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From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

The Training Guide issue of *Concrete Decor* is one of our favorites. Promoting education is an essential part of the mission of *Concrete Decor* magazine.

Our magazine was founded to educate contractors and other construction professionals about the possibilities of decorative concrete, and each year, there are new innovations to talk about, stories to tell and tips to share. We publish all the news we can fit into the pages of the magazine. You'll learn even more at training seminars.

Decorative concrete training opportunities across the country are often hosted by manufacturers, and the trainers they hire to represent them are among the most accomplished decorative concrete pros in our industry. It's not a coincidence that the names of many of these trainers often appear in our articles as well. They know their stuff. Not only can they tell you a lot of "hidden" tricks to getting the most out of their employer's materials, machines or tools, they can use their experience to troubleshoot common issues of almost any kind.

You may also network with other contractors in your area who are struggling with the same climate and market conditions as you. Sure, they're your competitors, but you're also in this together. Get yourselves talking and you may pick up more juicy bits from your classmates than you do from the class.

As always, our Training Guide has a print and an online component. Use the Guide we've printed in this issue to discover which companies offer training materials and opportunities for the type of decorative concrete you wish to pursue. If you're new to this industry, you'll find this section particularly helpful.

Online at www.concretedecor.net/education/training, you will find a continuously updated, comprehensive calendar of events throughout the country. Look up the manufacturers you've identified in the magazine, or search by type of product. You'll see locations where you can get information live and in person.

With the work season winding down, there's no better time than now to make plans to upgrade your skill sets over the winter.

Sincerely,



John Strieder
Editor



On the cover: A detail from a fabric-formed sculpture called "Absolution," created by the team of Justin Burd and Nathan Smith, from Set In Stone Concrete Design House, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. GFRC mixes allow thinner, curvier and lighter structures to be crafted from concrete. For more, see page 34.



Photo courtesy of Set In Stone Concrete Design House



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OF DECORATIVE
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October 2014
Volume 14 • Issue No. 7

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Mailing Address: Professional Trade
Publications Inc.
P.O. Box 25210
228 Grimes St.
Eugene, OR 97402

Concrete Decor™ The Journal of Decorative Concrete is published eight times a year by Professional Trade Publications Inc. Bulk rate postage paid at Lebanon Junction, Kentucky, and additional mailing offices.
ISSN 1542-1597

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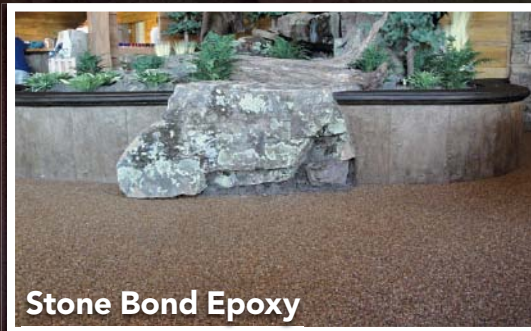
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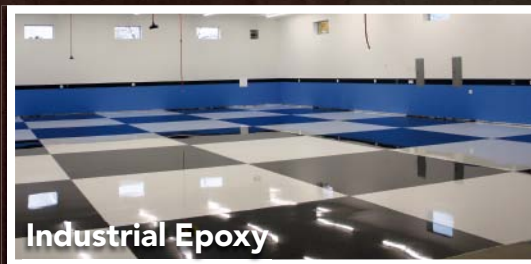
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Bryon "Bru" Bruington is technical sales director for KutRite, a producer of products for the concrete grinding, polishing and scarifying industry. Email him at b_bruington@kutritemfg.com. See Bryon's column, "Hands-on Grinding & Polishing Tips," on page 71.



Doug Carlton is working on his third decade in the decorative concrete industry. He's the owner of Carlton Construction, located at the base of the Big Horn Mountains in northeastern Wyoming. Doug can be reached at carltondoug@sbcglobal.net. See Doug's column, "Carlton's Corner," on page 58.



Scott Cohen is a landscape, general and swimming-pool contractor. He has been featured on several shows on HGTV and is the author of eight books. He can be contacted at scott.cohen@greenscenelandscape.com. Turn to page 62 to read his companion piece to Jeffrey Girard's article.



Jeffrey Girard is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute and a pioneer of engineered concrete countertops. He can be reached at info@concretecountertopinstitute.com. See Jeffrey's article about fire features on page 60.



David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com. See David's column, "The Polishing Consultant," on page 68.



Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net. See Chris' column, "Concrete Questions," on page 56.

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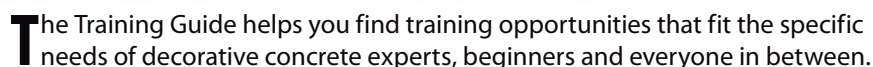
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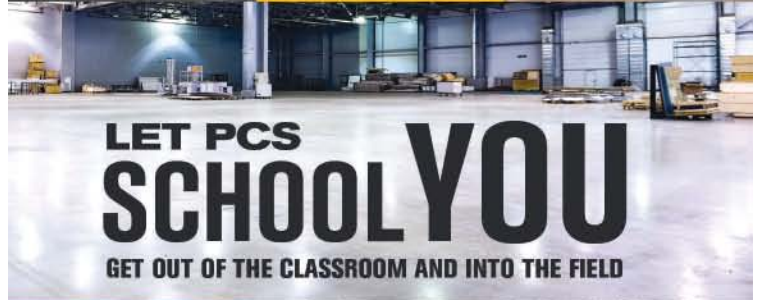
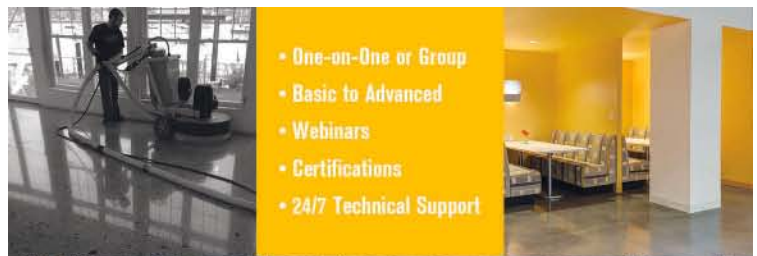
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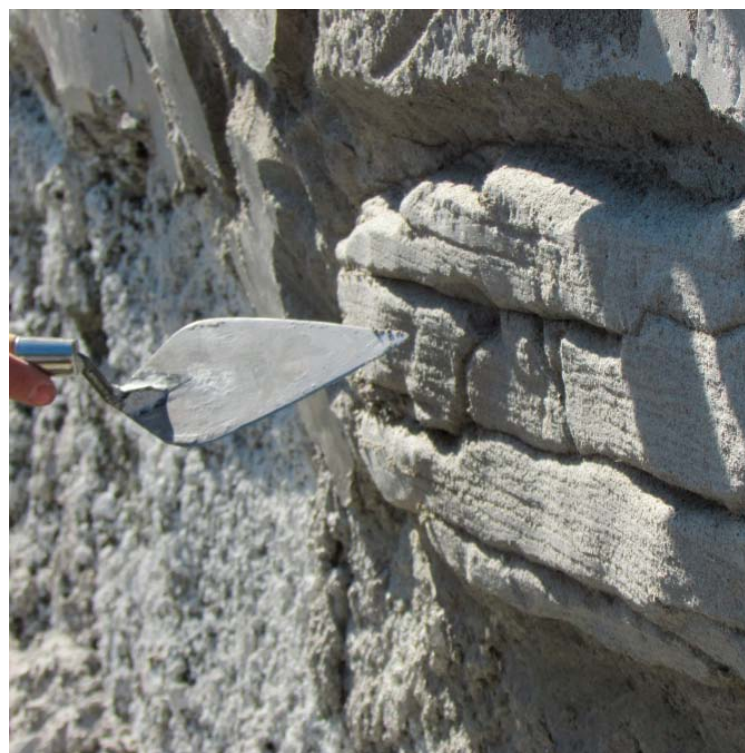
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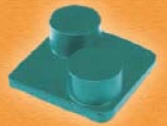
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www.aciconcrete.net

Adaptive Concrete Innovations offers training on the Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association's new standard, ST115. Sessions focus on reading concrete surface texture and creating a polishing process audit. They are led by Andy Bowman, Surface Metrology Specialist, who has spent more than 20 years in the concrete placement, repair, finishing and polishing industries.



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BRICKFORM, a division of Solomon Colors, provides easy-to-use systems that work seamlessly together to resurface and restore aging concrete, or create new colored and textured hardscapes. We manufacture a full array of decorative products for texturing, coloring, polishing, resurfacing, finishing, sealing and maintaining your customers' decorative concrete.

See our ad on page 19 • Reader Service 65



Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products
9126B Industrial Blvd.
Covington, GA 30014

p: (877) 706-5303
www.buddyrhodes.com

Buddy Rhodes invented an industry. He has built a team and sparked an evolution. His team continues to innovate, dream, explore and create. Buddy wants you to join his team, to join the Evolution. Take this invitation to join a lineage of artisans who are creating with concrete at the highest level. Learn the craft and join the tradition from its source.

See our ad on page 73 • Reader Service 19

Butterfield Color Inc.
625 W. Illinois Ave.
Aurora, IL 60506

p: (800) 282-3388 f: (630) 906-1982
www.butterfieldcolor.com

Butterfield Color Inc. manufactures a complete line of decorative concrete products for the treatment of new and existing concrete including integral colors, color hardeners, stains, antiquing and release agents, overlays, sealers, stamping tools, form liners and countertop mix.

See our ad on page 41 • Reader Service 05

Citadel Corporation
2271 2nd St. N
St. Paul, MN 55109

p: (866) 765-4310
www.citadelfloors.com

Citadel is a specialty floor coating manufacturer which has developed high-end polyurea floor coating solutions. Citadel products are installed in over 15 countries and on projects that range from high-end grocery stores to major automotive service centers. Citadel products have earned a reputation as the most reliable, durable, environmental flooring systems in the world.



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Raleigh, NC 27604

p: (888) 386-7711
www.concretecountertopinstitute.com

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- Use from-scratch mixes, not proprietary products
- Learn from the pioneer of engineered concrete countertops
- Hands-on and self-study training available

See our ad on page 58 • Reader Service 07

CONCRETE FLOORING ASSOCIATES

Concrete Flooring Associates
25533 Richards Rd.
Spring, TX 77386

p: (281) 419-2580 f: (281) 292-3751
www.concreteflooringassociates.com

CFA is a full-line supply and training center, servicing the Southwest. We offer full training on all products and equipment sold. Our two instructors have a combined experience of 30 years in the field. We provide objective support to both professionals and DIYers alike. Products we offer are tested and regarded as highest quality to value offerings in the industry. Visit www.cfa-online.com.

The Concrete Protector
15970 Sidney St.
Wapakoneta, OH 45895

p: (567) 297-3700
www.theconcreteprotector.com

We manufacture and distribute products, equipment, and training to protect, repair, and design concrete! We believe concrete should look great and last a lifetime. The Concrete Protector Company will teach you to become a successful polishing and coating professional!

See our ads on pages 6 & 72 •
Reader Service 09 & 10



Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings
7455 Carroll Rd.
San Diego, CA 92121

p: (800) 232-8311 f: (858) 450-6881
www.concretesolutions.com

Concrete Solutions by Rhino Linings is an industry-leading product line developed for the restoration, protection, and beautification of concrete surfaces. From humble beginnings in 1986 in San Diego to now a now world-renowned product, Concrete Solutions continues to be the product of choice for today's contractors.

EDCO Equipment Development Company Inc.
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Frederick, MD 21702

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www.edcoinc.com

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See our ad on page 78 • Reader Service 21

Elite Crete Systems South
24765 Hwy. 69
Jasper, AL 35504

p: (205) 522-5333 f: (205) 221-3976
www.elitecrete.com

"Elite Crete Systems" is an industry-leading worldwide manufacturer of decorative concrete and resinous floor systems. We pride ourselves in having the best technical support in the business, bar none. We give honest no bull trainings from a real manufacturer, not a re-labeler. We are here to help you in the business from marketing to lead generation. No franchises, no packages, no sales pitch.

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MiraPrime - Specialty Primers

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E-mail: miracotetraining@cpcmail.net

Engrave-A-Crete Inc.
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Mansfield, MO 65704

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www.engageacrete.com

Engrave-A-Crete is the premier inventor, developer and manufacturer of innovative decorative concrete engraving tools. In business for over 20 years, we offer industry-leading, hands-on, cutting-edge training in a small group setting. Our unique tools and systems engrave the design in, not on, the old or new concrete, indoors or out, with no messy overlays, heavy mats or clouds of dust.

See our ads on pages 17 & 26 ·
Reader Service 22 & 23

Fishstone - ConcreteCountertopSupply.com
110 East St.
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

p: (815) 276-0299
www.concretecountertopsupply.com

Fishstone is the source for all your precast and countertop supplies and training. Visit our new training facility (4000 sq. ft.) for an exceptional hands-on experience. Check out the many events now scheduled at our facility and with guest hosts around the US and abroad, or call for info if interested in a personalized training experience.

GranQuartz
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Tucker, GA 30084

p: (866) 639-0960 f: (800) 399-3997
www.granquartz.com

GranQuartz was founded in 1971 and is the largest distributor of stone tools, equipment and supplies in the United States. In addition to the stone industry, GranQuartz provides top-quality products and services to the concrete decor and polishing markets as well as the tile industry. GranQuartz operates 13 locations throughout the United States, and we have well over 50 knowledgeable team members.

See our ad on page 30 · Reader Service 29

Hi-Tech Systems
1190 N. Del Rio Pl.
Ontario, CA 91764

p: (909) 945-5530 f: (909) 945-3009
www.hitechpolyurea.com

Progressive Fastening Systems was established in the '80s as a specialty fastener supplier to commercial, industrial and construction markets.

See our ad on page 70 · Reader Service 30



HTC Professional Floor Systems
5617 Tazewell Pike
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p: (865) 289-2311 f: (865) 689-3991
www.htc-floorsystems.com

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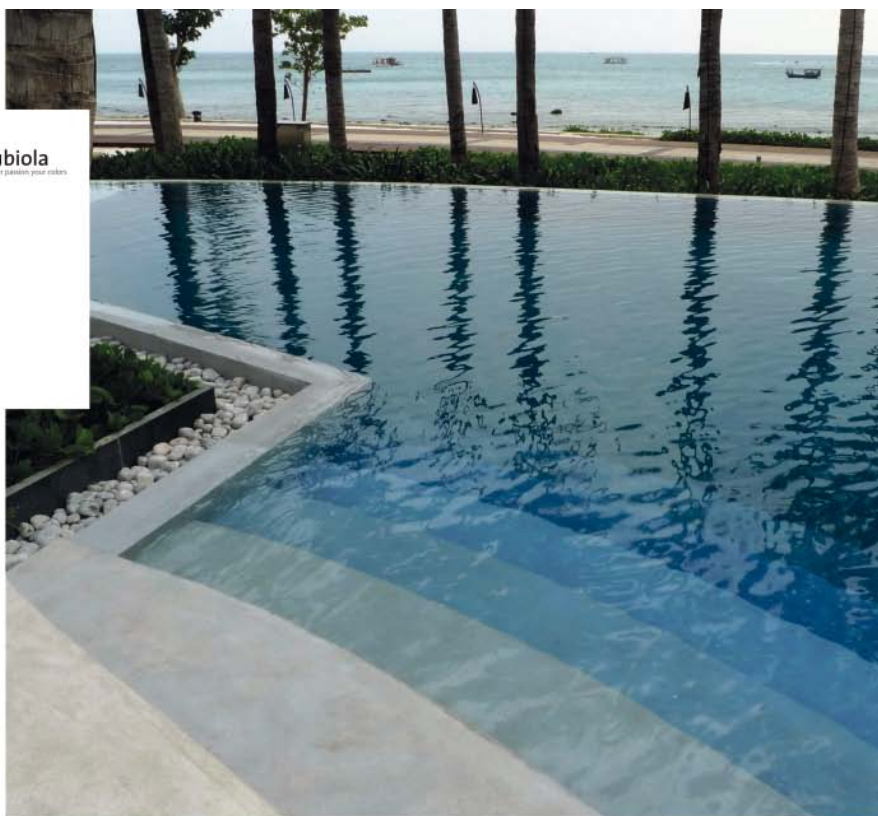


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www.increte.com

For over 50 years, Increte has been the leader in decorative concrete technology. Increte is the original, and still only, one-stop-shop and full-service manufacturer for chemistry and tooling as well as training and sales and marketing help. Our turn-key engineered systems are easy to learn and to apply. As a brand of Euclid Chemical, we have the largest support and sales staff in the industry.

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400 Medinah Rd.
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www.jondon.com

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PRODUCTS™**

Kingdom Products
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Throop, PA 18512

p: (570) 489-6025 f: (570) 383-6711
www.kingdom-products.com

Kingdom Products specializes in manufacturing premium-quality dry powder cement-based materials. Color hardeners, antique release agents, concrete repair and restoration materials, stampable overlay, vertical wall mixes and custom packaged pigments are only a small sample of products available under our Kingdom brand or available for private label packaging.

See our ads on pages 45 & 76 •
Reader Service 37 & 38



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Tampa, FL 33610

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www.mckinnonmaterials.com

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ModaCrete University
234 Middle St.
Middletown, CT 06457

p: (860) 343-7005
www.modacreteuniversity.com

ModaCrete University offers a diverse selection of courses for producing and retailing concrete countertops. Our experience, education and understanding of the medium, processing and retailing of concrete countertops are unparalleled. Come learn from our mistakes and successes in our world-class production facility which not only covers concrete countertops but all premium countertop materials.



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www.polishedconcretesolutions.com

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See our ad on page 9 • Reader Service 53

Pure Texture
3123-K Cedar Park Rd.
Greensboro, NC 27405

p: (336) 698-9800 f: (336) 698-9900
www.puretexture.com

Pure Texture is a leading decorative concrete manufacturing and training center serving the U.S. and international contractors. Committed to excellence, Pure Texture has developed a user-friendly product that, with the applicable techniques, can be applied horizontally, vertically, on existing countertops, overhead, wood and even glass!

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Anaheim, CA 92801

p: (714) 738-6640 f: (714) 738-6950
www.questbuilding.com

Quest Building Products is California's full-service store specializing in decorative concrete products to prepare, protect and decorate your concrete surface. Offering tools and coatings, Quest also provides sales, service and rentals for concrete prep equipment. With a knowledgeable staff and reputable manufacturers, Quest is your one-stop shop for all your concrete needs.

Runyon Surface Prep Rental & Supply
410 W. Carmel Dr.
Carmel, IN 46032

p: (800) 896-8665
www.runyonsurfaceprep.com

Runyon Surface Prep is a full-service stocking distributor and rental shop with products and equipment for surface prep, decorative concrete and floor maintenance, with brands including Husqvarna, HTC, Ermator, AmeriPolish, Prosoco and Metzger/McGuire, to name a few. Runyon Surface Prep is known for its exemplary customer service, committed to meeting your needs at any length necessary.

