



CONCRETE ART



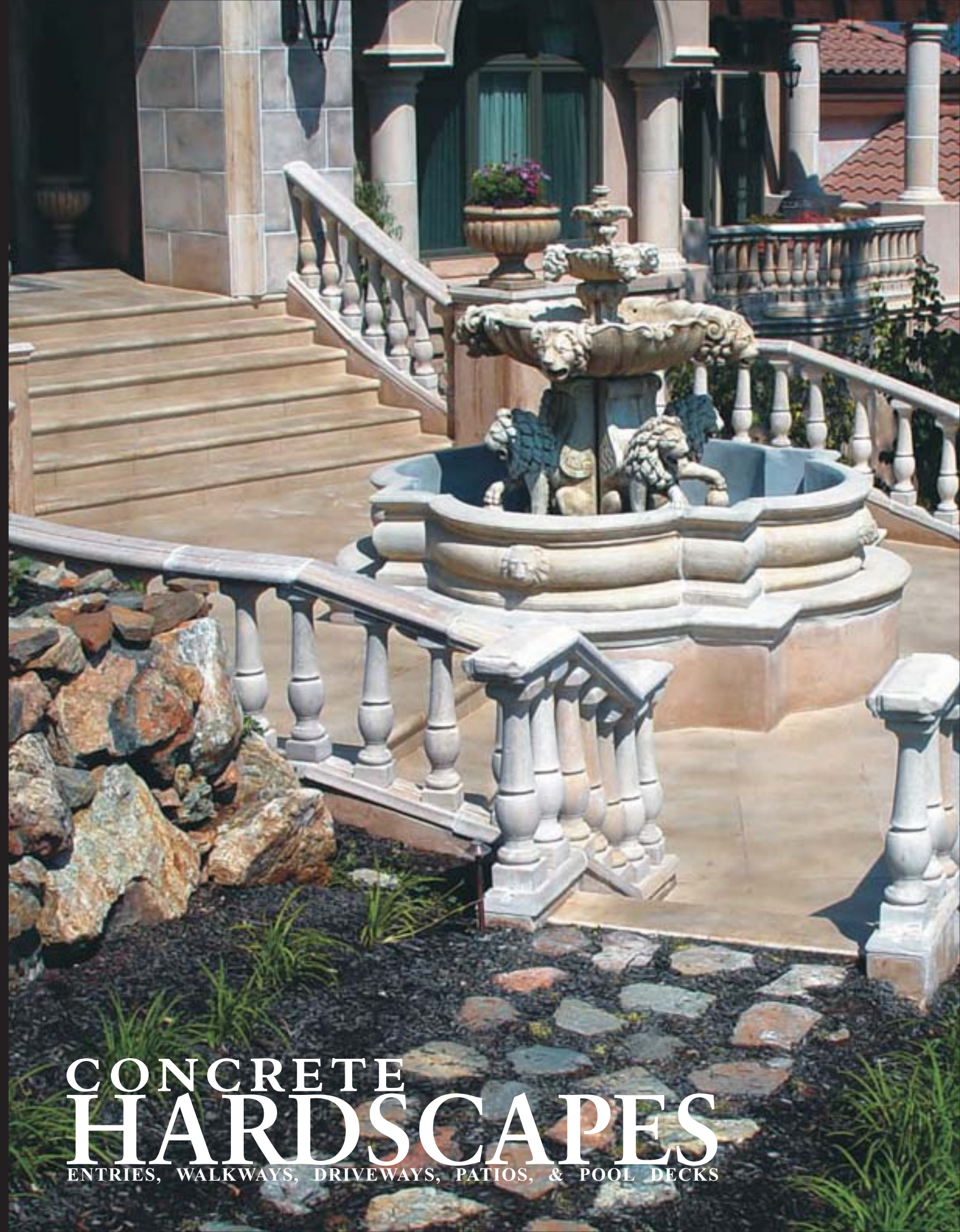
TOM RALSTON CONCRETE



AMCON INC.



DISTINCTIVE CONCRETE



CONCRETE HARDSCAPES

ENTRIES, WALKWAYS, DRIVEWAYS, PATIOS, & POOL DECKS

INTRODUCTION

To say there has been an explosion in decorative concrete is quite the understatement! Homeowners are hiring decorative concrete specialists to color, stain, score, stamp, overlay, or otherwise decorate the pool decks, entries, driveways, and walkways around their homes.

