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OF DECORATIVE
CONCRETE

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2015 Industry Forecast

A Guide to GFRC, Precast &
Cast-In-Place Countertops

Polishing Concrete for the
High-Tech Industry

Vol. 15 No. 1 January 2015

Viva Las Vegas

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- Siemens Motor
- Morseflex Couplers
- Power: 220V/1 Ph/15 Am
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- Tool Cavities: 6
- RPM: 1,575
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- Water Tank: 9 Gal.
- Water Dispenser Control
- Electronic Gauges
- Grinds: 1/4 In. From Wall
- Weight: 350 Lbs.
- Packaging Size: 25x38x46 In.
- Sweep Path: 25x25 In.



Classic Genie \$5,750

- Siemens Motor 10 Hp
- 220V, 3 Ph, 30 Amp
- Variable Speed 0-1500 RPM
- Magnetic Plates: 4
- Tool Cavities: 12
- Digital Gauges
- Weight 463 Lb + Collar 44 Lb
- Water Tank 9.25 Gal. w/control
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- Magnetic Plates Hold 12 Tools
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- Power Cord 50 Ft

Lease For
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- Motor | 10 Hp
- Current | 28 Amp
- Motor RPM | 0-2800 rpm
- Working path | 27 Inch
- Weight | 419 Lbs

Lease For
\$184



Presto Genie \$7,995

- 10 Hp, Variable Speed Drive
- Siemens Motor
- Power: 220-V/3 PH
- Current 15 AMP - 50/60 Hz
- Folding / Adjustable Handle
- Magnetic Plates: 4
- Tool Cavities: 12
- Cavity Tool Size 3"
- RPM: 0 to 1,800
- Water Tank: 9.25 Gal.
- Water Dispenser Control
- Digital Electronic Gauges
- Grinds: 1/4" From Wall
- HRB bearing for longer life
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- 3-n-1

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- Siemens Motor 20 HP
- Grinds: 1/4" From Wall
- HRB bearing for longer life
- Power: 220-V/3 PH
- Current 15 AMP - 50/60 Hz
- Magnetic Plates: 6
- Tool Cavities: 18
- Cavity Tool Size 3"
- Crate Size: 38 x 47 x 53
- Water Tank: 9.25 Gal.
- Water Dispenser Control
- Digital Electronic Gauges
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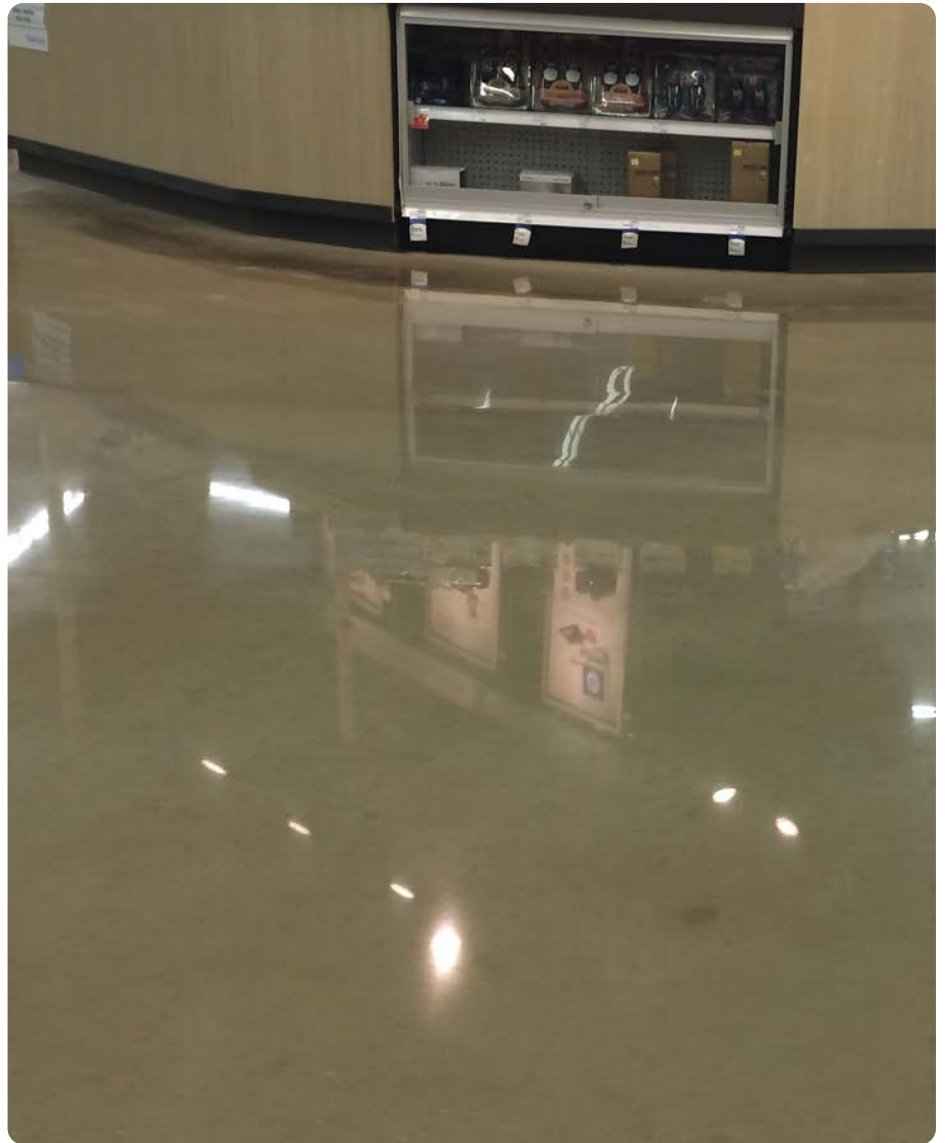
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From the Publisher's Desk

Dear Readers,

Given the economic improvement we've experienced over the past couple of years, I imagine you have gained a renewed sense of confidence in your business and the decorative concrete market. Winter weather in many areas of the country has replaced economic woes as the top issue of concern for a lot of decorative concrete professionals.

Back in 2000, I visited an event where some companies were promoting coloring systems for ready-mix plants. The notion that concrete could now be colored was an incredible idea and a big game-changer for those who work with concrete. The notion that architects, designers and property owners could now choose from an array of color options for their concrete applications was, as it remains today, the biggest and best change in the industry.

Many have heard me liken color systems at the ready-mix plant to a color carousel at the paint store. The reason for this comparison is that while gray concrete is indeed a color with many variations, today's consumers can choose from a palette of more than 800 colors for their concrete projects. Designers and contractors must recognize that these important changes in the industry also have a direct impact on the way these materials are utilized. For the architectural community it's imperative they understand the nuances of working with these materials, and for contractors the challenge is recognizing their customers are increasingly interested in the look of concrete, not just the performance.

Not only can concrete be beautiful but it can be used in place of a multitude of other building materials and finishes. This important fact requires contractors to understand their work requires great attention to detail. Now that concrete products can mimic other building materials and provide finishes unique to traditional building and finishing products, the onus is on us to meet and exceed consumer expectations.

What does this all mean for our industry? A lot. From my perspective it means regardless of color or texture, every concrete application needs to be specified properly and installed professionally. Regardless of its use today, concrete has the opportunity to become an even more beautiful architectural finish 20 years from now. Inside this issue are insights from a variety of industry experts looking at our trade. Explore their thoughts and I think you will see why concrete continues to have huge growth potential.

God bless you and best wishes to you and yours for a prosperous 2015.

Sincerely,



Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher



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On the cover: Seen here are details of a Pima basket LithoMosaic made for the Corn Creek National Forest Wildlife Refuge northwest of Las Vegas. For more information, see page 44.

Photo by Robin Brailsford

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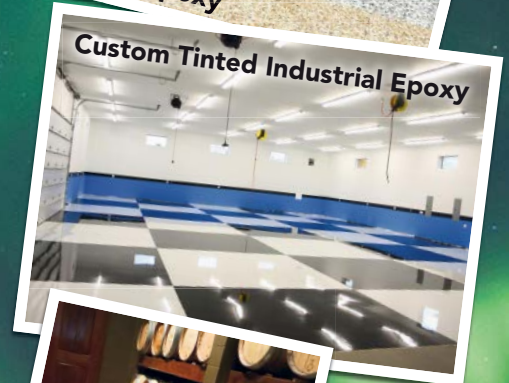


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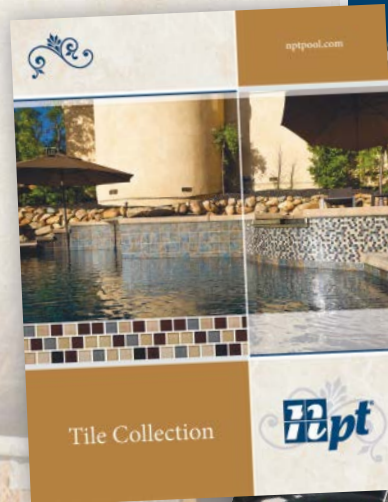
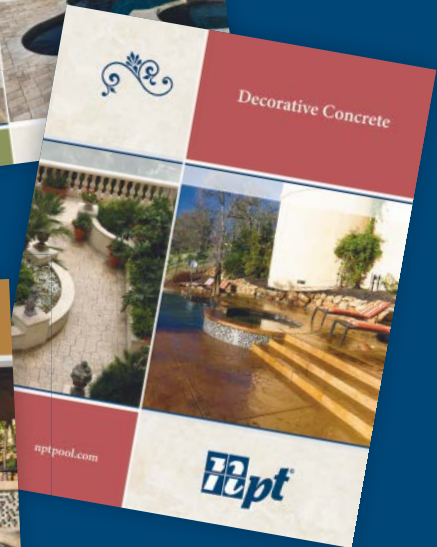
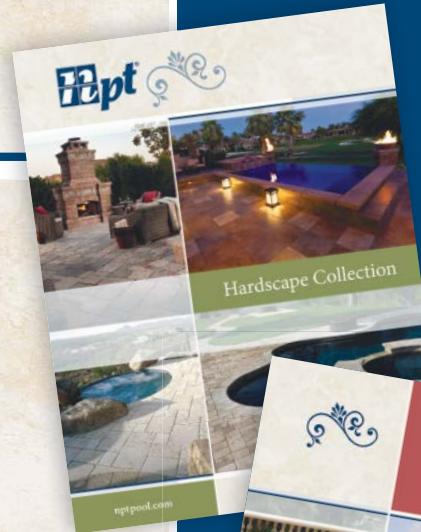
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By **NEWLOOK**

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EnduraStain Solid Color



Kevin Brown of KB Concrete Stains used EnduraStain Solid Color in Medium Gray at the high profile Fig House in Los Angeles. He states, "Awesome product! The EnduraStain was extremely easy to apply and very user-friendly. The product covers very well and dries evenly...it adheres extremely well". After all the decorative cutting and staining was complete, he sealed it with SmartSeal WB. The owner was very pleased and said, "It looks awesome. I can't wait for events to start happening!"



Key Benefits

- Ready-to-use water-based Solid Color Stain with less than 100 g/l VOC
- Super easy and fast application with sprayers or applicator brush
- Unique nano-chemistry enhances penetration, adhesion, and durability
- Similar to Original Solid Color but with no pot life and no mixing of parts

EnduraStain Acid Look



14 year old Seth Villagomez used EnduraStain Acid Look on his first staining project. His mother wanted an acid stain look on her driveway to match the brick on her home. Seth brushed in a terracotta color that looked great on its own but to match the darker bricks he applied a second darker color. EnduraStain technology coupled with the natural absorption of the concrete provided the look she wanted. Seth loved the experience, "It was so fast and so easy, I think I have a new summer job!"



Key Benefits

- Non - Acid, non - hazardous
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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 72.



Mark Celebuski is a partner at Trinic LLC, a company that offers protective solutions for concrete, stone and tile. He can be reached at mark@trinic.us. See Mark's article on page 74.



Jason Geiser owns Deco-Crete Supply and Cornerstone Concrete Designs, both based in Orrville, Ohio. He can be contacted at jason@deco-cretesupply.com. See Jason's article on page 78.



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 on page 64.



Gaye Goodman is an artist who fell in love with acid staining 20 years ago. She and her company, based in the high desert of New Mexico, work on decorative projects across the Southwest. Contact her or see training materials on staining at www.gayegoodman.com. See Gaye's article on page 82.



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 84.



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 70.

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Michelman invests in digital imaging

Michelman, a global developer and manufacturer of environmentally friendly advanced materials, has invested in new digital imaging technology that allows chemists to view coating and substrate samples at nano-level magnification. The new technology is part of Michelman's investment in the Michelman Advanced Materials Collaboration Center that officially opened in October at the company's global headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio.



The new state-of-the-art imaging technology is not widely available in the packaging coatings and specialty chemicals industries, and allows Michelman to quickly and thoroughly analyze surface characteristics critical to developing successful coating systems for paper board, corrugated, flexible packaging, wood, metal, plastic, concrete and other industrial applications. The information gathered includes high-resolution 3-D and topographical views using nondestructive sample preparation and roughness measurements.

Multiple samples can be quickly recorded and compared using various analysis modes. The rich information and wealth of data are then used to troubleshoot, improve or develop coating technologies.

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🌐 www.michelman.com

ACI Foundation establishes fellowship

The ACI Foundation has established a new fellowship, the Barbara S. and W. Calvin McCall Carolinas Fellowship. Created by the ACI Carolinas chapter, it aims to improve the chapter and increase the number of student chapters in the Carolinas.

The chapter named the fellowship to honor the McCalls for their tremendous dedication to the concrete community and the ACI Carolinas chapter. This \$7,000 fellowship will be awarded to undergraduate, graduate or doctoral students in construction, design, education or materials programs during the year of the award.

The student should be an active member of an ACI student chapter affiliated with the Carolinas chapter or in the U.S. and in good standing with a university in North or South Carolina. This fellowship will be awarded beginning in 2015, and brings the total number of fellowships available in 2015 to 11. The application period ended Nov. 30, 2014.

The ACI Foundation offers fellowship and scholarship opportunities to students whose studies relate to the concrete industry. ACI Foundation Fellowship awards are granted to high-potential undergraduate and graduate students who are studying engineering, construction management or other concrete-related fields of study. Fellowship applicants must be nominated by a faculty member who is also an ACI member to be considered for these awards. Those students receiving fellowships also receive paid travel and registration to three ACI conventions, and assignment to an industry mentor.

📞 (248) 848-3800

🌐 www.acifoundation.org

ACI releases the reorganized ACI 318-14

The American Concrete Institute (ACI), an organization whose mission is to develop and disseminate consensus-based knowledge on concrete and its uses, officially released the completely reorganized publication "ACI 318-14: Building Code Requirements for Structural Concrete."

The 2015 International Building Code will reference 318-14. Now published and available for use, 318-14 is reorganized from an engineer's perspective. By focusing on member design, ACI 318 requirements flow more intuitively and have fewer cross-references. It's easier to use and has an improved logic and information flow, allowing members to quickly locate relevant code information. Also, construction requirements are centralized in one chapter.

This publication is the first major reorganization of ACI 318 since 1971 and represents nearly a decade of work. The publication features improved language and style consistency, more expansive use of tables and charts and is organized so that engineers have increased confidence they have satisfied all necessary code requirements. Other updates include new chapters on structural systems and diaphragms and a consistent structure for each member chapter.

The United States and more than 22 countries around the world base their national building codes on all or part of ACI 318, and the document is used globally. 318-14 is available in various electronic formats for access on desktop, tablet and mobile devices, plus the traditional printed copy is available in Spanish, Chinese and other languages.

Approximately 50 seminars for professionals about the reorganized 318-14 are scheduled in various locations for 2015. ACI's "Reinforced Concrete Design Manual" will be updated and published in accordance with the reorganized 318-14, and will be available in 2015.

🌐 www.concrete.org/ACI318

Pro Sales Reps partners with tool bag maker Veto Pro Pac

Professional Sales Representatives LLC recently partnered with Veto Pro Pac, a manufacturer of unique tool bags from Norwalk, Connecticut. Pro Sales Reps will represent the product line in all 13 Western states — Alaska, Arizona, California,

TRANSITIONS

Atlas Copco named **Marty Molthen** as district sales manager of the company's Southwest rental channel. Molthen works closely with national and independent rental yard owners, managers and strategic account customers to provide pricing, product demonstrations, product information and any needed assistance.

Atlas Copco appointed **DeAnna Wells** as area sales manager for its East Texas and Louisiana territory. Wells also works with national and independent rental centers at the branch and store levels to provide pricing, product demonstrations, product information and any other assistance to help them boost revenues with Atlas Copco equipment.

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Veto Pro Pac offers several types of bags that provide tool storage and protection solutions for every service technician. Their product line includes totes, backpacks, pouches and laptop bags. Their bags feature waterproof molded bases, rugged construction built to withstand almost all conditions and pockets designed to hold a wide variety of hand tools, testers, gauges and meters. All of the bags are supported by a 5-year limited warranty, guaranteeing that the bags will be free from manufacturer's defects in materials and workmanship.

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Penetron upgrades plants in Poland

Penetron crystalline technology helped upgrade and complete three important and recently completed construction projects in Puławy, a significant industrial center in Eastern Poland.

The town of Puławy has grown into a notable industrial center over the past 50 years, thanks to a large chemical complex, the Zakłady Azotowe Puławy facility, which is also the world's largest producer of melamine. The continued expansion of this facility and the resulting population growth in the region have also elevated demand for retail and infrastructural growth.

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The Penetron technology was used on Azoty Puławy chemical plant, Puławy wastewater treatment plant and Puławy shopping center. The Penetron Group is a leading manufacturer of specialty construction products for concrete waterproofing, concrete repairs and floor preparation systems.

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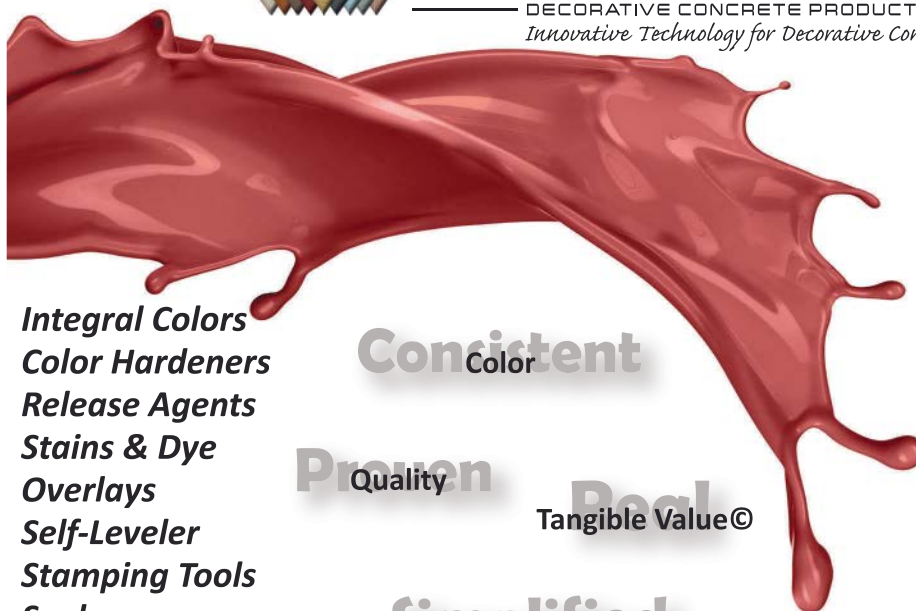
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Easycove adds two new partners

Easycove, a manufacturer of pre-formed coving products engineered to bond to resinous walls and floors via its unique interlocking bond channels, has added two new partners. X-Calibur Construction Chemistry Inc. is its first international distributor and ACF Distribution Inc., also known as All County Flooring Supply, in Farmingdale, New York, is now its East Coast distributor. The agreements include distribution of Easycove's new 1-inch cove, 4-inch and 6-inch coving and high-performance adhesive.

Under the international agreement, X-Calibur has been given exclusive international selling rights of Easycove products for the GCC states (UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain), as well as Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria. Product will be available ex-stock in the UAE, Kenya and Nigeria.

ACF Distribution Inc., established in 1980, is a wholesaler of industry-leading flooring products throughout the Metropolitan New York, New Jersey, Long Island, and Connecticut markets.

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🌐 www.acfdistribution.com

Kansas City concrete group presents 2014 awards

The Concrete Promotional Group of Greater Kansas City, a regional nonprofit trade association, presented the 2014 Excellence in Concrete Awards in November at the Historic Firestone Building Event Space in Kansas City, Missouri.

The awards program highlights companies and people who demonstrate solid concrete construction solutions for buildings and infrastructure in the metro area.

The program honored 58 companies in 17 categories: Concrete Parking Lot, Overland Park Residence, Paving, DOT, Decorative Commercial, Concrete Countertops, Municipal Paving, Swimming Pools, Site Cast Tilt-Up, Polished Concrete, Commercial Floors, Multiple Cast-in-Place Uses, Sustainable/Green, Multifamily Restoration, Low Rise, Parking Garage and Monuments.

☎ (913) 342-5800

🌐 www.concretepromotion.com



Michelman gives back with Global Day of Service

On Sept. 12, more than 200 Michelman employees around the world put their corporate work down and embraced a day of giving back to their communities. This is the third annual "Global Day of Service" Michelman has held. Associates spent the day volunteering at various locations in the U.S., China, Singapore (shown in photo above), India and at eight different locations in Europe.

🌐 www.michelman.com

Atlas Copco adds personnel to support rental centers

Atlas Copco has added 18 sales personnel to provide local expertise and support to its rental customer base. In addition to creating a local point of contact, the new sales staff helps rental centers find the right equipment to maximize fleet use and acts as a resource for customers by helping to arrange comprehensive financing. They also provide maintenance tips and product training.

The new staff additions are part of an overall strategy to build local relationships and support with rental customers and the markets they serve. The sales support team now consists of 25 people dedicated to supporting the rental channel. In addition to conducting training and demonstrations as well as arranging financing, the local sales staff will assist rental centers in local marketing and publicity efforts.

Atlas Copco has five product trailers that the sales support specialists use to demonstrate equipment and train rental center staff and operators. The trailers are equipped with a broad selection of equipment, including television monitors to display videos and product presentations to help promote safety and efficiency, as well as training and maintenance programs.

The sales staff complements a network of local service centers strategically located in key customer areas, such as Seattle, Corpus Christi, Atlanta, Cleveland, Raleigh, Santa Ana and Houston.

🌐 (800) 732-6762

🌐 www.atlascopco.us

Prosoco honored at Greenbuild 2014

SCS Global Services, a leading independent certification body for the green building sector, paid tribute to three companies—Prosoco, Marvin Windows and KI—whose SCS-certified or evaluated products are among the top 10 companies honored for innovative products for 2015 by BuildingGreen.

In the 13th consecutive year of the award, BuildingGreen, publisher of *Environmental Building News*, highlighted “transformative products [that] eliminate toxic chemicals and fossil fuels, and improve building and site performance.”

Prosoco is a national manufacturer of products that clean, protect and maintain concrete, brick and stone. Its Fluid-Applied Cat 5 Air Barrier System is a high-

performance alternative to sheet goods, based on a high-performance “hybrid” polymer chemistry that uses no solvents or isocyanates, and further adapted to remove phthalate plasticizers.

This system, along with concrete coating and building construction coating and sealant products, has been certified under the SCS Indoor Advantage Gold standard, the industry’s toughest indoor air quality certification.

