

Concrete Countertops

Contractors combine concrete and creativity for unique concrete countertops

Award winning kitchen

Creating kitchens that are classic and simple while incorporating tangible objects from the owners' lives is not an easy task. But Steve Silberman and Tommy Cook of Absolute ConcreteWorks, Poulsbo, Wash., were up to the task. Not only did they create the desired concrete countertops the homeowners wanted, but they also created an award winning concrete art piece for the kitchen's bar area.

The homeowner wanted the countertops to have a worn, leathered look without the rugged feel. The countertops also included stainless, removable trivets and a cook top that was flush with the countertop, Cook says. Aside from the countertops in

the kitchen and bar area, Absolute ConcreteWorks also created a concrete backsplash and a removable concrete art piece that incorporated items from the homeowners' previous endeavors.

Absolute ConcreteWorks used its trademarked SoundCrete GFRC concrete mix for all the concrete elements in the kitchen. "The main reason for using GFRC is higher strength and lighter weight. It's a much easier product to deal with," Cook says.

To create the precast countertops, Cook first used templates to fabricate the molds. Once the molds were created, the inlays set for the knockouts and the inserts for the trivets in place, Cook sprayed on the GFRC mist coat. He then back brushed the mist coat

to remove any pin holes and "compact" the concrete.

Next he sprayed the GFRC backer mix, which contains the glass fibers, to a 3/8-inch thickness. Styrofoam was then added on top of the backer mix. "The foam is in there to take up volume. It's a weight reduction method," Cook says. "Another benefit is the Styrofoam holds temperature, so it makes it a little warmer than your standard concrete countertops would be." Another 1/4-inch of backer mix was sprayed over the foam, and then the countertop was troweled and left to cure.

To achieve the desired color, Cook sprayed on brown acid stain and let it sit to create its own pattern. He also used pads to buff the concrete and give it a "worn" look, Cook says. The countertops were neutralized, rinsed and covered with a food friendly sealer. While the kitchen countertops were kept simple, the

Below: Absolute ConcreteWorks won Cheng's Circle of Distinction Award for Best "Funk"-tional feature for the art piece at the end of the wine bar counter. Right: All the kitchen countertops were done using SoundCrete, the company's own GFRC mix.



AT A GLANCE

Company:

Absolute ConcreteWorks
Poulsbo, Wash.
www.acwusa.com

Project: Kitchen countertop, backsplash and art piece

Awards: Won 2009 Cheng Concrete Exchange Circle of Distinction Design Challenge Best "Funk"-tional feature

Size: 134 square feet of GFRC SoundCrete concrete mix

Key products and equipment:

Pro-Seal water-based acrylic sealer; QC Products stains; Brickform stains; L.M. Scofield stains; SoundCrete GFRC mix; GFRC sprayer; roller; hand trowels; depth gauge tools; Styrofoam; dry color; dyes



wine bar area was a bit more whimsical. Here, Cook created countertops with wavy edges and the award winning art piece.

The art piece, which won Best "Funk"-tional feature in the 2009 Cheng Concrete Exchange Circle of Distinction Design Challenge, utilized some of the homeowners' personal items to create a 3-D look. The panel was done in a positive cast, which was a bit of a challenge, Cook says. After spraying, the concrete items were troweled into the piece. Dry color was tamped into the surface, and the final details were created using acid stains and dyes. **CC**