



So you want stained floors....

This article is intended to educate anyone who is deciding to use chemical reactive staining on an existing concrete slab or floor. Stained floors are a thing of beauty, no other process allows you to achieve the unique, jewel tones that come from “staining” concrete floors. The process of “acid staining” dates back many years, the Yonahlossee lodge in Yellowstone is one of the earliest applications of acid staining in this country.

The correct name for the process is chemical reactive staining, since the real power comes from metallic salts that react with the hydrated lime and the cement. The acid allows the concrete to “open up” in order to receive the salts. The technology is currently limited to a color palette based on 6-8 color tones. These color tones can be diluted in varying percentages to achieve additional tones with varied hues. The incorporation of “rogue” ingredients can also alter the color, but this technique can be dangerous and produce unattractive results. The thing to remember is.....*the principle of staining is simple, the process is complicated.*

If you're still interested, you will need to have a few “tests” done in order to determine if your slab is suitable for staining. But first, stand back and take a good look at the slab. Remember, staining is a translucent process, if the slab is damaged and marred, it will be a damaged and marred floor after it is stained. If at this point you feel the current “look” of the slab is suitable to your taste, then you can proceed. A good early test is to pour a small amount of water on the surface. If the water seems to “absorb” on the surface – good, if the water “beads up” – then the slab probably has either a sealer or curing compound applied to it. Further testing needs to be done at this point if staining is an option. A pH and calcium chloride test should be completed at this time. These tests will indicate to us whether additional treatments need to be performed prior to staining. Lack of testing is the leading cause of failures in concrete staining.

Maintenance of stained floors is probably the most understood area of this process. Many people think, “because it's concrete....” that they don't have to do anything to it....this couldn't be farther from the truth. A barrier of sealer and floor finish will need to be maintained at all times, otherwise you will eventually wear into the surface of the concrete, wearing off the colored concrete particles. Preventative measures such as walk-off mats, daily floor dusting, and reapplication of floor finish in traffic areas will help protect your floor and maintain a good luster. Treated properly, stained floors are a unique, one-of-a-kind masterpiece that will last for generations.

For additional information: www.carolinabomanite.com

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