

# DECORATIVE CONCRETE

Retailer

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# PUBLISHER'S LETTER



## Dear Readers,

It's a privilege and my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the pages of *Decorative Concrete Retailer* (DCR), a publication dedicated to

promoting decorative concrete products and providing the information stores need to serve this exciting new segment of the construction industry.

Decorative concrete is an emerging market. Professionally oriented, it strives to promote itself with quality-made products in the hands of skilled professionals, although a few do-it-yourselfers are experimenting with these products too. Decorative concrete competes aggressively with other building materials because of its durability and its unique ability to imitate other building materials as well as create finishes that are unlike any others.

Success in your relationships with contractors is our primary goal in DCR. As with *Concrete Decor*, our publication dedicated to contractors, education and networking are key. As I'm sure you are aware, contractors trust people who not only stock the products they need but can also

provide information and support in many kinds of construction environments.

Inside DCR are industry-leading stories on hot new products that will help your customers succeed. You'll also find in each issue ways to drive more business through your doors and keep them coming back for more. Better yet, you'll discover what other stores are doing to move more product throughout the year. Because decorative concrete encompasses a diverse range of products and applications, it's important for retailers to know who their best customers are and what they need to succeed. In DCR you'll find these answers and much more.

Besides promoting products that are in demand, DCR serves a growing number of dealers, distributors and sales professionals whose knowledge of these products is essential to supporting their customers.

In the months ahead, DCR will unveil a growing array of online resources at [www.dcretailer.net](http://www.dcretailer.net). Included in your subscription will be unlimited access to nine years of articles and information we've already published in the pages of *Concrete Decor*. Stores will also enjoy added exposure for their businesses with free listings on [www.concretedecor.net](http://www.concretedecor.net), where more than 110,000 monthly visitors seek information and local resources. And because

[www.dcretailer.net](http://www.dcretailer.net) is accessible to qualified readers only, it provides information from suppliers that only stores can tap into on a daily basis.

I'm writing this letter on the inauguration day of our 44th president. Today, it is both prudent and practical for companies large and small to carefully evaluate their policies, procedures, and in particular, their product offerings. A niche that may help you survive this recession and, inevitably, others in the future, decorative concrete is demonstrating a level of resiliency that can strengthen your company today and prepare you for profitable new seasons ahead.

While the demand for decorative concrete continues to grow, accessibility to these products and services rests with distributors, retailers and resellers that are willing to explore the opportunities this industry holds. We look forward to serving you in the pages of DCR for years to come.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen, Publisher

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# MOVERS & SHAKERS


News that matters

## Ghines and Alpha enter distribution agreement

Ghines and Alpha Professional Tools have announced an agreement for distribution and service of the Ghines product line within the United States.

Ghines manufactures a wide range of products, including high-quality diamond and profiling tools, routers, dust collection systems for stone fabrication shops, and cost-effective, stationary contouring machinery.

Thanks to the Alpha deal, Ghines products will now be stocked in U.S. distribution centers.

 (800) 648-7229

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

## Blastrac Global gets bigger in Oklahoma

Blastrac Global has announced an expansion and investment in its Oklahoma City manufacturing facility.

As part of the expansion, the company has added two CNC machining centers, a roll press, cranes, and high definition CNC plasma equipment. "By moving key, high quality components in-house, we've increased control of the supply chain and costs," said Mark Haworth, vice president and general manager, in a press release.

In the wake of so much global demand for Blastrac's complete line of products, the Oklahoma City expansion will help move top products to the lowest manufacturing point.

As part of Blastrac's restructuring, Jonn Rippman, currently the national training manager, will add a new Inside Sales and Technical Support group, which will focus on taking care of the customer.

Blastrac equipment is designed for surface preparation of concrete, steel, brick, stone, asphalt and other substrates.

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

## Metal Forms Corp. purchases Sterling Handling Equipment

Metal Forms Corp., a leading manufacturer in the concrete construction industry since 1909, has announced its purchase of Sterling Handling Equipment Inc. Both companies have more than a century of manufacturing history in Milwaukee.

Established in 1904, Sterling Handling Equipment makes material handling equipment, including wheelbarrows, mortar tubs and concrete carts. "Sterling has an excellent reputation in the industry, with durable and reliable products," says Metal Forms president Tom Miller in a news release. "This equipment compliments our existing product line and will serve as the cornerstone of MFC's new Handling Division."

MFC plans to move Sterling's production to its manufacturing facilities in Milwaukee, Wis.

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

## Urethane Polymers make hires, acquires companies

Urethane Polymers International has hired Lee Tizard as business development manager and Brandon Carpenter as architectural sales manager.

The president of UPI, Jim Bolotin, feels both men bring a large amount of field and technical experience to the company.

This summer, United Polymers acquired Excellent Coatings Inc. and Tufflex Polymers late last year, allowing UPI to expand its product offerings.

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

## Prosoco hires group specialist

Prosoco Inc., a manufacturer of products that clean, protect and maintain concrete, brick and stone architecture, has added a new member to its Consolideck finished concrete flooring team.



As Prosoco's concrete products group specialist, Jeff Dykstra will promote Consolideck high-performance flooring products, develop new business, conduct training and consult on projects. Though he has responsibilities nationwide, Jeff is based out of North Las Vegas, and will focus mostly on the western United States.

A 20-year veteran of the construction industry, Dykstra has run his own Chicago-based finished concrete flooring company, A & I Futuristic Flooring, since 2000. He's installed more than half a million square feet of finished concrete flooring throughout the Midwest, including at numerous Expo Design Centers and Chicago's City Colleges.

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

### Promotions and a hire at Tindall

Tindall Corp. has announced two promotions at its Virginia Division and one new hire at its Georgia Division.

Charles "Chuck" Wynings has been promoted to general manager of the Virginia Division, located in Petersburg, Va. Wynings has been with Tindall Corp. since 1999, previously serving as engineering manager. His career has included five years with consulting engineers H. Wilden & Associates Inc., and nine years with precaster New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co. Inc.

Also at the Virginia Division, Jeff Lepard, P.E., has been promoted to engineering manager. Lepard has served at Tindall for more than seven years, previously as a project engineer. His extensive precast experience also includes a decade with a Pennsylvania precast company.

Phillip J. Iverson, P.E., has been appointed to the position of general manager for the company's Georgia Division in Conley. A member of the precast industry for many years, Iverson comes to Tindall from Spancrete of Illinois Inc., where he most recently served as director of business development. His precast experience includes engineering, estimating and sales positions for other precast, prestressed

concrete companies, as well as technical director of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute for a number of years.

Tindall Corp. is a leader in the design and manufacture of precast, prestressed concrete framing systems for mixed-use, educational, commercial, institutional, industrial and parking structures; modular products for the corrections industry; and utility products.

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

### Bonsal American realigns key leadership in response to growth


Bonsal American Inc. has added a new position to its leadership team and has promoted two other members to better handle growth.