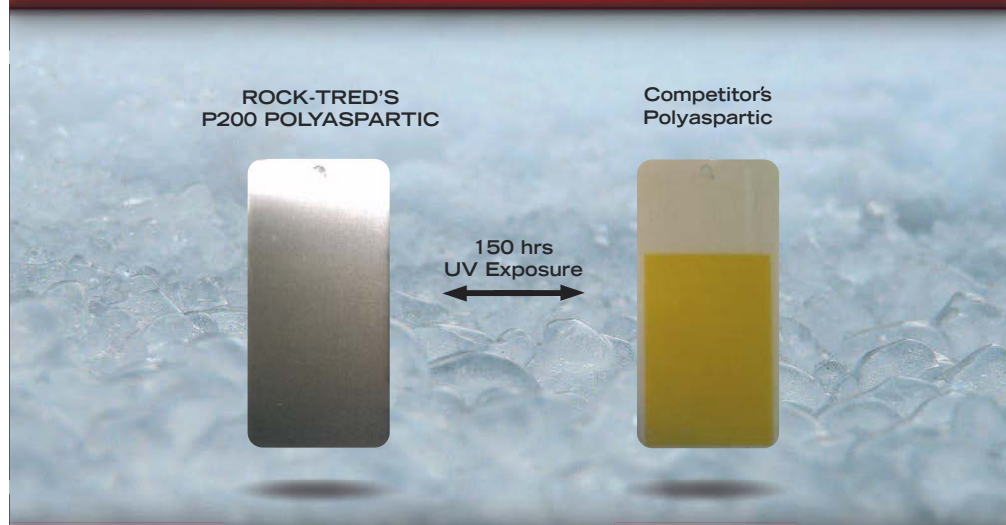
SCS has been providing global

leadership in third-party environmental and sustainability certification, auditing, testing and standards development for three decades. Programs span a cross-section of industries, recognizing achievements in green building, manufacturing, food and agriculture, forestry and more. SCS is a Certified B corporation, reflecting its commitment to socially and environmentally responsible business practices.

🌐 www.scsglobalservices.com

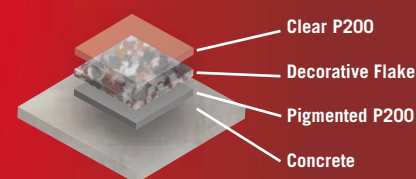
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PCA names new CEO and chair

At its fall meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Portland Cement Association board of directors named James G. Toscas president and chief executive officer and elected John Stull chair and Karl Watson Jr. vice chair, effective Dec. 15, 2014.

Stull, president and CEO of Lafarge North America, succeeds Cary O. Cohrs, president of American Cement Co. LLC. Watson, president of CEMEX USA, succeeds Stull.

Toscas has decades of experience in the concrete industry. For the past 11 years he served as president and CEO of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute, and from 1998 to 2002 he was executive vice president and CEO at the American Concrete Institute.

As a founder of the Concrete and Masonry-Related Associations, Toscas improved the collaboration of all industry allies and provided a forum to establish a strategic roadmap for the entire concrete industry.

Prior to joining ACI, Toscas was executive director and CEO of the American Nuclear Society. He received

a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Chicago and a master's in nuclear engineering from the University of Illinois, Urbana.

With offices in Skokie, Illinois, and Washington, D.C., PCA represents cement manufacturing companies in the U.S. It conducts market development, engineering, research, education and public affairs programs.

www.cement.org

Scofield's annual awards contest sets record with 100 entries

L. M. Scofield Co. has finished accepting entries for its seventh annual Decorative Concrete Awards contest, and the number of entries received has set an all-time record.

"We received an astonishing 100 entries in the 2014 contest, which is almost double the record we have ever received in one year previously. The number of entries seems fitting since we will be celebrating our company's centennial year in 2015," says Cam Villar, director of integrated marketing. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony during Scofield's centennial celebration at the 2015 World of Concrete in Las Vegas.

The contest is divided into six categories: Integral Concrete Color, Stained Concrete, Stamped Concrete, Polished Concrete, Heavy/Highway Concrete and Artistic Concrete. Each category will award a second runner-up, a first runner-up and a grand prize winner. The contest is free to enter and open to any contractor or company that used Scofield Systems in the submitted project.

Scofield will feature all 100 entries on its Facebook page (Scofield Decorative Concrete Systems), where they will be posted one at a time in the coming months.

(800) 800-9900

www.scofield.com

Penetron supports clean water access

For this year's Penetron International's Fall 2014 EWB-USA Grant Award Contest, the company carefully selected three extraordinary projects that provide clean water access to remote rural villages in East Africa and Central America. Voting, done on the Penetron Facebook page, closed Nov. 11. All three projects are managed by Engineers Without Borders USA (EWB-USA).

The winning project by Tufts University/Shilongo in Uganda will receive a grant from

EVENT CALENDAR

The International Concrete Polishing and Staining Conference

Feb. 2-3, Las Vegas, Nevada

www.icpsc365.com/icpsc2015

World of Concrete

Feb. 2-6, Las Vegas, Nevada

www.worldofconcrete.com

Decorative Concrete Staining & Engraving Seminar

Feb. 25-27, Mansfield, Missouri

www.engraveacrete.com

International Concrete Repair Institute Spring Convention

March 25-27, New York, New York

www.icri.org

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Penetron. That project will create a single borehole to provide additional drinking water for the community of 2,300 as there are long waits at the current single hand-operated pump. EWB-USA is implementing an automatic pumping system to allow up to four people to fill up their jugs at once.

The other two projects, a water pipeline in Guatemala and a pump system in Nicaragua, also will receive grant funding.

The Penetron Group is a leading manufacturer of specialty construction products for concrete waterproofing, concrete repairs and floor preparation systems. It operates through a global network, offering support to the design and construction community through its regional offices, representatives and distribution channels.

☎ (631) 941-9700

🌐 www.penetron.com

🌐 www.ewb-usa.org

W.R. Grace to buy out Turkish partner

W.R. Grace & Co. has entered into definitive agreements to acquire the remaining 50 percent equity interest in the joint venture it formed in 1996 with STFA Yatırım Holding A.S., one of Turkey's most established and reputable conglomerates providing services in construction, natural gas distribution, construction equipment and construction chemicals. With the agreement, STFA will sell its 50 percent stake in Grace Yapı Kimyasalları to a Grace subsidiary.

The Istanbul-based business provides cement additives, concrete admixtures and building envelope products in Turkey and the surrounding region. The transaction is pending Turkish regulatory approval and is expected to close by the year's end. Terms were not disclosed.

Grace Construction Products offers a wide range of innovative specialty construction chemicals worldwide. The business will continue to provide products to customers in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Iraq. It also will remain an important growth center for the company's specialty building materials business in the region. 📱

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Fabricate any form with Smooth-On's new epoxy putty

Free Form Habitat Fire Safe epoxy putty by Smooth-On is a high-density epoxy sculpting putty that is flame rated (E84, Class A). Habitat Fire Safe is solvent-free and contains no VOCs. Working time is 90 minutes and cure time is 16 hours at room temperature (73 degrees F/23 degrees C). Epoxy cures to a very hard, flame- and heat-resistant material that's easily painted. Fire Safe does not contain any carcinogens (cancer causing agents).

Suitable for interior and exterior theming applications and general sculpting, Habitat Fire Safe is certified 'aquarium safe' and is used by aquariums and zoos to make hyper-realistic trees, vines, rocks, coral and other display elements. It is made to be used with Habitat Folding Powder to thicken and reduce sag when applied to a vertical surface.

Once putty is applied, it can be stamped with a silicone rubber stamp to create repeating patterns with intricate detail over a large surface area that can be smoothed with alcohol or water. It will not melt foam and can be used as an EPS foam coating.

Free Form Habitat Fire Safe, an excellent repair cement, bonds permanently to itself, PVC, acrylic sheeting, wood, many metals, plastics and foams.

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www.smooth-on.com

Benron will introduce new texture sprayer at WOC

At the 2015 World of Concrete, Benron will formally introduce the Ez-Tex DXG gas-powered texture sprayer for decorative concrete overlayment and air compressor with Benron's Gal-Air compressor pack and Honda's GX160 engine.

Among the strongest two-cylinder direct-drive compressors on the market, the Ez-Tex DXG has an innovative design that doesn't use pulleys, flywheels, belts or belt-guard assemblies. The compressor is bolted directly to the engine flange, resulting in a lightweight, compact machine that weighs only 60 pounds and has an air delivery of 25 cubic feet per minute (CFM) displacement.

Other features include automatic idle down, an ASME safety valve and engine-oil shutdown. The automatic control is factory-set to idle down at 125 psi and to refill when pressure reaches 100 psi. The two-cylinder direct-drive design is Honda-approved and virtually maintenance free.

The Ez-Tex DXG also features a high-output, double-diaphragm texture spray pump that produces material delivery rates up to 6 gpm. With material operating pressure up to 100 psi, users can spray heavier materials and support much longer hose lengths.

The large capacity 15-gallon material hopper includes quick connectors between the hopper and material strainer. To make it lighter and easier to carry, Benron's 25-cfm gas compressor pack can be removed. Users also can leave the gas compressor outside while spraying inside to reduce exposure to noise and exhaust fumes.

(888) 327-9839

www.benron.com



Jon-Don adds new propane concrete floor grinder

Jon-Don, a leading distributor of products, equipment and training for independent contractors and in-house service providers across multiple industries, has added the Scan Combiflex 800 Propane to its line of Scanmaskin concrete floor grinders.

The grinder is 100 percent powered by propane and is ideal for use by operators with concrete polishing jobs in large, wide-open facilities or outdoor locations where power supply is limited.

With a weight of 970 pounds and a grinding path of 32 inches, the heavy-duty machine is designed to help operators achieve productivity rates between 750 and 1,290 square feet per hour.

Like all Scan Combiflex floor grinders, this propane model's low-vibration design directs the torque of the machine down at the floor, significantly minimizing stress and operator fatigue. In fact, Scanmaskin grinders can be pushed along almost as easily as a shopping cart.

☎ (800) 556-6366

🌐 www.jondon.com

Atlas Copco completes new soil roller line

Atlas Copco has introduced its CA1300 and CA1500 single-drum soil rollers for high maneuverability and visibility on parking lot, road, utility pipe and street projects. The new rollers feature the company's Active Bouncing Control, a cross-mounted Tier 4 Interim or Tier 4 Final engine, and steel blades that improve compaction, safety and visibility.

The cross-mounted engines are placed perpendicular to the frames, which is an industry first. The rollers' hydraulic pumps, in line with the engines, allow users to reach all necessary components

on the engines and hydraulic pumps for fast and easy service and maintenance. And because the engines are cross-mounted rather than parallel to the frame, they provide optimal weight distribution and contribute to the units' minimal footprint. The CA1300 features a Tier 4 Final, 75-horsepower Kubota diesel engine, and the CA1500 uses a Tier 4 Interim, 100-horsepower Cummins diesel engine.

Both have top-mounted, cool-air intakes with side vents that combine with the ejector exhaust outlet to minimize engine noise and prevent dust from being sucked into the engine compartment, a common occurrence on soil-compaction sites. The rollers' high-static linear loads make them ideal for compacting a range of materials, from clay to rock fill.

The CA1300 features a static linear load of 73 pounds per linear inch (PLI), and the CA1500 has 112 PLI. The compaction power is transferred through the rollers' drums to efficiently compact soil with minimal passes to quickly and accurately achieve the same compaction speed every time. The CA1300's 54-inch drum and the CA1500's 66-inch drum give operators optimal visibility and allow them to maneuver into tight workspaces, such as pipe trenches or road shoulders.

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Skilsaw introduces Sawsquatch

The Skilsaw 10 1/4-inch Worm Drive Saw, dubbed "Sawsquatch," is the only one of its kind designed to cut smoothly through four layers of material in one motion. It offers professionals a powerful performance to get the job done with faster and fewer cuts.

Paired with a carbide blade and designed with a large dual-field motor, the saw uses a unique copper winding pattern that increases the surface area to keep the motor cool. The saw will be available at retail and industrial distributors in early 2015.

(877) 754-5999

www.skilsaw.com

Jon-Don carries Sentinel mold-resistant coating

Jon-Don, a leading distributor of products, equipment and training for independent contractors and in-house service providers across multiple industries, has added Sentinel 24-7 Zero Mold/Mildew Resistant Coating to its extensive line of mold-abatement products.

The virtually odorless coating contains no volatile organic compounds or hazardous air pollutants. It also meets requirements for LEED credit 4.2 for low-emission materials, paints and coatings.

24-7 features built-in Microban antimicrobial protection and comes with a 10-year warranty against mold growth on the coating film surface. This latex-based coating can be easily applied to just about any interior surface with an airless sprayer or roller. The coating is available in both clear and a tintable white version.

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Fab-Form reports new method of ICF panelization

Fab-Form Industries, a manufacturer of efficient building products for the concrete industry, reports the use of Helix micro rebar has dramatically changed its method of ICF panelization.

In the past, Fab-Form, headquartered in Delta, British Columbia, manufactured the ICF panels horizontally, 12-feet long and two-blocks high. This configuration enabled them to progressively install horizontal steel as the components were built on-site.

With Helix micro rebar, the ready-mix company supplies and installs the reinforcing, allowing Fab-Form to manufacture panels sized for optimum site installation, not steel installation. Because of this, Fab-Form now manufactures panels 8-feet long and about 10-feet high.

The Fab-Form monopour foundation is built in components with the fabric bag (which forms the footing) attached to the bottom of each panel. Different colored elements represent separate components.

Once the contractor has approved the working drawings, the manufacturing begins. The working drawings allow the builder to carefully review the top of wall elevations and final dimensions so that site errors and resulting delays and expenses are avoided. Even point loads in the footing are easily accommodated.

Monopour panels are delivered by truck to the jobsite. A drainage layer across the site prevents ground moisture from entering into the concrete. String lines and batter boards are used to align each panel.

The Fab-Form website includes a detailed video, panel drawing and photos of a recent installation of the new method of panelization.

The Fab-Form monopour system uses the ICF block itself to form the footing, thereby eliminating all footing-forming lumber, stakes, cold joints and double pours. Monopour supports suspend ICF blocks above the ground at the required footing height. Fastfoot is attached to the bottom of the ICF blocks to form the footing. Sewn corners and T-junctions increase speed of site installation dramatically. Fastfoot is GreenSpec listed and LEED-point contributing.

☎ (888) 303-3278

🌐 www.fab-form.com

ChemSystems introduces new color hardener

ChemSystems Inc., a leading specialty manufacturer of decorative concrete products based in Houston, Texas, introduces CSI Architectural Color Hardener, a specially formulated, dry-shake, colored surface hardener that contains premium-graded reflective aggregates.

Designed to be lightly exposed using CSI Surface Etch or Surface Gel Tek gelled acid, the product is used for coloring, hardening and conditioning freshly placed concrete flatwork when a more refined lightly exposed surface with reflective aggregates is desired. All the aggregates are contained in the product, eliminating the need to surface-seed aggregate or pay for through-body aggregate.

CSI Architectural Color Hardener is offered in six standard colors with three different reflective aggregate types. Custom colors and aggregate blends are available upon request.

With more than 20 years of service, ChemSystems provides products to the decorative concrete market under the HBS, CSI and Helix brand names. 🛠️

☎ (800) 545-9827

🌐 www.chemsystemsinc.net

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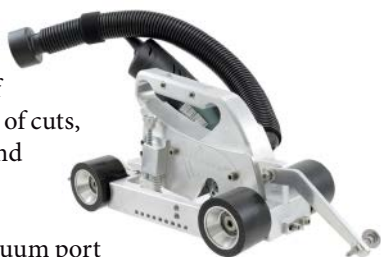
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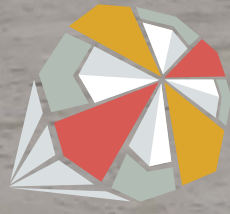
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State of the Industry

Decorative concrete experts weigh in on what's coming and how to meet it

WE recently asked several of our concrete comrades to share with us their thoughts on the industry as a whole and their segment of the decorative concrete industry in particular. Though their answers and experiences were wildly different, the one thing that clearly came through is an excitement for the nearly unlimited potential these experts see in the industry right now.

We asked everyone the same set of questions. It wasn't easy to approach this, given our friends' varied experiences and applications. Perhaps the first challenge to looking ahead this way is defining the industry in general.

"The basic question, 'Where is our industry headed?' is riddled with complexity, considering there is no common ground as to what our 'industry' is," says Jeremy French, artisan with Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products. "Is it concrete? Is it countertops? Is it artisans? The perspective about the future depends heavily on which one of these definitions rings truest to the individual."

Many factors have contributed to the growth of the industry. "The combination of better materials, better education and greater public awareness means demand is growing in all market segments," French says. "This is what is great about concrete as a moldable material . . . it can be shaped to demand and has a unique problem-solving ability as a result. The better the artisan is at shaping the material, the more specifiers will resort to the material to solve design challenges, regardless of whether the environment is residential, commercial or public."

According to a report published by the Freedonia Group, ready-mix concrete will continue to be the fast-growing segment for cement through 2015, and will account for nearly 30 percent of global demand. Demand in the U.S. for precast concrete is expected to rise to \$11.3 billion in 2015. This same report notes residential buildings are the fastest-growing segment for precast. Of

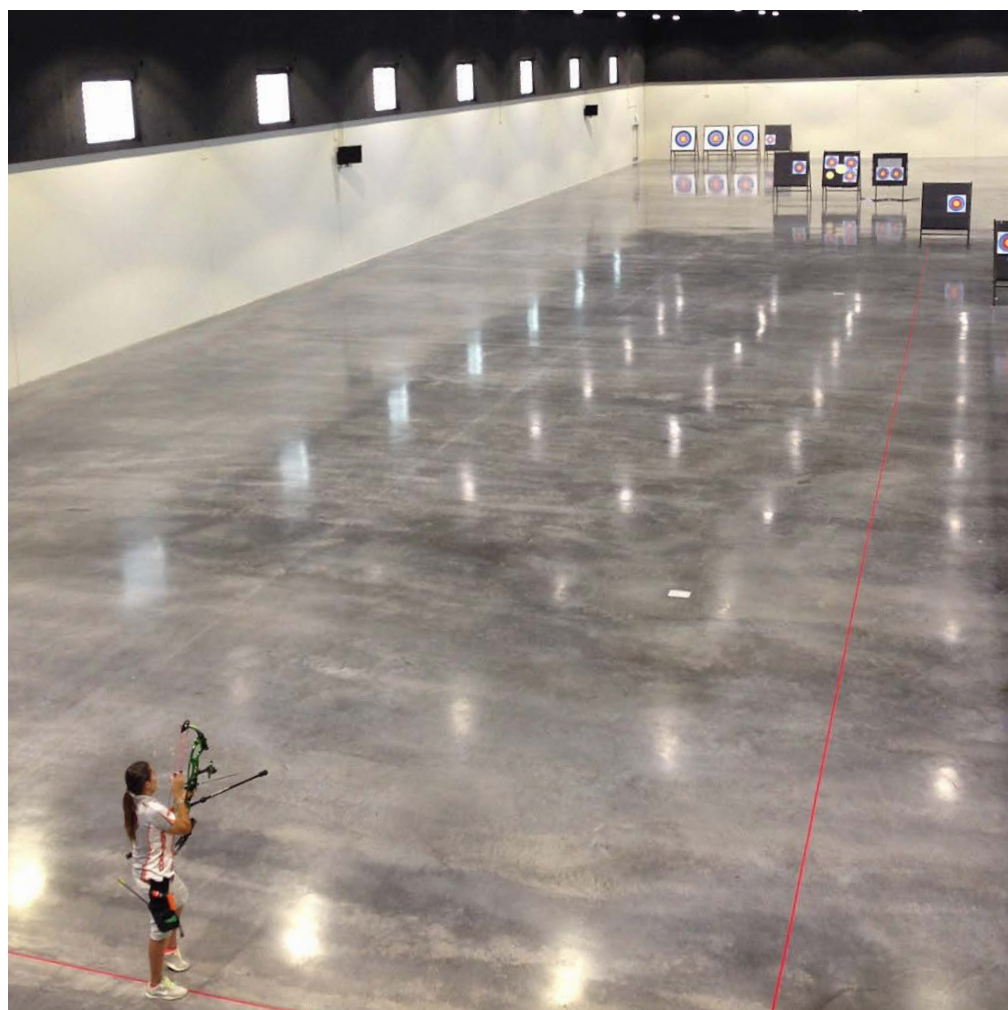


Photo courtesy of Convergent Concrete Technologies LLC

Polished concrete is one of the fastest-growing segments of the decorative concrete industry today. This growth is an opportunity for artisans and specialty contractors to emerge beyond polished concrete surfaces with unique affordable options that offer bold new looks. (Eaton Archery in Salt Lake City, Utah, the U.S. Olympic training center, by Extreme Finishes.)

all product types, architectural concrete will see the fastest-growing demand through 2015, thanks to decorative facades. A 2014 report from the Portland Cement Association predicts cement consumption will rise to 93.3 million tons in 2015 and 103.2 million tons in 2016.

What this rise in use means to us is perhaps best said by Cody Carpenter, owner and operator of Architectural Concrete Interiors. "Let's put it this way, this ain't Kansas anymore, Mr. Concrete!" he says.

"I am excited for what our industry has in store, and see it going in a positive direction. Concrete embodies richness and this is something that will never lose its popularity as a design medium."

We invite you to join the conversation by getting in touch via our website (www.concretedecor.net), on Facebook (*Concrete Decor Magazine*) or Twitter (@concretedecor). Snippets of what our respondents wrote follow.

—Vanessa Salvia

Where is your segment of the decorative concrete industry at in relation to competing products, and do you see continued growth?

Grier: "One of the primary catalysts moving this segment of the decorative concrete industry forward is the nearly unlimited variety of finishes that can be achieved along with the ability for these coating systems to also be functional within a heavy-traffic environment."

Scharich: "Decorative concrete is definitely stealing market share on the interior flooring market. Usage of dyes, stains and polishing in retail, education and industrial buildings has experienced tremendous growth in that same five-year period. Nonstamped color-usage options like sandblasting, swirl-finishing and artistic directional brooming combined with secondary colored borders are being utilized in greater numbers each year."

Sacco: "I feel we will see continued growth in the decorative market."

Sullivan: "Imprinted concrete has become a mainstream hardscape finish that is available in all markets and is offered by most residential concrete contractors. The paver industry has taken note of the stamped concrete industry and has come out with larger paver stones, textured surfaces and expanded color options. I think stamped concrete will grow, but it will mostly come from an expanding construction market as the economy grows, not from an expansion of the stamped concrete market itself taking market share

from other hardscape surfaces."

Koebrick: "The decorative concrete market segment is definitely growing at an exponential rate. We see it replacing vinyl tile, natural stone, ceramic tile and even wood as new products offer competitive design elements. Polished concrete is rapidly growing in retail and commercial, replacing vinyl tile and alternatives. However, last year there was a fast-growing trend in artesian style floors."

Wilson: "Coatings have their strengths, especially when there's a need to address a problem area or completely rehabilitate existing old, damaged or discolored flooring without removing or replacing the existing concrete. Polishing has taken the industry by storm, especially in new construction and commercial projects. Self-leveling overlays are a growth area for the industry."

Underwood: "We are starting to see combination technologies that provide enhanced performance based on the strength of the application."

