



Students and teachers pose after the successful conclusion of the Aurastone™ Supertops class. Kneeling are Melanie Royals and David Rairick, and Billy Bigler is standing directly behind them.

Aurastone™ ROCKS



the Decorative Painting Industry

Let's face it. The last couple of years have been a bit of a downer for decorative finishers. We all enjoyed tremendous growth over the early parts of the last decade as housing values soared and our customers seemed to have an endless supply of dispensable income to spend on the types of artistic services we were offering.

During this boom, which has occurred repeatedly for decorative arti-

sans during the first 20 years of the last four centuries, the ranks of decorative finishers swelled, as did the expansion of product lines and teaching studios. Now, as we all know, the bubble has burst and many businesses and artisans have been forced to retire, retool or rethink their approach to their business and their artwork. The services we offer and the artwork we produce has always been considered a luxury item:

the cherry on top—not a necessity. While beautiful glazed, plastered or patterned walls *feel* like an essential to complete an interior environment, these finishes may now have been temporarily relegated to the bottom of the redecorating wish list.

Surfaces that *are* a necessity in the home, especially if they need rehabil-

Above: Samples of Aurastone™, some enhanced with Modellos.

itation, replacement or beautification, now take precedence. “Rehab, renew, repurpose” is the new mantra in these eco- and dollar-conscious times. One required surface that is ripe for redecoration in many homes and businesses is countertops, both for kitchens and bathrooms.

As you examine your client list, potential sales and how to keep up with the changing times, you, of

course, consider what you believe will take you into the next decade. If past marketing ideas are no longer working, or if you cannot reach the market of designers and architects who are sparsely populating walls with decorative finishes, now is the time to look into other products/techniques/sales opportunities.

Enter Aurastone™. This system is an eco-friendly, artistic, architectural

coating that is easily mastered, easily applied *and* easily sold. Decorative artisans are flocking to Aurastone™ classes as quickly as they are scheduled because they appreciate the artistic aspects, the “green” attributes and

David Rairick, Creator and President of Aurastone™

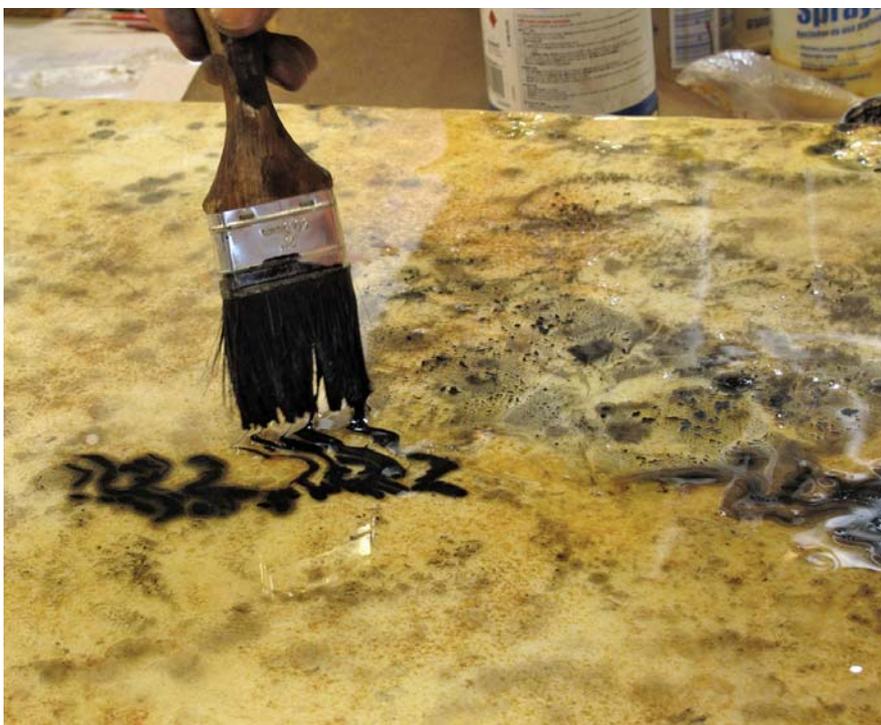
For nearly 20 years, David Rairick has been involved in the decorative arts industry as an artisan, teacher and developer. With intimate knowledge of the products available and disappointed in the reliability of their promised results, he set out to create Aurastone™. He knew he wanted to produce a system combining artistry, durability and ease of application that is affordable, reliable and consistent.