AMCON, located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is seeing a large increase in pool-related projects. "Many homeowners not only want a pool, but a total package - a back yard retreat in which they can escape and relax at the end of the day and on weekends."

Adds Mike Boeddeker of Pristine Concrete in Paso Robles, California, "Today people want their own private vacation spot, somewhere they can retreat to every day." Homeowners often want an extension of their house; they want an exterior surface that flows with the indoor flooring materials they have used.

Using decorative concrete as part of a homes overall design is also happening in the Staples, Minnesota area. "We have been doing large decorative driveways, 2,000 to 5,000 square feet, lakeside patios and wrap around porches. This is in keeping with the rustic and log homes found in the lake areas," according to Mike Verlennich of Verlennich Masonry and Concrete.

Decorative contractors can also spruce up existing concrete. Concrete Art, located in Carlsbad, California, turns boring gray concrete into surfaces with innovative designs and vibrant colors. "We enhance existing surfaces so homeowners don't have to go through the arduous process of replacing concrete," says company president Jeffrey Grieve.

Bill Guthro of Distinctive Concrete also points out that stamped concrete, for instance, is also very cost effective. "Stamped concrete is usually about one-third less than the price of installing natural materials," according to Guthro.

Ok. Enough with the dialog! Please browse this catalog for decorative concrete ideas - then call the contractor near you to get started creating your own vacation retreat right at home.

Sincerely,



Jim Peterson
President
The Concrete Network

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Southern California Residents Dressing Up Their Existing Concrete

Residents throughout South Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties are turning to Concrete Art to enhance their existing concrete floors so they don't have to go through the arduous process of replacing concrete. And in the process they achieve floors that are colorful, unique, and fit in with the décor.

Through its scoring and staining system, Concrete Art turns boring gray concrete in neighborhoods like Cota de Caza, Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach, Temecula, Corona, Riverside, Rancho Santa Fe, Carlsbad, Del Mar, and Poway into floors with innovative designs and vibrant colors.

Based in Carlsbad, Concrete Art's system is very distinctive in that grout lines are cut into the concrete to achieve a specific look, whether it's tile, brick, stone, or a geometric pattern. Concrete Art has even produced marbled patina and block, flagstone designs, and diagonal pavers.

"In Southern California there are many different types of hardscape products being used," said Jeffrey Grieve, president and chief executive officer of the company. "These products range from new stamped concrete and sandblasted concrete to scored and stained concrete to integral colored concrete and coating products."

The scoring element of Concrete Art is accomplished with diamond blades and with other tools that he developed. The coloring process is also unique, because it is not a paint or coating product, but a concrete



staining system that is effective, permanent, and economical.

"We are seeing more and more homeowners interested in dressing up their outdoor living spaces," said Grieve. "With a large amount of refinancing occurring in Southern California, due to low interest rates and soaring values in real estate, people are spending money enhancing their homes, not only as an investment vehicle, but to make living in them more pleasurable."

Concrete Art, where clientele is equally split between residential and commercial, installs some 350 projects a year. Overall volume from 2001 to 2002 increased by 45 percent.

D.R. Horton, a national, major homebuilder, has utilized the Concrete Art scoring and staining system for the past six years. Concrete Art is used at their model complexes in Southern California and as an upgrade option for their home buyers.

And if you're looking for a state-of-the-art pool deck, Concrete Art can make a splash. Grieve creates more than 100 pool decks a year.

"Concrete is a real growth industry," he said. "It's going to be huge."

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Residents in Central Coast Using Concrete for Vacation Spots at Home

Today people want their own private vacation spot, somewhere they can retreat to every day. Those in the San Luis Obispo area turn to Pristine Concrete to create their own private outdoor living environments that have a resort feel.

Pristine Concrete is based in Paso Robles, which is in San Luis Obispo County, halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Owner Mike Boeddeker offers an array of services, including colored concrete, countertops, driveways, engraving, staining, pool decks, stamping, and water projects.