Reardon: "Decorative concrete and/or finished concrete floors have grown by leaps and bounds in the last couple of years. We have seen explosive growth in the marketplace with dyed/stained concrete, integral colored concrete, overlays, integral colored overlays, along with the 'naked' floor. Traditionally we hear 'the concrete is already there,' the term canvas is being used more and more, and the 'natural' characteristics of the concrete as it sits are a bonus to their clients and no longer need to be covered up."

The following people contributed to this story:

Cody Carpenter, owner and operator of Architectural Concrete Interiors; specialty is countertops and precast

Jeremy French, artisan with Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products; specialty is countertops and precast

Ben Grier, with sales and marketing for HP Spartacote; specialty is concrete coatings/epoxies/sealers

Jeff Koebrick, president of Convergent Concrete Technologies LLC; specialty is polished concrete flooring

Joe Reardon, director of SASE Signature Floor Systems; specialty is polished concrete flooring

Bart Sacco, owner of Kingdom

Products; specialty is stamped and imprinted concrete

Todd Scharich, owner of Decorative Concrete Resources; decorative concrete specialist with the American Society of Concrete Contractors

Chris Sullivan, vice president of sales and marketing for ChemSystems Inc.; specialty is concrete coatings, epoxies and sealers

Chris Underwood, product manager of H&C, Diversified Brands, for Sherwin Williams; specialty is concrete coatings, epoxies and sealers

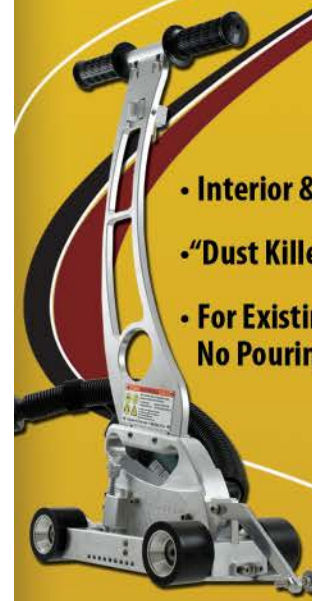
Jennifer Wilson, brand manager for Rhino Linings Corp.; specialty is concrete coatings, epoxies and sealers

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Expect to see a plethora of new products at the 2015 World of Concrete such as high- and low-gloss surface treatments; color enhancers; stain, wear and slip protection; and specialty treatments for polishable toppings. (Floor by Lesa Systems in Australia.)

Photo courtesy of Convergent Concrete Technologies LLC

What do you see as the main catalyst moving your segment of the decorative concrete industry forward: pigments, new products, chemical improvements, better training, public awareness, sustainability or something else? Or all of the above?

Scharich: “I believe concrete pigments are the core product that industry growth will be built around. The use and public awareness that comes with their high-visibility placement is the face of our industry.”

Sacco: “I am starting to see custom concrete countertop fabrication coming back strong. Vertical wall mix is gaining popular attention once again due to its ability to be sculpted to replicate many different natural items like stone, brick, tiles and even wood. Restoration work is also on the rise.”

Sullivan: “Plain and simple – innovation and customization must occur to keep stamped concrete relevant in the hardscape

industry. Most of this will need to come from installers as they offer new and unique color options, creative design options and customization options for each job (for a price).”

Underwood: “Pigments. As color becomes increasingly more popular, new products that provide better uses of existing technologies and breakthrough technologies can change the game. However, all of these innovations will need better messaging and awareness to consumers and contractors if we are to continue to see growth in this industry.”

Koebrick: “New products, definitely. We are seeing a wave of new business coming from contractors who are fed up with products not performing as represented. The best way to move the industry forward is to have more performance-based specifications that force manufacturers to provide quality products.”

Wilson: “For the industry overall, public

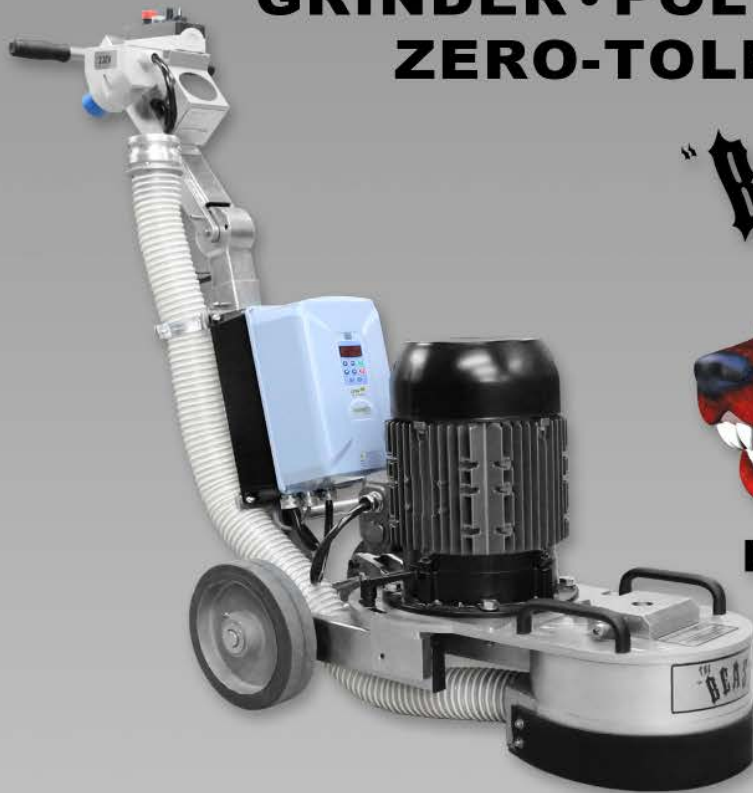
awareness, architect education, contractor training and product availability are key catalysts moving forward. Architects and designers need more education on the differences between various coatings so they can properly specify them. Product training is always key, but sometimes the contractors need more training on how to sell the products rather than just how to apply them. Unfortunately too many contractors are either good at selling or good at applying coatings, but not both.”

Reardon: “As the industry matures we have been lucky to be part of a new generation of products, services and manufacturers becoming more entrenched with the customers they serve and the industry as a whole. In picking the main catalysts that have driven this I would say training by manufacturers, new chemical technology and advancement in tooling and planetary grinders.”

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Where do you see the greatest increase in business coming from: retail, industrial, residential, private sector, municipalities or somewhere else?

Grier: "The largest increase in business over the next 10 years will be from the commercial and industrial sector. Companies are just now becoming aware of the advantages offered by high-performance systems which limit downtime."

Scharich: "Following the economic stimulus in 2008, the municipal decorative concrete market saw huge growth. But those funds have run out and the burden is back on the local communities. Because of this, I expect to see the retail market as the area where our biggest growth will come from."

Sacco: "On the decorative side, most of my increase in business has been in new product formulation and/or manufacturing capacity."

Sullivan: "Mostly from private sector/residential and some from municipalities."

Underwood: "I believe retail offers the biggest opportunity for growth, as awareness increases and products become increasingly easier to use."

Koebrick: "We see growth in all



Photo courtesy of SASE

In the past, surface protection meant applying a topical treatment but these treatments are quickly being replaced by new penetrating products. Traditional tooling and planetary equipment used on these floors also have advanced to help applicators produce durable, attractive floors that can be processed quickly but still provide longevity.

segments across the board equally. However, our significant growth has come from new product options specifically addressing needs within each segment."

Wilson: "Retrofits and renovations, regardless of whether it's for the residential, commercial, industrial or municipal segments, will always be our biggest market,

but I see a lot of opportunities in the industrial segment."

Reardon: "As we mature we are seeing all aspects of industrial, retail, residential, doctor offices, homes, schools, etc. using decorative concrete. Growth will come and along with that an increase for training, training and more training."

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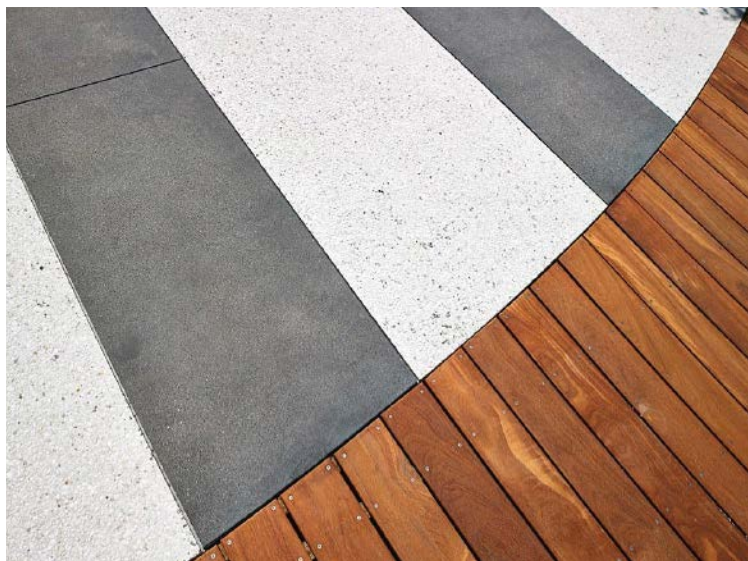


Photo courtesy of American Society of Concrete Contractors

Competitive products in the exterior market have seen little or no change in many years, while new methods of finishing decorative concrete continue to evolve.

Carpenter: “I have seen a much larger spectrum of clients in recent years. Precast concrete, when put into the hands of the artisans in our industry, will continue to gain momentum because of the amount of talent that is producing it. We are fueled by some of the world’s most talented designers that are guided by the medium of concrete which translates itself into beauty.”

What are some negatives trending in your segment of the industry?

French: “If the value of artisan concrete is not maintained, it will be difficult for the material and the artisan to fully realize the potential. The companies that undercut on price go out of business, but they wreck perceived value in the process. The effort it takes to rebuild that perception is significant, and it makes for unnecessary complications for those trying to build sustainable businesses using artisan concrete.”

Scharich: “The decorative concrete market will always suffer some from untrained or unskilled installers. Tremendous effort



Photo courtesy of SASE

Manufacturers have listened to what customers are asking for with advanced tooling and water-based products that accomplish both stain and slab protection.

exhibited toward project sales can be destroyed by a price-based, low-quality contractor.”

Sacco: “I am not sure if we have negative trends in our segment of the industry. What I can see is that with the small amount of residential work that is on the rebound, most property owners are still cash-strapped and are forced to cut out upgraded items like pattern-stamped walkways, patios and driveways.”

Sullivan: “Quality of work remains the major negative trend.”

Underwood: “Failures usually occur due to a lack of proper preparation to the substrate, which is usually a result of the lack of knowledge of the person applying the solution. Availability of more training tools and demonstrations are critical to ensure the average end-user has enough tools in their toolkit to ensure success.”

Koebrick: “The biggest negative we foresee is the onslaught of unproven and untested systems on the market and the lack of performance-based specifications.”

Wilson: “There have been changes to chemical usage guidelines and product VOC guidelines. Finding replacement chemicals that do not impact the workability or performance of the product is key and can be a challenge. Also, we are seeing companies in many foreign countries developing their own products and producing them locally, so the export market for U.S. companies is decreasing.”

Carpenter: “We find ourselves still chasing that perfect durable finish that meets industry solid-surface expectations of a low-maintenance, durable product similar to quartz countertops. We as an industry are still struggling to match large manufacturers’ finishes similar to GFRC concrete without the maintenance drawbacks of concrete. Where concrete will and always has shined is in its ability to morph into endless shapes and surface finishes, which has always given us an edge in certain design applications.”

Reardon: “We need to look back on the way natural stone floors were polished. Our industry faces the same task as other industries, like it and unlike it. We need to stick to basics and still perform the traditional methods that existed in the beginning. With the advancements come responsibility of the industry, the applicators and everyone involved. We need to protect the basics while still providing progress forward.” 🛠️

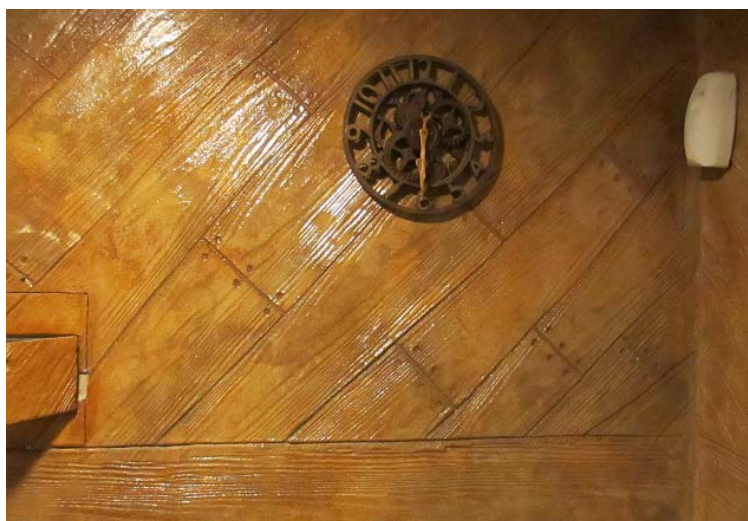



Photo courtesy of Kingdom Products

Vertical wall mixes are gaining in popularity when renovating restaurants, theme parks or even your average everyday home. They can adhere to most interior or exterior substrates and can replicate many natural items such as stone or wood.



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Define Your Business Goals for 2015

by Vanessa Salvia

As you can tell from our “State of the Industry” article starting on page 26, many experts believe the decorative concrete industry will experience large amounts of growth in 2015. That will come from new products and techniques, and a growing awareness of the versatility of decorative concrete.

Is your business poised to take advantage of that growth? One measure of a business’ strength lies in how quickly it can adjust to changes. There’s no better time than the beginning of a new year to look back on the past year and evaluate your business plan. Here are a few questions to keep you on track and focused.

1. What were your successes and strengths over the past year? Identify specifically what you can do to develop and enhance those strengths.

2. What didn’t work? What was challenging? Evaluate what didn’t work like you expected and learn from it. How

did you positively address challenges and can you take even more specific steps to do better this year?

3. What were your missed opportunities? You may have overlooked an opportunity to take good pictures, send out a press release, attend a conference, advertise in a new way or make new business connections. Vow to act differently when the opportunity next presents itself.

4. How have your competitors changed? Your own marketing strategy should encompass offense and defense, so you can react flexibly to whatever your competition is doing — not to copy them but to keep an equal standing or better. If new competitors have entered the market, evaluate what makes them different and adjust your own strategies accordingly.

5. When was the last time you updated your website? If you can’t remember, it’s time to do it now. Add a new project to your portfolio. Change

the description of your services to keep it updated and fresh.

6. What are your biggest opportunities this year? Opportunities in the industrial and commercial segment are growing rapidly. Develop case studies or cultivate relationships that will help you take advantage of the growth you are seeing in your area. Many experts see the renovation market continuing to grow.

7. What trends are you seeing in what your clients are asking for? Put what the market wants front and center in your marketing materials and in the supplies you sell, if applicable.

8. What industry changes will threaten your segment of the industry and how can you address them? For instance, Jennifer Wilson, brand manager for Rhino Linings, has observed that products are being reformulated, and companies in foreign countries are developing their own products, which means that the export market in the U.S. is decreasing.

9. Do you have the right people in your organization? Hire a marketer to take that work off your plate. Invest in trainings to make sure you have well-skilled employees. What skill sets is your organization missing? Can you provide that or do you need to outsource or hire new people?

10. What is your annual gross and net income goal? Break that down into a monthly figure and take steps to determine how you will get there.

11. What part of your business is under-performing? Evaluate what is not working to help you meet your targets. Do these sectors of your business need to be eliminated or do they need a push to help them move forward?

12. How are you supporting your industry? A rising tide floats all boats, as the saying goes. You can look out for yourself only, or you can attempt to develop and strengthen relationships with industry organizations, offer trainings or seek out partnerships with other people in your field who will help grow the industry as a whole. 🛠️

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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE

Adrian Gascon, Creative Waterscapes Ventura, California

by Vanessa Salvia

ADRIAN Gascon has reinvented himself personally and professionally a few times. He sold cars and played and coached baseball and basketball, then through luck and hard work began fabricating top-secret planes for the government, making \$20 an hour at 20 years old. He's found success in concrete, and continues to tweak himself as he learns new techniques to bend concrete to his will.

"I had to drop out of college and I sold cars, but left that because of the gas crunch," Gascon says. After that he worked for a company called Piper Aerostar for a year, where he learned structural engineering and hydraulics. "Then they closed and Lockheed hired me to work on the SR-71 and the F-117," Gascon says, speaking of a Mach 3+ reconnaissance aircraft known as the Blackbird and the stealth fighter that was flown during Operation Desert Storm. "That was awesome. I was only 21. I was fortunate because I knew hydraulics and structural mechanics." When there were layoffs in the aerospace industry, Gascon drove a truck.

Gascon, now 56, was born in Tucson and grew up in the small coastal farming town of Oxnard, California. Although his last name has a French origin, his father was born and raised in Mexico while his mother was from Nogales, Arizona.

Divine intervention?

In 1998, Gascon had a family of his own and he and his wife, Michelle, had an unsolicited opportunity to move to Fillmore, California. Unsure if that would be a wise move,

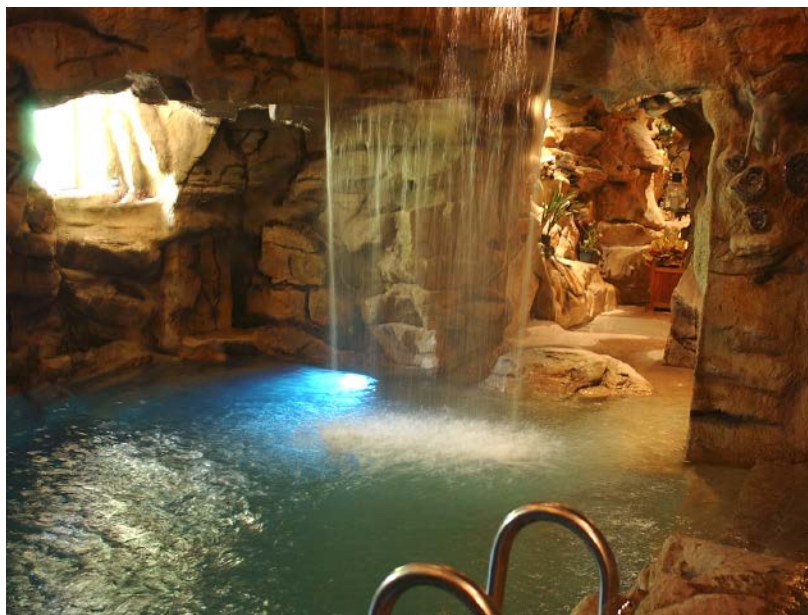
he did a little soul searching. "We just asked God, 'Why Fillmore?'" he recalls, and then just trusted their faith that moving was the right thing to do.

"We ended up buying a house across the street from a factory called Rock and Water Creations, a company that manufactures GFRC precast boulders."

A month later, Gascon was let go from his job in the aerospace industry.

"I walked into the factory that day and the owner, Rodger Embury, was on the phone telling someone he had a worker who would be out for two or three months," he says. Embury asked him about his previous employment. "When I told him, he said, 'If you can build an airplane, I can teach you to do waterfalls.'"

The then 41-year-old was hired at the wage of \$6 an hour. Three years later he supervised a \$20 million project using 60,000 square feet of GFRC and about 35,000 square feet of positive rock carving.







Embury shared many of his trade secrets through his training classes, Gascon says. “His philosophy was you’re only as good as the people around you. Give them all the secrets, teach them everything and if they go on to start their own company and become better than you, so be it.”

Focusing on creativity and design

Gascon and Embury moved into the manufacturing and distribution aspect of the trade and started contracting worldwide. Gascon’s immediate experience was in GFRG, but he also managed and supervised large construction projects involving concrete work of all types. “The thing I like about concrete is that you can

use one material to build things from start to finish,” Gascon says.

He says he’s done some unique projects, including recreating a 50-foot-high grotto for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic church in Houston with Rod Russell-Ides. “It was designed to look like the grotto in France where the Virgin Mary made an appearance,” he says, of the multimillion-dollar project.

For another job, the Spirit Lodge, he incorporated a 12-foot-high GFRG water feature into an actual adobe ruin. Hand-carved branches and other details recreated a home in an adobe village.

Still another job nearly completed in downtown Los Angeles is for Clifton’s Cafeteria. It is a comprehensive restoration

of an iconic structure built in 1935, with positive rockwork, a wedding chapel, a huge fireplace and a bar area. “It’s a \$5 million renovation,” says Gascon. “I was brought in to do some of the rock repair work and possibly color the whole thing.”

He remembers another fantastic job he did back in 2001 in Shawnee, Kansas, involving a private backyard retreat that encompassed a mountain and 25-foot-deep caverns filled with 1.8 million gallons of water. “Different openings in the caverns take you through to a swimming pool with fiber-optic lighting and precious jewels embedded into the walls so scuba divers have something to look for,” he says.

This 200-crew project was in progress for



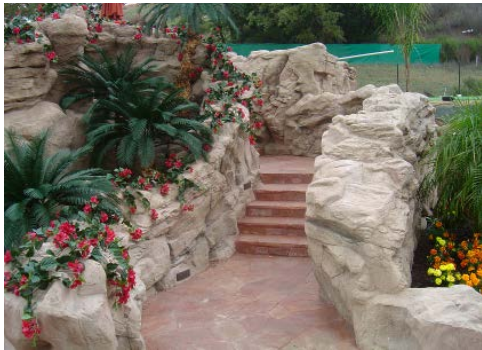
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a year before Gascon arrived, spending 13 months overseeing the GFRC. The project featured a 33-foot-high waterfall inside the grotto. "We put radiant heating tubing into the rockwork, which was 40-feet-high to the ceiling. We installed a lounge area that had six 60-inch plasma TVs. There were seven Jacuzzis and four of them were designed for use by NBA college stars who were more than 7 feet tall."

The improved economy continues to bring more business his way. "People got good deals on foreclosures and were coming in and demoing out their backyards," he says. "I was recently asked to put together a crew to go up to Napa Valley to work for a contractor doing houses."

Around the world

After Embury trained Gascon as much as he could, Gascon took that knowledge and started his own company called Creative Waterscapes Consulting providing supervising and training. He also taught seminars on using GFRC materials to contractors from all over the United States and beyond.

Today, Gascon works regularly with an established network of contractors. "I've found a niche," he says. "They bring me in to do their rockwork, run their jobs and bring in skilled people. They want to make sure the material orders are right and that they stay on budget."

Gascon says he doesn't market himself

in the traditional ways, and yet he has more work than he can keep up with most of the time. Looking back on how his career has played out, he gives most of the credit to God's guidance and to that unexplainable push to move his family to Fillmore.

