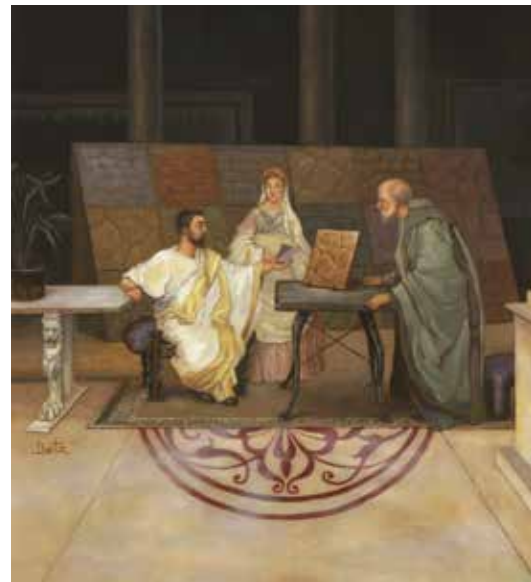


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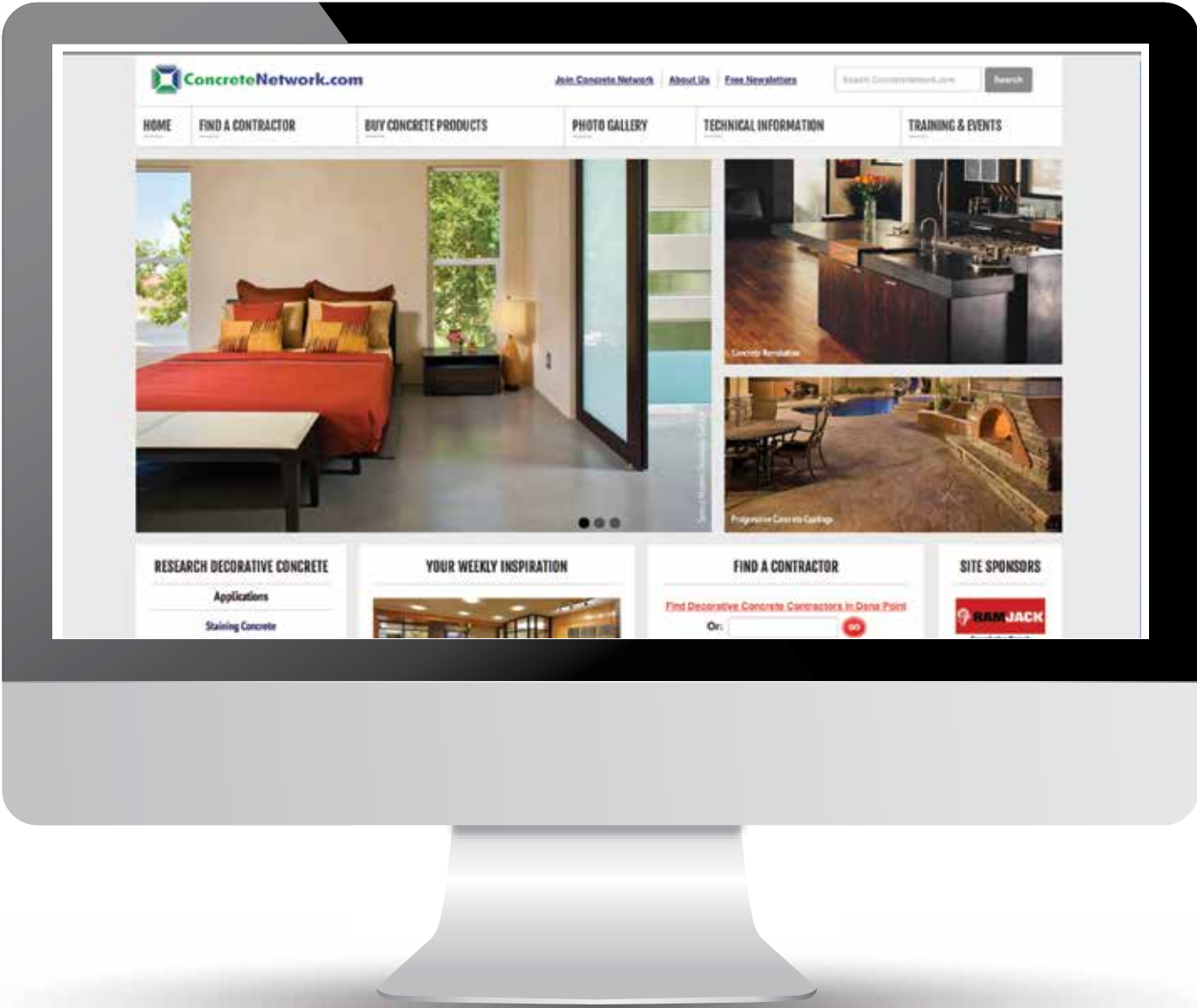
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CONTENTS



22



Features

6 CONCRETE POLISHING TODAY

Learn about five trends shaping the growth of this booming industry

14 NOW ON TAP

See the creative ways breweries and bistros are using concrete floors

22 THE LAYERED LOOK

A terraced stamped concrete deck, installed in layers, replicates handcrafted stone

26 GIVE IT A SWIRL

Stenciling a concrete floor with a swirled motif adds flair to an upscale restaurant

30 WABI-SABI GARDEN BENCH

A concrete bench featuring its own mini waterfall brings tranquility to a Japanese garden

32 RAMPED-UP SINKS

Long ramp-style concrete sinks liven up the locker rooms of a new recreation facility

34 WOOD PLANK FAKE-OUT

A concrete pool deck is stamped and colored to replicate real wood



30

36 CREATIVE CASTING

See how contractors are using custom-sculpted formwork to create unique shapes in concrete

38 INSPIRATION GALLERY

Floors, counters and outdoor surfaces to inspire creativity

56 ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

Barbara Sargent shares her secrets to building a successful business

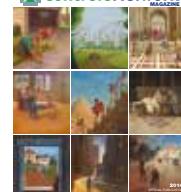
60 CONCRETE PRODUCTS

Your guide to choosing the right products, equipment and tools



14

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ON THE COVER:
A compilation of past covers in celebration of Concrete Network's 15th year (1999-2014). All artwork commissioned by Concrete Network and illustrated by Katy Betz.



Concrete Polishing Today





LEARN ABOUT FIVE TRENDS SHAPING THE GROWTH OF THIS BOOMING INDUSTRY

BY CHRIS SULLIVAN

ConcreteNetwork.com columnist and technical expert

POLISHED CONCRETE IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE HOTTEST MARKET SEGMENT IN decorative concrete today. It has held that title for the last five years, and shows no signs of giving up the number one position any time soon. The commercial and industrial flooring communities have embraced polished concrete as the new standard when a combination of aesthetics, durability, reduced construction costs, and minimal environmental impact is desired. Many large retailers such as Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Lowes have switched to polished concrete as the standard flooring for both new and existing stores.

I interviewed experts from all fields of polished concrete around the country, and the common recurring theme was “growth.” The industry barely existed 13 years ago. Today, it



now dominates the decorative concrete marketplace, as evidenced by the annual revenue it generates.

Even though the profit potential is high, polishing concrete requires a high level of concrete expertise, on-the-job experience, and some deep pockets to survive the initial startup. Despite these challenges, the opportunity for growth in the polished concrete industry is likely to continue, especially as the word spreads about the many benefits of polished floors.

What are some of the factors feeding this growth? And can the industry continue to adapt to the demands of the market and keep right on growing? Read on to get some expert opinions.

FACTORS DRIVING THE GROWTH OF POLISHED CONCRETE

Considering the unprecedented growth polished concrete has experienced over the

last decade, it is interesting to look at where the market stands today. “Coming out of adolescence into early adulthood,” is how Brad Walker, owner of Lone Star Decorative Concrete, Watauga, Texas, puts it. He says that three out of every four commercial jobs he comes across end up going with polished concrete. “Everything is going polished – dealerships, schools, light commercial, retail, government, and big box,” he says.

One major trend driving the growth of the polished concrete market today is the cost-reduction benefit. “Although aesthetics is certainly one of the main factors why clients choose polished concrete, other considerations such as huge reductions in annual maintenance costs and the light reflectivity draw them to these floors,” says Bob Harris, owner of The Decorative Concrete Institute, Temple, Ga. When you consider the number of square feet of flooring a company like Home Depot has under one roof, the savings can be considerable.

While the primary focus of polished concrete has historically been commercial flooring, residential applications are gaining in popularity as homeowners realize they can garner the same benefits in reduced electricity and maintenance costs. “We have seen a large increase in the number of residential basements being polished,” says Abner Peachey, sales manager for Rosebud Concrete, Myerstown, Penn. Peachey says that 50% to 60% of their polished work is residential basements.

TREND 1: MINIMALIST DESIGN GIVES WAY TO BOLD COLOR

As a whole, the polished concrete industry tends to be simplistic when it comes to design and style. The most popular color is natural gray concrete, with a vast majority of polished floors not utilizing any color or other design elements. “The reality is that a majority of the polished market is considered very minimalistic when it comes to colors and design,” says Harris.

The polishing industry has experienced unprecedented growth over the last decade. The primary focus has historically been commercial flooring, but this may be changing.



DECO-POUR

“The design community has embraced polished concrete and we are now seeing more new construction specifications calling out polished concrete over traditional hard flooring materials.”

—Vernon Talbot





*“The best teacher
is still experience.
Having the right
equipment and
knowledge is key.”*
—Mose Peachey

CONCRETE FLOORS POLISHING & SEALING LTD

The clean and simple industrial look is a popular trend with both commercial and residential construction, and polished concrete fits nicely into that design mode. The ability to manipulate plain gray concrete to achieve various design elements is one of the benefits that makes polished concrete so versatile and adds to its popularity among designers and homeowners. Polished concrete can range from a paste polish, where the final color is uniform with no aggregate visible, all the way to a deep polish where large aggregate is exposed, closely resembling terrazzo. “Most of our customers want a salt and pepper finish,” says Chris Raiser, manager of Xtreme Polishing, a distribution outlet in Deerfield Beach, Fla., specializing in polished concrete equipment and chemicals. This type of finish is produced by removing a very thin top layer of the concrete during the initial grinding process to expose some of the sand aggregate. Raiser also says they are seeing a trend where clients are switching to deep polished

concrete to achieve the look of terrazzo at a lower cost.