His intent was to create a system for countertops that would outperform granite in hardness and durability, that could be unique works of arts rather than something that is chosen from the rack. The Aurastone™ system was developed with decorative artisans in mind, knowing that they would appreciate the ease with which decorative effects are produced.

Not one to rest on his success, David is developing a mixed media collection, which will integrate earth gems, agates and more to establish a new level of countertop finishes that are esthetically pleasing. When asked what his hopes are for Aurastone™ David replies, “I would like the terms ‘decorative artisan’ and ‘Aurastone™’ to be synonymous. What I mean by that is that every successful decorative artisan will have Aurastone™ in his or her portfolio because the demands will be great for artistry with the Aurastone™ system.”



Aurastone™ marble samples ready for client presentation. Artist: Billy Bigler.



Manipulating the Aurashades™ in the Auraclear™.

they know that samples created with Aurastone™ will greatly enhance their portfolios. With fresh offerings for their clients, artisans have discovered that they indulge their creativity with many decorative concepts that can individualize the countertops. Those artisans who have seen the finished products have submitted many comments regarding the look, the feel and the durability, which surpasses anything that they have found with other products. (See box on page 22 with artists' comments.)

Aurastone™ is the ultimate countertop resurfacing product in that it is completely self-priming and can be applied directly over existing laminate, Corian, tile, cultured marble, granite, wood and more. This means that all those tired countertops that have been abused, damaged or just don't fit in new color schemes are ready for resurfacing—beautifully!



Melanie Royals adding Auraclear™ to an Aurastone™/Modello tabletop.

This system will allow you to create “stone” surfaces that meet and exceed the “real thing”! Consider some of the key advantages of Aurastone™ compared to granite or marble:

- Allows custom, artistic finishes to be created to complement any interior scheme, existing décor and home elements.



Kitchen counters finished with Aurastone™. Artist: Dan Gangler. Photo by: Norman Sizemore.

- Can be applied over existing substrates; granite cannot, and often upgrade requires an entire support system as reinforcement.
- Absolutely *not* going to accept a stain, even iodine; granite stains easily with fruit, peanut butter, olive oil, bacteria, etc.
- It is a heat-resistant surface that can withstand 500° F of indirect heat, and it is completely waterproof; granite can discolor or crack from heat and is porous.
- Appearance of one continuous piece of surface; granite always has

shown the seams of gluing pieces together.

- Limitless edging possibilities; granite offers limited and expensive profiled edges.

Another key selling point that is of major interest to designers, architects, contractors and homeowners alike is that the Aurastone™ system is a “green” solution. Because of the demand for eco-friendly, sustainable products, this system was created with these additional advantages:

- A system with ingredients which are completely safe with low VOCs;

How to Find Out More and Get Involved

Upcoming workshops at Modello Designs will feature David Rairick teaching with Melanie Royals. We have just added new dates to our summer schedule. Please visit our website for additional information at www.modellodesigns.com.

- Aurastone™ Foundations/Auratops 1- June 16-18 and July 7-9
- Auratops 2 - August 18-20
- Supertops! - August 23-25

Workshop Bonus! Our workshops include a valuable web conference with the instructors approximately two weeks after the hands-on workshop to reinforce your training, answer follow-up questions, and provide additional support.

Other Aurastone™ distributorships offer training opportunities nationwide in Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Canada. More specifics can be found at www.aurastone.com. To learn more, please visit our website and register for the FREE 50-minute webinar in which David introduces all the amazing attributes of Aurastone™ at www.designyoursuccess.biz. Also, look for Modello Designs and Aurastone™ on Facebook.

Comments from Those Using Aurastone™

“I am inspired by making something useful that people actually need. I don’t need to convince clients to contract me for an Aurastone™ countertop...the samples sell themselves. I can design a surface that is one of a kind; utilize the decorative art techniques I have learned previously and create something that is truly unique and has not been seen in the market. It feels great to have my artwork appreciated at a whole new level.”

