost for handling. And because of the acid content, you have to use plastic sprayers instead of metal that can corrode.

Rob Ellis, president of SRI Concrete

Products, notes that acid stains are no stronger than muriatic acids that anyone can buy from big chain retailers. "You should take the same precautions you would applying a simple acid etch."

To be absolutely safe, contractors should wear an OSHA-approved respirator, gloves, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and goggles, Sargent recommends. If the acid splashes on you, it will eat holes in your clothing and burn your skin. Wash it off at once, she says. If you get it in your eyes, flush with water immediately and go to a doctor. Also, the acid spray can kill unprotected plants.

### Prepping takes time

Before you begin any staining project, Sargent says, make sure the floor is clean, the concrete isn't sealed or that something hasn't been added to the mix to keep the stain from reacting. "There are products out there to take off anything," she says. "It's worth every hour you spend prepping for a stain job, because when you're finished, it's permanent."

You also need to remove the weak cement paste at the surface before and after you stain, says Thome. Otherwise, the weak layer will be stained and the color will wash off during the residue removal process.

"(After staining,) you need to aggressively break away the cement

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The palette for this floor at the Potawatomi Tribes Executive Building in Crandon, Wis., consisted of 10 colors of Lithochrome Tintura Stain, a waterborne stain touted by L.M. Scofield Co. as an acid stain alternative. Five were blends of base colors, to better match the rendered design. The ability to mix and match colors proved critical, given the condition of mixed pours in the work area.

Photo courtesy of L.M. Scofield Co.



paste that was weakened by the acid so the sealer has a durable surface to bond to," he says. "I've seen it too many times when a sealer has peeled from the surface bringing the color with it. This is not a sealer issue. It's a residue removal issue."

It's imperative that you don't seal too quickly, Sargent says, or you'll just capture the moisture. "Just because it feels dry doesn't mean it is dry."

On new construction, make sure the surface is protected from the likes of electricians or plumbers, says Justin Brazie, product manager for H&C Concrete Coatings. "The other trades disrespect the floor because they think it's going to be covered up. You need to get with the general contractor and make sure he tells the other trades that it's not going to be."

For stains to stick, he explains, the concrete has to be bare. "Even if someone spills pop on the floor and wipes it up, when you come in and spray that spill will jump out at you." The same goes for pencil marks, chalk, burn marks or even silicone spray.

"If a floor is too beat up," Brazie adds, "you can always throw down an overlay. But that will make the job more involved."



Photo courtesy of Butterfield Color

This dragon-tail restaurant floor was created with Butterfield Elements Water-based Stains, including Cordovan Leather for the floor and Verdigris for the dragon tail.

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On this floor, diluted Kemiko Malay Tan stain was covered with Kemiko Clear Wax.

According to Sullivan, three key factors need to come together for a successful staining job: porosity, penetration and adhesion. "The surface needs to be porous or there's nowhere for the stain to go. If it's troweled too tight or the surface is contaminated, there is no penetration. The stain just sits on the surface. And if there's no penetration, you won't get any adhesion."

A contractor's biggest mistake when it comes to acid staining, he continues, is overapplying the product. "Overapplication causes surface tension, and the stain sits on the surface rather than penetrating it. In this case, less is more."

## The rewards

People hooked on acid staining rave about its natural rather than manmade-looking results. "Most dyes and pigments cover up what's there, whereas acid stains accentuate the variation," Ellis says.

"The colors you get from reactive stains are stone tones or earthy colors, like rust, deep chocolate, copper patina, amber and golden colors," says Rigsby. "I love acid stains. They're tried and true. They embrace the natural characteristics of concrete, resulting in a stone-like appearance that in and of itself is artistic."

# Mottled by Design

## One company's technique for imitating the look of acid stain

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

**U**nlike acid stains, which achieve their natural good looks with a chemical reaction, today's water-based copycats often rely on employing proper techniques.

Trevor Foster, regional sales manager and principal trainer for Miracote Products, touts one such procedure. "If you know what acid stains look like, our system is very easy to use," he says.

Miracote's water-based penetrating stain, Mirastain II, which has been around for a decade or more, can be used to emulate the look of acid staining without all the fuss. Available in 36 standard colors and endless custom colors, the eco-friendly product is made with polymer resin, water, isopropyl alcohol, a proprietary blend of flow and leveling agents, and liquid integral pigment.

"Its biggest advantage is that Mirastain doesn't cause a chemical reaction," Foster says about the stain. "You don't need to wait for

the stain to react with the free lime in the concrete and you don't need to neutralize it. What you see is what you get. That's a very big selling point."

Throughout the year at distributors' showrooms and warehouses across the country, Foster conducts three-day workshops in which he demonstrates how to use Mirastain to emulate acid stains. The hands-on training, geared for rookies and pros alike, covers everything from surface preparation to advanced application techniques.

"Spraying wet on wet is very critical with this system so the colors can flow together, mottle and variegate all as one," Foster says. To produce highs and low, you overload some areas with pigments while lightly going over others. Two types of sprayers are involved — a pump sprayer and a high-volume, low-pressure spray gun — which are used simultaneously, streaming one color and churning another. "You

just have to develop 'the eye,'" he says. "It's a very easy system to use if you know what you're looking for."

If you need more color in a certain area, "Boom, you know right then and there," says Foster. And the colors in the line really make a difference. They can be diluted to get a light pink or used full strength to get a deep burgundy, vivid green or even a true black. "You're not stuck with the same old colors," he points out. Acid stains only offer about a dozen.

Miracote, with its alcohol content, has a much quicker drying time than acid-based stains, Foster continues. Rather than having to wait for the stain to react, then rinsing, then letting it dry and hydrate before sealing, you're sealing in two to four hours. Overall, Foster estimates, his company's technique could save 15 to 20 hours per man per job.

[www.miracote.com](http://www.miracote.com)



The Texas-based contractor points out that reactive stains are UV-stable — “Most dyes are not,” she says — and can be successfully used inside or outside.

When it comes to individuality, Brazie says, acid stains are unbeatable. “You can create something that’s very hard to repeat. You can get close, but it won’t be exact, because there are so many different variables that come into play.”

Butterfield Color’s Boudart concedes that reactive stains aren’t the easiest material to work with. “But when it comes to getting natural variegated looks, they pretty much do the work for you. Acid stain gives you the best mottled, Old World look out of all the products out there.”

“I’m amazed at a lot of the new products on the market and how they work, but there’s no substitute for the old standards,” Ellis concludes. “A lot of new products look like acid stains, but you won’t get the longevity of acid stain when it comes to fading or washing away. You’re not just adding a pigment, you’re changing the surface. They just don’t compare.”

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This floor in a private residence in Georgia was hard-troweled and stained with SRI Concrete Products’ Renaissance Spanish Moss.

Photo courtesy of SRI Concrete Products



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Photos courtesy of General Equipment Co.

# SURFACE PREPARATION: THE RIGHT PROFILE

by Sue Marquette Poremba

**O**ne thing that the experts agree on when it comes to concrete surface preparation is that everybody has his own approach.