While coloring polished concrete is still an emerging trend, the vast color palette and endless design opportunities give installers of polished concrete floors many options to choose from. In fact, polished concrete has been one of the driving forces behind the growth in the popularity of concrete dyes. The smaller particle size and better solubility of a dye compared to a stain allow for deeper penetration and stronger, more vivid color development. When the conditions are right, dyes can be a great way to create amazingly colorful polished floors.

Stencil work is another area where polished concrete is seeing exciting growth. The smooth finish of polished concrete lends itself well to stencils, allowing for very intricate designs to be applied. A real advantage of stencils is that the design is permanent and becomes part of the concrete. Companies

who see the value of polished concrete as a flooring option also see the benefit of having their company logo or other marketing message etched or colored into the concrete. “Occasionally we will find a client that wants to take the floor over the top with intricate saw designs or graphics, like engraving rivers into the floor or decorative stenciling,” says Harris.

TREND 2: MORE EQUIPMENT OPTIONS

The polished concrete industry has come a long way in the last 10 years, offering more equipment options to accommodate various job demands and budgets. Raiser, who deals with many different installers, all running different brands and sizes of polishing equipment, sees a lot of companies starting out with small machines because they cost less and are a great way to enter the industry. As the company grows and the size of the jobs they take on gets bigger, they replace the smaller models with larger equipment and use the small machines for

doing edges and working in tight spaces.

According to Walker, the weight of the machine is very important when polishing, especially on hard, dense concrete. It can make a big difference in how many hours are spent on the floor, which translates to less labor and reduced wear and tear on the machine. “We get 2,500 hours of working time from our machines before we need to do any major maintenance or repair work,” he says.

Another factor important to installers is how easy the equipment is to operate. Peachey, whose company uses HTC machines and diamond tooling, says the equipment seems to be getting more user-friendly. “We see an advantage to running the same equipment and tooling,” he says.

Harris also sees the benefits of using equipment from a manufacturer who offers a complete package. “It boils down to what kind of complete package the manufacturer has to offer,” he says. The service and training offered by the manufacturer after the sale are also important. Many companies offer these services, but they are not all the same.

Although large machines work well in open spaces, they don’t work well along edges against existing walls, leaving anywhere from a few inches to almost a foot that need to be polished by hand or with a smaller machine. “The two main ways we address edges, short of making them decorative, is the old traditional way—which is on your hands and knees with hand-held edge grinders—or the less backbreaking way using the HTC 270 walk-behind edge grinder,” says Harris.

The old-school method of working on your hands and knees is giving way to advances in smaller machines that operate standing up. Walker says that they used to charge extra for edge work because it was so tedious and labor intensive. Now it’s just part of the job because they have more efficient equipment.

Although electric polishing equipment still dominates the industry, some installers are trending toward propane-powered polishers. “The main selling point of the propane unit is that you do not have to fight with power cords,” says Harris. Another selling point is that you don’t need the external generators often required to run larger electric-powered machines. Although propane-powered equipment does not have cords or generators,

they can produce harmful emissions when operated inside buildings with poor ventilation. Propane machines can also be louder and require more maintenance than electric polishers.

TREND 3: BETTER DIAMOND TOOLING

Aside from the actual polishing machine, the diamond tooling is the most important part of the equipment package. It is the interface between the machine and the concrete and determines the scratch pattern and final look of the polished floor. According to Talbot, each diamond pattern and grit imparts a scratch to the floor. The goal is for the entire floor to have the same identical scratch pattern so you achieve a uniform look and luster. That is why it’s critical to have quality diamond tooling, since poor-quality diamonds will result in nonuniformity in the polished finish.

“It’s the diamond tooling that is the workhorse and can make the difference between being profitable or not,” says Harris. “Back when we started, there were very few choices with regard to tooling. Today’s market offers an array of diamonds that can increase production and remove scratches more effectively, not to mention last longer.”

Walker has improved his efficiency by using transitional diamonds, also known as hybrid diamond tooling, on certain projects. Hybrid diamond tooling combines the deep cutting and grinding action of metal tooling with the



softer polishing action of resin tooling, making the transition from the metal grinding steps to resin polishing steps easier and faster.

The hottest trend in diamond tooling is the use of diamond-impregnated pads. These lower-cost pads come in many sizes and work with different types of machines. When used properly, the pads last longer than traditional diamond tooling and are much easier to work with. “The evolution of the hybrid and transitional tools has dramatically improved the quality of the polish,” says Harris.

Today’s market offers contractors better equipment and an array of diamonds that can increase production and remove scratches more effectively.



TREND 4: TAKING A HYBRID APPROACH

Polishing concrete is a process that can take place wet or dry. Depending on who you talk to and what region of the country you are in, one process seems to rule over the other. Both have their pros and cons, but in the end, they each produce a high-quality polished floor when done properly.

“You see a lot of the old-school terrazzo guys use a wet polish because that is what they are used to,” says Walker. The advantages of wet polishing include a reduction in airborne dust and less wear and tear on diamond tooling because of cooler processing temperatures.

On the other side of the fence, those that prefer dry polishing claim that the wet process consumes a lot of water, especially on large jobs, and produces a significant amount of waste slurry that is not always easy to dispose of. “Environmental issues are a growing concern, and disposing of slurry from wet polishing is becoming an issue,” says Walker.

Dry polishing may not consume water, but it does produce a significant amount of airborne contamination—enough so, that many commercial jobs require dust collection on the job as part of the polishing process. This almost mandates that if you are going to polish dry, you will need to own vacuum equipment. “Vacuum equipment has gotten much better,” says Walker. “Hepa filters and better pull make vacuum equipment that is lasting longer.”

One of the reasons some contractors prefer dry over wet polishing systems is the ability to dispose of the waste more easily. The downside to dry polishing is the cost associated with having to own and operate vacuum equipment as well as increased tooling costs, since dry polishing tends to consume diamond pads faster than wet polishing.

Many installers have adopted a hybrid approach to polishing. They prefer one process over the other, but remain flexible

and are willing to adapt when the situation warrants. “We wet grind the floor open on a lot of our jobs, then switch over to dry polish for the rest of the job,” says Walker. This strategy of doing what works best in a particular situation seems to be common among polishing contractors who are not married to one process.

TREND 5: DENSIFIERS AND STAIN GUARDS GO MAINSTREAM

Chemical densification is arguably the most critical step in achieving long-term durability of a polished concrete floor. It also allows for the development of shine and luster through the mechanical polishing process.

The two most commonly used densifying chemicals today are sodium and lithium. Sodium is considered to be the cost-effective workhorse of penetrating densifying sealers. Lithium, a more recent product, has garnered a large following with claims of deeper

Most polished floors, especially in locations like this pizzeria, are now getting a final guard or sealer to help protect against certain stains and increase the shine of the floor.



With the design community embracing polished concrete, the future of the industry looks good say veteran polishers from across the country.



penetration due to a smaller particle size, resulting in a more durable polished surface. On-the-job performance and cost are the biggest factors to consider when selecting what densification system to use, with lithium-based systems typically priced higher than sodium-based systems.

In regard to performance, there is still debate as to which system works better. Some contractors have a preference based on personal experience while others feel that it is less about the system and more about when and how much chemical is used. Walker is a big proponent of reading the floor to understand what chemicals to use and when to apply them. He says the key to success is to densify as much as possible. "Densifying is less about the product, but rather how much is used. The more you densify the better your floor."

Guards for polished concrete are also a source of debate. "Theoretically, you are now adding something topically to the polished floor," which is often sold as a floor free of any sealers or coatings, says Harris. Still, the use of guards has increased to where most polished floors are getting some type of final stain guard or sealer to help protect against certain stains and increase the shine of the floor.

Guards are typically low-solids acrylic, polyurethane or epoxy systems, or blends of resins, designed to form a very thin film on the surface of polished concrete and protect against stains. They are often used when the polished floor is colored with a dye or stain. "We recommend guards for use on colored

floors as they help pull more color and increase brightness," says Talbot.

One of the downsides of using guards is overapplication. "The problem I see many contractors make is either overapplying or using these products to obtain a false shine or cover blemishes, such as scratches," says Harris. In certain cases, he will even take gloss readings before and after applying guard to ensure they are getting the proper shine from the polishing process and not just the guard.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR POLISHED CONCRETE?

Everyone I spoke with only sees continued growth in the polished concrete industry, with no signs of things slowing down. "We have not even scratched the surface of where the industry can go," says Harris. Talbot says that the design community has embraced polished concrete and we are now seeing more new construction specifications calling for polished concrete over traditional hard flooring materials.

Many companies have invested a big part of their future in polished concrete, anticipating ample room for growth. "Polished concrete will be 50% of my growth this year," says Walker. Contributing to this broad acceptance of polished concrete are its green attributes. It is an environmentally friendly process with low VOC emissions and it contributes toward many Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) categories. "Polished concrete will only grow as it rides the green building

trend," says Raiser.

The most difficult part of the rapid growth in the industry will be managing expectations and ensuring consistency across the market. It is critical for the industry as a whole to maintain profitability, as the pressure to provide more for less will undeniably follow. We can already see signs of price and quality erosion, as substandard surface polishing has made its way into some larger mainstream projects.

The biggest mistake installers new to polishing make is to assume that all concrete is a good candidate for polishing. With polishing, the concrete you start with has the biggest impact on what you end up with, and in many cases the installer has no control in how the concrete is placed and finished. Learning to read concrete is an art that comes with years of being on the floor behind the machine, a fact often missed by the novice installer. In recent years, the level of education provided by the supply side of the industry regarding the reality of what it takes to be successful has increased dramatically.

Even with the inevitable economic pressures that the industry must face, the future looks amazing as the U.S. market slowly wakes up to the benefits and potential of polished concrete. Advancements in both equipment and chemicals, along with education, have had a positive impact on overall product quality.

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SEE THE CREATIVE WAYS
Breweries and Bistros
ARE USING CONCRETE FLOORS

BY ANNE BALOGH AND SARAH HUTCHINSON, CONCRETENETWORK.COM





In Societe's tasting room, the floors were acid stained in a warm walnut shade and then protected with a polyurethane sealer.

