

A Warm Welcome Begins on the Floor



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FOR FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The advent of greater variety and complementary flooring finishes in the hospitality market has broadened the opportunities for guests to encounter—and hotel service teams to enjoy—the versatility of designed concrete floors.

The Stonhard Group with its four brands of flooring, Stonhard, Liquid Elements, Expanko, and Fritztile, offers a variety of options for the hospitality market. With expertise gleaned from its A-Team of installers and extensive technical research on how flooring applications should differ based on the installation environment, The Stonhard Group discusses here the use of specific flooring systems for the spaces that designers and facilities managers regularly encounter in hospitality and retail settings.

Liquid Elements pours it on

Artfully poured liquid concrete floors, Liquid Elements, uses cutting-edge technology to produce both decorative and high-performing floors. “Liquid Elements provides a boutique approach to design,” says Mike Jewell, vice president of product research and development.

Liquid Elements has five distinct lines of floors that comprise its brand: Smooth, Reflect, Crush, Glitz, and Capture. The bones of Liquid Elements

are in its performance-oriented polymer with traditional epoxies. It’s all in the materials; they are the binders that hold it all together.

“Liquid Elements is an ideal solution for hospitality settings and also for spaces like healthcare lobbies and general commercial offices that incorporate public areas. Current trends dictate multiple uses of the same space,” says Sally Reis, national manager of commercial interiors for the hospitality market, The Stonhard Group. “Companies are trying to



Smooth, while a durable and resilient surface, also helps to create a modern, smart and elegant meeting space.

change the office environment by changing how they are using space. Versatile flooring contributes to contemporary, sleek, interchangeable use of a workspace, transforming it into a multi-use room.”

Large open spaces that are repurposed throughout the day or the week, require the right floor to withstand these changes and to achieve a contemporary sleek line, Reis explains.

Liquid Elements’ *Smooth*, a resilient, self-leveling floor, is a type of finish offering longevity, depth and design options, including a matte or gloss that works in any contemporary commercial setting. Smooth comes in one dimensional color, Mono series, or two-color, Duo series.

“If a hotel environment seeks an upscale decorative and smooth floor, what you can and want to do from a maintenance standpoint matters,” says Jewell. “In retail, waxing once a week might be acceptable for some, but not every operator.”

“Smooth Duo provides a smooth surface for elevator lobbies and lobby landings. It is the utility-oriented Liquid Elements product that is both decorative and cool,” says Jewell. “It is also placed in office environments that are design-oriented, such as media companies, and those that like an edgy, techno look rather than carpet,” explains Jewell.

They like the cool modern look, he indicates. Further, Smooth Duo’s resilience helps with sound-deadening, so it is not as loud as polished concrete.

“Liquid Elements, the most recent addition to The Stonhard Group, offers an open palette that can address specific applications,” advises Sally Reis, national commercial manager of the Liquid Elements brand. “Light colors are the ‘in’ look right now in the U.S.” She should know, as Reis is part of



Smooth ensures comfort underfoot, resists scratching and is easy to maintain. Available in custom colors.

an architectural/design sales group that meets with interior designers and project architects assisting with product and finish selection. The Stonhard Group boasts more than 15 architectural/engineering representatives across the U.S. and collaborates with 145 design firms specializing in the hospitality industry. The company uses this group, along with its more than 150 sales people to obtain specifications and garner higher visibility at hospitality industry trade shows.

The *Reflect* product line is a strong example of how design works with durability. Reflect is all about the design and durable finish. The durability and chemistry is not much different than Smooth. From a design standpoint—more art form is designed into Reflect than Smooth Duo. Reflect allows applicators to be artistically creative, as they can manipulate the appearance of the product while it is being installed. A cool, metallic may be best-suited to the hospitality market with precious-metal finishes, a consideration for high-design areas where hotel guests spend time such as lobbies, bars, dining areas, and intimate lounge areas.

Coppers, golds, silvers, and mixed metals in Reflect are swirled into a high-gloss polish offering a surface that is bathed in light, ideal for an intimate restaurant in a boutique hotel. It borrows the range of an artist's palette combining natural minerals to produce a floor that is handcrafted.

Reflect's luster also yields a resilient floor that is comfortable, easy to clean, maintain, and resists scratches. "The installer has a lot of control over what the floor looks like when done," Jewell remarks. "It forms the nexus between art and technology."

Liquid Elements can cover guest room floors as well. Where a boutique hotel does not want to use carpet, the Liquid Elements line is the answer. Small hotels with a trendy client base are embracing concrete floors along



with other smooth hard floors for guest rooms. “Our brands can do guest rooms, entryways, drop-off areas, pool decks, and a newer Stonhard product, *Stonpath* performs well for walkways with a new take on pattern-stamped concrete,” Jewell remarks. “It is a good replacement for asphalt.”

