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May/June 2018
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Publisher's Letter



Dear Readers,

Believe it or not, this issue marks the 129th edition of *Concrete Decor*. While *Concrete Decor* magazine is halfway through its 18th year, I look at its pages and realize that our industry is alive and well. Workmanship keeps improving along with an unrelenting breadth of applications and techniques. As I turn these pages on a computer screen before approving it for the printing press, I'm still eager to see what awaits on the next page.

Decorative concrete continues to prove itself in the U.S. market and it's continuing to grow in other parts of the world as well. Our cover story by industry expert Chris Sullivan offers insights on the global market for decorative concrete.

Over the past few years, the industry has pulled at itself in somewhat understandable ways. After all, decorative concrete comprises applications for both new and existing surfaces and enjoys ongoing demand in residential, commercial and industrial spaces.

Recent acquisitions in manufacturing, resale and even construction companies have occurred because of the industry's ability to compete with so many other trades. This evolution of our industry happens because it's constantly proving itself as a growth market. What I realize more and more is the fact that our industry is glued together by a steady reliance on people to help meet the endless array of technical challenges.

The internet has played an exciting and challenging role in the industry's progress. I have questioned its value because of its impersonal nature and because I believe solutions for many job site challenges require on-site discussions.

Surprisingly, however, I'm realizing that social platforms are helping to elevate these discussions. I'm also recognizing that *Concrete Decor* magazine's ability to serve the industry — foreign and domestic — depends on us to constantly deliver relevant and reliable information.

As this year rolls along, we'll be preparing for some changes that I think you can look forward to. As a fifth-generation publisher and a former tradesman, quality has always been front and center at *Concrete Decor*. So, as we prepare for the future, you can rest assured that these hallmarks will be our top priority.

As spring gives way to busy summer months, don't forget that time with family and friends is critical to maintaining balance in life and that competitive advantage.

Enjoy this edition of *Concrete Decor*.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher



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On the cover: The Queensbay Sculpture Garden and walkway, which garnered a first-place award this year in the ASCC Decorative Concrete Council's 10th annual Decorative Concrete Awards competition, feature nearly 3,500 square feet of exposed aggregate and integrally colored concrete at a new development in Penang, Malaysia.

Photo courtesy of Bomanite Malaysia

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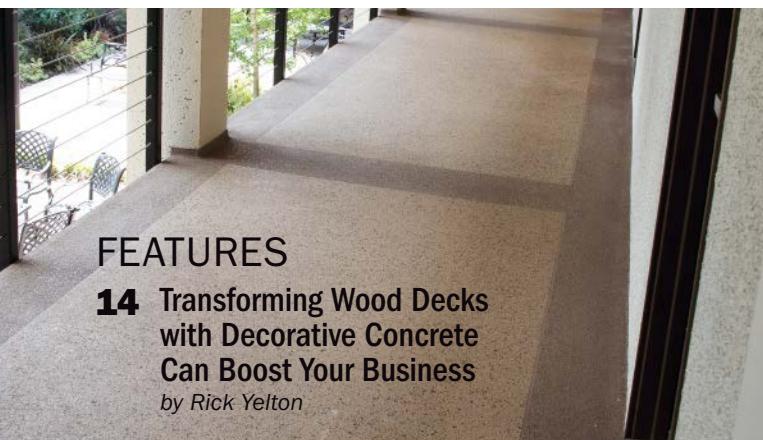
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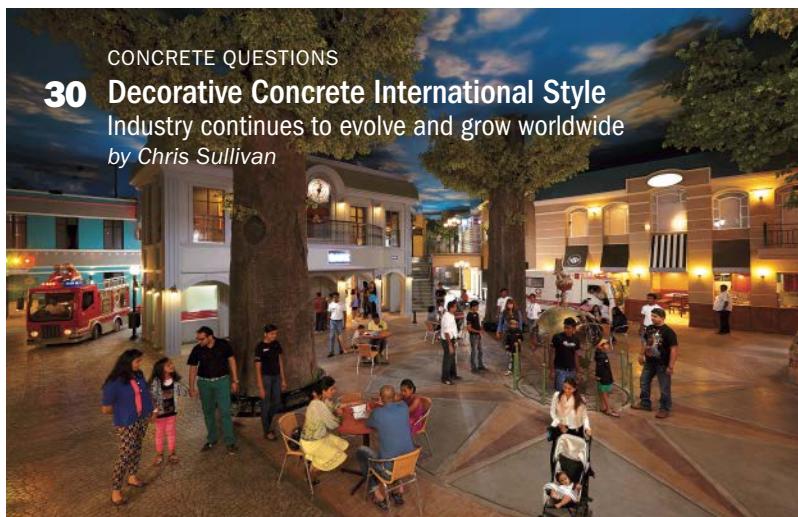
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go to connect.concretedecor.net/PIRC



Kristin Dispenza has been a member of the AOE team since 2013, developing trends articles, case studies and other PR materials. She received a B.S. degree from The Ohio State University College of Engineering/School of Architecture and has more than 20 years of writing and editorial experience. She can be reached at kristin.dispenza@aoeteam.com. See Kristin's article on page 8.



Rick Lobdell, a classically trained artist with a master's in fine arts in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design, has also studied math and drafting. In this series, the owner of Concrete Mystique Engraving in Tennessee will explain how he conceives his well-known designs. He can be reached at rick@concretemystique.com. See Rick's column, "Design Theory," on page 36.



Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. and a member of the Decorative Concrete Hall of Fame. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net. See Chris' column, "Concrete Questions," on page 30.

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For more information about the new RH test guidelines, call 800-207-2164 or visit www.RapidRH.com.



PRODUCT NEWS

New stucco mix introduced

Imperial Stucco Mix, a one-component, polymer-modified, fiber-reinforced stucco system from Kingdom Products, is formulated to provide a long-lasting, durable and water-resistant finish.

The recently introduced stucco system can be applied over traditional wire lath or directly to a clean, sound substrate prepped with the company's Superbond

Polymer/Primer. Integrally pigmented during the blending process to ensure uniformity, Imperial Stucco is available in five standard colors.

 www.kingdom-products.com



Cordless tire inflator tops off tire in under one minute

Milwaukee Tool continues to deliver portable productivity with its new M12 Compact Inflator. Touted to be the fastest, cordless tire inflator in the industry, the tool can top off a car tire in under one minute. Capable of completing demanding inflation applications such as car, light truck and compact equipment tires, the new inflator delivers fast, accurate, easy inflation with the portability to take anywhere.

The M12 Compact Inflator can complete a wide range of applications from light truck tires (65-80 psi) to compact equipment (10-80 psi). As part of the system, this tool is completely compatible with the wide range of subcompact tools available on this platform.

Rated to deliver more than 120 psi and built with a high-efficiency motor and pump, the compact inflator delivers up to five times the speed of fill on car and light truck tires. It can fill a light truck tire from flat to full on a single battery.

Its auto shut-off technology delivers highly accurate pressure, protects from overfill and automatically senses speed of fill to shut off at the desired psi. Additionally, a back-lit LCD screen illuminates the digital gauge so users can more easily check the target and current pressure reading.

Weighing just over 3 pounds, the inflator is designed with an integrated handle so it can be transported nearly anywhere. A reinforced cage protects it from drops and impact, as well as inclement weather. The backside of the unit features a place to easily store the 26-inch hose and attachments, including a ball inflation needle, inflatable nozzle and all-brass presta chuck.

 www.milwaukeetool.com
 (800) 729-3878



Spray upgrade features a flexible hose

To access smaller, hard-to-reach areas, Aztec recently added the Spray Grand Finale to its lineup of floor maintenance equipment. The two-in-one coatings applicator uses a microfiber pad to apply floor finish, concrete densifiers, hardeners and sealers. The new hand spray upgrade features a flexible hose.

Now available in both 24- and 36-inch pad widths, it provides an easy, high-speed way to lay down a smooth, uniform coat of chemicals that is eight times faster than the traditional mop-and-bucket method. It also eliminates baseboard splash and puddling, all while reducing chemical usage by 30 percent.

A battery-powered pump controls the flow rate to a microfiber or looped pad. Using a magnetic sensor and pressure-controlled pump, the chemicals flow from the bucket through the hand spray nozzle or machine and onto the floor.

The new version can do everything the old machine does, but also lets you spray chemicals like concrete guard, sealer or bathroom disinfectant in small amounts without having to lift anything but a spray wand.

 www.aztecpproducts.com
 (215) 393-4700

Compact storage solutions provide security

Knaack LLC recently introduced two products designed to keep valuable tools safe and easily accessible on the job site: the Cart Armour and the Compact Rolling Workbench. Both products are designed for commercial construction and residential contractors who need secured, easily accessible storage solutions.



The Cart Armour, an interlocking steel paneling system, encloses mobile work carts to secure contents from theft. Installed in less than 15 minutes, the patent-pending design incorporates 16-gauge steel panels and a padlock for extra security. It's designed to wrap around three Knaack mobile cart models but can be retrofitted to select existing cart models that haven't been modified.

The workbench offers a heavy-duty 12-gauge worktop that can be used as a surface for mounting pipe threaders or vices. It can be easily transported through doorways, elevators and cramped work areas.



 www.knaack.com

Angle grinder combines power with connectivity

Power, connectivity and a user interface combine to make the Bosch GWS18V-45PSC 18V EC angle grinder a great choice for tough grinding applications. The 4½-inch grinder features a brushless motor that offers maximum efficiency and low maintenance, plus connectivity that delivers mobile device-based maintenance review and performance notifications.

The grinder, which can also cut metal, offers greater runtime and more power than similar cordless grinders with brushed motors. It delivers 9,000 no-load rpm and doesn't forego power in favor of maneuverability.

Its HMI interface has a large screen that changes color based on grinder operating status: green for operational, yellow identifies issues like kickbacks, red means it's offline, and blue means the grinder is connected to a mobile device.

Users can customize the grinder, change the soft-start function's speed, set the LED brightness, and receive battery charge and safety information. Advanced electronic features include controls that shut off the grinder if dropped or if the tool becomes jammed, as well as restart protection to prevent start-ups during battery insertion.

 www.boschtools.com

 (877) 267-2499



Scannaskin unveils new World Series

World Series from Scannaskin is a completely new line with high-quality floor grinders, industrial vacuums and diamond tools where the design has been based on inspiration and knowledge worldwide. The focus on this premium line has been on the operator, where service, quality and reliability are some of the keywords.

"The development of World Series has been based on current market demand and industry trends from customers all around the world. We combine this input from our user base along with Swedish engineering," says Martin Persson, technical manager at Scannaskin Sweden AB.

First out in the World Series range is Scannaskin 32, a floor grinder with a wide range of high-quality features that makes it among the fastest and most modern grinders on the market. It has a unique efficiency that minimizes the grinding hours to a tenth.

The machine features cast alloy components, along with a floating shroud, designed for years of durability and dust-free operation. Scannaskin 32 is constructed so that a minimum amount of time is required for servicing the machine. Smartly designed, only three screw sets need to be released to allow easy access to the whole machine house.

"This machine gives the operator the greatest time gains, both in terms of efficiency and service life. This is 'grinding in the fast lane' for real," Persson says.

 www.scanmaskin.com

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PRODUCT NEWS

Poly brush good for general cleaning

Wagman Metal Products Inc., a leader in power trowel replacement blades, pans and innovative trowel attachments for scrubbing, stripping and polishing, recently introduced a new polypropylene brush.



The stiff Mondo Poly Brush bristle is good for general scrubbing on smooth concrete including cleaning floors after tilt-up construction and applying densifiers. The brush won't rust and is resistant to many chemicals.

It can be used on 36-inch and 46-inch walk-behinds as well as 6-foot and 8-foot ride-on power trowels. An 11-inch size can be used on the Wagman LP230.

🌐 www.WagmanMetal.com
📞 (800) 233-9461

Guard reformulated to resist water faster

A new and improved version of Prosooco's Consolideck LSGuard provides water resistance three times faster than before. Surfaces coated with the new formula only require protection from water exposure for 24 hours.