"It's very subjective," says Dennis Von Ruden, president of General Equipment Co. "There are no hard-core rules on how to approach surface prep."

Surface prep, in its simplest form, is preparing the floor for decorative concrete, and how that is approached is dependent on the type of installation planned.

Polishing and stain projects will get the least aggressive preparation or profile. Floors intended for epoxies, polyurethanes and overlays will be given a heavier profile. The thicker the material you are putting down, the heavier the profile of the surface prep

must be, says Brad Padgett, CEO of Concrete Polishing Solutions. "Epoxies go down heavier than the urethanes, and overlays are typically thicker than the epoxies."

Preparing the surface for polishing, he says, "is similar to what you'd be doing with any coatings in that you'd be removing any foreign materials, be it bond-breakers or surface imperfections, to prepare it for its final look or its final polish."

Padgett recommends using the surface prep strategies presented by the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI). Along with industry guidelines, ICRI offers concrete-surface profile chips, which are rubber-molded, numbered samples that range from a number one to a number nine. Each number



corresponds with a set of guidelines that state what that profile is, how to achieve it, and what coatings or overlays can be applied over it.

When it comes to epoxies and polyurethanes, Chris Sullivan, vice president of sales and marketing for Chemsystems Inc., says that the two finishes are both high-performance coatings and require similar profiling to each other.

Within the ICRI guidelines, Sullivan adds, it is possible to get even more specific by looking at the viscosity and the solids content. "There is a difference between a 100-percent solids product and something that's in the 50 to 60 percent solids range, in terms of profile," he says.

Also, there are at least four American Concrete Institute/ASTM standards that are relevant for surface prep:

- ACI 503R-93: Use of Epoxy Compounds with Concrete
- ASTM D4260-05: Standard Practice for Liquid and Gelled Acid Etching of Concrete
- ASTM D4262-83 (1999): Standard Test Method for pH of Chemically Cleaned or Etched Concrete Surfaces
- ASTM D4232-83 (2005): Standard Test Method for Indicating Moisture in Concrete by the Plastic Sheet Method

Profiles are achieved by different methods. One is abrasive blasting, a category that includes sandblasting and shot-blasting, also known as blast-tracking. "(The blast-tracking process) literally hurls small steel balls at the surface to remove any loose area with minimal dust," explains Bill Slama, senior technical advisor for Ceilcote, a product line of International Paint.

Acid etching, using a 3-to-1 solution of hydrochloric acid, has long been a popular form for profiling the surface. But some are less inclined to use acid etching today, and the environmental impact of the acids is only one concern. "This method has its drawbacks, especially if the concrete had a coating or an oily surface that prevents the acid from reacting with the concrete surface," says Slama. "It also isn't used as much anymore because it is a wet treatment, and it has to be rinsed off very well, making it messy and the concrete too wet."

To determine what prep work needs to be done, the experts agree, the contractor should make a visual inspection of the concrete first to check out the overall condition of the surface.

A water test is also used. This involves spreading a thin layer of water on the concrete surface and timing how quickly water is absorbed.




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If the water absorbs within a few seconds, it indicates a porous surface, while longer absorption time means more in-depth surface prep is needed. Von Ruden says his trick to making sure the concrete is ready is to carry a jug of water with him as he uses a machine to prep the floor. "I slop a little water on the floor," he says. "If I see the water is permeating the concrete and starting to dry, I'll have a good bond. Everything is clean and the pores are open. If the water beads up, that's a sign that something isn't right and the job needs more work."

Properly prepped concrete is free of contaminants and debris. It can be difficult to remove all the oil and grease from the surface, says Tim Slusher, director of business development with Eagle Solutions. He recommends a mechanical scrubber with a brush and

a light alkaline chemical to remove oils. "We use a scrubber with a brush that mechanically scrubs to agitate the surface," he says.

Dust, on the other hand, is relatively easy to remove with vacuum systems.

### Profiling problems

There are challenges in surface prep that need to be kept in mind. "The biggest ones are an overprofile and creating a profile pattern," Sullivan says. "If you go too deep and overprofile, you start to expose aggregate and jeopardize the decorative finish."

Another challenge Sullivan encounters often is profile marks when surface prepping for staining or dying. "That means you leave a track pattern or a sanding pattern, depending on the type of equipment being used."

Moisture in the concrete is another challenge. The concrete needs to be as dry as possible. "Removing moisture is our Achilles heel," says Padgett. "In the polishing process, the moisture in the slab isn't nearly the issue as it would be in the coating process. Moisture inhibits the coating from getting a good bond." Opening up the finish of the concrete can help the moisture travel to the surface faster and dissipate. Large fans can help dry the concrete.

The experts agree that the approach to surface prep also depends on whether the job is new construction or rehab.

"When it is new construction, you can work with the architect," Padgett explains. "He's the one who has the vision on how everything should be brought together. You can make him understand that your prep is only as good as the floor the finishers give you.

You can all work together to make sure everyone understands how they affect each other's jobs." But when it is a rehab job, Padgett says, "You've got what you've got. The concrete is already there, and whatever condition it is in is what you have to deal with."

The important thing, he says, is to communicate with the customer or the general contractor about the limits of surface prep methods. "You want to make sure the customer is well-educated on what the conditions of the floor is, what the end results could be and other possible solutions."

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you provide the swim gear."*



# Product Profile



Photo courtesy of General Motors

## RapidShield from Quaker Chemical Corp.

**O**ne of concrete's few downsides is the amount of waiting a contractor, and customer, must do while the concrete sets or coatings dry. Some of that waiting time is now significantly reduced, thanks to RapidShield from Epmar Corp., a subsidiary of Quaker Chemical Corp.

Special photoinhibitors in this floor coating give it the ability to harden rapidly when exposed to RapidShield's special UV light system, powered by what is known

as QV Technology. The floor can accept industrial traffic within mere seconds of exposure.

"Our QV Technology refers to the chemistry working with the highly engineered lamp curing system, which is designed to deliver the specific wavelength, intensity and duration of UV light required for optimal curing of our RapidShield formulations," says Roger Chmura, North America business manager for RapidShield. "This results in the floor coating being cured instantly, turning it into a solid film which creates a very strong bond to and within the substrate."

Clearly, the fast cure time is RapidShield's key advantage. However, there are other benefits to using the coating.

During the hardening process, the coating forms a three-dimensional polymer with greater hardness and better chemical resistance than many conventional coatings

### Cook your countertops

Want to find out about a countertop sealer that cures quickly when exposed to a UV lamp? Counter-UV from Surface 519 does just that. Read about it in *Counter Culture*, the concrete countertop supplement delivered with some issues of *Concrete Decor* and available online at [www.concretedecor.net](http://www.concretedecor.net).



that require hours or days to fully harden.