Gil Seco has been promoted to senior vice president and general manager of the construction products division, which includes products sold under the ProSpec brand.

Bill Ashton has been named chief operating officer of the dry mix division, which includes products sold under the Sakrete brand.

Andy Brinkmeier has been named vice president of business development, and Daniel Benigni has been promoted from regional controller to vice president of finance.

"The reorganization of our leadership team is key to positioning Bonsal American for continued growth and market leadership," said David Maske, president of Bonsal American, in a press release.

Bonsal American Inc. is one of the largest producers of packaged building material products in the United States, including cement mixes and concrete repair and restoration products. 

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

## MIDWEST RAKE COMPANY LLC

*can give you an edge...  
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[www.midwestrake.com](http://www.midwestrake.com)

# NEW PRODUCTS

## Hot new releases that are turning heads

### QC releases water-based stains

Renew by QC is a new line of nonhazardous, water-based penetrating concrete stain products that are free of acids or acrylics.

The line consists of: Renew by QC Solid Color Concrete Stain, Renew by QC Translucent Stain, Renew by QC Primer, and Renew by QC Color Additive. Offered by QC Construction Products, these products rejuvenate colored surfaces or plain gray concrete by minimizing discolorations without altering surface texture. Made for use with existing concrete, unsealed concrete, interior or exterior concrete and other cementitious surfaces, Renew by QC products are easy to use and low-maintenance with excellent recoatability. Renew can be used to create specialty stencil designs with stencils and can be specially ordered in any standard QC product color.

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

### A self-leveling concrete topping

Ardex Engineered Cements has launched a new self-leveling concrete for outdoor applications – Ardex K 301 Exterior Self-Leveling Concrete Topping and Underlayment.

Ardex K 301 is a portland cement-based product for fast-track resurfacing and smoothing of concrete. The product is an ideal concrete wear surface or underlayment for commercial, light industrial and residential applications such as sidewalks, loading docks, parking garages, driveways, plazas, balconies and many other applications. It is freeze-thaw resistant, sets quickly, and can be walked on in just two to three hours.

📞 (888) 512-7339

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

### Sto Corp. meets low VOC regulations

Sto Corp., a leader in cladding, coating and restoration systems, has announced that the majority of its coatings line of building products has been adjusted to meet new low-VOC regulations that went into effect in southern California this past summer.

There are a number of Sto products affected by the change. They include Sto Metallic Coating, StoCoat Color, Stochastic Sand, and Sto Concrete Coating Smooth.

The adjustments to these coatings products fit with Sto Corp.'s upcoming implementation of its ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

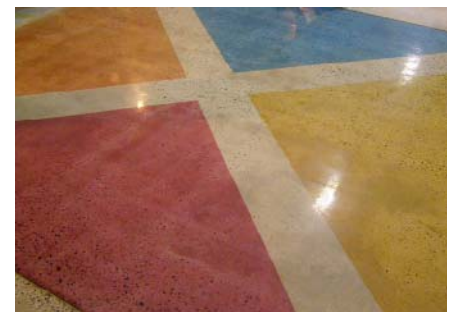
📞 (888) 786-2955

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

### Scofield debuts dye concentrate, traction aggregate

New from L.M. Scofield Co., Scofield Formula One Liquid Dye Concentrate is a penetrating, translucent liquid dye concentrate designed for use in the production of colored, ground and polished interior architectural concrete.

Developed as a fast-track alternative to existing conventional dyes, Scofield Formula One Liquid Dye Concentrate includes both dye and the extender solvent. When added to acetone at the job site, it is ready to use after mixing. After dilution, the Concentrate can be used in conjunction with Scofield





Formula One Lithium Densifier and Scofield Formula One Finish Coat. The Concentrate is available in 20 standard colors.

Also new from L.M. Scofield Co., Scofield Traction Additive is a clear, lightweight synthetic aggregate developed for use with Scofield concrete curing and sealing materials to produce textured surfaces with improved slip resistance.

Scofield Traction Additive consists of lightweight polypropylene spheres that remain suspended in the curing and sealing compounds, creating a textured surface without sharp edges. The small, clear particles are not readily noticeable on the finished floor and they will not discolor the surface.

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



## Sealant designed for tilt-ups

Pecora has introduced Tilt-Seal, a high-quality weatherproofing sealant specifically formulated for the unique needs of tilt-up professionals.

An advanced acrylic latex sealant, Tilt-Seal provides the movement flexibility necessary for use with concrete panels. It also requires no mixing and offers a fast cure time. Tilt-Seal is a one-component, water-based sealant with color stability and resistance to ultraviolet rays, ozone and airborne contaminants. This product is a solvent-free, nontoxic, environmentally friendly product with a very low VOC content. No solvents need to be employed in cleanup either – the applicator simply uses water to remove excess sealant and to clean tools.

Because this product was designed for being painted over by professionals, Tilt-Seal is manufactured in one color and configuration: limestone 5-gallon units.

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



## Cohills releases water-based stains

Manufactured by Cohills Building Specialties Inc., Pro Series Enviro Stain is a line of water-based, nonacid polymer-bonded stains that penetrate into a concrete surface to produce long-lasting UV-resistant stains that enhance any concrete surface.

Pro Series Enviro Stains contain no arsenic, lead or mercury and only a small number of organic solvents to conform to all VOC regulations. One gallon of stain covers up to 200 square feet.

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

## Sonoma unveils MetalCrete

Sonoma Cast Stone has unveiled a new option for concrete countertops and sinks: MetalCrete.

MetalCrete concrete countertops and sinks do not ring hollow like molded metal. They have the feel of solid stone, and each has been permanently plated with a genuine metal finish. Fixtures can be completely or partially plated for a variety of effects. Copper, nickel, brass, bronze or steel finishes are available.

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

## Concrete tub mold from Expressions Ltd.

Expressions Ltd. is now selling the Urbane, a concrete tub mold.

The Urbane is constructed out of fiberglass and can be reused. Measuring 52 inches long and 25 1/2 inches wide, the mold can be used for both precast and cast-in-place concrete tubs.



## IT'S ALL ABOUT VERSATILITY

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DRYLOK is the #1 Rated Masonry Waterproofer. For over 50 years it's recognized as the leader in the masonry waterproofing industry. DRYLOK is "Guaranteed to Stop Water" and comes with a fully transferable warranty. Use DRYLOK as the first step to a complete remodel or a finish coat for a waterproof and decorative surface. DRYLOK comes in blue, beige, gray and white and can be tinted for custom coloring. Application is easy with brush, roller or spray gun.

### Backed by Independent Testing

All formulas of DRYLOK – Powder, Oil, Latex and Extreme – are independently tested to back their claims. All are tested to industry standards set forth by governing bodies and on materials that are industry approved to the highest capacity.\*



**BASEMENTS**



**EXTERIORS**



**COMMERCIAL**

\*DL Labs, 2008

To order DRYLOK products or for more information on the DRYLOK Program call 1-800-845-5227 or your UGL Salesman.