"I don't advertise or even have a website or business cards," he says, "and yet I've traveled all over the country. I can't give myself that much credit." 📱

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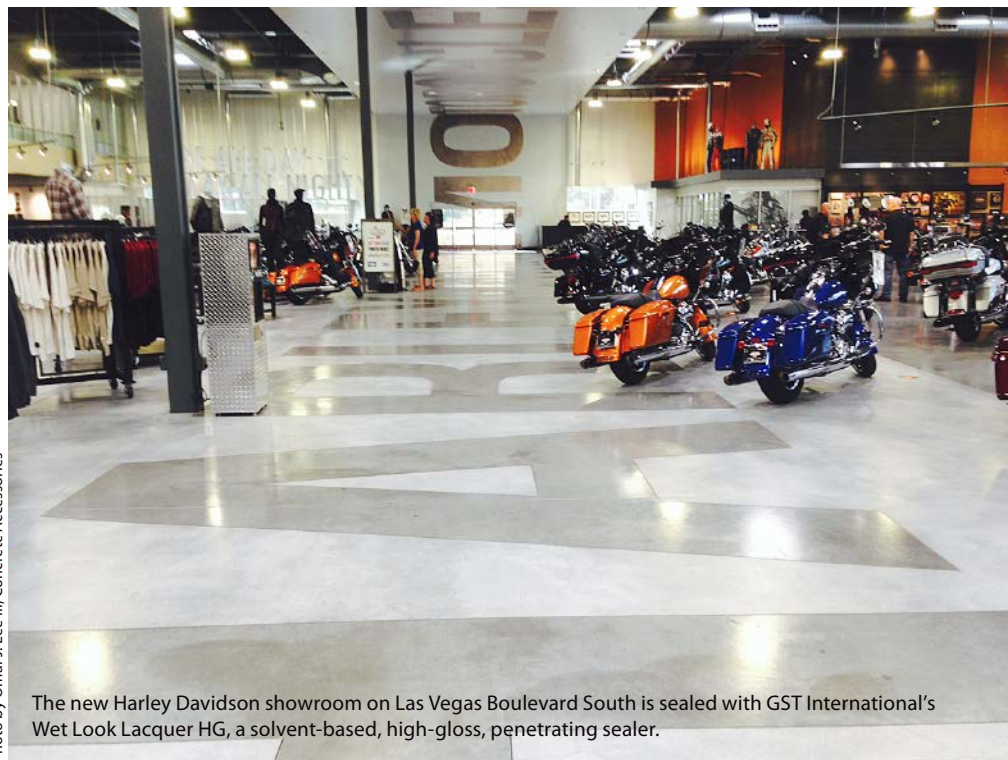
by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

Seen here are details of a Pima basket LithoMosaic made for the
Corn Creek National Forest Wildlife Refuge northwest of Las Vegas.

Photo by Robin Brailsford



Much of the decorative concrete work in Las Vegas involves making old concrete look new again, such as the Bare Pool at the Mirage.



The new Harley Davidson showroom on Las Vegas Boulevard South is sealed with GST International's Wet Look Lacquer HG, a solvent-based, high-gloss, penetrating sealer.

THROUGHOUT the nation's gambling capital, signs of rejuvenation are unfolding as tourists with a bit more spending money check in, investors' interest returns and locals get back to work. Experts at Colliers International report that Las Vegas's economy is steadily improving and a new recession isn't in the cards. Large and small construction projects, many stalled and others flat-out abandoned, are once again on a roll.

Among the noteworthy projects are the former shabby and shuttered Sahara, which has been transformed into the vibrant SLS (as in Style, Luxury, Service) Las Vegas on the Strip. The new Downtown Summerlin mall, a 106-acre, 1.6 million-square-foot development, opened for business in October with about 125 shops and eateries. And a new 20,000-seat arena is currently under construction between the New York-New York and Monte Carlo resorts.

Smaller projects prominently featuring decorative concrete include a new 50,000-square-foot Harley Davidson showroom on Las Vegas Boulevard South, just yards away from the famous Welcome to Las Vegas sign. Completed in fall 2014, the facility where you can rent or buy hogs has a GST Wet Look Lacquer floor and a sidewalk accented with Proline color hardener, reports Omar Lee of Concrete Accessories, one of the suppliers who

provided products for the dealership.

Jason Mota, market manager for Miracote products, says most of his customers in Las Vegas have been involved with projects that focus on making old concrete look new again, such as restoring pool decks, pathways and cabana areas.

The pool deck at Bare Pool at the Mirage resort, for instance, was prepped and recoated with the company's polyurea resin, MiraFlor Glazetop FC broadcast system, a coating known for its fast return to service. "Exterior pool deck surfaces need high-performance protective sealers that are very durable because these surfaces get so abused due to extreme bathing loads," with things like suntan lotion, spilled drinks and heavy foot traffic, he says. Add the UV exposure and extreme hot and cold environments into the picture and "everything is magnified."

Miracote products also were used on the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino's main pool deck. The 40,000-square-foot area was resealed with the factory-pigmented MiraGard HDWB Gloss to renew its appearance and protect it from foot traffic and staining.

One-of-a-kind rules

"I think the flow of work has picked up tremendously in these last two years as far as volume goes," says Rayson Shizuru, decorative concrete foreman for Design

Concrete. "Our clients these days are asking more and more for unique projects, one-of-a-kind things." Many of them want a "modern industrial look," he says, which often translates into a seamless floor. This past year, the bulk of Design Concrete's business has involved tenant improvements. Two projects he thinks are noteworthy involve a tattoo parlor and a helicopter service.



Vegas Ink's newest location stands out with its Westcoat Liquid Dazzle floor.



Photos courtesy of Design Concrete

Owners of Vegas Ink opted to use Liquid Dazzle from Westcoat, an epoxy coating system with metallic additives, over conventional acid staining to produce the one-of-a-kind floor they were seeking.

Owners of Vegas Ink, a 1,200-square-foot parlor in a strip mall near Planet Hollywood and across from Bubba Gump's restaurant, were ardent they wanted stained concrete in their new shop but didn't like any of Shizuru's samples. "Conventional acid staining just didn't quite do it for them but then I showed them a Dazzle sample and 'boom!' it clicked." However, it's not a stain. Liquid Dazzle from Westcoat is an epoxy coating system with metallic additives that freely flow to produce a dynamic color-changing floor.

The other project involved Sundance Helicopters, a sightseeing service that flies tourists from McCarran Airport over the Strip and beyond to the Grand Canyon. In the waiting lounge, the owners wanted a stained concrete floor that looked like an aerial desert shot of what customers would see en route to the Grand Canyon.

"We had to scramble for a faux finisher and flew one in from California," Shizuru

says. The art, which included things like Lake Mead and the Hoover Dam, were drawn to scale which entailed daily meetings with the architect to ensure accuracy. The artist used custom-made templates for the compass and names.

Both projects were done simultaneously last July during the hours of 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. "That's another thing," he says. "All these companies want the work done while the business is open because no one wants to lose customers." These two jobs, in particular, he says, ran him and his crew ragged because they were located across town from each other.

Vegas Ink, Shizuru adds, was the most challenging. The 24-hour parlor's prime location got a lot of foot traffic and the Electric Daisy Carnival music festival was in full swing during the work. "We had a hard time keeping the kids out of there," he says. "They just loved the smell of the polyurethane."

Diversity helps business

Chief Concrete, one of Las Vegas' premier architectural and decorative concrete contractors, has managed to stay busy these past several years because of the company's diversity, says Matt Walker, operations manager. From surface prep and polishing to stamping and epoxy coatings, it pretty much does everything except production. "One day we're using jack hammers and the next we're installing a LithoMosaic," he says.

His company recently worked on two new construction projects that feature LithoMosaics, a patented system that integrates custom-designed mosaics into a monolithic pour. Invented by artist Robin Brailsford and patented with partners at Shaw & Sons to be used by licensed Lithocrete installers, the mosaics are made off site and delivered ready to go.

One of the mosaics can be found at the new Garside Pool that just opened in June.



Sundance Helicopters' lounge features a stained concrete floor that gives customers a preview of what they can expect to see en route to the Grand Canyon.



Photos courtesy of Design Concrete

The long-awaited, fossil-themed community water park includes a 28-foot ichthyosaur fossil mosaic made from recycled glass and tiles. “We called him Icky,” Walker says with a laugh. His company was contracted to install “Icky” and finish the area of the pool he occupies.

The other mosaics are part of Corn Creek, the largest National Forest Wildlife Refuge in the continental U.S. Located about 30 miles northwest of town, the refuge debuted its new 11,000-square-foot visitors’ center in September, which features a 300-foot-long Lithocrete river and two 10-feet in diameter LithoMosaic medallions. These mosaics were based on images of the Pima, indigenous Americans also known as the “River People.”

Photo by Wick Alexander

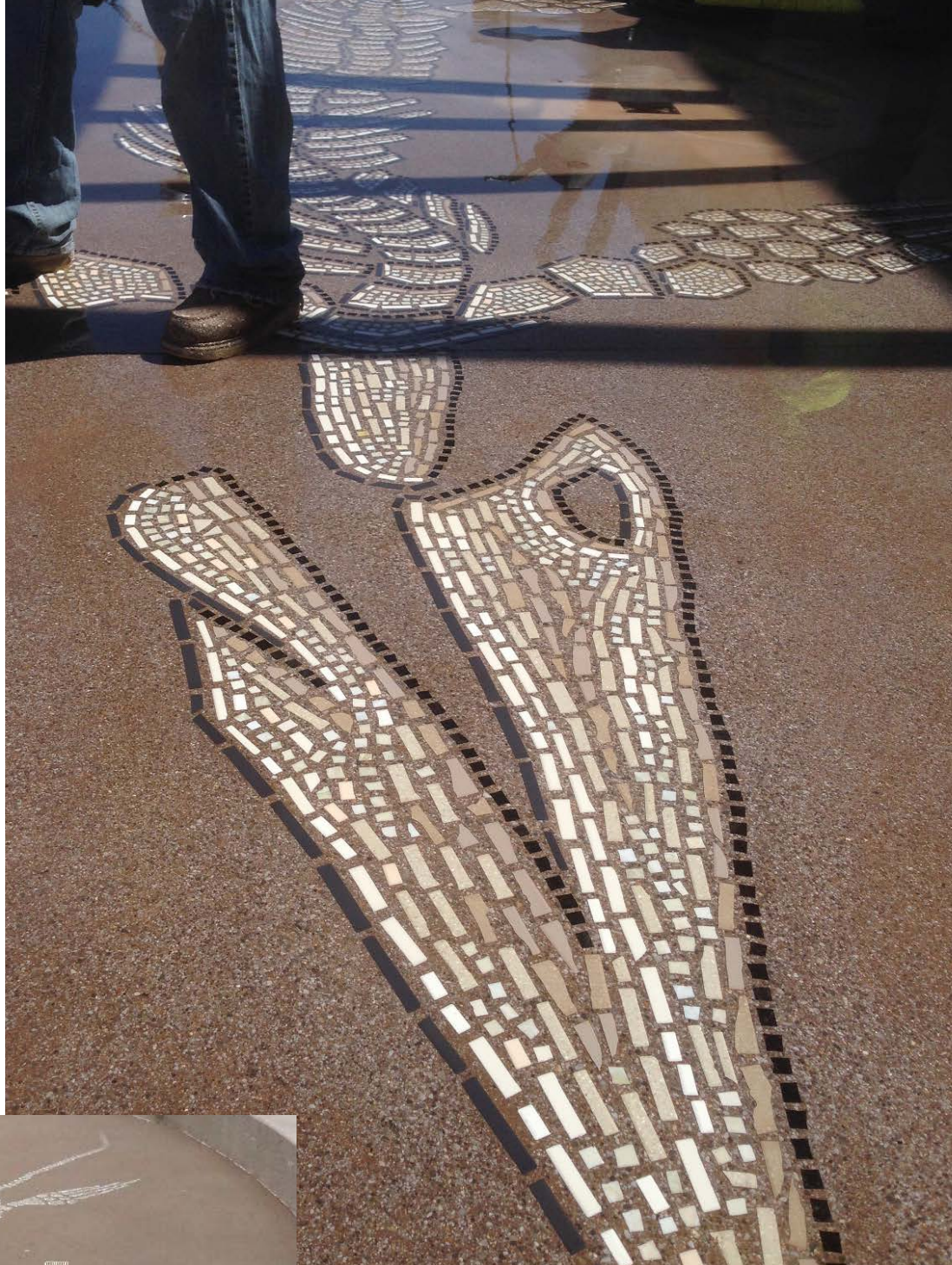


Photo courtesy of Chief Concrete



Photo courtesy of Chief Concrete

LithoMosaics are custom-made decorative elements assembled off site and delivered ready to install. You can see the ichthyosaur, here and above right, at the recently opened Garside community water park in town and two Native American-inspired creations at Corn Creek National Forest Wildlife Refuge about 30 miles away.

Chief Concrete installed both medallions and also worked with Brailsford and her partner, Wick Alexander, on the meandering Lithocrete river bed seeded with glass and aggregate.

As for larger projects, Chief Concrete worked on the new Downtown Summerlin mall. Walker estimates they installed about 70,000 square feet of concrete sidewalks, accented with a couple thousand square feet of stamped concrete. Inside, the company polished about 75,000 square feet of concrete for various retail stores such as Old Navy, Nordstrom Rack, True Religion, Lindbergh, b.young, Sur La Table and Ethan Allen.

Just down the street from the mall, Chief Concrete coated, polished and/or sealed about 42,000 square feet



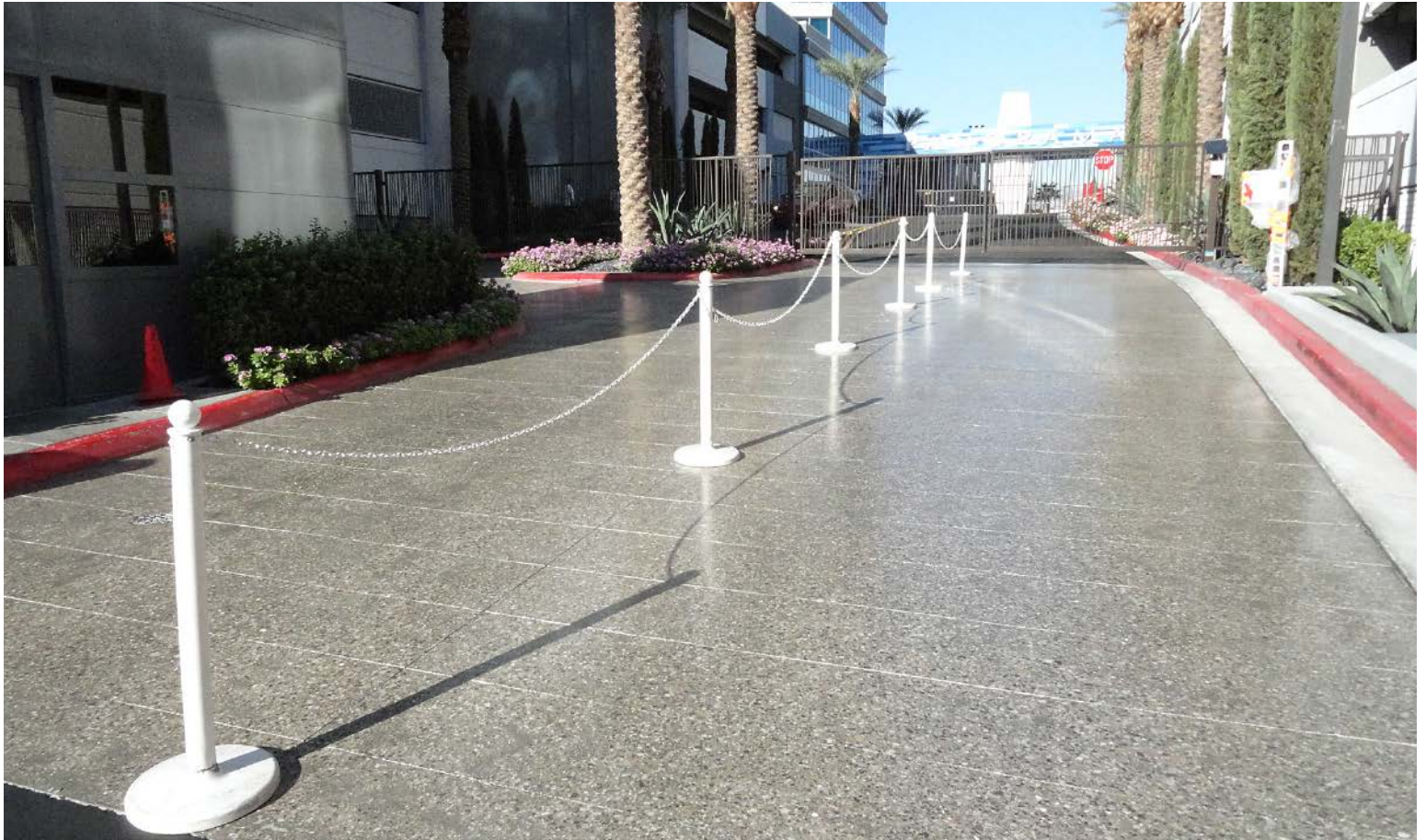
Photos courtesy of Chief Concrete



The Switch SuperNAP data center includes decorative concrete areas that are integrally colored and glass-seeded. Seen above is the company's logo outlined with stainless-steel inserts. At left is a detail from an adjacent part of the project.

of concrete this past year for a new strip mall that included Sprouts, Petco, T.J. Maxx and HomeGoods. Other new work includes integrally colored and glass-seeded concrete with stainless-steel inserts at the headquarters of Switch SuperNAP, a leader in data center design and development. That job also featured an eye-catching red and black logo at the entryway.

"Although we've seen improvement of significance in new concrete placement within the last year, we've had steady business polishing, coating or topping existing slabs for tenant improvements," says Monte Walker, president and owner of Chief Concrete. Work has included jobs at two CarMax dealerships, the Henderson Armory and M&M's World on the Strip, the latter an open-store remodel that involved Ardex Pandomo Loft, a hand-troweled floor topping. "There hasn't been a lot of ground-up building. There's still quite an inventory of commercial buildings." One of his company's more interesting tenant



The guard gate area of Panorama Towers features concrete that was ground, honed and sealed with a polyurethane. Prior to this, the area had been stamped concrete.

improvement jobs was at Panorama Towers, a high-rise residential condominium complex on Dean Martin Drive near CityCenter. Chief crews remodeled the valet and guard gate areas between the two towers by demolishing more than 2,200 square feet of existing concrete at the valet. Next, they placed integrally colored concrete—separating the different colored pours with stainless-steel division rods—and seeded it with recycled glass and mirror. The architectural pavement was then ground, honed and sealed.

“At the guard gate area we ground nearly a half-inch to remove the existing 3,000 square feet of the stamped texture to smooth the surface and expose large aggregate,” he says, before honing and sealing with a polyurethane sealer. The job also entailed poured-in-place, ground and honed vertical walls and planters. 🚚

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This new Sprouts grocery store down the street from Downtown Summerlin features polished and sealed concrete flooring.

Photo courtesy of Chief Concrete



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Outdoor Tropical Retreat Restaurant Gets High and Dry Facelift

St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

by Gail Elber

A FIVE-STAR resort will often go the extra mile to achieve the perfect ambience. But a resort in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, actually went an extra 2,500 miles to Sundeck headquarters in Arlington, Texas, to get the decorative concrete deck it wanted for its outdoor restaurant and lounge.

The resort approached account executive Rae Cerasoli with Sundeck National Accounts because Sundeck had completed projects for many other hotels in the same chain. The designer approved a sample of Sundeck's Tuscan decorative concrete overlay system in a wood-plank design. Tuscan is a hand-crafted overlay made with proprietary additives, dry mix and finishing color, and protective sealers.

A large awning partially covered the resort's outdoor restaurant and lounge. Island storms would blow rainwater into the restaurant, which would collect in low spots on the concrete floor. Resort managers wanted to improve the nearly 4,000-square-foot floor's drainage and also replace the multiple layers of painted finish with something decorative, durable and complementary to their brand.

In September 2013, project manager Armando Hernandez, project leaders



Photos courtesy of Sundeck of Washington

Silvano Villalobos, Miguel Velazquez, Guillermo Martinez and two other artisans flew to St. Thomas and started work. The crew used two 7-inch angle grinders to remove several layers of paint.

Once Hernandez's crew had removed the paint and pressure-washed the slab, they were able to identify the areas that did

not flow toward the floor drains. In some low spots, as much as an inch and a half of water was collecting. That realization was a setback for the crew, as this was going to require additional materials. The team pulled together and was able to expedite the necessary materials. "We had estimated 20 bags, but we needed 160 bags," Hernandez

Project at a Glance

Decorative concrete contractor: Sundeck of Washington, Chantilly, Virginia

Client: An international resort chain

Products used: Sundeck Tuscan textured overlay, Sundeck SunH2O water-based stain in Copper and Montego Stone, Sundeck EcoClear polyurethane sealer

Project description: Stripping and leveling a 3,843-square-foot painted concrete floor, correcting drainage and creating a wood-plank texture stained for a natural appearance

Challenges: Addressing low-lying areas that held water and coordinating materials, equipment and crews around a fully operational five-star resort. Also, iguanas kept walking on the wet overlay.

www.sundeckofwashington.com



says. He had to make eight trips in his rented Hyundai to bring all the bags back to the resort.

The crew began blending and pitching the low-lying area of the concrete floor toward the existing drains. They allowed the floor to dry, flooded it with water, identified remaining low spots, blended them and flooded the floor again until the whole thing was draining properly. They then topped the slab with a 1/8-inch Tuscan base coat. To make the job even more challenging, the crew had to prevent iguanas from walking through it.

The crew then measured and laid out the 8-inch-wide wood-plank pattern in 3/8-inch reinforced fiberglass tape. Laying out the pattern took a whole day because of the size of the area and the need to maneuver through the bar area, not to mention the fact that the restaurant's walls were 8 inches out of square.

Next, the crew applied the Tuscan material and textured it with a pull trowel to create the wood-grain effect. Then they pulled up the tape, leaving the wood-plank pattern. Using a buffer with 80-grit sandpaper, the crew then sanded down the texture to a comfortable walking surface.

After blowing off the dust, the crew used a garden-type pump-up sprayer to apply a coat of Sundek's SunH20 water-based stain in Copper. When that was dry, they used sponges to highlight some of the planks in the darker-colored Montego Stone before applying another coat of Copper.

The final step was to roll on two coats of the company's EcoClear water-based polyurethane sealer to help protect their new decorative concrete installation. Rain delayed this finale and the crew had to wait for the slab to be completely dry before they could apply the sealer.



Hernandez's crew received many compliments. These came not only from the hotel's managers but also from the guests, some of whom had enjoyed watching the two-week transformation of the restaurant's floor.

Victorious over the rain, mosquitoes and iguanas, Sundek provided a one-of-a-kind concrete design for this Caribbean destination. 🚚

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The Lorenzo Los Angeles

by John Strieder

DECORATIVE concrete doesn't come on a bigger scale than this. Developer Geoff Palmer has built more apartments in downtown Los Angeles than anyone else — more than 3,000 — all in the same faux-Italian style. And he's trusted one decorative concrete artisan to fancy up the driveways, courtyards and other common areas of his big buildings.

That man is Andre Plouffe, founder of Designs in Concrete, based in Thousand Oaks. Over a series of jobs as a subcontractor (he bids with the concrete contractor), he's earned Palmer's trust by staying on time and on budget. In return, the developer gives him an enormous amount of leeway. Plouffe often overrides plans and specs to put in what he thinks will look better, and he doesn't even ask the boss, he says. They trust him. And they



Photos courtesy of Proline Decorative Concrete Systems

keep hiring him — projects for G.H. Palmer Associates account for 60 to 70 percent of his gross revenues.

