

COVER STORY

# Patio Planning 101



Here's how  
*Hudecek  
Cement's*  
stamped concrete  
process can save  
you time, money  
and hassle.

Intricate designs, diverse colors, and creative inlays and edges that can flow with natural landscape borders are easily achieved with a stamped concrete design. The natural appearance of *Hudecek Cement's* designs have led to the amazing growth and popularity of the company.

by **Bill Yurgen**

“I really didn't plan for things to work out this way,” Mark Hudecek explained to me the first time we met and discussed his family business, *Hudecek Cement*. Now, in hindsight, things really do happen for a reason. Mark took the helm of the company 10 years ago when his father was diagnosed with cancer. “As I took over daily operations, we began to turn the business in a more creative direction,” he said. “I have attended more than 20 classes all over the country to learn more effective techniques and to create the best stamped concrete work that I can. Back in the days of my grandfather and father, concrete really was just plain old grey. Today, I can look back at the gradual 10-year progression of stamped concrete and be proud of how far the industry and our company have come.”

Hudecek Cement is truly the story of an American family-owned business—founded in 1946 by Mark's grandfather, John Hudecek. But the company's roots in the cement business actually go back to the 1920s when John began working as a cement man. Today's company principles have

different names, but their ethic of hard work and devotion to customers remains the same. Mark's wife, Julie, left the corporate world to bring her expertise to the company. His brother, Will, is Mark's “right-hand.” Mark's father, Richard, still comes to work every day and lends his 44 years of experience to the operation. And his mother, Carol, is c company president and keeps the books.

Mark has taken his artistic eye and combined it with a pride in craftsmanship that has made Hudecek Cement a leader in residential patios, driveways and walkways since it was founded. The choices seem to be limitless and include everything from brick to flagstone to slate.

Mark and Julie Hudecek are helping to prepare homeowners who plan to have a patio installed this year.

## Begin with research...and a budget

Mark offered his guidance: “Everyone's budget changes from year to year, but if you have a set budget, explore your options for a patio. There can be significant savings depending on which material you choose. Stamped Concrete, done properly, looks like the real thing—even up close. This is why my crew and I attend training every year.”

Some homeowners begin with a patio, then add landscaping, lighting, retaining walls, etc., over the coming seasons.

“We educate our customers on what they should be looking for,” Mark explained, “including how the process is done and what the city and state codes are. Our clients want to know that the job is being done correctly and artistically. I really enjoy when people ask questions.”

Julie Hudecek added some additional thoughts: “Some people get very detailed in the questions about the process, and they should. It is important to know what the work entails and doing your homework

helps you in the long run. Cost is important, but so is making sure that your contractor is not cutting corners on the work that will be a part of your home for decades.”

## Get a custom look you'll love for years

Two reasons many homeowners choose stamped concrete over natural stone and pavers is cost and versatility. Intricate designs, diverse colors, and creative inlays and edges that can flow with natural landscape borders are easily achieved with a stamped concrete design. To mimic the complexity and curves that concrete makes possible would be very costly to duplicate with natural stone or pavers.

Mark offered his thoughts on creating natural looking color. “Many of our customers want an existing color of their home exterior to be complemented in their patio,” he said. “This is easily achieved with the multitude of colors available with stamped concrete.”

In fact, Mark has been asked to serve as a guest instructor for 2011 for one of the top two worldwide concrete color producing companies. “All of the training we undergo is to benefit our customers so they get the best looking decorative concrete possible,” he assured. One of the most visually appealing examples of how well this natural effect can be accomplished is in their very popular Arizona Flagstone pattern.

Mark's wife, Julie, recently started All Pro Sealing & Powerwashing. “It's amazing

to me that I can tell almost instantly if the stamped concrete was done by Mark or not,” she smiled. “It makes me even prouder of the work that he and our family does. The difference in the coloring is obvious when a contractor does not have the proper training. It's unfortunate, because you're spending hard-earned money on something that will be there for the next 20 years. It should look beautiful, not spotted.” (Visit [www.allprosealing.com](http://www.allprosealing.com) for more information).

see PATIO PLANNING 101, page 6



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## A Concrete Testimonial

“Hudecek Cement built my patio two years ago. Last year they built a beautiful pergola for us. This year we have invited the Hudecks to build an outdoor fireplace. We found that Mark and Julie are so talented at design, we are able to add...not add on. Everything looks natural, balanced and cohesive.

“Mark and his crew were always at the job, on time. Everything went like clockwork and we were so pleased that Mark was able to subcontract a carpenter and electrician. Every step was handled professionally and we couldn't be more pleased.” —**Mary Ann K.**

## Less time worrying and more time enjoying

One of the best things about a stamped patio installation is that it's usually just a 2-3 day process and can be enjoyed right away. Mark is typically on the job from start to finish working with the crew. Trained in architectural patio design, his presence assures his clients that their new patio will be executed to his exacting specifications.

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And homeowners are assured that surface shifting or weeds growing through their patio are not problems they will have to deal with every year—as can be the case with pavers.

“We use heavy rebar as well as wire mesh in all of our work,” Mark added. “Most installers don't go this extra mile because it is not required by code. We like to do our work by the book. Most homeowner don't realize that you have to be licensed in each city that you perform work in and then pull a permit for each job. Inspections are

important because they ensure that the work is being done correctly.”

Mark also related their commitment to trouble-free performance for their product. “Stamped concrete does need to be maintained and there are more options for sealant coming out every year. Today we use products that last four to five years as opposed to previously available sealers that lasted only one or two years. That's the great thing about our industry; it's constantly improving...and so are we.”

*To see for the many beautiful patios, retaining walls, fire pits, walkways and drives that Hudecek Cement has custom built, visit [Hudecekcement.com](http://Hudecekcement.com). For more information on how to begin your project, you may contact Hudecek Cement at 216-956-6744.*



**Hudecek Cement's stamped patio installation usually takes just 2-3 days.**