

Terrazzo, Tile & Marble Association of Canada

The Analyst

L'association Canadienne de Terrazzo, Tuile et Marbre

October 2009



Changing Times

By Len Tompkins

2008 and 2009 have been a time of discovery and challenges for the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada. The volunteer Board of Directors has been very actively involved in the day to day operation of the association, while orchestrating the search for a new leader. The countless hours spent by the Executive Committee involving five directors is another illustration of their commitment to the industry and the TTMAC.

As with any new appointment, the learning curve was steep, but because of the support by those that had navigated the TTMAC ship for the first six months of 2008, it was not overwhelming. As the year came to a close, we can reflect on the events of the last year, things discovered, lessons learned, and then move on to develop plans for the future.

By the fall of 2008, phase one had been completed involving meetings with members on the west coast. The same process in Ontario started in September with discussions taking place on the various activities of the association and created a list of strengths and opportunities. A clearly defined, very detailed list of initiatives, actions, along with timing, costs and responsible parties was developed for the entire organization. Budgets were developed by staff, broken out by month and presented to the Executive Committee. Conference calls and meetings to discuss content were held in October and a full discussion and presentation was made to the Board of Directors in November. Dialogue and input were constructively presented by all parties and the entire package including Operating Budgets, and detailed Action Plans was approved in December.

This Action Plan will now be used to track the progress of the association, its initiatives, and actions taken during the reporting period and year to date. Transparency in communication is very important to the health and future of the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada. Members have access to the website where updates have already been made and some actions will be reported. Members can also access a listing of the Board of Directors, and their contact information is on our site and in the Members Directory and Buyers Guide. Part of their responsibility is to keep you in the 'loop'. Members also have access to information on "what is happening" by contacting the TTMAC offices and speaking to staff, or contacting me directly.

The synergies developed through this process will make the TTMAC much stronger, more vibrant, a true industry leader, and one that embraces change and transparency in its communications and reporting to all members.

Transparency, also allows members who are not active in the association, to become more knowledgeable about the

many facets of the association. Many ask themselves what membership does for them. By taking the time to visit the website, speak with other members, and staff they may find that they have more opportunities and access to benefits that they were not aware of. Membership provides opportunity, and if no efforts are made to learn more and make an investment in time, then little return may be realized... By being involved at some level, members will be able to review initiatives, actions and results by people. Involvement may become contagious and previously inactive members may want to get involved and have a hand in taking the association and industry to new levels of excellence.

As TTMAC moves forward, the challenges will be great. How to attract more contractors, make the hardsurface products more attractive to designers, who are concerned with installation issues, and standards, specifications and the end results.

TTMAC has plans in place and will be rolling out initiatives throughout 2009 to attract smaller contractors/installers, improve the installation performance standards in the trade, by training, testing, and accrediting qualified installers, marketing them through our website, and promoting them via new standards to consumers, architects and designers who will be able to assess on line a contractors ability to effectively provide a level of excellence in installations that the market demands.

In May of 2009 at the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association Convention, all delegates and their guests were introduced to the Action Plans and the progress that had been made year to date on all initiatives. The feedback was positive and the destination charted for all in attendance and a new energy evolved to carry TTMAC into the future. Change is an essential part of progress.

While the most popular forecast for 2009 and 2010 is for a very challenging year and at TTMAC this is an opportunity to streamline programs, roll out effective training programs for non union and union shops, promote a new higher standard of installations, and raise the bar so that those not willing to invest in their employees, and themselves will be over looked as the market becomes more selective, and pricing pressures are reduced due to product performance improvements.

The coming year will present owners and managers with a new set of challenges to deal with, and they should look into the future where they have invested time and resources to train their people, set new standards for performance and raise the profile of their people, products, business and the industry in order to improve their pre-recession position in the community to one of dominance.

TTMAC UNIVERSAL FLOOR TESTER

The Universal Floor Tester is a very unique testing apparatus. This machine is a redesign of the Robinson Floor Tester and is capable of conducting testing for ASTM C-627-99 designation. This ASTM (American Standards & Test Methods) test is designed to verify the durability/suitability of a flooring system for a particular type of installation environment. The test method consists of preparing an assembly on either a concrete substrate or wood-frame construction that duplicates as closely as possible the installation environment under consideration. The ASTM C-627-99 provides a standardized procedure to evaluate the performance of a floor tile installation under conditions similar to the actual environment that the installation will be subjected to.

This new testing apparatus was designed to be capable to test long span joists or I-beams, sub-floor, underlayment, bonding material, tile and grout as specified by the client. In addition, the tester was constructed to be able to take a pre-formed concrete slab that can be cracked and cycled to open and closed at a given rate and width. This allows for the testing of crack-isolation membranes for accelerated aging as well as possibly exposing the system to live loads at minimum or maximum crack widths.