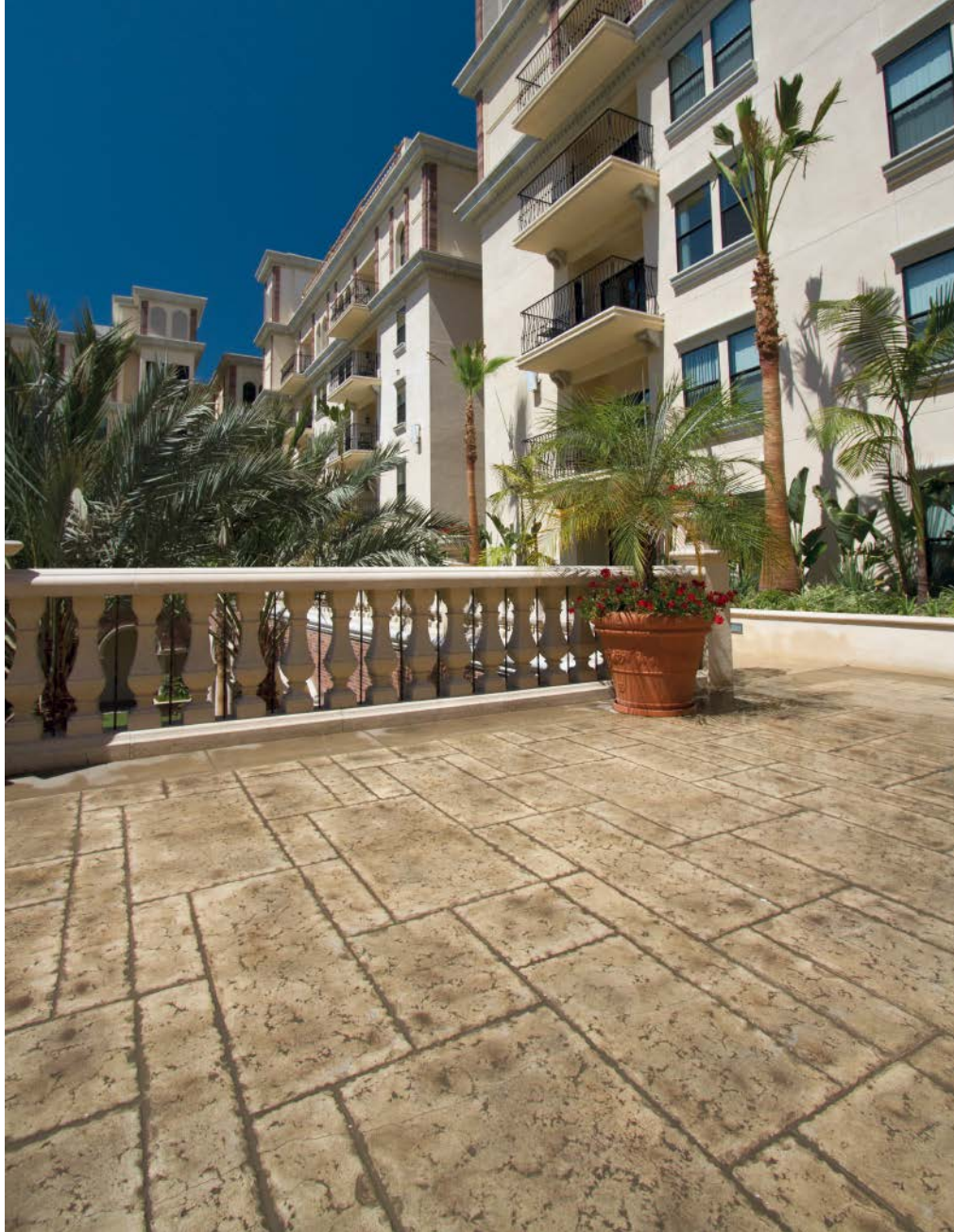
As a result, Plouffe's work plays a central role in a series of huge apartment complexes with Renaissance-themed names such as the Medici, Orsini and Visconti that have transformed downtown L.A.

"G.H. Palmer are not the easiest guys to work for," Plouffe says. "They're tough. They say, 'There's your schedule and this is when your pour days are. And make them, because there are guys coming up behind you.' They push you. But the first week of the month your check is there. You're never calling them for money, ever. If Geoff hasn't been paid by the bank, he'll pay you out of pocket. You dream of clients like that."

Luxury complex for college kids

Their most recent collaboration, The Lorenzo, is the first Palmer complex geared toward college students. Half a mile from the University of Southern California campus, the \$300 million, six-story fortress occupies the city block at Flower Street and Adams Boulevard. It offers more than 900 furnished apartments, plus an impressive list of luxury amenities that include two gyms, four pools, two professional-size indoor basketball courts, community lounges, steam showers and a sauna. The centerpiece is a \$4.5 million fountain that emits lasers and fog and shoots water in time to music.

"You move away from home and you live in a freaking luxury complex like that?"



Project at a Glance

Client: G.H. Palmer Associates, Beverly Hills, Calif.

Decorative concrete contractor: Designs In Concrete, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

www.designsinconcrete.net

General contractor: G.H. Palmer Associates; Sam Maus Sr., project coordinator; Sam Maus Jr., senior superintendent

Concrete contractor: Silverline Construction, Los Angeles

Landscape/hardscape architect: L.A. Group Design Works, Woodland Hills, Calif.

Time to complete decorative concrete work: A year and 10 months, concluding in July 2014

Scope of work: Close to 2,500 square yards of stamped concrete

Total cost of project: \$300 million

Contract for decorative concrete work: \$1.4 million

Project description/scope of work: Decorative paving for drives, walkways, pool decks and stairs.

Materials used: Stamps and texture skins from Solomon Brickform and Proline Concrete Tools, including a custom-made Lorenzo Travertine stamp from Proline, plus Rotating Ashlar Blue Stone and Random Stone Large stamps, and 18-inch Slate Tile and Belgium Slate texture skins; Espresso, Sand Canyon, Cream Buff and Mojave color hardener from Proline Concrete Tools; Mocha and Walnut release agents from Proline Concrete Tools; Dark Walnut, Padre Brown, Antique Amber and Faded Terracotta acid stains from L. M. Scofield Co.; Brickform Gem-Seal

Challenges: Trying to stay on schedule with 100-yard concrete pours, dealing with weather when pours were scheduled up to two weeks in advance, running almost 600 linear feet of hose to pump concrete to the locations throughout the project

My God. I want to be a college student," Plouffe says.

Decorative concrete is part of The Lorenzo luxury experience — from driveways and walkways to pool decks and patios.

The courtyard surrounding the big fountain is decked out in the same Brickform large cobblestone pattern used on the driveways. The courtyard was colored with Proline Concrete Tools' Espresso and Mojave release. The walkways were set apart using Proline's bluestone hammered-edge ashlar stamp.

The courtyard up the stairs from the fountain, and the pool deck beyond, were stamped with the Lorenzo Travertine stamp, an ashlar stamp designed for this project by Proline. "I wanted something different," Plouffe says. "Nobody else had it."

PROJECT PROFILE

It's a hammered-edge stone pattern with the biggest stones measuring 17-by-40 inches, larger than in other ashlar patterns. About 3,000 to 3,500 square feet were stamped with it. Proline now sells the stamp on its own site.

The Lorenzo offered Plouffe many opportunities to do some of his improv. A second courtyard with a fountain was slated for a pattern Plouffe didn't like, so he instead played off the walls, which featured precast stones in a running bond pattern. "We skim-textured that whole courtyard, then saw-cut and hammered stones on it in a 20-by-40-inch pattern, stained them different colors and grouted it."

Where the design called for fish-scale fan patterns in smaller areas where they would look weird, Plouffe instead installed a hammered-edge tile pattern and some texture that complemented the looks of nearby walls and planters. And on a second pool deck, where a pattern monotonously repeated itself, the crew used bands and randomly stained stone patterns to break it up and give it some character. When walkways widened into circle areas, they'd deviate from the planned texture and joints to cut, hammer and stain tiles in diluted shades of a given stain.

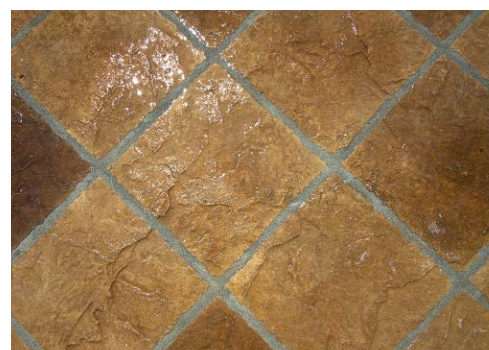
"I bet you we went through 12, 15 pallets of color hardener at 50 bags per pallet, and probably four or five pallets of release, at least," Plouffe says.

What's even more impressive is that Plouffe oversaw \$1.4 million worth of work while undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.

With a little help from a friend

Plouffe was diagnosed two weeks after he started the Lorenzo project. "I was off of it for a while. That's when John Wilgus took over."

Wilgus runs his own decorative concrete business, JMW Contractors, and was



Photos courtesy of Proline Decorative Concrete Systems

Plouffe's colleague in stamped concrete in the 1970s. "He ran my project for three or four months when I was in the hospital getting surgery and starting to deal with chemo. From October (2012) to January or February or so, he kind of took over the project for me, ran my guys and kept me on schedule. Doing 100-yard stamp pours with a boom pump at one time — where am I going to find somebody to do that, to take my place? There are not exactly a million guys out there, let alone a guy who will volunteer to say, 'Hey, I'll take care of this. You just get better.'"

Wilgus didn't ask for money at first, and when Plouffe insisted on being billed after a month and a half, he asked for \$5,000. Plouffe gave him \$10,000.

Sure, he says, being off the big job was frustrating. "But the project really wasn't

that high on my list of priorities. Staying alive was. I knew it was in good hands but I didn't really think about it that much in the hospital. I had enough on my mind."

Life goes on

The treatments worked at the time. But the cancer has returned, and Plouffe is currently diagnosed with Stage IV. "I've been in pretty good shape. I still feel good now. But the sh*t came back." Still, he's not slowing down on the business front. He's working for Palmer once again on the next big project. "I'm already four months into the Da Vinci. It's another 400-unit project. It's not as big of a scale and it's not as fast-track a schedule."

Designs in Concrete also will be doing all the decorative for two planned non-Italian Palmer complexes on Broadway in

downtown L.A. And there's more on the docket after that. "No one even bids against us anymore," Plouffe says. "I've taken care of him for this long, and out of 15 projects I think I tore out six steps. We stay on track, we give them a quality project, on time, on budget. If we don't like it, we change it and make it look better."

His team has mostly been with him on the Palmer projects since the Medici 15 years ago. "So they all know what's going on and how everything goes. It's a pretty well-oiled machine."

The workweek is not that bad, Plouffe says. "I get my chemo on Thursdays, I go to Big Bear Lake, I work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and then I get chemo again Thursday. I'm just trying to do what I can with it. It sucks. I'm getting two chemo drugs, where before I only got one. So that really kicks my ass. But hey, it's better than being in a pine box."

His team can carry the workload for him, he says. "My guys have really grown up through all this. They've picked up the slack and they do a lot more stuff than they used to, and they really help out a lot." He name-checks Jaime Palma, Manuel Salinas



and Victor Lopez, calling them "my three main men," and also credits "the crews and owners of other subcontracting companies for their never-ending support and encouragement through the rough times."

He will keep coming into work as long

as his health allows, he says. "It's like a big family. I know these guys. They're friends. I enjoy going there and doing stuff. All the people care about what's happened with me and they're really supportive. There's a lot of positive energy." 📱



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Crowning the Top Brawler

Picking the best concrete work was a tough job

by Vanessa Salvia

NEW to the Concrete Decor Show in 2014 was a Brawl in the Fall competition where eight preselected teams of decorative concrete professionals vied for a chance to win their part of \$10,000 in cash and prizes, with the first-place team netting booty worth \$5,000.

Everyone attending the show received a ballot when they entered and was encouraged to visit the eight competition areas to observe and question the artisans at work. Toward the end of the show, attendees chose their favorites and cast their ballots to help the judges pick the top three winners. The winning projects were determined by attendee votes and six judges, Clark Branum of Diamatic, Nathan Giffin of Vertical Artisans, Jeff Kudrick of JM Lifestyles, Frank Lewis of Sundek, Jim Peterson of Concrete Network and Chris Sullivan of ChemSystems Inc.

"I liked the fact the teams worked on their projects while the show was going on and people had a chance to ask questions," says Deco-Crete Supply's Jason Geiser, the event's emcee. "The teams interacted with the attendees and that's what we wanted to achieve." His job was to broadcast each team's ongoing progress and interview them as they worked.

"The projects were over-the-top," Geiser says of the award-worthy entries each so different from one another. "I think it gave a good overview of what it is that we do and what's possible as decorative concrete professionals. Every facet of decorative concrete work was being done somewhere."

Cash and prizes valued at \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively, were awarded to the first- and second-place teams. Third place received \$1,000 in prizes, and Merit Award winners placing fourth through eighth received \$400 in prizes. For more about all of the competitors, see the 2014 Brawl in the Fall portion of Concrete Decor Show's website at <http://bit.ly/11EXfD>.



Photos courtesy of Southern Arkansas University Photo Team

First-Place Winner:

ELLIE ELLIS

Elite Artistry

Happy Valley, Oregon

www.eliteartistrybyellie.com

ELLIE Ellis works as a decorative finisher and had little experience in concrete, but her detailed molds and the gorgeous fireplace mantel she created proved enough to win over the judges.

Ellis is a member of IDAL, the International Decorative Artisans League that co-located its annual conference with the Concrete Decor Show. While perusing the website for information about the IDAL convention, she came across the Brawl application. On impulse, she applied. When she was selected, "The stress started," Ellis recalls. "I realized I would be competing against people who have worked with concrete for years."

Ellis replicated a relief of a medieval scene she had made for her fireplace at home that had taken more than 200 hours to complete. To suit the competition's timeframe, she made molds of the different elements using products from Polytek and cast the pieces in FGR 95, a fast-setting gypsum cement mix from USG Corp. Upon arrival, an 8-by-6-foot fireplace frame was built and Ellis' work began.

No stranger to troweling, she applied Flex-C-Ment to make the fireplace resemble stone. The easy-to-use white vertical mix, she says, reminded her of a Japanese plaster she had used before.

Ellis' project attracted a lot of attention from passers-by. She poured concrete into her molds and affixed them in very creative ways to the frame using the vertical mix. "It was very intricate," says Geiser. "People could see work being done on something that was functional rather than abstract."

Ellis says she normally doesn't like to work with clients looking over her shoulder, but this was a different experience. "The people were all so wonderful and easy to talk to," she says.

One of Ellis' team members, Eva Gallant, took the fireplace home with her at the end of the show.

As a result of the show's exposure, Ellis plans to offer her collection of more than 200 molds for sale on her website.

The first-place team received \$5,000 in cash and prizes including six sets of vertical stamps from Flex-C-Ment and a mortar sprayer from ToolCrete, a concrete mixer, polisher and pads from Flex North America, a set of Connors Quarry Stone stamps from Proline, a wooden bench mold from Butterfield Color and a CME4 moisture meter from TrameX.



Second Place Winner:

ADRIAN GASCON

Creative Waterscapes
Ventura, California

ROD RUSSELL-IDES

Signature Gardens
Dallas, Texas

www.rod russellides.net

ADRIAN Gascon and Rod Russell-Ides had worked together only once before, in 2001, to construct a replica of the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes for a Catholic church in Houston. Upon completion, they parted ways. When Gascon heard about the upcoming Brawl in the Fall in Fort Worth, he contacted Russell-Ides and convinced him to join forces again.

The reconnected duo combined their strengths in GFRC and faux rock and water-scapes to a second-place win by the judges. They also won the People's Choice Award.

Their entry consisted of a waterfall with six 4-by-12-feet linked panels "so we could bolt them together fast because we had a time limit," says Russell-Ides. They attached the panels to their framework and used different vertical mixes to fill in the voids. The side panels extended down to form a water runnel, which emptied into a terracotta pot surrounded by ferns and other decor.





"People do these things in their backyards but it was really cool to see that on the show floor," says Geiser. "This team definitely put in the most hours."

Russell-Ides had not been to an event like this before and is pleased he was able



Photos courtesy of Southern Arkansas University Photo Team

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to share his livelihood. "Most of the time I do jobs like this in someone's backyard and no one sees it unless they have a big party," he says. "This was out here for everyone to see what is possible with this kind of construction. I thought the whole event was amazing and I discovered many things about concrete that I never knew."

The second-place team received \$2,500 in cash and prizes including a Rattle Stick from Rattle Stick, seamless texture mats from Barnsco, SpiderLath rolls with strips from SpiderLath, an iPad mini from HP Spartacote and a woodworking kit from Waltools.

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Third Place Winner:

RACHEL BRUCE

FLOORmap Stencil Design

Bella Vista, Arkansas

www.floormapdesigns.com

RACHEL Bruce, an artist well-versed with color theory, puts that to good use with her stencil manufacturing business. Using color theory, which determines the placement of line, color and shading, she makes flat surfaces look three-dimensional. At the Brawl, she achieved amazing results with her “melting” Rubik’s Cube.

Through the placement of color, the bottom of Bruce’s cube looked like it was melting into a swirl of red, blue and yellow,



Photos courtesy of Southern Arkansas University Photo Team



while the top “popped out” above the floor. Attendees stopped to stare, posed for pictures of themselves “sitting” on the cube or even laid on the floor for a picture that looked like they were flying on it.

“Her project was something you could interact with,” says Geiser.

Bruce says she had fun and learned a lot. In retrospect, she says, it would have been more visually appealing if more of the stencil had been done ahead of time. “It was difficult for people to tell what was going on because everything was covered up with vinyl” until almost the end of the competition, Bruce says.

Despite that fact, her work spoke for itself and the people responded by declaring her project a winner. And that, she says, was the first time she had ever won a competition. “I won third place and I felt like I won first,” she says.

The third-place team received \$1,000 in prizes including a screed set from EZ Screed Tools and rolls of SpiderLath without strips from SpiderLath.

Thank you to the sponsors who provided prize money and product donations to the competitors.

Each of the eight teams received in-store credit from Deco-Crete Supply, acid stain from Kemiko and a PB 550 vacuum from CDCLarue Industries Inc.

Midwest Rake, The Wooster Brush Co. and Nox-Crete donated cash for the competition. Midwest Rake and Wooster Brush also donated tools and supplies. 🛠️

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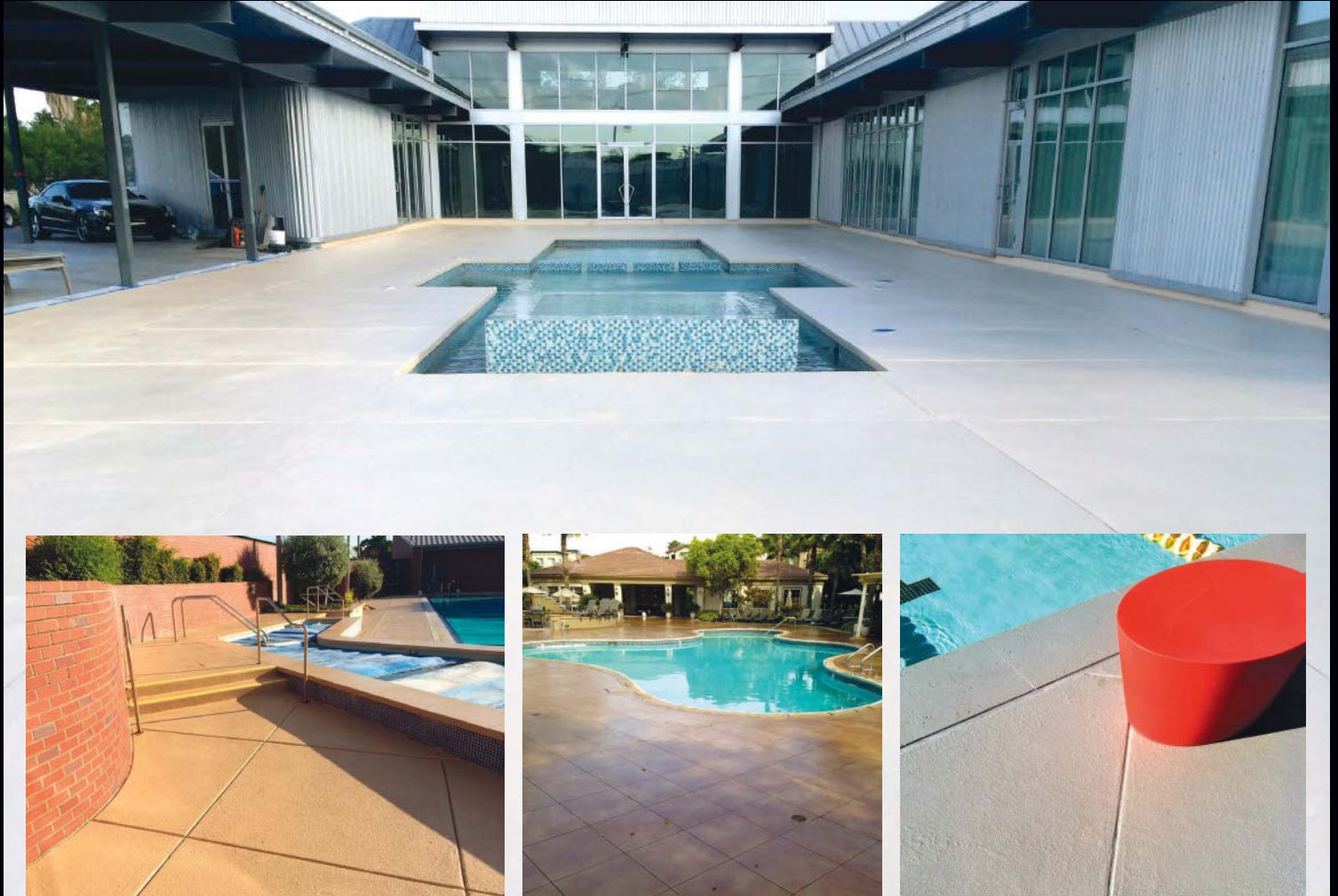
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Here's an example of a seamless, precast GFRC island with waterfall ends.

Photo courtesy of Jake Brady Concrete by Design

Countertop Casting

Which method is best for the job?

by Jeffrey Girard

CONCRETE is a fantastic material with which to work and design. It is one of the few building materials we can create and control to suit our wants and needs. Mix design, reinforcing technique and casting method are interrelated and influence everything from performance, cost and ease of fabrication to aesthetics and transportability. This article will focus on the different casting methods used to shape concrete and how to determine which method to use.

First, it's important to understand the term "casting method." This is simply the process of placing the concrete. However, mix design, consistency, mold-making techniques and the finished look are all influenced by this choice, so any discussion of casting method leads to a discussion of all these topics.

The most common casting methods are:

- Cast-in-place
- Precast:
 - Wet cast
 - Hand-packed
 - Sprayed
 - Troweled

Cast-in-Place

Also known as pour-in-place, the cast-in-place method involves forms built on top of cabinets or supports, and concrete that's placed and finished on site. The process is similar to conventional concrete: Concrete is delivered to the site or mixed on site, placed in forms, spread, consolidated (usually with stinger vibrators), struck off, floated and then usually hard-troweled.

While cast-in-place could conceivably be used for many types of countertop projects,

it is best suited for large-scale projects that require a seamless look and would be difficult or impossible to transport or install.

Since cast-in-place projects are not moved, reinforcing is not as critical as with precast. Cast-in-place uses a lot of conventional concrete techniques. The forming, placement, vibration and troweled finish are similar to conventional concrete. Mix design for cast-in-place concrete countertops is also similar to conventional concrete. In fact, ready-mix can be and often is used. For these reasons, many contractors with a background in concrete flatwork or decorative concrete often do cast-in-place.