The biggest challenge for all facilities managers and their designers is selecting a floor that is going to perform. “The floor needs to fit with the design intent of the project and a company’s image and branding,” Reis says. “We don’t want a client saying the floor looks dated.” And that is why she advocates strongly for Liquid Elements’ artfully poured floors. “We can provide an artistic look. Liquid Elements offers a high-end image that its clients and their design teams are trying to project to hospitality facility guests or customers of a company.” Liquid Elements floors were created for hospitality and attract designers and planners who seek architecturally impactful floors for specific environments.

Reis says Liquid Elements has found success with the bigger hotel brands that want a consistent look or image. In spring 2016, The Stonhard Group signed an agreement with Hilton and its sales team is letting the chain’s contracted interior design firms know they have the hotel’s flooring solution. And now, Liquid Elements is working with boutique hotels that also have a distinct look and design. “We want them to know that when maintained, they can get 15 to 20 years out of a Liquid Elements floor,” says Reis.

Liquid Elements allows for custom colors and capabilities. “We make it easy for the design community to work on customs.” says Reis. “They can change the color, we can encapsulate a brand’s logo, a product it sells, or a thematic line that a company markets.” In updating Liquid Elements, Reis indicates they pay particular attention to Pantone Color of the Year and the Pantone Marketing Group predictions. New offerings always include the current color forecast.

The A-team of applicators

Liquid Elements’ training program is extended to The Stonhard Group’s seasoned sub-contractors who are eager and capable of perfecting the next level of quality and detail. “They are The Stonhard Group applicators—but the A team,” says Jewell. “We train them at corporate headquarters; after that, it’s field work.”

The applicator works for The Stonhard Group on a project as an extension of sales and engineers, Jewell explains. “They are sub-contractors to us, but when on-site they are The Stonhard Group to the client.”

“Further, designers are concerned about the environment, and we let them know our products are unique. They get resiliency, and it is also sustainable,” Reis explains. “Resins in the Liquid Elements line are not concrete, but resin poured. Also it’s not a rigid resin product, it is “artfully poured,” Reis details. “We do a fair amount of education on epoxy and urethanes with the designers.”

Glitz is aptly named for its look of glitter in a clear resin. It takes longer to install than Smooth, as more layers are involved. This sparkly, high-gloss floor glimmers and reflects color from every angle. Glitz can be dramatically different depending on your color selection. Reds conjure images of ruby red slippers, while whites evoke an endless sheen. From the Las Vegas strip to haute couture runways, this resilient floor will ensure comfort under foot. It is easy to clean and scratch-resistant to keep the glitter glittering.

Many designers aren’t aware of resin and liquid-applied flooring. They know terrazzo, but they aren’t familiar with this type of resin. They see the capabilities now, says Reis. “When they visit installations and see how long the floors are in place and looking like new, it persuades them to try liquid flooring. And we have a good reference list,” she affirms.

Crush, a natural product of river rock and quartz stone contains a resin binder and is one of the simplest products to install, with the least number of layers. Its limited, natural color scheme with stones and aggregates is an updated twist on something that has been around for a long time. New color trends in the quartz line are expected this year. Crush brings the outdoors indoors and is used in lounge, pool, and spa settings, and adjacent informal seating areas. Less formal earthy areas can have a harder Crush that paves the way into hotel corridors to meet with a polished Crush.

“We have different floors or looks for every environment. We are not only back of the house anymore,” says John Walsh, The Stonhard Group director of business development.

Polished, like other Liquid Elements floors, was created with the designer in mind. It offers a better version of polished concrete that is simple to



install for new construction and is good for renovations. “This is an analog to polished concrete,” says Jewell. “The polymer overlay gets rid of imperfections in the concrete.” In cases where old carpet or tiles were removed, the installers grind down the underfloor during preparation to get it open and rough, so it can take the bonding for Polished.

Polished speaks to an urban motif and is ideal for a city retail setting—especially useful for hotel retail shops that can be high-traffic.

The Stonhard Group—and its multiple Ston lines

The Stonhard Group has a legacy of manufacturing and installing high-performance epoxy and urethane floors. “We believe it is the largest, most respected polymer floor surface in the world—active since the late 1950s. And from a concrete repair standpoint, we’ve been doing it since 1922,” states Jewell.

Stonhard has numerous “Ston” product lines, some of which will be highlighted here.

Stonclad is the original Stonhard Group product that was introduced in 1950. It is a fairly thick polymeric overlay—designed to repair and protect

Ovolo Hotel in Aberdeen Harbour, Hong Kong, a progressive design/ boutique hotel, chose Crush to make an immediate impression on guests with its portico driveway. It says natural and chic at the same time.



concrete. A designer can resurface with a Stonclad floor that is very hard and strong. The original Stonclad GS remains consistent with the 1950 formula, however there are now nine additional systems formulated for specific markets like food service and even a system that incorporates recycled glass and plant-based resins to meet environmental expectations.

