

# RESIDENTIAL Concrete

hanley wood

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## Tilt-Up Renovation Recaptures Original Style

Beauty in the Bathroom

Concrete's Contribution  
to Green

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HANLEY

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SUSAN ANDREWS  
BUDDY RHODES CONCRETE PRODUCE  
691 TENNESSEE ST  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107-3029

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cementitious overlay. The stencil was placed on the dry overlay and the entire floor stained with Bella Vernici's Parchment, Brandy Wine, and Turtle Black. The stencil was removed and the uncovered pattern was stained with Parchment, Palm Green, and a sprinkle of Miracle-Gro to add a blue/green hue to the chemical reaction. "The Bella Vernici water-based stains called 'oxidizers' are user-friendly. The metallic salts are finely crystallized and emulsify in water," says Brown. She finished with a liquid hardener to densify the concrete overlay and a clear Carnauba-based wax. Maintenance for the floor requires only an occasional damp mopping.

#### SHOWERS AND WALLS

A concrete overlay covered the organic shell-shaped shower designed by Janet Brown's son, Matthew Murphy, at the 2007 World of Concrete. Its curved walls were built in sections using metal stud framing and covered in 1/4-inch flexible sheetrock. The drywall was primed with latex followed by bonding primer and a trowel-applied cementitious overlay. The overlay was stained in Bella Vernici Parchment, Caramel, Coffee Brown, and Turtle Black colors. Afterward the walls were

diamond polished to a 200-grit finish. The texture was made purposefully smoother in some areas with selective grinding. After staining, Brown applied a liquid hardener to densify the concrete surface to complete the earthy finish. The white porcelain commode and sink received a similar decorative treatment. To prepare these surfaces, Brown used an etching product that cured for 48 hours, creating a bondable surface to which the sprayed-on overlay adhered. "The key to spraying the overlay was using retarder to slow down the curing process and prevent the overlay from solidifying in the spray gun," says Brown. After drying for 48 hours, the fixtures were stained using the same colors as the shower walls. The stain was followed with a liquid hardener and a Carnauba-based wax.

Buddy Rhodes worked collaboratively with San Francisco architect Dan Phipps to design a bathroom with concrete tiles. Its soft-edged curved shower, built with concrete board and plywood on a 2x4-foot wood frame, is a comfortable shape for the body. The curve has a return edge that goes to the shower and another to the window. Rhodes created molds and cast the 3/4-inch tiles right side up to accommodate the curved radius;

they have a hand-troweled finish. Phipps and Rhodes worked together to develop the warm-toned tile color, a variation on a sandstone hue. The 24-inch reinforced concrete tiles are adhered with thin set mortar with an acrylic additive. Rhodes's ceramic background has led to the use of concrete that is almost clay-like in consistency. Its low water-cement ratio produces dense high-strength concrete tiles. Rhodes used a water-based acrylic sealer to finish the shower. The same tiles cast flat were used for walls with the curved shapes softening the corners.

#### ENDLESS OPTIONS

Discussions with homeowners about a bathroom may begin around a concrete countertop but then expand to floors, walls, or showers. Underlying, and sometimes unspoken, are questions about how the material functions and its incorporation into the complete design. Contractors may do beautiful concrete work, but "the ultimate success of any project is how well it fits in composition, form, color, and proportion to the space in which it resides" says Cheng. Important considerations for one of the most important and intimate rooms in the house. ●