See our ad on page 11 • Reader Service 61

SASE Company Inc.
2475 Stock Creek Blvd.
Rockford, TN 37853

p: (800) 522-2606 f: (865) 745-4110
www.sasecompany.com

SASE manufactures and distributes concrete polishing, preparation equipment and tooling directly to our customers. SASE offers the most complete line of concrete polishing equipment and tooling in the industry. SASE is committed to excellence in both the quality of products we sell as well as in the service and support we provide. We look forward to serving you, our customer.

See our ad on page 65 • Reader Service 62



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164 Republic Dr.
Kyle, TX 78640

p: (619) 401-8282 f: (619) 401-8288
www.super-krete.com

The original since 1985 - Complete systems for concrete repair, restoration, waterproofing, beautification and protecting including additives, overlays, color stains, paints, epoxy systems, sealers and more. Training available! Serving you from 2 locations in California and now Texas. Super-Krete Products are the choice of choice amongst the Hollyhock masons and plasterers. Always request the best.

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Windsor, NY 13865

p: (607) 655-1517
www.trinic.us

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See our ad on page 7 · Reader Service 72



Vexcon Chemicals
7240 State Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19135

p: (215) 332-7709 f: (215) 332-9997
www.vexcon.com

Certi-Shine is a leading global brand for polished concrete. Attend the training seminar that everyone is talking about; fine-tune your techniques and become certified to install Certi-Shine FSR (food stain resistant) technology and our interior and exterior silicate Micro Stain as well as FUSION, the latest in polished concrete repair.

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p: (604) 629-8700
www.werkmaster.com

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p: (800) 250-4519 f: (619) 262-8606
www.westcoat.com

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Saw not included

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Countertop artisan Cody Carpenter's new training facility

Countertop artisan Cody Carpenter is launching his new Phoenix, Arizona, training facility, Plan B Studios, with wet-cast and flex-form workshops in November, with more to come.

Training instructor Cody Carpenter has more than 10 years of experience in the industry with a multitude of fabrications and installations accomplished under his leadership. Plan B Studios offers unique proprietary techniques not taught by any other industry trainers.

Plan B studio's training objective is to teach, inspire, and reignite the creative minds of industry artisans. Whether you are new to the industry or a seasoned professional, Plan B has many training options that are right for you.

☎ (602) 486-9396

🌐 www.codydesigns.com

ACI offers industry publication called "Improving Concrete Quality"

The American Concrete Institute has made available a book entitled "Improving Concrete Quality." Quality measurement is not prevalent in the concrete industry, according to the organization, and quality investment is not seen as potentially generating a positive return. This publication examines how and why concrete quality should be measured, and it includes instruction on developing specifications with the aim of improving concrete quality.

The publication offers a clear understanding of the link between the materials (cement, SCM, aggregate, water, air), manufacturing, testing variability and concrete quality. "Improving Concrete Quality" also includes information on analyzing test data to improve quality.

☎ (248) 848-3800

🌐 www.concrete.org



Second edition of ACI's User's Guide to ASTM C94 on Ready-Mixed Concrete

The American Concrete Institute has made available the second edition of its industry publication "User's Guide to ASTM C94 on Ready-Mixed Concrete." ASTM C94 covers the complex subject of ordering, production and delivery of ready-mixed concrete. There have been many changes and improvements to C94 since the first edition of this manual was printed, especially in the technology for production and delivery of concrete.

This new edition represents a significant rewrite of all portions of the book and explains how to apply C94 in a very straightforward manner. Twenty-two comprehensive chapters explain every aspect of ASTM C94. The book provides tips and advice and has numerical examples, photos, and figures to illustrate proper procedures and implications when C94 is cited in project specifications.

☎ (248) 848-3800

🌐 www.concrete.org

Dur-A-Flex expands in Midwest

Dur-A-Flex Inc. is once again expanding its operations, this time in the Midwest. President and chief operating officer Peter V. Ferris recently signed a lease for an 11,000-square-foot facility at 200 William St., Bensenville, Illinois, in the Chicago area.

This facility is the third location for the manufacturer of commercial, industrial and institutional seamless/high-performance polymer flooring and wall systems. The new location will enable the company's Midwest customers to receive the same level of sales and service assistance as East and West Coast customers.

The new facility will offer training, space for Dur-A-Flex's product inventory, a design center showcasing floor samples, and a dedicated staff including sales representatives, technical support agents and customer service representatives. A shipping and receiving department will expedite product shipments and facilitate same-day order and product pickups by regional customers.

☎ (877) 251-5418

🌐 www.dur-a-flex.com

Laticrete acquires HP Spartacote

Laticrete International Inc., a manufacturer of globally proven construction solutions for the building industry, announced the acquisition of HP Spartacote. The acquisition will provide Laticrete customers access to new products and technologies while expanding the company's presence in the restoration, decorative flooring and coatings category. Headquartered in Golden, Colorado, HP Spartacote produces a premium line of resinous floor coatings. The acquisition was completed in July, while integration of manufacturing, sales and service functions will occur over the next 12 months.

Laticrete is a family-owned, worldwide manufacturer and marketer of residential, commercial and industrial construction solutions. This announcement follows two other acquisitions made earlier this year, of L&M Construction Chemicals and the DuPont Surface Care Business.

☎ (800) 243-4788

🌐 www.laticrete.com

ModaCrete University introduces MixDesign online software

ModaCrete University has introduced MixDesign, all-encompassing online software that can assist any concrete producer in developing and recording concrete mix designs. The software will allow the user to have instant access to concrete statistics, adjust mix volumes and proportions, and deliver production floor documents and price reports.

Though MixDesign is Microsoft Access-based, Microsoft Office is not required for you to use the program. Purchasing the program from the ModaCrete store will enable the buyer to access a free online operating program if they do not have access to the Microsoft Office suite of tools.

MixDesign was developed over the past two years. The program originally began as an Excel spreadsheet that was given out in trainings to allow contractors to track and record mix designs. The program was conceptually expanded to become an inclusive tool that can develop and document mixes, run calculations and track prices.

☎ (860) 343-7005

🌐 www.modacrete.com

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ChemSystems partners with Kansas-based Decorative Concrete Supply

ChemSystems has formed a strategic partnership with Decorative Concrete Supply, of Shawnee, Kansas.

Decorative Concrete Supply has gained access to products, manufacturing technology and internal resources offered by ChemSystems, while providing ChemSystems with better access to the Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas markets for its Helix brand of decorative concrete products.

As part of the partnership, Decorative Concrete Supply will become the newest member of the Cement Colors distribution network. The Cement Colors network currently has locations in Fort Worth and Houston, Texas, providing product sales, technical service, specialty manufacturing and warehousing.

Mike Murray, the owner of Decorative Concrete Supply since 1999, will continue to be involved with DCS, focusing primarily on sales and technical service. Denise Valdepena, treasurer and board member of the Concrete Promotional Group, member of ACI, and board member of the Decorative Concrete Council of the American Society of Concrete Contractors, will be vice president and general manager of Decorative Concrete Supply.

ChemSystems is based in Houston, Texas, and provides products to the decorative concrete market under the HBS, CSI and Helix brand names.

☎ (800) 545-9827

🌐 www.chemsystemsinc.net

EVENT CALENDAR

The American Society of Concrete Contractors (ASCC) Regional Event

Oct. 14-15, Detroit, Michigan

🌐 www.ascconline.org

American Concrete Institute Fall Convention

Oct. 26-30, Washington, D.C.

🌐 www.concrete.org

TRANSITIONS

Alex Nesta has joined the Pamako countertop sealing division of ModaCrete Inc. as their newest lab technician. Nesta is a third-year student at Central Connecticut State University studying molecular biology and chemistry.

Halco Lighting Technologies, a leader in lamp and ballast product solutions, welcomes **Doug Campbell** to the newly created position of Mid-Atlantic Regional Sales Manager. Campbell has more than 17 years of industry experience in various sales and business development roles.

HTC America welcomed **Brad Burns** as technical director for the United States. Burns will support customers with grinding applications and be responsible for HTC University, a training program for concrete grinding professionals. He will also drive product development and improvement and liaise with trade organizations. Contact (865) 765-4065 or brad.burns@htc-america.com.

HTC also welcomed four new sales representatives to its rapidly expanding sales department in North America. The new sales representatives include **Walter Bell**, located in Atlanta, Georgia (walter.bell@htc-america.com); **Todd Lambel**, in Chicago, Illinois (todd.lambel@htc-america.com); **Ramiro Jimenez**, in Napa, California (ramiro.jimenez@htc-america.com); and **Steve Lackey** in Los Angeles (steve.lackey@htc-america.com).



Omar Martinez joined Husqvarna Construction Products as HU Applications Manager for the West. Martinez has been a concrete cutter operator for more than 10 years. His experience with running saws and knowing how they work makes him well-suited to help customers with any issues.



Michelman, a global developer of industrial polymers and coatings, has hired **Jeff Rodgers** as the company's new CFO. Effective July 31, 2014,

Rodgers has assumed responsibility for Michelman's global financial management.

Rui Zhong joined ModaCrete as an intern civil engineer. Zhong is a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Connecticut civil and environmental engineering department. He has in-depth knowledge of ultra-high-performance concrete (UHPC), ultra-high-performance fiber-reinforced concrete (UHP-RFC) and high-performance pervious concrete (HPPC).

TS Cement Manufacturing Corp. announces a new organizational structure effective September 1. **Jerry Hoyle**, president and CEO of CTS since 2011, will relinquish his position as president and assume the position of vice chairman of the board while retaining his position as CEO. **Frank Senatore** will assume the position of president of retail and international sales. **Ken Vallens** will assume the position of president of engineering sales and research.

To support its continued growth and expansion in the Asia Pacific region, Michelman has hired **Richard Yang** as its new regional sales manager, Asia-Pacific, chemical specialties, and country manager, China.



Allen Engineering Corp. has promoted **Roger Euliss** to the position of vice president of sales and marketing. He has been with AEC for the past two years serving as sales and marketing director. He will continue leading the AEC sales and marketing team worldwide.

SCANMASKIN OWNERS DO IT IN AN HOUR.

With other grinders, a belt change is an all-day affair that costs you big on down-time and lost productivity. What's worse, a lot of those belts fail after just 1,000 hours. Who can afford to waste time and money like that?

You can change the belt on a Scanmaskin floor grinder in just **60 minutes**. Yep. Just one hour. Plus, each Scanmaskin belt is rated for up to **5,000 hours**.

PACKAGE DEAL

SCAN COMBIFLEX 650 FLOOR GRINDER + ERMATOR S36 DUST COLLECTOR & C3000 PRE-SEPARATOR

**LEASE IT
FOR ONLY
\$498.98***
per month!



SPECIFICATIONS:

SCAN COMBIFLEX 650

- « Productivity rates of 650–970 feet²/hour
- « 230V, single phase
- « 3-head planetary drive system; holds 9–18 tools
- « Low-vibration design
- « Solid steel construction—right down to the dust shroud
- « Weighs 705 pounds

ERMATOR S36

- « 230V, single phase
- « Three tested and certified HEPA filters
- « 353 CFM
- « 110 inches of water lift
- « Mess-free drop-down dust collection

ERMATOR C3000

- « Captures 90% of dust and debris
- « Extends life of dust collector filters
- « Longopac dust-free disposal

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*Based on a 60-month lease.



The Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute's 2014 Sidney Freedman Craftsmanship Awards

For the past three years, the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) has held annual Sidney Freedman Craftsmanship Awards to recognize excellence in craftsmanship using glass-fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC).

The competition is open to entries of any type or size, though the entries must thoroughly document the production challenges, including photographs or forms, reinforcement, hardware and the completed precast concrete or GFRC unit. Judging is based on demonstrated success in overcoming obstacles to production, solving formwork or finishing challenges, and providing high-quality finished products.

Willis Construction Co., in San Juan Bautista, California, won the 2014 Sidney Freedman Craftsmanship Award for its production of GFRC panels for the Broad Museum, in Los Angeles, California.

Willis Construction submitted a project that utilized GFRC in a technologically complex manner. The exterior skin of the project is clad with individual GFRC panels that create a rain



The GFRC cladding elements of the Broad Museum were produced using polystyrene foam forms. A coating was applied to the roughed-out forms to provide a smooth, hard surface.



The completed panels and their steel frames are supported by a complex grid of structural steel members.

screen for a majority of the building. More than 300 individual forms were necessary to produce the more than 2,500 individual panels. Computer detailed software was used to design the

three-dimensional shape of each panel. The computer file was then translated to a robotic form fabricating machine called a CNC machine to create an exact negative shape for each panel.

Honorable Mention was awarded to Gate Precast Co., in Kissimmee, Florida, for their work on an LDS temple. Gate Precast Co. produced a monolithic steeple for the Latter Day Saints Temple in Davie, Florida. The temple owner wanted the steeple to be constructed with minimal or, preferably, no joints, which led to challenges in design and construction.

Typically, a steeple such as this would be constructed in individual pieces which would have been held together with a joint near the tip. However, to meet the demands of the job, a steel stay-in-place inner form was created. This form allowed for the production of a full-height, hollow precast steeple of minimal weight. The steeple was too large to cast inside, so the formwork was erected outside and a pump was used to place the concrete.



A pump was used to place concrete in formwork for the steeple for an LDS church in Davie, Florida.



A void inside the steeple was created using a steel form to minimize the finished weight.

Photos courtesy of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute

Easycove partners with The Concrete Protector

Easycove announced a new distribution partnership with The Concrete Protector thanks to increasing product demands. The new alliance will ensure the availability of Easycove's coving products in the resinous flooring industry.

The Concrete Protector is Easycove's second distributor in the Eastern region of the United States. The agreement includes distribution of new 1-inch, 4-inch and 6-inch coving and Easycove's high-performance adhesive. Under the agreement, The Concrete Protector (TCP) will become the primary provider of service and application support in the Ohio region.

"With The Concrete Protector as our distributor, we increase our presence in the resinous flooring industry for quality coving solutions," said Heather Earley, president of Easycove, in a news release.

Easycove is a manufacturer of coving products engineered to create a superior bond to the walls and floor. Easycove installs in a fraction of the time compared to traditional troweled coving. Easycove's unique interlocking bond channels outperform other products on the market.

The Concrete Protector is a trusted supplier of products, equipment and training to protect, repair and design concrete. As a decorative concrete supplier, The Concrete Protector ensures every product distributed is professionally and carefully delivered and installed.

☎ (847) 972-2131

🌐 www.easycove.com

🌐 www.theconcreteprotector.com

CIM steering committee announces new board members

The National Steering Committee (NSC) for the Concrete Industry Management (CIM) program, a business-intensive program that awards students with a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in Concrete Industry Management, recently announced the election of new officers and board members.

The newly elected officers are chairman Mike Schneider, vice president of operations, Baker Concrete Construction Inc.; vice chairman Alan Nedza, director of sales, admixture systems North America, BASF Corp.; and treasurer Nicole R. Maher, chief operating officer, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA).

Newly elected board members include Steve Cox, North American director of sales, Grace Construction Products; Matt Childs, president, American Concrete Pavement Association; Beverly Garnant, executive director, American Society of Concrete Contractors; Brian Gallagher, director of marketing, O'Neal Inc; and Mike Campion, senior vice president, Sika Corp. 📄

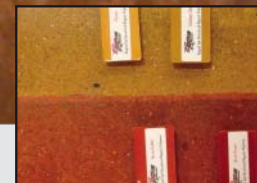
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New ModaCrete sealers and admixtures for concrete tops

ModaCrete has extended the Pamako line of materials to include three new high-performance sealers and admixtures for concrete countertops.

Pamako SBRS (Silane Based Reactive Sealer) is a highly reactive densifying sealer. Pamako WCGRC (Wet Cast GRC) is a dry SCC performance-enhancing admixture for GFRC products. Pamako PPA (Performance Plus Admixture) is a dry admix for use in wet-casting or GFRC mixes that delivers higher compressive and flexural strength as well as a reduction in water absorption.

☎ (860) 343-7005

🌐 www.modacrete.com

Scanmaskin introduces propane grinder and dust collector

Finding adequate power for operating large grinders and dust collectors on a job site is no longer a challenge. Scanmaskin has introduced the Scan Combiflex 800 Propane to solve this problem.

The Scan Combiflex 800 Propane is their first 100-percent self-contained propane machine. The SC800P machine features a high-performance 25-horsepower Kawasaki V-Twin



engine, coupled with a high-torque centrifugal clutch system. Using this efficient drive system, the SC800P is able to provide high torque while grinding at low speeds. This is crucial, especially for rough grinding and surface preparation applications. Weighing in at 970 pounds and offering 32 inches of grinding width, the SC800P is perfect for medium- to large-sized commercial projects. The unit also features a digital rpm display along with an hour meter, making it easy to track usage and maintenance.

While Scanmaskin does not manufacture a propane dust collector, they've teamed up with Ermator. The new Ermator T8600 Propane HEPA vacuum is the perfect complement to the Scanmaskin SC800P grinder. Boasting a large 18-horsepower Kawasaki engine, the T8600P cranks out 410 cfm with 115 inches of water lift on a 3-inch hose. In addition, each HEPA filter on the T8600P is individually tested and certified to ensure that they meet or exceed HEPA standards.

To ensure ease of use, both the Scanmaskin SC800P and the Ermator T8600P use interchangeable propane tanks, and both have emission systems that comply with California regulations. The units each come equipped with CO2 safety sensors for additional operator safety.

☎ (425) 628-1212

🌐 www.scanmaskin.com

Vexcon's new guard for densified and polished concrete

Vexcon Chemicals announces Vexcon's StarSeal PS Ultra Guard SPE, a water-based stabilized penetrating and film-forming curing polymer that provides durable, long-lasting stain protection and enhanced shine to densified/hardened and polished concrete floors.

StarSeal provides quick stain and wear resistance while significantly increasing the gloss level and the coefficient of friction of the treated floor.

Use StarSeal to increase gloss and clarity, intensify the color of colored floors, and help hide polishing imperfections. StarSeal provides stain protection from food and chemical stains along with a wear-resistant film that eliminates streaking. Other benefits of StarSeal are that it is quick-drying in less than one hour and can take a high-speed burnish the same day. StarSeal provides increased ease of maintenance and a nonslip floor.

StarSeal PS Ultra Guard SPE is part of the StarSeal PS family of products, which includes floor hardeners and stain protectants.

☎ (888) 839-2661

🌐 www.vexcon.com



New phosphorescent powder for glow-in-the-dark casting

New Glow Worm phosphorescent powder by Smooth-On provides hours of glow-in-the-dark effects. Phosphorescent powders themselves are not new, but what makes Glow Worm powder special is how long the glow power lasts. Castings will glow for hours. Compared to other phosphorescent powders, castings made with Glow Worm will glow in the dark 10 times longer.

Glow Worm powders are available in blue or green. Add powder to a Smooth-On plastic, rubber or foam system as directed and pour or brush into a mold. The casting can then be "charged" with light and put on display.

☎ (800) 762-0744

🌐 www.smooth-on.com

KreteTek's Ghostshield Sealers now sold at HomeDepot.com

HomeDepot.com now sells the Ghostshield line of concrete sealing products. Ghostshield products come with comprehensive warranties, are easy to apply and utilize environmentally friendly solutions that take advantage of advances in molecular nanotechnology.

