

TECHNOLOGY ISSUE

exposures

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EXCLUSIVE

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Where they fit in modern
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Inside the Innovative
Designers Tool Belt



UNVEILING THE TRUE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONCRETE

Harlequin Plaza, Denver Tech Center

By Karen Van Heukelem

Concrete is not new. The technology of concrete is not new. Both have been utilized for thousands of years. However, re-discovering the aesthetic characteristics of concrete is a pleasing trend that has re-emerged in the design community. Whether it is a water feature splash pad, sidewalk, pool deck, or a grand entry to a luxurious hotel, Bomanite's® SandScape Texture™ (SandScape) brings out the true potential of today's concrete: beautifully utilitarian concrete.

What do most people see when they think of concrete? Unfortunately, most people visualize the broom finish marks on the surface of the watery cement paste. What a shame. Concrete loses its art and beauty at the surface and is seen as merely serving its utilitarian purpose.

To overcome this perception, the SandScape was developed to complement exposed aggregate systems. Unlike the exposed aggregate of the past, with its rough, uneven, and foot-grating surface, SandScape refined the process to unveil the art beneath

the surface of concrete. It reveals what concrete is: a mixture of water, cement, fine aggregate (sand) and course aggregate (rocks).

SandScape is the uniform finish of exposing the fine aggregate of the concrete surface. This makes for an ideal finish for several reasons.

- First, the SandScape process is a delicate procedure that, when done correctly, results in a consistently textured finish. Poorly executed copies of this process show the inconsistent texture of deep and light etching. SandScape has a uniform finish with the same level of etching across the entire surface.
- Second, it ages beautifully. The walking surface of SandScape is the sand surface; when that is walked off, there is more sand, so it wears evenly. Other non-exposed finishes show wear by cutting down to that sandy layer. SandScape merely brings the finish to that layer to eliminate that problem.



Arista Plaza, Broomfield, CO

- Finally, it holds color beautifully. Although an integral color is recommended over a topical stain or dye for most concrete applications, Sandscape holds surface-applied colors better than standard finishes. The stain will typically penetrate past the sandy surface to the cementitious layer. The color will not walk off as quickly as it would in other finishes.

Creative variations to Sandscape abound. Varying the etch level, seeding decorative aggregate per the Lithocrete® standards, applying similar finishes of Aggretex®, or even changing the integral color or the aggregate in the mix allows designers an almost unlimited variety of finishes. It lends itself well to special scoring, staining and theming. Sandscape is ideal for pool decks because it is smooth enough to walk on with bare feet, but yet has an excellent non-slip surface. According to Landscape Architect James S. Ramos of Nuszer Kopatz, "Incorporating Sandscape colors and finish in our projects allows us to develop a level of detail that adds to the beauty and quality of our designs. It's especially nice for pool decks and spray grounds and a great surface for bare feet."

The trend by Landscape Architects to specify Sandscape as their finish of choice is becoming more prevalent in Colorado. Words such as "authentic, natural, honest, and historic, with more the character of stone or other natural paving materials" aptly describe their love of the product. It has been embraced as a desired pavement finish in Class A commercial facilities and many high end residential projects. It combines the desired combination of aesthetics, durability, cost-effectiveness, and design flexibility. "In the current economy we have been working very hard with de-



*Shops at Quail Creek,
Broomfield, CO*



*Trailhead Lodge,
Steamboat Springs, CO*

velopers to get anticipated construction costs in line with their budgets," said Gary L. Worthley, ASLA of LandWorks Design, Inc. "I appreciate the fact that we can get a more refined finish with the Sandscape and we have been able to reduce cost by eliminating integral color and introducing local colored aggregates."

Karen Van Heukelem is Colorado Hardscapes's Business Developer with a degree in Business, pursuing her Master's from the University of Denver, and is a LEED Accredited Professional. Her project experience includes, but is not limited to MacKenzie House's Asbury Green, Lafayette Festival Plaza, and the Shops at Quail Creek. Contact her at Karen@coloradohardscapes.com or at 303-750-8200.