The Urbane is currently the only mold available from Expressions, but other tub designs will be available soon.

[www.Expressions-LTD.com](http://www.Expressions-LTD.com)



## An underlayment that self-seals

USG has introduced a new cementitious underlayment. Levelrock brand 4500 NXG floor underlayment is a high-performance underlayment designed for interior use in a wide variety of projects. It turns out a smooth, hard surface that provides long life over concrete slabs, prestressed concrete and concrete planks at thicknesses from featheredge (with proper sand) to 2 inches.

Suitable for use with a variety of floor coverings, the underlayment offers compressive strengths of up to 5,500 psi. Quick application and setting times, combined with high production rates, permit the resumption of trade traffic within hours of the underlayment pour.

[\(800\) 874-4968](tel:(800)874-4968)

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

## Blastrac develops the Eco-Shroud

Blastrac, a leader in surface preparation technologies, has announced the development of the Eco-Shroud.

The Eco-Shroud is a vacuum shroud designed and engineered for use on a wide variety of grinders to provide maximum results from hand-held grinding and polishing tools.

The shroud aids in reducing dust during grinding and polishing procedures, which increases visibility and helps maintain air quality in the work area.

[\(800\) 256-3440](tel:(800)256-3440)

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



## Stoneage offers kneel board, mesh dispenser

Stoneage Concrete Tools has released two new tools for the trade — Quickdisc and E-Z Mesh.

The Quickdisc allows a person to slide effortlessly when floating or troweling concrete. The kneeling board has a wide, 22-inch-

diameter base to avoid sinking, and a bowed aluminum bottom helps keep edges out of the cement.

The E-Z Mesh is a wire-mesh dispenser and straightener, reportedly the first one on the market. Made out of aluminum and PVC, it is lightweight and can be applied to a trailer hitch by one person. As an alternative, it can be placed on the ground using its incorporated legs. In addition, it can be made into a sturdy work platform by removing the mesh roller and adding a custom piece of plywood.

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

## A coating blend from Anvil

Anvil Paints & Coatings Inc. has introduced Anvil 1700 High Performance Epoxy Show Coat concrete and garage floor paint for use on interior and exterior, painted or unpainted concrete surfaces.

Its durable acrylic and epoxy formula delivers a solid-color satin finish that is highly resistant to hot automobile tires as well as fading, scuffing, cracking, peeling and blistering. For a super-gloss showroom finish, Anvil's 2350 Wet Look Sealer can be used as a topcoat.

[\(800\) 822-6776](tel:(800)822-6776)

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

## Alpha adds nine

Alpha Professional Tools has expanded its line of products by developing nine new tools for the concrete industry.

The list includes the Ecogrinder, a high-performance grinder with a built-in vacuum system. Its unique slide cover allows the Ecogrinder grinding wheel to grind all the way up to a wall. The other products are: Grinding Cup Wheels, Dust Bag Carriage, Concrete Profiling Wheel, Ecocutter (ECC-125), Ecocutter Carriage Extension, a 3/16-inch Hot Rod Blade, and Corner Nippers.

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

## A multipurpose leveling tool

Masonry and concrete workers now have access to a single tool that performs the functions needed in leveling, plumbing, squaring and measuring projects.

Level Best2 utilizes two opposing level bubbles, a perfect 90-degree angle, and a ruler. Masonry and concrete contractors can plumb, level and square building foundations, sidewalk and driveway forms, stairs, countertops, retaining walls and even infrastructural footings easier and faster with this tool. It is made from injection-molded high-impact polystyrene. To ensure lateral rigidity, a perfect 90-degree angle and extreme durability, Level Best2 uses a 90-second in-mold curing process. Other Level Best2 features include "dual sides," so it can be turned over and applied to all four corners of a foundation, and a pencil slot for convenient and accurate markings.

The Level Best2 is available in three different sizes.

[\(866\) 930-5203](tel:(866)930-5203)

[www.levelbest2.com](http://www.levelbest2.com)





## Eagle releases new burnisher

Eagle Floor Solutions has introduced what the company is calling “the first burnisher designed with the concrete polishing and refresh market in mind.”

The cordless EnviroPro WA27 shines polished concrete, terrazzo, marble, VCT and other tile floors without leaving dust behind. The machine was engineered to apply extra head weight while refreshing the shine on polished concrete, and it can easily be adjusted to provide lighter head weight for traditional floor polishing. It increases the floor temperature as needed, and it captures airborne dust particulates with a built-in active vacuum filter system.

The EnviroPro WA27 ships with two pad drivers, including a metal pad driver for concrete surfaces.

☎ (800) 633-0519

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



## Sakrete's recycled asphalt patch

Sakrete has launched U.S. Cold Patch, a ready-to-use recycled asphalt product that permanently repairs potholes, depressions or cracks in any asphalt or concrete surface. It meets the strictest California emissions standards and can be applied year-round in all regions of the country that are subject to cutback asphalt restrictions as part of an effort to reduce pollution.

U.S. Cold Patch is made from nearly 60 percent recycled asphalt pavement. It reduces VOC emissions by at least 60 percent versus medium-cure cutback asphalt patching materials and by more than 70 percent versus rapid-cure cutback asphalt patching materials. The product is odorless and cleans up with soap and water.

Sakrete U.S. Cold Patch is applied directly from the package to the problem area and is tamped down or rolled over with a vehicle wheel for good compaction. It sets up immediately and does not require curing. Patched areas are immediately available for traffic, will not need repatching over time, and can be repaved without removal of the patched area.

Sakrete U.S. Cold Patch is available in 50-pound bags and 3,000-pound bulk bags. The Sakrete brand is owned and managed by Sakrete of North America, a division of Bonsal American/Oldcastle.

☎ (800) 738-1621

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



## New angle grinder from Metabo

Metabo Corp. has introduced the new Stone Master WE14-125VS 5-inch angle grinder, which is built with Metabo's VTC (Vario Tacho Constamatic) electronic speed stabilization, making the grinder

ideal for grinding, cutting and finishing granite, marble or concrete countertops.

Metabo's VTC electronics enhance productivity by constantly monitoring the rpm of the motor and adding voltage as the load increases, enabling the grinder to maintain the same rpm from no load to full-rated load. A soft-start feature extends longevity of both the motor windings and gears. The WE14-125VS also incorporates Metabo's CoolFlow technology, with repositioned carbon brushes for unrestricted airflow and a fan that pulls more air through the tool to keep it running cooler during operation. In addition, the grinder features aluminum die-cast housing to help with heat dissipation and provide increased durability.

The grinder features a Metabo LongLife motor and offers 12.2 amps and 1,400 watts of power as well as a variable speed range of 2,800 to 10,500 rpm. Safety features include a toolless guard adjustment, a spindle lock and an S-Automatic safety slip clutch to protect the operator from kickback by absorbing the torque created if the wheel binds or snags. The power-interruption protection feature prevents restart if power is lost to the tool and the switch remains in the on position.