“Most of our work is stamped concrete, driveways, patios, but we like to add some rock work or stamped walls to add some dimension to a project,” said Boeddeker. “Decorative concrete is growing big time.”

Boeddeker colors the surface with a color hardener then imprints the concrete with the pattern you chose, like brick, cobble, or stone. He then cleans and seals the project.

He also stains existing concrete by taking your concrete foundation, driveway or patio and saw-cutting designs then staining with an acid stain or a modified-latex stain. It is then sealed with a gloss sealer.

Boeddeker said residents in San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles and Northern Santa Maria County are clamoring for home improvement projects conducive to outdoor living.

“They almost always want an extension of their house,” he said. “They want something that flows with the indoor flooring, and has shade as well as sun.”

Boeddeker said he is receiving a lot of requests for outdoor kitchens with barbecues, sinks, burners, warmers, refrigerators, even storage areas.

“Lighting is big also,” he said. “Homeowners want lighting that reflects their mood for parties, romance, family or just a great backdrop on those cold, rainy nights ... They want a vacation spot they can go to every day.”

And part of that vacation package is the decorative concrete that graces the patio, walkway and courtyard areas.

Boeddeker’s most recent pursuit is exterior rock work, which is often incorporated into patios and outdoor patio and barbecue areas.

He said he would love to do some sort of big rock job — something that would involve a big custom pool, caves, waterfalls, a grotto, and stamping all around. “Something really natural that blends in with the surroundings,” he said.

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Innovative Outdoor Projects are Specialty for Santa Cruz-Based Company

For Santa Cruz area residents who have a glimmer of an idea of a dream outdoor living area, Tom Ralston will bring it to life, whether it's with pizza ovens, fire pits, concrete furniture or pools surrounded by decorative concrete.

Tom Ralston Concrete produces a wide variety of quality concrete products — both interior and exterior — including hillside foundations, concrete countertops, thin topping overlays, exotic swimming pool decks, driveways, and patios.

The company also provides a range of masonry work, including flagstone, brick, block, pizza ovens, barbecue surrounds, slate, and concrete pavers.

Masonry work runs the gamut from flagstone, tile, brick, or stone patterns embracing pool areas, entry ways, steps or patio areas to pavers for driveways and even brick serpentine walls.

Ralston said residents in the area — including San Jose, Capitola, Los Gatos, Silver Creek, Willow Glen, and Monte Serrino — are definitely taking their home improvement projects outside with elaborate outdoor living areas.

“There’s a whole new luxurious atmosphere in entertaining guests and spending time outdoors,” he said.

Tom Ralston Concrete was founded by Tom’s grandfather, Wilbur Thomas Ralston, in 1928. The company employs 60, and has two



masonry divisions, as well as an on-site showroom.

When Tom took the helm from his father, Jim, in 1989, he brought his creative flair, which naturally altered the company’s focus from traditional concrete projects to modern, decorative concrete stamping, staining, and one-of-a-kind structural projects for residential and commercial clients. One of Tom’s primary goals is to stay one step ahead of innovation by consistently scouting out new products and helping clients achieve the unique projects they envision.

Although he’s proud to have produced some of the most unique concrete work around, he’s still always surfing for new ideas.

“I’m constantly bringing in new hardscape ideas,” he said. “I want to continue that unique flavor.” In fact, Concrete Construction magazine recently touted Tom Ralston Concrete as one of the top three “contractors to watch.”

“I take whatever abstract elements the homeowner is envisioning and — with creativity and passion — bring them to life,” Ralston said.

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Sacramento Homeowners Weaving Concrete Into Exterior Remodeling

Homeowners in Northern California are remodeling and renovating like never before. And many who love to spend time outside are integrating decorative concrete into their outdoor renovation projects.

Many are turning to Apex Concrete Designs, owned by Mark Foreman and Nick Johnson, which caters to homeowners in the Sacramento suburban and Sierra Nevada foothill neighborhoods, including Los Lagos, Sunridge Meadows, Granite Bay, and Serrano.

The company offers a wide variety of services, including stamped and stained concrete, self-leveling overlay designs, micro-finishes that are 1/8-inch thick or less, and concrete toppings with scoring. Nick and Mark have created everything from upper balconies and patios to terraces and entries to driveways and pool decks — which are popular due to the area's scorching valley heat that typically extends from spring to fall.