Four products are now available. Lithi-Tek LS 9500 is a penetrating, invisible, chemically reactive sealer that permanently waterproofs and densifies. Siloxa-Tek 8500 offers an impregnating, invisible sealer that creates a hydrophobic surface environment to reduce water and surface absorption, salt degradation, spalling and cracking. Cryli-Tek 5500 is a decorative water-based sealer that offers a subtle matte/satin finish while reducing water penetration. Finally, Cryli-Tek 5505 is a decorative, solvent-based sealer that offers a high-gloss, wet-look finish while reducing water penetration.

☎ (855) 573-8383

🌐 www.ghostshield.com

Water Cannon introduces diesel hot-water pressure washer

Water Cannon's new Kohler hot water diesel high-performance industrial pressure washer (product ID 19K07) is designed for everyday and extreme commercial usage, including tasks such as surface preparation and corrosion control.

The new pressure washer has a V-belt drive skid-style Kohler diesel engine. Customizable psi ratings range from 3,200 to 4,000 and power ranges from 4.0 to 8.0 gallons per minute. The unit is entirely self-contained with dual 15-gallon poly diesel fuel tanks, a 12-volt battery start and a 45-amp charging system. Additionally, 115-volt models are also available, and they include powerful 2,500-watt generators.

The stainless steel coil wrap, burner hood and reliable Beckett burners make this diesel pressure washer model efficient and responsive. A control panel, adjustable thermostat and safety pressure release valve give the operator complete control of the pressure washer's functions and water temperature. Accessories that come with the package include a gun/wand assembly, a 50-foot-high pressure hose, a Maxi-Flo 20 percent chemical injector, four color-coded spray nozzles and a color-coded chemical nozzle. An optional wheel kit makes this washer portable.

☎ (321) 800-5744

🌐 www.watercannon.com



Polygem announces fast-curing topcoat

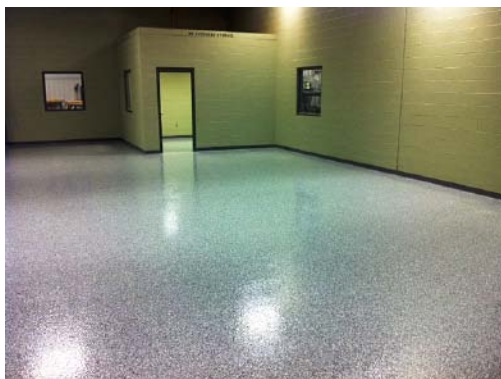
Polygem's new mix is called #1618. It's a fast-curing, two-part epoxy resin specially formulated for use as a topcoat.

The #1618 is easily mixable and its low viscosity allows for easy-to-spread thin-coat applications.

Polygem's #1618 is ideal for small areas or areas of critical use that demand a prompt return to service. The #1618 mix is resistant to most chemicals and solvents. It is also nonblushing and therefore a good choice for cool or humid floors.

☎ (630) 231-5600

🌐 www.polygem.com



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Kourasanit decorative coatings now available in the U.S.

Kourasanit, a decorative materials manufacturer creating unique, ecofriendly coating materials, announces that its products are now available for purchase in the U.S.

For more than 35 years, Kourasanit has been an industry standard in Europe. Founded in Greece, the company creates its products in the time-honored tradition of mixing lime and volcanic ash to create plasterlike coatings for use in restoration and building. This mix is known as a “hydraulic mortar” and creates a multipurpose coating that is beautiful, natural, durable, and resistant to moisture and cracks. Aggregates add visual and tactile appeal to the coatings. Aggregate options range from natural materials such as sand and straw to recycled materials such as crushed glass.

Kourasanit coatings can be applied to walls, furniture, ceilings, and floors in every aspect of commercial or residential surface finishing — including bathrooms, foyers, libraries, dens, living rooms, kitchens and even swimming pools, where the coatings provide a long-lasting, nonslip surface for pool interiors and surrounding areas.

The coatings offer a wide range of application possibilities, including lending any surface the appearance of natural stone. Since Kourasanit coatings do not function as cement or spackle, the product must be applied to paint-ready surfaces.

Because Kourasanit coatings are made from natural materials and can be applied to both exterior and interior surfaces, every application of the product leads to a unique aesthetic result. For this reason, the coatings are popular with faux finishers, decorative painters, interior designers, developers, architects and homeowners looking for one-of-a-kind finishing options.

Kourasanit coatings are used extensively in European luxury hotels and casinos, including the Cavo Tagoo Hotel, the Blue Palace Resort and Spa, and Aquila Elounda Village Resort. The Kourasanit USA showroom, located in Metairie, Louisiana, illustrates the versatility of the coatings, offering a wide range of color, texture and application samples to view and touch.

Kourasanit is currently accepting distributor, dealer and franchise applications for open territories.

📞 (504) 210-9248

🌐 www.kourasanit-usa.com

Introducing BOLDStone's Waterproof Decking System

Most people admit that they love the look of stone, but it is out of the budget of many people. BOLDStone has addressed that problem through the new BOLDStone Waterproof Decking System. Now, there is a whole new way to give decks and balconies beautiful stone finishes quickly and easily. Typical uses for the decking system are waterproof sun decks, balconies, walkways and breezeways. The system can also be used for repair of uneven surfaces and leaking waterproof surfaces.

BOLDStone eliminates pooling of water on the deck, offers superior crack resistance and has low to no odor thanks to its low-VOC formulation. Apply BOLDStone Waterproof Decking System at any required thickness. It stays flexible over extreme temperatures and looks like a real stone finish.

📞 (800) 230-5345

🌐 www.boldstone.com



Chicago Pneumatic launches new concrete equipment line

Global construction equipment manufacturer Chicago Pneumatic has announced the launch of its comprehensive new concrete equipment line. The range of products covers all facets of concrete finishing applications, including vibration, leveling, finishing and cutting.

Freshly poured concrete contains air pockets that require vibration to increase the density and strength of the concrete. This can be achieved by utilizing a poker or a screed. Contractors can now select from a line of mechanical, or pneumatic, pokers from Chicago Pneumatic to meet the needs of the specific application.

The new durable and user-friendly VPM mechanical vibrators are designed for mid-sized applications using medium- to high-slump concrete. For jobs of any size requiring high-speed vibration, the VPP pneumatic vibrator range delivers high-performance centrifugal force.

With compressed-air cooling and low maintenance, these vibrators are highly dependable even in the most remote locations. The Chicago Pneumatic vibrator range is fully complemented by a wide selection of portable power sources. Mechanical vibrators have a choice of gasoline or diesel drive units with rugged construction, rubber mountings to reduce vibration and noise, and quick-release couplings. A complete range of air compressors is available to run VPP pneumatic vibrators on different job sites.

The new concrete product line includes walk-behind screeds that provide a consistent, even surface without any guide or supporting tube. Equipped with reliable Honda engines, they offer reduced hand-arm vibration, with an easily-accessible ignition switch and throttle control for quick adjustments. The LBG 1200 hand-held screed provides surface vibration only. It is suitable for slabs of all types and concrete of all consistencies. Recommended for smaller slabs and medium- to low-slump concrete, the LBG 800 bull-float screed provides deeper vibration and single-step leveling.

Screeding time, labor and transport costs can also be reduced with the CP CombiForm lightweight, leave-in-place screed rail system. CombiForm is easily prepared and cast into the concrete, providing an efficient leveling solution. Without any requirement

for preleveling before screeding, it can also eliminate the need for a floor saw.

Chicago Pneumatic's STG power trowels are ideal where smoother finished surfaces are essential. Models are available for jobs from small edging tasks to larger floors. With efficient, reliable performance and low maintenance, they create long-lasting durable finishes for concrete slabs, industrial floors, parking lots and alleys. The STG 24 is a small power float edger intended for smaller slabs and finishing edges, especially in confined spaces and next to walls. STG 36 and 46 are higher-capacity trowels designed for larger slabs.

Completing the range are concrete and asphalt floor saws that deliver a straight, stable cut for expansion joints, to a maximum depth of 150 mm. They ease the operator's work with adjustable handles and ergonomically positioned controls.

Gasoline and diesel models are available.

 www.cp.com

New and improved Husqvarna grinders

Husqvarna introduces a new line of versatile and easy-to-use grinding machines. The company has revamped its PG 280 and PG 400 small grinders and added the PG 450. All of the machines fold for transport.

Husqvarna's new machines are durable, flexible and easy to use. The new chassis/frame can be separated from the grinding head in less than 30 seconds, making setup and teardown easy. Having two separate pieces enables the grinders to fit into the trunk of most vehicles. In addition, the handlebar on the frame adjusts.

The self-adjusting floating cover with brush list enables dust to be collected for a cleaner environment. The new cover follows the surface of the floor and creates a tight seal for efficient dust management.

All three machines have a fixed speed, which makes them easy to use as there are no settings required. They are equipped with an hour meter (except the PG 400).

The PG 450 is Husqvarna's smallest planetary grinder/polisher. It's a versatile grinding machine that can perform all types of applications such as concrete grinding, coating removal, concrete repair and polishing. The planetary drive also guarantees a flatter surface, and the machine can be used to create a Hiperfloor polished concrete solution. The machine

runs on single-phase power, which is easily accessible in most industrial and domestic settings.

The PG 280 has the added benefit of an edge function with a wall protector for controlled edge grinding next to walls. The removable section on the lid cover makes it easy to convert to edge grinding. There are openings on both the left and right sides of the machine. This function also uses a nonmarking wall protector to ensure the

wall is not damaged during grinding. This feature enables users to remain upright, in a more ergonomic position.

To ensure the PG 280 can get as close as possible to walls, a new wheel setting with foot pedal has also been developed. The wheels can be set on either the left or right side by using the foot pedal. It is easy to use and no tools are required.

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 www.husqvarnagroup.com



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More run time with new Makita Multi-Tool

Makita has released a new 18V LXT Lithium-Ion Cordless Multi-Tool Kit (model XMT035) with tool-less accessory change and longer run time than the previous model. The XMT035 is engineered for fast cutting, sanding, scraping and grout removal, and it is ideal for a full range of trades.

It's the latest addition to the expanding 18V LXT lineup, the world's largest cordless tool series powered by an 18V lithium-ion slide-style battery.

The XMT035 features an LED light to illuminate the work area, a small diameter barrel grip for improved handling, a large on/off slide switch with lock-on button, and adapters to fit most competitive accessories. A battery capacity warning system turns on an indicator light and is engineered to automatically stop the motor to notify the user when it's time to recharge the battery.

For improved tool performance and extended battery life, the XMT035 features Star Protection Computer Controls. Star Protection is communication technology that allows the Star Protection-equipped tool and battery to exchange data in real time and monitor conditions during use to protect against overloading, overdischarging and overheating.

☎ (800) 462-5482

🌐 www.makitatools.com

Liquid Elements releases 11 new colors

Liquid Elements, a brand of The Stonhard Group, launched 11 new color options for its six product lines. Liquid Elements color lines are updated regularly, inspired by design industry color trends.

The Smooth product line, popular in corporate boardrooms, has four new colors: Auckland Moss, Hakui Orchid, Londonberry Dew and Belgian Waffle. Reflect has three new colors: Black Vortex, Molten Dawn and Fusion Storm. The chic, tumbled marbled collection, Crush, introduced Iron and Burnished. The popular glitter-inspired floor line, Glitz, unveiled Turquoise Universe and Tourmaline Meteor.

Liquid Elements floors are created, manufactured and installed with sustainability in mind. A Liquid Elements floor is designed to have a long life cycle and become part of a building structure, rather than ending up in a landfill at the end of its life. As a member of the United States Green Building Council and IIDA, Liquid Elements supports the principles of green design by being environmentally responsible in all aspects of the manufacturing process.

☎ (877) 642-7243

🌐 www.liquidelements.com



Miracote's new MiraPrime Aqua-Blok XL primer

New MiraPrime Aqua-Blok XL from Miracote is a clear, single-component, odorless, water-based, penetrating colloidal silicate liquid primer that integrally waterproofs concrete, mortar and other cementitious structures. Based on scientifically superior inorganic mineral waterproofing technology, Aqua-Blok XL penetrates deep into the capillary structure of concrete and mortar to permanently enhance physical properties and the dynamics of waterproofing performance.

Exhibiting highly reactive and hydrophilic properties, Aqua-Blok XL quickly migrates through waterways and capillary tracts to chemically react with and convert free water-soluble calcium hydroxide into a dense crystalline network of insoluble calcium silicate hydrate gel within the



concrete pore structure. This conversion process purges unwanted chlorides and contaminants from within the concrete matrix, seals and densifies, permanently blocks moisture ingress, reduces moisture vapor emissivity and enhances resistance to aggressive chemical substances.

☎ (800) 692-3502

🌐 www.miracote.com

MBW's new heavy high-speed trowel

MBW has introduced a heavy-weight high-speed trowel for finishing concrete under adverse conditions. Model 465199 is a 46-inch diameter machine powered by a GX390 Honda engine factory-set to 3,400 rpm. The machine weighs 275 pounds and offers a rotor speed range of 35 to 180 rpm. The wide range of rotor rpm is achieved through a variable sheave torque converter-style clutch.

The machine is available with either conventional twist-adjusting or constant-force pitch handles. To function properly, power trowels must maintain a precise perpendicular relationship between the gearbox's output shaft and blade arms. Once that relationship is compromised, the trowel will vibrate or wobble. MBW has gone to great lengths to maintain this critical relationship. MBW Walk-Behind Power Trowels feature the industry's heaviest bearings, output shafts, gears, spiders and blade arms. Comparison of these critical MBW components to those of any competitor answers the question as to why MBW trowels run so well for so long.

MBW considered operator comfort, safety and increased productivity to be essential in the design of the new trowel. For example, MBW handles are up to 6 inches longer than most others, which provides greater leverage. The handles are adjustable to fit the operator more comfortably and absorb trowel torque. Each MBW trowel is balanced with regard to engine location for excellent performance and reduced operator fatigue. MBW's heavier handle and stronger guard ring add up to extra safety.

MBW offers 24-inch, 36-inch and 46-inch trowels. 🛠️

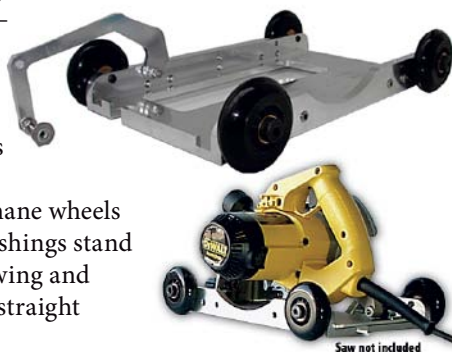
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Water Cannon's 4,200 PSI Honda Engine Powered Pressure Washer Offers Plenty of Power at an Exceptional Price

THE lifetime frame, 3-year engine and 5-year pump contribute to making the 4,200 PSI pressure washer an industry favorite.

The aircraft-grade frame on which the pressure washer rests has two handles for maximum maneuverability and no welds to ensure utmost survivability. Two oversized tires and two shock-absorbing feet provide a stable platform for the pressure washer and also make it easy to transport.

The thermo-sensor automatically prevents overheating in bypass mode and protects the pump from potential damage. An adjustable pressure valve offers the operator complete control over pressure in order to address a wide variety of applications.

Included in the price and packaged with each pressure washer upon shipping is a complete accessory kit with a 50-foot-long high pressure hose, gun and wand assembly, a soap injector and 5 nozzles. As a result, this washer is essentially ready to use as soon as it arrives.



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How to Market Your Services to General Contractors

by Joe Maty

DECORATIVE concrete contractor David Edwards has a message for general contractors.

Unfortunately, he says, it's a message they might prefer not to hear.

"You're no better than your worst sub," he says.

The way he sees it, general contractors are basically brokers. "At the end of the day, they coordinate construction jobs."

In this role, they call the shots on subcontractors, based on criteria that, he says, too often start and end with cost. "We try our best to pick quality contractors to do business with, but some still focus on the low bidder."

Nevertheless, David Edwards and his company, Edwards Concrete, of Winter Garden, Florida, continue to campaign for the GC's attention. A key tool in this

communication program, he says, is the lunch and learn.

"It's for GCs, architects, anybody who might use our service," he says. "We'll do a catered lunch, and while they're eating we'll do a slideshow, tell them about all our services. Once we get done, in 30 minutes or so — my intentions are to keep it as short as possible — there are a lot of questions."

Typically, the questions come fast and furious about decorative concrete and how Edwards Concrete achieves certain looks. "They are a little stressful to do, but we feel good about it afterwards," he says.

Edwards isn't sure his message about quality gets through, but he figures it's worth a try. Maybe, just maybe, the GC will remember that cost is not the only thing to consider when hiring a decorative concrete professional.

Edwards' pitch to the GC is relatively direct — enjoy a free lunch and let him explain what decorative concrete is all about. A sampling of opinion from a handful of other contractors turns up some interesting — you might even say unorthodox — approaches to this matter of communication with the general contractor.

The DCC as problem solver

"GCs have no interest in decorative concrete," asserts Gregory Hyde Hryniewicz, owner of Hyde Concrete, of Annapolis, Maryland. "Decorative concrete is a pain in the (butt) for them. It takes longer to do, it's more prone to problems. If you're looking to spend money on marketing, don't spend it on GCs."

Hryniewicz is serious, at least to a degree. He's not saying the GC is unimportant

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or undeserving of the DCC's sales pitch. His point: The GC's instincts are attuned to certain stimuli — cost, efficiency, expediency. The GC doesn't want to hear how good you are at polishing concrete. "He wants someone who solves problems as economically as possible," Hryniewicz says.

"My approach is to do this: Be a trusted advisor, be a resource for him for reliable information. Depending on the situation, he can turn around and put me in front of the architect, possibly as a way to improve upon a design. Or sometimes the architect doesn't specify correctly, like in the type of finish, the level of finish. Here, the GC should say, 'Let my decorative concrete contractor talk to you directly.'"

Hryniewicz says he doesn't market to GCs per se, "but I do sell relationships with GCs." This relationship can make a difference at key moments — when the GC has won a contract and is considering subcontractors, at the time of initial bid when the DCC can serve as a resource for cost estimates, and (not infrequently) in cases where something didn't work out with another DCC. Hyde Concrete gets a significant number of jobs this way, Hryniewicz says, due to a reputation for quality, albeit at a price premium.

Information, he says, is a highly valuable asset for the DCC in its relationship with GCs. The GC may not need to know everything about decorative concrete, but they need to know whom to call to get the information they do need.

In keeping with this "trusted advisor" role, Hryniewicz says he seeks networking opportunities such as events offered by trade association Associated Builders & Contractors. "I want to stay at the forefront in their minds, so that when they have a decorative concrete question or problem, they can call me. I'm a resource for them." And, he says, if needed he can effectively speak the language of decorative concrete to the clients that matter most — the owner and designer.

Making an impression

Cory Hanneman, owner of Element 7 Concrete, in Marble Falls, Texas, hit on a novel idea for etching himself and his company in the minds of GC customers — crafting custom-made items with a connection to both the client and Element 7.

One year he made coasters for drinking glasses out of a self-leveling cement mix,

using a urethane mold. In another stroke of creative wizardry, he used self-consolidating concrete to produce a Bakugan game for clients that he knew had young children.

"Who else does that?" he says, certain of the idea's originality. "It doesn't cost a lot of money and shows your company's skill and creativity." He simply purchased a game at retail and applied a release agent to make a mold.

