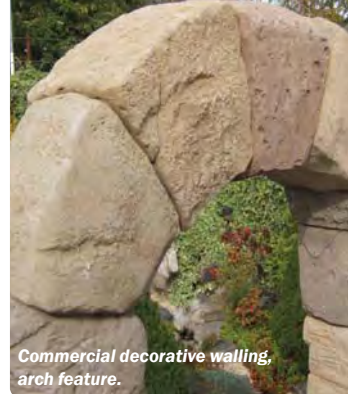




The winner of the Domestic Installation category was ReadyPave from Whitchurch with this patio design.



Commercial decorative walling, arch feature.



Individual Features third place - Aztec paving for the Holy Family Catholic Church in Patchway Bristol.

Pattern imprinted – a concrete investment



GOLDEN TROWEL AWARDS 2011

John Grant of Pattern Imprinted Concrete Supplies (PICSUK) reports on the 2011 Golden Trowel competition, with another high standard year of decorative concrete installations.

Below: Individual Features winner – Creteprint Paving Company, with an inset pin-wheel medallion imprinted concrete.



Over the past 20 years, we have seen the range of commercial and domestic applications for pattern-imprinted concrete grow and with other decorative concrete techniques being used more widely, the long-term benefits of its use can now clearly be seen.

The durability of well-designed ready-mixed concrete, combined with the measurable abrasion resistance of colour surface hardeners, delivers a long-term performance. Add the benefits of aesthetic appeal and the scope of surface finishes available for the client and the only real decision is 'what pattern, texture and colour do I specify?'

The 6th Annual Golden Trowel awards for decorative concrete projects installed during 2011 include a range of entries from across the UK, illustrating the scope of surface finishes being created by quality installers. Pattern-imprinted finishes, exposed aggregate, texture only and stone walling effects, make this year's competition one of the most interesting to date.

The number and variety of commercial applications

entered show how much more widely decorative concrete is being considered by clients, architects and specifiers alike. Add to this the number of projects PICS sees installed weekly, which do not get entered into the Golden Trowel competition, and this sector of the concrete industry offers great opportunities worldwide.

From some of the original applications such as theme parks and drive-thru restaurants, through to petrol stations, bus stations and seafront promenades, there are many more clients now demanding longevity and performance, with low and simple maintenance requirements. Cost is always a factor but decorative concrete is more competitive and offers better lifetime costs than cheaper paving alternatives than ever before.

2011 competition

The 2011 competition judging panel consisted of Richard Day of The Concrete Society and Graham True, an independent consultant and expert witness who regularly views decorative concrete projects around the UK. Graham's view after the judging was that the quality and originality of entries has improved over the years he has been involved. Aply assisted by John Linley, technical manager of PICS, to provide answers to questions from



Above left and right: First Choice Driveways was second place in the Domestic category.



Above: Third place in the Domestic category was The Concrete Paving Company.



Above: Winner of the Commercial Installations category – McDonald's restaurant drive-thru lanes, Cosham in Portsmouth.



Above: Commercial Installations second place – sea wall works at St Helens Duver on the Isle of Wight.



Above: Commercial Installations third place – redesign frontage at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Patchway Bristol.



Above: Individual Features second place – Cotswold Colourcrete's internal kitchen floor.



Above: Construction of a fire pit.



Above: Wallcrete and pattern-imprinted feature patio.

the panel, over 60 individual projects were judged, with 146 photographs provided.

Richard's view was that the attention to detail within the context of the landscape, be it a commercial or domestic project, brings out the best in this form of visual concrete.

There were three categories of projects judged for 2011 entries: Domestic Installations, Commercial Installations and Individual Features within any project, with the best three photographs chosen for each category based on a range of factors including the quality of the photograph, the visible standard of the installation and the degree of complexity displayed.

Domestic Installations

The winning entry in the Domestic Installations category was submitted by Readypave from Whitchurch – a quality patio design using colour, design and features, which combined to create a stunning effect around a pond, taking into account pillars and drainage.

Second place went to First Choice Driveways, with a garden project using a combination of pattern and textured skin finishes. The third place award was made to The Concrete Paving Company for its well-executed pattern-imprinted and textured skinned design driveway.

Commercial Installations

The category for Commercial Installations continues to grow and this year's competition featured entries of installations for clients including McDonald's, Merlin Entertainments Group, the Isle of Wight Council and the Holy Family Catholic Church in Bristol. These entries were a real mix of design, quality applications and individual specifications to achieve durability and individuality to suit each project.

First place was awarded for a photograph of a pattern-imprinted concrete refurbishment of the McDonald's restaurant drive-thru lanes at Cosham in Portsmouth. Second place went to the sea wall works at St Helens Duver on the Isle of Wight and third place to a redesign frontage at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Patchway, Bristol.

Individual Features

The section for individual features within a project allows the judges to see some unique features designed by installers themselves, as well as those specified by the client. Examples of feature-imprinting mat designs and hand-crafted finishes were entered.

The winner of this section was Creteprint Paving Company, with an inset pin-wheel medallion imprinted feature within a driveway and second place for Cotswold Colourcrete showed features from a high-standard installation of an internal kitchen floor and hallway with a well, in a York stone imprinted design. Aztec Paving was also recognised for the feature work of acid-stained grapevines and a hand-imprinted cross at its church project.

The competition has provided another snapshot of an interesting year in the decorative concrete market in the UK, with creativity, durability and long-term value being the key factors highlighted for this growing sector of the specialist concrete industry – a true concrete investment!

Wallcrete is another technique that is becoming popular. An example is the arch feature shown on page 14 top right. Both wallcrete and imprinted concrete techniques are displayed on the 'in progress and complete' images of a feature patio and fire pit (left). ●