☎ (800) 638-2264

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



## Hammer features antivibration technology

Metabo Corp. has introduced the MHE 96 SDS-Max Demolition Hammer, a demolition hammer that combines a powerful 15-amp motor with Metabo VibraTech technology. MVT reduces vibration and user fatigue due to its integrated damping system incorporated into the main and side handles.

The MHE 96's 15-amp motor provides up to 1,950 bpm and 27 joules of single-blow energy.

Metabo's Vario Tacho Constamatic electronic speed

control enables the tool to maintain a virtually constant number of blows per minute between load and no-load, maximizing the productivity of the operator. The large D-type rear handle is vibration-dampened, and the antivibration side handle can be mounted in three different positions for maximum comfort. The oversized function switch enables the operator to easily position the chisel face in 16 different positions, and a lockable switch enables comfortable operation for long periods. Other integral features that increase the tool's durability include tough aluminum die-cast gearbox housing, a protected service display, a safety clutch, and auto-stop carbon brushes. The MHE 96 measures 27 3/4 inches in length and weighs 26.5 pounds.

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## Portable heater gets upgrade

Allmand Bros. Inc. has upgraded its Maxi-Heat portable heater with higher static pressure.

Incorporating a new fan-motor combination and increasing the static pressure from 0.5 wg to 1.5 wg, the upgraded Maxi-Heat is able to accommodate up to 110 feet of 16-inch ducting, as opposed to 40 feet with the previous model.

The Maxi-Heat features twin heater units that produce a maximum of 1,010,000 btu and may be operated independently, depending on heating requirements. A standard 1,800-rpm liquid-cooled Isuzu diesel engine with regulated generator provides power for the heaters and electrical accessories. A 191-gallon fuel tank provides more than 24 hours of operation without refueling.

In addition to the static pressure and ducting upgrades, Allmand has added an in-line fuel heater and prefilter to the Maxi-Heat's fuel system to improve heater performance and durability.

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## New colors available for garage floor coating

Shield-Crete Epoxy Concrete Garage Floor Coating from H&C Concrete Coatings is now available in four new finish colors.

The new colors are safety yellow, royal blue, jade green and night sky. They join the current lineup of pewter, beige, ivory and firebrick red.



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

The Shield-Crete line is easy to apply and long-lasting. It protects against gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, road salt and hot-tire pickup. Garage floors are just the beginning — Shield-Crete is also ideal for use on basement floors, walkways, stairs, patios, porches and concrete walls.

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## Electronic sensor feature included on new vacuum

The new Pulse-Bac PB-2150 vacuum from CDClarue Industries is reportedly the first portable vacuum to use an electronic sensor that detects when the collection tank is full. The sensor is designed to alert the user by way of a flashing LED on the control panel and an audible alarm.

The PB-2150 allows the user to empty dust and debris into a 6 mm plastic bag while the vacuum continually operates, without the bag collapsing in on itself or being sucked up into the collection



chamber. After emptying the debris into the bag, the user seals the upper vacuum chamber, removes the bag and replaces it with a new one, without ever needing to turn off the vacuum or stop production.

The PB-2150 comes equipped with conical-shaped twist-on filters capable of capturing dust particles as small as .1 micron in size.

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## Media News

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# BUSINESS STRATEGIES

Ideas to help you grow your business

## The Art of Selling Decorative Concrete Products

*by David Searls*

**H**ome prices are wobbling, new construction rates are stalling, unemployment figures are rising and credit markets remain frozen. It's pretty much the definition of a perfect storm for the construction industry and retailers alike.

"Not much of anything is selling right now," observes Brad Struiksma, purchasing manager for the 10-store California retail chain Resource Building Materials. "Every category is falling. But decorative concrete is holding its own."

Even in the current economic climate, there is some good news for decorative concrete product resellers. Of several contacted recently by Decorative Concrete Retailer, every one was doing at least as well with decorative concrete materials as with any other construction product category.

In some cases, decorative concrete materials have been the difference between profit and loss. Product manager Ryan McCreery, who was hired to ramp up decorative concrete sales at Indianapolis-based Jobsite Supply, admits that the current economic situation is the worse he's seen in his four years at the construction supply company. However, he says, DC is one of the fastest-growing segments of his business.

His customers are particularly interested in stamped and polished concrete, overlays, stains, and concrete countertops, but all DC materials are doing well, he says. "It's everything ... DC in general has increased noticeably."

Zack Ellis, a general manager at Concrete Design Center in the Dallas-Forth Worth region of Texas, is even more optimistic. "We're holding steady," he says. "Business is better now than it's been in the last four or five years. We're seeing lots of new construction, and decorative concrete is selling."

Ellis says that his customers seem to be focusing in particular on sealers, stains, mop-on waxes, and water-based and solvent-based dyes. "Acid stains are one of our biggest sellers," he adds.

### Displayed to advantage

Struiksma of Resource Building Materials has noticed that the stores in his chain that do the best business in decorative concrete are those that do the best job of merchandising. "In-store displays definitely help sell what we've got," he says. "Our stores that have decorative concrete in view, or with product literature on display, do a lot better than those that keep their DC products in back."

It might seem like Merchandising 101 to make your inventory visible to customers, but that's not always a realistic option when decorative concrete products are competing with other niche categories. For some in the construction supply trade, decorative concrete is a secondary line that takes up as little as 10 to 15 percent of the store's shelf space.

Also, because contractors are often the primary target market, supply store managers aren't always in the habit of



thinking like retailers. Professionals tend to be surer of what they're looking for than homeowners, so they're less apt to make impulse buys or be swayed by an attractive counter display.

"The majority of our (decorative concrete) inventory is in our warehouse area," admits Jeff Patterson of Muller Construction Supply in San Jose, Calif.

Muller offers a complete line of concrete accessories at four northern California locations. Its largely contractor customer base wants everything from tools and power equipment to safety supplies and concrete mixes and grout. There's simply no room to properly showcase the company's decorative concrete offerings, including the sealers, water-based stains, dust-on color and dust-on release agents that are its top sellers within the category. And there's little incentive to do so, since such a low percentage of store sales comes from walk-in retail trade.

But Patterson makes the best of the situation. "We've got photo displays up front along with 12-by-12 samples of stamped and treated concrete. We try to grab as much attention as possible."

That's the key — making the most of the space you have and adapting the visual mindset of a retailer even if the bulk of your business is with contractors.

Get creative. You might not be able to justify giving shelf space to everything you carry within the DC category, but make the setting as inviting as possible. Or at least try to prominently display your manufacturers' POP material. It could make a difference in your bottom line.

If you need further incentive, think of your contractors' potential as sales agents to home and building owners. One of Jobsite Supply's competitors in the Indianapolis area is an installer/distributor with a location that makes contractors hesitant to send their clients there, McCreery says. That's spurred him to make general customer appeal something of a New Year's resolution. "Our goal is to expand and upgrade our building and create a much nicer display area," he says. "We want to support our contractors and create an environment where local end-users feel comfortable coming and where contractors feel comfortable sending them."