For another giveaway, he used an old motorcycle tire as a mold and shaped leftover countertop concrete to fashion a "propagandasaurus" — a desktop ornament that displays brochures and other literature. Then there was the flower vase, made using a concrete slump cone.

"It's just doing creative things with leftovers, a really good way to tattoo the name of your company or brand in the minds of customers," Hanneman says.


For builders who bring a good deal of business his way, Hanneman puts together a book of photos featuring projects by the contractor that incorporate a contribution from Element 7. The contractor's company name and logo are printed on the cover, accompanied by the Element 7 logo. Other

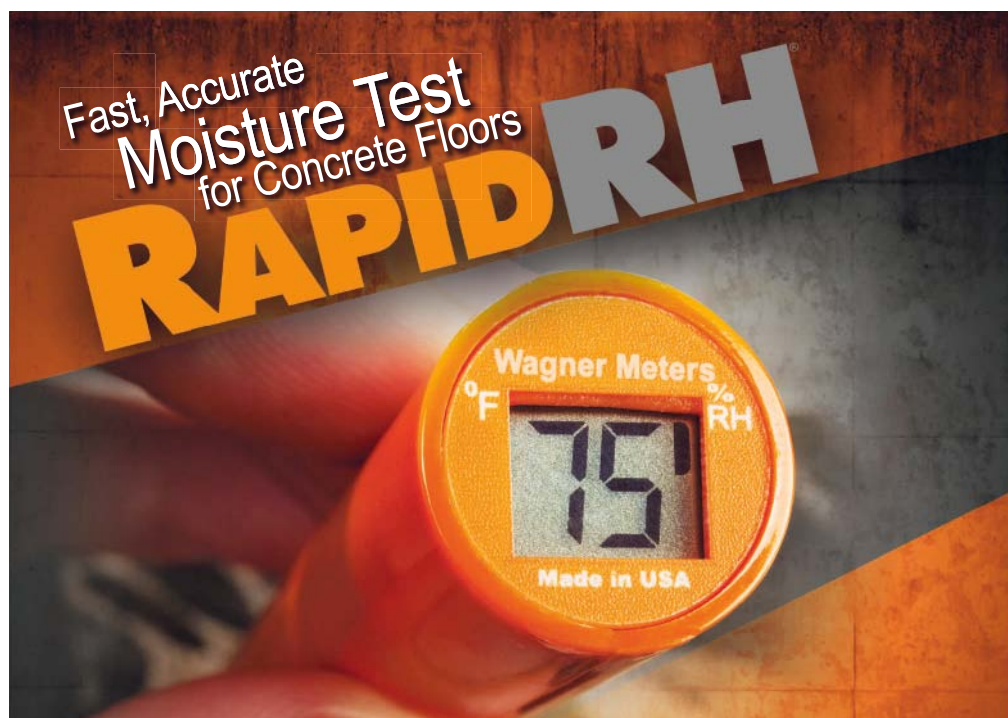
information, such as a color chart for stained concrete, is also shown inside as part of the sampling of the builder's portfolio, including decorative concrete work.

A key, Hanneman says, is knowing your core customers and focusing on those parts of your business.

"We focus on ongoing business with core customers — the builders," he says. "I like to work with high-end residential, so we work with builders in that niche. You have to know what your niche is. Some like to do car dealers, so they should run with that. Others like blue-collar customers, so maybe remodels are their niche."

For him, the image of professionalism and quality extends to details such as the visual appearance of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans with the Element 7 name across the side. "We always work to keep them clean. We maintain them rigorously, which is hard with decorative concrete work," he says.

"Builders are always going to be moving around and stuck in traffic," he notes. And on the road, they will encounter spiffy-looking Element 7 vehicles. 




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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE

Justin Burd and Nathan Smith, Set In Stone Concrete Design House Chattanooga, Tennessee

by Vanessa Salvia

BARS and countertops are “anticlimactic” to this month’s artisans in concrete, Justin Burd and Nathan Smith. “We’ve been trying to push the limits of what concrete can do as a medium by creating good design and shapes that are not often seen within our industry,” says Smith.

Burd, 36, who is originally from Chattanooga, began working with concrete while living in West Virginia. He had his own business called Tribe 1 Customs, which he started in 2006. “I was remodeling a friend’s house who wanted to install concrete countertops,” says Burd. Buddy Rhodes’s first book on concrete countertops was loaned to him to get him started. “I cast my first piece for the first kitchen I worked on, and my friend really liked it. Somebody else saw it and they wanted it too and that’s when the snowball started rolling downhill.”

Smith’s back story is similar. Smith, 32, installed a concrete countertop when he was building his own home in 2007. Someone saw it, liked it and wanted one too. That’s when Smith realized that concrete installation could be a profitable business.

Burd says at the time there was no one else in his area of West Virginia doing concrete work. “This was right when the form was getting popular,” he says. “I had pretty much laid down as much concrete as I could where I was, so I needed to move on. I started out with countertops, but then when I started to grow, my mind took me other places. I started thinking about the possibilities of furniture and sculpture.”

He had his business for nearly three years, then moved back to his hometown of Chattanooga. He joined forces with Smith in 2009, becoming a co-owner in Smith’s business, Set In Stone. The two friends inspire each other and push each other to greater possibilities.

“Once I hooked up with Nathan I got another creative brain to bounce ideas off of and work with,” says Burd. “Everything

kind of fell into place here. It’s a real good partnership.”

Burd and Smith are both avid outdoorsmen. “If I’m not in the shop or asleep I’m usually outside in the woods or rock-climbing or power-boarding,” says Burd. “I feel like one of my most inspiring places to be is outside. I do a lot of my best thinking out there.” When Burd is out in nature, his eyes notice the shapes and patterns around him, such as flowing water and rocks. “Both of those elements appeal to me and it really comes out in my work,” he says.

For Smith, the element that continually inspires him and manifests through his work is steel. “Nathan is very inspired by minimalism too,” says Burd. “He definitely has a belief that less is more, and you can see that in a lot of our work.”



The future will be fabric-formed

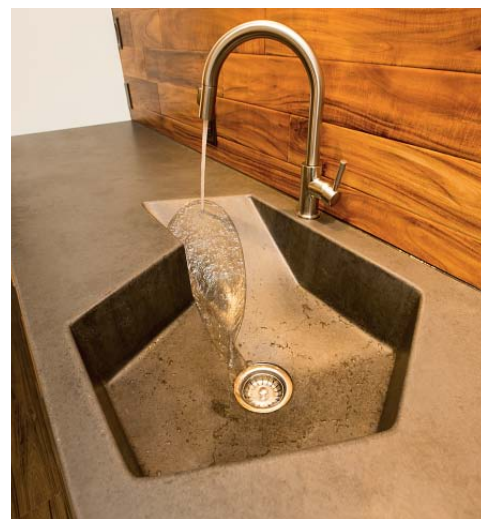
Smith and Burd do a lot of custom work for both residential and commercial spaces. They also have their furniture and other objects in galleries. “We’re kind of speckled all over the place,” says Burd. “We’ve

built a reputation to where people have an idea and they’ve seen our work and they want us to put our twist on whatever it is they want.”

These two creative minds are putting their effort into building up their online presence through a Web store. They plan to focus more on sculpture in the future. Whatever they make, it’s likely to be fabric-formed. “We feel fabric-forming is so great that we’ve changed our mix designs to pretty much use GFRC all the time,” says Smith. “GFRC allows us to build more complex shapes easier. Justin and I started using wet-cast, and we still do that every once in a while, but for the most part we’re using GFRC every day.”

One sculpture, a detail of which is on this issue’s cover, was an early experiment in fabric-forming. That 5-foot-by-





Photos courtesy of Set In Stone Concrete Design House

3-foot piece, called “Absolution,” is now a public art piece in downtown Chattanooga. “Absolution” was created using a Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products mix that is “another tool in the toolbox,” Smith says. “We’re using that for countertops that are 1-inch thick or 3/4-inch thick instead of casting 2 inches thick. It’s enabled us to go lighter — less material and lighter weight.”

Smith and Burd are head trainers for Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products. And they are increasingly excited about sharing the possibilities of Buddy Rhodes materials.

“We’re really trying to bring training back to life because we’ve felt that training has gotten a little diluted,” says Burd. “We’re trying to bring in new twists. That’s always

what we try to do.” After a brief pause, Burd continues on. “No, we don’t try, we do. We set ourselves apart.”

The trainings typically teach people how to make concrete countertops and other concrete objects using Buddy Rhodes mixes and Rhodes’ signature techniques. “We’ve evolved the program to include techniques that we’ve personally come up with,” Burd says. “We don’t just do countertops. I’ve added to the curriculum to create different objects, not only to make it fresh for me to teach, but also so the students see other things besides countertops.”

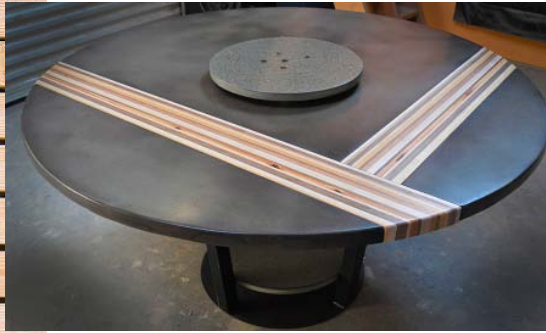
Larger and lighter

The pair’s customers give them a lot

of creative freedom, whether it’s for a functional installation such as a full-scale shower or for a decorative garden sculpture. “Now that we have these GFRM mixes it’s expanded our reach of what we can do,” says Smith. “We’re making 20-inch-long pieces without a seam. It’s bringing a whole new dynamic to the industry.”

One of the “wildest” things that Burd says they’ve done was a massive 700-pound fabric-formed concrete headboard embedded with fiber optic lighting. “Cool things like that,” Burd says.

Another of their projects was a 22-foot waterfall. It was cast in two large pieces and placed on top of a building for the owner of a penthouse apartment. “We cast it in our



shop and had it craned onto the rooftop,” says Burd. “He had an open rooftop space and it was on one of the exterior sides of the building. It had a kind of infinity edge.”

Another memorable project was the Elements Bench made at the Artistry in Decorative Concrete demos at the 2011 World of Concrete. The bench is an homage to the elements of fire and water and the idea of rest, incorporating a fountain and a fire floating up from a bed of lava rocks. “That’s definitely pushing the limits of GFRG concrete,” says Burd. “It’s 1 inch thick and 22 feet long.”

A chair, formed from a combination of bent metal and concrete, is actually a lot more comfortable than it might look, Burd says. The pair made several mock-ups to

make sure the chair was ergonomically correct. “And there’s storage under it because it’s hollow,” Burd says. “So if you get cold you can always throw a heater under it!”

Each summer in Chattanooga, the pair host “Nightly Build” classes from 6 to 8 p.m. one night a week for a month. Their hope with the Nightly Builds was that people who work full-time day jobs could pick up some tools and do something creative. Participants in the workshops get to make something useful that they can take home with them at the conclusion of the class. Set In Stone has also offered concrete-making activities for special events in Chattanooga. These activities are aimed at children, although Smith and Burd find that adults

are enthusiastic about them as well.

“I think that Nathan and I are an awesome combination for what we do,” says Burd, “because if two people are going down the same road you don’t have room to grow. Nathan and I are similar but we’re also different and I think that’s key to the things that we have done and what we will do. I’ve learned a lot from Nathan and hopefully he’s learned from me too.”

www.concretecaster.com

Artisan Justin Burd is pictured at lower right.

See more photos from this feature online at ConcreteDecor.net

Hundreds of Unique Precast Concrete Panels Transform Museum

Louisiana State Museum and Sports Hall of Fame, Natchitoches, Louisiana

by Joe Maty

As graceful as an acrobatic touchdown catch by Danny Abramowicz. As stunning as a Mel Blount goal-line interception. More sweeping than a Vida Blue curveball.

OK, we're getting carried away with the sports analogies.

But after all, we are talking about the new Louisiana State Museum and Sports Hall of Fame. And its design, particularly the curvaceous, undulating surface of the interior, is extraordinary.

Located in the historic town of Natchitoches, said to be the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, the new space brings together collections formerly housed at a historic courthouse and a university.

The designer, Baton Rouge-based Trahan Architects, put cast-stone maker Advanced Architectural Stone to the test in the molding and casting of the concrete panels that produced the interior contours. From a surface model developed by the design team, Advanced Architectural Stone cast more than a thousand different panels, each one of a unique size and shape.

"The project required 1,064 pieces," says Tim Michael, vice president, operations, of Advanced Architectural Stone, based in Fort Worth, Texas. "Every piece was different, with some as large as 18 by 12 1/2 feet." Some of those larger pieces were produced for the uppermost section of the interior, near the skylight.



Photos by Tim Hursley

Project at a Glance

Client: Louisiana State Museum and Sports Hall of Fame, Natchitoches, Louisiana

Caster: Advanced Architectural Stone, Fort Worth, Texas

www.advancedarchitecturalstone.com

General contractor: VCC

Architect: Trahan Architects, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Brad McWhirter, project architect

Precast panel installation: Masonry Arts Co., Bessemer, Alabama

Building information modeling for precast panel construction: Case Design Inc., New York

Additional precast panel engineering and design: David Kufferman, P.E., Fairfield, Conn.; Method Design, New York

Steel fabrication and erection: Champion Steel, Alexandria, Louisiana, and CMC Steel, Cayce, South Carolina

White cement supplier: Lehigh White Cement, Waco, Texas

Project description: Design, manufacture, engineering, and construction of white-cement, molded cast stone panels for undulating, sinuous building interior; architecture described as an interpretation of the local area's geology, geography and historical building construction

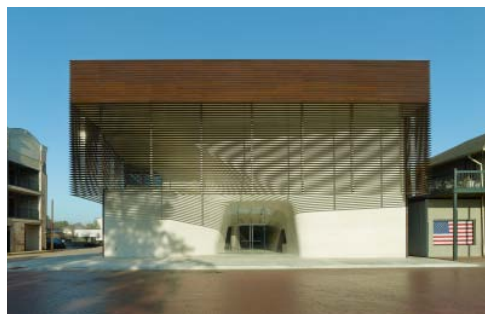
Concrete mix: Advanced Architectural Stone Inc., Fort Worth, Texas

Project cost: \$12.6 million

Total construction duration: 2 years, 8 months

Length of time for cast stone installation: 1 year, 6 months

Challenges: Design and manufacture of more than 1,000 unique customized concrete panels for building interior; Building Information Modeling (BIM) for construction of interior concrete panel system; installation of panels by means of various connection mechanisms; use of advanced digital design and engineering programs for "3-D jigsaw puzzle" of concrete panels weighing up to thousands of pounds each.



The parts were produced in four different phases, turning out 250 to 260 per phase.

"It was a lot of trial and error," Michael says. The key was the creation of the molds for the individual panels. Advanced determined that a mold with a dense foam composition and a resin finish best served its purpose.

The geometry of the molds was specified by Case Design Inc., the New York-based Building Information Modeling (BIM) consultancy. Case, working for construction manager VCC, provided modeling services for precast panel construction, as well as electrical, HVAC and sprinkler systems.

Case created a model for each panel, and provided a shop ticket to Advanced for casting. Connection points were machined in to facilitate bolting to the metal frame of the interior design. Advanced made the molds using a five-axis CNC (computer numerical control) system that employed a laser to read the model. Each completed mold was digitally scanned and analyzed for compliance with the model.

Michael says the job was the first and only of its type for the company. The modeling process required more than a year to complete. Each mold required approximately two days to produce, with some parts taking more than a week.

For the mix, Advanced used a specially engineered combination of white cement, sand, admixtures and additives.

Advanced used the dry-tamp method to cast the concrete panels, employing low



Photo by Tim Hursley



Photo courtesy of Case Building and Technology

levels of water in the mix. Michael described the mix as "almost a wet sand," and says the process offered a more economic and technically feasible method than conventional wet pour.

The finished panels were installed by Masonry Arts Co., of Bessemer, Alabama.

"The complexity was extensive," says Trahan Architects president and principal in charge Victor F. "Trey" Trahan, discussing the processes used to make and install the panels. "Tolerances were very strict and limited, and installation and attachment to the structure was critical."

Advanced Architectural Stone and the installation contractor Masonry Arts did a fantastic job, Trahan says. "For something that had never been done before, they achieved a remarkable quality level. All members of the design team applaud those efforts."



Photo by Tim Hursley

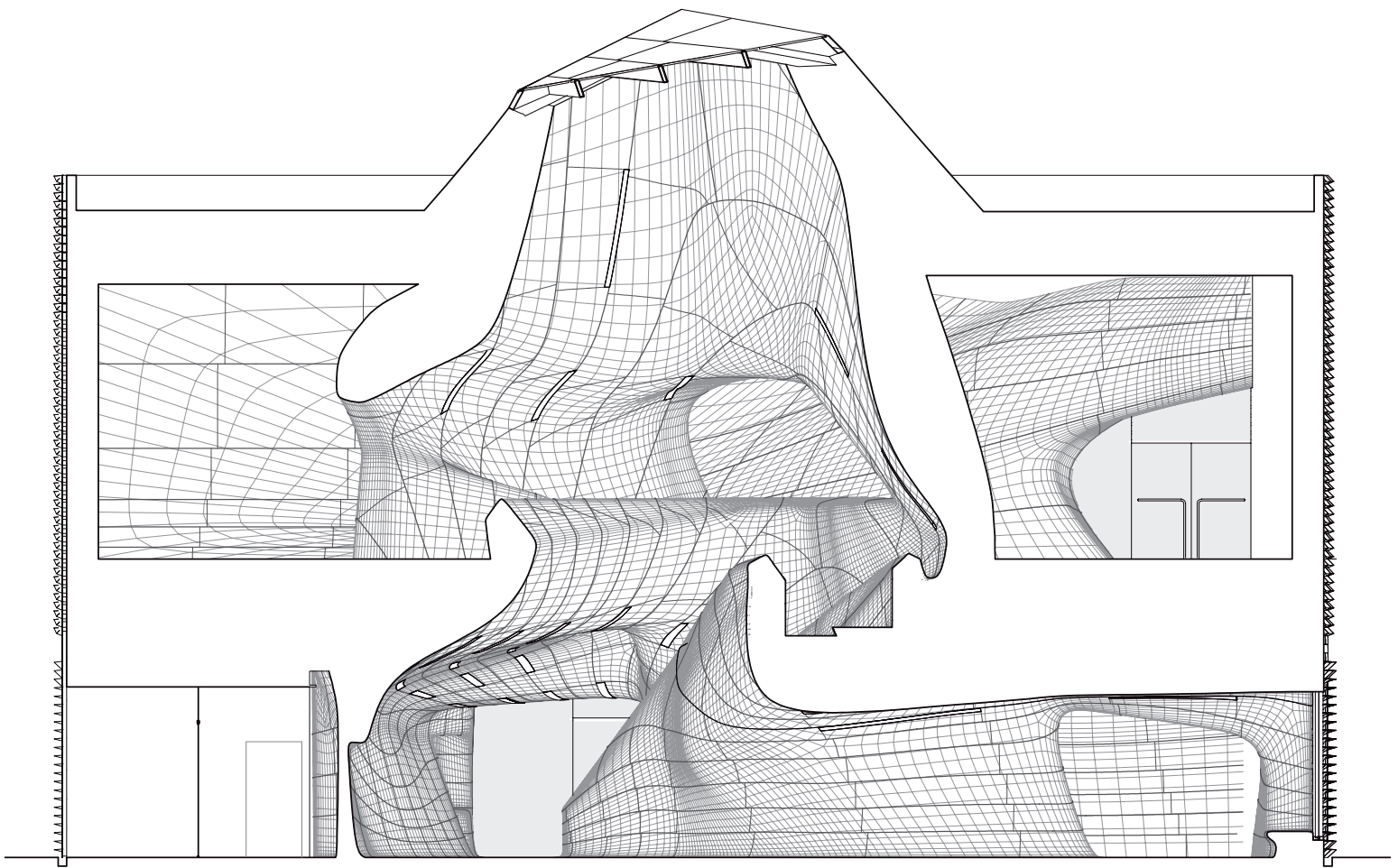


Image courtesy of Trahan Architects

Core of the design

The work of Advanced Architectural Stone won high praise from Trahan Architects as a key element in the designers' concepts for the project.