Cast-in-place can be a challenge for those who do not have concrete finishing experience, because troweling skill dictates

the final quality of the countertop. The aesthetic demands of a kitchen countertop, bathroom vanity, fireplace or other architectural feature are far more stringent than for a sidewalk or patio.

Other important factors to keep in mind are that casting on site does not allow as much control as precasting in your shop. There may not be climate control in the building, which means you must make special provisions for curing. There is a risk of damage from other trades.

Cast-in-place is also risky in terms of damage to the job site—imagine getting concrete all over a customer's \$50,000 kitchen cabinets!

Cast-in-place is almost always troweled. However, exposed aggregate is possible. Exposing aggregate is best done with wet grinding rather than dry grinding. Wet grinding can be done only if you can cast the concrete very early in the project process and the job site is essentially waterproof.

A great example of this is a bartop I made in the Cayman Islands. The client wanted a very large, very thick, seamless bar. However, he also wanted a large amount of exposed decorative aggregate including stone, glass, glow-in-the-dark aggregate and shells. Casting in place very early in the project, when only a concrete subfloor and concrete base wall for the bar were in place, was the solution.



Workers seed and float in a large amount of decorative aggregate.

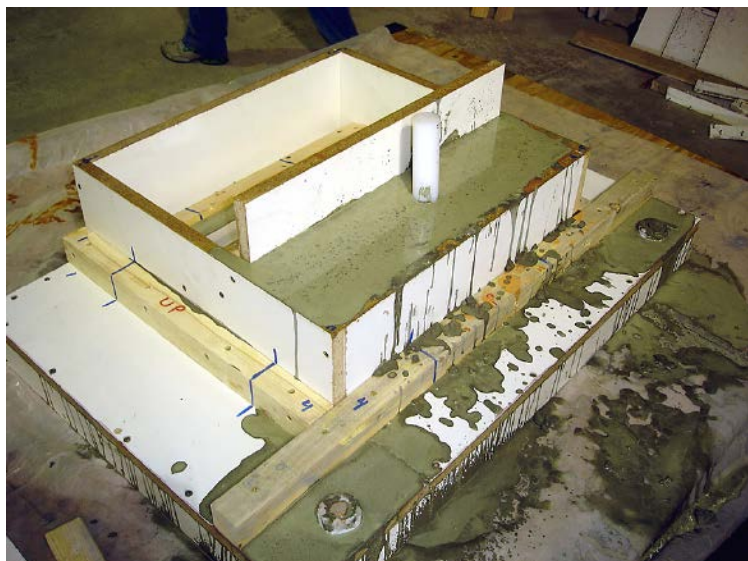


Wet grinding is messy!



Large, colorful aggregates can be seen in the finished surface.

Photos courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute



Photos courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute

Here's a mold for a wet-cast ramp sink.



Here's a mold for a hand-packed ramp sink.

Precast

Precast simply refers to concrete cast off-site, usually in a shop, and transported to the job site to be installed. Within this broad category, there are several actual casting methods, but in general, precast methods allow more control and less risk to the unfinished work than cast-in-place. It also allows for a wider variety of finished looks. Next, let's explore each precast casting method.

Wet Cast

Wet casting can be used to create castings that pick up surface details. The concrete is made to be highly fluid, to ensure both great casting detail and that the molds get completely filled without voids or honeycombing. Fresh concrete is poured into the open molds or forms, so the concrete flows out to fill the mold and encapsulate suspended steel reinforcing (if it's used).

Wet casting usually uses vibration to assist in fluidizing the concrete, allowing complex and intricate molds to be filled, quickly creating very detailed pieces. For example, wet casting against plywood that has been soaked to raise the grain then sealed with several coats of wood polyurethane sealer will exactly duplicate the plywood texture. Wet casting against a perfectly smooth surface will create a smooth, shiny concrete surface.

This casting technique leaves a very fragile cement cream layer that's literally eggshell thin. And, no matter how much you vibrate, a few tiny pinholes will be lurking just below that fragile surface.

Unless I am trying to create a surface texture such as the ones described above, I prefer to lightly hand-sand wet-cast pieces, then inspect and fill any pinholes.

The biggest disadvantage of wet casting is the mold must be essentially a bottle. It must be a watertight, two-sided shape that will contain a liquid in the exact shape you're trying to create. This can result in some very complicated molds. And, in the case of a deep "bottle" such as the mold for a wet-cast wall, the pressure exerted by the concrete in the mold can be extreme and require a lot of bracing. One-sided molds are much easier to create. Two precast methods allow for one-sided molds: hand-packed and GFRC.

Hand-Packed

The most recognizable use of the hand-packing technique is the Buddy Rhodes style of creating fissures and voids that are then filled in with a coordinating or contrasting color. This signature style is called "hand pressed." Using a zero-slump mix makes creating this look easy.

The mix used for hand-packing can be:

- very dry all-sand mix, that is then steel-reinforced
- more claylike, all-sand mix such as the Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products mix that is then steel-reinforced
- GFRC face-coat mix made stiff and claylike simply by using less water, and then followed with GFRC backer coat

While there are subtle differences in the details of the hand-packing method with the three mixes, the overall technique is

to use your hands to form "meatballs" or "hamburger patties" of concrete, and place those handfuls of concrete in the mold either overlapping or next to each other, leaving voids between them. To achieve a natural look, it is best to make the shapes random, or your finished piece will end up looking polka-dotted.

After placing the handfuls, follow with more mix or backer, taking care not to fill in the voids. Depending on the application, the voids in the finished piece may or may not be filled in with a cement grout.

Sprayed

Glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) is now a very popular method for creating concrete countertops, fireplaces and more. Typically, the visible surface of GFRC is created by spraying a fluid, fine, sand-based mix into the molds to create a thin layer. This is called the mist coat. Then a fibrous backer coat is applied. This provides the strength and flexibility for which GFRC is known.

If you spray properly, it is easy to achieve a surface with little or no pinholes. A sprayed surface picks up all of the details of the casting substrate, just like wet cast. Unlike wet cast, spraying allows you to use a one-sided mold.

A further advantage of GFRC is it allows you to create very thin pieces, typically 3/4-inch thick, which makes them lightweight. And, GFRC has very high flexural strength without having to place steel reinforcing, which can be quite difficult for complex shapes. This makes GFRC ideally suited to three-dimensional concrete creations.

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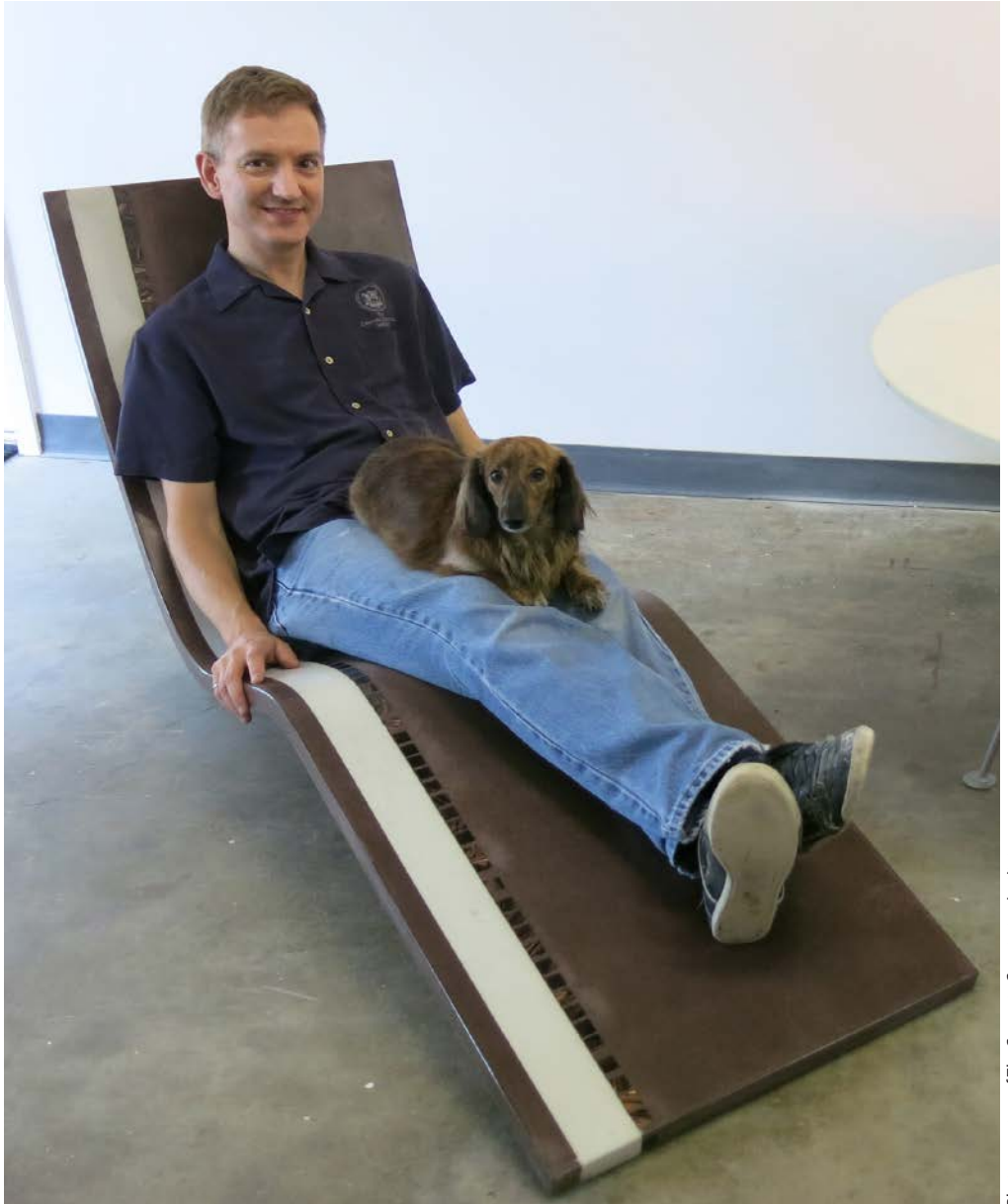
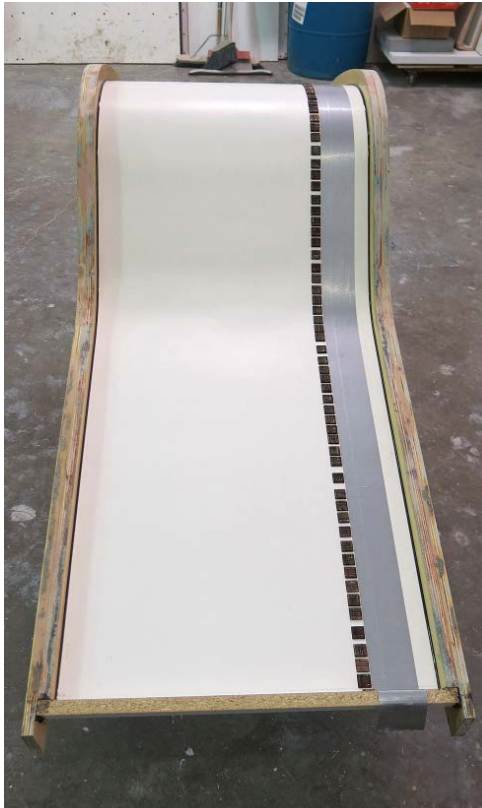


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Photos courtesy of The Concrete Countertop Institute

GFRC is a common choice for three-dimensional pieces such as this lounge chair created by CCI students. To create the white line, we sprayed a brown mist coat in the mold that had the line area masked with duct tape, pulled off the duct tape, then sprayed a white mist coat on the line area.

GFRC is not limited to a sprayed finish. It is possible to create a thicker visible layer, called a face coat. The face coat can contain aggregate that you expose, or it can be hand-packed. It is even possible to wet cast GFRC using a technique called direct casting that uses a fluid backer mix and vibration. The most typical casting method for GFRC, though, is spraying.

Troweled

Usually when one thinks of precast, one thinks of casting so that the finished face of the piece is the surface of the mold. The mold is stripped and the piece flipped over so the finished face can be processed. However, it is possible to precast right side

up and trowel the finished surface. This provides the beautiful, leathery look of a troweled surface, without the disadvantages of cast-in-place.

This article explained the most common casting methods, but there are as many casting techniques as there are artisans. Some artisans use overlays and create colors and patterns by blending different color mixes, for example. The casting method you choose could be dictated by the project's constraints or by personal preference.

Jake Brady Concrete by Design in Florida uses GFRC exclusively to create massive, seamless pieces. When asked why he uses GFRC rather than cast-in-place for these huge pieces, Brady says, "Because I can.

I like a challenge, and I don't do cast-in-place. Cast-in-place is a different animal, requiring a whole different skill set."

Professional concrete countertop makers should have a wide variety of casting methods in their toolbox, allowing them to choose the right method for them and the project, creating endless possibilities for functional concrete art. 🛠️

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.

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Short Answers to Quick Questions

by Chris Sullivan

RECEIVE a lot of questions from people looking for a quick answer that does not require much in the way of a technical explanation. Here are two such questions and answers you might find interesting and informative.

I recently poured a concrete driveway and tried for an exposed aggregate look. I waited a little too long before washing the mortar layer off. Now, I have some areas that won't spray off. I chipped off those areas with a hammer and now they look very uneven and inconsistent in color. I want to use a resurfacing product to cover the aggregates. I would appreciate any advice you have on fixing this error.

This is one of the few times I recommend an acid for a concrete repair. A strong acid wash should help even out the surface. Start with a muriatic acid diluted 1:1 with water. Treat the entire area with the acid and scrub the acid using a stiff bristle acid-resistant broom.

Consider using a gelled acid to control the runoff or to avoid damaging other surfaces, grass and/or plants. It may take several acid applications to achieve the desired look. If a stronger acid is required, test an area using straight (undiluted) acid. Never let the acid dry on the surface, as this can lead to a white/green/yellow residue that is very difficult to remove.

No matter the type of acid or dilution, always neutralize the surface. A solution of 5 gallons of water, a cup of household bleach and a few squirts of kitchen dish soap make a great neutralizing solution. Scrub the entire area treated with acid with the neutralizing wash. Rinse with clean water and let the surface dry.

P.S. I always recommend sealing exposed aggregate surfaces with a penetrating waterproofing sealer.



Photos courtesy of Chris Sullivan

This uneven exposed aggregate surface needs to be treated with an acid wash.

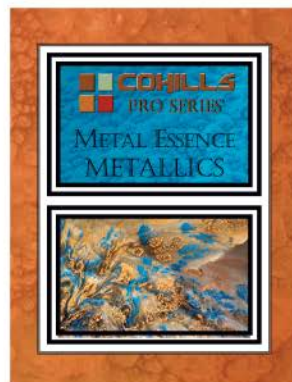
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A thin concrete overlay was applied over a wooden subfloor. The subfloor was securely nailed and the seams were filled and taped before a waterproof primer was applied. Why are the seams now showing through and why have some cracked?

The primer was not thick enough to act as a barrier to keep the seams from migrating and showing through the overlay. Most manufacturers of overlay systems specify a 5- to 7-step process when a cement-based overlay is being applied over wood. Here are the steps:

1. Patch and fill cracks and seams.
2. Apply primer.
3. Put down cement-based mortar bed and/or waterproof membrane and/or crack suppression membrane.
4. Apply primer.
5. Apply scratch coat.
6. Apply primer.
7. Finish with the overlay system.

Keep in mind that wood is a very flexible material when compared to concrete and you need a fairly stout layer or layers of material to keep any movement of the wooden subfloor from shadowing through. If you are still committed to an overlay on your floor, use the overlay you have down as an initial scratch coat and continue, starting with step 2 above.

The most important part of the process is step 3. This is where you need to use a thick enough material or membrane to resist cracking or shadowing from the wooden subfloor through to the overlay.

A word of caution: Even with the best materials and most detailed installation, applying a thin overlay over a wooden substrate is risky. In my experience almost all of these types of installations develop some cracks over the life of the floor. 🛠️

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.



Inadequate preparation can cause cracks along the wooden subfloor seams to migrate through an overlay.



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There is a Difference Between Sealing and Resealing Decorative Concrete

by Doug Carlton

FEW things can compare to freshly sealed concrete. Hues of hidden color explode the minute a coat of fresh sealer makes contact with the concrete's surface. Customers smile with satisfaction and concrete artisans swell with pride. The end result, when done properly, is a shiny hardscape that complements any outdoor living space. Unfortunately though, not all decorative outdoor concrete projects end this well. Some turn milky or flakey on the surface not long after the sealing process. The reasons why this happens are no longer a mystery.

Nothing can tarnish a concrete work of art quicker than sealer that goes bad. I know the disappointment myself all too well. After doing this work for several decades, I've had to scratch my head and ask myself why a recently sealed project sometimes looks appealing while other times it looks anything but. Even though I'd practice 100-percent consistency and follow manufacturers' recommendations, often my sealer would fail. Nothing, and I mean nothing, is more disheartening than watching an otherwise amazing work of effort become tarnished by a thin film of failed sealer.

Sealing new concrete

Sealing concrete for the first time is less complex than resealing an existing slab. In most cases, following the manufacturer's recommendations results in a good bond to the concrete's surface. Regardless of whether the sealer is water- or solvent-based, three key steps ensure long-lasting sealer-to-concrete adhesion.

The first step is to ensure the concrete mass is cured and completely dry before applying sealer. Enemy No. 1 for concrete sealer is moisture. Moisture still being expelled from uncured concrete can become trapped between the thin sealer and the concrete surface. Our industry commonly calls this "blushing." Trapped moisture can also result from not allowing the surface to completely dry after cleaning. Most often, trapped moisture comes from impatience,



After applying a coat of new sealer over an existing coat, use a chemical-resistant broom to agitate the surface. The agitation will not only reactivate the old sealer but it will also mix the old with the new.

as contractors push to finish something that needs more cure time.

The second step to sealing success requires applying thin coats in ambient conditions. The first pass of sealer should be so thin that the concrete barely looks sealed.

The outside temperature and the concrete surface should be cool enough that the thin layer of sealer cures without overinfluence. Excessive heat adversely influences how the sealer cures and can make it bubble. Only after each layer is dry should a subsequent

Photo courtesy of Doug Carlton

application take place. Rushing, or stacking new sealer over wet, rarely works in a decorative concrete artisan's favor.

The third step is equally crucial. The newly sealed concrete needs to harden before any foot, car or pet paws touch it. Keep water off the fresh surface for as long as possible, so be mindful of the weather and make sure a home's watering system (if it has one) is turned off in that area.

Be sure to seal not only the concrete surface but also the slab ends or edges as these areas are often overlooked. Unsealed edges allow moisture to wick in and be trapped just beneath the sealer when it tries to dissipate. Encourage a landscape design that allows for an irrigation buffer between the sod and the concrete's edge.

Resealing existing concrete

The majority of resealing challenges pertain to solvent-based sealers. Customers falsely believe a new coat of sealer is the only step to "fixing" distasteful or unappealing decorative concrete. After all, customers recall how nice and shiny their concrete once looked and assume a fresh coat of sealer will make their hardscape look new again. This, my friends, is rarely the case. The fact is, a new layer of good sealer will not fix multiple coats of bad sealer. Sure it will look nice long enough for a check to clear, but the long-lasting effect is less than desirable.

Failing sealer must be addressed, but this does not usually require stripping. Far too often I read or hear sealer remedies that involve stripping perfectly good sealer. It's expensive to remove sealer, so why extract old sealer if it isn't necessary, right?

Resealing concrete is nothing like sealing new concrete. Sealing new concrete requires a good bond to a concrete surface. On the other hand, resealing a surface requires adhesion to an existing sealer. Applying new sealer is most often perceived as a new layer over an old one, but this should not be the case. Instead, visualize mixing over stacking. The new sealer must "mix" in order to release trapped moisture and reactivate previously applied sealer. The reactivation will melt undesirable "chalky" or "flaky" areas simultaneously. This reactivation requires more than a pump-up style sprayer.

The secret to resealing is agitation. Pick an area of a manageable size and apply a coat of new sealer. Immediately agitate the surface

with a chemical-resistant broom before moving on to another area. This agitation will not only reactivate the old sealer but will cohesively mix the two sealers.

I usually treat the troubled areas first, let them dry and soon after reseal everything else. Back-brooming with the chemical-resistant broom is beneficial beyond simple sealer reactivation. Back-brooming is a beneficial way to distribute puddled sealer from low-lying areas which are often found in stamped concrete.

Finally, whether you are sealing new concrete or resealing a surface, use a nonskid additive if you want to improve traction. 🛞

Doug Carlton is working on his third decade in the decorative concrete industry. He is 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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Eric Schaeffer of Majestic Concrete Design and Bill Sheetz of Polytek Development Corp. strip a lattice panel from a cylindrical form.
Photos by Dennie Boyer, Polytek Development Corp.

Warping Glass-Fiber Reinforced Concrete Saves time and money over using 3-D forms

by Mark Celebuski

MOST people don't think of concrete as being bendable but it is, even in its hardened state. That said, bending and warping concrete is more manageable while it is still in its plastic state. Part of the appeal of warping concrete is the cool factor, and the other part is the time and labor savings. In the case of warping concrete versus casting in 3-D forms the appeal is big-time cost savings.

The forms

Polyurethane rubber forms are so useful they might have been invented for warping concrete. Rubber forms are easy to make, very flexible (depending on the durometer of rubber used) and very durable. I like Poly 74-45 rubber from Polytek Development Corp. for rubber molds with gradual bends and no undercuts, and the Poly 74-20 (which is a bit softer) for forms with very

tight bends and lots of detail such as the lattice pieces shown in the photos.

I make my masters for casting the rubber molds out of medium-density fiberboard plywood. MDF lacks any grain structure, making it easy to machine or sand. Coat the raw MDF with lacquer to seal it. Then prior to casting the rubber, apply a couple of coats of Johnson's paste wax and buff it out. Give the rubber a day to cure and you're ready to cast. Your forms can last for hundreds of castings if you treat them carefully.

The mix

Let's look at casting GFRC without a face coat and with no fiber showing. The majority of smaller fabricators and a growing number of larger GFRC manufacturers are using premix GFRC techniques. With a premix technique, a face

coat with no fiber is sprayed on or sprayed onto the form, and a back coat with fiber is either hand-applied or sprayed onto the form. In spray-up techniques, a face coat with no fibers is sprayed on the form and the glass fiber is cut by a roving chopping gun and mixed with the mortar stream to form the back coat.

Both techniques use a face coat with no fibers, but we have taken premix techniques a step further and eliminated the face coat. Here's an explanation of why and how it works:

Everything has a specific gravity. This measurement is how much a given volume of something weighs when compared to a given volume of water. Water has a specific gravity of 1, while steel, for instance, has a specific gravity of about 7.8 (depending on the grade). This means a given volume of

steel weights 7.8 times as much as the same volume of water. When you drop a chunk of steel in water, the steel sinks.

When you blend items with different specific gravities, they are going to split up (segregate) into different layers if the mixing medium allows it to happen. Make your mix too fluid, with either too much water or too much plasticizer, and you'll get separate layers. You can take advantage of this by allowing it to happen very slightly and under controlled conditions.

The materials in your mix have different

specific gravities. Cement is 3.15, sands are generally around 2.62, water is the standard at 1 and most pozzolans are about 2.5.

