

concrete & masonry construction products

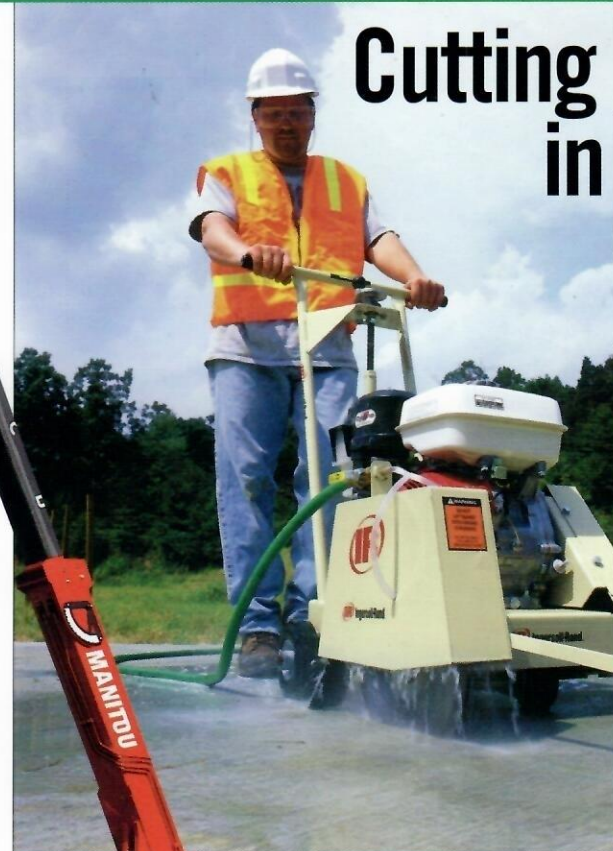
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BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE EDITORS OF CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION & MASONRY CONSTRUCTION

Telehandlers



Cutting in



Demolition equipment



The Artistry of Rick Fischer

Decorative blocks



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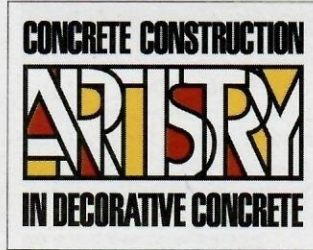
Fischer created a Navajo-inspired tapestry pattern (see above) for the 2006 World of Concrete Artistry in Decorative Concrete demonstrations. He lets his creativity run free, offering clients a host of finishes like stencils, stains, and overlays (left and below). To date, he's focused his attention in the residential arena, crafting fireplaces (see right), countertops, porches, and sunrooms.

PHOTOS: RICK FISCHER



By Laurie Banyay

shifting gears



One artist's unlikely journey from cars to concrete

Some people work with concrete because the profession is passed down through generations. Others, like Rick Fischer, chance upon it and evolve its scope to a whole new level through unique backgrounds.

The early part of Fischer's career revolved around custom automotive painting with his brother where they used decorative masking patterns to create various design motifs. From cars, boats, and motorcycles, Fischer moved into custom wall painting in the residential and commercial markets.

While Fischer was doing decorative finishes on walls, several people exposed him to what could be done with concrete floors. He then embarked on a journey to learn about concrete that included differences in hot and cold weather and how concrete is mixed and placed. "It's a whole different animal to understand than walls," he says. With some knowledge of this new medium, Fischer threw his talents into the decorative arena. In 1993, he founded Roanoke, Ind.-based Deco Illusions. Concentrating primarily on the residential market, he works with multiple methods such as stenciling and stains, but especially enjoys manipulating micro-topping overlays because of their clean appearance and ability to

sunrooms. Fischer is in the design phases of a European-inspired wine cellar, where he plans to reproduce the aged caverns through concrete, plaster, and wood.

Fischer exudes enthusiasm for concrete art and its potential. Architects and engineers can bring an environmentally friendly material into a home, while creating the exotic look of stone, marble, or wood without exhausting natural resources, he says. "Replicating it with concrete is the way to go," Fischer says. "I see the industry embracing that flexibility."

As an artisan at the 2006 Artistry in Decorative Concrete demonstrations at the World of Concrete, Fischer created an intricate tapestry pattern, inspired by the Navajo Indians. To create dramatic contrasts between sharp lines and graceful arches, he used trowel-down colored overlay cements, stencils, and water-based stains. "New ideas kept coming up and constantly evolving," he says. "Everybody's always looking for new ideas to bring to the table. It's a great energy to feed on."

Before beginning a project, Fischer sits down with his client to talk in-depth about their expectations and the value behind it, and together they develop a plan to put those ideas into motion. Fischer believes a project



Fischer doesn't stop at just working with concrete—he also teaches it, traveling across the country holding seminars and workshops, and even opening a training facility in his Roanoke studio. "The industry is always changing and evolving and you have to evolve with that change and stay on

Fischer travels across the country and workshops in addition to opening his Roanoke, Ind.-based studio.