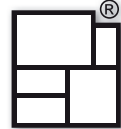
Trahan says the architects sought more than the presence of interior walls to house a space — they wanted complex relief, a feeling of weight and mass, with the onlooker situated spatially in the core, in contrast to the effect of a meandering, shallow veneer.

The design represented an intent to contextualize the building in its landscape and environment, formed by an ancient river, Trahan says. Natchitoches is located alongside Cane River Lake, a body of water left by the Red River when the river changed course in the 19th century.

In addition to regional geology and geography, the design and material are intended as a reference to the area's early architecture and construction, which employed a mixture of clay, Spanish moss and horsehair for walls and facades — a mixture called bousillage. "They would whitewash this monolith masonry, kind

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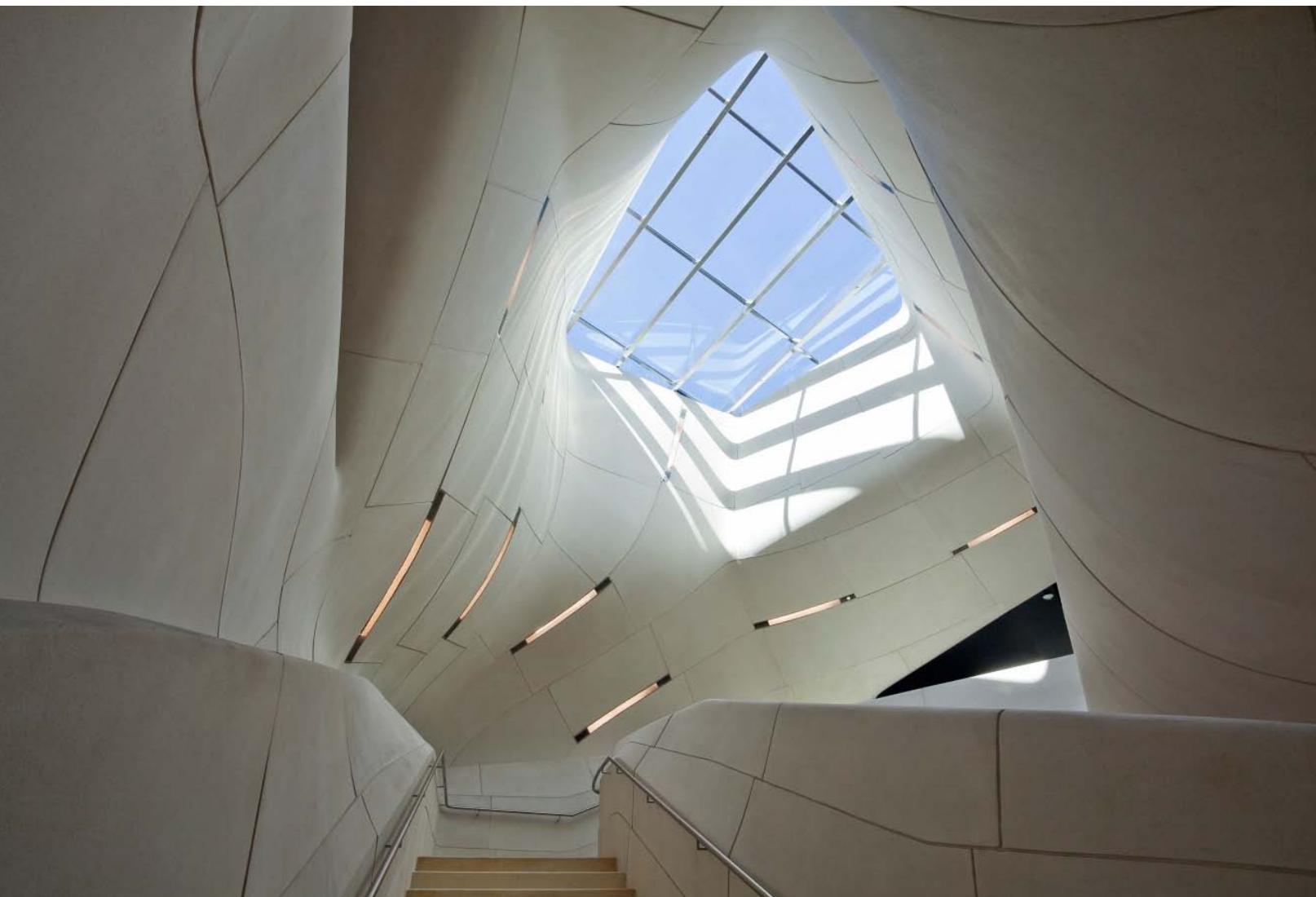
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Photos by Mark J. Sindler, courtesy of Louisiana State Museum

of like adobe. It's something we wanted to connect with in a very contemporary way," says Trahan.

The building's relatively simple exterior of copper panels serves as a contemporary interpretation of the nearby area's clapboard-and-shutter plantations, while the flowing interior "emerges at the entrance, enticing visitors to leave the walking tour and into the evocative exhibit spaces within," Trahan Architects says in a description the firm released to the press.

Trahan says his team initially considered several material types, including plaster, metal, wood and fiberglass. "It was decided they didn't have the material quality, the weight and mass."

Trahan Architects calls the concrete-panel interior a "3-D jigsaw puzzle" of more than 1,000 pieces, each made individually from the digitally created pattern. "The puzzle can only be properly assembled if all

the pieces are nearly perfectly made," the press kit notes.

With the finished surfaces of the concrete panels, Trahan could achieve consistency, but with subtle differences in hues and tones. "In one way it's a monolithic surface, but with the feeling and seeing of individual pieces. It's the subtle variation we were looking for," Trey Trahan says.

Complex array of connections

From a practical construction standpoint, the design team faced the challenge of making this weight and mass work. Some panels weighed as much as thousands of pounds.

A complex array of connections was employed to anchor the panels to the steel framework. Movement connections were required on most panels to account for shell action (sometimes called "arch action") and the compressive strength of the cast stone. More than 20 different types of connections

were used, depending on whether the panels were stacked, bolted up, hung, or attached by some hybrid mechanism. Some connections were accessible to welding and others "blind." Some "completely unique" connections were developed on a case-by-case basis, Trahan Architects says.

Collaborating with Trahan Architects to map out this 3-D puzzle and its pieces were David Kufferman, a Fairfield, Connecticut, structural engineer, and Method Design, New York, using digital programs to determine final anchor points that Advanced Architectural Stone would need to machine into the panels. More than 2,150 such connection points were needed for the entire project.

Highly sophisticated software programs were utilized to map out the construction of the structure's Shaped Surface Support Steel (SSSS) frame on which the cast stone panels were attached. Also impressive was



the use of predeflecting ballast to install the cast-stone panels in the atrium and monumental stairway areas. This system used concentrated loads of 24 tons, hung from temporary frames, to account for deflection (displacement under a load) of the frame during construction.

The collaboration of all this technology and technical expertise produced, in the end, a resolution of Trahan Architects' mission: to interpret athletics as a component of cultural history rather than as independent themes. "While sports and regional history may appeal to different audiences, the exhibits and configuration explore the interconnectedness between the two," the architects propose in their written review. In this building, "the spaces flow visually and figuratively together." 📱

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The renewed pool deck features a knockdown texture and contrasting coping.

Photos courtesy of Artistic Concrete Surfaces

Staples and Paint Pigments Win the Day

Cambridge Square Apartments, Overland Park, Kansas

by Gail Elber

OVERLAND Park, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, often makes it onto lists of the nation's most livable cities. But for a slab of concrete, Overland Park is a bad place to be.

"Concrete gets pretty abused with our climate here," says Mike Denny, president of Artistic Concrete Surfaces, in nearby Olathe, Kansas. "With our freeze-thaw conditions, it's pretty extreme. Concrete is better off in a northern climate where they get one freeze and it stays frozen all winter. Here we sometimes get two freeze-thaw cycles a day. That's really what's hard on concrete."

The elements had cracked and spalled the 20-year-old concrete pool deck at Cambridge Square Apartments in Overland Park. In the spring of 2013, the complex owners approached ACS about fixing it. They asked ACS to give them a price on repairing the damaged areas, with a plan to tear out the whole slab later and replace it with broom-finished concrete.

Instead, Denny drafted a plan to fix the cracks, patch damage, tear out and replace a few highly deteriorated sections, and then recoat the whole thing with a polymer-modified cement-based topping.

Project at a Glance

Client: Cambridge Square Apartments, Fogelman Management Group

Decorative concrete contractor: Artistic Concrete Surfaces, Olathe, Kansas

www.kansascityconcrete.com

Products used: Concrete staples from Concrete Product Resource, CSI Microtopping HD from ChemSystems Inc., pigments from Sherwin-Williams, MagicTrowel from TexMaster Tools

Project description: A cracked and spalled pool deck was restored with concrete stapling and a microtopping.

Challenges: Hot weather accelerated curing of the microtopping, so the project was completed in sections.

To fix the cracks, ACS used Concrete Staples from Concrete Product Resource, a technology new to ACS at the time. Workers chased the cracks with a saw and cleaned them thoroughly. Then, every 18 inches, they sawed a foot-long cut across each crack, drilled holes at either end of the cut, filled the cut with epoxy, and dropped in a staple. More epoxy went into the crack on top of the staple.

Denny is pleased with the stapling technique. "None of the cracks we did it on have come back," he says. "It's pretty amazing."

Installers used a scarifier to knock off loose material in areas that were spalled, then power-washed to create a porous surface to which the new finish would adhere.

The new finish was CSI Microtopping HD, from ChemSystems Inc. The vinyl-polymer-modified cement-based topping was applied in two coats. First, a base coat was applied with MagicTrowels. "It was really hot and a big, open, windy area," Denny says. "We had to work in the early mornings and evenings to get it to dry properly." For this reason, the base coat was applied in four 2,500-square-foot sections.

"Then we came back and put a second coat on with a spray gun and then used a MagicTrowel again to knock down that texture," Denny says. For the second coat, all 10,000 square feet were done at once with a bigger crew.

For a pool deck, a knockdown texture provides traction and also cools the surface. "When wind passes across it, it has more surface area to cool off the concrete," Denny says. The bumps also provide little pockets of shade that help cool the surface. (For more about how texture keeps concrete cool, see "Cool Concrete," *Concrete Decor*, July 2011.)

The microtopping was applied in its natural white color on the deck. On the



Concrete Product Resource staples are about a foot long and 5/8 inch in diameter.



Cracks were chased and filled with epoxy before the microtopping was applied.

coping, it was colored gray at a paint store with Sherwin-Williams pigments.

"It's the same pigment they add to their paints," Denny says. "With the overlay material being a white base, I simply asked them to add pigment to my microtopping liquid catalyst as they would to a 5-gallon bucket of water-based acrylic paint. It takes a

lot of explaining and phone calls to Sherwin-Williams headquarters for everyone to make sure this is a doable request, but once you have everyone on board, it allows the customer to pick from a large variety of color. You just have to be careful to set the expectations of slight color variance." 📞

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Architectural Bridge Honors Native Americans

Gold Line Light-Rail Bridge, Arcadia, California

by Joe Maty

CAN a major axis of modern transportation infrastructure in Los Angeles somehow forge a tie to the region's pre-modern heritage?

The Metro Gold Line Extension Construction Authority, which is building a major addition to a new light-rail line stretching from Pasadena to Montclair, California, thinks so. The construction authority made creativity in transportation architecture — and concrete construction — a priority in the design of a light-rail bridge spanning Interstate 210 at Arcadia.

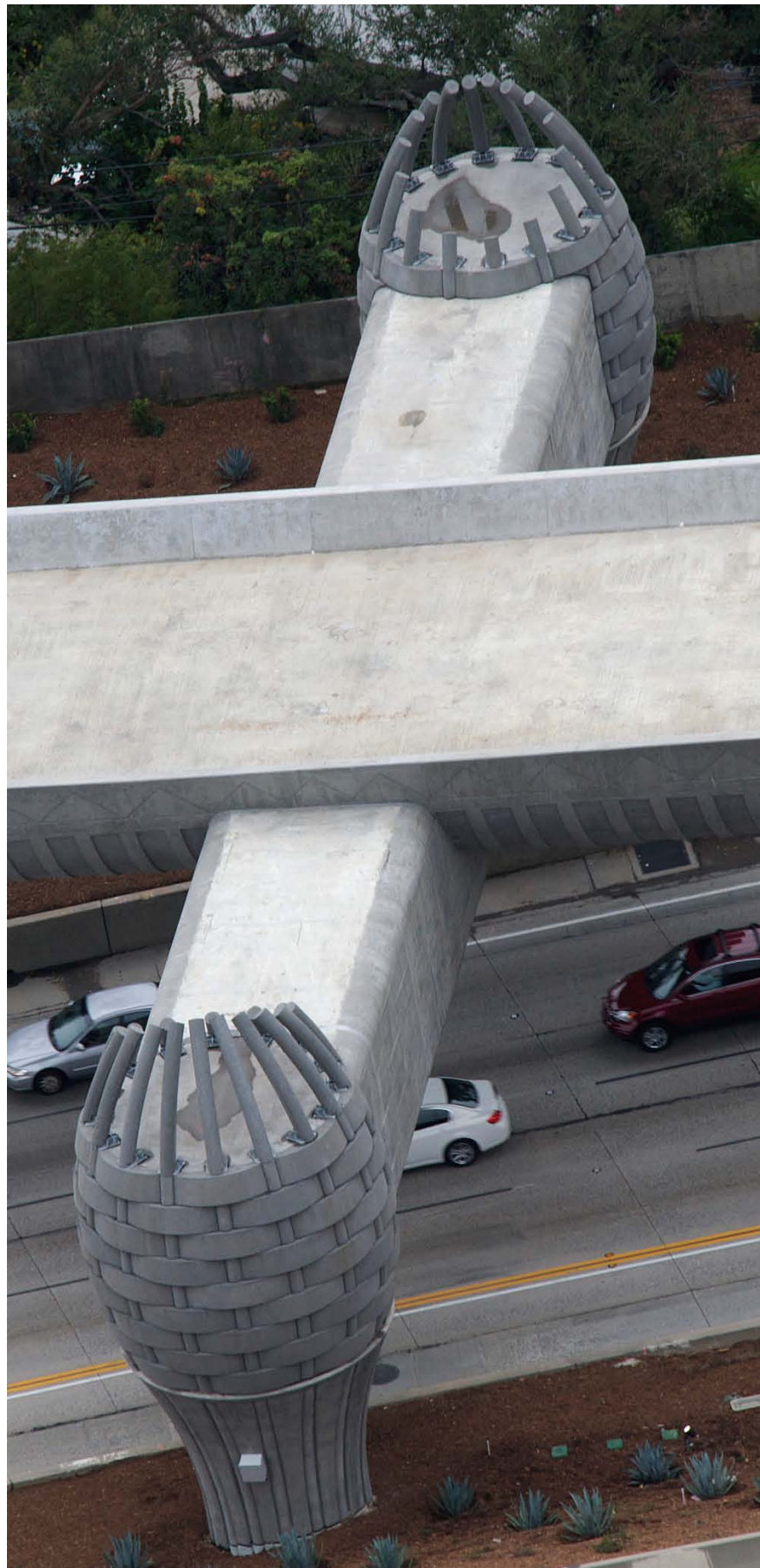
The Gold Line Bridge, the first-ever artist-designed transit bridge in California, is described as a 584-foot-long concrete sculpture, a project that has “reimagined the construction process for transit infrastructure projects in the state,” the Construction Authority says in a news release.

The concept for bridge as art was inspired by the region's indigenous peoples and wildlife, accented with the relatively contemporary historical flavor of the nearby U.S. Route 66 “with its oversized architectural landmarks,” according to the Construction Authority's written account of the project, titled “Gold Line Bridge: The Art of Design.”

Andrew Leicester, the artist commissioned as design concept advisor for the project, says the shapes of woven baskets adorning the bridge “metaphorically represent the Native Americans of the region and the growth of agriculture as a primary catalyst to the



Photos courtesy of Dana Kemp, Masonry Concepts Inc.



San Gabriel Valley.” Leicester has created a number of notable public art pieces over the past 30 years, including projects at transit plazas, park entrances, water gardens and other venues.

The bridge structure’s serpentine main underbelly features cast grooves and hatch marks simulating the patterns seen on the western diamondback rattlesnake, which the Construction Authority says is a reference to the connectivity of the transit system.

Building the baskets

Moonlight Molds, of Gardena, California, produced the precast concrete elements that formed two focal pieces in the bridge sculpture: the 25-foot-tall “woven” baskets. These two elements are visually tied together by a relief pattern on the span’s outrigger beam. The complex weaving patterns on the beam and the ribbed pattern on the superstructure were created using wood and rubber concrete forms crafted by Fitzgerald Formliners of Santa Ana.

Masonry Concepts, a diversified

Project at a Glance

Client: Metro Gold Line Extension Construction Authority

Concrete construction contractor: Skanska USA Civil

Masonry construction subcontractor: Masonry Concepts Inc., Santa Fe Springs, California

www.masonry-concepts.com

Cast-concrete parts maker: Moonlight Molds, Gardena, California

www.moonlightmolds.com

Concrete forms supplier: Fitzgerald Formliners, Santa Ana, California

Architect/design consultant: AECOM, Los Angeles

Project description: Construction of 584-foot-long light-rail bridge featuring sculptural design spanning Interstate 210. The project involved casting and construction of precast and cast-on-site concrete elements for 25-foot-tall basket designs and an underbelly of bridge span made to simulate the patterns of the western diamondback rattlesnake.

Concrete mix: National Ready Mixed Concrete Co., Irwindale, California; Moonlight Molds

General contractor: Skanska USA Civil (design-builder)

Project cost: \$18.6 million

How long from start to completion: About 16 months

Challenges: Installation of precast concrete elements to rebar-mesh framework of sculptural baskets; formulation of concrete mix and making of precast concrete elements with specified appearance qualities; design and casting of “reed” elements for baskets

Photo courtesy of Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority

masonry construction subcontractor with an extensive portfolio of major projects in Southern California, took on the pivotal role of assembling the parts to create the baskets.