The product, which maintains the same advantages and benefits of the original product, can be applied to conventional concrete, hardened concrete or cement terrazzo floors. Surfaces treated with LSGuard resist damage from water, chemical attack and surface abrasion. It provides a long-lasting, high-gloss finish that maximizes light reflectance and eliminates the need for floor waxes, liquid polishes and conventional resin-based coatings.

🌐 www.prosococo.com

Job estimating app designed for overlays

Stone Edge Surfaces, a division of Turley International Resources, recently launched its new Job Estimator Pro app for the stamped concrete overlay and decorative concrete industry.

This new app automatically creates customized job-specific estimates and calculates labor costs and profit margins on horizontal and vertical concrete overlays, customizable concrete veneers, stamped concrete overlays and decorative concrete projects. It can archive an estimate or format one, and drop it into an email customized with customer name, disclaimers and contractor information.

It also simplifies material ordering by automatically creating and formatting job-specific material quantity lists for the sales and front counter staff to use when placing product orders.

The app can automatically open your phone dialer and contact technical assistance or schedule an email to be sent. It can open overlay video photo books to show customers examples, as well as access blog posts and training videos.

Bruce Grogg, Stone Edge Surfaces president, says he created the app to fill a void in the industry. Although it's based on his company's products, the app can be used by just about everyone estimating product application coverage.

🌐 www.jobestimatorpro.com

Self-propelled machine eases floor-covering removal task

General Equipment Co. recently debuted the FCS18 Rip-R-Stripper, its first self-propelled floor-covering removal machine that takes much of the work out of removing VCT tiles, rubber-backed carpeting and other sheet-type coverings from concrete surfaces. With its direct-drive, random-orbit action, the machine boasts a removal rate up to 720 square feet of material per hour.

Powered by a 3/4-horsepower electric blade motor and 1/3-horsepower electric drive motor, the FCS18 offers quiet operation and a top cutting width of 18 inches. An exciter plate is directly mounted to the motor driveshaft, which transfers maximum power to the material being removed through orbital action.



Controlling the FCS18 is simple with variable-speed forward and fixed-speed reverse controls. Compared with manually propelled machines, it eliminates back and forth movement while helping to provide a more consistent force to the work surface.

Two, 50-pound external weight side plates can be attached to the FCS18 to increase downforce on the blade. These side plates can be removed, as well as the operator handle, for compact transport. To prevent unwanted flooring materials from building up under the blade clamp, the machine features a four-bolt blade clamping system.

Built with a heavy-duty unitized, welded steel-plate frame, the machine comes standard with a 50-foot extension cord and cutting blades.

🌐 www.generalequip.com
📞 (800) 533-0524

App helps manage job site tools

Hilti is bringing connectivity to the job site with its free Hilti Connect app. Tool information, service history and more are now accessible via the app and NFC tag inside the tool, allowing you to easily identify the tool and access information even when the serial number is unreadable. This app puts instant access at your fingertips and will help you make informed decisions on the job site to be more productive.

The app, which can be downloaded to a smartphone or tablet, can help you identify a tool, check its service history and warranty, determine if it should be repaired or replaced, schedule a tool for repair, learn more about how to use a specific tool, identify accessories and track tool usage.

🌐 www.hilti.com
📞 (800) 879-8000



The entrance to Faciliteq's headquarters displays the design versatility of the panels made by All Access Manufacturing.

Access Panels Open Up Flooring Possibilities

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

In the past, access panels have been boring and not much to look at," says Jake Dean, general manager of All Access Manufacturing, a Las Vegas-based company that manufactures a decorative line of panels called Artego. "We've created new options for these panels that has really opened up the possibilities of how floors can tie in with an overall design."

When you enter the showroom of Faciliteq, a company headquartered in Las Vegas that specializes in high-performance architectural interiors and sells Artego panels, you'll be wowed by the artful possibilities of raised flooring.

In lieu of laminate or carpet tiles, these access panels are finished in a variety of materials including terrazzo, metallic pigmented polyaspartic, epoxy, concrete or a microtopping. Typically sized at 24-by-24 inches and about 3/8-inch thick, the panels can be made larger, such as the oblong panels seen at Faciliteq's headquarters.

Everything is custom ordered, Dean says, and orders usually take between seven and 10 weeks to turn around. Panels can be produced in a wide array of colors and patterns, including logos or corporate identification symbols that may span several panels.

Floors made from access panels — often referred to as "computer floors" — are great for high-rise office buildings, entry lobbies, medical facilities, banks, condo towers and casinos. They sit on pedestals that elevate the panels from 1 inch to 10 feet or more depending on how much room is needed below for electrical and mechanical components, wiring and ductwork.



Access panels are great choices in commercial settings as wiring, ductwork and mechanical components are hidden beneath the flooring.

"Raised floor panels are really popular with data servers because it's so much easier to run wires beneath the floor than overhead," Dean says, not to mention it's easier to access the equipment to make repairs or changes when necessary. It's also conducive to accommodate new tenants in commercial settings as it gives the space more flexibility.

The terrazzo panels, Artego TZ, can contribute to LEED points depending on the percentage of recycled aggregates. Artego MP features a UV-stable, scratch-resistant metallic pigmented epoxy that's a good choice for high-traffic areas. And Artego SF panels feature a mix of epoxy and sand/river pebbles.

"Their main purpose is to give tenants more customizable space without having to tear things out," says Dean. If you want to change the color scheme, "You can just lift the floor and swap panels." 

 www.allaccessmfg.com

Are Press Releases Still Relevant?

by Kristin Dispensa

THE Museum of Public Relations considers the first press release to be a statement written by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1906, disclosing the events surrounding a train derailment. That statement spawned an industry.

For the next century, companies looking to build their public image regularly shared news via a press release, following set formats and processes. But in the internet age, company messages can be easily and directly communicated to customers via social media or a blog page.

So is there room in company marketing plans for a press release? The short answer is yes — a longer answer is, “in certain circumstances.” And those circumstances continue to evolve.

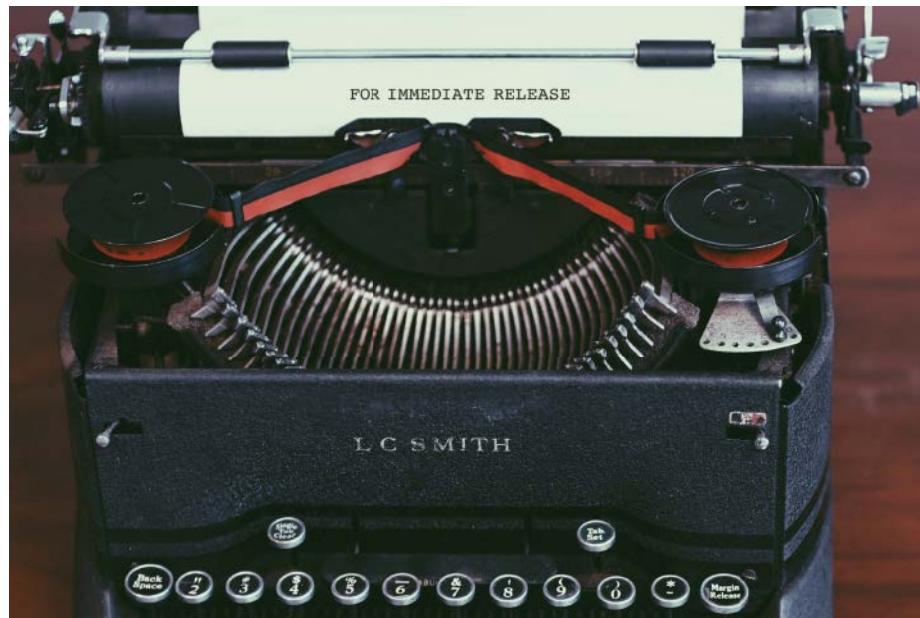
Improving your odds

Companies should consider putting out a press release when they want to communicate a detailed story — quotes by a respected industry expert, for example, or extensive technical information that’s intended for a specific audience. In such situations, the familiar format of a press release may attract an editor’s attention and improve the odds of media coverage.

Press releases are also useful for creating a company “resume.” New hires, product releases, quarterly statements and minor awards are important events in a company’s growth. Releases on such events can be used to populate a company’s media resource webpage and provide a one-stop shop for journalists.

These webpages have the added benefit of giving customers a quick primer on a company. Press releases housed on a company website make use of pull marketing (in which customers are taking the action and are drawn to company information) instead of push marketing (in which information is — as the name implies — pushed toward people). Pull marketing can be a very effective means of relating to customers.

Press releases also help broadcast straightforward messages with



broad appeal, such as event-related announcements. Many editors still rely on press releases to convey information important to a wide base of the industry.

Tying in a PR campaign

Like press releases, earned media coverage — that is, third-party write-ups in newspapers or magazines — followed a familiar, established process for many years. Journalists would contact story sources directly and/or work with a company public relations representative.

Public relations, or PR, is the formal way in which organizations communicate with their public audiences. As a modern marketing strategy, PR is just as effective as it was in years past — and arguably more effective.

A good PR strategy represents planned or managed communication. It’s an inexpensive yet effective means of building a brand because, unlike advertising, PR is the only way to get a company’s name and story out in the marketplace without having to pay for the delivery of that message.

A feature article highlighting a company’s innovations expresses a third-party endorsement that simply cannot be purchased. However, since

PR is not a paid-medium, there are no guarantees that an editor will pick up a story. To ensure success, the producers of PR must have a keen sense of news, strong writing skills and the ability to build relationships with editors.

Creating the content

Whether producing a press release or a PR article, a company must first identify the story it wants to tell and then determine what audience would have an interest in that story. A story should focus on unique projects, new products or a trend.

When developing a list of potential media contacts to pitch ideas to, it’s important to go beyond the obvious daily and weekly community papers. Media lists should include association newsletters and industry trades as well as market-specific publications. Increasingly, groups such as real estate firms, insurance brokers, financial consultants and civic organizations have their own newsletters or other publications. These can be a good place for companies to develop synergistic relationships with like-minded organizations.

How you communicate with an editor can be as important as what

you communicate to that editor. Editors are like any other businessperson — they have deadlines, families, bosses and feelings. Therefore, they should be treated with the same respect as any other prospect.

Company representatives who make the effort to track down answers to questions, meet deadlines and respond quickly to messages will become trusted resources. Furthermore, most journalists know a little about a lot of things, so educating them is encouraged. Tying a company's goods or services to a larger trend, such as energy efficiency or current design trends, will also build loyalty.

Finally, it's important to note that purchasing an ad doesn't give a company the right to demand editorial coverage. Most publications keep a strict distinction between purchased advertising and the editorial coverage their readers deserve.

Knowing when to use a given marketing tool is critical, especially with today's fast pace of change. Companies can work with an experienced freelance writer or public relations expert to help them navigate these processes and deliver well-written articles or press releases that will find their way to the top of an editor's inbox. 

Kristin Dispenza has been a member of the AOE team since 2013, developing trends articles, case studies and other PR materials. She received a B.S. degree from The Ohio State University College of Engineering/School of Architecture and has more than 20 years of writing and editorial experience. She can be reached at kristin.dispenza@aoeteam.com.



