



Designer FYI

By Kris Linder
Photo by Kerry Paul

Designing interiors with... concrete?



Concrete provides an appealing combination of art and function for unique residential projects

It gets confusing, doesn't it? So many new products to choose from when remodeling — decisions between granite, marble, tile, laminate and the hot new material, concrete.

Yes, you heard right. Concrete surfaces are being used for residential flooring and kitchen countertops, but that's not all.

Once relegated to commercial installations, concrete is finding its way into homes with cutting-edge designs. The sleekness of concrete blends well with many of the modern and retro styles popular with architects and designers today.

With a medium like concrete, the possibilities are endless. Custom forms allow contractors to mold concrete into any shape. If you want beautiful, natural, unique and substantial architectural elements for your home — including concrete furniture — you may choose the color, shape, thickness and texture of your element. In short, concrete provides an appealing combination of art and function for unique residential projects.

And contrary to preconceptions, concrete is only slightly heavier than granite. A 1.5-inch thick slab of concrete weighs less than a pound per square foot more than an equivalent slab of granite.

But before you run off and remodel your house with concrete, there are some things you should know. For example, concrete countertops are smooth and easy to clean, but they have to be sealed frequently, other-

wise they will stain. Sealer can be purchased in most tile shops, and if you don't want to do it yourself, there are companies that do nothing but seal grout, tile, marble, granite and concrete.

Concrete is also very hard — standing on concrete for an extended amount of time can tire your feet, ankles and back. In addition, if you drop something on concrete it splinters into a bazillion pieces — and it's slippery when wet.

In my opinion, concrete is best confined to the garage and patio. But if you do decide to use concrete, it's wise to work with an architect, because engineering and weight issues often crop up. ⬆

Interior Design Source owner Kris Linder consults, designs, remodels and provides interior furnishings for a large segment of Silicon Valley. Call her at 408.395.4028 or visit www.interior-design-source.com.