Skanska USA Civil, the primary construction contractor, built the concrete-and-steel-rebar columns on which the basket elements were assembled. Masonry Concepts’ task was to lift the 60-some

precast concrete parts into place, connect them to the rebar mat that served as a framework for attaching the basket and reinforcing for the grout installed behind the basket sections. The mat consisted of 8-by-8-inch squares of vertical and horizontal rebar.

“This wasn’t a huge job for us, but certainly one of the more unique,” says



Dana Kemp, president of Masonry Concepts and project manager for the company's work on the bridge. "It's a unique kind of job for masonry contractors of this type. The men like to be involved in something like that. Laying 8-8-16 structural block all day long can get old," he quips.

"Also, I like to pursue projects like that. The men like it, and it's an opportunity to see greater (profit) margin. There's more risk, but more reward potential."

A key to Masonry Concepts' successful bid for the masonry subcontract work, Kemp says, was the company's innovative



Photos courtesy of Dana Kemp, Masonry Concepts Inc.

approach in devising a system to effectively attach the concrete basket elements to the rebar-mesh framework. This system involved two all-thread rods threaded into inserts cast into the back of the precast parts and bolting two C channels to the ends of the all-thread, with the rebar mat sandwiched between the precast basket segments and the C channel.

"We came up with a better mousetrap," Kemp says of the system used to attach the basket parts to the steel framework. "Our system allowed us to access the back of the part and the rebar directly from the scaffold. The lengths of all thread were all within a typical length that we were able to precut. There was virtually no drilling — simply setting and aligning the part, then bolting on the C-channel and snugging it up against the rebar mat that needed to be there anyway for reinforcing the grout pour."

Each horizontal ring of the woven baskets is composed of eight concrete sections, each measuring 7 feet long, 1 foot 9 inches high and 12 inches thick from front to back. Kemp estimated that each part weighed more than 1,000 pounds. About 10 rings were stacked atop one another to make the baskets.

Debating the concrete mix design

While the system to attach the basket parts got a good deal of attention from the standpoint of structural challenges, the concrete mix used for the bridge's artwork elements generated considerable discussion and was the subject of extensive review by the design team.

"It required several different types and colors of aggregate," says Lawrence Demore, Skanska's project manager for the bridge construction. Demore says the mix went through several samples before winning approval from the design team.

Jeff Keenan, president and owner of Moonlight Molds, says the company incorporated locally sourced black-stone aggregate to produce a mix that provided both the appearance and the connection to the region's geology sought by the designers. Ground glass — clear, gray and mirrored — was added to produce the sparkle the designers wanted, he says.

To optimize aggregate exposure on the precast elements that make up the basket sculptures, Moonlight Molds used a special release agent, and water was employed for a final blast treatment instead of abrasive media.



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Erecting the reeds

Also generating buzz at the project discussion sessions was the challenge of casting the parts that serve as the “reeds” extending from the tops of the two basket elements. Concerns were raised about producing these slender columns in a way that met visual objectives while remaining intact in demanding service conditions. Kemp says steel tubing painted to match the baskets’ finish was suggested, but dismissed by the designers. They wanted an authentic replication of the composition used in the basket sculpture.

Here, Keenan says Moonlight Molds used a steel tube and flex anchor framework to provide structural integrity. The concrete exterior of these elements is composed of GFRC and an aggregate mix identical to the concrete used for the basket elements.

Melding art and transit

The bridge is a key part of the Foothill Extension, a nearly \$2 billion, 24-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line light-rail system. The section from Pasadena to Azusa is scheduled for completion in September 2015. The Azusa-to-Montclair section is still in planning.

The Gold Line Bridge was completed in late 2012 and has won five industry awards for construction and engineering excellence. Construction Authority CEO Habib F. Balian says the bridge’s cost of \$18.6 million is roughly the same as that of a conventional bridge.

In press materials, Balian says the design and construction project team succeeded in creating what he envisioned — a bridge that is “sculptural, not just an embellished structure.”

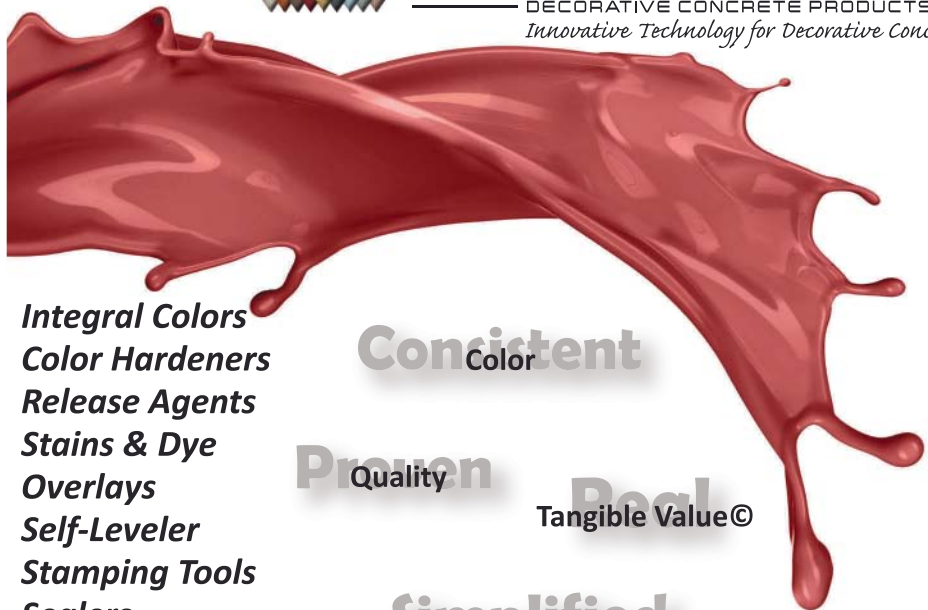
“I wanted us to create something

fantastic, something never done before. I wanted the artist to address the landscape — the mountains — as well as the community and its history and culture. Ultimately, I wanted to meld art and the transit experience, and we did that.” 📱



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Customizing a Hangar Floor for the Military's New Fighter Jets

Luke Air Force Base, Glendale, Arizona

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

WHO would have thought polished concrete would come to the aid of the U.S. Air Force's newest fighter jet?

The ongoing relationship between the U.S. Air Force and Yezco Concrete Polishing began back in 2009 with a 200-square-foot, high-performance concrete test panel in the propulsion room of an aircraft hangar for F-16 fighter jets at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona. Unlike older epoxy coverings, the polished concrete prepared by the Phoenix contractor exceeded expectations.

"We recommended it as a solution to their flooring issues," which included adhesion and lamination problems, says Rob Yezzi, the company's vice president, who works together with his cousin, Joe Yezzi, company president, to run the business. Rob proposed installing a polished concrete test panel in a heavily worked area that got the most use and abuse. "Six months later, we closed the deal and began work on the remaining hangar floors."

That first job entailed 25,000 square feet of floor that needed to be stripped of three layers of epoxy and several layers of paint in designated areas, then finished with dyed and polished concrete. The flooring also had to be detailed to reflect the hangar's

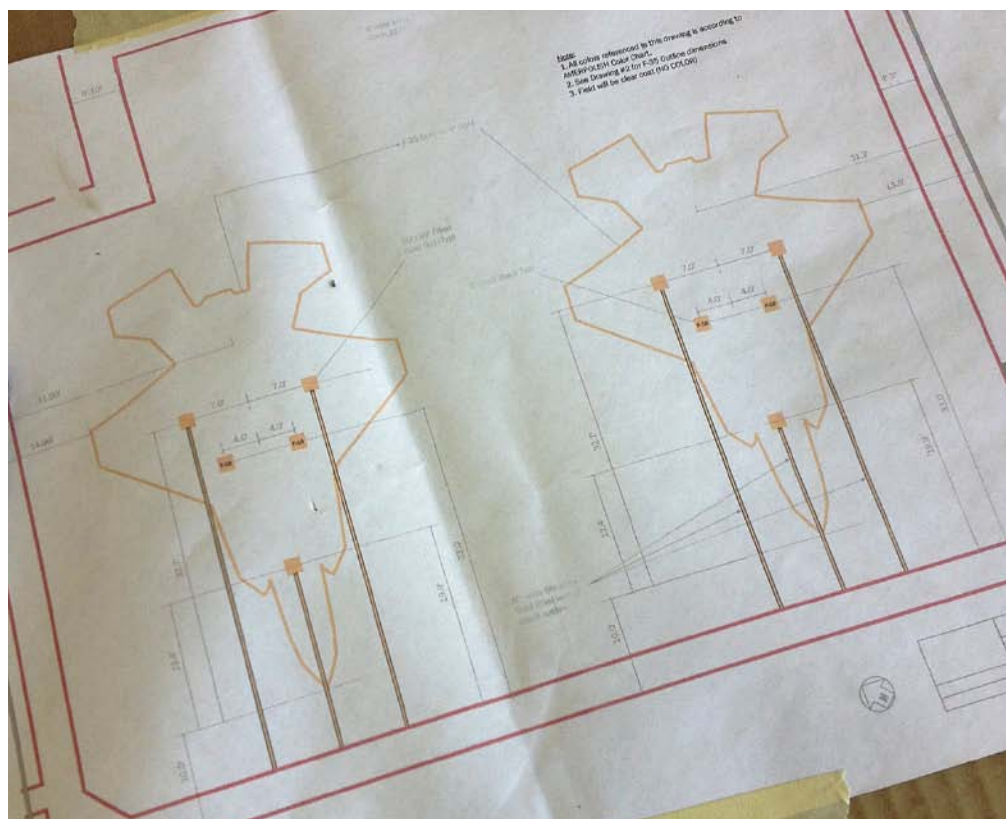


Photo courtesy of Yezco Concrete Polishing

newest occupants: F-35s. The soon-to-be phased-out F-16s were being replaced with the up-and-coming premier jet for not only the Air Force but the U.S. Marines and Navy as well.

Designing spaces

As part of the flooring job, Rob Yezzi and his seven-member crew had to create designated parking areas for each of the new aircraft. This went beyond your simple, striped parking lanes.

To ensure all the planes would fit properly, they had to create a silhouette of each F-35 to be parked in the hangar. The F-35's dimensions differed from the F-16s that were there before. "They gave me a blueprint that had the outlines (of the F-35) in inches, which we had to convert into feet," he says. "The nose (of the jet) had to be

so many inches from a reference point and the front wheel and wings had to line up just so. We had a one-inch tolerance all the way around."

This critical part of the job, he says, was all done painstakingly by hand. "Working off the blueprint, we used a lot of masking tape and created life-size images on the floor," he says. With the tape as their guide, the crew then dyed the jet silhouettes with AmeriPolish SureLock Gold, outlined in Midnight Black.

In addition to the designated parking areas, the hangar had other areas that were color-coded according to the Air Force safety program. For instance, walkways were marked in yellow, eyewash stations were green, and black-and-yellow stripes marked hazardous areas where there were overhead doors and electrical panels. The

Project at a glance

Client: U.S. Air Force

Contractor: Yezco Concrete Polishing, Phoenix, Arizona

yezco.com

Scope of project: The contractor's ongoing relationship with Luke Air Force Base started with dyeing and polishing concrete in a fighter-jet hangar

Products, tools and method used: AmeriPolish SureLock penetrating dyes, AmeriPolish 3D HS hybrid silicate densifier, AmeriPolish SR2 stain-resistant sealer, HTC diamond tooling and grinders used in compliance with HTC's Superfloor method

Challenges: Cutting through existing epoxy and deciphering blueprint dimensions to create life-size silhouettes of F-35s on the floor



Photo by Joe Yezzi

areas where firefighting equipment was stored were noted with red, as were paths that had to be kept clear at all times.

In the past, these areas had been painted, but the Yezco crew opted to go with a more sustainable solution and used penetrating dyes. "Now they won't have to repaint every few years, because the dye is permanent," Yezzi says.

Tackling the challenges

The hangar job also involved removing concrete to make way for a new duct system and various pieces of diagnostic equipment, then

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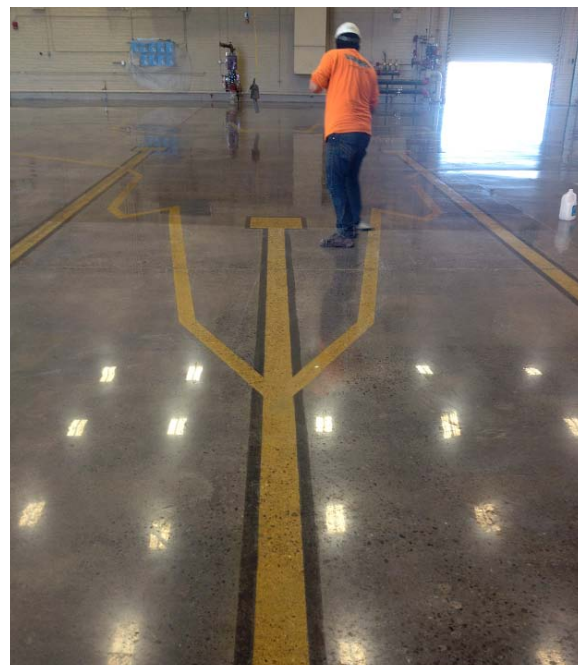
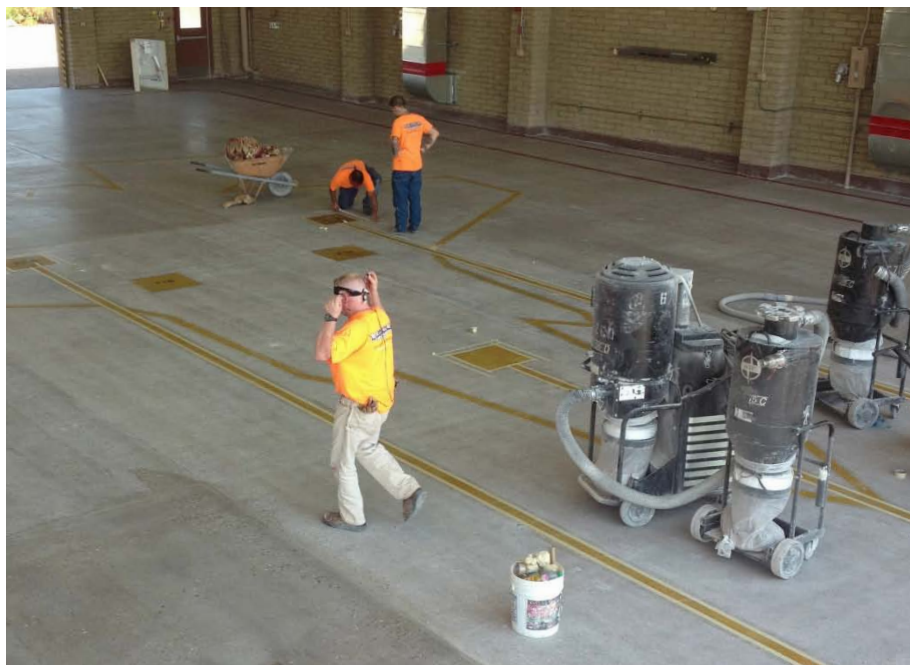
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PROJECT PROFILE



Photos courtesy of Yezco Concrete Polishing

pouring new concrete. In addition, Yezco had to grind away years of hydraulic fluid stains. As you can imagine, all these new and old areas didn't match.

To make the floor look good for its new residents, Yezzi says they ground the entire

floor, bringing it up to 100 and then 400 grit. "Then we sprayed down a SureLock custom gray dye, to bring everything to the same color, and applied a densifier," he says. In highly stain-prone areas, they also used AmeriPolish SR2, a penetrating

stain repellant designed to protect polished concrete.

To be qualified to continue polishing concrete for Luke AFB — which includes hangars, warehouses and other buildings — each crewmember has to go through an initial extensive background check and then get their clearance renewed every six months. Each time they take their vehicles on base, Yezzi says, the vehicles must go through a search pit that involves dogs, mirrors and physical inspections to make sure everything is on the up and up.

"We try to plan our days to be the first in line," he says. "You can get through (the procedure) in 15 minutes or you can sit and wait 45 minutes for your turn."

Besides the everyday hassles of passing the military muster and getting through the gate in one piece each morning, there are the drills to contend with. "We'll be in our groove and making progress when out of nowhere there's a simulated terrorist attack or bomb threat that will shut us down," Yezzi says. These lockdowns are sporadic, he adds, and sometimes they'll happen more than once in a day. "We just have to deal with them and lose a day or two of production."

Still, Yezzi says, he finds the work very gratifying. "I'm most proud that we are able to provide the Air Force with a sustainable solution for their flooring needs. As a team, we have successfully transformed a dingy epoxy floor into a nice piece of polished art that performs well for them."

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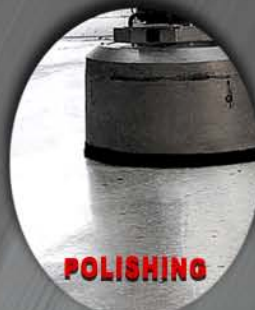
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How Do I Correct Acid Stain Colors?

by Chris Sullivan

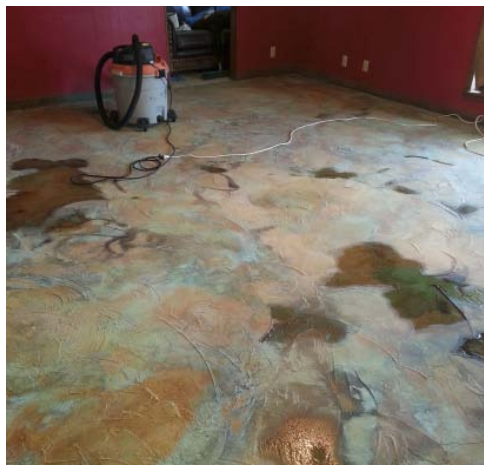
Question: I put a textured concrete overlay on my concrete floors. I did all the cleaning processes, and I applied acid stain in buff, cola and amber colors. My problem is that I wanted more of a yellow tone, and instead, it is more orange with some yellow! I have tried sanding some of the orange off and it has lightened it, but not enough. I am a DIY person and have never tried this in my life. What can I do now to fix this? What are my options?

WHILE I advocate hiring professional decorative concrete installers for projects, I also realize that there is a large segment of the decorative stain market that is made up of weekend warriors and DIYers. Even after more than 20 years of industry education on staining, I get as many questions like this from do-it-yourselfers as I do from people who hired a professional installer.