Chances are the next time you visit your local watering hole, whether it's a brewery or wine bistro, you'll encounter concrete flooring rather than the typical tile or ceramic floor often found in these facilities. You'll find them not only behind the scenes where the beer is being made, but also in the tasting rooms where it's being consumed. Concrete floors are being used more often in these environments because of their performance attributes as well as their design versatility. The projects shown here showcase the variety of looks that can be achieved, ranging from utilitarian to highly decorative, depending on the type of treatment applied.

As you might expect, floors in these facilities are subject to frequent spills and staining, as well as heavy foot traffic. Concrete protected by a high-performance coating is virtually impervious to these wear conditions. "Caustic chemicals and thermal shock are always a concern in these environments, so they require a much more durable system that is anti-slip as well," says Todd Seabroch, project consultant at Life Deck Coating Installations, San Diego, which exclusively uses products from Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems.

Paul Koury, president of Westcoat, recommends the use of a heavy-duty urethane cement coating in brewing rooms. "This is the most popular product going in breweries. It incorporates cement in a urethane polymer and is very chemical resistant, very durable. One of its key attributes is that it handles thermal shock and won't pop off if hot water is spilled. Most standard epoxies will melt at 130 to 140 degrees," he says. Koury also warns against using acrylic sealers in brewing facilities because they offer no chemical resistance and they tend to be porous, allowing bacteria to penetrate.

In tasting rooms and bistros where customers are being served, the

appearance of the floor is as important as its durability and stain resistance. In these areas, a popular treatment for concrete floors is the use of stains or dyes protected by a polyurethane sealer. "Most tasting rooms are done in stained concrete that has been processed by grinding the floor with a planetary grinder, mainly because of the warm color and patina that it offers. The processed and stained concrete has an inviting organic, natural feel to it," says Seaboch.

Koury stresses that proper surface preparation is the key to good performance. "The winning combination for a floor that is going to last is to properly sand and grind the surface first. This opens up the concrete and allows the stain and sealer to penetrate. The color goes deep and the sealer goes deep, which makes the treatment longer lasting," he says.

More brewery owners are also choosing concrete floors because they are easier to keep clean than tile and alternative flooring materials, since they have no grout lines that can trap dirt and bacteria. "Concrete floor maintenance usually entails mopping the floors with mild degreasers and periodically waxing to keep up the sheen or maintain traffic wear patterns," says Seaboch. Koury says that polyurethane sealers resist stains and can easily be cleaned with a low pH cleaner, even just vinegar and water. Harsh chemicals are usually not needed.

Concrete is a greener flooring option as well, notes Koury, because you can restore and save the existing concrete instead of repouring or covering it with another material that won't hold up.

CONCRETE COATINGS STAND UP TO THE BEER CHALLENGE

Life Deck recently installed a heavy-duty floor coating in the brewing room of Societe Brewing Company, San Diego, to give the



Another example of a tasting room floor treated with a stain. Here two colors of Westcoat water-based stain were used for a mottled look, followed by sealing with a clear epoxy and satin polyurethane.



WHY CONCRETE IS A GOOD CHOICE FOR BREWERY FLOORS

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- **ANTI-SLIP** coatings can be applied to the surface
- **RESISTANT** to stains when sealed with a polyurethane
- **EASIER TO KEEP CLEAN** than tile and alternative flooring materials
- **SUSTAINABLE**, allowing you to earn LEED points by restoring the concrete you already have



surface a chemical-resistant and easy-to-clean finish. Housing a 20-barrel production brewery and an adjacent tasting room with an unobstructed view, Societe Brewing needed a flooring finish that would meet some diverse and challenging requirements.

When owners Travis Smith and Doug Constantiner designed their facility in 2012, no detail was overlooked. For the brewing area, the floors are constantly exposed to caustic chemicals and thermal shock, so it was imperative that the floor withstand severe chemical exposure while being slip resistant and easy to clean. In the tasting room, which is open to the public, the appearance of the floor was as important as its durability and stain resistance. "Ultimately, we found the complexity of issues surrounding the floor very interesting. Most people will only see it as a floor and not understand what went into making it," said Smith and Constantiner.

Part of that decision-making process involved choosing the best concrete floor coatings to meet the brewery's functional and aesthetic needs. In the brewing room, they decided to treat the floor with a high-performance gray urethane cement from Westcoat. "Through our research we found this to be the best option for us. It is chemical, temperature, and impact resistant; it should last us many years and many thousands of barrels of beer," they said. To warm up the tasting room area and create a dynamic place for customers to sample Societe's specialty brews, they chose to use an acid stain protected with a polyurethane sealer.

In the brewing room, Life Deck's crews first prepped the floors by thoroughly diamond grinding the surface, and then installed the high-build urethane cement, which is fast-drying and self-leveling. In the tasting room, they ground the floors with a planetary grinder and stained them with Westcoat acid stain in walnut. The floors were then sealed with a polyurethane designed for use in severe chemical environments and heavy traffic areas.



Some bistro and brewery owners like concrete flooring because of the unlimited design possibilities, allowing them to amp up the “wow” factor.



This concrete floor at Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens, Escondido, Calif., was acid stained in rich bronze and walnut colors and sealed with a polyurethane coating. Coating installer: Life Deck Coating Installations, San Diego



Acid stains and dyes are often used in tasting rooms because they impart a warm color and patina and give floors a natural organic feel. In Stone World Bistro & Gardens tasting room, Westcoat Fast Stain in brown was applied to the floor after it was prepped by diamond grinding. *Coating installer: Life Deck Coating Installations, San Diego*



This stunning floor in Cuvée's spirit and wine parlor was coated with Liquid Dazzle metallic epoxy, in chartreuse with marine highlights. Coating installer: A-Plus Concrete Construction, Fresno, Calif.

ADDING DAZZLE WITH METALLIC EPOXIES

Some bistro and brewery owners like concrete flooring because of the unlimited design possibilities, allowing them to amp up the “wow” factor. For Cuvée, a spirit and wine parlor in Fresno, Calif., Thomas Villasana of A-Plus Concrete Construction gave the owners the over-the-top look they were after by coating the concrete floor with Westcoat's Liquid Dazzle metallic epoxy, using chartreuse as the main floor color and marine for the dazzle effects.

“The owners wanted something different than a regular concrete floor,” says Villasana. “They had seen metallic flooring online and sought out A-Plus Concrete to see if it was something we could do.”

Surface preparation was a very important part of this job. “There was a lot of prep to the existing concrete floor due to the different flooring that had been applied throughout the building. We made sure not to leave any stone unturned,” Villasana says. With more than 1,400 square feet of carpet, tile and linoleum to remove, the prep work took over three days to complete. First, the concrete was ground with a dual-head floor grinder and cracks were repaired. Once the cracks were filled, the floor was ground flush and cleaned with degreaser and tri-sodium phosphate.

Prior to applying the Liquid Dazzle, a primer coat was applied to the floor. Next, the Liquid Dazzle was applied by a single installer to get consistency of the effects. “We found that heat plays an important part with the Liquid Dazzle — the warmer the temperature the more movement you get,” says Villasana.




Contact: Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems
www.westcoat.com


Societe Brewery Company founders Travis Smith and Doug Constantiner chose a heavy-duty gray urethane cement topcoat to give their brewing room floor a chemical-resistant and easy-to-clean finish. Coating installer: Life Deck Coating Installations, San Diego



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Picture of the Week: Hyde Concrete in Annapolis, MD.