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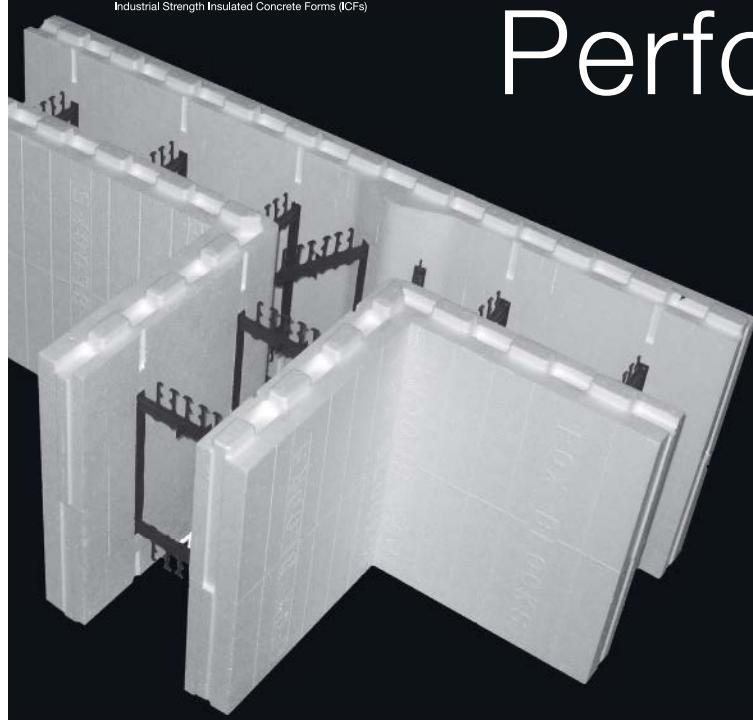


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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE



Photos courtesy of KB Concrete Staining

Kevin Brown, KB Concrete Staining Eastvale, California

by Vanessa Salvia

KEVIN Brown is a soft-spoken, humble-yet-accomplished man who got into the business of concrete work through his family. As he describes it, he knew from a young age that he wanted to follow in the family footsteps.

After finding his own way through the crowded concrete contractor landscape in Southern California, he thoroughly enjoys his work as an artisan creating concrete countertops, resurfacing and repairing old concrete, cleaning, sealing and staining.

"I got into the business through my dad and my uncle," says Brown, 49, now owner of KB Concrete Staining in Eastvale, California. "My dad was a concrete contractor where I grew up in Orange County, so I just always knew from a young kid that I wanted to do concrete work. I would go to work with them and I loved it."

Of course, the young Brown didn't really know how hard the work was until he actually started doing it, but he still loved it. He considers himself fortunate that he knew early on that he liked the work and he didn't have to wonder what his career path would be.



Exploring his options

For many years Brown worked during the summers and on weekends with his family. Once out of high school he was able to work full time, but his father insisted that he give college a try, to explore all his options.

"I did that for a while but I just knew that college wasn't for me and finally I was able to go full bore into the concrete work," he recalls. "I had learned so much throughout the years from just being around it and working all the summers, so going into it I was able to do more than what most people might do when they were first starting out."

Post-high school, Brown's father moved to Northern California while the younger Brown stayed in Orange County and explored architectural and decorative concrete. "And that's where my passion started," he says.

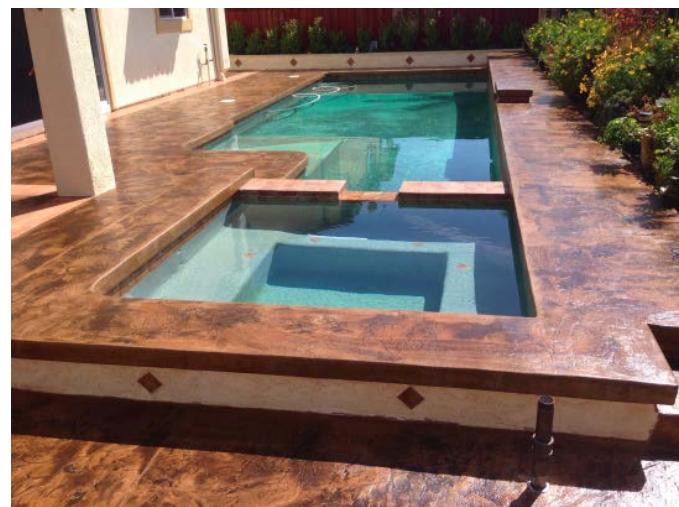
"I was fortunate to be in the concrete industry, and especially the decorative concrete industry, in the late '80s and especially the '90s because the industry was going crazy with innovation."

Enhancing the 'stone'

The innovation led him into flatwork, and he started his own business at the age of 24. Later in the '90s, Brown researched alternatives to problems he was having with his sealers. He also discovered that customers didn't understand what to expect from integral color, or just plain gray concrete for that matter, so they were becoming disappointed with how their projects were turning out.

"It led me to figure out why the sealers weren't really working and why one would fail and one wouldn't fail," he says. "Those experiences led me into the field of staining, sealing and restoration."

It's in this area that Brown really



gets to be creative. "You can take old, existing concrete — whether it's a year, 10, 15 or 20 years old — and give it a facelift that makes it so much better than it once was because of the products and procedures that are available today," he says.

With his in-depth knowledge of products and techniques that lead to success, Brown can be artistic with the knowledge that the projects will turn out as promised. He can also confidently explain to clients what they can achieve and what he can deliver.

Now that his work is focused

on restoration and repair, Brown frequently finds himself working with concrete that was poured by someone else. Often, the color of that concrete wasn't expected or doesn't match other concrete already on-site. Brown not only fixes it — he enhances it.

Maintaining contact

One of his projects that stands out is a large pool with an island in a backyard in Norco, California. Brown poured the concrete for that job in the late 1990s. "I built that whole backyard, the pool, the rock, the concrete,

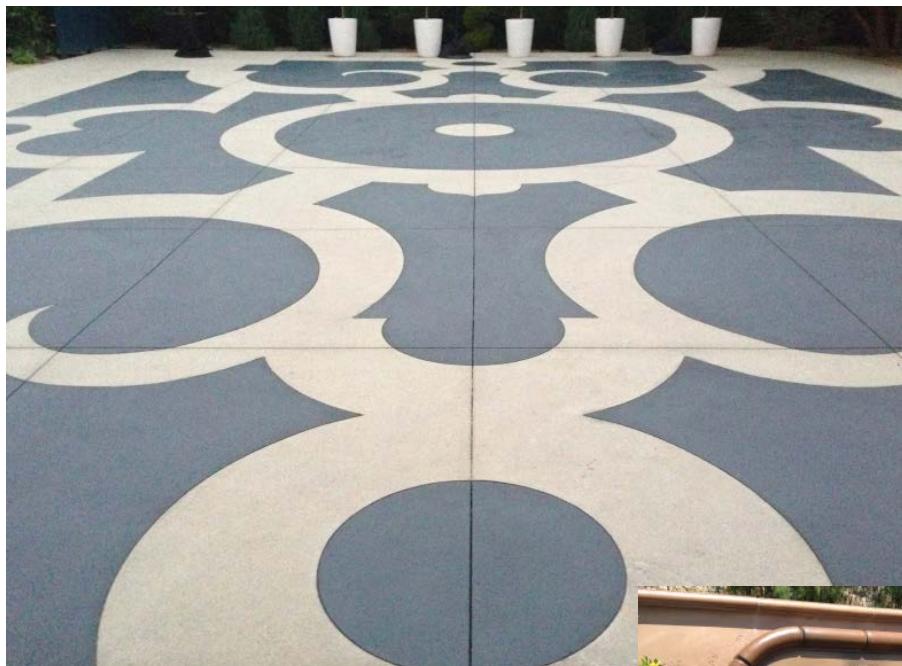
everything," Brown says.

"And they called me back to restore all the concrete and restain all their rock. It was still in good condition. It just needed a refresher and they wanted to change colors from gray to earth tones."

To have a client keep in touch and call back after almost 18 years was rewarding. The fact that the concrete he had poured was still in good enough shape to be restored was also meaningful.

"That client was the first (to call) but I also had several other clients from the late '90s and (early) 2000s call me back

ARTISAN IN CONCRETE



to restore their concrete," says Brown. "They wanted only me to do it."

Brown's abilities to give new life to the worn-out concrete depends largely on the state of the existing surface. He can work with concrete that is badly cracked but structurally sound, as in not being lifted. "Concrete cracks, and sometimes there's just nothing you can do with the cracks," he says.

But many times, he can take the cracks and turn them into a random stone pattern, he says. In cases where the concrete is not cracked but is just

worn and faded, Brown listens to what the client wants to achieve and attempts to deliver that.

"Sometimes they just want their old, tired, broom finish changed to a fresh look with a stamped overlay," Brown says. "And if the budget allows it, maybe decorative saw cuts for borders or a potential pattern of some sort."

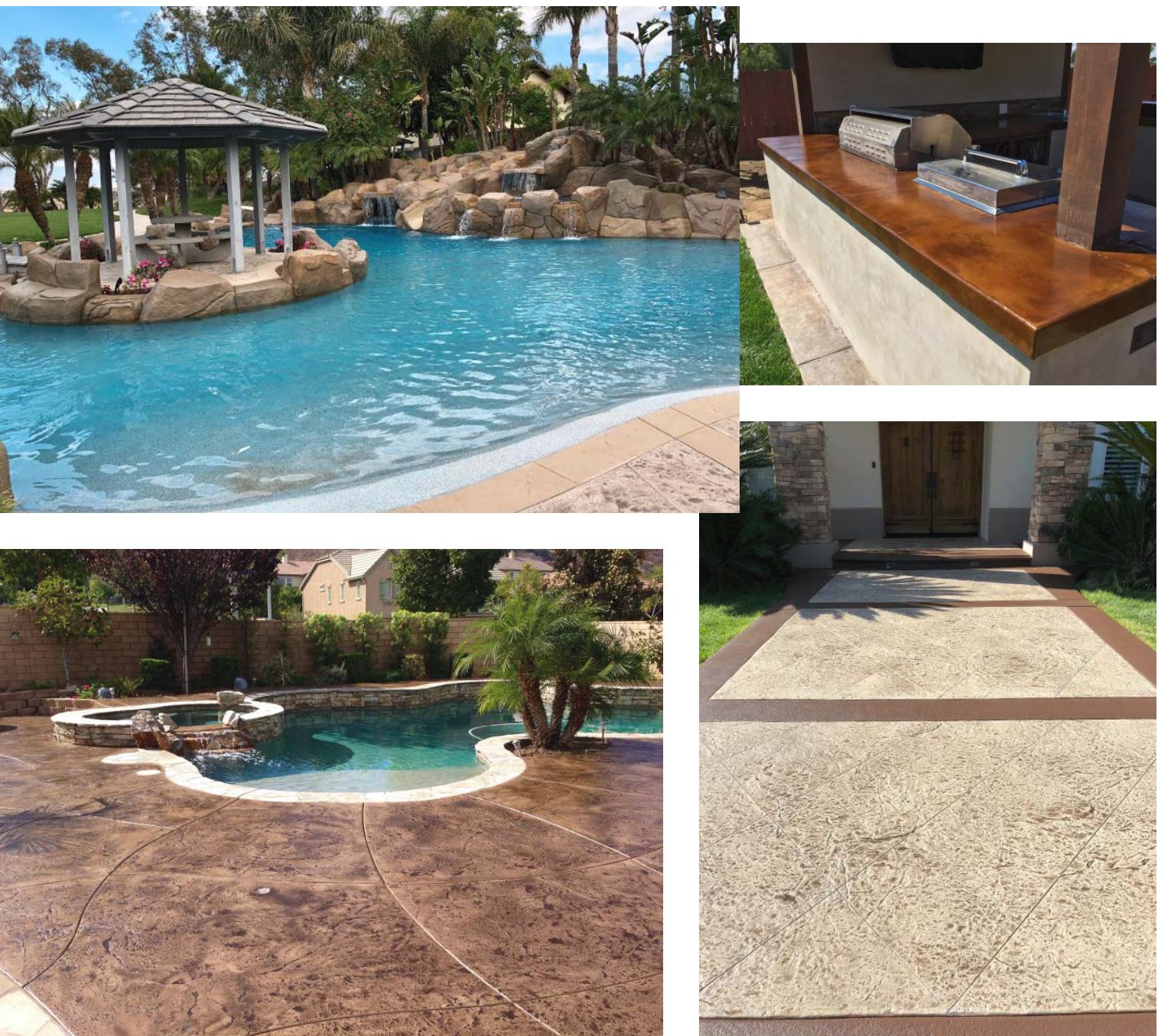
Staying true to water

Brown always uses water-based stains for a few reasons. The colors are much more vibrant, the stains are eco-friendly

and they can be very easily applied. In Brown's experience, solvent-based stains don't stand up outdoors in the California sun. Water-based stains, on the other hand, are UV stable and can.