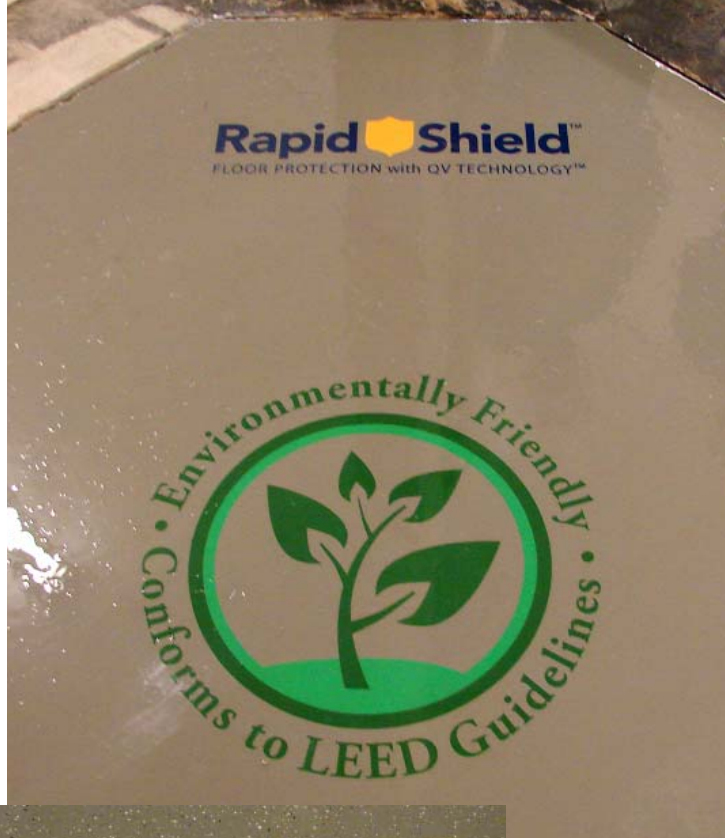
For the customer, RapidShield offers an easy-to-clean surface, stain resistance and durability. For the contractor, another of its benefits is that it has a one-component formulation, which means there is no mixing required, an unlimited pot life and a long shelf life. In addition, it is nonflammable, low in odor, and as it releases no VOCs, environmentally friendly.

RapidShield is ideal for place such as warehouses, manufacturing plants, automotive plants, parking garages, grocery stores and other areas that cannot tolerate long shutdowns or interrupted production, whether due to cure times or environmental considerations. "(It's ideal) anywhere downtime is not wanted, where a green and safe product is desired, and where the ability to have a floor that is easily cleaned and maintained is desired," Chmura says. "We are also finding customers that prefer RapidShield because of its benefits over polishing."

Although it's clearly beneficial to those who do industrial finishes, its advantages don't skip over the decorative concrete industry.

Chmura says that RapidShield is available in 23 different colors, and the company has the ability to create custom colors. One popular decorative application, he says, is logos.

WerkMaster, a concrete-preparation equipment manufacturer, recently had its logo applied to a concrete floor using RapidShield. The project was part of a RapidShield training program at All in Concrete LLC's training center, near Chicago. To start, the concrete was ground down to expose the aggregate in the existing concrete. Then a clear primer was applied, followed by a red-colored batch of RapidShield for the logo itself. The job was finished with a clear coat of RapidShield. Using one coat of color lets viewers see the aggregate through the coating, allowing RapidShield to serve as an alternative to staining.



Photos courtesy of All in Concrete



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## Product Profile

The company is also conducting trials on a UV-cured topcoat product for some existing overlay technologies, and it hopes to release this product in the near future.

Quaker has a Chemical Management Services Division that is responsible for cutting chemical consumption, reducing maintenance associated with chemicals used in manufacturing facilities, and improving quality, environmental compliance and safety, Chmura notes. One company they provide this service for is General Motors. "We worked with our customers at GM to come up with the RapidShield formulation, which does all of the above and makes their facility 'tour ready' at all times."

He says that so far, RapidShield has been a great success. "Our performance is considered high in the areas of product performance, process application know-how, technical expertise and overall project management," he says.

RapidShield also won the 2009 Most



Photo courtesy of General Motors

Innovative Products contest at World of Concrete in the Placement and Finishing category, as voted on by attendees. "We have had literally hundreds of inquiries from applicators as well as

dealers and end users seeking more information and to become involved in installation and/or the supply chain," Chmura says. 📞

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## Polishing Pads



### Concrete Polishing Solutions – SpinFlex

SpinFlex polishing pads from Concrete Polishing Solutions maintain and enhance the shine of floors without use of aggressive chemicals or the reapplication of waxes or polish.

The pads feature microscopic diamonds that are impregnated into the pad. They easily mount to the pad driver of any piece of cleaning, burnishing or polishing equipment, so they are easy to incorporate into existing maintenance schedules.

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🌐 [www.go2cps.com](http://www.go2cps.com)

### Diamond Tec Inc – Metal-X Diamond Polish Pad

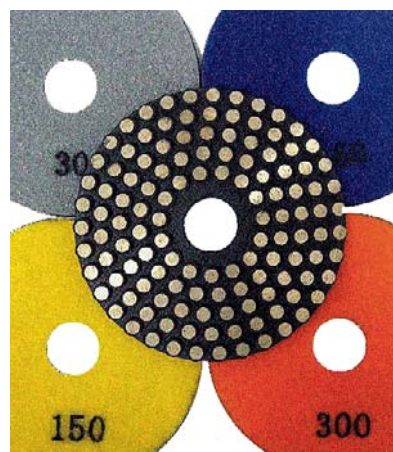
The new Metal-X Diamond Polish Pad from Diamond Tec Inc. delivers more aggressive grinding and polishing action while significantly promoting longer pad life.

These pads have unique advantages over common resin polish-pad technology for surface preparation. They are metal-bonded, which means they are more durable than their resin counterpart, and they are able to effectively grind up to 30 percent faster than a resin-bonded pad. In addition, the Metal-X Diamond Polish Pad is able to grind and polish simultaneously.

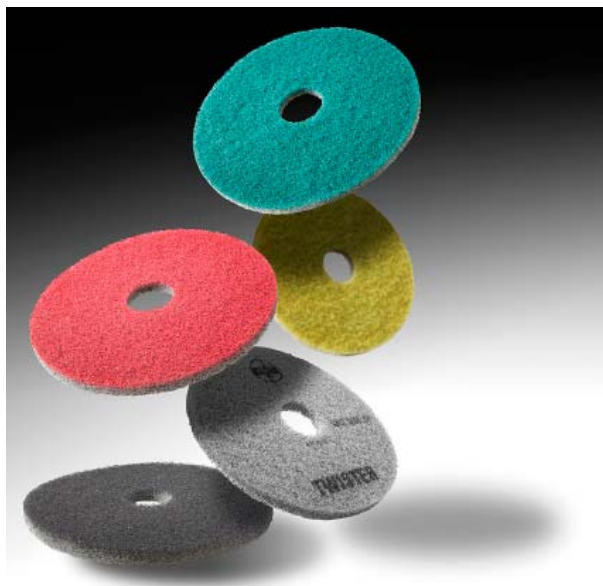
This product is available in whole sizes of 3 inches to 7 inches, and it's available in 30, 50, 80, 150 and 300 grit.