### Ahead of the concrete curve

It's vital to keep up with industry trends and technology and to stock what's intriguing your customers — even before they know it. So when it comes to decorative concrete, wise suppliers will stay educated and make sure employees know what they're selling.

One way to stay ahead of the curve is to piggyback on the positive publicity generated by the nation's growing eco-friendly movement by carrying a full line of "green" decorative concrete products.

"We're seeing more of a focus on green building and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) practices," says McCreery. "Customers are asking for products like low-VOC water-based stains, so we carry them."

Bright, vibrant color is another trend worth exploiting — at least in most markets. "While color is very popular in California, the earth tones seem to be more accepted (in Indianapolis)," McCreery says.

In any case, he is ready if West Coast style should make its way to the heartland. "In general," he says, "if it's on a color hardener chart, we've got it." 📖

# STORE PROFILE

**A retailer that knows how  
to move merchandise**

## **Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply Throop, Pa.**

*by Sue Marquette Poremba*

**A**s the saying goes, a man's home is his castle. But in the case of Bart Sacco, his business is his castle — literally. The building for Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply is a cinder-block fortress with medieval-looking battlements along the edges of its roof.

"Castles were made out of stone," Sacco says. "Everything in my castle is concrete that looks like stone."

Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply, located in Throop, Pa., was founded almost 20 years ago, but the roots of the company go much deeper than that. Sacco, the son of a contractor who specialized in ornamental plastering, grew up in a masonry environment. "I always liked concrete as a business," he says.

Sacco worked with his father's company for a few years, but like many young men, he felt the need to explore something different. He drove a tractor-trailer for a while, he says, and one of his deliveries was to a Marriott Hotel that was under construction. As he unloaded air-conditioning units, he noticed workmen installing patterned concrete.

"I jumped down on all fours to look at it. The security guy thought I was having a heart attack," he laughs. "And I said, 'I'm just looking at the concrete.'"

At that point, Sacco decided he wanted to work in concrete. He spoke to the concrete crew at the site, and soon parked

his truck forever.

He started his concrete business in 1989, and within a few years, he was focusing solely on decorative concrete.

However, like others in the decorative concrete trade at that time, Sacco noticed it was difficult to get the materials needed for jobs. So he began buying his supplies in bulk and sold the excess materials to other contractors.

In 1998, he bought the commercial property where his store stands today. "The goal was to build a warehouse and expand it as the need for the supplies increased, and I backed myself right out of the installing end of the business," he says. "I didn't want to be competing with local installers because I didn't think that would be good for business."

Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply is a two-pronged operation: a distribution center for materials and a training facility for contractors to learn the trade. The original building for the business was built in 1998, and in 2003, a second warehouse was constructed, as well as the showroom at the front of the building. The showroom is the part that looks like the castle. The complex also includes classrooms, an outdoor training area, and an indoor area where contractors and others interested in learning decorative concrete can do hands-on projects in all types of weather.



Photos by Bart Sacco





"We sell the products, and we also give advice on how to use the products properly," Sacco says.

The business is a full-stock distributor for Brickform and Solomon Colors. It also carries Buddy Rhodes Countertop Mix, Arizona Polymers and many other brands. "We stock everything that is concrete-related, either tools or products," Sacco says. "We keep a tremendous amount of colors and dyes and release agents in-house. We also have our own pigment blender on-site, which was a nice addition to the business. We can blend custom-matched colors for any needs."

When asked what his best-selling products are, Sacco pauses a moment before he answers, and finally picks colorants. "Color is so much a part of everything we do," he says. "It's in everything, whether we're doing a ground-

and-polish floor or countertops or anything that is pattern-stamped."

The bulk of Sacco's customers are contractors and retail outlets. "We sell to a lot of business-to-business businesses, I guess would be the best way to put it."

To reach out to potential clients, Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply advertises in trade magazines and does some local advertising, but a lot of Sacco's business comes from word of mouth. He says the recommendations come because he keeps his prices competitive and treats customers well.

He sells both nationwide and internationally. "We sell to a lot of countries I never expected to, like Japan, China, England, Germany and Estonia," he says. "We shipped a product to New Zealand and it got there in three days. The guy e-mailed me to say it was outstanding





# STORE PROFILE

service, considering we're half a world away and he can't get local products in under a week."

Sacco considers the training seminars he offers to be a vital component of his business. While the seminars might help bring customers into the store, Sacco says his main concern is teaching contractors and other users the right way to use the products.

"I have the knowledge, and I enjoy sharing it," he says. "It doesn't make sense for me to keep all that knowledge to myself, so we run programs here to lessen the learning curve for others."

The training sessions are hands-on, using a real slab of concrete. "The training seminars are run like real jobs," Sacco explains. "We do all the steps, start to finish, of every aspect of doing the job."



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Customers tell Sacco when they are interested in learning a certain topic, and he keeps a running list for each topic until there are enough interested people to hold a class. Approximately 90 percent of the attendees are contractors, but some who take the seminars are trade-school or union instructors. Sometimes Sacco will let do-it-yourselfers come in to learn decorative concrete techniques, as well. If he needs to, he will go out to a job site to conduct a seminar.

The castle showroom is an important part of his business, as it gives customers the chance to see samples of completed projects. "A lot of times completed samples were in someone's home or business, and to show the work to potential clients meant disrupting private lives," Sacco says. "I wanted to build



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# STORE PROFILE

an area where the general public could come and look at the different options with decorative concrete without invading someone's area."

All of the employees are trained to understand the products they sell, and they are involved in the training. He has 10 employees on staff during the busy summer months, while during the off-season he scales back to six.

Keeping busy in the winter months is always a challenge, Sacco says. During that time, he tends to sell more interior products.

From getting down on all fours to becoming the lord of his castle, Sacco has grown a successful business over the past 20 years by following one general philosophy. "Be honest with your customers," he says. "Treat them how you want to be treated." 📧

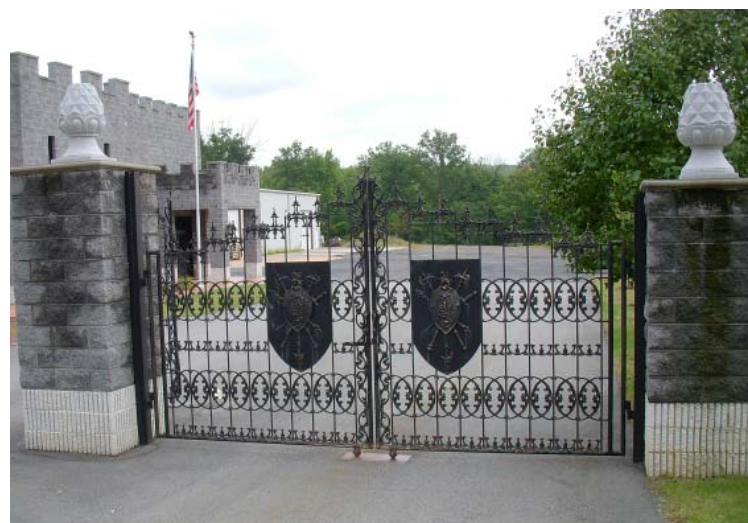
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Top and middle right: Inside Concrete Texturing Tool & Supply, owner Bart Sacco has devoted a lot of attention to the layout of the sales floor. Trowels are placed with trowels, flats with flats. Concrete finishing materials are in one area, overlays in another. "Everything is easy to get to, easy to find," Sacco says. "It's very organized, and that's the best way to get productivity out of it."