Brown's a fan of stains by NewLook International because the company has six different product lines for various applications and a large library of colors to choose from, he says. For concrete repair products, Brown uses Super-Krete's stampable overlays and microtoppings.

About three years ago Brown used



NewLook International to create a saw-cut and stained pattern on a 40-by-60-foot area of a dance floor of an events center on the outskirts of Los Angeles. That turned out so well that NewLook uses a photo of that floor on some of its product labeling.

He continually pushes himself and gets inspiration by going to trade shows to keep up with advancements in the industry and to see what other artisans are doing.

Sponsored by NewLook, Brown came in third in the 2016 Brawl in the Fall

contest at the Concrete Decor Show in San Diego. There, he put his staining, etching and texturing skills to work on a floor depicting an underwater scene with a cave, fish and seaweed.

Rewarding results

Brown's reward comes from making something old or cracked look new again, or even better than new. One driveway that he particularly loves was plain gray, old and tired looking. He revamped it with stamped texture and darker earth tones.

"I love the fact that I can go to a job and know right away that I can make it look amazing," he says.

"I knew growing up in the trade that I was more artistic than most of the people I worked with. I was always paying attention to detail and even while pouring concrete I wanted to do the absolute best I could. Now it's the same way while doing overlays, stains and sealers. I take a lot of pride in what I do and how I do it and it shows. That's how I've always been able to stay busy."

www.kbconcretestaining.com



Photos courtesy of Kaimana Coatings

Transforming Wood Decks with Decorative Concrete Can Boost Your Business

by Rick Yelton

BUILDING owners are asking contractors around the country to create decorative outdoor concrete features on areas not normally associated with concrete surfaces such as decks and roofs. The transformation from exposed wood surfaces to waterproof concrete decking is a factor in the growth of the whole deck and patio market. According to a November 2017 market analysis report prepared by IBISWorld, the demand for deck and patio construction will experience an annual growth of at least 5.5 percent.

There are several design trends supporting the forecasted growth of waterproofed concrete deck treatments. Architects use these systems to reduce a

project's initial cost. In many markets, it's more economical to top off the building with waterproof concrete decking systems than purchasing more expensive ground-level acreage to provide outdoor amenities relished by prospective buyers and renters.

In the residential market, waterproofed durable decorative concrete surfaces offer a quality alternative to the joist-supported under-decking treatment on elevated decks. When protected from the weather elements, these under-utilized areas can be expanded to patios, outdoor cooking areas or additional secure storage.

And since concrete overlay systems can now be placed on both interior and

exterior floors, they offer a distinctive floor design on both sides of the patio door. Katy Tomasulo, the editor of Professional Builder, reported in the magazine's 2018 hot trend surveys of the design industry that "Buyers increasingly want the same amenities on their decks and patios that they have inside."

Business opportunity knocks

When Norman Clayton performed his first deck treatment project more than 30 years ago, little did the contractor in San Marcos, California, realize that waterproofed decorative concrete decks would become an important part of his business. Currently he estimates that waterproofing wooden

decks accounts for nearly two-thirds of his company's billings.

Christiaan Zaayer, owner of Quality Sealants in Escondido, California, also has seen an increased interest from her company's core customers in using decorative concrete to waterproof wooden decks. Zaayer has opted to use this new service to organically grow with the company's key accounts. Currently, waterproofing accounts for about 15 percent of the company's total billings, but that number is growing.

Clayton, who owns Kaimana Coatings, and Zaayer are just two contractors who are expanding their decorative concrete businesses by adding waterproofing to their portfolio of services they offer to general contractors.

The combination of decorative and waterproofing skills may be the industry's fastest-growing business opportunity. While the market potential seems inviting, transforming from a slab-on-grade focused business to waterproofing elevated wood decks requires careful planning and a commitment to details.

How to get started

Marc Di Zinno, architectural representative for Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems, has helped contractors around North America expand their portfolios into waterproofing. Di Zinno, who has witnessed the growth of Kaimana

Photo courtesy of Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems



Empire Waterproofing worked on this decking at the Kellogg West Hotel and Conference Center at Cal Poly Pomona in California and finished it by applying Westcoat's Texture-Crete custom system with a multicolored spray texture finish.

Coatings and Quality Sealants, offers contractors three important considerations as they extend their services to include waterproofing.

First, contractors should select a coating manufacturer with whom they

feel comfortable. Many manufacturers offer training on their system followed by experienced field support through all phases of the project.

Product manufacturers direct their marketing efforts to architects,

Learn from the Concrete Decor archives

Todd Fisher, who works on installs, research and development for Unique Concrete in West Milford, New Jersey, offers a great project profile on a wooden deck upgrade:

<https://bit.ly/2G3ot0w>

Concrete Decor columnist Chris Sullivan examines a failed concrete overlay on a wood deck in "Why is My Concrete Deck Overlay Failing, But Only Where It's Exposed to the Elements?"

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Photo courtesy of Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems

This residential deck in San Diego, California, features Westcoat's ALX Custom Flagstone finish waterproofing system.

design-build owners and specifiers to promote their proprietary systems in job specs. To receive a full warranty, these manufacturers will insist that only authorized contractors or those who have received certified training on the application process be allowed to perform the work. It's important to receive the general contractor's approval before opting to use a nonspecified system.

Second, each waterproofing project is unique so closely examine the details, Di Zinno says. "Contractors should use the normal two- to three- week period following the contract award and start of work to do some serious checking."

If contractors discover a challenging detail, they can seek support from the product manufacturer to determine the appropriate solution that maintains the system's warranty. Also, Di Zinno continues, pay close attention to the terminology used in the bid documents. Many jurisdictions have enacted standards regarding waterproofing to their local building codes. Most manufacturers are aware of these requirements and can provide advice on product selection and installation.

Finally, perform a thorough review of the drawings, especially focusing on flashing details for the worksite's perimeter and thresholds. Di Zinno advises contractors to confirm that the deck will have the appropriate slope, adequate drainage and flow features including cricket flashing. (Cricketts are triangular shaped and are built up to direct water to the appropriate drains in the deck. This is most commonly done

in the plywood substrate, Di Zinno says, but can also be installed with the Westcoat products.)

"Don't forget to ask questions about the railing detail, including how and where it will be installed," says Di Zinno.

Clayton agrees with Di Zinno's suggestions but offers an additional important consideration before adding this service to your business: the initial investment.

Before offering waterproofing to clients, Clayton says he invested more than \$10,000 for the right equipment. Equipping crews with the proper surface preparation equipment, product mixers and application tools are essential for quality installation. Along with these production tools, plan to invest in upgrades for proper safety equipment including fall protection and dust suppression/containment.

Many hands on deck

Prior to starting Kaimana Coatings in 2012, Clayton was first a technical trainer and problem-solver for a coating manufacturer before becoming a project director for several waterproofing contractors. He's come to realize that while most decorative concrete contractors have a good working knowledge of how to install microtoppings and overlays on slabs, they need to recognize there are some important considerations when preparing a deck or wooden substrate.

The coating contractor is often the last sub on the job, warns Clayton, and a host of preceding contractors can compromise the quality of the install.

So wise waterproofing contractors, he says, should ensure the built structure conforms to the construction plans. If any detail doesn't match, they should document the deficiency's specifics and alert the general contractor and client.

Clayton's crews begin their inspections by checking the sturdiness of the framing and underlayment, and looking for any deflections caused by walking on the structure. The deck must be stiff, he says, and the supporting framing systems must be resistant to movement. Pay attention to vibrations caused by movement on adjoining stairs or decks.

Along with the structure's soundness, the underlayment must be checked. "Most systems work well over properly engineered substrates," says Di Zinno.

If you're tasked to install a

ICP Construction acquires Pli-Dek

ICP Construction, a division of Innovative Chemical Products Group, recently acquired Pli-Dek, an innovator in waterproofing solutions that provides a wide variety of specialty coatings for the building industry, including waterproof deck coatings, fluid-applied waterproofing membranes, epoxy flooring and concrete coatings.

The company's current portfolio of brands will remain intact. This includes Pli-Dek, Con-Dek, Dek C-Ment, Resinylte and RoofSlope.

According to Zain Mahmood, division president of ICP Construction, "With the addition of Pli-Dek's products, services and commitment to quality, ICP Construction offers you an increased range of products, additional resources and industry-leading solutions while continuing our long-standing commitment to innovation, product safety, environmental stewardship and overall service."

For more information about Pli-Dek, visit www.plidek.com.

waterproofed concrete deck on a plywood substrate, make sure the framing crew installed a material rated for exterior applications. Exterior plywood carries an X stamp, which identifies it as suitable for use outdoors.

CDX is the most common exterior plywood grade. Marine-grade plywood is similar to standard exterior-grade plywood, but its core consists of knot-free sheets, eliminating the possibility of water pockets forming within the structure.

Down to the details

Zaayer insists that knowledge of how other aspects of construction may impact your waterproofing project can

be the difference in profit or loss. Once you're assured that the supporting structure is sound, she advises you to check out the building's components that could cause moisture intrusion. Ensure that possible sources of water such as gutters, downspouts and trims don't expose your soon-to-be installed decking to undue rainwater or snowfall.

Zaayer says her biggest concerns are with flashing and deck slope. Often there are repairs or adjustments to the original construction that didn't include proper flashing. And unlike slabs on grade that are relatively static, elevated wooden decks are subject to post-installation movement. There could be settlement caused by freeze-thaw.

Zaayer's passion for detail extends into product selection. Her crews only use decking systems that include primers for the wooden substrate, reinforcement such as metal lath or composite lath combined with a repair mortar or cement board, waterproofing coating and flashing materials, and a primer that prepares the system for the decorative topping and sealer.

When possible before starting applications, Clayton encourages contractors to prepare a small mock-up treatment area away from the potential highest visual exposure. It's best to conduct the mock-up a week or so prior to the treatment date, he says, using the same equipment that will be on the project. 

 www.kaimanacoatings.com

 www.qualitysealants.com

 www.westcoat.com

Interested in Inspections?

For contractors who want to learn more about inspection procedures of residential elevated wooden decks, the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors offers the download of "Inspecting a Deck, Illustrated" on its website at www.nachi.org/deck-inspections.htm.

The document focuses on single-level residential and commercial wood decks and references both the InterNACHI's Residential Standards of Practice and the International Standards of Practice for Inspecting Commercial Properties.



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Methodology + Artistry: Hitting the mark with aggregate

Aggregates take center stage in this pool setting in Carmel, California. River rocks ranging in size from 3 feet to 1/8 inch in diameter create a cliffside/waterfall feature, while natural rock aggregate sculpted and rounded by water creates a streambed effect on the pool deck, with sand washes and clusters of rock. The concrete's tan integral color harmonizes with the aggregate.

Photos courtesy of Tom Ralston Concrete

by Joe Maty

BEFORE there was stamping, before the emergence of acid staining, an exposed aggregate finish was the decorative concrete choice by many.

"It's one of the oldest decorative concrete techniques, but one of the most difficult to do correctly," says Tom Ralston, a third-generation concrete contractor and owner of Tom Ralston Concrete in Santa Cruz, California.

Ralston says broadcasting, or "seeding" aggregate is "somewhat of a lost art" for contractors who are relative newcomers to the trade. Key challenges to creating successful exposed aggregate artistry include the task of achieving uniform consistency with a tight matrix of aggregate, he says.

"If you don't broadcast correctly, you'll have big gaping spaces where not enough aggregate was used, or clumps of aggregate where aggregate was piled up and not properly distributed." One trick that Ralston has incorporated to help "disguise" blank spaces that don't have seeded aggregate is to add an integral color to the mix.

"The integral color should harmonize with the main hue of the chosen exposed aggregate," he says. "That way the gap or space devoid of seeded aggregate is less noticeable."