Success Tips from Paul Koury
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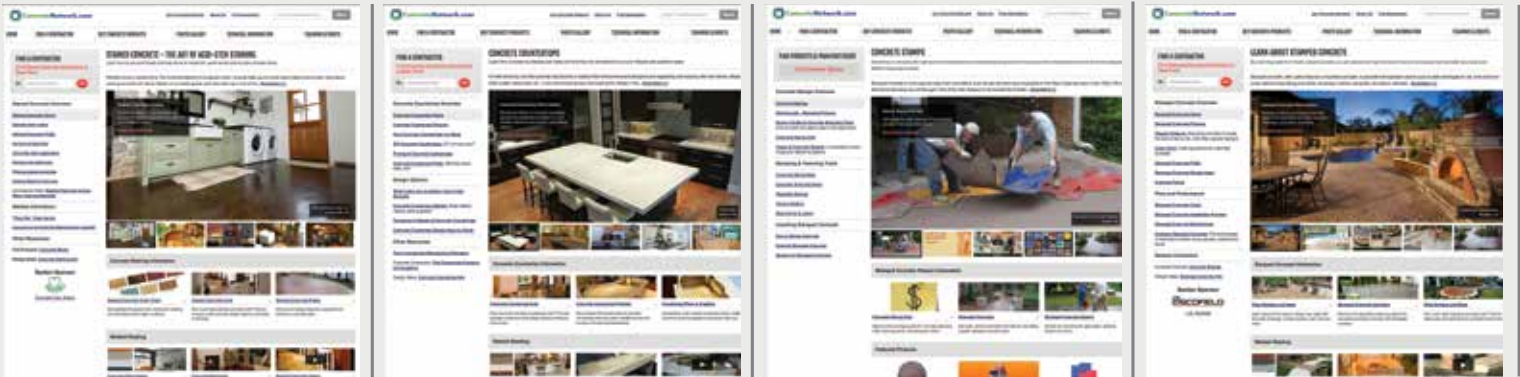
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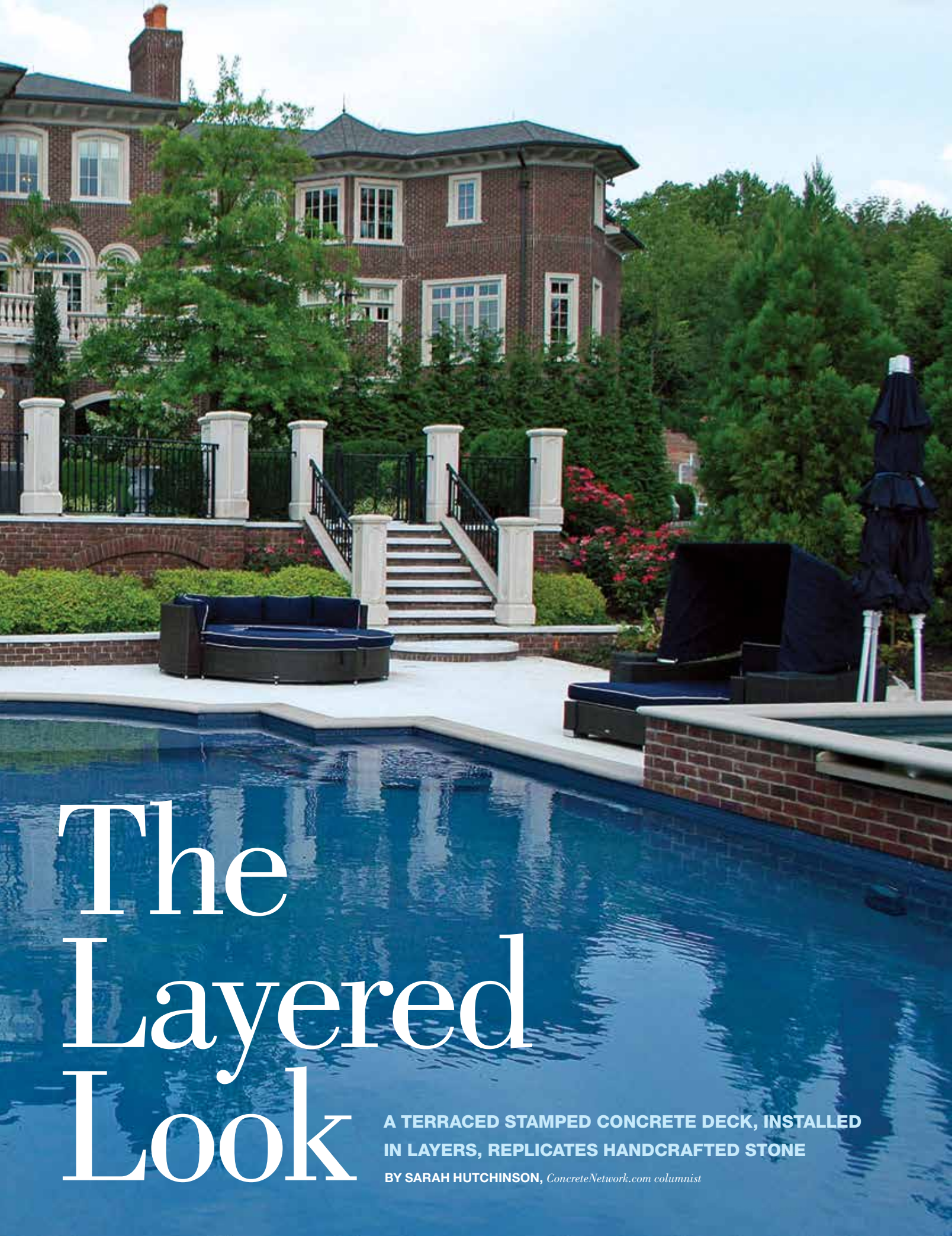
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The white-on-white concrete contrasts nicely with the home's brick and the surrounding greenery.



The Layered Look

**A TERRACED STAMPED CONCRETE DECK, INSTALLED
IN LAYERS, REPLICATES HANDCRAFTED STONE**

BY SARAH HUTCHINSON, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist

Fisher compares the process to laying stonework, only they are creating the stones from concrete right in place.

THE POOL DECK, WHICH ABUTS THE LIMESTONE COPING, STAYS COOL BECAUSE OF ITS WHITE-ON-WHITE COLOR SCHEME.



LAYERING IT ON

STEP 1: A structural slab is poured with all the necessary reinforcement. For this project, #5 rebar was placed on 2.5-inch centers, and 40 yards of fiber-reinforced, 4000-psi concrete was pumped using a boom truck.

STEP 2: The slab is scarified to ensure a proper bond.

STEP 3: A proprietary topping is mixed onsite and applied over the structural slab. The mix consisted of finely graded concrete sand, white portland cement, titanium dioxide, colloidal silica, and PVA fibers. The topping layer is approximately 1 inch thick.

STEP 4: The topping is stamped with metal cookie-cutter style stamps.

STEP 5: The joints are grouted by hand.

STEP 6: Densifier and sealer are applied.



The owners of this Livingston, N.J., property were in search of something different for their terraced backyard. Unique Concrete of West Milford, N.J., recently helped them achieve their goals by using a unique two-layer process to complete the final phase of decorative concrete work around their pool deck.

“First we pour a structural slab that is scarified and followed by a topping that is stamped, colored and grouted,” explains Todd Fisher. He compares the process to laying stonework, only they are creating the stones from concrete right in place. “We like to call our product handcrafted stone decking,” he says.

The company poured and finished more than 6,000 square feet of decorative concrete in three phases over the course of four years. Portions of the project were completed while the home was still under construction, while other parts were completed later.

The upper level of the yard nearest the home consists of a balcony with radiant heating, the middle level serves as a lounging space and has a distinct checkerboard pattern combining sections of grass and concrete paving, and the swimming pool level at the bottom features a 2,500-square-foot decorative concrete deck and a pool house.

For this project, a white-on-white color scheme was selected for a distinctive look and for its coolness factor. “The white concrete is comfortable to walk on even on a warm



THE SECOND PHASE WAS THE MIDDLE TERRACE WITH TWO CHECKERBOARD SECTIONS. MORE THAN 6,000 SQUARE FEET OF DECORATIVE CONCRETE WAS INSTALLED AT THIS NEW JERSEY PROPERTY.

summer afternoon,” Fisher says. When Unique took temperature readings, the concrete pool deck was 20 degrees cooler than the adjacent limestone coping. The white-on-white concrete also contrasts nicely with the home’s brick and the surrounding greenery.

For budget reasons, the upper two levels were poured with an uncolored concrete mix and stained with a solid white stain, while the pool deck was poured with a white portland mix with titanium dioxide. “Since the pool deck mix itself was white, we did not rely on stains to achieve the coloring.” After the topping was poured and stamped, the joints were filled with a white grout, creating the white-on-white effect.

Various challenges arose throughout the project on each level. For the upper balcony, Unique Concrete’s crews had to deal with access difficulties as well as ongoing construction on the rest of the property. On the checkerboard level, detailed formwork was required. “Getting the corners to match up was important for the end result since the

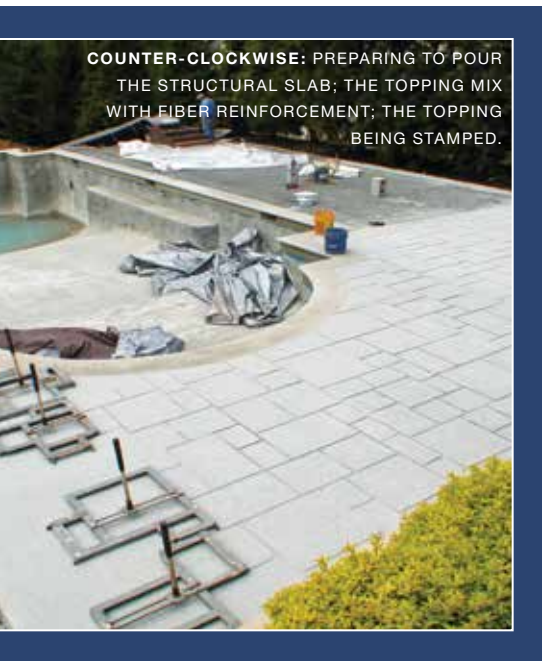
pattern would be a focal point when viewed from above,” he says. For the pool deck, the challenge was to stabilize the deck properly since this entire area was situated atop fill dirt. “In order to prevent settlement of our handcrafted stone decking, we designed and placed footings in strategic places under the entire deck area before pouring the structural slab,” says Fisher.

Unique Concrete installed the layered and grouted pool deck using a six-step process (see sidebar). Fisher says that their unique approach offers the look of realistic custom masonry or stone without the intensive labor or chance of settling. In addition, the expansion joints are completely hidden within the grouted pattern. Furthermore, it gave these homeowners exactly what they wanted—a one-of-a-kind surface to complete their backyard entertaining space.

CONCRETE CONTRACTOR:

Unique Concrete, West Milford, N.J.
www.uniqueconcretenj.com

COUNTER-CLOCKWISE: PREPARING TO POUR THE STRUCTURAL SLAB; THE TOPPING MIX WITH FIBER REINFORCEMENT; THE TOPPING BEING STAMPED.





GIVE IT A *Swirl*

STENCILING A CONCRETE FLOOR WITH A SWIRLED MOTIF
ADDS FLAIR TO AN UPSCALE RESTAURANT

BY ANNE BALOGH, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist





THE KAPNOS RESTAURANT, which opened in July 2013 in Washington, DC, has become an instant hot spot. The 160-seat restaurant specializes in the cuisine of northern Greece and is the third DC restaurant owned by Mike Isabella, a former contestant on television's Top Chef. Part of its appeal, aside from the fabulous food, is the décor, which is inspired by the rustic mountainous regions of Greece. Chef Isabella worked closely with the interior design team of Streetsense, Bethesda, Md., to develop the concept for the 6,000-square-foot space, which includes a 38-seat private dining room, bar, main dining room, a recessed dining area, a 10-seat communal chef's table, and an open kitchen showcasing whole animals roasting over open flames.

The stunning décor is a mix of earth tones and lush jewel tone accents in eggplant and burnt orange. Because Kapnos is the Greek term for "smoke," swirls of color evoking wisps of smoke are stenciled onto the concrete floors.

"Isabella and the architect wanted a design that connected the whole space and had the look of natural fading. The architect came up with the unique swirled motif, aiming for something that wouldn't easily be copied in the DC market," says Devin Leach of Hyde Concrete, a contractor specializing in decorative and architectural concrete work.

The stenciled footprint covers 1,650 square feet of floor in the restaurant's high-end dining area. Because the concrete was new, Hyde's crew went over the floor with grinders to create the right surface profile for staining, stenciling and sealing. After grinding and cleaning the concrete, they began the painstaking process of applying the stenciled design.

"We used a total of 117 stencils that were on average 5 feet tall and 3 feet wide," says Leach. "We worked closely with Modello Designs in California to make sure the stencil was scaled to fit the floor while honoring the design."

