

There is no doubt that decorative concrete for floor and countertop applications is a hot market and an opportunity for decorative painters to branch out to new surfaces. But what is really involved in using concrete overlayments and coloring techniques?

A new instructional DVD by Bob Harris, author of a series of decorative concrete training guides and director of The Decorative Concrete Institute near Atlanta, Ga., may provide some of the answers to those burning questions. Bob Harris is one of the leaders in the field of decorative concrete, and rightfully so. He was born into the concrete business and began assisting his father in the family business at an early age. He was the national training director for L.M. Scofield for many years and senior superintendent for Disney for six years, designing and executing decorative “themed concrete” work. Bob now focuses on teaching and training and offers a wide range of classes using multiple product lines at his Atlanta-area studio, and also does specialty work and project consulting worldwide.

I was highly honored, then, when Bob called me with the invitation to “guest” in a DVD he was creating to support his recent book on concrete overlayments, “Bob Harris’s Guide to Concrete Overlayments and Top-pings.” Bob has been an active supporter of the concrete division of Modello Designs, using Modello patterns regularly in his workshops. The DVD project involved a complete transformation of a new home, both inside and out, with a variety of decorative concrete overlayments and techniques. I was given “creative license” to come up with a decorative treatment for the home’s entry.

One of our most unique products at Modello Designs™ is our series of intricate Concrete Carpet™ patterns, and this project provided the



Bob Harris and Melanie Royals admire the finished flooring featuring Modello and decorative concrete.

Discovering Decorative Concrete

Modello Designs & SkimStone Share a Starring Role in a New DVD

perfect opportunity to develop a new design that would bring color, design and impact to the house. As the installation of the carpet design was scheduled to be videotaped live and in progress over one to two days, it was critical to choose a product and technique that was as fail-safe, predictable and as quick and easy to install as possible.

SkimStone’s integrally colored decorative concrete overlay fit the bill perfectly:

- The 10 colors of tint available can be predictably mixed to virtually any hue or value.
- It dries quickly to a durable state so that multiple colors can be layered in a short amount of time.
- It is easily manipulated to provide a range of effects.
- It offers easy set-up and cleanup.
- It works beautifully with Modello Designs Decorative Masking Patterns.

The project was done over another integrally colored concrete overlayment, specifically Colormaker's Rotofino. This initial overlay was

done extensively throughout the house several days before our arrival, and proved to be an ideal working surface for the Modello and SkimStone products.

I had some great assistance on site from Rick Fischer, DecoIllusions from Fort Wayne, Ind., and Susan Kiningham, Dulce Domum in Atlanta, Ga. There were some long hours and battles with sore knees and thighs (mine) and local thunderstorms, but it was definitely worthwhile and left the future homeowner with a one-of-a-kind custom entry.

Here is an overview of the project:



COLOR SAMPLING: Two different color samples were done in the studio prior to leaving for the jobsite. For this project, I decided to go with lighter tint strengths of the SkimStone colors to achieve a more subdued, neutral look. Colors were intermixed to create a variety of different taupes, blues and

Artful Allover Alternatives

Stenciled allover patterns are a staple in most decorative finishers' repertoires, whether they are painted or embossed. Painted allover patterns are a great way to wrap a room with pattern and also a great alternative to wallpaper when custom colors and designs are desired.

Replicating the look of wallpaper can be redundant, time-consuming and even a tad bit predictable. Often, budgets and project needs call for a more creative approach. That would be a good time to consider using allover stencil patterns in some slightly different and updated ways.



A Crowning Canopy of Vines

Rather than repeat an allover vine stencil on the entire wall surface, use it to create a very deep, irregular frieze at the ceiling (above and right). Depending on the height of the ceiling this could be done in a number of ways.

For rooms with average height, 8 to 9 feet, simply begin the design along

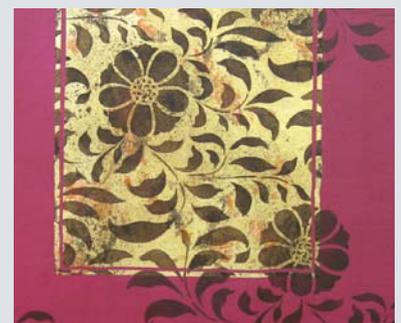
the ceiling line and allow it to repeat down 18 to 24 inches. For higher ceilings, a nice treatment is to extend the ceiling color and/or treatment down on to the wall surface to a height of about 9 to 10 feet, where you can transition to your wall and vine finish by simply taping off, adding molding or a contrasting stenciled border. Either way, it adds to the look if you vary

how the vine ends around the bottom by stenciling smaller pieces of vine trailing off in different directions here and there.