Another common pitfall: Doing the wash too early after the pour and seeding, causing aggregate to "pop out," he says.



Sunburst cobble aggregate is embedded in integrally colored concrete featuring Sequoia Sand from Davis Colors. Brick stamping "picture frames" the aggregate.



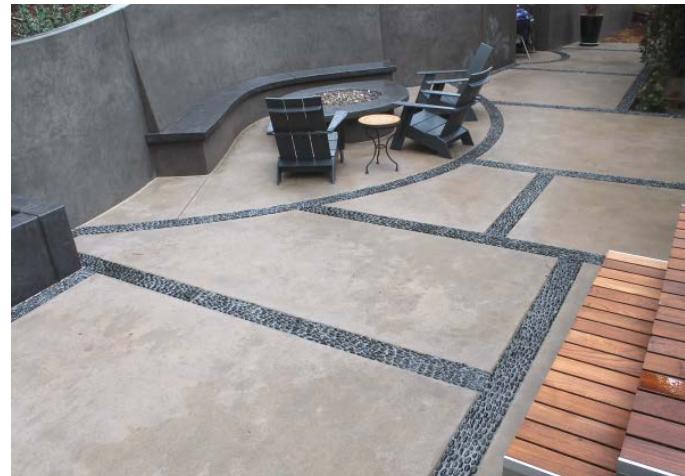
A closeup of sunburst cobble reveals several colors including jade green, Kuro black and Five Springs. This installation, at a coffee café entrance, features aggregate bands in areas of green-colored concrete, conveying a marine motif.

“Broadcasting requires good hand-eye coordination from finishers. And many don’t have that,” he says. Of Ralston Concrete’s 24 employees, he feels only about five are proficient in seeding aggregate.

Regional flavor

Technique and hand-eye coordination aside, there’s the matter of artistic vision in selecting and using aggregate, which can run from the minuscule (rock fines) to soccer-ball size and larger. Color, shape and surface characteristics all figure into how aggregates will appear in a concrete installation, and concrete color treatment and its interaction with aggregate are important facets of the canvas.

Concrete-mix composition varies from one geographic (and geologic) location to another, and aggregates used in decorative concrete projects also reflect regional variation. Specific aggregate types can be imported to fit a certain creative objective, but local and regional sourcing often gives projects a connection to an area’s natural environment. Economics also



Dorsal fin bands are another creative way to use an unorthodox type of aggregate. For these bands, or veins, 2-inch flat Mexican black pebbles are turned on their side to resemble a fin. Installation is painstaking — one at a time. The fins create an impression of fish swimming upstream.

favor local sourcing, as do sustainable design and building programs such as LEED, the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design rating system.

In California, black and white Yuba quartz and red river rock deliver this kind of connection to regional geology, and these aggregates are readily available, while a greenish-blue rock from the Tahoe area produces the “Blue Lake Skimmer,” Ralston says. The San Pablo rock, a dark blue, comes from the Delta region of the Sacramento area.

Other typical aggregate sources in the California decorative concrete market are Mexico, Utah, Oregon and Arizona, he says.

“It all depends on the surrounding area,” Ralston says. “For example, if the house has lots of grays or whites or blacks you may want to offset that with a gray concrete color base and rocks that would harmonize with them. Or if the house was in colors that are Southwestern or tropical or Floridian, then you may use rocks that would complement the house or the surrounds.

“Perhaps they live next to the ocean or in a forest. It just

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Photos courtesy of Edwards Bomanite

Seashell aggregate provides a connection to Florida's marine environment in these two installations by Edwards Bomanite — a miniature golf course (above) and a pool deck (right) in Orlando.

all depends. There's no one specific formula and that's the beauty of it. It's art, and as they say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. So a concrete contractor has to be really sensitive to the owners or architects or whoever's making the decisions and run with their sensibilities."

That's just beachy

On the other side of the country, in Florida, regional sourcing finds expression with materials such as seashells and lime screenings, says David Edwards, president of Edwards Bomanite in Winter Garden, Florida.

Seashells make a statement in pool decks installed by Edwards Bomanite, in a miniature golf feature at the Grand Beach by Diamond Resorts and in many other projects by the company in Florida, Edwards says.

At the Arden Park pool in Orlando, No. 2 coquina shells were combined with gray concrete, and the surface was sandblasted to remove the shells' sharp edges. At the miniature golf project, decorative curbing and low walls around greens and holes were constructed using integrally colored concrete and shell aggregate, with white cement adding accent on adjacent walkways.

More exotic aggregate types played starring roles for Edwards Bomanite in a major project at



This gray-concrete pool deck was blasted to take the edges off the shell aggregate. Integral coloring was used in the miniature golf project.

the boutique Kimpton Hotel in the Cayman Islands.

Aggregate from Cactus Canyon Quarries of Texas was used in combination with two different integral colors — an orange shade called Ginger and a dark color called Bark. Mother of pearl from South Africa was used in an accent band between the two colors.

Cactus Canyon aggregates Pearl Gray, a subtle shade of the color, and Blanco Mexicano were used to add dimension to the integrally colored concrete surface.

Edwards recalls the aggregate choices for the Kimpton being put through a gauntlet of reviews by the project architect, with three sets of samples needed to get the final aggregate/integral color combination.

Texture and brightness

Back in Florida, Edwards Bomanite relied on locally sourced aggregate — limestone screenings — to give texture and brightness to gray concrete in a plaza area at the Orlando Florida Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-



Aggregate imported from Texas and South Africa add an exotic flavor to this integrally colored installation at the boutique Kimpton Hotel in the Cayman Islands.



Limestone screenings add brightness and texture to the Orlando Temple's plaza, with white concrete complementing the white precast temple exterior.

Day Saints. This was combined with white concrete, where granulated granite aggregate was broadcast. The overall effect, dominated by a bright white, served to tie the plaza to the white precast-concrete temple structure.

Aside from the decorative treatments at the LDS temple, Edwards Concrete was called on to employ its heavy-duty concrete expertise with the installation of a 12-inch-thick slab for the plaza, with two mats of steel rebar. This robust construction was specified to ensure the plaza holds up when heavy lift equipment is used to clean the 165-foot-tall spire.

Seashell aggregate figures prominently in a major job underway for Edwards Bomanite — 27,000 square feet of pool deck at the International Palms Hotel in Orlando.

Adding zing

Scott Cohen, garden artisan and owner of The Green Scene Landscaping and Swimming Pools in Chatsworth, California, uses aggregates to add color and effect to his specialties — pools, water features, fire pits/fireplaces, outdoor kitchens and other backyard features.

Cohen says such projects reflect the booming trend of designing backyard space into different outdoor rooms including living rooms, kitchens, dining rooms and spas, as well as pools with elaborate pool decks. Colors and aggregates can customize and differentiate these spaces.



Photo courtesy of The Green Scene Landscaping and Swimming Pools

Abalone shells were the aggregates of choice to seed this poolside installation, with a grind that left the surface short of polish level to retain slip resistance.

In the project shown here, the steps and pool coping were cast in place, using white cement and pea gravel aggregate. An edging tool was used to add safety slip resistance on step edges. Abalone shells were seeded, and a subsequent grind was employed to hone, but not polish, the surface to retain slip resistance.

A countertop was also installed in the project, using the same materials and processes, but with polishing to a glass finish. 

 www.edwardsbomanite.com
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SEAL of Approval

Deciding which sealer is best largely depends on the job

by K. Schipper

THREE are a lot of sealers in the marketplace today, probably more than ever before. And, while that can be a good thing — think plenty of choices — it also brings up more questions about whether you're choosing the right product for a given job.

Sometimes it pays to think outside the box. Justin Vollmerhausen of Colorado Hard Surfaces did just that, and now he has stamped concrete patios that still look like new after five years.

Photo courtesy of Colorado Hard Surfaces

You can certainly seal and run. After all, sealing comes at the end of a project, with that check close enough to taste. Still, as the last component to a job, using the proper sealer is also the most important ingredient for avoiding future issues.

So, what's the right answer? In a nutshell, it involves educating your customer to realistic expectations, then spending the time to research those products to a point where you feel comfortable applying your best answer.

Sealing for success

The reality is not every concrete job needs a sealer, but those that don't are pretty few and far between.

"Those would include things that are vertical, things that aren't wear surfaces, some forms of sculpture or art. In other words, nonfunctional forms of concrete," says Chris Becker, director of technical services for Springfield, Illinois-based Solomon Colors/Brickform. "But, if it's underfoot, you'd better put something on it. Absolutely."

Bob Chatterton, owner of Trinic in Kirkwood, New York, says it doesn't even have to be underfoot. He notes that there's a definite need to seal concrete countertops from stains and organic and citric acids that can etch a concrete surface.

Speaking more broadly than just about countertops, Chatterton adds, "Generally, sealing stained or stamped concrete not only protects it, but helps



Photo courtesy of Scofield

While spraying may be the easiest way to apply a sealer, using a product that has to be rolled on makes it possible to get better coverage. It's also still possible to broadcast a nonslip additive into a rolled-on sealer.

lock the color in to make it last longer and look better."

From there, it gets complicated. Not only are there a lot of different types of sealers for various applications, but Justin Vollmerhausen, a contractor who owns Colorado Hard Surfaces in Denver, says there are probably just as many opinions about what kind of sealer should be used on a given type of concrete for a specific type of result.

"You can take one type of concrete and a family of sealers from some of the different manufacturers, and you're going to have people from each say, 'This is the best,' 'No, this is the best,' 'No, mine is the best,'" he says. "There's no one best way to answer that question because there are so many different ideas."

Still, not all sealers are created equal.

The fact that some are made with penetrating formulas while others are decorative coatings is a good example.

"Penetrating sealers migrate deep into the concrete and with the latest advances in nano-technology they are capable of penetrating deeper than ever, providing unparalleled protection from within," says Hermine Basso, director of business development for Ghostshield in Hudson, New Hampshire. "Decorative coating-style sealers are more geared toward protection, providing a coating on the concrete surface."

And, while penetrating sealers tend to leave the concrete with a natural, unchanged finish, decorative coatings come in a variety of sheens, or even more durable epoxy- or urethane-style coatings, she says.



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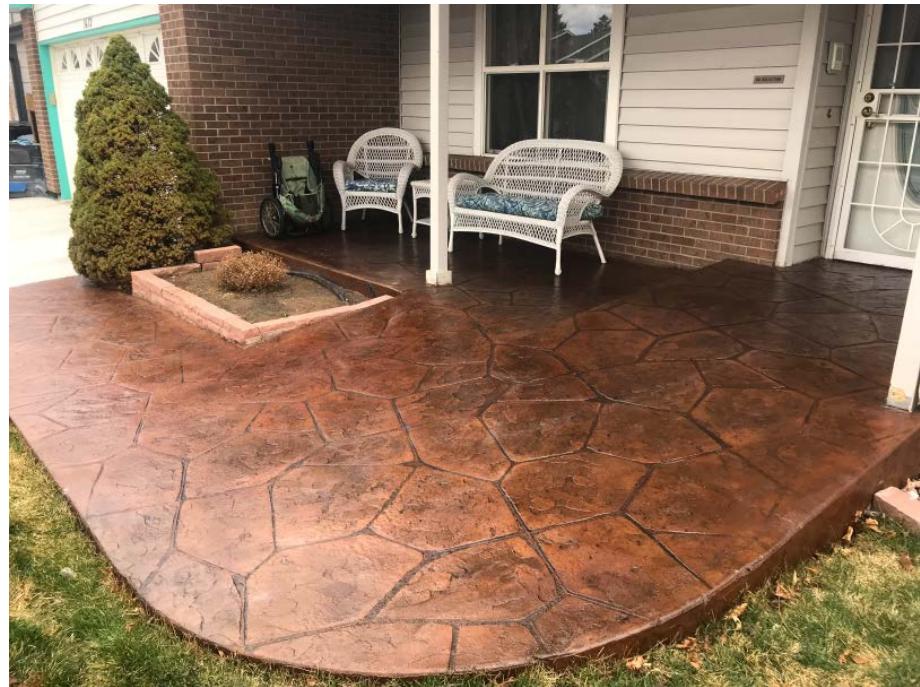
Surface prep is critical to get good results. Cleaning the old sealer off with xylene or a similar product (*above*) is an important step to achieve a beautiful finished product (*right*).