☎ (800) 211-0665

🌐 [www.diamondtecblades.com](http://www.diamondtecblades.com)







### HTC Professional Floor Systems – Twister

Twister from HTC Professional Floor Systems is a cleaning system that contains floor pads prepared with billions of microscopic diamonds that clean and polish the floor.

The Twister system minimizes the need for aggressive chemicals, since it processes dirt mechanically without wear to the floor. The result is glossy floors without adding wax or polish. The Twister system can be used on surfaces such as terrazzo and concrete. The system is universal, meaning it is suitable for combination or single autoscrubbers as well as polishing machines worldwide.

☎ (877) 482-8700

🌐 [www.htc-america.com](http://www.htc-america.com)

### Superabrasive Inc. – V-Harr System for Polishing and Restoring

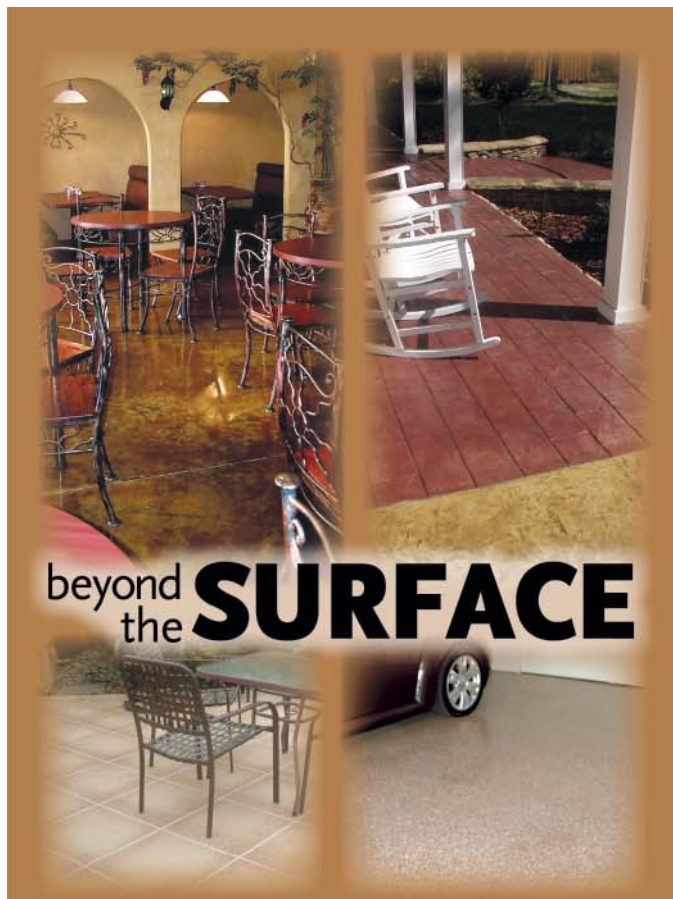
The V-Harr System for Polishing and Restoring from Superabrasive Inc. is ideal for concrete and natural stone floors.

Advantages of using V-Harr include a natural wool flexible backer with excellent scrubbing, cleaning and polishing qualities. Numerous large resin segments with a high concentration of diamonds ensure outstanding results and a long tool life. The system's spiral movement enables efficient waste disposal and guarantees clean contact between the diamonds and the floor.

The V-Harr System for Polishing and Restoring is available in a variety of sizes ranging from 3 inches to 27 inches. V-Harr is part of Superabrasive's family of polishing pads, which includes Nato, T-Bone and ShinePro. 🛠️

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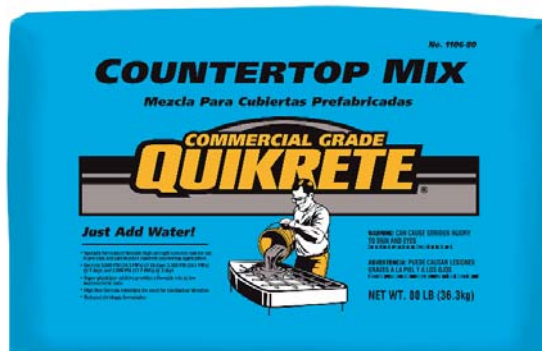
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## Quikrete announces new products for 2009

Quikrete Companies has announced the release of several new products for 2009. Among them are a green concrete mix and a countertop mix that allows for a reduction in form-stripping time.

Suitable for general concrete work, Quikrete Green Concrete Mix consists of a blended concrete mix containing 50 percent recycled materials, including recycled aggregates, fly ash and slag cements. It offers a similar set time and strength characteristics as standard Quikrete Concrete Mix.

Quikrete Countertop Mix - 18 Hour is a flowable, high-strength concrete mix designed for cast-in-place and precast concrete countertops. The concrete mix, which reduces form-stripping time, contains a high-range water reducer and other additives to provide for a flowable mix and low water/cement ratio. In addition, the formulation possesses reduced-shrinkage properties and has been designed to minimize the need for mechanical vibration. Available in 80-pound bags, it reaches a compressive strength of 2,000 psi in 18 hours, 3,500 psi in 7 days and more than 5,000 psi in 28 days.

Concrete countertops made with Quikrete Countertop Mix - 18 Hour can be customized to individual specifications with a variety of decorative Quikrete Stucco & Mortar Colors and Quikrete Liquid Cement Colors. There are 20 standard colors available.

☎ (800) 828-5858

🌐 [www.quikrete.com](http://www.quikrete.com)

## Buddy Rhodes releases GFRC products

Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products has released new products designed to further adapt glass-fiber reinforced concrete technology to concrete countertops.

The new offerings include Alkali Resistant (AR) Glass Fibers, Polymer Curing Compound, Plasticizer/Liquid Water Reducer and an AR-Coated Glass Fiber Scrim. These products help increase strength and crack resistance for larger and lighter pieces at lesser thicknesses. The glass fibers' alkali-resistant coating makes them tougher and more complementary to a concrete/polymer matrix.

The Buddy Rhodes GFRC system utilizes unique products that can be used separately or together and can be combined with the company's mix and colors. Buddy Rhodes GFRC products can also be used with many other concrete mixes.

Training for Buddy Rhodes GFRC will be conducted exclusively by Gore Design Co. LLC, in Gore's Tempe, Ariz., studio and at the Buddy Rhodes studio in San Francisco.

🌐 [www.buddyrhodes.com](http://www.buddyrhodes.com)

## Simulated stone walls

Artisan Precast, a leader in the field of precast concrete fencing, has introduced ChiselCrete, designed to simulate dry-stack stone walls. Combining the strength and durability of precast concrete with the texture and look of hand-laid stone, ChiselCrete is the latest precast concrete product in Artisan Precast's lineup.