The new design of the Universal Floor Tester allows for suspended floors to be assembled and tested at almost any given length and construction height up to 1,015 mm (40") and spans in length up to 4,573 mm (15'). For engineered wood assemblies, for example, valuable data such as curvature of the span, deflection, twisting and vibrations in the assembly can be monitored. Further potential testing that could be conducted is for post-tension or pre-stressed concrete at a given span length and depth..

The split-slab function and the top driven carriage of the tester is specific to this testing apparatus and is not known to be duplicated by any other testing machine currently available.

Revenue gained by the Association will allow us to increase expenditures on Research and Development and provide the ability to produce accurate and proven specification guides and manuals.



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AS OF JANUARY 2009

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TTMAC

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Q & A

By Domenic Zavarella

Q: The tile in our lobby has been installed for approximately 4 years. The tile is still in great shape, but the grout lines look dirty. What can be done to clean or restore them?

A: Using a neutral or commercial alkaline cleaner such as a wax stripper, scrub the grout lines with a nylon or natural bristle brush. This will help remove any built up dirt and soap grime. Acid based cleaners should be avoided as they will adversely affect cement based grouts. Repeat the process until all built up dirt has been removed. There may be instances where the grout lines are heavily soiled or stained. If this is the case, then a suitable grout colourant may need to be applied. Application may vary depending on the manufacturer. Not only will the grout colourant help re-colour the grout lines, it will also help seal the grout joints and help prevent future staining from occurring.

Q: How does substrate flatness play a role in the installation of large format tile?

A: With the advent of larger ceramic tile formats, it is becoming exceedingly critical to ensure flat substrates prior to tile installation. The TTMAC currently suggest a surface level tolerance of 3 mm in 3049 mm measured using a straight edge. This however does not account for surface waviness over short spans which can wreak havoc on large tile format installations when using traditional thinset mortars. The concrete industry currently measure flatness and levelness of concrete by means of ASTM E 1155 which uses FF and FL values respectively to represent the degree of flatness and levelness. The use of cementitious self-levellers can be very useful in helping achieve a flat substrate. Further information can be found at the www.concrete.org and <http://www.astm.org/DATABASE.CART/HISTORICAL/E1155-96R01.htm>. Pay particular attention to substrate deflection and ensure the substrate is designed to meet with the National Building and Provincial Building Codes.

Q: How does the mortar selection vary when installing large format tile?

A: The use of full contact mortars will greatly assist the installer in helping achieve a better mortar transfer to the back of the tile and thereby eliminate the need for back-buttering. Full contact mortars may also assist in helping reduce mortar slumping. In all cases it is important to check with the mortar manufacturer to ensure the appropriate use of the mortar for the job at hand. Resist the urge to build up conventional Portland cement thin set mortars beyond their design capacity as they may excessively shrink and or cause tile delamination and shrinkage cracks.

Do you have technical questions you require answered?

Send your questions to technicalinfo@ttmac.com and we will be happy to assist.

Your questions may appear in our next issue!



John Vennare, C.E.T.
Chief Estimator

Terrazzo, Marble & Tile Incorporated
166 Woodstream Blvd.,
Woodbridge, Ontario L4L 7Y2

Tel: (905) 850-3006 ext. 228

Fax: (905) 850-3010

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TRAINING 2009

Stoneology - Vancouver
October 6 & 7
TTMAC Office

Stoneology - Toronto
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TTMAC FACILITY RENTALS

Did you know that the TTMAC facility at 163 Buttermilk Avenue is available to all TTMAC members for a nominal rental fee? Members can rent the warehouse and classroom to conduct training sessions, sales meetings or to conduct product research. This location is accessible to major highways and has a restaurant located right next door.

For rental fees and availability contact the TTMAC at 905.660.9640 or by email at association@ttmac.com



The Association would like to ask all TTMAC members to send a binder with technical or product information to the TTMAC office in order that we may update our library.

Please contact Elaine at the TTMAC office to make arrangements.

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Making it Watertight

Homeowners tend to invest in rooms they use most frequently, so bathrooms are becoming an important focus in today's building and remodeling projects. Bathrooms are also becoming more luxurious—a sort of retreat within the home—complete with steam showers, oversized bathtubs, aromatherapy, and the latest in fixtures and lighting. The increased demand for tile in luxurious bathrooms makes it more important than ever to ensure that proper tile installation methods and quality installation systems are used.