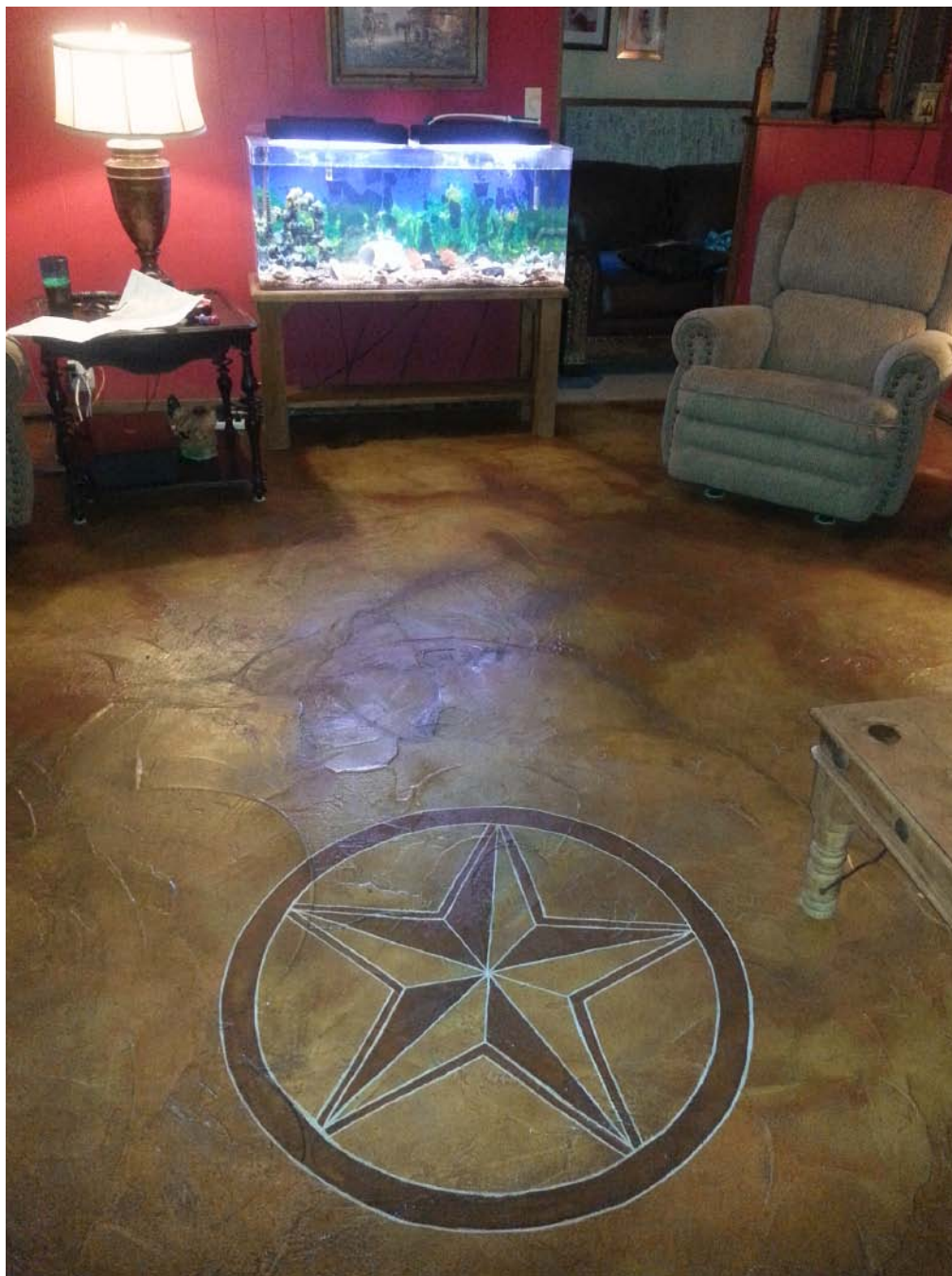
Stain remains a popular finish, and while the number of problems or complaints has decreased over the last few decades, the problems remain the same, and they don't discriminate between professionals and DIY homeowners.

Because of this, I begin my response to most of these types of questions by saying, "Welcome to the world of acid staining!" Variations in color are to be expected.

A sample area would have saved a lot



After color was removed with dilute acid, this floor was neutralized and cleaned. A wet-dry vacuum is great for picking up residue and wastewater.



A DIYer used a mild acid solution to remove some orange from this acid-stained floor, then added darker colors.

of time and heartache. This is a classic example of why the industry preaches samples. Making a mock-up or small sample of the different colors on the floor would have shown that certain stain colors were creating an orange color and not the yellow or light brown the homeowner

wanted. Unfortunately, that is water under the bridge. The good news is that a sealer had not yet been applied, which saved the major headache of having to strip the floor before doing any color correction.

At this stage in the project there are a few options.

Photos courtesy of Candace Reese

- You can use a mild acid to remove some of the color. A solution of 40 parts water to 1 part muriatic acid, a scrub brush and cotton rags will help remove the stain.

Keep in mind that acid stains are not soluble in water. This means that water alone will not do much in regard to removing the orange-colored stain. A small amount of acid added to the water will pull the stain out of the concrete without etching the concrete surface.

In essence, the acidic solution reverses the reaction, allowing you to pull the color back out of the concrete. You can let the surface dry and then work back into the floor with the stains to get the desired color. This method is by far the most successful when wanting to pull stain back out of concrete.

- You can work other acid stains (or most any kind of stain) into the floor to try to get the desired color. You may get what you want or you may not. This works best when you want to go from light to dark colors. I would not try it if you are going from dark to light, as in this case.
- You can apply a dark stain in just certain areas to try to produce highlights to offset the orange. This is more of an artistic approach, and having a comfort level with how stains react and produce colors on concrete is recommended.
- A tinted sealer can be applied over the stain to try and hide the orange. This is the cheapest option and produces a Band-Aid fix. When you use this method, the repair color is tied up in the sealer, so if the sealer wears so does the color.

Whatever method you decide to use, test in a small area until you get the desired results! In this case the homeowner/installer used the mild acid method with great results, as you can read in the response that I received:

"Thank you so much, Chris! I took your advice and removed some of the orange. I also added in some darker colors. I could not be more excited! I am very pleased. It is beautiful, or at least I think so ;) ..LOL.. Thank you again for your help!"

Another satisfied customer, or at least I like to think so. 📱

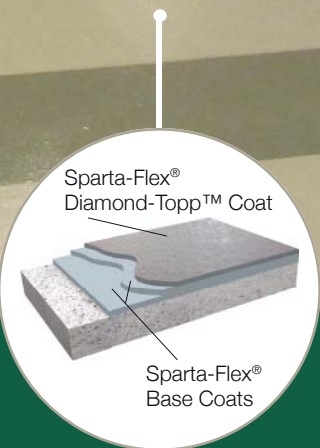
Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net.



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These Days, the Most Important Part of Contracting is Communication

by Doug Carlton

An amazing thing happened in 2011. Twitter users in Washington, D.C., tweeted news of an earthquake as it was happening, warning folks in New York City 30 seconds before they even felt it.

It is a truly incredible age we live in thanks to technology. Never has information and communication traveled so fast, so feverishly, as it does in today's world. This age of instant communication works in favor of decorative concrete professionals who comprehend the impact it has on their professional success. No longer will customers accept not knowing. No longer will decision-makers accept a nonverbal way of doing business.

The loss of revenue derived from poor communication is inestimable. It is imperative for you, as someone making

a living in the decorative concrete community, to realize how communication has changed our way of doing business and then, more importantly, fully understand how to use it as a tool.

Let's discuss how keeping in touch, or not, impacts every decorative project from start to finish. If you are reading this and wondering why your business is not making what you feel it should, then please pay very close attention.

Ten percent of each workday should be spent keeping in touch with your customers in some way. The proverbial daily fires that contractors dread fighting often stem from inadequate communication. Have you ever shown up on a job and it wasn't ready for you and your crew? Have you ever arrived to start a project you believed was

yours only to find someone else working on it? In an age of email, texting, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, instant messaging and smartphones, something like this should never, and I mean never, happen.

Has a product ever held up a project, costing you time, anxiety and profit? This, too, will no longer frequently happen when modern technology is implemented.

Your customers

After nearly three decades in the decorative concrete profession, I can assure readers of one certainty: customers worry when they don't hear from contractors. Their minds drift into the doubting abyss as they question their decision to use your services. They wonder if you still have them on the schedule or placed their material order. They wonder how much their latest change request will cost or if you realize their HOA won't allow work commencement before 7 a.m. And they worry over a dozen other things, unnecessarily, and it's all because of poor communication that is most often no one's fault but ours as contractors. If you desire to be the best, not to mention most profitable, decorative concrete company in your city, stay in touch with your clients.

Customers love knowing what's happening. That peace of mind makes a customer want to use your services again and, better yet, tell everyone they know about your professionalism. Daily updates build trust. Trust is the foundation of building a decorative empire. Trust is what makes your customer pay in a timely fashion, and trust is why you're given the stage to showcase your artistic talent. Trust is why a customer will give you free rein to express what you know will make their project look stellar and worthy of a *Concrete Decor* cover.

My company will request all communication be transcribed instead of verbal. Verbal communication is easily forgotten or misinterpreted. Written communication is timeless and holds all

The advertisement features a photograph of a bar with a vibrant red, polished concrete countertop. On the wall behind the bar is a circular logo for 'THE CONCRETE COUNTERTOP INSTITUTE' (CCI). The logo contains a shield with the letters 'CCI' and the words 'KNOWLEDGE', 'CONFIDENCE', and 'SUCCESS' below it. Overlaid on the top left of the image is the text 'YOU CAN DO IT. CCI CAN HELP.' in bold, red and blue fonts. At the bottom right of the image, the text 'CCI Graduate - Dave Banko of Counterpart' is written in a smaller font.

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parties accountable. If a customer calls my cell phone to confirm a color choice, I let her know our company policy will not allow order placement without an email confirmation. An email confirmation is insurance, and it's also useful if the customer decides to add more matching decorative concrete in the future.

Written communication clears the air regarding project cost overruns and monetary extras that so often plague the construction industry. Show your client the extra cost before commencement and ask him or her to confirm acceptance. Disagreements at the end of the project over additional costs are the number one reason for customer dissatisfaction. All because of poor communication.

Your employees

You must stay in touch internally as well. Each employee should be able to visually see schedule updates, inventory updates, delivery updates, weather updates, project changes and more. This information should move quickly and not be distracting. In other words, a schedule change made over a weekend could be nothing more than a shared email that employees check sometime before Monday morning.

All communication should be confirmed by the employee. A simple "got it" is all it takes.

Your material suppliers must also fall into lock step with this new policy of perpetual communication. This means material orders and updated correspondence is written, never verbal. If your supply person won't follow this protocol, find one who will, immediately. The times they are a-changing, my friend, and we must embrace this wonderful opportunity we have to instantly and consistently communicate.

Nothing will impact the future of your business like technology. Sure, products and materials are constantly improving but even this advancement pales compared to the ability to quickly, accurately and consistently share information with your decorative concrete team and clients. 📱

Doug Carlton is working on his third decade in the decorative concrete industry. He's the owner of Carlton Construction, located at the base of the Big Horn Mountains in northeastern Wyoming. Doug can be reached at carltondoug@sbcglobal.net.

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A GUIDE TO BUILDING FIRE FEATURES

This Calabasas, California, swimming pool with a Baja shelf is surrounded by four fire bowls with lava rock set into planter pilasters.

Photo by Paul Jonason

by Jeffrey Girard

THROUGHOUT the United States and Canada, even in cold climates, homeowners are clamoring for outdoor kitchens and living spaces to enhance the beauty, comfort and resale value of their homes.

Imagine if you could offer a stunning fire feature that defines your clients' outdoor living experience. The attraction of fire is undeniable. Take advantage of this attraction to create distinctive fire pits that will pay off in big ways for both you and your clients. Your work will take center stage in your client's outdoor living space.

In this article, I will give an overview of the background knowledge you need to understand fire features. I'll cover fuel types, the hardware, the fire media, design considerations and safety. Once you understand these issues, you can let your creativity take over.

Fire glass shaped like jelly beans.

Photo courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute





This fire pit in Encino, California, adjacent to cast-concrete seating, was constructed with full-range Pennsylvania bluestone and filled with blue glass.



A propane-fueled fire feature.

Safety first

There are many design considerations when creating fire features. First and foremost is safety. In each of the sections below, I touch on safety. Fire is dangerous, which, in effect makes your product dangerous. Before embarking on any fire feature project, I strongly recommend reading the safety information in the book “Outdoor Fireplaces & Fire Pits,” by Scott Cohen, owner of The Green Scene Landscaping and Pools, and check your local regulations.

Fuel types

Fire features can be fueled by wood, propane gas, natural gas or alcohol. Each of these fuel types has its pros and cons.

Wood, while burning, must not come directly into contact with the concrete. The extreme thermal stress will cause expansion, cracking, spalling and chemical degradation.

Important Safety Tips for Fire Pit Construction

by Scott Cohen

As a contractor with extensive experience with all types of fire features, and as an expert witness in situations where something's gone terribly wrong, I'd like to share some of the basic guidelines I use to maximize both safety and enjoyment of fire pits.

As is the case with so many exterior design issues, hitting the right marks is mostly a matter of common sense.

Let's take a brief look at some basic measures that help minimize operational risks. It bears mentioning that with fire, as is true with water, there is always an element of risk and it's impossible to design with every remote possibility in mind. The fact is, sometimes people do careless things that lead to injury. That said, we can still set things up so that there is less risk for people who use their features appropriately.

- **Fire-Ready Materials:** A big issue I see in fire pits is that they are often built only using CMUs (concrete blocks), which are not designed for use with fire. The aggregates will heat up and expand and might potentially pop or explode. I assert that all fire pits should be lined with fire brick and fire clay mortar. These materials are the same as those used in a kiln and various types of furnaces. They are fired during the manufacturing process and are designed to provide insulation over a range of temperatures.

The same holds true for the materials you use to fill the fire pit. Whether you use stone or glass, you should always use materials designed for high temperatures. Keep in mind, not all recycled glass is suitable to be installed in a fire pit.

- **Manual Control:** In spite of the fact that fire feature systems can include automated control, I still advocate the old-fashioned manual key valve to control the flow of gas. The reason is that the person holding the key is responsible for the height of the flames. He or she can set the flames relative to the wind conditions or how many people will be around the flame or the nature of the gathering. (It's probably smart to maintain low flames when hosting a gathering of small children or inebriated adults.) The idea is to prevent the flame from blowing into the surrounding area, which might, for example, set fire to a woman's sundress, singe a child who comes too close or set someone's hair on fire.

For fire features that are set in locations where there's very little chance of human contact — a fire bowl set on a pilaster on a vanishing edge, for example — there's less of an issue with having a preset flame height or on/off schedules. There, an automated control may be appropriate. But with a fire pit where people come within a few inches of the flame, having the ability to manually raise and lower the flame on the spot provides an extremely important element of safety.

I advise both residential and commercial clients to designate someone responsible for operation whenever the flame is lit. Possession of the key itself is a nice, clear way to establish that expectation.

- **Proper Spacing:** The dimensions of the pit will go a long way in determining the proximity of people to the flames. You should always maintain at least 4 inches clearance between the burner assembly and the edge of your coping. For rings where people will put up their feet or set drinks, I recommend a



The fire and water bowls at this Camarillo, California, residence flank a perimeter-overflow spa. Halos of river rock circle the fires in the middle. Water spills from the bowls into basins, then into the glass-tiled infinity pool.

minimum 12-inch-wide coping.

I also like to build raised pits to 10 to 12 inches above the deck, perfect footrest height. There's a tendency for some to raise the coping surface to 18 inches, standard bench height. When you put your feet up on an 18-inch raised surface, it's likely that your toes will get numb, which can present a safety hazard if your shoes get overheated or catch fire. Only build your fire pits at 18 inches tall if it is your intention that guests sit on the coping of the fire feature. In that instance, the coping width should be 16 to 18 inches wide (standard seat depth) to ensure clearance from the flames.

- **Burner Installation:** Fire elements have changed over the past few years. Not long ago there was a debate as to whether or not you installed fire rings with the holes pointing up or down. Pointing up could lead to water entering the manifold. Flipping the ring over solved that problem but led to uneven flame distribution.

Fortunately, these days, manufacturers make units that can be installed upward but also allow water to drain from the tubing.

An important caveat: Don't try to make your own burner assembly. Manufacturers follow specific guidelines critical to proper function and safety, so buy a good burner assembly and adhere to the manufacturers' installation instructions carefully.

Scott's article was originally published in Aqua magazine in October 2012.

Refractory concrete is resistant to very high temperatures, and that's why it's used to line pizza ovens and boilers. However, refractory concrete should never be used in an open fire pit where it can get wet from rain or snow. The steam generated from heating wet refractory concrete can cause cracking and spalling. Instead, line the firebox with fire brick or metal, and insulate the concrete from the fire box with at least a 4-inch air gap or 2 inches of crushed lava rock.

Be aware that wood burning may be illegal in your area or only allowed certain times of the year. Wood fires are also more unpredictable than the other types of fuel, with the potential for sparking. Provide a spark screen with a wood-burning fire feature. Last but not least, wood fires do not turn off instantly, so safe, responsible burning is a prime concern.

Propane is a type of liquefied petroleum gas that is denser than air, so unignited gas vapors will pool in confined spaces. This presents an explosion hazard. Always properly vent a propane-fueled fire pit! The venting must be near ground level, with a minimum 18 square inches of free area per vent, set no more than 5 inches above ground level. There must be at least two vent holes 180 inches apart for adequate cross-ventilation.

Fire glass should be no deeper than 1/4 inch above the top of the burner for optimum flame and minimum back-pressure. Large lava rock (2 inches or larger in size) may be up to 3 inches deep above the top of the burner. Do not exceed the 1/4-inch depth with fire glass or small lava rock directly above burner holes. Applying too much glass or small lava rock may result in unburned gas pooling in the fire pit and exploding.

Propane should be mixed with air by use of a pressure regulator

and an air-fuel mixer. Not using air will result in a very sooty flame. Mixing in air makes the flame burn cleaner, but with or without, propane tends to make fire glass sooty, so a light color of glass will not retain its look for long.

Propane fire features are not meant for cooking and do not produce a high-heat flame that would burn clean and appear blue. Decorative propane fire features instead produce a cooler flame that is more yellow in color and more closely resembles a wood fire.

Natural gas is cleaner burning and does not deposit soot on the fire media. Compressed natural gas is lighter than air, so it will not pool and does not require ventilation. Natural gas is also about one third the cost of propane. However, natural gas must be hard-plumbed by a licensed contractor. And fire glass or lava rock should be no deeper than 3 inches above the top of the burner for optimum flame and minimum back-pressure.

Coarse gravel or lava rock may be used under the burner as support. Coarse materials drain well and don't hold much moisture. Sand should not be used because it holds large amounts of moisture and does not vent well.

Alcohol fuels are placed in stainless steel, drop-in units. There are many types of alcohol-based fuels, including ethanol, denatured alcohol, spirits, biofuel, bioethanol, fireplace fuel, and fire gel. These fuels can be used indoors or outdoors and require no venting. However, small, alcohol-based fire features could be knocked over. And alcohol is an extremely expensive fuel that does not develop a very large flame. This type of fire feature is more like a big candle. Depending on the design, they can still be very dramatic.



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A fire burner connection.



A propane connector.

Photos courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute

Hardware

The next thing to understand about fire features is the hardware: igniter, burners or rings, burner pans, air mixers, piping and valves.

Fire pits may be ignited manually with a match, with a push-button spark **igniter** (like a gas grill), or with an automatic igniter.

If an automatic igniter is used, the ignition source is wired to the burner, with the ignition switch being some distance away from the fire feature. Timers and remote controllers are also available. These items can be quite costly.

Additionally, a flame sensor may be installed, which contains a thermocouple safety switch that shuts off the gas if the flame goes out. These are often required on commercial installations.