Bottom right: Outdoor samples of concrete on the lawn near the store.

Bottom left: Bart Sacco designed his store to look like a concrete castle. "It looks good, and it attracts attention because it's kind of unique," he says. "And it shows off the basics of concrete, what you can make with it."





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Photos courtesy of enCounter

# Quality concrete countertop mixes

## Concrete formulations and systems created for countertops

by Amy Johnson

**A**s decorative options for concrete in countertops and other home elements evolve, mix designs are becoming more sophisticated. While many fabricators develop their own proprietary formulations, there are also companies that market specialty bag mixes designed to give contractors everything they need to create countertops or other home elements.

Mike Heidebrink, president of concrete countertop pioneer Cheng Concrete, sees this trend as validation of the concrete countertop industry. "There's a whole world of new products out there and it's a good sign that our industry has carved out its niche in the marketplace," he says.

"It testifies to our longevity that there are now specific products being developed for countertops."

### In the bag

Bag mixes for countertops share some characteristics: They are designed to minimize cracking and shrinking, they are strong enough to be poured in thinner slabs and they are optimized for workability. Most have a compressive strength of 6,000 pounds per square inch (psi) or more, typically earning the designation of "high performance" from the American Concrete Institute. However, suppliers generally agree that compressive strength per se is not





important to countertops. Rather, the same properties that give a mix high psi also make it denser and allow for thinner slabs. High-performance concrete also replicates fine mold details better. Finally, high psi may contribute to preventing damage during shipping and installation.

SureCrete Design Products offers two bag mixes in its Xtreme series for home elements. One is Xtreme Countertop, a two-part fast-curing cementitious composite that can be poured as thin as 1/2 inch, demolded in four hours and polished after eight hours. "This material can be precast and installed the next day," says Damon Hoover, sales manager for SureCrete's CarpenterStone division.

Xtreme Countertop has a compressive strength of more than 10,000 psi. It is formulated with an admixture that allows several pounds of fiber to be added and dispersed evenly, which adds tensile strength to reduce cracking and allow for large spans.

Another SureCrete product, Xtreme Lightweight, is popular for home elements that do not require the same wear surface as countertops. This cementitious composite material is supplied in three components. The vermiculite and cement mix aggregate makes the material 65 percent lighter than traditional concrete. At just 44 pounds per cubic foot, Hoover says, the mix offers a huge advantage for

architects and engineers designing for weight. "It can save money because designs don't require extra structural support."

**"I just don't believe we should be shipping countertops or raw materials across the country. We want customers to get everything they need within 50 miles."**

— Mark Celebuski, general manager,  
Pinnacle Cast Concrete

At 2,200 psi, Xtreme Lightweight is best suited for vertical, nonweight-bearing applications such as wall treatments, faux balcony balustrades, exterior cladding and crown molding. It can also be cut with traditional woodworking tools, and it can be sprayed, hand-packed or poured into molds. Hoover knows one artist who etches designs onto glass and molds the product against the etched glass to pick up the details of the design. "The material reads the characteristics of whatever mold you pour it into," he says. As for color options,

Xtreme Countertop and Lightweight are both cement-based, Hoover says, so any coloring system works the same as it would with regular concrete.

Another high-performance mix for countertops is available as part of the enCounter professional concrete countertop system, sold to contractors through The Stamp Store, based in Oklahoma City. Doug Bannister developed this mix to address the issues that challenged him most in using concrete for countertops. "I wanted a material that would do everything like concrete except crack. I wanted it to trowel, color, stain, finish and feel like concrete, without the cracking that everybody says is inevitable."

Bannister first attempted to adapt ready-mix concrete for countertops by adding superplasticizers and fibers. "What I learned was that these interfere with performance," he says. "Plasticizers can be sticky, which compromises the finish. Fibers come springing to the surface if you're staining, because you're eroding the paste. They make it hard to seal."

Bannister's approach was to blend ingredients in the right ratios to create the characteristics he wanted without additives or fibers. "It is (partly) a matter of reducing water," he says. "The more water it requires, the more it will shrink and curl." The result is an 8,870-psi material that he claims will not shrink or crack. To demonstrate, he keeps a



Photo courtesy of SureCrete Design Products

Above: A magazine-holding table made with Xtreme Countertop mix.



Photo by Jack Clark

Left: This table was produced with Ductal fiber-reinforced concrete by Szolyd Development Corp. for Durabuilt Windows & Doors' head office in Edmonton, Alberta. The Durabuilt logo can be seen in the surface.

span of concrete in his showroom that is more than 18 feet long with no support. "It's been two years and it hasn't sagged yet," he says.

The comprehensive enCounter system includes not only the complete mix, but also reusable edge forms and premeasured colors.

## More bag mixes

Concrete countertop pioneer Buddy Rhodes of Buddy Rhodes Concrete Products LLC has been supplying Buddy Rhodes Concrete Counter Mix, a time-tested, bone-white, versatile mix for more than five years. "The high-grade aggregate and sands reveal an extremely refined finish," says CEO Stephen Schatz. "We don't put any larger rock in our bag, because the rock would interfere with our pressed technique and hinder the option of working the mix vertically in custom molds. The design has a long pot life for troweling, but most projects can still be taken out of the mold in 24 hours." This mix as supplied has a compressive strength of 6,000 psi, which can be increased to 9,000 psi by adding 3/8-inch pea gravel.

The Buddy Rhodes mix is shipped without large aggregates. "There is no need to ship gravel around the country when everyone has it locally," Schatz explains. "The mix design's high cement content allows for up to 20 pounds of specialty aggregate, glass or pea gravel to be added for troweled or vibrated applications. This option is great for creating unique looks as well as extending the coverage of the mix."

LifeTime Floors LLC offers three countertop mixes in its Quicktops

line. The original product, Quicktops Premium, is a "bag and bucket," according to project manager Kenton Hove. The kit includes 50 pounds of dry material and a 2.5 gallon bucket of liquid with acrylic to add strength and fibers to improve tensile strength and eliminate surface cracking.

Two new additions to the line eliminate the bucket — all ingredients are supplied dry, and the contractor adds only water and color. Quicktops-One incorporates white marble aggregates that are exposed when polished. Quicktops e mix is the company's most economical offering, at about \$38 per 50-pound bag. "When this material is cast without being colored, the look resembles Indiana limestone," Hove says. "This makes it popular for fireplace hearths and surrounds. I've even seen it used for water features, capstones and furniture pieces."