Because the swirled motif was created using two different colors of stain, the stencils were applied in layers. The crew then used an HVLP sprayer to apply the stains. To produce the desired faded effect and to speed application, Hyde used H&C semi-transparent water-based stains, which require no rinsing, mopping, or neutralizing. After all work was complete, the floor was protected with two coats of sealer.

MATERIALS USED

STENCILS: Modello Designs

CONCRETE STAINS: H&C Semi-Transparent Decorative Stain, in Obsidian and Henna

CONCRETE SEALER: National Polymers Water-Based Epoxy (as a primer) and National Polymers Polyaspartic Coating (as a topcoat)

CONCRETE CONTRACTOR
Hyde Concrete, Annapolis, Md.
www.hydeconcrete.com

ARCHITECT
Streetsense, Bethesda, Md.
www.streetsense.com



WABI-SABI GARDEN BENCH

A CONCRETE BENCH FEATURING ITS OWN
MINI WATERFALL BRINGS TRANQUILITY TO
A JAPANESE GARDEN

BY ANNE BALOGH, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist



CONTRACTOR: JOHN ZIEBARTH
TURNING STONE DESIGN, EAST POINT, GA.
WWW.TURNINGSTONEDESIGN.COM



OPPOSITE: THE BENCH WAS MADE IN ONE PIECE USING GLASS-FIBER-REINFORCED CONCRETE. NO PIGMENT OR SPECIAL FINISHES WERE ADDED. ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: THE WATERFALL, GENERATED BY A RECIRCULATING PUMP, FLOWS OVER THE EDGE IN A GENTLE CASCADE; A FURROW IN THE BACK OF THE BENCH CHANNELS THE WATER OVER A BED OF NATIVE RIVER ROCK; COMBINING THE ORGANIC ELEMENTS OF CONCRETE, STONE, AND WATER, THIS WABI-SABI STYLE GARDEN BENCH IS THE IDEAL SPOT FOR REFLECTION AND MEDIATION.

The main design inspiration was taken from the classic elements of a Japanese garden, with a more contemporary and local flair.

Designed to be the perfect spot for contemplation, this unusual precast concrete bench provides its own soothing sound effects, featuring a mini waterfall that cascades onto a bed of stone. The Zen-style bench was custom made by John Ziebarth of Turning Stone Design for Fier Studio, one of 14 contemporary dwellings featured in Atlanta's 2013 Modern Home Tour. The 450-square-foot home, designed by Atlanta architect Dencity, is a remote, peaceful getaway from the daily hustle and bustle. While small in size, it incorporates an abundance of meditative spaces, including a lounge area, a compact library and office, a wrap-around covered deck, and a lookout roof deck perch. A stone pathway leading to the concrete bench invites people to come and enjoy the serenity of the secluded backyard.

"The main design inspiration was taken from the classic elements of a Japanese garden, with a more contemporary and local flair," says Ziebarth. "Concrete was chosen for its ability to be customized to the principles of wabi-sabi design."

Wabi sabi is a Japanese design aesthetic that embraces inner serenity (wabi) and an appreciation for the beauty of natural imperfection (sabi). Accordingly, Ziebarth left the concrete bench its natural state, with no pigment or special finishes added. He cast the bench in one piece using lightweight glass-fiber-reinforced concrete and a blend of gray and white cement to add subtle color contrast. To create the waterfall, he placed a recirculating pump with cistern directly

underneath the bench leg and waterfall element. PVC piping cast into the bench leg circulates the water up into a shallow furrow running along the back of the bench. The water then flows over a bed of native river rock before spilling over the edge, creating hypnotic sound and movement.

Although Turning Stone Design's primary business is precast concrete countertops, sinks and fireplaces, Ziebarth is seeing greater demand for one-of-a-kind concrete architectural elements, such as wall panels and furniture. For another residence on the 2013 Modern Atlanta Home Tour, he even created a monolithic concrete mailbox.

RAMPED-UP SINKS

LONG RAMP-STYLE CONCRETE SINKS LIVEN UP THE LOCKER ROOMS OF A NEW RECREATION FACILITY

BY ANNE BALOGH, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist





Recently, Target Corp. converted two 100+-year-old historic buildings in downtown Minneapolis into a new 25,000-square-foot recreation space for its Twin Cities employees, called Target Plaza Commons. The new facility has an urban-chic vibe, with the brick walls, wood beams, concrete pillars and original terrazzo floors left exposed. To convey this industrial, no-frills look in the facility's locker rooms, the architect specified the installation of long ramp-style concrete sinks. The project presented a number of challenges, not only because of the size of the sinks (two are 12 feet in length and one is 18 feet), but also the requirement for no legs or visible vertical supports.

"The original drawings had rough dimensions, but we had to determine a way to support the sinks with no exposed legs or posts and make the hidden drains function properly. We built the sinks with GFRC, and set them on an engineered steel frame that was built into the walls, using a 2 x 4 steel beam support in the front and 2-inch angle iron in the rear," says contractor Cole Montgomery of Urban Concrete Works, Richfield, Minn.

Forming and casting the sinks was also a challenge. A total of 13 pieces were cast, all about 6 feet long and weighing 240 pounds. All of the widths varied slightly, so Urban Concrete had to make custom molds using melamine, MDF, and laminate. "There was no room for error. With finished tile on each side, the sinks had to fit," says Cole.

Seaming the sinks together was also a concern. The 18-foot sink has two seams, and having a slight twist or warp would have been a huge problem. "It was very important that the molds were perfect," says Montgomery. "I spent hours just checking measurements, and in the end it showed. All of the seams were nearly perfect."

Because the architect specified the sinks to be left a natural gray, no integral or topical color was needed. "This made my job much easier, since I had to mix multiple batches of concrete over four days of casting," says Montgomery. To maintain the natural finish, he simply sealed the sinks with a waterborne epoxy and a coat of wax for added protection.

Montgomery says the market for decorative concrete is thriving in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, making for some tough competition. "You really have to sell your work to get the job. I think the demand for quality decorative concrete is getting stronger and stronger. People are noticing the differences in the level of craftsmanship from different installers."

CONTRACTOR: Cole Montgomery
Urban Concrete Works, Richfield, Minn.
www.urbanconcreteworks.com



WOOD PLANK FAKE-OUT

A CONCRETE POOL DECK IS STAMPED AND COLORED TO REPLICATE REAL WOOD

BY ANNE BALOGH, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist

Wood is rarely used as a pool deck material because it can easily deteriorate and splinter after constant exposure to water and harsh pool chemicals. But with stamped concrete, you can still enjoy the look of a wood deck without any of the drawbacks.

A perfect example is this concrete pool deck at an upscale home in Columbus, N.J., which was stamped with a wood plank pattern

chosen by homeowners who like the look of wood but wanted the durability of concrete. Installer ESPJ Construction, which specializes in decorative stamped concrete and masonry work, achieved the realistic look of wood graining by using a wood-plank stamp from Proline along with a desert tan dry-shake color hardener accented with a dark brown release agent, both from Solomon Colors. Because the pool backed up to a hill, ESPJ also installed

an attractive stone-look retaining wall and terraced patio.

“The client wanted to do a patio along with something attractive, but had no plans or drawings. We came up with the idea of converting the wall into a raised patio and adding three shear-descent waterfalls with two staircases, one on each side of the pool,” says EPSJ general manager Geovani Espejo.



“Whether they want traditional concrete or specialty colors and designs, our team of professional concrete workers can make any concrete design become reality.”

— Geovani Espejo

THIS 1,700-SQUARE-FOOT POOL DECK STAMPED WITH A WOOD PLANK PATTERN WAS THE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO LIKE THE LOOK OF WOOD BUT WANTED THE DURABILITY OF CONCRETE.

The pool deck is approximately 1,700 square feet and includes areas for lounging, dining and grilling. It can also be accessed from any part of the house. The retaining walls are made of cinder block resurfaced with thin-veneer cultured stone and capped with limestone. French drains were also integrated into the base of the wall to facilitate drainage.

ESPJ prides itself on being able to transform

concrete into any look the client desires, as they did with great success on this project. “Whether they want traditional concrete or specialty colors and designs, our team of professional concrete workers can make any concrete design become reality,” says Espejo.

MATERIALS USED

Concrete stamp: Proline wood-plank stamp

Coloring agents: Desert tan dry-shake color hardener and dark brown release agent, both from Solomon Colors

CONTRACTOR

ESPJ CONSTRUCTION, LINDEN, N.J.
WWW.ESPJCONSTRUCTION.COM

CREATIVE CASTING

SEE HOW CONTRACTORS ARE USING CUSTOM-SCULPTED FORMWORK TO CREATE UNIQUE SHAPES IN CONCRETE



THESE INSPIRATIONAL CONCRETE BENCHES MADE BY C.S.W. CREATIONS WERE CAST USING CUSTOM FORMS MADE OF MELAMINE AND FOAM CUTOUTS SHAPED WITH A CNC MACHINE. DRY PIGMENT WAS ADDED TO THE CONCRETE MIX TO CREATE THE INTEGRAL COLORS. CONTRACTOR: WWW.CSWCREATIONS.COM



One of the great qualities of concrete is that, unlike stone, it can be sculpted while it's still in liquid form to create nearly any shape imaginable. These two projects—a concrete sink basin shaped to look like an ammonite fossil and concrete benches that display inspirational phrases in three-dimensional typography—showcase the range of possibilities.

For the ammonite sink, contractor Chris Frazer of DC Custom Concrete, San Diego, cast the concrete in a spiral-shaped mold that his partner painstakingly hand-sculpted from plaster. Frazer's client was designing a modern apartment complex that had a need for something natural and organic to break away from the sharp, contemporary lines of the building's architecture. The sink was cast using glass-fiber-reinforced concrete with a bit of black pigment added to slightly darken the gray cement. After removal from the mold, the surface was lightly sanded by hand and sealed with an acrylic water-based sealer.

For the typographic concrete benches, a more high-tech approach was used to sculpt the forms. C.S.W. Creations, Katy, Tex., made the benches—19 in all—for a beautification project in downtown Houston's East End. Local artists and trades people came together to revitalize the esplanade along Navigation Boulevard by creating a variety of functional street art with themes relating to Houston history and the ethnic groups that built the East End. The concrete benches display various inspirational phrases, in both English and Spanish, using playful three-dimensional typography. Local artist Anthony Shumate Thompson designed the benches, and C.S.W. partnered with him to fabricate them. The forms were created by making a rectangular box out of melamine then placing foam cutouts of the words, sculpted with a CNC machine, along both sides of the benches. The benches range from 48 to 72 inches in length and were poured in four colors that coordinate with the surrounding artwork. Once the benches were demolded, their surfaces were hand-honed to remove any sharp edges and then sprayed with an anti-graffiti sealer.