There are many different sizes and shapes of fire **burners** for propane and natural gas. Many are circular rings, some are linear,

and some are star-shaped to provide even flame distribution. Better-quality burners are made from stainless steel.

The burner is placed on a stainless steel **pan** that supports the burner and the fire glass or rock. The igniter also mounts to the pan.

Piping connects the fire burner to a **valve**. The valve may be a key valve or a ball valve. Key valves are required by law in some areas, and are necessary on a hard-plumbed installation with an essentially infinite source of fuel.

Safety considerations

For safety, there must be some way to turn off and prohibit use of the fuel. With a propane tank, this is easily achieved simply by using the quick disconnect to disconnect the propane tank and remove it. For hard-plumbed installations, a key valve lets you turn off the fuel and lock it off by taking away the key.

Scott Cohen strongly recommends a manual key valve and match lighting rather than an automatic igniter. This allows the holder of the key to evaluate current weather conditions and adjust the height of the fire accordingly. It also clearly puts responsibility for fire safety on the person holding the key.

Fire media

Fire media can be an exciting part of the design of a fire feature. There are many colors, shapes and sizes available. Materials are fire glass, lava rock and ceramic.

Do not use stone, regular glass, gravel, rocks, nonrefractory ceramic or other materials in direct contact with open flames. These materials could shatter or explode when heated by flame.

Basic design considerations

Aside from the general aesthetics, the design of a fire pit plays a significant role in its safety, durability and reliability.

Fire pits (except for small alcohol burners) should only ever be used and installed outdoors. **Drainage** is an important consideration, not only to eliminate stagnant water from pooling inside the fire pit, but also to keep metal parts in good working order for a longer time.

Solid metal **covers** help keep fire media clean and dry,



Natural gas fuels this fire feature.

Photo courtesy of The Green Scene Landscaping and Pools



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Photo courtesy of The Green Scene Landscaping and Pools

Water falls over tiles in a raised spa in Granada Hills, California. The fire pit on the right is lined with lava rock. On the top level is a custom fire and water feature. On the left is a Baja shelf — a platform roughly 6 inches under water, allowing for lounge chairs. Coping is white cast-in-place concrete, as is a swim-up bar to the left of the spa.

eliminating debris from collecting on and potentially clogging the burner.

Covers also help protect bystanders from hot glass media once the fire pit is shut off. Fire media can stay dangerously hot for a long time after the flames are gone. A cover can prevent accidental contact that could cause serious burns, as hot fire media still looks the same as it does when it is cold. Some fire glass is colorful and shaped like jelly beans, and children may be tempted to pick it up.

Mesh covers act as spark arrestors and are needed only for wood-fueled fire pits. These may be required by law in some areas.



Photo courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute

Fire pit with burner and pan. The pan has an opening for the igniter.

Burner depth

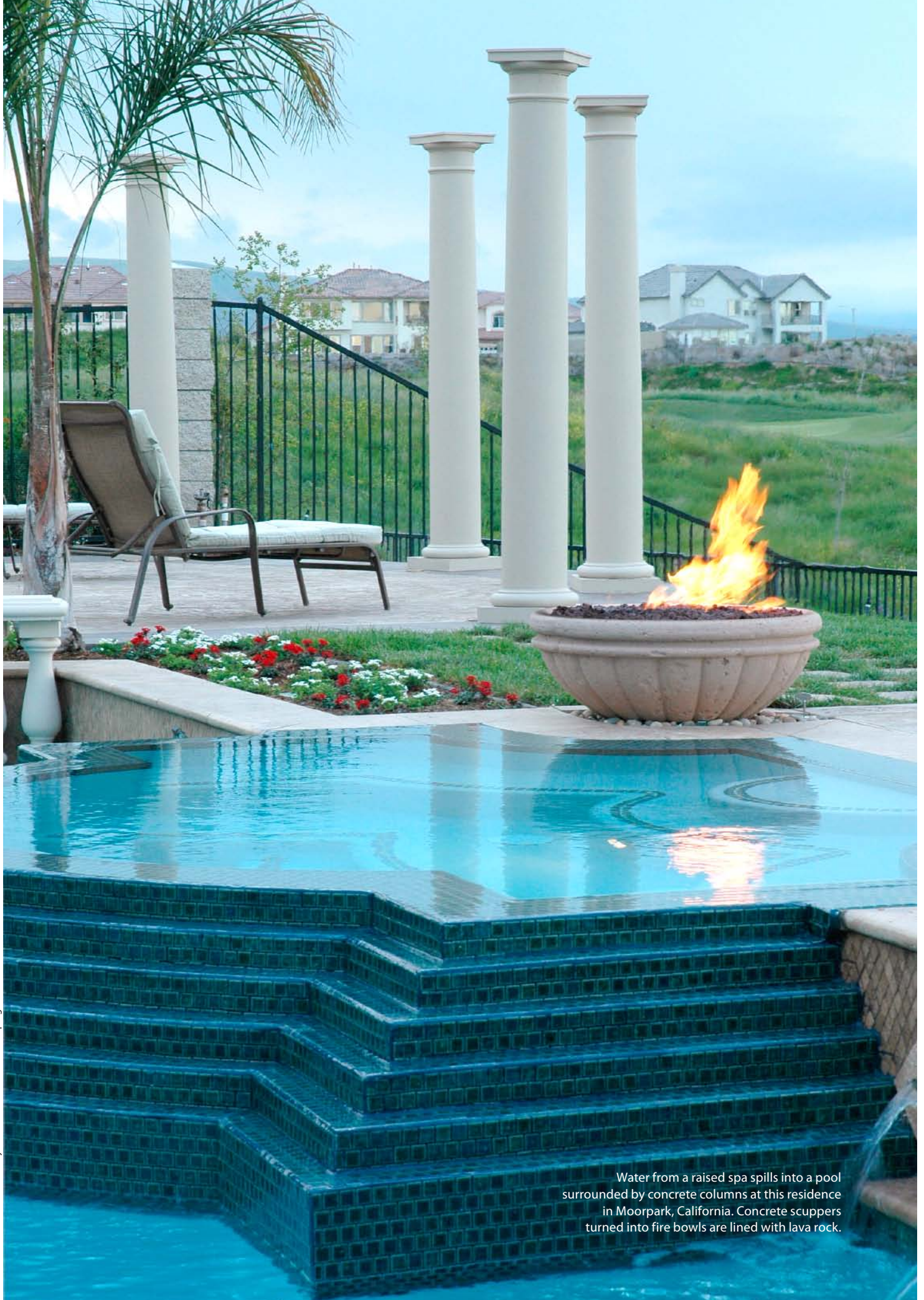
Good fire-pit designs place the fire burner high in the fire pit, with very little concrete exposed to the heat from the fire. Not only does this allow for greater flame exposure above the fire pit, but it also minimizes the amount of concrete that is heated by the flames.

Concrete won't burn, but intense heating can cause cracking, spalling and even chemical degradation. This is why concrete should never be directly exposed to open flame or burning embers. Even indirect heating from nearby flames can cause thermal expansion and cracking, which is why well-designed fire pots keep the concrete far from the flames and expose very little concrete to the radiated heat.

There's another good reason to minimize the amount of concrete that gets hot: safety. Like fire media, hot concrete looks the same as cold concrete, so the best rule of thumb for safety and long-term durability is to keep the concrete cool to the touch.

Now that you understand how the various parts of fire features work and the important safety and design considerations, you can expand your outdoor custom concrete repertoire beyond flooring surfaces and simple barbecue tops and offer your clients an all-around "wow" experience with custom concrete. 🍷

Jeffrey Girard is founder and president of The Concrete Countertop Institute and a pioneer of engineered concrete countertops. He can be reached at info@concretecountertopinstitute.com.



Water from a raised spa spills into a pool surrounded by concrete columns at this residence in Moorpark, California. Concrete scuppers turned into fire bowls are lined with lava rock.

The Polishing Consultant

Four Ways to Grow While Staying Solvent

by David Stephenson

IN so many magazines and email blasts, concrete contractors are taught small tips and tricks that hopefully one day will help them out in specific situations. Very rarely does anyone talk about business or industry growth as it relates to your specific company. I am going to attempt to do just that in this article.

I am a consultant. A vast majority of my time is spent reviewing slabs, mainly to ensure that the end user gets a beautiful and easily maintainable floor. But I spend a portion of my time working with contractors to shape and grow their businesses.

I understand that the concrete business is hard (pun intended). The product is not exact. This industry will never become commodified to the point where all or even most projects are equal. There will always be

variable conditions that multiply as projects progress. There will always be new things to learn, and there will always be good and bad competition. I know all of these things from my personal experience. I started as a contractor and learned from the ground up. I have lived through the customers with unrealistic expectations, the manufacturer that has a bad batch of product, and all the various employee issues that come along with being a contractor.

When I sit with contractors, whether I am their consultant or not, I find out almost every time that they want to grow their business. I think that this is a universal desire. The big question that is rarely asked or analyzed correctly is, "How can I grow my business and stay healthy and solvent?"

There are many different answers to this

question, but my goal is to discuss some of the fundamental ideas that should be considered.

1. Identify a realistic goal for growth

First, you need to consider your market. Ask yourself, "How many direct competitors do I have in my market?" Once you have that answer, which I bet most of you know off the top of your heads, you can move to the next step. "How many projects did my company do in this market last year, and how many did we bid on and lose?" Add up the ones you did. You may also know how many you bid on, but if not, guess. Be realistic, because this is important. Once you have these questions answered, you can get a general idea of your market size. There will always be a few projects that you



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didn't know about, just like there will be some projects that you did know about that were done by out-of-town contractors that are not your direct competitors. Do not put too much emphasis on these, as they will generally even out.

The jobs available divided by the competitors in the market gives you a fair goal to shoot for. If there were 100 projects with three direct competitors in a given market, for example, with all things being equal there would be a 33 percent split. If you won only 20 projects, or 20 percent, then you know that you should target 13 percent of the market, as that should be the easiest pickup for you to make.

2. Don't simply be the cheapest

My second thought is that by far the biggest mistake I see contractors make — and this is not limited to new or smaller contractors — is pricing themselves below the competition. This will garner you a few more projects, but in order to keep the edge that you pick up, you will have to continually lower the price of your work while keeping the same level of quality.

This is a diminishing-returns scenario that will eventually force you out of business. Remember that every time you lower your price by 10 cents, that lowered price becomes the new market standard. It is very hard to go up in price.

Rather than constantly lowering the price of work, you will find that good competitors work on developing relationships using the foundation of good quality work. Figure your pricing on a model that makes you money.

Every contractor is different. If you don't know what your price point is, an easy way to determine it is to take the cost of all your labor and materials, add 10 percent (for rework and unusual items that come up) and double that figure. This will allow a portion for overhead while still keeping a healthy profit. Don't bid so low on a project that you are not able to make your margin.

A good friend of mine was in the meat business. We were talking about one of his competitors that went bankrupt. The company needed revenue to cover overhead, he said, and they were struggling to stay solvent. What did they do to combat this problem? They sold their meat at a loss. I believe the exact quote was, "They were losing a penny a pound but were making it up by selling product by the truckload."

They eventually sold themselves right into bankruptcy! The market bought their cheap product because of the price, but in the end there was no profit left.

Dropping the price is a short-term solution that leads to a "rob Peter to pay Paul" scenario. You spend more than you make on the projects, but you use cash flow to offset the loss. This allows you to think for a while that everything will be great because you are billing more each month. This is a dead-end thought all around.

Focus on tightening your operations

doing the work that you get for the right price. Go after the work that you want. Some companies are better at retail stores, some at manufacturing facilities and some at schools. Once you figure out what you do well, target those projects at a price point that you can actually clear a profit on.

3. Improve your company's infrastructure

The third major consideration is infrastructure. I have an analogy that I use regularly when talking about this. Think



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of your company like a city. With any city, there is an established area with all utilities in place. When the city wants to grow, before it can build houses for people to move into, it need to have power, water, telephone lines and streets in place. Only then can the builders start on the neighborhoods.

You will always be limited by your infrastructure development. If you are strong in sales, that is like having water, and that's great. But you also need to make sure you are strong in administration, operations, and field personnel and equipment, which is like also having phone service, power and sewer. Without these pieces in place, you can end up building out farther than you can effectively support or manage.

Sure, you believe that you can build out one or maybe two of these pieces as you go. This is when companies make the biggest mistakes. Pieces fall through the cracks, project quality suffers, or manufacturers aren't paid on time and start to cut off supply lines. There is a host of problems with trying to grow too fast. I see these mistakes happen daily. Grow steadily and you will be strong and profitable. You will be respected by your customers, suppliers and competitors, and I promise (again from experience) that you will have a lot less stress in your life.

4. Identify your true competitors

My fourth and final point is to know your real competition. In the decorative concrete industry, I see contractors competing against other decorative flooring contractors just as hard as they compete against other flooring types. The analogy here is a basketball team where all the players are out for themselves and are competing daily with their own teammates without even realizing that the true opponent is the other team. The real competition is the floor coverings industry.

The tile and carpet guys have to be loving it that decorative (especially polished concrete) contractors are providing a high-overhead, high-skill-level flooring option for a fraction of what the competing flooring options charge for an easily installed, mass-produced floor. My recommendation is that you lift up the industry, and in doing so, create more work for everyone, which will in turn mean more work for you.

I see contractors cut down other contractors and try to sell the customer on the idea that their company does a better job

more cheaply. This isn't realistic, because if you are cheaper, you have to lower your costs somewhere. The three areas that can give are labor (lower-skilled labor costs less), supplies (lower-quality materials also cost less) or processes (cutting a step here or there). The end result of cutting costs in these areas is lowering the quality. Every time that you lower the quality, the perception of the industry is lowered in the eyes of the consumer.

Every great job you do gets one or two more jobs for the industry. Every bad job that you do will lose 10. As the industry has competed with itself, prices have continued to drop. As prices drop there is less margin in the business. As the margin goes, the only companies that are able to compete are the larger installers because of their purchasing power and operational infrastructure. The larger companies tend to be less creative, which eventually leads to very bland, watered-down product. This will turn designers and architects away, further lowering the number of projects in the market. I think you can follow where I am going with this.

The best thing that can happen for the decorative concrete industry is for contractors to understand the market that they are serving, learn to respect their own price point and hold firm on profitable projects, grow strong and well-run companies that are balanced (somewhat), and compete against floor coverings to create a larger market overall.

I hope this article helps you. If you do even one of these things, you will find yourself in a better position. I have a motto that I try to live my life by that is very applicable here. "Play chess, not checkers!" To me this means that you should look out in front of you and play several moves ahead. Checkers players generally move one step at a time with very little strategy or forethought. Chess players sit back and run through potential moves with a thought of how each potential move can affect them. If you will run your business like a chess match you will find you are positioned correctly most of the time. ♟

David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com.

Hands-on Grinding & Polishing Tips

PVC Pipe, Leftover Diamonds, Paint and Chalk Put to Work

by Bryon "Bru" Bruington

Make line cuts with a Dremel rotary tool

Using a Dremel hand-held rotary tool for freehand line cuts in decorative concrete greatly decreases the time it takes and increases the accuracy of the cut. It is a small rotary tool with high rpm, and it's relatively easy on the budget. The tool is also great when used with a sandpaper tip for cleaning off dirty grout lines in ceramic tile. It will even help you clean stain off polyurea joints for polished concrete.

Protect your cords with PVC

Use PVC pipe for cord protection and cord management. Fit the cord through lengths of pipe. The pipe can move freely on the floor, reducing the abrasion on the rubber outer liner of the cord. You can use pipe clamps to isolate the pipe for even better cord management. This will help the operator control the cord close to the grinder or scarifier.

During preplanning, tag trouble spots with orange marking paint

During the pre-job walk-through of a new project, have the bidder use orange marking paint to identify potential hazards in the floor. These could include old electrical junction boxes and bolts that have been cut flush for anchored machines. The orange paint should be visible in dim light situations. This will reduce downtime for equipment and repairs. A can of orange marking paint is cheaper than a new tool plate.


Use white chalk for decorative applications

When marking the floor for stain or stencil layout, use white chalk. This is a neutral pigment that will not stain the floor. It blends well with gray or white portland cement and will not leave ghost lines from the layout on the floor.

What to do with leftover and mismatched diamonds

If you have a lot of leftover, mismatched diamonds, use them for a heavy-removal situation. You can use different grit sizes, but be sure the thicknesses of the diamond segments are relatively close to each other, or the grinder may run unbalanced. This is a great way of stretching your diamond cost and also cleans out more space in the truck and warehouse.

Grind old ceramic or terra cotta tile

A Kut-Rite BevelKut diamond tool can be used to grind old ceramic or terra cotta tile too. The bevel on the side of the segment reduces fracturing or chipping of the tile. A lot of money can be saved with this technique. It reduces the amount of filler that would be used to fix or flatten the joint and edge. The floor can then be topcoated and sealed, or just sealed for an industrial look. 

Bryon "Bru" Bruington is technical sales director for KutRite, a producer of products for the concrete grinding, polishing and scarifying industry. Email him at b_bruington@kutritemfg.com.



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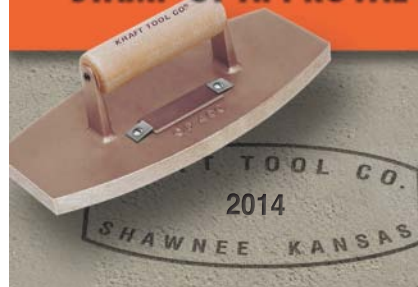
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Branching Out

by Vanessa Salvia

CONNECTICUT-BASED faux-bois artisan Michael Fogg spent eight years as a journeyman cabinetmaker and architectural woodworker. He then managed his own cabinetmaking business for six years before feeling stifled. “I had the idea that I would do spec furniture rather than custom cabinetry,” Fogg recalled. “I had some ideas for furniture I wanted to make and figured that concrete was the way to do it.”

The art of faux bois, French for “false wood,” has a long history of artistically imitating wood in various media. Some of Fogg’s early pieces were tables featuring wooden tops on faux bois bases. Now, he uses concrete entirely. “People seem to respond to concrete just as is,” he says. “I haven’t had time to do woodworking since I started.”

Concrete appeals to Fogg because it’s a less restrictive system than what he experienced with his woodworking. “With concrete you can smear on some more or make a slurry and fill it in,” he says. “The other cool thing about concrete is that it gets harder and harder all on its own — you don’t have to fire it. And the harder it gets the more fine the texture can be.”

Fogg sculpts his creations using hand tools and ferrocement, so-called because it combines steel with portland cement and other ingredients. The ECC (engineered cementitious composite) Fogg uses is very similar to what some concrete countertops are made from, he says.

His favorite materials include Scofield Lithochrome Chemstain Classic acid stains,

Quikrete integral colors in charcoal and brown, Nyad G wollastonite, available through Blue Concrete, and PVA and AR fiberglass fibers from Nycon Corp. “I use Trinic’s GFRC admixture as well as a few other products from them, notably pure CSA (calcium sulfoaluminate cement), colloidal silica, powdered superplasticizer, and NanoSeal.”

Though he’s been focused on furniture, Fogg plans to pursue larger projects such as building installations and architectural pieces such as pergolas. “I look at trees differently now,” Fogg says. “They’re more like sculpture.”

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