



This courtyard was sprayed with Concrete Solutions' Ultra Surface Spray-Top System.



that toppings "go on like a really fine plaster and don't require any type of mechanical reinforcement like concrete would." The toppings are also valuable where profiles like crown moldings or sculptural details need to be retained.

Sprayable concrete toppings are also suitable for application on other surfaces besides concrete. With proper surface preparation and priming they may be used on any rigid horizontal or vertical surface, including ceramic tile, Formica and drywall. Pachade adds wood to the list, but cautions that the topping will crack if the wood flexes. Concrete Solutions cites the use of toppings over foam shapes to create the look of concrete structures without the weight.

Application steps

As with any decorative technique, successful results depend largely on careful preparation. "Masking is extremely important," Pachade says, "This stuff sticks!"

Specifics for surface preparation may vary from product to product and substrate to substrate, but there are some commonalities. First, the surface must be structurally sound, clean, and free of dust, dirt and debris such as drywall residue, mold and petroleum-based products. In short, there should be no contaminant between the substrate and the topping. Bella Vernici recommends scraping the surface to smooth rough spots and then thoroughly washing the substrate with soap and water. If there are still pinholes or rough areas, a skim coat may be applied before priming.

The makers of all three materials described here stress the importance of priming. The primer creates the bond between the original substrate and the concrete topping. Colormaker recommends applying acrylic primer with a sprayer and then, on horizontal surfaces, spreading with a broom or mop for complete coverage. The first coat of