ChiselCrete has all the benefits precast concrete has to offer, including resistance to weather and climate, sustainability, and the ability to be used as a retaining wall. Artisan Precast uses recycled cementitious material to reduce the amount of cement used, and it is integrally colored to eliminate the release of VOCs at the job site.

🌐 [www.artisanprecast.com](http://www.artisanprecast.com)





### A green expansion joint filler

Eco-Joint is a new multipurpose expansion-joint filler from W.R. Meadows.

The product is composed of 100 percent recycled synthetic rubber. It is flexible, lightweight, chemical-resistant, and UV-stable. Eco-Joint is compatible with most currently available cold-applied sealants. It will not deform, twist, or break with normal on-the-job handling.

Eco-Joint is suitable for use as an expansion or control joint in roadways, sidewalks, driveways, flooring, flatwork, patios, and any commercial or industrial application subject to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The use of Eco-Joint may contribute to several LEED credits, including those involving recycled content and regional materials.

☎ (847) 214-2100

🌐 [www.wrmeadows.com](http://www.wrmeadows.com)

### CoolStain from NewLook

CoolStain's formula incorporates infrared reflective pigment technologies to minimize heat build in objects exposed to sunlight.

Offered by NewLook International, CoolStain is ideal for pool decks, patios and sidewalks, city parks, aquatic areas, and other locations where the hot summer sun beats down on concrete.

CoolStain is able to reduce surface temperatures by 17 1/2 F to 50 F, which allows for more comfort when walking barefoot during the hot summer months. It also improves solar reflectivity, lowers energy absorption, which reduces heat emission, and qualifies for LEED points.

The cooling properties of CoolStain last as long as the color remains on the surface. Eight colors are available, and color matching is an option. It is not

necessary to seal ColorStain, but it can be done without affecting its properties.

🌐 [www.getnewlook.com](http://www.getnewlook.com)

### A joint sealer with flexibility

Chemline now offers Chemthane 8190, a flexible seal for expansion joints.

Chemthane 8190 will provide contractors with a durable, flexible seal that will not become brittle and break out with movement. It is ideal for repairing spalled joints, as well as filling random cracks and patching gouges, holes and surface defects. Chemthane 8190 is a 100 percent solids, flexible, two-part polyurea elastomer that cures to the touch in 60 seconds.

The use of Chemthane 8190 prevents contaminants from pooling in joint areas — which is especially necessary in food plants and other floor surfaces where sanitary conditions are required.

🌐 [www.chemline.net](http://www.chemline.net)

### Strong, easy-to-use lath

SpiderLath, from SpiderLath Inc., is a new fiberglass mesh and lath system for use in stucco, plaster, countertops,

concrete stairs, concrete overlays and other installations.

SpiderLath can be used over existing surfaces to apply finishes. Fully encapsulated in the mortar bed for a structurally sound scratch coat, it adds tensile and flexural strength to cementitious material, providing a stronger bond. It is versatile and strong enough to use with heavy products such as three-coat stucco. Each roll is 4 feet by 75 feet and easy to cut, unroll, stretch and fasten. The product can be installed horizontally, vertically or diagonally. SpiderLath leaves no sharp edges to cut the installer, and a thin coat of stiffening material is added to the fiberglass mesh to make the product easier to handle and faster to install.

🌐 [www.spiderlath.com](http://www.spiderlath.com)

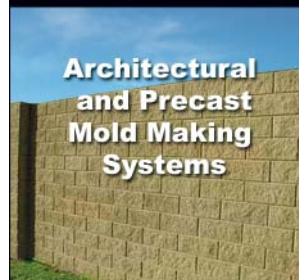
### Water tank allows independence

With the introduction of the WT 10 water tank from Husqvarna Construction Products, it is now possible to be completely independent of a local water supply. Used in conjunction with DEX, a new dust-handling system that provides cleaner



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cutting with less water usage, the WT 10 also allows longer cutting times.

The water tank holds up to 10 liters of water and can provide up to 20 minutes of operation before having to refill. It's outfitted with a battery-powered pump and is equipped with a lithium ion battery that, when fully charged, supplies two hours of continuous running time.

[www.husqvarnacp.com](http://www.husqvarnacp.com)

### Concrete saw from MK Diamond

MK Diamond Products has introduced an 18-inch concrete saw that features a 10-horsepower Baldor three-phase electric motor, available in either 230 volts or 460 volts.

The MK-1610B features a one-piece steel chassis that will not flex during operation. A hinged blade guard mounts on either side of the saw and cuts within 2 inches of a wall or curb and 6 5/8-inches deep. Its 1 1/4-inch blade shaft is supported by two heavy-duty, self-aligning pillow block bearings.

A stainless-steel water distribution

system supplies water to both sides of the blade for superior cooling. The depth control assembly is engineered for smooth, controlled blade insertion.

[\(800\) 421-5830](tel:(800)421-5830)

[www.mkdiamond.com](http://www.mkdiamond.com)

### New grinder from Metabo

The new Metabo WE9-125 Quick 5-inch angle grinder is built with Metabo's Vario Constamatic (VC) electronic speed stabilization. This makes the grinder ideal for heavy operating conditions such as grinding, cutting and finishing granite, marble or concrete.

Metabo's VC electronics constantly monitor the current in the motor, adding voltage as the load increases and keeping the tool running at optimum speed. A soft start feature extends longevity of both the motor windings and gears. The WE9-125 Quick grinder also incorporates Metabo's CoolFlow technology with repositioned carbon brushes for unrestricted airflow and a fan that pulls more air through the tool to keep it running cooler.

The grinder features a robust Metabo LongLife motor and offers 22 inch-pounds of torque. Weighing only 5.4 pounds, this grinder features a secure racket grip and dual grip zones for ergonomic handling. The tool's antivibration side handle absorbs up to 60 percent of the vibration.

[www.metabo.us](http://www.metabo.us)

### New squeegee from Kraft

Kraft Tool Co. has introduced a 24-inch clamp-style, solvent-resistant Application Squeegee Frame with a threaded handle adaptor.

It is used for consistent depth when spreading self-leveling materials, thin materials or concrete restoration applications. EPDM reversible (notched on both sides) squeegee blades are sold separately and available in three styles: Straight blade, 1/8-inch V-notch blade or 1/4-inch V-notch blade. EPDM blades are ideal for solvent-based coatings.

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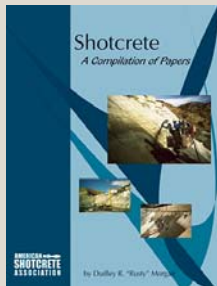
## In Print

### American Shotcrete Association releases shotcrete book

The American Shotcrete Association has announced the release of a new landmark book on shotcrete.

The 424-page book, "Shotcrete — A Compilation of Papers," is a collection of the most important papers by Dudley R. "Rusty" Morgan, Ph.D., PEng, FACI, FCAE, concerning shotcrete. The papers are grouped under the following headings: Shotcrete Research and Development; Freeze-thaw Durability of Shotcrete; Fiber-reinforced Shotcrete; Shotcrete for Ground and Underground Support; and Infrastructure Rehabilitation with Shotcrete.