The good news is glass fiber has a specific gravity of 2.5. This means glass fiber won't remain on the face of your casting if the conditions are right.

In a very fluid mix, the cement settles to the bottom, the sand settles on top of the cement, the glass fiber and pozzolans (about the same specific gravity) are next and the water layer is on top. Obviously we don't want complete segregation in a mix or the resultant concrete would be very weak.

Your task is to allow the glass fiber to migrate off the face ever so slightly without the mix segregating. You can do this by adding Trinic Plasticizer to make the mix more fluid, vibrating the mix slightly or by

using a combination of both. The glass fiber will still be visible if you grind the piece, but you'll have a hard time seeing any fiber if you skip the polish.

This also is an excellent technique to use when casting concrete tile or wall panels. I call it 'dump and done.' The time-savings over a sprayed-up face coat and hand-laid back coat are considerable.

When Trinic had our admixture independently tested, we made the sample coupons using this technique. The results showed that the self-consolidating GFRC mix proportioned with Trinic's GFRC Admix and Plasticizer have strengths equal to a premixed GFRC blend that's hand-laid and rolled for compaction. This opens a whole new world of opportunities for GFRC manufacturers.

To make this warped concrete end table (left), Bill Sheets applied Polytek Mold release to a rubber lattice form, then filled it in with self-consolidating GFRC mix. He and Eric Schaeffer then warped the panel on a cylindrical form.





Sheets fills in the rubber mold for an end table with self-consolidating GFRC mix.



Stripping the end table form.

Photos by Dennie Boyer, Polytek Development Corp.

When to bend

When you bend concrete in the plastic state you are breaking the bonds of the initial set before it's too late for them to heal. Bend too soon and the concrete will slump. Bend too late and it will crack. Bend at just the right time and it will take the bend without showing any ill effects.

As concrete enters its initial set, it begins to move from a plastic state into a hardened state. The window for bending normal non-accelerated portland cement-based concrete will last about 15

minutes on a 90-degree Fahrenheit day and longer on a 60-degree day. The problem is the "bendable window" may take an hour or more to occur on a 90-degree day, up to perhaps three hours on a 60-degree day.

In order to speed things along we replace a portion of the portland cement with CSA cement. CSA cement, or calcium sulphoaluminate cement, sets much faster than the ordinary portland variety. How much you replace depends on batch and ambient temperatures. A 20 percent replacement in an 80-degree shop will have you warping about 15 minutes after casting. A 40 percent replacement may be required for the same performance in a 50-degree shop. Make small samples to evaluate set times or you may find yourself with a batch that goes hot and begins to set while you're mixing it.

To see if your concrete is ready to bend, lift the edge of your form slightly and watch for slumping. I like to bend as soon as the concrete will hold rather than risking cracks. Cover your concrete with plastic once you've got it warped to prevent moisture loss during curing. You may be able to strip your piece on the same day it was cast when using a portland-CSA blend. 🛠️



The finished warped concrete end table.

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Mark Celebuski is a partner at Trinic LLC, a company that offers protective solutions for concrete, stone and tile. He can be reached at mark@trinic.us.

Video links for more info:

🌐 www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e-hKIU6DBc&list=PL6Q6d3zsSdyYiXBXkd4MaKnA4A2ZQ9Vu

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Mix Design For Bendable Concrete

The following mix makes about 1 cubic foot — enough to cast 16 square feet at 3/4-inch thick.

62 pounds cementitious ingredients

You can mix portland cement with CSA cement. Start with 80 percent portland, 20 percent CSA and work in more CSA as needed.

62 pounds sand

I like sand in the 30 to 50 mesh range. 40-50 blend works very well.

18 pounds water

This will give you a water-to-cementitious ratio of .29. Don't sweat it if you use a little more or a little less.

1.86 pounds Trinic GFRC Admix (3 percent of cementitious weight)

62 pounds cementitious multiplied by 3 percent = 1.86 pounds

0.31 to 0.62 pounds Trinic Plasticizer (0.5 percent to 1.0 percent of cementitious weight)

Start with 0.5 percent.

The finer the sand the more required to maintain fluidity.

3.72 pounds A R Glass Fiber (total dry weight of batch [124 pounds] multiplied by 3 percent)

200 bundle 1/2-inch or 3/4-inch will work fine.

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Build the Perfect Pool Deck

Part 2 of 3: Coping

by Jason Geiser

In part 1 of this three-part series, The Subgrade, I walked you through proven methods of addressing the unique challenges of installing concrete decks around pools and how you can overcome them. If you missed part 1, you can find it in the archives at concretedecor.net, Vol. 14 No. 5 July 2014. The article is titled “The Hole Truth about Pools.”

In part 2 we discuss pool coping, which is the cap, or cover, for the wall and provides aesthetics and safety along the pool’s edge. Visually, the coping frames the pool. Coping can be made of many different types of material, including cast-in-place concrete, brick, flagstone, precast concrete, travertine, aluminum or tile. The pool coping separates the pool structure from the pool deck, which means the deck can shift without adversely affecting the pool.

For the purpose of this article we will primarily discuss the use of cantilevered Styrofoam forms for decorative cast-in-place concrete coping.

Pools are constructed with three basic types of materials — concrete (gunite), vinyl liners and fiberglass. Cantilevered Styrofoam forms are used in the construction of all three.

Tips for forming and finishing concrete coping

When forming straight-wall pools with cantilevered Styrofoam forms, we’ve found that backing the forms with 1-by-6 foot



Jason Geiser applies color hardener slurry to a coping face.

how
TO

lumber is easier than using tie wires every foot to keep the forms straight. With the lumber you only need one tie wire every 5 feet or so to brace the form. This way is a lot quicker and helps produce straighter walls.

You use the tie wire the same way — you drill small holes through the 1-by-6. Be sure to keep the top of the 1-by-6 approximately 1-inch below the top of the Styrofoam form. This detail will make more sense later when

we discuss coping borders.

For curved-wall pools there is no need for the 1-by-6 lumber as the radius actually adds strength. Plus, if it pushes out a little, it is not as noticeable as a straight wall.

When pouring the concrete coping with pools constructed of gunite or vinyl liner,

you generally have two choices: water in or water out. With fiberglass pools you have one choice, water in. I think you’ll find most pool builders want to get water in the pool as soon as the walls are done, because the water provides even pressure on all sides of the walls.

Water in the pool might be great for that, but it is a horrible situation for the poor guys pouring the mud, especially if it’s stamped. It’s even more of a pain if the pool has a concrete coping. From a concrete installer’s perspective, your ability to install the coping with the least degree of difficulty and cost will be to do so without water in the pool. However, the pool builder may not give you that choice.

Water in the pool

If the pool already contains water, which is most likely with fiberglass pools, you’ll face two major obstacles. How do you keep the mess out of the water, and how do you access the vertical face of the coping for finishing operations?



Photos courtesy of Jason Geiser

Built-in aluminum coping eliminates having to access the vertical face during the finishing operations. However, you still are faced with the challenge of keeping construction debris—such as broadcast color hardener, powdered release, concrete and other contaminants—from getting into the pool water.

What I have found to be most effective is to tape bubble wrap to the face of the coping. Normal plastic sinks, but the air-filled bubble wrap floats on top of the water. Use the widest bubble wrap you can find, as this allows you to collect the largest amount of contaminants. When the work is done, simply fold the bubble wrap up onto the deck and collect the contaminants for disposal.

Now that we know how to keep the mess out of the water, what can we do to make finishing the vertical face of the coping easier?

I've found that pouring the coping separately makes it easier. Obviously this is going to cost more, but this method allows you to more easily lean over the edge to fix any issues as the Styrofoam forms are pulled. It also has design advantages. Pouring the coping separately allows you to make it a different color than the main part of the pool deck. Having a different color coping is not only visually appealing, but it enhances safety by making the water's edge more obvious.

Whether I am using a different color for the coping or the same, I also suggest using a seamless texture on the coping border. With a seamless texture, you can put joints in wherever you want and the border stops the field pattern. Carry this texture over onto the face of the coping and install joints every 4 to 5 feet to simulate stone. This method allows you to avoid the less-than-realistic look of a jointed pattern, such as with some stones like ashlar slate or random stone that have joints in tight patterns. If you took that joint pattern all the way to the pool's edge, all those lines should carry down the face of the coping.

If you can't pour the coping separately and you are using integral color, you have one choice — get in and get wet! This is not so bad in the pool's shallow end, but a lot trickier in the deep end where you'll need some type of floating device for you and your tools. This is cumbersome at best. You won't be able to avoid getting construction debris in the water because there is no way you can use the bubble wrap trick.

The process of texturing the coping face is simple. Cut a roughly 4-inch piece of the Styrofoam form you're using and wrap it with vinyl tape. If you're using integral color it's extremely important to work quickly. As soon as you're done stamping the pool deck, remove the Styrofoam form from the face of the coping and slide the tool back and forth on the face of the exposed concrete coping to work up enough cream to fill in all the holes.

You can do a few different things to finish the coping face. You can leave it smooth, put a light broom finish on it or,

preferably, stamp it if all the conditions are right. Next, use a chisel to carry all the joints down the face.

There is a way to avoid the dip in the pool. For those of you who have read my articles before, you know I'm a huge fan of color hardener and this is a perfect example of just one of its many advantages. If you use the hardener on the border, then all you have to do is mix up a slurry of sifted hardener. To do this, use a bucket strainer made for paint. Dump a scoop of hardener in and shake. The fine particles go in the



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bucket below and you throw away the bigger sand in the strainer. Mix the powder with water and you've got a matching slurry.

Whenever I do this or talk about this method, I have people ask, "You mean to tell me that's going to stick on there and not come off?" The answer is yes. I have done hundreds of feet of coping in this manner and I have never had one peel off. In Ohio we have as many freeze-thaw cycles as anywhere in the country and the work holds.

You still want to get going on the coping faces as soon as possible after you're done stamping the pool deck. If more than two to four hours go by before you slurry, brush a bonding agent on first to get the best bond. If you are using the color hardener slurry, you can finish the work the next day.

This approach works equally well even if there is no water in the pool.

No water in pool

With concrete (gunite) and vinyl liner pools, you are more likely to be able to work on a pool with no water. In order to backfill walls so you can pour concrete, the inside may need to be braced depending on the walls' material. For concrete pools this isn't

a factor, but if you backfill the edges around the pool with stone or dirt and the walls are not braced, they will shift and start to cave in. The bracing is pretty simple and doesn't take very long, and it also makes a great

scaffolding to stand on.

The key here is to have a good relationship with the pool builders so they know exactly what you need. You have a lot more options in the pool with no water.

Photos courtesy of Jason Geiser



Prebuilt scaffolding inside the pool allows for easy access to the deep end while working.

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By using color hardener you can pour the coping with a different color border at the same time you are pouring the pool deck. This is next to impossible if there is water in the pool, not to mention much more economical than forming and pouring the border separately.

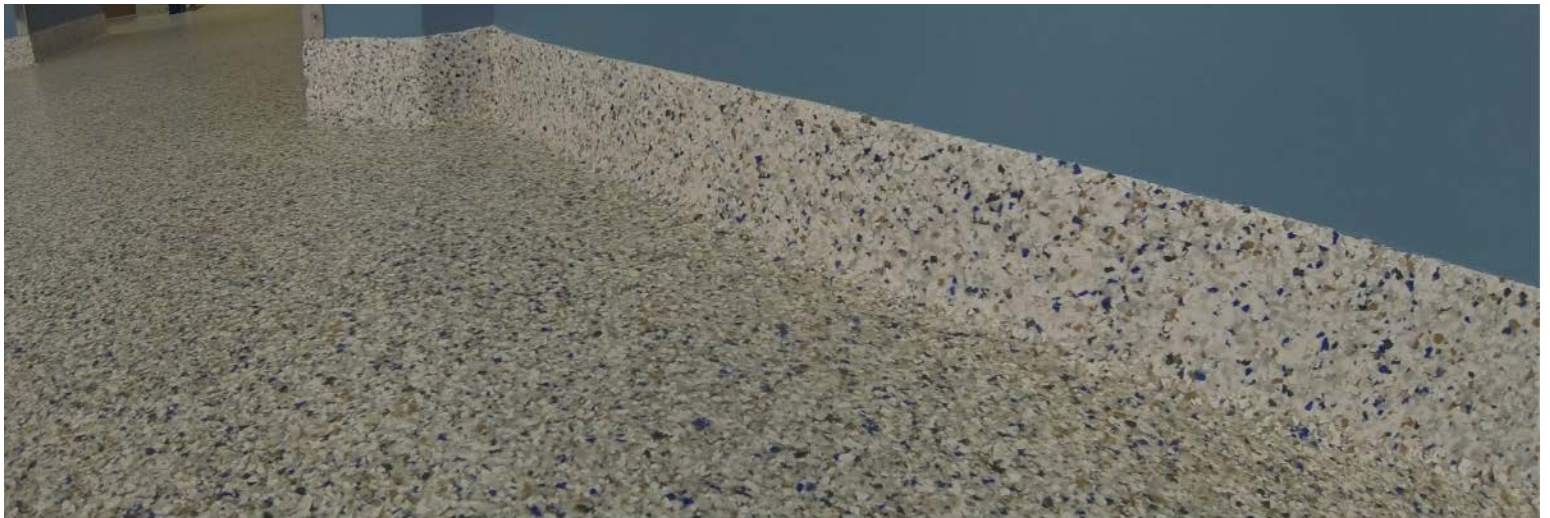
To achieve this we use a groover edger to get the desired border width. We position a 1-by-6 piece of lumber an inch from the top of the foam so we can run the edger on the outside of the foam. This groove gives us the space we need to separate the main field color from the color hardener border.



An unfinished coping face, before the color hardener slurry is applied, left, and the finished coping face, above. The main field of the ashlar pattern is separated from the coping.

You also can just leave the border the same color as the field, which is probably a good method for beginners. The process for texturing the coping face is the same as we discussed earlier. 📱

Jason Geiser owns Deco-Crete Supply and Cornerstone Concrete Designs, both based in Orrville, Ohio. He can be contacted at jason@deco-cretesupply.com.



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Photo courtesy of Troy Lemon, Cornerstone Decorative Concrete

I doubt the workers at Cornerstone had a checklist concerning “good composition” in mind, but they fulfilled it nicely with this plan for the format within which they worked.

The Elements of Style (for Contractors)

by Gaye Goodman

There is a famous paperback called “The Elements of Style” by Strunk and White. Many writers treasure it as a guide to writing clearly and succinctly while avoiding common grammatical errors. The handbook itself is a model of clarity.

I had 26 years of studio work and art classes behind me as a fine arts painter when I gave up in disgust at the ploys involved in marketing art. In comparison with the world of galleries and critics, what contractors asked me to produce on floors came as a refreshing whiff of common sense.

Fifteen years later, I decided to teach some principles of design and composition to my contractor-students. Having some knowledge of the way artists think about filling space truly helps in choosing materials and structure. Therefore, I undertake this series of articles to present the Elements of Style for Contractors.

ARTISTS approach design as a space-filling exercise. As such, the first thing they consider is the format within which they will be working. Is the given space a long rectangle or is it circular? The shape of the format will radically alter the distribution of elements within it. The elements of design are the simple building blocks artists have to work with, such as line, shape, texture, value and color. In this series of articles, we will explore these elements and how they apply to concrete work.

The artist’s first plan is usually to sketch out the composition he or she will make within

the format. The composition is the artist’s choice of design elements and the way they are arranged in space. There are some principles of “good composition” which all artists either learn in school or instinctively understand. In dividing up an empty space we want to create a harmonious use of space division, balance, unity and emphasis. We also want to carry the viewer’s eye around the space in a way which feels natural and pleasing.

This pool patio (above) by Troy Lemon of Cornerstone Decorative Concrete uses crisp white borders to frame the larger stamped flagstone elements, the way white cuffs emphasize a dark dinner jacket (space division and emphasis). He creates unity across the whole patio by maintaining a shallow stamped texture over every portion of it. The wider white border is in

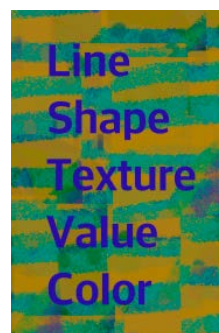


Photo courtesy of Faux Real LLC

proportion to the larger size of the pool. If there were only a border around the pool, and not around the walkway, the composition would not be in balance.

We usually do not want our work to look unbalanced, disjointed or confusing. Artists might strive for a disjointed feeling if portraying war or agony, but this implies they know the rules of harmony well enough to break them in the service of a powerful impact.

There is some cultural relativity to the rules of good composition. We Americans are conditioned by a lifetime of reading English. Our eyes scan a painting or photo by entering it from the left, as we do a page of script. Then it is up to the artist to lead the viewer's eye around the format, trying to keep attention moving within the frame.

One must not create some bright-colored anomaly in one corner upon which the viewer might fixate. (That is called an "eye trap.") You also do not want the viewer to glance briefly at a central image and then leave the canvas, feeling there is nothing more of value to see. In general, the entire composition must be treated with care and detail equal to that of the center of interest.

Tony Richardson, a professional photographer, took this shot of one of our crew members while she was applying muriatic acid to a long piece of felt we had put down to etch a petroglyph (the electric company's logo) onto the floor of the utility provider's skybox at the baseball stadium.

Notice how your eye enters the photo following the wall on the left, then travels

around the image in a clockwise movement, staying within the format and following the lines of the logo to arrive at the emphasis (the person working). The distortion of horizontal lines by Richardson's wide-angle lens curves the entire room to create a unity with the floor design. This is an example of inspired composition.

Summary: The way design elements are used to fill a space involve four "principles of composition" (space division, balance, unity and emphasis). These are your guides

to planning and action. The five elements of design are the tools you use to bring your design to life. 📷

Gaye Goodman is an artist who fell in love with acid staining 20 years ago. She and her company, based in the high desert of New Mexico, work on decorative projects across the Southwest. Contact her or see training materials on staining at www.gayegoodman.com.



Photo by Tony Richardson



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The Polishing Consultant Good Communication is Your Key to Success

by David Stephenson

GENERALLY write my articles based on items, concerns or issues that I've recently encountered to help ensure the information I'm passing on to you is timely and relevant. This article is about communication. The difference between a professional contractor and an unprofessional contractor often comes down to communication. Obviously, the quality of your work goes a long way. However, companies that provide good work but do a poor job of communicating leave the project with poor relationships. These are more damaging than a mediocre project could ever be.

The communication string starts internally within your own company, well before you communicate with customers. To start things off, I have a question for you. This is a serious question you should not just read and dismiss: How well have you communicated to your employees what your company stands for and what your vision is pertaining to the company's reputation?

Establish your identity

I work with a contractor in the Midwest. The company is not particularly large, but the owner has done a fantastic job of communicating to his employees its identity as a "customer service all the way from start to completion" company. As a consultant, I can see it in the jobs they do and the way they respond to the projects and issues they encounter.

The result of this mentality is a great and loyal relationship with their accounts and the ability to charge a higher-than-average price. Their customers are willing to pay a little more for them because they have experienced high-service commitment and consistent, good communication.

If you need an easily followed model of employee communication and its impact on customers, look at Chick-fil-A. It is not the cheapest chain but it takes great care of each customer. As a result, it has more sales and a higher profit margin than any other fast food chain. The shoe company Zappos.com built its reputation on customer service. An account of a woman who purchased shoes but had to return them due to a death in her family went viral and propelled the company to international fame when this woman reported that the Zappos customer service rep who had helped her had the company send flowers to her home.

Improve internal interactions

Internal company communication related to projects is a key point as well. It always surprises me when a crew shows up to a site without specifications or some of the products they need to correctly perform the scope of work. I see this happen regularly and it is an issue easy to control.

Simply discussing each project before the crew heads to the job goes a long way. Also, make sure the crew has a copy of the specifications before they leave the shop so they have time to review them prior to arriving on site. When a subcontractor shows up to a project without all the information, the GC-sub relationship gets strained from the start. It's hard to recover from these types of setbacks.

Make sure the right hand knows what the left is doing

Communication between contractors and GCs also is important. I had a recent project where the GC talked to the polishing contractor and worked out a date to be back on site. The crew in the field did not relay

the information to their office in a timely manner. Consequently, the office scheduled the crew to be somewhere else on that date.

Not knowing this, the GC scheduled me to fly across the country to attend a meeting on site with the owner, architect, GC and polisher. The morning of the meeting, we found out the polishing contractor was several states away. The owner was extremely upset and the GC felt responsible. I wasted two days and the planned meeting didn't happen.

I have a hundred examples like this that are all related to communication between the contractor and GC. Communication related to scheduling, scope of work, unforeseen conditions encountered on the project, change orders and completion dates are the most common areas I see break down.

As communication with the GC in turn affects the customer and other related parties, good communication at this level is imperative. As I said before, if the communication fails here, even if you have done a great job, everyone involved feels like you did not. This means they are less likely to call you in the future and less likely to push to help you on things that are important (like payment or change orders).

Consultants can help

I generally act as an owner's representative. Having a consultant involved does several things. It allows the owner or final customer to realistically view the process and get the best possible outcome from the project. This is good for both the project's owner and contractors involved. From a communication standpoint, though, this adds an additional layer.

If you are involved on a project with a consultant, it is important to openly communicate for many reasons. If you have issues related to existing conditions, the consultant can potentially help figure out an acceptable solution. If it is not possible, the consultant's assistance with discovering the responsible party and assisting you with appropriate change orders is invaluable.

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If you are on a remodel project with issues, the consultant's relationship with the owner brings issues to the front early so the responsibility for resolving the issue does not solely rest with the subcontractor. One example of this issue happened on a project recently. The concrete that was set to be polished had high air content. This caused a lot of voids or pinholes at the surface of the slab. The owner was not aware of this issue with the slab at the start of the project.

The polishing contractor was experiencing scratches that were deeper and more frequent than normally would be expected. After trying several options to remove the scratches, the contractor contacted me about the issue. I researched the history of the concrete, figured out the issue and we, as a group, came to the conclusion that the concrete needed an epoxy grout coat to fill in the large amount of pores, which would allow the polishing to be done correctly. The contractor was able to submit a change order for the extra process and the owner was happy.

If the contractor had not contacted me and continued the project, I would have found this issue on my punch list review. When the contractor brought up the slab issue at that point, it would appear to the customer they were just looking for extra money and didn't want to complete the project per specifications. By communicating the issue with the consultant early, the contractor changed the entire dynamic of the project.

Communication—whether it is between an employer and employees, sales and operations, subcontractor and general contractor, or subcontractor and owner or owner's rep—is one of the most important things you can improve. This relatively simple issue can elevate or destroy a contractor faster than any other single thing you can do.

The beauty is that unlike many other things that cost money to upgrade, bettering your communication is virtually free. It takes time and repetition to make sure it becomes a habit rather than a short-term resolution. 📞

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.

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Digital-Age Synergy

Polished concrete clicks in California's high-tech mecca

by Joe Maty

WHAT might computer users learn when they google the terms “google” and “polished concrete?”

One of the top results is an entry that offers a glimpse of a polished-concrete installation at the Google campus in Mountain View, California, by Bay Area Concretes (BAC) in Livermore, California.

Polished concrete, it turns out, has become a hot commodity in the high-tech mecca of Silicon Valley and surrounding communities.

And why not? The leadership and management of these companies are known for being forward-thinking, innovative and attuned to providing cutting-edge work environments that stimulate more of the same —innovation, creativity and collaborative approaches to technology development.