Variables galore

The questions a contractor needs to consider before deciding on a correct sealer can seem almost endless.

"You need to look at every variable," says Keith Boudart, national sales manager for Aurora, Illinois-based Butterfield Color. "What's the situation? Where will the sealer be used? What's the potential longevity of the product? What is the decorative application? What is the climate? What type of traffic will the surface have? Who's applying the sealer and at what thickness?"

Even a seemingly simple question, such as whether the job is indoors or outdoors, can bring up several issues. For instance, is the job in the Midwest, where salt is a given not just on exterior concrete but can be tracked into a home



Photos courtesy of Colorado Hard Surfaces

or business? Or is it in the Southwest, where sun can be the primary issue?

One important consideration on the indoor versus outdoor location of a job is the odor of solvent-based sealers. Douglasville, Georgia-based Scofield has recently released a new line of solvent-based sealers that has reduced VOCs (volatile organic compounds) which contribute to air pollution. Still, managing director Art Pinto says they have a strong odor and require a mask for interior use.

"For interior it's more challenging to use a solvent-based product," he

says. "Water-based products are often for interior use, but you still have to look at the use of the floor. If it's a residential job you may not need a very high-performance sealer. But if it's a restaurant or commercial floor in a mall, you'll want to use a higher-performance sealer because resealing (and repairing) is expensive and complicated."

Often a higher-performance sealer will be a multipart one. Solomon Colors' Becker says those perform best on interior applications where heavy traffic is the rule, although they can protect exterior surfaces with heavy traffic, as well.

"They have a thicker composition which can be used for deterring any kind of chemical or oil penetration," Becker says. "They're also typically chemically resistant and resist wearing and scuffs."

Still another consideration is the actual composition of the surface of the concrete, particularly whether it's very smooth or not.

"If concrete is polished, solvent-based products will typically penetrate better," says Ghostshield's Basso. "The polishing process closes off the surface pores and solvents are better suited to carry the varying molecular particle sizes into the substrate."

Finally, there's the question of timeframe. While in a perfect world, sealing would be done after new concrete has had a chance to cure.



Photo courtesy of Solomon Colors/Brickform

An important job for any outdoor sealer is to keep water out of the concrete, which can help protect it from spalling.



Success with any sealing job — indoors or out — requires good preparation.

However, some companies recommend that to avoid trapping moisture from the concrete, especially under water-based sealers, not every job can wait.

One of the newest products on the market to deal with that issue is Butterfield Color's Clear Guard First Seal.

"It's basically a water-based reactive product that can be applied at 48 hours after pouring the concrete," says Boudart. "It helps minimize the effect of freeze-thaw and deicing salts, but it also promotes adhesion of a topical sealer. So, once it's thoroughly dry you can apply a solvent-borne acrylic sealer over the surface."



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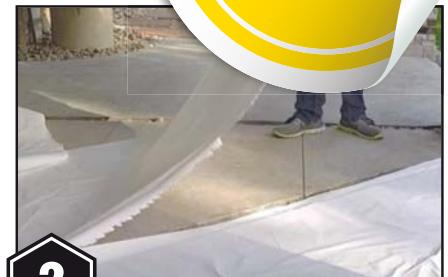
Roll the biodegradable Deco-Peel blanket over the acrylic sealer to be removed. Trim corners and curves to fit. (Easy in tight spaces, too!)



2

Roll it on.

Roll or brush apply the biodegradable Deco-Peel liquid stripper over the blanket until saturated. Allow the liquid to dry (usually 2-4 hours).



3

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When in doubt

As if those situations can't be complicated enough, then there are those where you're called in to reseal someone else's work — and possibly neither you nor the client is going to know what was originally applied.

Scofield's Pinto offers a couple of suggestions on that. He says if the original sealer is still in good shape, you can probably safely apply a solvent-based sealer, although pretesting is a good idea.

If you want to go the water-based route and you're unsure of what's underneath, "Do a very good cleaning, sand the area lightly so the sealer will adhere and then prepare the sealer," Pinto says.

That's somewhat the situation Vollmerhausen found himself in a few years ago. He explains that Colorado Hard Surfaces was called in by a residential owner whose stamped patio was beginning to spall within a couple years of construction.

Vollmerhausen says he knew he could repair the spalling, but, "I knew if I fixed his patio, I was going to need



Photo courtesy of Trinic

Aesthetics certainly plays a role in choosing the best sealer for a project, although on exterior jobs a key consideration is protecting the concrete from the elements.

something more permanent than a simple acrylic to protect his patio and keep water out."

Although he had been using Super-Krete Products' SK-P250 polyurethane on commercial floors with great success, he contacted both his manufacturer's rep, Mark Haen, and local sales rep before choosing to apply it to the exterior stamped concrete.

"The P250 is UV stable, and is thick enough to hold nonslip products," Vollmerhausen says. "Colors won't fade, sealant does wear and there's a great texture for slip resistance. It's the only product we use now for sealing stamped concrete because it lasts. I've got four-year-old patios you'd think were new."

Not that his success with the product hasn't come without a little work. He says the patio must be absolutely clean, the old sealer must be entirely removed, and it's rolled on, rather than sprayed.

Additionally, the client needs to buy into paying more upfront for a premium product and application in exchange for not having to reseal every year or two. In general, each client needs to know that expecting a concrete sealer to remain unchanged after years of weather and/or manmade abuse is unrealistic.

The bottom line: get all the information you can before choosing a sealer, and then follow directions.

"If you've got a question, ask somebody who knows," advises Trinic's Chatterton. "Talk to someone who sells or manufactures sealers that's well-versed in both the benefits and the cautions of things that can go wrong. Remember, every project is always a little bit different. And, remember, the sealer isn't going to perform the best it can if it's not applied the way it should be."

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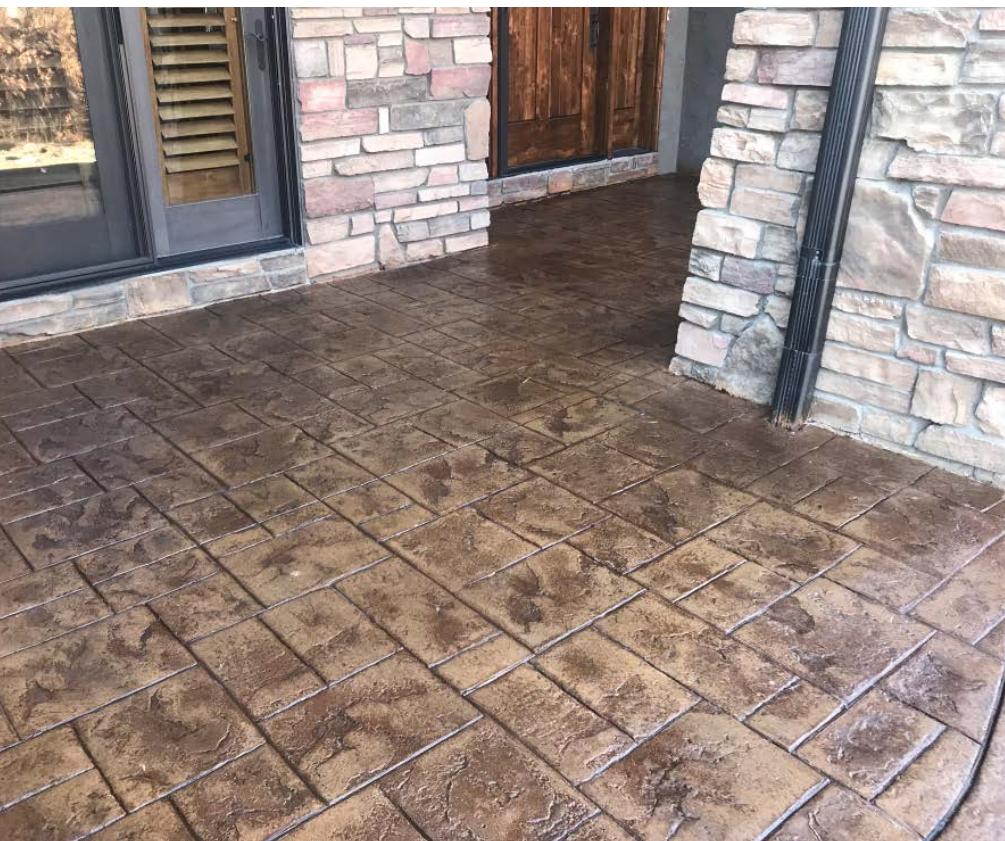


Photo courtesy of Colorado Hard Surfaces

Sometimes there's a bit of a learning curve with a new product and not every system is created equally. That's why it's so important to have good communication with your manufacturer's rep and/or distributor.



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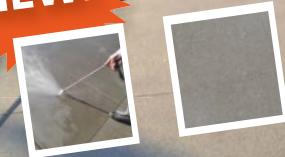
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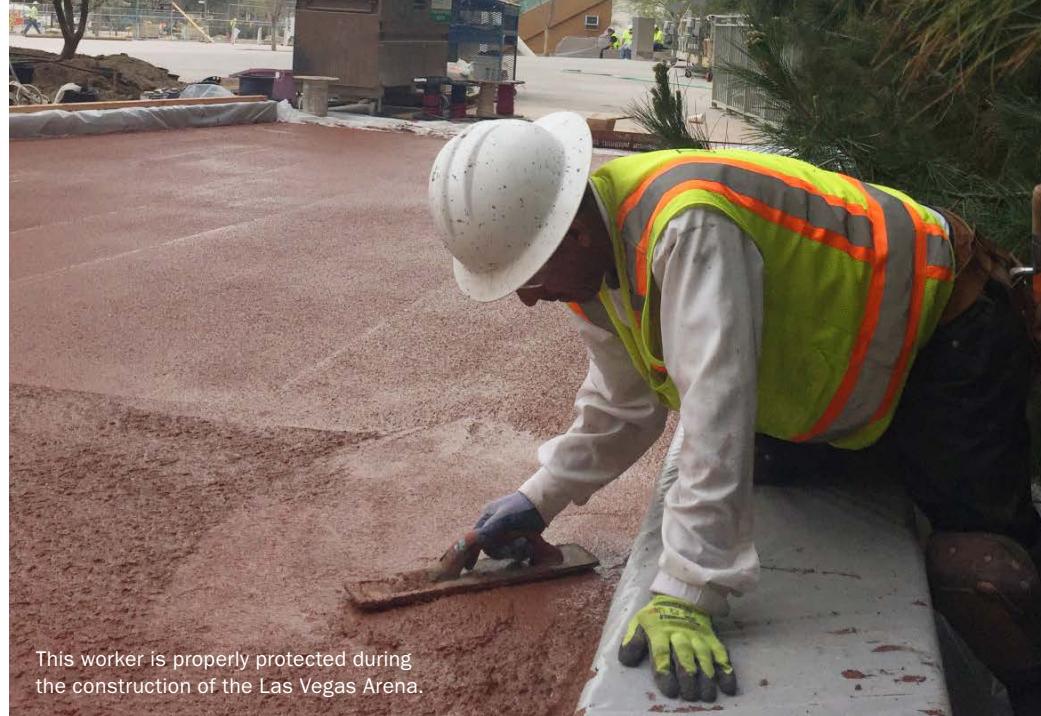
Companies today are emphasizing the importance of safe practices

by Chris Mayo

THE Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a final rule on respirable crystalline silica dust (silica I) on March 25, 2016. The new rule updated regulations established more than 40 years ago and introduced requirements for reducing employee exposure to silica dust. Enforcement of most provisions of the new rule for the construction industry began on Sept. 23, 2017. Enforcement for general industry and maritime components are slated to begin in June 2018.

