



Mixing Business + Pleasure

Business: a clean minimalistic kitchen that gave center stage to the view (see next page) **Pleasure:** a fun bar area that incorporated themes from the client's business including an espresso bar/café and wine-making

- Steve Silberman + Tommy Cook, Absolute ConcreteWorks





A bar area with a sense of humor and a kitchen area with a more serious side are connected by rich brown concrete countertops. Creators Steve Silberman and Tommy Cook of Absolute ConcreteWorks have perfected the art of mixing business with pleasure in both the design of the countertops and in the ingredients of them.

The countertops in the kitchen are straight-edged, while in the bar, they take on a wave-like curve, creating conceptual contrast. The concrete is filled with both client mementos for personalization and recycled additives for structural and environmental consideration. From a distance, the counters appear to be a monochromatic espresso brown, yet up close, a rich and varied patina is surprisingly revealed.

Whether with guests or by themselves, the homeowners are sure to enjoy this entertainer's kitchen paradise for years to come.

Previous Page: A wine bottle and corks, real leaves, cast grapes, glass beads, crushed glass, coffee cup, and tin espresso sign are all cast in a custom GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete) mix that provides greater design flexibility and is lighter weight than traditional concrete countertop mixes. The mix also includes recycled/reclaimed glass elements and a lower carbon footprint VCAS cement.

Above: The rich earthy feel of the espresso brown concrete countertops provides the perfect foreground for the meadow and water view.

Far Left: The desired effect of the look and feel of a worn leather couch was achieved using an acid stain and a little elbow grease with 3m pad that created wear patterns by rubbing the color away.

Metal trivets for resting hot pans reside in 1/4" deep channels in the countertop and easily pop out for a quick run through the dishwasher.

Cooktop is set flush into the concrete.

Left: The curved edge treatment pays homage to the home's waterfront waves and was formed with precisely cut recycled melamine and flexible tile board.



Designer Notes

Steve Silberman
Tommy Cook
Absolute ConcreteWorks

Specifications Concrete Countertops

Total Retail Price of Concrete: \$20,000

Weight: 1,503 lbs

Volume: 134 sq ft

Concrete Mix: SoundCrete®, a GFRC Leed Compliant ACW mix including reclaimed or recycled glass elements. VCAS, a white pozzolan made from recycled glass that requires 99% less energy than an equivalent amount of Portland cement.

Faucet: Grohe

Sink: Kohler

Vessel Sinks: Pegasus

Cooktop: Gaggenau

Refrigerator: GE

Oven: GE

Microwave: GE

Photography: Northlight Photography



Why concrete?

Concrete was the only material which fully met the client's criteria that called for a warm tactile eco-friendly material that offered unlimited color palette selections, opportunities for personalization together with a long life cycle that is highly stain resistant and easily maintained. Due to the design specification calling for the functional art panel to be removable, we dramatically decreased the weight to less than 100 lbs by using SoundCrete®, our registered trademark brand® of GFRC mix.

Client Desire

Our clients were attracted to the Absolute Concrete Works maxim "fusing art with function" and the memento embedded panel is an on point example of this fusion. It is removable for access to the lighting for the bar's glass block wall. It is also an art piece that incorporates themes from businesses the clients had owned.

Client Reaction

The clients were very pleased with the design and finish of the countertops. As for the art piece, a basic design was given to the client for approval and then artistic license was granted beyond that design. As with all art (that is not paint by numbers), it happens as you create it and this project followed that path.

Timing + Expertise

The entire project took three consecutive weeks. The art piece took about 44 hours. The initial casting was not very time consuming. The prep for the piece took considerable time for both design and gathering of the elements. The largest amount of time was required for the coloring process after the piece had been cast, cured and removed from the mold. There were numerous elements that had individual color, such as the grapes (cast in concrete from a custom mold, then placed in the pour), leaf imprints ("stamped" from real leaves), and the background color.

The piece had maximum weight limitations; hence the use of dramatically stronger-lighter weight GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete). However, this created the additional challenge of working with a top coat that did not contain AR resistant glass fibers. We had not previously done much positive casting of GFRC, actually working with the mist coat. We conducted mix design tests to achieve a stronger mix enabling us the ability to build the mist coat thicker than usually required. The SoundCrete® mix design we developed for this project has since been used for other positive cast projects calling for a similar mix design. On a personal note ACW's Tommy Cook takes great pride in being referred to as "the MacGyver" of concrete (which is a great compliment to those that remember the mid 1980's TV series!)





Best 'Funk'tional

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ABSOLUTE ConcreteWorks is a National Award-Winning Eco-Friendly, architectural and decorative concrete products firm. Based in the Seattle, Tacoma Metro, ACW takes great pride in being acknowledged as the Northwest's premier designer and fabricator of custom functional art for residential, commercial and retail applications. ACW is nationally recognized as an industry leader in the use of dramatically stronger and significantly lighter weight Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) marketed under our SoundCrete® registered trademark brand.

Our specialties include (but are not limited too), concrete countertops, fireplace surrounds, outdoor kitchens, concrete furniture, Ofuro and designer bathtubs, shower and tub surrounds and a full spectrum of decorative concrete products. ACW also offers concrete masonry units and architectural details including wall caps, column caps, window and door surrounds. Many products are crated and available for shipment throughout the United States.

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