*The sink was
hand-sculpted
to create an
organic element.*



DC CUSTOM CONCRETE MADE THIS SPIRAL-SHAPED
AMMONITE SINK BY CASTING THE CONCRETE IN A MOLD
HAND-SCULPTED FROM PLASTER.
CONTRACTOR: WWW.DCCUSTOMCONCRETE.COM

GALLERY

a collection of

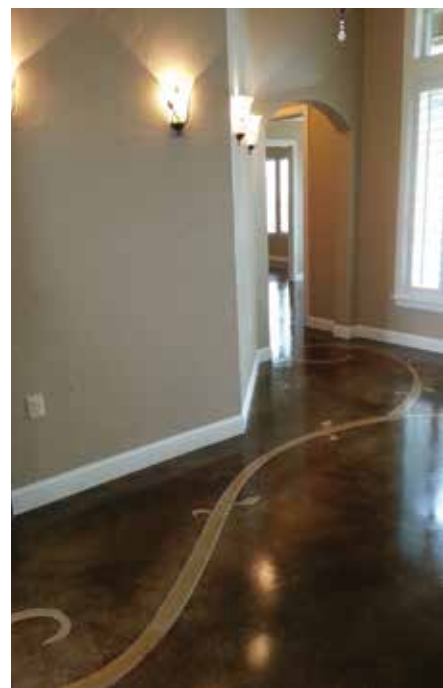
CONCRETE FLOORS





TOP: *BNE Contractors Inc in Kitchener, ON; Preferred Concrete Polishing in Kernersville, NC; Concrete Studio in Alpharetta, GA*
CENTER: *Infinity Concrete Coatings in Newport Beach, CA; Coolstone Concrete Design in Encino, CA* **BOTTOM:** *Diamond D Company in Capitola, CA; East Coast Decorative Concrete in East Syracuse, NY; Decorative Crete-Worx in Grand Prairie, TX*









TOP: *Concrete911
in Citrus Heights,
CA; Brown's Services
Incorporated in
Woodbridge, VA*

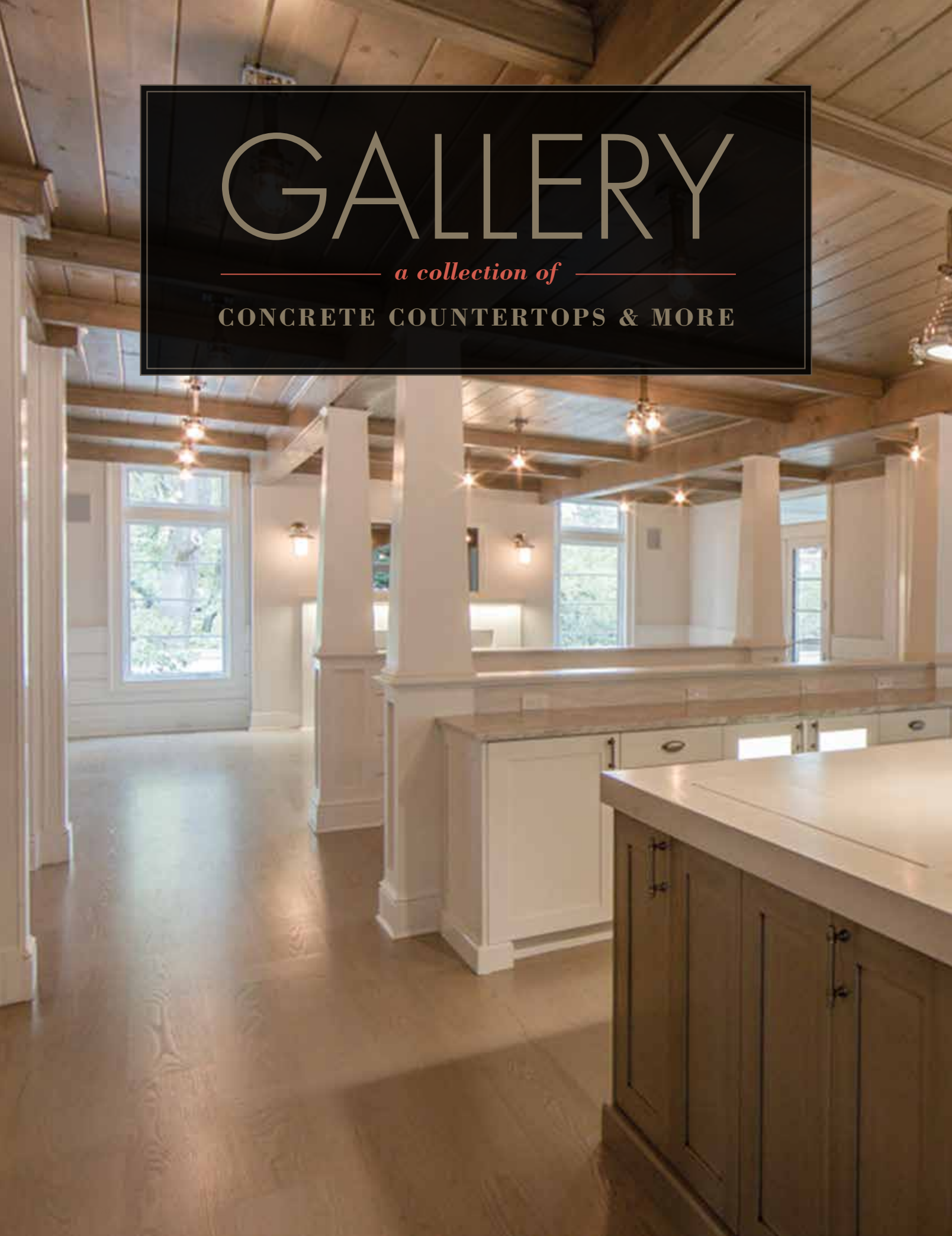
BOTTOM: *Stephens and
Smith Construction
in Lincoln, NE; JH
Advanced Concrete
Solutions in Jackson
Hole, WY; L&A Crystal
in Mequon, WI*



GALLERY

a collection of

CONCRETE COUNTERTOPS & MORE







TOP: *Culloton Design in Los Angeles, CA; Custom Crete Werks LLC in Racine, WI; Stoneworth Innovative Concrete Products in Lincoln, NE* **CENTER:** *Reformed Concrete LLC in Quarryville, PA; Oso Industries in New York, NY; Kerr Concrete in Evanston, IL* **BOTTOM:** *Hard Topix in Jenison, MI; JH Advanced Concrete Solutions in Jackson Hole, WY; Jax Design Shop Inc in Carlsbad, CA*





TOP: *Semco Modern
Seamless Surface in Las
Vegas, NV; Homcrete
Inc in El Paso, TX*
BOTTOM: *SunWorks,
etc. LLC in Annville,
PA; JM Lifestyles in
Randolph, NJ; Flying
Turtle Cast Concrete in
Modesto, CA*