Homeowners love having the option of choosing from an array of patterns — tile, wood, brick, granite, stone, and rock.

“But the ashlar slate is the most popular,” says Johnson, who has been stamping concrete for the past 20 years.

“We were the first to start imprinting concrete (in the area), so we've got a pretty good history,” he says. “The secret's come out.”

He attributes that to the healthy production of tools that have been

introduced to the industry over the years.

“As more tools become available, more people become aware of decorative concrete,” he says.

Coupled with the availability of custom colors and penetrating stains, the look has become even more natural, making it more attractive to homeowners, Foreman says.

“Decorative concrete has become more popular than stone, brick and tile (for exterior projects) because it costs less, is better in quality and it has the unlimited ability to be created into whatever the client wants as far as color, texture and pattern go,” he says.

Colors and patterns for stamped concrete are often chosen to blend with other stone or tile elements at the residence. Stamped concrete can also be blended with other decorative concrete elements such as exposed aggregate finishes and acid-etch staining.

It's also an attractive option because outdoor tables don't rock on concrete like they typically do on stone and tile surfaces. Plus, Foreman says, they're easy to maintain with cleaning and resealing every few years.

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Oregon Company Specializes in Freestyle and Themed Concrete Projects

When Central Oregon residents want a one-of-a-kind outdoor project, whether it's an extension of their interior décor or a patio, exterior entryway, pool deck or terrace that complements the architecture of the house, they turn to Elements of Time.

Based in Redmond, Oregon, Elements of Time, which has showcased 100 yards of concrete in the Street of Dreams, caters to residents in myriad exclusive communities, including Aubrey Glen, Aubrey Butte, Black Butte Ranch, and Broken Top.

The company specializes in countertops, acid-etched stained concrete, stamped concrete, colored concrete, resurfacing, pool decks, architecturally designed concrete, and decorative floors. They also offer unique, textured and stamped driveways; breathtaking structures that combine concrete, metal, light, and water; and most of all, the signature concrete furniture for which the company has become known.

“Our main advantage is that we're unique and different,” says co-owner Beau Hibdon.

The company recently launched an innovative decking system in which the decorative concrete — formed to look like real rock with broken edges — can be placed over wood, making it easier and more cost effective than tearing out an existing deck.

And for the more artistic types, Elements of Time has introduced a metal coating system in which the



concrete is transformed to the appearance and texture of metal, including copper. The metal process can be used for a number of decorative purposes, like family crests or corporate logos.

“We're pretty far ahead of the game,” co-owner Dave Anderson said.

The company also specializes in creating themes, whether it's incorporating the look and feel of a log cabin, matching colors, or designing concrete to match or complement a window design or architectural feature.

Colors and patterns for stamped concrete are often chosen to blend with other stone or tile elements at the residence. Complex designs incorporating steps, courtyards, and fountains can be achieved. Stamped concrete can also be blended with other decorative concrete elements such as acid-etched staining.

“Or sometimes there's an interior theme that the homeowner wants carried to the outside,” Anderson said. “What we're really about is creating something unique. We like to turn concrete into something freestyle and make it your own creation.”

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Montana Decorative Concrete Company Specializes in Rustic Look

Big Sky country is known for its rustic appeal — the serenity of the mountains and lakes and the lure of fishing, skiing and hunting — so it's no wonder that residents are excited about the recent arrival of Concreations, a decorative concrete company that specializes in rustic-looking decorative concrete.

Owner Jay Manning opened his business in Bigfork less than a year ago after spending 14 years creating concrete patios, terraces, columns, and fountains — virtually anything — in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico and seven years in Southern California. His new Montana clients span the Flat Head Valley, White Fish, and Bigfork areas.

The company offers a full spectrum of decorative concrete finishes, including custom designs; inlaid rock tapestries; stamped and stained patios, walkways and driveways; masonry; flatwork; and fire pits. Concreations also specializes in a few products unique to the Montana area: concrete boat docks and radiant-heated driveways, which melt the snow quickly.

“With wood boat docks, the wood frequently gets knocked down,” he said, explaining that lakeside homeowners are requesting concrete not only for the ability to create docks with color and patterns, but for durability as well.