While new regulations, and the associated steps required for compliance, can create stress across the industry, these rules make sense. According to OSHA, workers who inhale small crystalline silica particles are at increased risk of suffering serious lung and kidney issues.

Respirable crystalline silica is created when cutting, grinding, sawing or drilling concrete, plus the same type of procedures when working with brick, stone, mortar and ceramics. About 2 to 3 million people in the United States are exposed to silica at work.



This worker is properly protected during the construction of the Las Vegas Arena.

Focusing on safety

Chris Plue, senior vice president at Webcor Concrete in San Francisco, knows safety. In addition to his day job heading a group that includes more than 1,000 hourly co-workers, Plue is the current president of the American Society of Concrete Contractors.

Previously, he served as the director of ASCC's Safety and Risk Management Council. In his capacity with ASCC and with Webcor, Plue has a special focus on safety.

"Focused on safety" can be a broad subject with different levels of emphasis. One area of focus is the comprehensive safety program at Webcor, a company that builds high-rise concrete structures and is ripe for silica exposures and a host of other risks. Consequently, it has proactively responded to the new silica guidelines.

"Several years ago, we decided to shift our safety culture," says Plue. "Initially, the biggest challenge was to operate in a way in which every employee and subcontractor is looking out for each other. This is contrary to the industry norm of keeping your head down and mouth shut. Newer crew members tend to be hesitant to ask questions of the more experienced workers if they see safety issues."

Webcor now boasts a safety program that has been accepted company-wide. Every supervisor takes OSHA 30, a 30-hour online construction safety course. The company also trains all supervisors

in their Legacy Safety course which was adapted from Cemex, a ready-mix company.

"It's a great program for promoting the type of culture of safety we were looking for. Nearly 1,000 of our employees have taken the course."

Additionally, foremen spend regular one-on-one time with each member of their crew, reviewing risks, how to mitigate them and any safety practices that may need to be improved. "This has empowered every employee to be actively involved and outspoken about job-site safety," says Plue.

Each Webcor job site includes multiple employees who are safety trainers. Each day begins with stretch-and-flex exercises and a formal safety plan specific to the tasks to be performed.

Using tools, PPEs appropriately

According to Joseph Whiteman, ASCC director of safety services, "Compliance with the new silica guidelines work in concert with other areas that are a constant focus (such as) safe use of tools and appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) practices. Almost all the silica rules consist of containing respirable silica dust. Grinding, cutting, drilling and demolition all cause silica dust."

"In most cases, appropriate use of an approved tool with the recommended attachments can mitigate exposure rates. When combined with the use of approved PPE, most companies can meet the new standards."



Photos courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons

A T.B. Penick crew performs its "stretch-and-flex" exercises to loosen up before starting the day's work at Myriad Gardens in Oklahoma City. Following this routine, they review safety procedures specific to the task at hand. Webcor also has a similar safety program in place.

Whiteman says most infractions are a result of improper tool use, like removing the shroud on a grinder to make it easier to see the work surface or forgetting to keep the work surface consistently wet when cutting or grinding. Wet methods are one of the best ways to minimize airborne silica dust.

Some, maybe most, companies decided that retooling was the best and most cost-effective way to meet the guidelines. "Retooling isn't cheap, but it is less time consuming and cheaper than meeting the testing requirements of OSHA if companies choose to use tools that don't include citations stating silica exposure rates," says Whiteman.

Manufacturers of cutting and grinding tools now include exposure rates of silica in their owners' manuals.

"These need to be read carefully, as the exposure levels and task durations are based on how many hours the tool can be used before allowable silica exposures are exceeded," cautions Whiteman.

"This usually means controlled testing, sample collection and a lab analysis to determine how much silica results from each tool used in all the ways it might be utilized. This can be very expensive and time consuming."

OSHA has published parameters for each type of work that might cause respirable silica. Table 1 (www.osha.gov/silica/Table1sect1926.1153.pdf) spells out how to use tools to comply, what PPE is required and for how long the activity can be performed before you are overexposed.

Whiteman says that as long as an activity is done within the strictures of Table 1, requirements are being met. "When you get outside of Table 1, that opens a whole new can of worms," he says. This usually involves testing like that required for tools.

Following regs to the letter

T.B. Penick & Sons, another large-scale contractor similar to Webcor in size and scope of projects, also takes safety seriously.

Victor Klemaske, vice president of estimators and project managers, says, "Safety compliance is part of doing business. When new regulations come on board, we follow them to the letter."

"Safety compliance is part of doing business."

—VICTOR KLEMASKE

The company has a dedicated safety manager and each job has a competent person who has taken the OSHA guidelines test and ensures they are met.

Like many companies, T.B. Penick had to purchase some new tools to comply with the silica regulations. For instance, it's switched to using all wet saws. The company also chose to do some equipment-specific testing on some tools. "We tested for baselines on each tool we chose to continue using," says Klemaske.

A big initial challenge, he says, was ensuring that employees used tools

with all the safety attachments on them. "Sometimes it seems easier to take one of the two handles off a roto hammer, or to remove the shroud on a grinder. Those attachments are there for a reason. Any employee using a tool is required to read the manufacturers' recommendations on how to use the tool and to follow them. The same goes for use of chemicals. The product safety sheets must be reviewed prior to use."

Making adjustments

"Any new regulations can be challenging at first," says Whiteman. "People had a lot of trouble with fall protection standards when they came out, for instance. But now, it's pretty much part of the industry-wide culture to tie off when you reach a certain height."

"The same goes for PPEs. What we see now is that companies insist that their employees are wearing the right respirators. That means they've been trained, medically evaluated, properly fitted and the respirator is being worn as recommended. Hardhats, too. These are all things that had to be adjusted to when OSHA regulations first came on board."

"Safety is like driving on a road when you've been told that 999 times out of 1,000, you'll be perfectly safe," says Plue. "At first those seem like really good odds. But when that one time happens, the results can be life-altering." 

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Industry continues to evolve and grow worldwide

by Chris Sullivan

OVER the last 15 years I've been fortunate to partake in multiple international training programs and symposiums which have let me interact with some amazing people worldwide. Every time I travel outside the U.S. I'm amazed at the scope of the decorative concrete industry. Most of us focus on our sphere of influence — as is to be expected — and don't pay as much attention to the industry as a whole, especially outside our borders.

For those of us who work in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe, we take for granted the quality of our everyday materials, let alone how easy they are to obtain. In developing countries, the amount of time and cost involved in getting everything needed for a job can be staggering. But staggering to who?

This is where culture and expectations come into play. If the region's culture understands hand mixing concrete on-site, planning six weeks out for material or working with handmade tools, they make do. When I work in these regions, I'm constantly amazed how resourceful the people are. I often struggle since I'm used to my way, but is that the right way?

Despite all the challenges, the decorative concrete market continues to grow internationally. Over the last decade the quality has improved greatly and, in many cases, the projects dwarf what we see in the U.S., Canada and Europe in size and scope.



Dozens of decorative concrete patterns and finishes can be seen at Shanghai Disney, the first Disney park resort in mainland China.

Photo courtesy of Orangestone Construction Technology

International market expands

"The international decorative concrete market is very robust and shows signs of growing at around 6 percent per annum over the next five years or so, with an expected market value of some U.S. \$13 billion projected in 2022," says John Dennis, who is based just south of Manilla, Philippines, and is the general manager and director of business development for Bomanite International Ltd.

BIL is the entity that manages the Bomanite business and intellectual property outside of the U.S. and Canada. The single largest international entity that focuses on decorative concrete, it has 11 independently operated manufacturing locations and more than 20 installation companies across the globe.

According to Dennis, "Huge investments in the leisure industry — namely theme parks and entertainment cities, especially in the Middle East and Asia, where there are approximately 20 such live projects in either the late design stage or implementation stage — have caused BIL to gear up to face the challenges that will be coming."

Disney and Universal Studios were the trendsetters in the early 1990s when it came to placing decorative concrete hardscape finishes outside the U.S., many of which had never been seen in those regions before. Since then, decorative concrete hardscapes have become the finish of choice for theme parks and entertainment complexes worldwide. The growth of these parks and complexes is slowly migrating into the residential sector, creating demand where it never existed before.

How concrete is viewed outside the U.S.

To understand the outlying decorative concrete market, you first must understand how the rest of the world looks at concrete. "Concrete outside the U.S. is viewed as a structural or base material, which is typically covered by another product like tile, stone, stucco, paint or veneer," says Matt Casto, field art director with T.B. Penick & Sons. Over the last 20 years, he's been involved with decorative concrete installations and trainings in 34 countries.

Concrete and cement-based materials are the primary building



Photo courtesy of The Walt Disney Co.

More than 1 million square feet of decorative concrete was installed at the Shanghai Disney Resort that opened in 2016 in Pudong, Shanghai, China.



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material worldwide, but outside the U.S. the culture of concrete hasn't been one of a finished product. This mindset has led to placing and finishing practices that create structurally sound — but not necessarily aesthetically pleasing — concrete. But aesthetics is beginning to change in developing countries, Casto says, as designers and architects realize concrete's value and demand higher quality finishes.

Likewise, installers are learning and implementing best practices to achieve concrete that has the quality, aesthetics and longevity of other more common flooring and hardscape finishing materials.

This is also what JoAnne Ong, one of the founding members of Bomanite Malaysia in Penang, has witnessed. "In the early 1980s the construction industry in Malaysia saw developers paying closer attention to landscaping their properties," she says.

This trend has slowly grown over the last three decades, and she's seeing larger budgets for decorative concrete hardscapes. "The focus on landscaping is significant enough to encourage a great increase of young and adventurous landscape architects." This change, she notes, has created new demand as the design industry embraces the variations and durability decorative concrete can offer a project.

Photo courtesy of Bomanite Malaysia



Integrally colored exposed aggregate and textured concrete deck out the entrance of the Queensbay development in Penang, Malaysia.

International struggles

Almost every conversation I have with someone from the industry in a developing country eventually circles around to the difficulty of obtaining materials and skilled labor that we take for granted in First World countries.

"Lack of forming accessories, limited supply of hand tools, and almost nonexistent supply and culture of sealers" were the top three issues Pablo Aviles, chief operating officer for

Concretos Y Pigmentos SA, in Mexico City, listed in a recent communication.

The same issue of product availability was a concern for BIL's Dennis. "Some of the biggest struggles our international applicators face are often ones of availability of some essential products." What we take for granted and expect on the shelf can require weeks to months of preplanning to make sure they are on-site when the project begins. "Often these are basic products found [over the counter in the U.S.] but that might take weeks to arrive on-site if the need is unforeseen," he says.

Closer to home, Nathan Wong, general manager and owner of Alternative Concrete Solutions in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, has cleared the hurdles of sourcing materials and solved the logistics of performing work across many islands. "The process is complicated, but the opportunities are endless if you're willing to put in hard work for the first three to five years," he says.

Investing in training, dealing with long lead times and producing higher quality work allowed Wong to create a niche for himself. He basically outlasted his competition and found new ways to get things done. "When they say three days, I tell my customer one week," he says.

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As an interesting side note, he adds, "A lot of the issues arise on the mainland U.S. before the materials arrive on the island." There are inefficiencies in logistics and shipping at all points, he says, no matter the country.

The other major struggle international concrete installers deal with is universal — finding and retaining skilled labor. Many companies are faced with having to employ foreign workers because of the lack of local labor.

Bomanite of Malaysia's Ong says, "Our [workers] are from Indonesia and Nepal. In addition to the language barrier, these foreign workers have absolutely no construction knowledge. Most have only farming experience. They haven't seen a steel trowel, an edger, to say the least, a fresno."

In many cases the employer provides housing and pays for work permits and visas, which adds to the cost of doing business. "A lot of them finish their contract and return home but we are fortunate to have many who have stayed and worked with us for 15-20 years," Ong says.

Sharing technology and new product development

The flow of technology and new products in our industry has historically moved from the U.S. outward. The rapid growth of the decorative concrete industry internationally has started to change that dynamic. New products and finishes are beginning to originate in developing countries and Western markets are adopting them.

