



Today's Homes

Upscale Living in Nashville



Staying on the cutting edge of the industry holds a twofold purpose for John Carney, owner of Art Over Concrete. Giving new life to ugly concrete whether it's chipped, stained, damaged or newly poured. Secondly, his goal is to continue pushing the envelope of what can be accomplished artistically using concrete as the medium. Because each piece is an original creation for the client, attention to detail and what the client wants to achieve are taken very seriously by Carney. "I am not only proud of my work, but I am also proud of the ones who allow me to do what I love doing – you the client," shared Carney.

Carney founded Art Over Concrete five years ago after determining retirement didn't provide enough challenge to his life after having been an optometrist for many years. Carney admits that his original plans had been to treat the new business as a hobby. However, the same tenacity that motivated him to build a successful optometrist business kicked in and he has since poured tremendous energy into this endeavor. He has earned the respect within his industry having been featured in trade magazines and suppliers calling to ask assistance due to his expertise. Each January,

Carney sets aside time to study under the most talented decorative artists in the United States and Europe in which to expand his knowledge and "to keep pushing the envelope."

This past January Carney studied with Martin Alan Hirsch at Hirsch's Louisville, Kentucky studio. "Hirsch is the preeminent faux artist," said Carney. Since 1987, Hirsch has been 'bridging the gap between reality and illusion' at his decorative finishes studio. Hirsch's talents can be seen at Reba McIntyre's Starstruck Studios.

Carney is an astute student and has since applied what he learned from Hirsch to create Corinthian columns, Italian plastered walls using marble, and the look of slate for pool decks and outdoor kitchens. Slate isn't recommended for outdoor use; however, with Carney's method, concrete is made to realistically look like the real thing, but stronger, more durable and for half the cost. Concrete can also be turned into faux painted brick with broken plaster along with distressed lime washed walls.

One of Carney's clients who grew up in Colorado moved to Virginia. He missed Colorado so much that he built a concrete mountain stream in his backyard. Art Over Concrete was commissioned to make the inside resemble a mountain. Carney said the finished product was so realistic that the client often rented out this area of his backyard for parties. Another client in Colorado is building a concrete house and wants the inside to look like a goldmine. Carney has that project scheduled for August. Next spring, he has projects in Canada and Belize He just concluded work on the new Trumps Salon in Green Hills. "With the help of my assistants, I personally create each and every commission we are awarded," Carney added.



Concrete can be given a new face with Art Over Concrete, which includes engraving, acid staining, overlay and resurfacing. Overlay, namely PermaCrete, manufactured in Nashville, is a blend of acrylic polymers and high-grade concrete. Not only does it cover cracks, it can be used on new concrete to create the look of stone, brick or pavers – both inside and out. Overlay not only can be decorated to maximize its beauty, but is also stronger and more flexible than ordinary concrete. Virtually any color is possible with an overlay. Unlike concrete stamping, Carney said his patterns are laid to conform to the shape of a sidewalk or driveway, allowing for a natural look that a straight stamp pattern won't allow.

■ **Nothing Compares to a PermaCrete Surface®!** ■

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