But Manning said the cornerstone of his work is achieving a rustic look to blend in with a natural setting,

drawn from his experiences in Mexico.

“In Mexico the designs are more intricate ... The architects there are always trying new things,” Manning said. “They build multi-million dollar homes that they want to make look old.”

Manning said he learned myriad techniques for achieving “old-looking” finishes, and he now wants to try his hand at it in Montana.

He originally came to Montana with the limited purpose of helping his father build his home.

“I decided to stay,” Manning said. “I saw that decorative concrete was definitely catching on here.”

Manning said he will keep developing natural-looking products, answering the call of Montana homeowners. As more materials come on the market, he is able to keep the inventive juices flowing.

“Plus, my dad is a biochemist. He helps me thicken it up and helps with different designs,” Manning said. “I always try to stay ahead of the game.”

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Laying Decorative Ground for Lakeside Minnesota's Homes

When people see it, they want it.

Such has been the case for the decorative concrete work produced by Dave and Mike Verlennich of Verlennich Masonry and Concrete, based in Staples, Minnesota. The company specializes in stamped concrete, overlays, stenciling, and staining.

Homeowners in the resort areas of central and north central Minnesota, like Brainerd and surrounding lake areas Alexandria, Walker, Bemidji, St. Cloud, and Tower, are clamoring for decorative concrete hardscapes.

“We have been doing large driveways, many 2,000 to 5,000 square feet, lakeside patios and wrap-around porches,” said Mike Verlennich. “This is in keeping with the rustic and log homes found in the lake areas.”

The demand has kept the company busy. They have seen business steadily increase and will do 50 to 75 projects next season. In addition, their interior hardscape and countertop business segment is growing rapidly.

The brothers say that sometimes someone will see one of their projects out in public and have to find out more. One woman visiting her local Dairy Queen eagerly entered the drive-thru and asked not for an ice cream treat but for information — she wanted to know who created the sandblasted, red cobblestone patio, accented in black.



When the woman found out Verlennich Masonry and Concrete created the patio, she contacted them and said she wanted her sidewalk to look just like the Dairy Queen patio — minus the big DQ logo smack-dab in the center.

Verlennich’s projects all involve a wide palette of colors — their stains come in as many as 250 hues and shades.

“We do a lot of browns and tans, a lot of charcoal tones, and some reds,” he said.

As far as textures go, Minnesotans seem to prefer a seamless granite texture look and flagstone textures — stone that is natural to the area.

Because Minnesotans have such a short warm period during the year, many try to make the most out of their outdoor space, Verlennich said.

“Many times patios are connected to three season porches and outdoor kitchens. There is also an area trend of trying to blend in with natural surroundings,” he said.

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Oklahomans No Longer Have to Settle for 'The Old Gray Stuff'

Homeowners in the Oklahoma City suburbs are seeing decorative concrete in restaurants, stores, and salons. Inspired by this new breed of concrete with its beautiful colors, variety of patterns, and ability to meld with its environment, homeowners are now incorporating concrete into their home improvement projects.

Many seeking unique exterior decorative concrete projects hit the jackpot with Concrete Creations, which caters to residents in the Oklahoma City metro area, including Edmond and Moore, and Gaillardia, an exclusive development in Northwest Oklahoma City.

Patios, porches, and driveways are extremely popular. Owner Lawson Edwards also has his share of unique undertakings, including a recent request from a builder to contribute to an old-fashioned looking bridge — one like you'd find in the Great Smokey Mountains, he says.

"I'll be doing the stamped concrete under the bridge," Edwards said.

Stamped concrete is concrete that is patterned to resemble brick, slate, flagstone, stone, tile, and even wood. It is used to beautify pool decks, driveways, entries and courtyards, and patios.

Due to the wide array of patterns and colors available, and the lower price tag compared to other materials, stamped concrete is

becoming more popular and frequent.

Edwards says Oklahomans tend to gravitate toward the flagstone and Roman ashlar slate patterns — two of Concrete Creation's most popular.

"As far as colors go, earth tones are big — the tans and browns," Edwards said.

Edwards said that over the past six years since Concrete Creations has been in existence, he has seen an enormous trend toward elaborate outdoor living spaces.

