



Volume 1/Number 6

Imprint

For the Decorative Concrete Professional



deminar snaps



Representatives from Artcrete in Natchitoches, Louisiana, participated in the January Deminar as visiting instructors. Artcrete rep, Madison Pierce (top left) and Doug Bannister of the Stamp Store, presented an afternoon session on stenciled concrete. Several Artcrete stencil patterns are sold through the Stamp Store.

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Cast In Place **Concrete Counter Tops**

BY DOUG BANNISTER
THE STAMP STORE

Concrete counter tops offer plenty of opportunity for companies or contractors looking to expand their decorative options. We receive inquiries about them almost daily.

The pricing of counter tops range from \$35 to \$350 per square foot. I've seen crudely finished tops and heard about sophisticated tops involving metal, glass and tile. This article deals with cast in place concrete counter tops.

As with any decorative project, it's critical that you and the decision makers share common objectives. These include price, edge treatment, thickness, color variations, topcoat choice, care and maintenance. Before you begin, it is prudent to educate your customer to expect and welcome the variations that are inherent - and even desirable - in hand-crafted products.

Despite the rugged material, concrete countertops require no special cabinetry.



Doug Bannister gives a demonstration on concrete counter tops during a recent Stamp Store deminar.

When adding a base on which to place the concrete, consider what will be visible when the edge forms are removed. Cutting back at a 45-degree angle allows the concrete to meet the stile so that no wood shows at the intersection.

THE EDGE: There are many edge treatments. Stegmeier makes three excellent bull nose form shapes: Capstone, Diamond Cut and Marble Round. We like the

Capstone and Marble Round: Diamond Cut needs to be left on until final set. Each box contains 112 linear feet of form, tape, ties, and nails. Cost is \$144. A local foam insulation company may be able to make a particular edge that you attach with double-sided tape. Another edge treatment is a straight up edge using wood forms. Intricate wood or polyurethane trim molding can be

From contractors to architects, professionals of all skill levels are intrigued by the possibilities of decorative concrete. Read what Stamp Store deminar participants are saying about this hot new market...



Randy Ober and Shane Ober

Randy Ober and son Shane operate out of Rogers, Arkansas. In Arkansas native stone is abundant so the ability to match the natural look using decorative concrete puts both contractors in an excellent profit-making position. "If we can pour concrete and make it look like native stone, our customers will go nuts," said Randy. Both contractors were impressed by what they learned during the Stamp Store deminar, particularly the use of liquid release agents. "We've always used powder release, but it works you to death," they said. "From now on we'll be using the liquid release, no doubt about it."

Decorative concrete is taking off in Mexico as cities, tourist attractions and government facilities strive to compliment their traditional architecture with an affordable option to natural stone. Jamie Ortiz and Jesus Tijerina represent Cromix Corp.,



Jesus Tijerina

a national company positioned on the edge of this new market. Ortiz and Tijerina attended the Deminar to learn more about advanced coloring techniques, stamped overlays and the use of products such a bubblegum release. "We don't do this in Mexico now, but are intrigued by the possibilities," said Ortiz. Both spend their time promoting the use of Cromix concrete products throughout Mexico. In the future, Cromix plans to host training programs similar to the Stamp Store Demina for Mexican contractors, architects and builders.



Jamie Ortiz

Cont'd from pg. 1

used like a form liner. A natural split face stone look can be created with a hot knife from foam or by lightly wetting a foam surface with xylene.

MIX: We've used a number of mix designs with high cement and low water content being the common denominator. Rock sizes from 3/8 inch and up work well. We recommend equal amounts of sand and rock. We have used the SP-5 Superplasticizer, but find it's not necessary as long as we keep the mix stiff, not more than a three slump. Cement content needs to be a stiff 3,500-psi. A 4,000-psi mix is even better. Remember, we want to avoid shrink cracking, so the water to cement ratio is important.

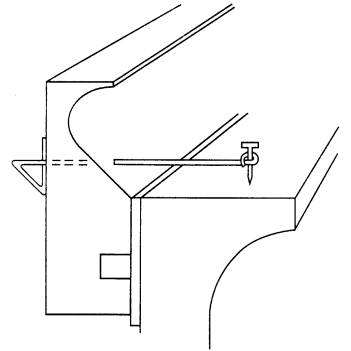
REINFORCEMENT: We prefer 4x4x6 gauge welded wire mesh cut from 8 x 20 panels. We find control joints unnecessary when using a low slump reinforced concrete. We also recommend additional reinforcement at reentrant corners. Fiber, which helps minimize early shrink cracking, can be a problem when acid staining because the fibers tend to stand up. Burning, or sealing and sanding, helps eliminate them, but fiber may add steps.

- To prevent the base materials from swelling, cover the deck with a thin sheet of poly.
- Use tape and poly to protect all adjacent surfaces, including the stile and the floor.

OVERLAY: If an overlay is used for the backsplash (an attractive, cost effective option), do it first. Use tape from the counter level up to serve as a guide and protection. Another method is to form as you would a step: Use drywall screws to set the form away

great forms

Great countertops start with great forms. Call the Stamp Store for help in selecting the perfect form for your job.

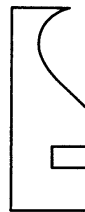


the best edge

For edge treatments, the Stamp Store recommends three bull nose form shapes. Each kit comes with 112 linear feet of form, tapes, ties and nails. Cost is \$144.