One example is the development of colored and exposed pervious concrete, which was developed and brought into large scale production by Orangestone Construction Technology, headquartered in Beijing China (<https://www.pinterest.com/orangestone/>). Through research and field trials, Orangestone developed a system for placing large areas of pervious concrete with various aggregates that produce a very specific appearance once the surface is exposed. Many of these projects exceed 500,000 square feet.

Another example of new technology moving from East to West is brought to you by the theme park company

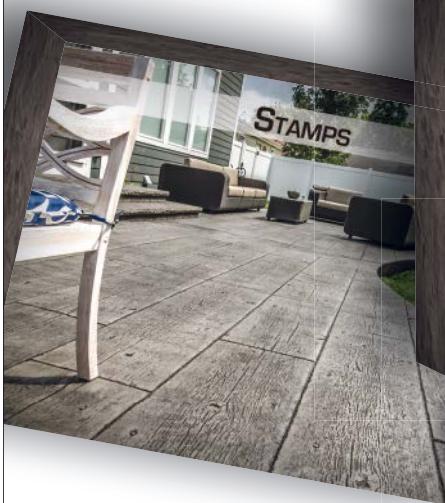


Photo courtesy of Orangestone Construction Technology

Integrally colored pervious concrete in multiple hues livens up walking paths at the Pujiang Country Park in Shanghai, China.

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Photo courtesy of KidZania S.A.P.I. de C.V., Mexico City

Small-scale stamp patterns and designs can be seen on the decorative concrete floors of the KidZania educational theme parks around the world.

KidZania, based in Mexico City (<http://www.kidzania.com/en>). The company builds interactive cities, also named KidZania, for children 1-14 that combine inspiration, fun and learning through realistic role-play. It's one of the fastest-growing global learning and entertainment brands in the world.

If you have a chance to take your kids to a KidZania, the first thing

you'll notice is that everything is created to scale for children. This includes the stamped concrete, which makes up most of the learning theme parks' flooring. The company had special reduced-scale stamp tools made to make child-size "stones and bricks." This technology has been used throughout all the parks and will also be part of the parks being built this year

in Chicago, Dallas and New York. (I should add these parks are being built 19 years and 19 countries later since the first park opened in Mexico City.)

Concrete for thought

Even with all the hurdles international installers may face, quality decorative concrete can be found worldwide. I'm continuously amazed and proud to be part of an industry that has grown so far and wide in such a short period of time.

This is our industry. As a global family involved in making the world more beautiful, we have a responsibility to keep decorative concrete the option of choice in the building industry. It is fine to be content, but never be satisfied. 

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

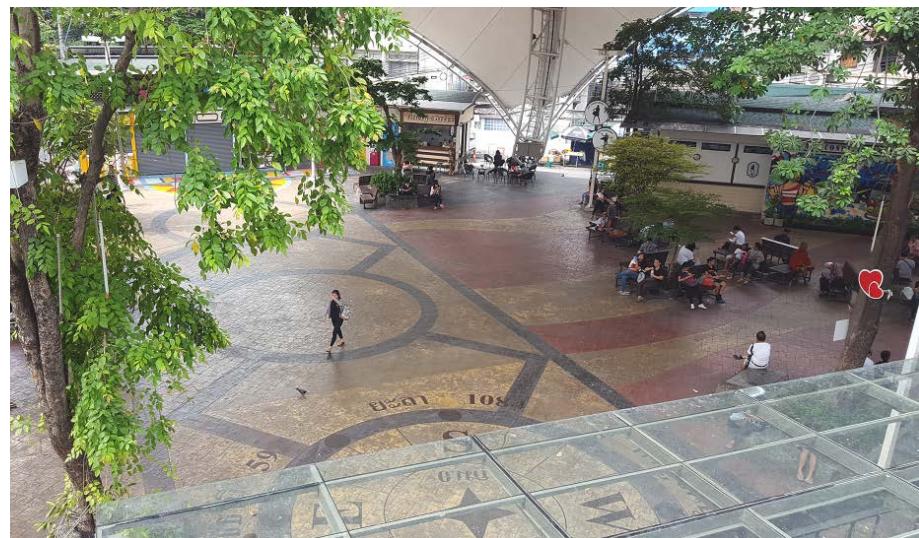


Photo courtesy of Chris Sullivan

Stamped and stained concrete make up most of the pedestrian walking areas around Victory Monument in Bangkok, Thailand.



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Photos courtesy of Rick Lobdell

Figure 1.

Gray Area

Coping but hoping gray will go away soon

by Rick Lobdell

GRAY seems to be dominating current color schemes for everything. As I'm not a fan, I hope this trend ends soon. Forcing me to work in gray almost makes me turn down jobs. But work is better than being idle so if gray is your prospect's preferred hue, here are a couple of important points to think about when talking to clients.

First, gray concrete is a warmer gray than most of the wall colors clients are picking. However, the shade varies throughout the country. In San Diego at the 2016 Concrete Decor Show, for instance, the concrete I worked on at the Brawl in the Fall was cream colored. In Nashville, where I live, the concrete is much colder. Please be aware of your concrete's temperature in comparison to the wall colors clients are picking.

Also note that most of our gray stains are colder than the color of concrete and there aren't a lot of warm gray stain choices in our industry. That's not to say there's not a perfect gray dye or water-based stain out there. I'm just saying they are hard to come by.

Finding middle ground

Applying a cold gray stain on top of a warm gray can make the cold gray appear bluish. Take that into consideration on your next gray sales call. When I break down these points to my clients, I typically get them to agree to change the floor color from gray to a very cold brown that I dilute so much you see some of the gray showing through. I also get them to realize they can change the color of their walls

easier than I can find the perfect gray concrete color to match.

Before you start the application, be aware of the floor's color. Some contractors use an overlay on all their jobs to control this. Whether you're using the existing concrete or creating a new surface color, the initial color on the surface is called the "ground" color.

When I paint on a canvas I start by priming the surface with a white primer called gesso. I draw my design and then start my ground colors for all my spaces. The ground color affects everything I do from that point on. Most of the time, I paint the complementary color over the ground color to create a vivid reaction and make my paintings vibrate.

Overlays make a difference

The same thing happens with concrete. Be aware of the initial gray color of the floor, how a gray overlay will change that and how a white overlay will affect the colors that go on top of it. When a white overlay is used as a ground color, you'll get more vibrant colors, but you will lose depth. If you're using an integral color in your overlay or concrete, note how that will affect your stains.

Most of the time, the color chart you show your clients is based on gray concrete or white overlay. If you add color to the overlay and then stain it with the color choice your client accepted, it won't look the same. Having an awareness of how everything affects color will save you tons of headaches and impress your clients.

Here are two of my ocean scenes. Figure 1 has a white overlay as the ground color. Figure 2 is on ordinary concrete from Texas. In figure 1, the colors are very vibrant. There is some depth in the blue water, but I had



Figure 2.

to apply many layers of dark blue to create that depth.

In figure 2, I only stained one color over the gray floor and achieved multiple color variations. To me there is a lot more depth in figure 2. There

are even hints of brown and green from the concrete slab that I never noticed during the process, but they came out during the sealing stage. You can't very easily recreate that kind of depth on white overlay.

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DESIGN THEORY

Figure 3 was an interesting challenge. My client wanted a pool deck like what you would find in New Mexico. I prepared a lot of samples ahead of time and decided to add a sand color to the white overlay as a ground color. Then when I stained over it, I got unique color changes that I couldn't have achieved any other way. The darker colors are acid stain and you can see a hint of that ground color showing through. I applied a super-diluted tan acid stain over the integral color to add just a hint of depth to the base color.

It's in the wash

At the 2018 World of Concrete this past January, I learned a new technique from Keefe Duhon of Concrete Revolution which has helped me contend with this gray-obsessed generation. During one of our demonstrations at the Decorative Concrete LIVE! event, he showed me a color combination I would never have thought to try on my own.

First, Duhon applied a white micro topping on the floor. (Since I am not a fan of white, I had a lot of reservations about applying it as a ground color.) Then we drew my design and lightly stained the details. His goal was to keep the stain color subtle, not use it to make a bold contrast like I tend to do.



Figure 3.

After we finished the design detail, he applied a brown and a black that were very diluted creating a wash over the entire area. The outcome (*below*) was subtle hints of brown and gray with limited white still showing.

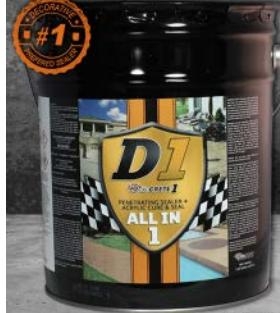
Many of you know I'm very set in my ways when it comes to techniques and applications, but I must admit I was extremely impressed with Keefe's handiwork. He accomplished the results we wanted in a way that was foreign to me. Many thanks to Duhon for showing an old timer a new trick.

It just goes to show you — No matter how long you work in this industry, doing your thing, there's always something new to learn out there. 

Rick Lobdell, a classically trained artist with a master's in fine arts in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design, has also studied math and drafting. In this series, the owner of Concrete Mystique Engraving in Tennessee will explain how he conceives his well-known designs. He can be reached at rick@concretemystique.com.



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Courting the Stone

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

VIRIDIAN Architectural Design initially wanted to resurface the ground floor of the circa 1875-1895 Fulton County Courthouse in Rochester, Indiana, with terrazzo but the money for the pricey topping wasn't in the budget. Still, the county wanted that stone look to complement the other floors in the building and polishing was deemed the next best thing.



The contractor originally hired for the job turned out to have very heavy equipment and county officials were unsure the century-plus-old building could withstand the weight. So they



nixed the original company and turned to Dancer Concrete Design in nearby Fort Wayne to tackle the job.

"They were worried about the weight and vibration of the machinery and how it would affect the entire structure," says owner Nick Dancer. "The building sits on huge pillars in the basement made of Indiana limestone. There are no mechanical fasteners holding it together. It's supported by weight."

Big enough to do the 2,200-square-foot job, a 32-inch Lavina grinder was successfully used to expose the floor's

antique aggregate pattern. In the 19th century, stone aggregate in concrete mixes was processed differently. Back then the stones were large and round instead of multisized and angular like the stones predominantly used today.

"To get the look we were going for, we had to go with two passes with a PCD (a superabrasive poly-crystalline diamond) and take off about 1/4 inch," Dancer says. "The deeper we went, the bigger the stones got."

All the concrete work was done at night and cleaned up so county business could be conducted the next day. In conjunction with the polishing, several areas were patched with Metzer/McGuire's Rapid Refloor XP. "You can't see any of the patches," Dancer says.

The Dancer team not only rendered a handsome floor polished to a satin 400 grit but also solved a pin hole problem with an extensive grout coat of LS/CS Densifier from Prosooco. They followed with a second coat of densifier, L&M Lion Hard, and finished the job with RetroPlate, a stain guard from Curecrete.

Refurbished and polished, the courthouse proudly maintains its listing with the National Register of Historical Places and Dancer says he's proud to have been part of the restoration. "The reason we got the project was we were willing to be adaptable, flexible and helpful." 

 www.nickdancerconcrete.com



Photos courtesy of Dancer Concrete Design

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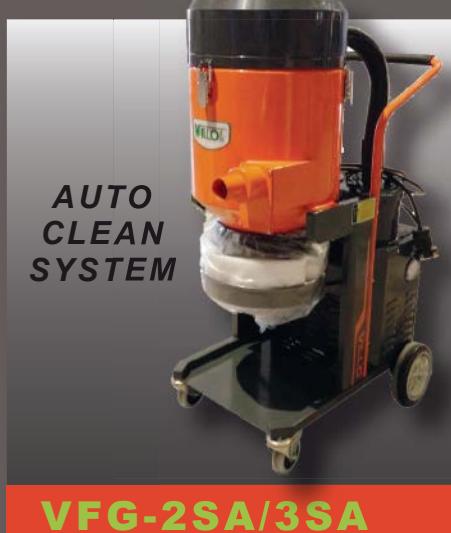
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