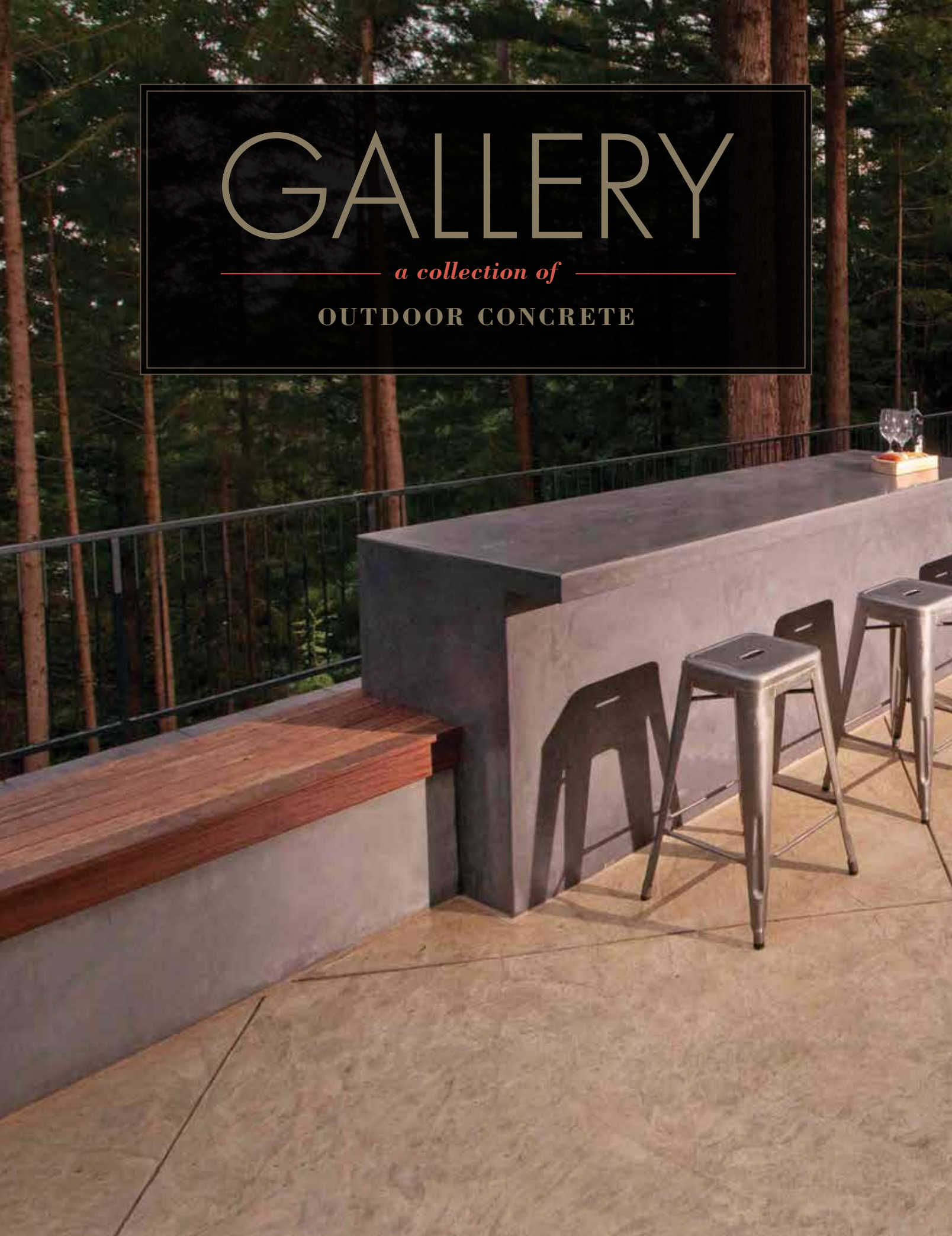




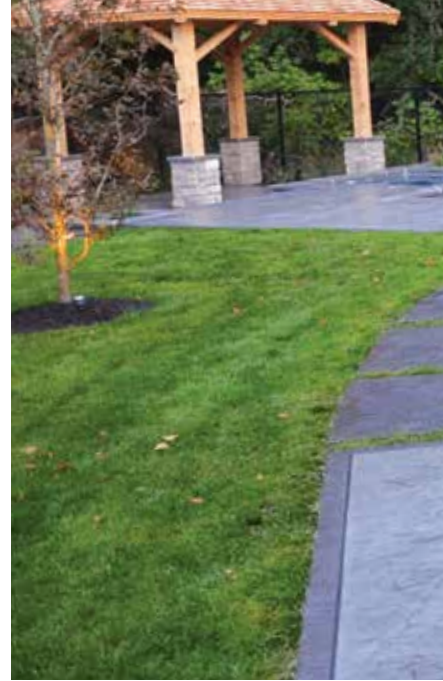
GALLERY

a collection of

OUTDOOR CONCRETE

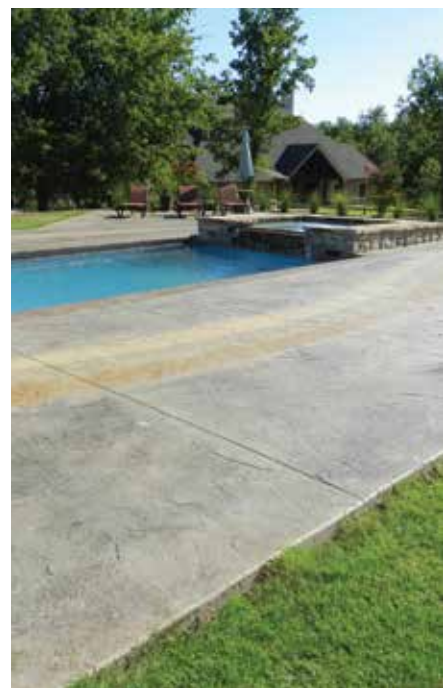






TOP: *Crete-Crafters Inc in Little Rock, AR; Elite Crete Design Inc in Oshawa, ON; Progressive Concrete Coatings in Wilmington, NC* **CENTER:** *Concreations, LLC in Millersburg, IN; Opus Stone in Tustin, CA; ESPJ Construction Corp in Linden, NJ* **BOTTOM:** *J&H Concrete in Uniontown, OH; Greystone Masonry Inc in Stafford, VA; Ramcrete in Owasso, OK*









TOP: *Roman Creations in Foristell, MO; Ozark Patterned Concrete, Inc. in Lowell, AR*

BOTTOM: *C.S.W. Creations in Katy, TX; CustomCrete in Saint Peters, MO; Stephens and Smith Construction in Lincoln, NE*





ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

2013 DECORATIVE CONCRETE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BARBARA SARGENT SHARES HER SECRETS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

BY JIM PETERSON, *president, ConcreteNetwork.com*

Barbara Sargent and her husband, Sarge, have been friends of mine for many years. Barbara has always been a mentor to me (as has Sarge). It's been several years now since she retired from running Kemiko Concrete Products, so I thought it would be a good time to ask her to share her most important success concepts as she looks back on the period of building the Kemiko brand. Nothing like a little time to clarify one's thoughts, wouldn't you agree?

Here are the results of that discussion. I hope the insights are as valuable to you as they have been to me.

YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK HARDER THAN YOU IMAGINE

The first step in her roadmap: When you first begin your business, you should work solo and resist hiring an assistant or staff until your new company is financially established. Self-employment is hard work and not a 9-to-5 job, particularly in the beginning. A lot of extra hours are required. She thinks self-employment is worth it, though, and took great pride in being self-employed.

PICKING THE RIGHT PRODUCT OR SERVICE IS VITAL

Be proud of your product line and demonstrate confidence in it, so when you stand against competitors, you can hold your head high; you know that you have a good product. However, you must choose your product carefully. And if you are the product (such as a contractor or installation company), you will be involved in its development.

When Barbara and Sarge were participating in training sessions at the Decorative Concrete Institute, DCI president Bob Harris would always end the sessions by asking Barbara if there was anything she would like to add. She told attendees that if they got a specification for another product outside the Kemiko line, use that product. Don't change the specs. Instead of being defensive about a competitor, she had enough confidence in her products that she knew they would come back to Kemiko after trying other products.

BE FLEXIBLE

If you see signs of an economic briar patch ahead, have the guts to stop, look, and listen and the wherewithal to change. It's never too late to implement a defensive business plan. It's important to realize that playing defense may have to happen during your career.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH WINNERS

Choose good company to surround yourself with. The company you keep should be a reflection of your standards. You are the steward of your brand, and you should want to work with people in the industry that you trust and who have the same work ethic and philosophy as yourself.

BE AGGRESSIVE IN MARKETING

Market in good times. But market even more intensely in down times, as hard as that may be to do. With over 150 trade shows under her belt and advertising in over 50 national magazines, Barbara has followed this rule to a tee. It was instrumental in putting her product out there on the national stage. Everyone knows you have to spend money to make money, but if you do that in a down time and choose your pipeline to the public well, you will be out of the chute quickly and have a head start when things come back.

BE HUMBLE

Being humble and appreciative are two qualities of a successful business person. These qualities help you open doors and make a mark in your industry and community.

EMBRACE CHANGE

Change is inevitable. But you have to be willing to keep abreast of it. Know your product line as well as your competitors' products. Constantly research, never ease up on learning, and be willing to change or tweak your business plan as you grow and diversify.

KEEP LEARNING AND SHARING

Some say you can't teach an old dog new tricks and that young pups are reluctant to value the old-fashioned path. Barbara could not disagree more strongly. Older people should link with and learn from younger people and then adjust to generational shifts. And younger people should realize that it's okay to go back in time, particularly as it relates to good values. A mix of young and old attributes is useful.

Holding insights close to the vest is passé. Sharing ideas and information with others shows that you care about them and the betterment of the industry. Leaders are always learning, teaching, and answering questions.

MR. STANLEY'S RULES

Barbara got much of her business experience while working for 21 years at Lambert Landscape Company in Dallas, Texas, where she was in charge of their retail store. She did purchasing, marketing, and customer service and was mentored by customer Stanley Marcus of Neiman Marcus fame. He taught her invaluable lessons (she called them "Mr. Stanley's rules"), and he told her not to vary from these lessons, to stay with them. Here they are:

Don't borrow money in the first three years of business. Many new businesses will usually fold within 3 years, as the odds of success are tipped against you. If you are still in business after 3 years, then you will probably be a success. After 3 years, banks will come knocking to loan you money. At that point, borrowing is okay because you may need to buy more equipment, hire more people, increase your marketing, or travel more for business.

Zero in on a specific client. Barbara started marketing concrete stains to homeowners, rather than focusing on the commercial staining market, which had entrenched competitors. She went right to the ladies who were picking out flooring. Then she moved over to the men who would do the installation. She never went the commercial route because she was not confident she could get into that market, so she went in through the back door.

Not everybody likes what you like. Don't think that what you like and what you personally buy will be what everyone likes. While running the retail operation at Lambert's, Barbara wouldn't order products in yellow and orange because she didn't like those colors. When Marcus learned about this, he told her that yellow and orange are popular colors in Europe and encouraged her to buy them. They sold very well. Look at all the options in the market when making your offering, not just what you like.

People want to talk to people. Don't go to an automated phone system as the first contact with the customer. Your first contact is a lasting impression, and you want to capture that customer right away. When Barbara ran Kemiko, she never went to an automated system. From 9 to 5, they picked up the call in person.

Work 24/7 to get the business going. When Barbara and Sarge first made the commitment to follow one of Mr. Stanley's rules, to work 7 days a week, 24/7, they had a toll-free telephone number put in their home. If the phone rang in the middle of the night, she didn't know if the call was from Britain, Italy, or Australia. She would pop out of bed and cheerfully say, "Kemiko," out of a dead sleep. She didn't want to miss a single call. She got the caller's address to send them information, she gave them her website, and she let them know if they had any technical questions, they could call her day or night.

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CONCRETE PRODUCTS

YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRODUCTS, EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS



This minimalist master bath sink features a central drain hidden by a bridge of glass that can be removed for easy cleaning. (Color: Benjamin Moore Carbon Black)



The Happy Box trough sink, made by Reaching Quiet and designed by Happy Box Architects, is a large single-basin design with an optional removable bamboo bridge. (Color: Benjamin Moore Vermillion)

Integral Pigment Color Matching

BLUECONCRETE INTEGRAL PIGMENTS CAN NOW BE CUSTOM BLENDED TO MATCH ANY BENJAMIN MOORE PAINT COLOR

By ANNE BALOGH, ConcreteNetwork.com columnist

For years, many suppliers of integral concrete pigments have offered custom color blends to broaden their standard color palettes. Now for the first time, there's one supplier that takes custom color to the next level, offering you the option of matching the hue of your concrete to any Benjamin Moore™ paint color, including vibrant shades such as Key Lime, Electric Orange and Strawberry Shortcake. Using the in-house color lab at BlueConcrete in Covington, Ga., is like visiting the paint mixing department at your local hardware store. Simply specify the Benjamin Moore™ color number or provide a paint sample, and BlueConcrete will formulate a package of custom-blended pigments ready to add to your concrete mix design.