This article outlines two methods of tile shower installation that are recognized by the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada (TTMAC). Installers should consult approved guidelines or receive appropriate training before installing tile showers on a job site.

The Pan Liner Method

The traditional method for installing tiled shower assemblies creates what can be described as a water in/water out system. It begins with the installation of a mortar bed that is sloped to the weep holes in the drain. A waterproofing membrane (pan liner) is placed over this "pre-slope" and clamped into the drain. Pan liners are carried up to a height of at least 3" above the finished height of the curb, and must not be penetrated by any fasteners. Pan liners are not designed to allow for the direct application of ceramic or stone tile. Thus, a mortar bed must be installed to provide load distribution and a bonding surface for the floor tile. Crushed stone or tile is placed around the weep holes of the drain to prevent blockage before installing the mortar bed. Most wall assemblies incorporate 4-mil polyethylene or roofing felt placed behind the tile substrate (i.e., floated mortar or backerboard panels) and lapped over the pan liner.

Each component described above is essential to the function of the overall system. For example, a common error is to ignore the pre-slope installation and place the pan liner directly over the flat sub-floor. When this is done, the system will not effectively drain the water to the weep holes in the drain, creating a permanently saturated mortar bed. This increases the potential for efflorescence and mold

growth within the system. Another common mistake is to penetrate the pan liner by using nails to

fasten backerboard panels to the curb. Even small penetrations in a pan liner can lead to large leaks and damage to surrounding materials.

Lack of training and understanding has contributed to the improper execution of the traditional method for waterproofing tiled showers and resulting failures.

The Bonded Waterproof Membrane Method

Unlike traditional shower pan liners, bonded waterproof membranes are applied on top of the setting bed and walls, with the tile applied directly to the membrane with thin-set mortar. The primary advantage of the bonded waterproof system is that water and water vapor is not allowed to saturate the setting bed or enter the wall cavity, thus eliminating the potential for mold growth in the system and the need for special backing materials.

Conventional two-stage floor drains are designed to connect to shower pan liners below the setting bed. In a bonded waterproofing installation, the use of a drain with an integrated bonding flange ensures a simple and secure connection to the membrane at the top of the assembly rather than below it.

To achieve a completely watertight assembly without a mortar bed, installers can use a pre-fabricated sloped shower tray made of expanded polystyrene (EPS). This tray eliminates the process of pre-sloping the floor and waiting for the setting bed to harden, saving installation time and reducing the weight of the assembly. Once the tray is secured to the substrate, the waterproofing membrane can be applied over top immediately.

Closing comment:

Because of growing concerns about mold and moisture issues, installers must take care to ensure that tile showers are installed using an approved method. The cost of cutting corners or missing a step in tile shower construction can be substantial. Installers must choose and closely adhere to the approved installation method that suits their requirements best.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

TTMAC Social Night

Montecassino Place Banquet Hall

October 29, 2008

For ticket information contact Elaine at 905.660.9640.

TTMAC Tech Expo

Simon Fraser University

Vancouver B.C.

November 20, 2009

For more information contact Ashley at 604.294.6885.

TTMAC Christmas Party

(Vancouver)

December 5, 2009

For ticket information contact Ashley at 604.294.6885.


TTMAC 2010 Convention

Westin Hotel, Calgary Alberta


June 16 - 19th

Further Information to Follow January 2010.

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Over the past number of years, the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association has promoted and hosted two regional special evenings for members in British Columbia and Ontario. Members are encouraged to bring their employees and clients to a social evening that has traditionally encouraged people to learn about new products, new members, and renew relationships with members.

Each of these two regional social events is formatted differently. The Vancouver event is promoted as a Christmas party where many members use the event as an opportunity to hold an employee Christmas Party with none of the headaches that go into making all of the arrangements. Member companies cover the admission cost for each employee and their spouse, and arrange their own company tables for team building and employer employee relationships heading into the New Year.

In Toronto the Social Night has historically featured cocktails, networking opportunities, table top displays to promote new products, a silent auction, a live auction, a four course dinner complete with wine, followed by a presentation on the Hardsurface Awards winners that were presented at the Annual Convention in Montreal earlier this year.

While the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association relies heavily on events like golf tournaments, Bocce tournaments and Social Nights to generate revenue to cover association overheads, it is imperative to give good value to each member at these events.

The TTMAC endeavours to address comments that have been made last year, and will continue to do so as activities evolve into new more attractive events for all members. The upcoming Social Night has also undergone change and will be promoted as the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada's 9th Annual Social Night featuring the "Tastes of Italy."

The "Tastes of Italy" will feature during the cocktail hour a selection of fine wines from different regions of Italy. Guests will be able to taste samples of up to six wines and Hors d'oeuvres will also be served that will also be representative of different regions of Italy.