—Karen Jorgenson, *Decorative Arts*

“As an applicator, more and more, I want to use products that cause no harm—to me, to others, to water, to air or to soil. This is a tall order for an artisan. Thankfully, these new Aurastone™ products have been developed to inflict less harm than other similar products previously dominating the supply chain.”

—Susan Mitchell

“Aurastone™ has definitely given me another outlet and direction for my business and my portfolio. My clientele is always ‘blown away’ at the design appeal and the functionality of the counters. On the business side of it, it works fantastic to offer another surface area that can be proposed for projects. On the design end, I find a fresh path for artistic expression. I’ve always had

a penchant for stone re-creations. The Aurastone™ coloring process allows me not only to achieve realistic effects, but also in less time.

—Dan Gangler, *Liquid Art Design*

“The samples created in the Aurastone™ workshops are causing jaw-dropping expressions; people don’t know how to react because there is nothing like it to compare to. The buzz will only get louder. I haven’t marketed at all and have been asked to bid several jobs using Aurastone™, just word of mouth from the samples. I’ve found the missing niche!”

—Billy Bigler, *Quality Custom Painting*

“I was fascinated by Aurastone™ as a new medium for my own original art. I was getting really bored with the same old decorative products but found inspiration with the Aurastone™ system. Now I am constantly dreaming of new ways to use it—wall panels, water features and ceiling panels. Aurastone™ brought back my passion. I feel a little panicked when I get low on product as I want to have it available when creativity strikes!”

—Evangelia Kondilis, *Evangelia Decorative Art Studio*

granite is polished and sealed with extremely high-VOC penetrating sealers.

- Manufactured and processed with the most minimal environmental footprint possible; granite requires excavating large holes in the earth, using large quantities of fossil fuel from the extraction to the international shipping requirements.

- Completely radon-free; most granite has at least trace amounts of radon, and many hold toxic levels of radon because it is extremely porous.

- USDA-approved (you can eat right off the counter!); granite is not. You will never eat off of granite at a restaurant.

We have seen that to sell a home these days the kitchen and bathrooms must be updated. So, if you could tell your client that (1) there is no need to demo the existing counter; (2) you offer an eco-friendly product to which you can add your artistic touch; and



David Rairick finishing an Aurastone™ tabletop with a Modello

(3) you can promise savings on the budget, would that get their attention? There is no wonder why decorative artisans are embracing Aurastone™ like it is the latest and the greatest!

Trained Aurastone™ artisans have the tools, products and knowledge at their fingertips that allow them to recreate even the most complex, intricately detailed and realistic-looking marbles with relative ease. These normally “cost-prohibitive” marble finishes can be offered to your clients at a cost that fits within a reasonable budget, yet allows for tremendous profit potential for you, the decorative finisher. Even if you do not consider yourself someone proficient in marbling, the

products will permit you to craft stunning results.

But there is no rule that confines you to use Aurastone™ just for finishing weary countertops in homes! Let your artistic imagination take you beyond residential countertops. Consider restaurants—the bars, tabletops or table rounds—or the transaction counters at restaurants, hotels, retail shops and offices. And how about the bathroom counters...everywhere!

Of course, we started to add our Modello Designs® Decorative Masking Patterns just as soon as we learned the Aurastone™ system, to create pattern enhancements. With the use of the paints, flakes and glass additives in the system, not to mention metallic foils, gilding leaf, Schaibin leaf and more; the possibilities are endless! Artists are sending photos of having added agates, coins, shells, buttons, wires, wine labels, fiber optics and any number of things to the Modello patterns over the Aurastone™. Everybody is really having fun experimenting!

So, it is easy to see why decorative artisans are clamoring to learn more and be able to add Aurastone™ to their repertoire. There is a reason David calls it the “Optical Phenomenon”! We can’t wait to see the results of new talent adding their own creative spin to the products! There are thousands of surfaces in need of attention, so the trend to renew, rehab, and repurpose should be very profitable. **TFP**



Billy Bigler creating samples.



Evangelia Kondilis applying what she has learned.



Melanie Royals is the President/Creative Director of Royal Design Studio and Modello Designs. A renowned artist and educator, Melanie helps to lead and expand the industry with the constant creation of new designs, products, techniques and applications for decorative finishers. Visit on-line at www.royaldesignstudio.com and www.modellodesigns.com.

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