[www.shotcrete.org](http://www.shotcrete.org)



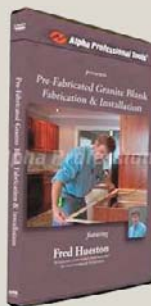
## On DVD

### New DVD from Alpha

Alpha Professional Tools has released the second DVD in its series of educational training videos.

This video focuses on fabricating and installing granite countertop blanks. Prefabricated blanks are more popular than ever due to the ease of handling and the amount of work needed to make a custom countertop. This video walks the viewer through the various steps to complete three different levels of projects. It starts with a small all-in-one vanity top, covers a custom double-sink vanity and wraps up with a large custom kitchen countertop and peninsula.

[www.alpha-tools.com](http://www.alpha-tools.com)



## On the Web

### An online marketplace for secondhand forms

Hartman Equipment Inc., a concrete form manufacturer, has launched Concrete Form Exchange, an online marketplace for used concrete forms.

The new Web site will allow contractors to post information about the forms they would like to sell. Concrete Form Exchange will feature forms in every category, including bridge, column and wall, enabling buyers to find exactly what they are looking for and creating a worldwide marketplace for sellers. There is no charge or registration process for buyers who view the listings.

[www.concreteformexchange.com](http://www.concreteformexchange.com)

### MK Diamond encourages strutting

MK Diamond Products has a new feature on its Web site called "Cut N' Strut." The feature provides customers with the ability to upload as many as 10 images of their projects directly to the site, showing the world the work they've

completed with MK Diamond products. Categories include Tile & Stone, Masonry, Concrete, Lapidary and Hardscapes.

Users can utilize the simple upload interface and post images of their projects from a home or business computer. As an added benefit, the site is formatted to allow the posting of professional and business contact information embedded with each thumbnail photograph, providing an advertising venue for contractors and handymen in all facets of the industry.


Every month MK Diamond will post a "Strut Of The Month" winner. Each monthly winner becomes a contender for the annual "Golden Rooster Award," to be given out each January.

[\(800\) 421-5830](tel:8004215830)

[www.mkdiamond.com](http://www.mkdiamond.com)

### Power Tool Institute relaunches Web site

The Power Tool Institute has launched its newly revamped Web site. The Institute's new site is a user-friendly resource for power tool safety with simple navigation, online ordering of publications, and easy-to-view videos.

Site features include downloadable PDFs of PTI's publications, safety videos in both English and Spanish, manufacturer members' profiles with links to their Web sites, power tool advisories, and a safety maintenance checklist. 

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## **American Society of Concrete Contractors**

### **Parking lot training course to cover pervious concrete**

The American Society of Concrete Contractors has teamed up with the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association to offer a new course, "How to Build a Successful Parking Lot Construction Business," to be held April 28-29, 2009, in Denver.

This course is intended for concrete contractors and concrete producers. It will discuss the features and benefits of concrete and asphalt for paved parking areas, and it will present the importance of marketing and effective presentation skills. The course will also provide detailed instruction on how to design and build concrete parking lots.

In addition to details of conventional concrete parking lots, this seminar will provide introductions to innovative concepts such as "white topping" and pervious concrete.

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 [www.ascconline.org](http://www.ascconline.org)

### **ASCC elections held**

Paul Albanelli, president of Albanelli Cement Contractors Inc., has been elected president of the American Society of Concrete Contractors for


2009-2010. Scott Anderson, Clay Fischer, Mike Poppoff and Thomas Zinchiak were elected vice presidents, and Harry Moats was elected secretary and treasurer. Elected to the board of



directors were Robert Dalrymple, Steve Lloyd, Phil Noel, Peter Ruttura, Scott Winkler and John Yline.

The Decorative Concrete Council, a specialty council of the ASCC, also held elections recently. Frank Lewis, regional manager for The Coatings Group, was elected council director, and Paul Schneider was elected secretary and treasurer. Elected to the DCC advisory board were Ray Brooks, Clark Branum, Ed Benus, Clyde Cobb, Priscilla Dunn, Dionne Hutchings Ojeda, Byron Klemaske II, Steve Lloyd, Jim Mullins, Joe Nasvik, Kevin Percy, Rob Sousa, Scott Thome and Wes Vollmer.

The ASCC Safety and Risk Management Council elected Chris Plue, director of construction for Webcor Concrete, to be council director and Steve Pereira, Professional Safety Associates, to be secretary and treasurer.

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## **Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association**

### **New training DVD released**

The Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association has released a new instructional DVD and video titled "Flat Sawing and Blade Safety."

The video helps provide operators with the skills and knowledge required for safe and effective flat sawing, along with addressing important issues such as proper blade-tightening techniques. Safe working practices and precautions relating to this type of work are highlighted and reinforced. "The video encourages operators and employers to refer to ANSI regulations and adhere to them," says Rick Norland, lead



instructor for CSDA training classes, in a press release. "Safety is not only a matter of knowledge, but of attitude."

This new video is also available as an online course via the CSDA Web site.

☎ (727) 577-5004

🌐 [www.csda.org](http://www.csda.org)

## International Concrete Repair Institute

### Membership numbers reach 2,000

The International Concrete Repair Institute, a nonprofit association dedicated to the repair, restoration and protection of concrete and other structures, passed the milestone of 2,000 members in February 2009.

ICRI has seen a steady growth in new memberships as well as an increase in membership renewals during the past six months of operation. This growth surge comes on the heels of ICRI in 2008 celebrating 20 years of serving the global concrete repair and restoration community.

🌐 [www.icri.org](http://www.icri.org)

## Portland Cement Association

### 2009 cement consumption levels predicted

Quick passage of an economic stimulus package followed by the almost immediate start of "shovel-ready" infrastructure projects in 2009 could increase cement consumption for next year, according to a recent report by the Portland Cement Association.

Without a stimulus package, 2009 cement consumption was projected to decrease 15.1 percent compared to 2008 levels, with an additional 8 percent forecasted for 2010. However, with an economic stimulus package that provides for infrastructure funding as well as state aid, consumption in 2009 could only be down 8.6 percent and 2010 could see an increase of 5.3 percent.

"The near-term stimulus to the economy can be enhanced by reducing the portion of the plan targeting tax cuts and placing more emphasis on state aid and traditional infrastructure spending," PCA chief economist Ed Sullivan said at a press conference at the World of Concrete. "Only if tax, state-aid, and 'shovel-ready' programs materialize quickly might the rate of decline in cement consumption be moderated late in the year."