All three reach about 3,500 psi in four hours. At that point the products can be demolded and polished. All three can be colored with any iron oxide or liquid color dispersion.

Hove believes these bag mixes offer several advantages. One is consistency. "All components are weighed and measured out so they are identical, bag to bag," he says. Another is convenience. "Contractors don't have to add admixtures or fibers. They don't have to spend time shopping for ingredients. We take the leg work out."

The fact that the formulation is designed for fast cure also makes precast operations faster and more controllable. "These are tested, proven products designed specifically for the four-hour time



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Photo courtesy of enCounter

All the materials for a pour ought to be ready before mixing begins.

frame,” Hove says. “You can do countertops in just one or two days. Contractors really increase productivity with a bag mix.”

### New uses for a high-end mix

Another product making some inroads into the home-element arena is Ductal from Lafarge North America. Ductal is a cementitious composite material with ultra-high strength — up to 30,000 psi. The material was developed to deliver structural performance without metal reinforcement. Not a traditional concrete, Ductal has no coarse aggregate. Plasticizer and reinforcing fibers (PVA or metallic) are included. “We’ve done a lot of work on the geometry of the fibers as well as their physical properties and interaction with the matrix,” explains Vic Perry, vice president and general manager for Ductal. “To get the same tensile strength in all directions the fibers must be dispersed in an isotropic manner. We’ve studied all the materials in the matrix, the aspect ratios, and how they work together.”

Ductal offers tremendous benefits in structural applications, where it eliminates the cost and weight of traditional steel and concrete. Because it can be molded into complex shapes in very thin sections, it is being used in some residential and decorative applications as well. “As long as you can build a mold to the shape you want, you can cast Ductal into that mold,” Perry explains. “Because the matrix is made of fine materials, it replicates the texture of the mold very precisely.”

One group using Ductal this way is Solus Decor Inc., of Vancouver, British Columbia. They use Ductal to create very durable outdoor features like planters and benches. “A standard concrete pot is thick, chunky, rough-textured and weighs a ton,” explains Solus partner Brad Carpenter. “With Ductal the mold can be a lot more elegant and we can cast a much thinner profile. This material is very strong, very robust. It’s going to outlast you and me.”

Carpenter does caution that working with Ductal is very different from working with concrete. He describes the viscosity as “almost an oatmeal” and says the quick set reduces working time. The material cost, seven to eight times the cost of regular concrete, means errors are expensive, a challenge compounded by the fact that there is less margin for error with thin molds. The same applies to adding color — pigments react differently with Ductal, and the cost of experimenting is high. “We limit our offerings to colors we know will sell better,” Carpenter says.

Ductal does not so much compete with concrete as it allows applications that are not possible with concrete. “Our customers buy Ductal because it enables them to do things that are unique,” Perry says. “My advice is, use concrete to do what concrete does, and use Ductal to do things you can’t ordinarily do.”

### Bag or scratch?

Proponents of bag mixes cite ease of use, consistent ingredients and reproducible results as key advantages. But some suppliers and artisans favor scratch mixes instead. For example, the Concrete Countertop Plant, part of Pinnacle Cast Concrete, sells all the equipment contractors need to set up shop for making countertops.

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Photo courtesy of Buddy Rhodes Studio

This is a close-up of a countertop made by Buddy Rhodes Qualified Artisan Nick Relampagos. To create the unique look of this countertop, recycled glass was mixed with Buddy Rhodes Concrete Mix.

Then they design each client's mix based on materials available locally to each contractor. "We base mixes on materials (sand, stone and cement) that customers can get locally," explains Pinnacle general manager Mark Celebuski. "They tell me what's available where they are and I then what to add. They generally need fiber, admixtures and high-quality pozzolan to achieve high performance."

Pinnacle sets a standard for the concrete and works with the contractor using local materials until that standard is met. "I just don't believe we should be shipping countertops or raw materials across the country," Celebuski says. "We want customers to get everything they need within 50 miles. Plus, contractors can save about \$5 per square foot by mixing their own concrete."

The Ashby System from Concrete Solutions is a proprietary admixture supplied in a 2-gallon bucket with a packet of fibers to be mixed into three bags of any concrete a contractor cares to use. The system depends on maximizing the performance of the ingredients and minimizing water. "If you can use 100 percent of the available cement, you have a denser mix, greater psi and tensile strength and better scratch resistance," says concrete artisan Ben Ashby.

Fine polypropylene fibers are part of the Ashby system. "Most people think the fiber is there for reinforcing, but it actually gives very little reinforcement because it does not bond well with cement," he says. "Instead, the mesh keeps water from migrating and forming capillaries which can weaken the concrete. Also, because the mix is so dry, it must be vibrated hard. The mesh prevents the aggregates from segregating during this process."

Jeffrey Girard, P.E., president of the Concrete Countertop Institute in Raleigh, N.C., has evaluated various bag mixes and appreciates their role in the marketplace. He does not believe, however, that a good bag mix compensates for lack of knowledge. "There is a misconception that all you need to know is in the bag," he says. "That's like saying all you need to know about baking is in the box. A bag mix may be simplified, but you still have to understand concrete — how it cures, the right water/cement ratio, how to reinforce it."

Pinnacle's Celebuski agrees. "Countertops are not just flashy design. Contractors need to take the responsibility for becoming experts in concrete." ■

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# PRODUCT PROFILES

## Unique decorative concrete tools and equipment

### Paladiano “Wonders of the World” Stamping Tool Line from Paladiano LLC

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

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

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

The end result was the Paladiano “Wonders of the World” stamping tool line, inspired by locations such as Paris, Athens, Barcelona, Yorkshire in England, and the Italian cities of Venice and Verona. Those cities are represented by the first six patterns that are being produced, which are expected to be available for sale this spring. The designs are patent-pending, and more are in development.

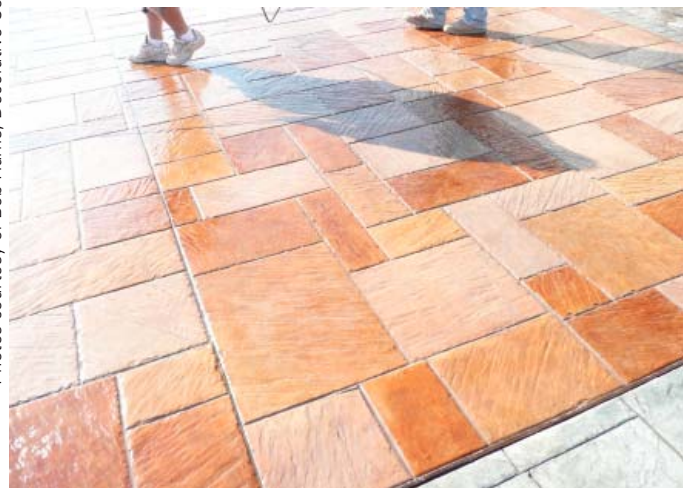
The stamping tools are cast with patterns taken from natural stones, which serve as models for authentic textures and shapes. In all, the team visited 28 cities to obtain copies of more than 450 textures from 33 different types of natural stone, including granite, limestone

and marble. “We took the samples from local quarries, exterior plazas, walkways and interior floors,” Harris says. “We also studied how the stones were laid, which allowed us to replicate the architectural characteristics of each location. The result is a line of innovative stamping tools that is truly extraordinary.”

