

# Terrazzo

Terrazzo, from the Italian word for terraces, was created several hundred years ago in Europe when Venetian workers discovered a new use for discarded marble remnants. Since that time it has become a logical, practical solution for contemporary design and construction.

Fifteenth-century Venetian mosaic workers began to use odd-size marble chips (remaining from shaping the stone tesserae) to surface the terraces around their living quarters. The uneven surfaces created, when the chips were set in clay to anchor them, convinced the workers that flattening the surface would produce a smoother surface more comfortable for walking. They began to rub the surface with hand-stones, achieving a flat surface.

Gifted craftsmen brought the Terrazzo concept to America with them from Europe in the late 18th century, where Terrazzo was used extensively in monumental structures. (Our first President, George Washington, designed his Mt. Vernon home and selected Terrazzo for many of the rooms.)

Soon American Terrazzo was created from the wealth of marble in the United States and American ingenuity advanced installation techniques. In the last 40 years, new developments were achieved with the discovery of epoxies, polyesters, latex and acrylics.

## Common Applications of Terrazzo Flooring Systems

- Airports
- Cafeterias
- Hospitals
- Locker Rooms
- Museums
- Office Buildings
- Restaurants
- Schools
- Shopping Malls
- Stadiums/Convention Centers

The above applications of terrazzo indicate that terrazzo is not only versatile but very durable and when finished and maintained properly, terrazzo can last for the life of the building.

Terrazzo restoration can be achieved by many methods. The criteria for deciding on the best method of restoration rely on the extent of deterioration of the floors surface. Some floors simply need to be stripped and waxed; others need to be honed using mildly abrasive pads. The most aggressive restoration takes place when a terrazzo floor has been coated over with floor paints, VCT, carpet, etc. and must be mechanically ground to remove the old coatings and expose a new layer of terrazzo which is then honed and polished to the desired finish.

Terrazzo is something that has been in use for hundred's of years and being that it is very durable it could be expected to last for eternity; the only challenge of having a terrazzo floor is keeping it as attractive as the day it was installed. So it makes sense that the first terrazzo floor created a new industry that catered to the restoration and preservation of the terrazzo surface.

Being that the industry of terrazzo restoration dates so far back, it's an understatement to say that the industry has seen some changes over the course of its existence. With the advent of machinery and advancements in the use of chemicals and abrasives what used to take days to complete can now be done in hours.

These advancements not only refined the process for skilled workers, but also opened the door to novice terrazzo restoration companies. What used to be an art that relatively few companies had mastered, it has now become an industry that is accessible to anyone equipped with the right tools, training and attention to detail.

The products that Substrate Technology manufactures for the terrazzo restoration industry are designed to be the most user friendly and durable products in the marketplace and are perfect examples of how the industry is constantly evolving to provide terrazzo restoration products and processes that get the job done as fast and as profitably as possible. Whether a contractor needs machinery, diamond tooling or chemical products, we have the most up-to-date line of products to restore and maintain a terrazzo floor.