🌐 [www.cement.org](http://www.cement.org)

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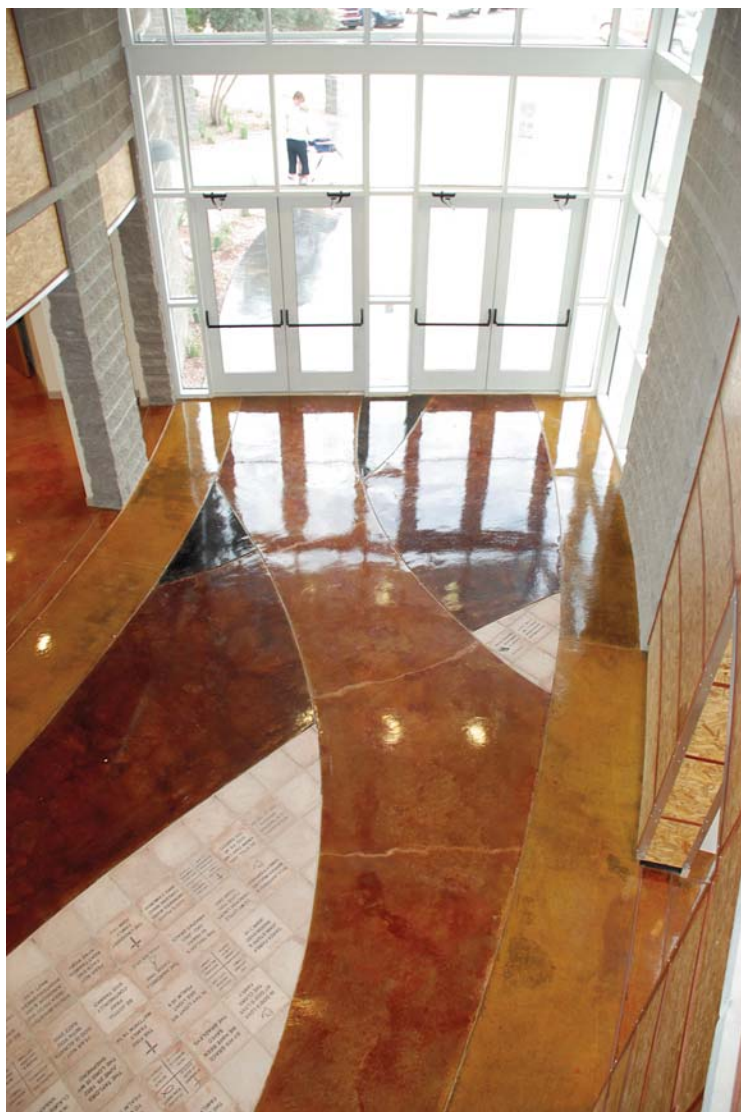
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## Final Pour



Photos by Daniel Owen, Arizona Polymer Flooring Inc.

## Church of Color

**W**hen Adobe Coatings of Mesa, Ariz., was brought in to create new concrete floors for Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church in Gilbert, Ariz., the original plan was to use acid stain for the entire project. One hitch: The 11,000-square-foot project included some balcony space. There was some concern that the acid stain would leach residue onto the floor below.

So instead, Adobe installed Cem-Dye, a water-based dye from Arizona Polymer Flooring Inc., on the upper balconies. Cem-Dye allowed Adobe to stain and seal in one night before people returned for work the next day.

Four different colors of Arizona Polymer acid stain were used on the lower levels of the building: Buckskin, Cola, Vintage Umber and Walnut. A

tawny-colored dye was also used on the ground level.

For both floors of the facility, Arizona Polymer Poly 250 was used as the sealer and Poly 100 Gloss as the topcoat. Both of these products were used to obtain a high-gloss, durable shine that can withstand high traffic.

Before the staining, a microtopping was applied on both floors to hide the existing concrete.

The project didn't stop at the door. Adobe Coatings also did work on the sidewalks outside the building, using a 60-grit aluminum oxide for slip resistance. "The sidewalk leading from the front parking lot, through the building, to the rear parking lot was done in a very contemporary way, with multiple colors giving the

flow throughout the building," says Paul Marcovecchio, owner of Adobe Coatings.

The outside areas were treated to the same four acid stain colors used in the interior of the building. According to Marcovecchio, the result offers a contemporary feel in a semicircle pattern.

For those who might be wondering how concrete fits with the decor of a church, it fits right in. The architecture and design of this church help it stand apart from the churches of decades and centuries ago. "The whole theme of the facility was kind of modern," says Arizona Polymer technical sales representative Mark Haen. "It's not your typical church."

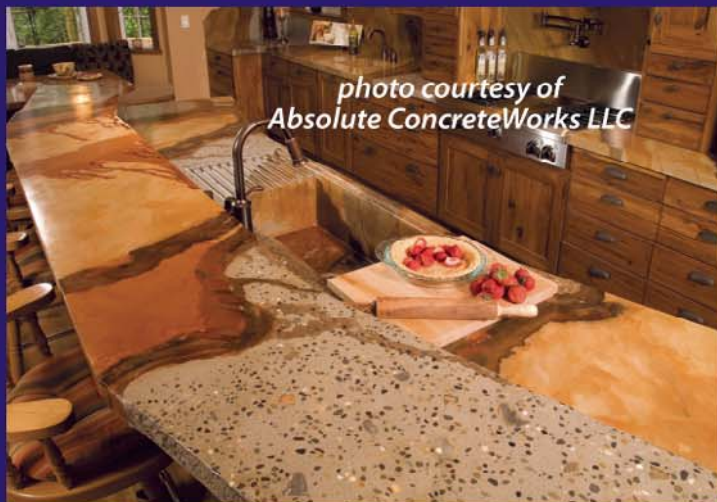
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A N N O U N C I N G

# The Concrete Decor Show & Decorative Concrete Spring Training



In March 2010, the foremost trainers in the business will converge on Phoenix to lead workshops for newcomers, experienced contractors and seasoned veterans. Workshops on March 17-19, 2010, will cover concrete staining, stenciling, stamping, polishing, engraving, resurfacing, repair, renovation, countertops, artificial rockwork, vertical features and artistic specialties. A pre-conference track March 16 will provide courses for architects, designers and builders, as well as business and marketing seminars for contractors, including "Starting a Decorative Concrete Business" and "Tapping Green Building Opportunities"

## Winning Jobs In A Challenging Economy

"The recession can play for you, or against you," says writer and concrete artisan Shellie Rigsby. "Some contractors are winning in a value-driven market where it is not enough to have the lowest price. The successful contractor must deliver a quality product and creative installation at an affordable price. My advice: Don't just show up with a color chart; bring your imagination! The economy may have slowed, but there is no reason for decorative concrete contractors to have a slowdown. Adopt products that are gorgeous and green to get the jobs. Learn how to make jobs more profitable. New products, innovative techniques and a great attitude are all it takes. Come to Decorative Concrete Spring Training and you'll get them all."

Shellie Rigsby formed Acanthus Inc./Concrete Stain Designs, in Plano, Texas, in 1998. She offers AIA accredited courses and has been leading training for six years. Teaching and training are just part of her mission to advance the building industry with "uncompromising standards and unsurpassed craftsmanship." Rigsby will offer several workshops at the event in March 2010: "Gorgeous, Graphic, & Green: Water-based Stains That Get Top-notch Results And Improve Your Bottom Line" is an introductory workshop suitable for all levels. Shellie will also lead "Advanced Graphic Techniques: Imaginative Stenciling and Artwork for Concrete Surfaces," a Level 3 Workshop.