"All kinds of hardscaping and landscaping projects," he said. "And people are really into maintaining their yards more, too."

He once worked on a house that boasts two outdoor fireplaces and an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

But the biggest decorative concrete trend in the Oklahoma area is acid staining, says Edwards.

"It's booming. Every year I think it can't get any bigger and it does," he said. "You don't have to settle for the old gray stuff anymore."

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Decorative Concrete is Key in Outdoor Projects in Maryland, Virginia

As an increasing number of homeowners in the Maryland and Virginia areas renovate their homes, more are counting decorative concrete as a vital element of their outdoor home improvement projects.

Many homeowners are finding outstanding decorative concrete services from AMCON Inc., one of the area's leading companies that caters to Virginia residents in areas including Mclean, Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, and River Creek; and to Maryland residents in such regions as Potomac, Bethesda, Annapolis, and Gatlinburg. And due to the demand, AMCON's services are expanding to the District of Columbia region.

"More people are into renovating their homes, especially their back yards," said Mary Amaro, of AMCON, one of the first companies to introduce decorative concrete to the region. "People are spending more time outdoors."

AMCON creates an array of hardscape projects, including patios, porches, walkways, and driveways, by using stamped and colored concrete techniques — techniques that complement a variety of landscapes and that provide a touch of individuality to a homeowner's back yard.

"What we're seeing is more homeowners are getting away from the dull, gray concrete," Amaro said. "They're becoming familiar



with what's now on the market (as far as decorative concrete products)."

Those homeowners who choose AMCON have the benefit of selecting from a range of patterns for their outdoor project.

Some of the more popular patterns among homeowners in the Maryland and Virginia areas include ashlar slate, grand ashlar slate, royal slate, European fan, and London cobblestone.

And homeowners love the wide palette of colors available — everything from harvest sand and misty mauve to terra cotta and seafoam green to pewter and philly blue.

In addition, AMCON is seeing an increase in the number of pool-related projects — primarily patios and walkways. Many homeowners not only want a pool, but a total package — a backyard retreat in which they can escape and relax at the end of the day and on weekends.

"It's catching on here, especially among the younger crowd," said Amaro. "The older generation tends to just know gray concrete, but they're catching on, too."

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Stamped Concrete is Flooring New England Residents

While New England has always been known for its harsh winters, it's now becoming known for Distinctive Concrete, an area company that specializes in stamped concrete, color acid stains, concrete repair, and countertops.

Bill Guthro, who has owned the company for four years, said the biggest challenge has been educating New England residents about all that concrete has to offer.

"People don't know anything about it," Guthro said. "Then they see (a decorative project) in a magazine and they have to have it."

Distinctive Concrete creates a range of stamped concrete projects. It typically involves coloring fresh ready-mixed concrete and embossing authentic-looking patterns of brick, stone or wood into the partially set concrete. Stamped concrete looks great around pools, patios and walkways.

Guthro also points out that stamped concrete is also very cost effective — in fact it is usually about one-third less than the price of installing natural materials.

He also emphasizes that stamped concrete can stand up to the frigid, harsh winters.

Guthro says stamped concrete is more durable and will last longer than any other type of masonry installation. Traditional pavers and cobblestone settle unevenly during the freezing and thawing cycles of winter. But stamped concrete is reinforced with

3/8-inch steel reinforcing rods placed 24 inches on center each way in the middle of the concrete. The steel resists the constant heaving during the freezing and thawing cycles.

"If done properly, it does last," he tells his clients.

In addition to the many residential customers, Distinctive Concrete's clientele includes the Marriott hotels, Holiday Inn hotels, Boston Design Center, Boston Police Department, Beverly Landmark School and several restaurants and retail merchants.

And both residential and commercial clients throughout New England love the range and depth of colors that can emanate from their concrete floors. Distinctive Concrete's deep penetrating concrete staining system creates beautiful, mottled color tones in existing concrete surfaces, usually interior floors.

"So it can enhance any decor whether interior, exterior, residential, or commercial," said Guthro. "It transforms old, worn concrete into a new and exciting look with a diverse coloring effect which penetrates deep into the pores of the surface to create an aesthetically rich and variegated finish."

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