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

During a brainstorming session to pick a name for the company, Harris opened up a book entitled “Floors of Venice.” He came across the term Paladiana in the glossary. The team liked the name, but they were unaware of its importance to architecture. As they would find out, it was inspired by the classic Palladian style of 15th-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio.

Although authenticity was the main goal in producing this line, the



Photos courtesy of Bob Harris, Decorative Concrete Institute



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

Another unique feature of the stamps is their special urethane construction, which expands the time frame allowed for imprinting. They permit earlier stamping, and if the concrete sets too quickly and stamping begins on a firmer surface, they result in less fracturing of the joints.

Although the stamps aren't available just yet, Brickform's salespeople have reported a lot of interest and excitement. Each pattern will be available in a boxed set with as many as eight unique patterns per set, along with accessories and matching flexible tools.

Having the appropriate amount of tools gives craftspeople a fair chance to stamp the area before the concrete sets, Harris says.

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

<http://www.decorativeconcreteinstitute.com/whatsnew.html>

## Ambient Glow Technology from Universal One Corp.

by Kelly O'Brien

**T**he line of high-performance photoluminescent aggregates called Ambient Glow Technology has a lot to recommend it.

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

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

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

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

by the day's exposure to the sun.

These "energized surfaces" are not only a creative way to bring light into a project, but they're also very eco-friendly. The patented aggregate is nontoxic and emits zero VOCs. This is a side of the product that Tomé is very excited about.

AGT can make a positive contribution to a project's LEED performance. "Our product is sustainable, eco-friendly and LEED-friendly," Tomé says.

The aggregates effectively reduce levels of light pollution and energy consumption. Tomé's favorite example is an outdoor landscaping project. "If you have your outdoor lights on for eight hours, at 60 minutes an hour that's 480 minutes of electricity," he says. "With AGT's energized surfaces, you can have those same landscape lights on timers set to go on for 10 minutes every hour — that's 84 percent less electricity used."

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

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Photos courtesy of Tip Top Lofts, Toronto

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## Essential equipment for the decorative concrete contractor

### Grinders



#### **Blastrac – Diamatic BMGP-600-R**

Blastrac has integrated its recently developed POD (Point of Development) Technology into a new high-performance grinding and polishing machine – the Diamatic BMGP-600-R.

The Diamatic BMGP-600-R features a proprietary 208/220-volt, 7.5-horsepower single-phase motor. The motor delivers a tooling speed of 400 rpm. Dust extraction occurs through a 3-inch hose connection, with secondary ports that can be employed for heavy coating removal.

Blastrac's POD Technology collects the dust and debris through the tool, cooling the diamond and polishing heads in the process. Benefits include a cleaner work path with increased visibility of the work surface, extended tool life of resins and diamonds, and a decrease in cleanup time.

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



#### **Concrete Polishing Solutions – CPS G-320D**

Concrete Polishing Solutions (CPS) has introduced the CPS G-320D as part of its new Extreme Series.

CPS has revisited their G-320 and G320 XT floor grinders and discovered a way to combine the power and ease of use from both in order to create a new grinding machine. The G-320D offers a 20-horsepower motor, increased torque and moveable head weight. The new slip clutch further improves the machine's durability and

simplifies the replacement process when maintenance is needed.

A similar version, the CPS G-320D Pro, runs on propane.

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





### CS Unitec – EBS 180

CS Unitec's 7-inch EBS 180 walk-behind concrete floor grinder prepares rough concrete and floors for the application of new coatings. It can be used to remove epoxy, glue, paint and other hard coating materials.

The EBS 180 concrete floor grinder is compact and lightweight, weighing only 21 pounds, including the attached control handle. This grinder's 22-amp high-performance motor is located above the diamond wheel, away from dust and debris, to extend the life of the grinder. The unit has a load speed of 6,000 rpm. The brush shield allows the user to adjust the height of the grinder to protect the unit from surface dust, dirt and stones.

Electronic features on the EBS 180 include soft start, temperature control, over-current cutoff and constant speed. A dust extraction port allows the tool to be connected to industrial wet/dry vacuums.

Diamond grinding wheels are available for both coated and uncoated concrete.

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### Husqvarna Construction Products – PG 820 and PG 680

In the wake of its acquisition of King Concepts, Husqvarna Construction Products has introduced new surface preparation and finishing machines – the Husqvarna PG 820 and PG 680.

The PG 820 is the largest in the range of surface preparation and finishing machines, and is equipped with dual-drive technology.

The PG 680 is an excellent choice for large and small jobs, particularly commercial projects. Smaller in size than the PG 820, the PG 680 is renowned for its maneuverability, efficiency and ease of use without sacrificing power and output.

Features of the PG 820 and PG 680 include a triple-headed grinder for a range of applications, full independent control of

planetary and satellite grinding heads for speed and direction of rotation, and a wide grinding path.

Both models use Redi Lock technology, an economical diamond replacement system, and the DC 5500 vacuum, a unit for both wet and dry applications. 📄

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





## Leitch & Co. – DS 301

The DS 301 is a planetary powered tool designed to produce flat, swirl free finishes on countertops and floors

Its 12-inch platform turns at a lower rate than the higher rotational speed of the 5-inch platens. This creates the optimal speed for diamond polishing, and helps to create a perfect finish 5 times faster than a single head polisher.

It also has an integral coolant feed for wet working and an optional dust cowl for dry abrasive systems.


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



## Leitch & Co. – DS 610

The DS 610 planetary surface machine from Intertool, a division of Leitch & Co., has many of the same features as the DS 605, but has been redesigned and features a new heavy-duty transmission.

The machine has a 24-inch grinding width with six 5-inch planets on two 12-inch platforms. A 10-horsepower motor controller operates on 230 volts of single-phase power for working ease in any situation.

The DS 610 offers up to 3,000 rpm for optimum diamond performance and life. It will grind within 1/4 inch of a wall and may be fitted with heavy sintered diamond grinding wheels for rough work. 

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### ShurTape – FrogTape

FrogTape, now available from ShurTape through a licensing agreement with Inspired Technologies Inc., is reportedly the only masking tape with PaintBlock Technology, a super-absorbent polymer similar to what's used in diapers to keep babies dry. The barrier helps prevent paint or concrete products from bleeding under the tape by forming a micro-barrier along the tape's edge.

FrogTape has received numerous awards, including one of *Popular Science* magazine's Best of What's New awards in 2007.

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