Dinner will continue with this theme and each course will also represent a different region. While we are attempting to bring a "little flavour of Italy to our dinner", we have also gone the extra mile.

While many of those in attendance have been to Italy, and would welcome the opportunity to go for another visit, many have not. The feature component will be a Grand Prize Draw for Airfare for Two to Rome, Italy. There will be a limited number of tickets available at \$25.00 per ticket and contest rules will be available on the TTMAC website.

Other changes include a greatly reduced number of silent auction items, featuring items associated with the respective regions of Italy. Also, more time will be allotted to networking and socializing.

Tickets for the "Tastes of Italy" Social Night on October 29, 2009 can be purchased for \$85.00 each and are available through the Toronto office or through members of the Social Committee. Tables of 10 are specially priced at \$800.00.

Plans are still underway for the "Tastes of Italy", participants are encouraged to attend as this is a great opportunity to not only sample wines, and food from different regions of Italy, but also to renew friendships and build new partnerships.



Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Craft Certification?

The Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association has been involved in the development of standards, and specifications for the hard surface industry since 1944. Through the years TTMAC has developed specification guides for terrazzo, tile and stone and provided them to members, other associations and professionals in order to improve the installation and performance of hard surface materials in the market.

Over the years TTMAC has considered training and education for industry professionals and trades people. The TTMAC western branch office has been active in conducting training sessions for installers in their facility for a number of years. Supplier members have also assisted in presenting generic programs that take the theory from the classroom to the shop floor, while providing a valuable experience for contractors.

A great deal of thought has gone into considering, conceiving, and the development of meaningful sessions built around the specification guides developed by the TTMAC. The point continues to be the relevance of these courses, in the overall scope of an effective apprenticeship program sanctioned by provincial governments. In other words, meaningful individual courses should be part of an overall plan that provides education and standardization of skills and experience in the trade.

In Ontario, the Provincial Apprenticeship Committee has been working with the unionized sector, the Guild and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities, for over two years to recognize the terrazzo, tile and marble trade. This recognition was essential as it allows the trade access to various types of funding for apprentices and apprenticeship training. Part of the process has been to develop a work book for an apprentice that covers all aspects of the trade and can be used to chart the apprentice's work experience and skill level leading to structured courses and testing through this program.

With the official certification (Certificate of Qualification) the trade now has in place, the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada has been asked to participate in the process. While this initiative has been driven by the unionized sector, the non union sector is equally important in providing a significant and creditable presence for the provincial ministry to seriously consider.

The Certificate of Qualification is available on a grandparenting basis, providing that certain application and qualifications can be met by trade's people prior to November 4th, 2009. After that date any journey person wishing to acquire this certificate will have to write and pass a provincial examination.

The Ontario Certificate of Qualification is very important to all craft workers whether they are union or non union workers as it ensures their access to training funds protects their opportunity to work in the trade and is transferable from one province to the next. Further details are available through our office in Concord, Ontario.

The Federal Government, through Human Resources & Social Development Canada is in the planning stages for a National Occupational Analysis workshop for the Red Seal trade of Tilesetter. This workshop is an important phase in the development of national standards for training, assessment and certification in this trade.

As both levels of government work on establishing training standards, skills development programs, it will not be long before this voluntary apprentice program becomes a mandatory apprenticeship similar to electricians, plumbers, and mechanics.

Certification is quickly becoming reality in Ontario and in the other provinces, and that provides both opportunity and challenges for contractors in the hard surface industry.

By Len Tompkins



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We trust that everyone has enjoyed this “New Edition” of the Analyst and we look forward to your feedback.

This is your Association “Newsletter” and we would like you to be involved with the informational content. We consider each of you to be an Analyst reporter and look to you to provide story ideas, draft articles, technical information, business topics of interest, member news, personal announcements such as births, new employees, promotions and any other information that you would like to share with the members of the Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association.

Please submit ideas and articles to our regional editors. Those in the west can send them to our Western Editor, Ashley by email at ashley@ttmac.com and those in the east can send to our Eastern Editor, Elaine by email at elaine@ttmac.com.

We look forward to your feedback, story ideas and information for our next edition of the Analyst.

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CONTACT US

TTMAC 163 Buttermilk Ave., Unit 8 Concord, ON L4K 3X8 Tel: 905.660.9640 800.201.8599 Fax: 905.660.0513 association@ttmac.com	TTMAC 108 -3650 Bonneville Place Burnaby, BC V3N 4T7 Tel: 604.294.6885 Fax: 604.294.2406 ashley@ttmac.com
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