

Terra-Crete

The idea of mixing concrete, crushed marble and decorative stone is by no means a fresh idea. The mixing of these materials is commonly called terrazzo; which has been used for over 100 years. What is new is the process by which this flooring is finished and maintained by taking advantage of concrete polishing and chemical densifier technology.

Below is a caption from a *Building Products Magazine* article written by Jeanne Fields and published July 6, 2006-

'New technologies are paving the way for the comeback of a once-dated decorative concrete application. Exposed aggregate is turning up in prestigious places like the renovation of the Getty Museum in Malibu, Calif., and is adding a touch of glamour to formerly bland driveways, patios, pool decks, spa areas, shopping centers and polished concrete floors.

This renewed attention is due to new products and systems that extend the life span of these surfaces. In the past, vintage exposed aggregate driveways were thought of as boring and even unsightly, with uneven surfaces and stones that popped out too frequently. Installers told homeowners to expect exposed aggregate concrete to lose its decorative stones over time. But thanks to longer-lasting products, exposed aggregate finishes now are seen as a beautiful and durable architectural paving option that includes patterned reveals, multiple stones, and a variety of finishes.

When combining this process with polished concrete floors, colored aggregate can be applied to the concrete mix or "seeded" into the top layer of the mix, and then the polishing process reveals these colors. Crushed glass, marble, granite, shells, nails, bolts, stones or any other objects can be seeded into the mix and polished smooth.

Perhaps the best aspect of seeded concrete—whether it's indoors or out—is its versatility and durability. The finished appearance of a seeded concrete slab can convey a subtle design using neutral colored aggregates or it can be made into a unique work of art by using a vast array of colored stone, glass and shell. Combine this freedom of color and material choices with polished concrete and the customer will get a floor that is truly unique, yet very simple to maintain.'

For the product Terra-Crete, the name really identifies the process by which the floor is finished after curing, rather than the raw materials or placement processes of the slab. However, some minimum parameters exist with regard to the raw materials used and the process by which the concrete slab is finished; the proper bag mix, placement procedures and the choice of aggregate materials are all vital to a successful installation. With regard to finishing the cured slab to a polished surface, the Terra-Crete process requires the use of the proper equipment, diamond tooling and chemicals to make certain the final finish is consistent and permanent.

Much like polished concrete, the demand for this product and process can only increase because of its design versatility and maintenance cost savings. By combining an age-old concept with modern diamond and chemical technology, a beautiful yet maintenance intense flooring option has been enhanced to make this an attractive option for aesthetic oriented and high traffic applications.