"The integral custom pigments are well-blended and disperse beautifully," says Eric Boyd of Reaching Quiet Design, an award-winning design-build firm renowned for its artisan work using concrete, steel, and wood. "One of our selling features is that we can match our concrete to any Benjamin Moore paint color. There's not another solid surface product that has that level of diversity," he adds.

Most of the Benjamin Moore custom color blends use white portland

cement, with the exception of certain darker hues that may benefit from the depth imparted by using gray portland cement. Popular applications for the custom integral pigments include concrete countertops, sinks, fireplace surrounds, and concrete furniture. In addition to matching paint colors, BlueConcrete can also blend custom colors using other references, such as a fabric swatch, a piece of tile or even river rock. They recommend that you test the colors in a small batch of your mix design before the pour, since the final color of the concrete can be influenced by factors such as the color of the cement paste, aggregate color, admixtures, and water-cement ratio.

To download a free Benjamin Moore custom color guide for concrete, visit www.blueconcrete.com.

DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR

Eric Boyd

Reaching Quiet Design, LLC
Charlotte, N.C.
www.reachingquiet.com

School Colors

CUSTOM-BLENDED CONCRETE STAINS GIVE SCHOOL FLOORS A PEPPEY, COLOR-COORDINATED LOOK

By ANNE BALOGH, *ConcreteNetwork.com* columnist

Ewa Makai Middle School in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, has taken the concept of school colors to a new level, using a dynamic blend of teal, robin's egg blue, and lilac throughout its facility to rev up school spirit. The colors form an array of geometric patterns on the concrete floors in the classrooms, hallways, and recreation areas. Coordinating accent colors were used on the school's doors, cabinets, and desks.

Ewa Makai opened to students in January 2011 and is the first school in Hawaii to achieve LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for sustainable construction, design, and operation. It is also the first public school in the state to receive a National Green Ribbon School award from the U.S. Department of Education, which honors schools that take a comprehensive approach to creating green environments.

Part of that approach to sustainable construction was the decision by the architect to stain the school's concrete floors rather than cover them with vinyl tile. A water-based solid-color concrete stain from NewLook was chosen not only because it could be custom blended to match the architect's color scheme, but also because the stain is eco-friendly and free of VOCs and toxic fumes.

Staining contractor Ken Tyson of Tyson's Inc., Kailua, Hawaii, says he uses NewLook solid-color stains on many of his projects because the colors are reliable. "I can always guaranty the color on the chart will match the color of the finished floor. With acid stains, you are at the will of the concrete. You have an idea of what the end results will be, but there is no way to show the customer, since no two concrete slabs are

the same. With NewLook, I can make a sample off site and it will be the same as the finished project."

The 104,000-square-foot job involved meticulous prep work to create the ideal surface for stain application. Tyson and his crew started by grinding the floor with diamond tooling and then applying NewLook's EcoAcid environmentally friendly concrete cleaner and etching compound to open up the pores. To keep the stain colors separate, score marks were cut into the concrete using an angle grinder.

"At the beginning of each day our foreman would lay out laminated colored paper which matched the color to be applied. Each worker would have their own color. We were very careful not to color the other sections," says Tyson. To apply the stain, the crew used brushes to keep the color contained. After staining, the floor was sealed with NewLook's water-based sealer and two coats of floor wax.

MATERIALS USED

From: NewLook International (www.getnewlook.com)

Concrete stains: Solid-color stain in custom-blended colors

Water-based sealer: SmartSeal WB

Concrete cleaner and etching compound: EcoAcid

STAINING CONTRACTOR

Ken Tyson, Tyson's Inc.

Kailua, Hawaii

www.tysonsync.com



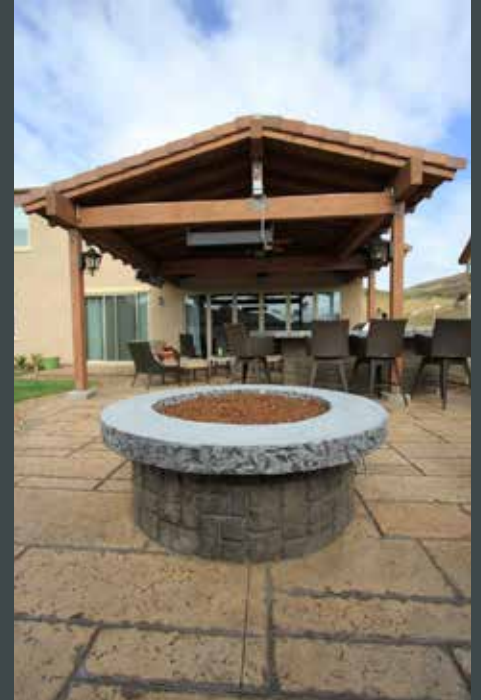
The vibrantly colored concrete floors make the hallways at Ewa Makai look anything but institutional.

ADHESIVE-BACKED STENCILS

TEAR-RESISTANT STENCILS FROM UNIVERSAL TEMPLATES

You might call Carlos Ramirez Jr., owner of Custom Ram Designs, a master stencilist. To create his distinctive designs, he uses adhesive-backed stencils from Universal Templates, which come in a variety of stone, brick, cobblestone, and tile patterns as well as special accent designs such as decorative medallions and star motifs. The sturdy tear-resistant stencils are made of high-impact recycled plastic. At a thickness of nearly ¼ inch, they create deep, long-lasting impressions that resist wear from vehicle traffic and abrasion.

www.universaltemplates.com



STAMPS REPLICATE TRAVERTINE

PROLINE'S ASHLAR LORENZO TRAVERTINE STAMP

This stamped patio, beautifully demonstrates how concrete can recreate the look of natural stone. Allen Ortiz, owner of Allen Decorative Concrete, used travertine stamps and stone-textured form liners from Proline Decorative Concrete Systems for the entire project, completing the job for around \$15,000, much less than you'd pay for real quarried stone. Ortiz used an ashlar travertine stamp and a hammered-edge form liner to impart a stone-like texture along the edges. He created the realistic coloring using a buff-toned dry-shake hardener accented with a combination of sandstone, charcoal and sandalwood water-based stains, also from Proline. A walnut antiquing wash was added to give the surface a weathered effect. The final touch was applying a clear, high-gloss sealer to enhance the color. www.prolinestamps.com



CAST-IN-PLACE COUNTERTOP SYSTEM

Z LIQUI-CRETE SYSTEM FROM CONCRETE COUNTERTOP SOLUTIONS

Now there's an easy, practical solution for keeping fiberglass mesh in place. The new Z Liqui-Crete System from Concrete Countertop Solution combines a highly flowable fiber-fortified concrete mixture with a heavy-duty 1x1-inch reinforcing grid of fiberglass mesh. To keep the mesh at the optimal height during the pour, it is held in place with the easy-to-attach Z Clip, which is simply screwed down to the cement board substrate and clipped onto the mesh. In addition to ensuring proper positioning of the reinforcement grid, the system is also designed to achieve high countertop strengths and perfect finishes.

www.concretecountertopsolutions.com

INDOOR/OUTDOOR ACID STAIN

A CHEMICALLY REACTIVE STAIN FROM DIRECT COLORS

For this patio, Nick Dancer of Dancer Concrete Design used a black reactive chemical stain from Direct Colors, diluted at a concentration of 1 part stain to 4 parts water to produce rich, dark coffee tones. The end result was a surface with a beautiful one-of-a-kind variegated look that Dancer sealed with Direct Colors satin-finish acrylic for protection from the elements.

www.directcolors.com



METALLIC FLOORING SYSTEM COLORCHROME FROM ARIZONA POLYMER FLOORING

According to Matt Dickens of Concrete Artistry & Design LLC, who has used the system for both residential and commercial projects, "APF has simplified ColorChrome so that you can achieve consistent results batch to batch with their factory-measured kits. It can be as simple as mixing Part A, Part B and pigment. However, for the more daring installers, they also sell the pigment separate so you can experiment and create countless different styles and colors and actually make ColorChrome your own." Adding to this versatility is ColorChrome's selection of 20 metallic pigments, in shades ranging from pearl, to iridescent blue, to burnt umber.

www.apfepoxy.com



INDUSTRIAL CONCRETE FLOOR COATING HP SPARTACOTE'S SPARTA-CHIP, A HIGH-PERFORMANCE POLYASPARTIC

Coating installer David Nanninga, owner of Mile High Coatings, recently installed HP Spartacote's Sparta-Chip for the flooring in a local firehouse. "This coating system offers a rapid return-to-service, excellent abrasion resistance and gloss retention, superior durability and high-solids content," says Nanninga. "The floor is simple to clean. The station regularly pressure washes the floor and does not need to use any special cleaner. The life expectancy of the floor should be at least 15 years. The nice thing is that repairs, if needed, are simple. Long-term maintenance might include a re-application of the clear coat," he adds. www.hpspartacote.com



BLACK ACID STAIN

TRIPLE-S CHEMICAL PRODUCTS

Jeremy Hapner, owner of Stained Concrete Originals, is a big fan of acid stains from Triple-S Chemical Products. "Their black stain is a true black," he says. "I've used other blacks that tend to go more dark brown." For a recent floor, Hapner diluted the stain with water and applied it to the concrete with a sprayer. He then allowed 24 hours for the color to reach its full intensity and sealed it with a high-gloss sealer to bring out the brilliance of the color.

www.concrete-stains.com



METALLIC EPOXY

WESTCOAT'S LIQUID DAZZLE

Steve Martinez of Tradewinds General Contracting was amazed by the attention the floors in a recent project featured on the Boise Parade of Homes received. "Unlike a clear epoxy or sealer, this coating system has a lot of depth. There isn't one area that is the same," says Martinez. The Liquid Dazzle system is not only strikingly beautiful but also highly durable and easy to maintain. www.westcoat.com



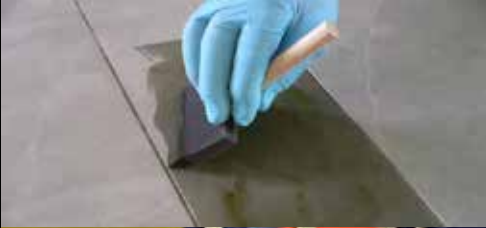
ACETONE DYES

H&C ACETONE DYE STAINS IN SPANISH DAGGER

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www.hcconcrete.com

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