## Investing In Training

"Training is the most important investment contractors can make no matter where they are in their career," according to Bob Harris, president of the Decorative Concrete Institute. "Through training, contractors learn



Bob Harris leads training courses for concrete staining and stamping worldwide.

Photo courtesy of Decorative Concrete Institute

ways to work smarter, not harder. Experienced veterans need training to stay fresh and take their business to the next level — to compete and win. Newcomers need a solid foundation of skills and knowledge, plus plenty of practice to avoid costly mistakes. Training is a good place to make mistakes and avoid the high cost of learning on your first paying projects. Each successful project helps a contractor to sell the next job."

Bob Harris will lead "Concrete Staining Fundamentals," Level 1 workshops that will cover ways to create an affordable but beautiful project. He will also teach Level 2 and 3 concrete stamping workshops.

Recognized worldwide for his contribution to decorative concrete training, he has authored guides that have sold more than 30,000 copies worldwide: *Bob Harris' Guide to Stained Interior Concrete Floor*, *Bob Harris' Guide to Stamped Concrete*, and *Bob Harris' Guide to Concrete Overlays and Toppings*. In addition to his own collection of step-by-step instructional DVDs, he has produced other professional training materials for organizations, including the Portland Cement Association, AGC-Laborers and the Concrete Network. In January 2009, Harris introduced his new line of Paladiano stamping tools.

## I N D U S T R Y L E A D I N G T R A I N E R S



Clark Branum



Fu Tung Cheng



Bob Harris



Gaye Goodman



Shellie Rigsby



Melanie Royals



Tom Ralston



Glen Roman



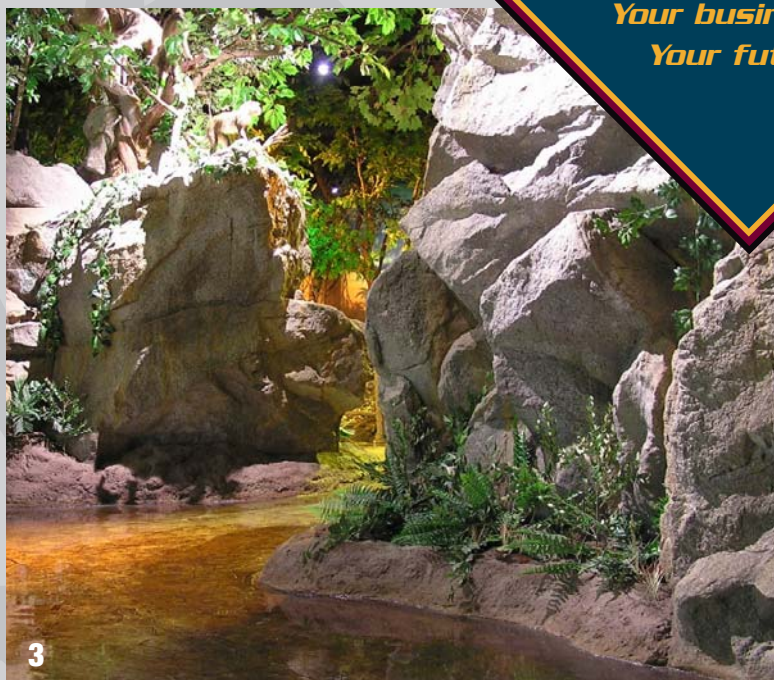
# Where Decorative Concrete Means Business.

[www.ConcreteDecorShow.com](http://www.ConcreteDecorShow.com)



*It's all about  
Decorative Concrete!*

*Your creativity,  
Your business...  
Your future.*



I N D U S T R Y



Mike Miller



Doug Bannister



Julio Hallack



Frank Lewis



John Anderson



# PHOENIX

March 16–19, 2010

Concrete *Decor* Show

DECORATIVE CONCRETE

SPRING TRAINING

2010



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## Photo Credits

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## LEADING TRAINERS



Wayne Sellon



Chris Sullivan



Peter Wagner



Doug Carlton



Buddy Rhodes



Jeff Kudrick



Nathan Giffin



Jeffrey Girard, P.E.



Harris became an independent trainer because the need was there. "A decade ago there was no independent, unbiased source for training," he says. "Many product manufacturers charged contractors for a sales pitch and a good-luck handshake, saying, 'Now get on with it!' There was not much information on how to organize your materials and plan your project or troubleshoot. Demonstrations on a small slab offered no clues on how to make good time on 30 yards or more of fresh concrete or information on what size crew it takes to do a big job. The details on product uses were provided in manufacturers' product training. The details that make the difference between an ordinary job and an extraordinary job were never mentioned. I decided this was my calling."

### Business Opportunities In Concrete Polishing

"Polished concrete is a great flooring option for retail and commercial facilities, as well as factories and schools," says Peter Wagner, director, FGS PermaShine System. "It provides an easy to clean, high performance floor with a design flair." According to Peter demand for floor repair and reuse remains strong even when the economy is weak. "When new construction slows down, it is natural for owners to start fixing what they have. It's more cost-effective to polish existing concrete than to install a floor covering that will wear out and require replacement."

Peter Wagner is one of several instructors who will teach courses on grinding and polishing concrete at the event. He says, "If you have the skills to make an old slab new, meet green building criteria, and make it beautiful, then there are plenty of opportunities in this business. Remember that being properly educated is the foundation of your success."

### Creating Artful Countertops And Features

"Concrete Decor has set the stage for a dynamic event," says Fu Tung Cheng, "and we look forward to participating in giving workshops and a seminar on our core approach at Cheng Concrete Training Academy: understanding the relationship between good design and honed technique to create a composition that elicits an emotion. Challenging your techniques to uphold the basic design principles of color, form and line moves the humble material of concrete into levels of the arts."

### Training And Education For All Levels

Growth of the decorative concrete business depends upon creativity, quality workmanship and efficient methods, plus a little business and marketing savvy. The focus at the Phoenix event is delivering superior training and networking opportunities for decorative concrete contractors and specialty artisans. Spring Training will offer three levels of training and educational seminars. Participants will receive Certificates of Completion for courses.

**Level 1: Back to Basics Workshops** will cover troubleshooting and project planning, plus ways to reduce the costs of doing business and improve profitability.

**Level 2: Intermediate Workshops** for experienced contractors who want to be star players.

**Level 3: Advanced Workshops** for seasoned veterans and supervisors will cover working in commercial construction and improving efficiency and productivity while retaining quality.

A blue-ribbon list of trainers will bring their expertise to the Decorative Concrete Spring Training. Visit [www.ConcreteDecorShow.com](http://www.ConcreteDecorShow.com) for more information on the 2010 event and trainers.

### Sponsorship Opportunities

Contact Sherry Boyd, director of marketing and communications, at [sherry.boyd@protradepub.com](mailto:sherry.boyd@protradepub.com) for information on sponsorship opportunities.

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