Suitable for Framing

This technique (above and below) combines traditional stencils with Modello Designs Decorative Masking Patterns™ for a more modern approach. Different sized and shaped squares and rectangles “frame” in the allover Oriental floral design,



terra cotta colors and tested out on sample boards. Once I had a nice range of colors to choose from, I choose several to incorporate into the “carpet” design and did some small design samples on Roc-lon cloth. *Note: SkimStone samples also can be created on chip board.*



STEP 1: The area that the carpet design was to be applied was mea-

sured out and taped off in the center of the room, because we wanted to create a contrasting color from the existing background color of the floor. Two thin coats of a light taupe color were quickly applied. For the first layer, a traditional steel Venetian trowel was used. For the second layer, a slightly lighter version of the color was mixed and applied with smaller plastic taping knives to create some color variation and “movement” within the finish. Plastic trowels are ideal to use with lighter color as they will not produce the black carbon marks that steel trowels will that are otherwise inherent with light colored, lime-based products.



STEP 2: The thin layers dried very quickly, and within an hour or so, we were able to apply the first layer of the Modello pattern. This first layer contained the silhouette shapes that would give us a contrasting layer

which is allowed to escape from the frames here and there to add a touch of whimsy, but more importantly to visually connect and soften the angular shapes.

The finish within the frames combines variegated and Schaibin (broken) leaf that has been lightly distressed and patinaed with Modern Masters Black Patina Solution™.



Graphic Decorative Masking

Another more modern and random approach again uses Modello masking patterns that have been cut into simple shapes of flower and leaf silhouettes (above). The flowers

and leaves are quite large and are scattered randomly across a melon-colored, layered Lusterstone™ finish. Graphic black and white designs within the shapes create a crisp, clean and contemporary finish. This type of application would



work well over any of the fresh, light jewel-tones that are so popular right now: fuchsia, chartreuse, coral, turquoise, etc.

Rustic and Random

Classic damask pattern (at right) goes grand when it is done at a larger scale to complement today’s more open and higher-ceiling spaces. This Grand Damask design was done in a large bedroom with a “lost and found” approach. The pattern strategically appears, disappears and reappears, allowing you to create the look of an allover wall finish that has more interest—and in less time!

The design was first stenciled in a light brown glaze, repeating vertically and horizontally in groups of three, five, seven, etc., and allowed to fade

into the background around the edges of the groupings. Then the stencil was replaced and Sandstone™ was skip-troweled through in a way to suggest age and distress. On some of the repeats there is very little of the texture material and some were even left just with glaze. The result is another highly unique and personal approach to allover pattern. —Melanie Royals

Look for these great finish ideas and more, along with step-by-step instructions at the Royal Design Studio/Modello Designs booth at the annual SALI Convention in Chicago this summer and The Faux Event this fall! Find the designs and Royal Recipes online at www.royaldesignstudio.com



within the design. Again, two thin layers were applied, with the second layer being lighter than the first.

STEP 3: By mid-afternoon, we were able to line up the second layer of the Modello that contained all of the design detail. With this



layer, we used smaller Japan scrapers and "Faux Fingers" to apply the colors to specific, predetermined areas of the design. In order to do this in the cleanest way possible, it was necessary to tape off close areas of the design to protect

them from neighboring colors being applied into them. In between layers, the design areas were scraped with the plastic taping knives and given light sandings. Prior to removing the Modello pattern, the whole design area was gone over lightly with an orbital sander and fine sandpaper.



The detail photo (above) was taken prior to sealing, which invariably deepens and richens up the color. We were all thrilled with the result. My only regret was that I couldn't take the "carpet" back home with me! **TFF**

The 3.5-hour DVD series, "A Guide to Concrete Overlays and Toppings with Bob Harris" will be available through the www.modelloconcrete.com Web site by the end of July 2006. Bob Harris's written Training Guides are available now.

Hands-on SkimStone workshops with Melanie Royals that offer a wide variety of techniques and training with Modellos, SkimStone and Concrete Carpet applications are scheduled regularly throughout the year in San Diego, Calif. You can find updated workshop schedules at both www.modellodesigns.com and www.modelloconcrete.com.



Melanie Royals is the creative force behind Royal Design Studio, an industry leader in the art of stenciling. Melanie continues to pursue the advancement of stenciling with the decorative painting industry by offering sophistication, inspiration and education to decorative paint professionals. For more information, call (800) 747-9767, or visit online at www.royaldesignstudio.com.

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