CAPSTONE

Part # 5CF112



DIAMOND CUT

Part # 5CF812



MARBLE ROUND

Part # 5CF712



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from the wall wide enough to accommodate the rock size in the concrete. A third method is to pour out enough (with some extra) 3 Π to 5 Π wide concrete, finish them as the counter top and cut to length. The same steel reinforcement also works well here.

COLOR: The same methods to color flatwork may be used for concrete countertops. The use of white Portland cement allows very light colors whether adding integral color, stains or sealer. Color hardeners provide a choice of 40 colors and combinations of colors. The most popular treatment involves some sort of color staining.

Keep in mind, more creative effects can be accomplished on the smaller counter areas than on commercial floors. Feathering marble veins, for example, is much easier on a small surface. Keep a piece of marble or pictures handy to use as reference as you develop the techniques that work for you. Water base stains

deminar graduates

To learn more about the Stamp Store's monthly deminars, check out our website at www.thestampstore.com



DECEMBER 2000

Front row: Daniel Smith, Artistic Concrete, Crownsville, MD; Jaime Ortiz, Cromix, Monterrey, Mexico. **Back row:** Jesus Tijerina, Cromix, Monterrey, Mexico; James Fowler, Tulsa, OK; and Doug Bannister, Stamp Store.

Concrete Counter Tops

work really well here.

Another great look is to stain (water or acid) over a counter top that has been skip troweled with a micro topping. The super fine aggregate of a micro topping is also helpful to get a glassy smooth finish. Our 55 lb bag of silica flour sells for \$40.

TOPCOATS: Topcoats are necessary to protect the concrete from stains. Reapply waxes every week or so. Many people think only water base sealers are USDA approved, but Super Diamond Clear, a solvent sealer, has an Incidental Food Contact rating. It sells for \$110 per 5-gallon bucket. We have an excellent one part urethane, MC-430, very shiny, very abrasion resistant, selling at \$75 per gallon. Other topcoats are 2 part 100 percent epoxies and urethanes. These sealers require mixing and can be less forgiving in their application.

Resealing any of these finishes is quick; just rough up the surface and reapply. Expect at least 5-10 years of service from the sealers, especially when owners use hot pads and cutting boards. Daily care is washing with household detergent.

Cast in place concrete counter tops are an unexplored decorative option for most contractors, however, offers good profit potential for a more creative and detail-oriented company.



FEBRUARY 2001

Front row: Corlis McLead, Oklahoma City, OK; Jose Reyna, Waterworks Landscape, Somis, CA; Donovan Morgan, Kaleidoscope Concrete Concepts, Amarillo, TX; J.C. Henson, Kaleidoscope Concrete Concepts, Amarillo, TX; and Keven Waits, Architectural Concrete Design, Coweta, OK.

Back Row: Michelle Feaver, Wilson, WY; Orlin Rogness, O.D. Rogness Construction, Lakeville, MN; Derrick Porter, Porter & Assoc., Nixa, MO; Shannon Porter, Porter & Assoc., Nixa, MO; Shawn Gleckler, Wauseon, OH; Brandon Darby, Austin, TX; Randy Keck, GRK Enterprise, Fairview, OK; and Doug Bannister, the Stamp Store.



JANUARY 2001

First row: Mike Verlennick, Verlennick Masonry & Concrete, Staples, MN; Frank Piccolo, Artcrete, Natchitoches, LA; and Bruce McLaren, Stamp Store, Oklahoma City, OK.

Middle row: Alan Brents, Concrete Concepts, Van Buren, AR; Randy Ober, W.R. Ober Construction, Bentonville, AR; Dave Verlennick, Verlennick Mason & Concrete, Staples, MN; and Shane Ober, Solid Rock, Bentonville, AR.

Back row: Vince Cowett, Starting Over, Antlers, OK; John McDonald, Elsro Construction, Ontario, Canada; Tom Adkins, Advanced Concrete Designs, Oklahoma City, OK; Doug Bannister, Stamp Store, Oklahoma City, OK; Alan Bell, Elsro Construction, Alberta, Canada; and Madison Pierce, Artcrete, Natchitoches, LA.



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Deminars Filling Up Fast!

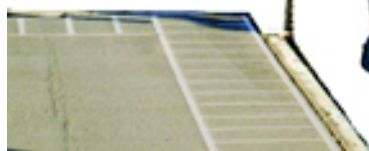
If you're interested in training with professionals in an environment focused specifically on learning, the Stamp Store Deminar is for you. Stamp Store Deminars offer skills-based training in the leading decorative concrete applications today's customers demand.

In three days you will gain hands on instruction in the following decorative concrete applications: stamped concrete; coloring techniques; water-based and acid-based staining; stamped overlays; mix formulas; and concrete countertops.

Don't let your competition get the edge on your market! Call today for more information on the Deminar, or enroll through our website. *Class is limited to 12 students per class, so please register early.*

www.thestampstore.com

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*Register For A
Deminar Today!*

Deminars 2001

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June	21 - 23
July	26 - 28
August	23 - 25
September	27 - 29
October	25 - 27
November	15 - 17
December	13 - 15

Register online at
www.thestampstore.com