It only makes sense that Internet colossus Google would take an interest in cutting-edge and worker-friendly building and design concepts, with the additional asset of an environmentally friendly profile.

“It’s architectural green; it’s green building,” says Mike Price, BAC president. “And the price point is good. It’s a high-end look for lower cost.”

With a cost in the neighborhood of \$4 to \$5 per square foot, Price says, the installed price tag for polished concrete is comparable to vinyl composition tile (VCT). But, he points out, “the architectural possibilities are endless and the maintenance is much less with polished concrete.”

Adrian Henry, executive vice president and part owner of Diacon Concrete Polishing in Manteca, California, cites a project his company has executed at Google locations in Mountain View. In these installations, carpet was removed and the concrete floor underneath was densified and diamond polished.

“They liked the clarity of polished concrete,” Henry says. “It gave a better overall appearance for the workplace. Also, these companies, like Google, want to be on the cutting edge.”

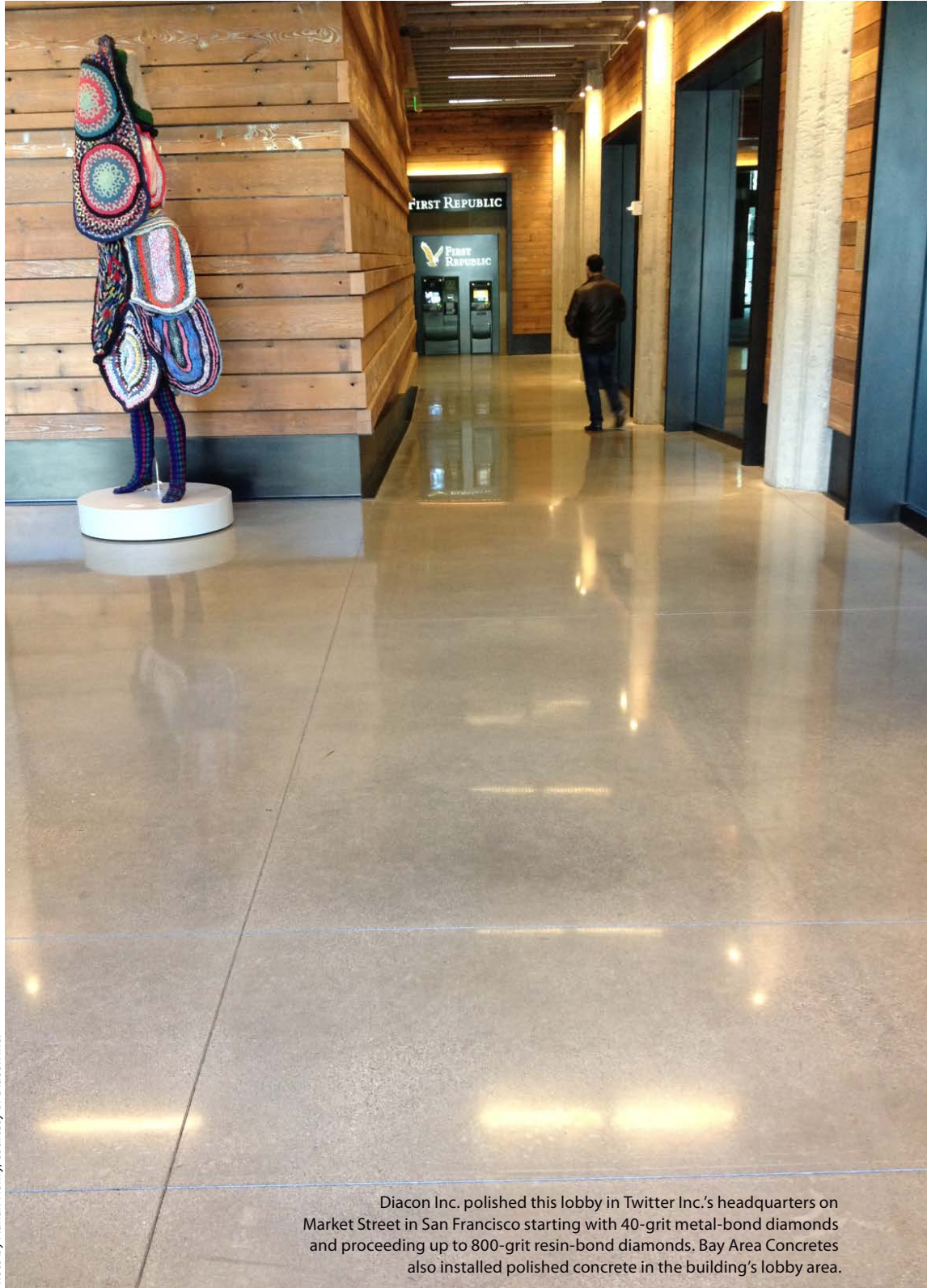
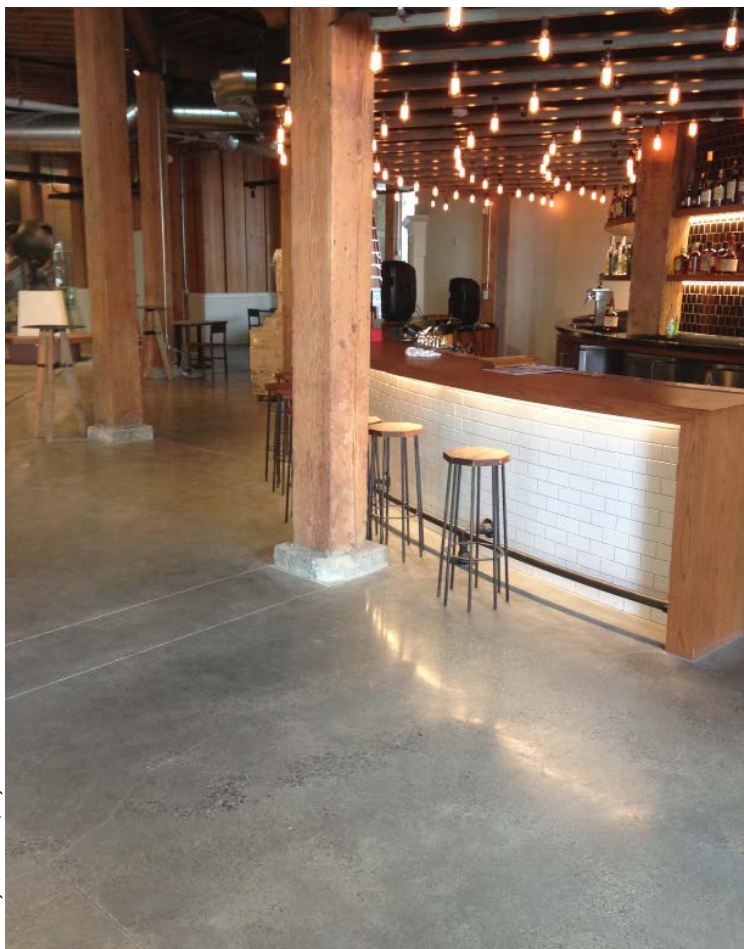


Photo by Adrian Henry, courtesy of Diacon Inc.

Diacon Inc. polished this lobby in Twitter Inc.'s headquarters on Market Street in San Francisco starting with 40-grit metal-bond diamonds and proceeding up to 800-grit resin-bond diamonds. Bay Area Concretes also installed polished concrete in the building's lobby area.



The photo here and the two following are of a software-code company's office facility in San Francisco. Bay Area Concretes installed the integrally colored, diamond-polished topping slabs.

Stimulating work with bottom-line benefits

Henry says Google "is all about doing whatever they can to put employees in a better frame of mind while working." Polished concrete, with its enhanced reflectivity, contributes to a brighter environment. And, Henry notes, the company also pays attention to the affordability side of the equation.

"The bottom line at the end of the day is that, whether it's Apple, Google, whoever, they have someone somewhere looking at where they can manage some cost savings," Henry says. In addition to the potential for reduced lighting costs, polished concrete offers cost-savings in maintenance over carpet or VCT because of the cleaning needs of carpet and the wax stripping and cleaning of VCT.

Diacon has worked with Twitter in the past, and a major job for Apple is in the works. That job involves an auditorium where unveilings of the iPhone and other hot consumer-tech products are staged.

Diacon has seen its polished-concrete business expand rapidly over the eight years it's been in business, Henry says. He joined the business when it was engaged in its second polishing job, and immediately saw a need for improved work practices and a more comprehensive approach to the projects. He says this approach means a review of the scope of work in the beginning and a review of the entire floor or scope of work with the owner, addressing all potential issues such as patch work, joints or spalls.

Continued on page 90

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Projected to grow

Concrete Decor asked Bay Area Concrete's president, Mike Price, a number of questions about the phenomenon of polished concrete in the high-tech area of California's Silicon Valley. That discussion follows.

What is driving the growth of polished concrete in the high-tech customer segment?

No. 1, they love it. It's architectural and also "green." No. 2, the price point is good. No. 3 is life cycle — the long-term service life or cost of the floor over a 30-year time span. Polished concrete beats all other floor surfaces over this span.

The architectural possibilities are endless and the maintenance is much less with polished concrete. We can add dye effects in any color, graphic enhancements or architectural saw-cuts, not to mention that a heavier grind and polish can produce beautiful colors in nature's own rocks and sand tips — just like polished rocks.

Are these companies doing creative things with polished concrete?

Yes, of course they are! BAC installed a recent project in a high-tech software/code firm's offices in a 100-year-old train station converted to office space. The existing floor surface was part asphalt, some old, dirty concrete and hardwood, among other remnant surfaces.

We installed a concrete topping slab, 1- to 4-inches thick, and inlaid some metal railroad-track sections into the topping. We poured concrete over different elevations and materials. This was a cost-effective solution, because we eliminated the need for a large scope of demolition. We then diamond-polished and even used heavier aggregates near the track, hand-seeded into the surface. We used 3/4-inch rock around the track sections when we poured, then we polished using hand grinders to reveal the larger aggregate. This simulated the gravel beds that train tracks are laid upon, in an abstract, artistic format. This was in their employee lobby, gathering/game area and general quad/cafe/tertia locations.

The highly durable and artistic surface served their needs well, as this is a highly creative firm with creative folks. We even produced a railroad spike with the founders' names engraved on it, and it was placed in the new concrete surface. It's real-world creativity coming to life in polished concrete.

What are the key attributes of polished concrete in this case?

It's green-building, the maintenance is low-cost and concrete as a surface medium took care of different height elevations resulting from the irregular surface and varying existing flooring materials. In most cases of polished concrete, we are using the existing concrete and no hazardous materials are involved. Clients like the idea of taking an existing concrete slab, honing it and making a natural kind of surface. We are not raping Mother Earth to create surfaces like other chemically based or tree-based mediums of flooring. We are simply reusing the existing concrete foundation to create a beautiful and allergen-free floor finish.

In the future, the clients can do whatever they want with



Photo by Mike Price, Bay Area Concretes

Here, Bay Area Concretes used a specially designed stamping mold to give the impression of railroad ties and embedded steel rails in the colored and polished topping slab.

the floor, with regard to design changes. They can put carpet, tile or hardwood over it, or simply regrind and polish adding a dye color or saw-cut pattern. Long-term design possibilities are endless.

What did you do in a similar project?

We did saw-cuts and waves of color in a 4,000-square-foot business space. There's a band of blue dye, a band of red dye, then gray installed in both the lobby and common area. The adjoining rooms were done in different colors. Every project takes a different timeframe to complete based on the intricate nature or simplicity of design, volume of area to address, and of course, the all-important construction schedule. We have completed 1,000-square-foot projects in two weeks and massive largest-in-class 500,000-square-foot projects in eight weeks. We always remain flexible and open to design and schedule challenges.

What kinds of customers are driving this growing market for polished concrete in this geographic area?

In the Silicon Valley and San Francisco marketplace — and the situation is similar in other cities — the dynamic is that an increasing share of the office space market is owned by large developers or property-management firms. Sometimes these owners will polish the floors, and these can be customized, if a long-term lease is signed. Then the new tenant can add other floor coverings as desired. Again, cost is a big factor along with surface durability and natural beauty of this green-build(ing) material. Architecturally speaking, the polished concrete floor surface is timeless.

Do the tenants hire their own contractor and customize this surface?

Yes, it's up to the tenants to do what they want, as far as altering the surface as needed. It's a win-win. Polished concrete

is a popular, cost-effective medium, not only for the tenant but also for the people who own the buildings.

We also see projects where the owner is doing the common areas, and tenants are doing their own thing with different colors or polish levels. The tenant can remove the polish "cap" off of the concrete, patch and repair and polish to a higher level, and install decorative saw-cuts and dye colors. Corporate logos or sayings can be placed in the floor, too.

You say you have another creative project in the works in Silicon Valley?

Yes, I can't identify the company, but we are doing research and slab development concepts for a topping slab that will produce a jelly-bean, blue-glass-aggregate look in a lobby. This design may change over time, but this is where we excel. We work with owners, interior designers, architects, general contractors and artists every day, in the early stages of their projects, to create the road map for their polished concrete success. We want this industry to continue on its path of growth because it is a wonderful product for our clients and the planet. Polished concrete will eventually come to every corner of the Earth. It has arrived.

Where is growth occurring for polished concrete, and how is the market evolving in other ways?

With the high-tech companies, the market is driven by designers and budgets. But you also see it in condos and common areas of apartment complexes, in some cases due to young environmentally conscious professionals who work at Google or Apple and want it in their homes, too. Loft owners in San Francisco have loved polished concrete forever, since around (the year) 2000 when we first started mass polishing concrete surfaces with our PolishedCrete brand name.

When polished concrete first came in vogue, it was mostly in schools and lofts, due to low cost and low maintenance. Now we get entire homes or apartments in the San Francisco Bay area where (residents) want all their floors polished. That's where the more decorative part of the business really comes into play. Homeowners love the unique and artistic design possibilities. Each floor is artistic and difficult to duplicate, thus these diamond-polished surfaces become an extension of the homeowner's creativity and individuality.

Do you see continued growth as likely?

Yes, it's only going to continue to grow. The market has huge growth potential. We're seeing commercial flooring contractors going into it as well as companies that do carpet, tile and so on. This market is just beginning and has a long way to go before reaching saturation. It is a shooting star in flooring.

How has polished concrete figured into your portfolio mix? Have these market dynamics changed your business?

Yes, polished is now about 50 percent of our business. In 2000 it was 5 percent of our business, and in 2010 it was about 20 percent. I can foresee that in the future it will be 75 percent plus. For a company like ours, we live and thrive on the cutting

edge of new concrete technology and diamond-polished concrete is here to stay.

What did your portfolio look like before the dawning of the age of polished concrete?

We were architectural concrete guys — toppings, Bomanite, stamped, textured, decorative concrete. We are the longest-surviving stamped-concrete contractor and the second in the nation to start stamping concrete back in 1966. This gives you an idea of our pedigree.

It took 18 years for stamped concrete to take off and thrive. As a concrete-polishing company, we are on year 16 and we are taking off and thriving once again, (this time) in polished surfaces.

What kinds of innovative, creative concepts are you seeing with high-tech customers?

You see everything, from taking an existing warehouse floor and polishing it to a nice shine, to cases like a project we did in an existing office space overlooking the (San Francisco) Bay, where we used a blue dye that reflects the hue of the bay. New concrete toppings integrate the use of recycled glass and when revealed, ground and polished, they become fantastic mediums of light-giving surfaces for employees to be inspired by every day at the office.

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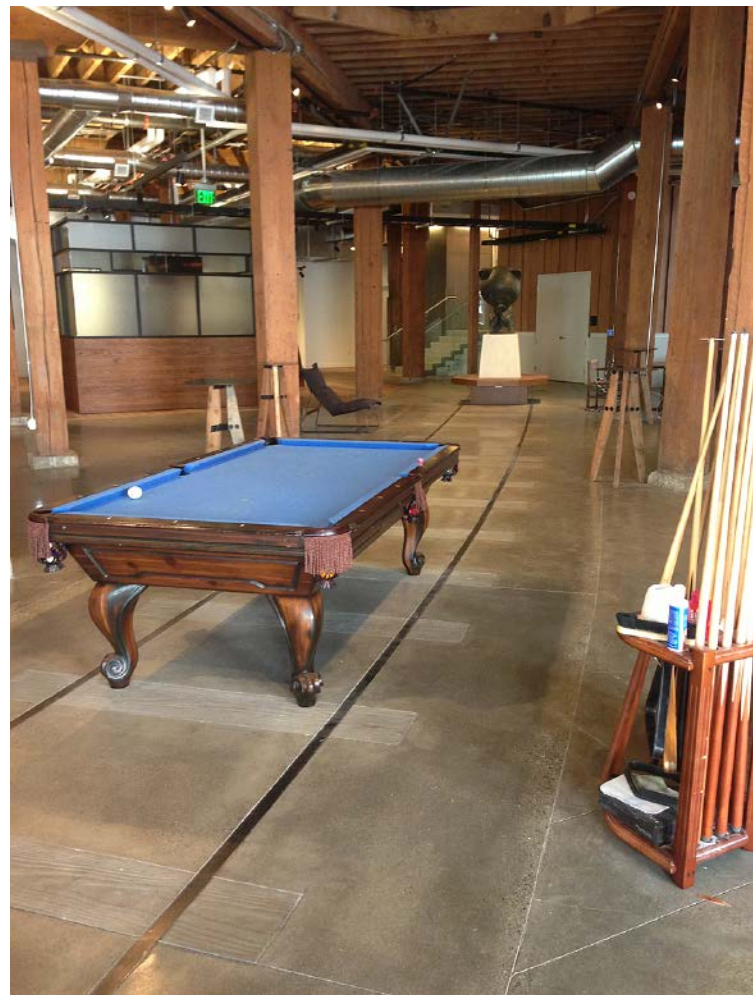


Photo by Mike Price, Bay Area Concretes

The railroad theme continues through this portion of the company's game area.

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Continued from page 87

New directions and growth areas for the business, he says, involve removing VCT prior to polishing (rather than subcontracting that task), and pouring/polishing concrete overlays. Most often, the client's objective is uniformity of the highly refined, polished surface, although some design-savvy clients opt for a striking color or colors, patterns and the inherent "character" of flaws and imperfections in an existing concrete surface. Overlays, he says, are gaining ground due to their uniformity attribute.

But highly polished gray concrete remains a typical preference of the big high-tech companies. Diacon has executed several polished-concrete installations for data-center company CoreSite, and Henry says he suggested the addition of colored glass to tweak the look. "But they like CoreSite gray," he says.

Nancy Yusuf, a former project manager for CoreSite, says the company thinks polished concrete is an optimal fit for data-center facilities. "It's durable for moving equipment on a daily basis," Yusuf says.

Referring to a recent polished-concrete installation at a CoreSite building in San Jose, she says, "We needed something strong and durable but that looks nice, too." CoreSite leases space in the building to other users, "so we wanted it to look good. We want to make it into a Class A building." The custom CoreSite gray color serves a branding function as well, she adds. 🛠️

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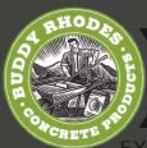
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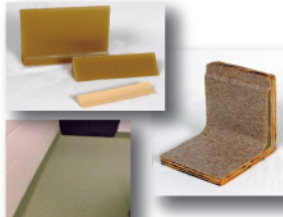
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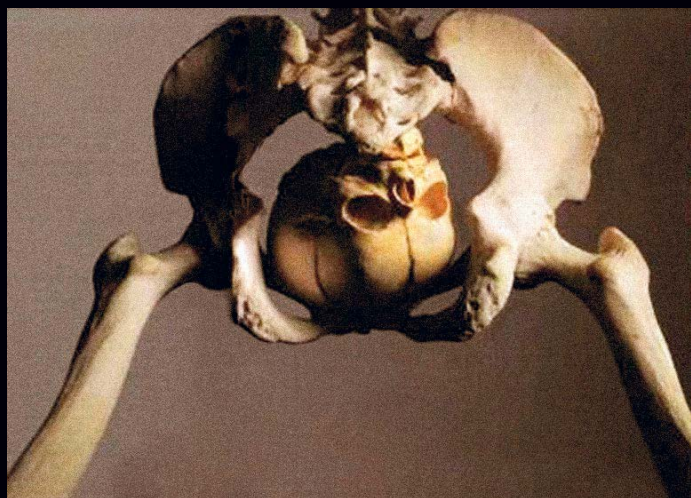
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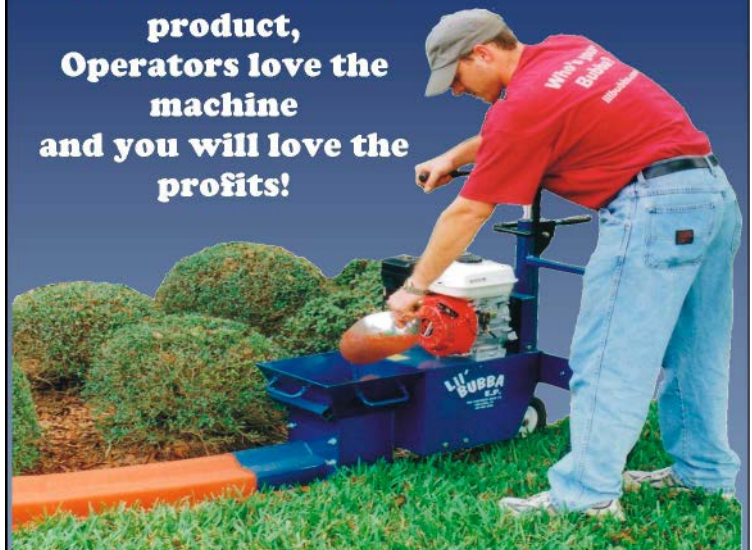
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Oh, deer!

by Vanessa Salvia

CABELA'S, a national retailer of hunting, fishing and outdoor gear, designs its stores with elaborate dioramas of outdoor scenes teeming with life. Besides taxidermists, artists and landscapers, the chain has come to rely on the talents of decorative concrete professionals to help bring these displays to life.

Among these pros is Jamie Hunt of Big Bamboo Studios, the project manager and lead artist at a Cabela's in Buffalo, New York. He worked alongside Sergio Cruz, Jeff Folkes, Chris Karlik and Josh Huntoon on their first creation for Cabela's. And if the men have their way, it won't be the last.

Working from a set of plans drawn by Cabela's architects and designers, Big Bamboo Studios created a 3-D model at 3/4-inch scale and submitted that for review. "Cabela's primarily looks for horizontal space to put in a lot of taxidermy so we work hard to accommodate that," says Hunt. "We also spent a lot of time on the vertical faces and pride ourselves on our rock looking real."

One challenge Cabela's encountered in the past was with water features. This display features water flowing from 10 feet back on the second tier, falling 8 feet into a catch basin and then running off into an



aquarium. "That's the focal point," says Hunt. "We made sure we made that correctly. It was a big concern of Cabela's because they had tried doing waterfalls like this in the past

and they would get too much splash. We were able to hit that spot on the first time."

About 4,000 square feet of rockwork went into this job. They started the job near the end of March 2014 and finished in mid-May. "We definitely had fun building this mountain and look forward to working with Tenji Inc., the aquarium life-support specialists, and Cabela's design team to build many more," says Hunt. Big Bamboo Studios uses SpiderLath, a fiberglass lath system, shotcrete and Smith Paints on all of its rockwork.

www.bigbamboostudios.com



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