Stonclad offers epoxy and urethane floor protection for heavy-duty environments. It is chemical, abrasion, and impact-resistant. Its lines, Stonclad UT, UR, and UL—give a durable, strong performance.

“In food processing and food service with fats, oils, high-temperature equipment and cooler areas—epoxies tend not to be the best choice, so use polyurethane systems like Stonclad UT UR UL,” recommends Jewell. “It performs better in these environments.”

The Stonclad markets include chemical, food and beverage, manufacturing, and more.

Stonshield is a safe, easy-to-clean floor system with design flexibility in myriad patterns and textures for light manufacturing and commercial environments. Stonshield UTS resists thermal shock and thermal cycling due to its polyurethane polyaspartic textured system.

To respond to the unique and abusive environments of cruise ships—hospitality environments exposed to the elements—there is Stondeck for pool decks, resort pool bars, patios, entrances, and rooftop nightclubs.

Historically, teak wood decks were found on cruise ships, but they needed to be oiled all the time. It is the oldest long-standing material in the cruise ship market, and now *Stondeck's* Syntheteak is replacing natural teak. *Syntheteak* offers a classic look, and also can be installed on hotel pool decks that take a lot of abuse. Due to wind, sun, exposure, and extreme temperature changes that the decks experience with thermal cycling, Stondeck is the nexus between technology and art. “Syntheteak will reproduce

the natural and highly popular look of teak, yet is more durable and with far less maintenance,” says Jewell. “And Stondeck’s *Decoro* offers artistic, free-form designs.”

How to get the right technical solution

Stonhard often acquires new clients when the facility needs to replace or repair a flooring system that hasn’t been in place very long. This happens due to product issues such as an industrial market failure (e.g. adhesion issue) or because the wrong product was selected for their environment. The Stonhard Group meets with the client, examines the surface, and makes sure the right product is installed. Failure usually indicates both an incorrect and low quality, under-performing flooring system was selected.

“Our goal is to guide designers and clients to make a good decision. Facilities managers change and move to other jobs. We have been steering customers in the right direction for more than 94 years,” says Jewell. “Our people are well-versed on guiding customers on details. There are many floor manufacturing suppliers that have this technology but the details are huge.”

“We have a consultant role when we explain to facilities managers how to clean and maintain the floor,” says Kendall Ellis, marketing manager, The Stonhard Group. “We have a division, Stonkleen, to work with clients at the front end or back end,” Ellis explains, “if they struggle to get the floor maintained to their standard.”

Expanko—a big part of our approach

Need engineered flooring? Recycled rubber? Cork? Green solution only? *Expanko Resilient Flooring* offers specifiers lots of commercial core product such as these that offer both ease and consistency of maintenance. Early in 2016, Expanko introduced CorkCore|LVT, a combination of water-resistant luxury vinyl tile and 100 percent natural cork. Highly durable, quiet, and easy-to-maintain, CorkCore|LVT is a flooring solution for hospitality, healthcare, education, retail, corporate, restaurant and multifamily markets. “With features like exceptional sound absorption without underlayment, no vapor barrier or additional sealer and finishes required, and water-resistant boards, CorkCore|LVT is like no other in the market today,”

says Randy Gillespie, senior vice president of sales and marketing, Expanko. “Recycled content is a goal of our product and is what the commercial designer and end-user architects seek,” he says.



CorkCore|LVT combines the outstanding properties of cork with luxury vinyl. Dramatic lobbies, busy eating areas and quiet meeting spaces can benefit from the versatile performance and popular wood visuals of CorkCore LVT.

“Cork products are primarily used in museums, places of worship, and libraries,” says Gillespie, “but we also see it installed in offices and lobbies, if warmer space is desired.” For example, *Heirloom Cork Flooring*, at one-half-inch thick, is best used in hospitality anywhere a wood floor would be found. Wood can be replaced with cork floors.”

As the new standard in Luxury Vinyl Tile, *CorkCore|LVT* measures 48-in. long and 5.5-in. wide and is comprised of five superior layers totaling 6 mm thick, featuring a .55 mm wear layer for durability and a 3 mm cork core for sound reduction, warmth, comfort and water resistance. With 12 registered embossed wood visuals and a 12 plank pattern repeat, CorkCore|LVT will make a statement in any application.

With testing and certifications like a Class 1 Fire Rating, 62 dB Acoustical Performance, GreenGuard Gold Certified for low chemical emissions, and a 15-year commercial warranty and 25-year residential warranty, CorkCore|LVT creates a safe, sustainable solution for commercial or residential traffic.

CorkCore|LVT's revolutionary compression system takes full advantage of all the amazing properties of cork—flexibility, elasticity and compressibility, functioning like a cork stopper. Planks can be installed as a floating system or glued down over approved substrates without a vapor barrier. No additional sealers or finishes are required for a simple installation. A mild detergent, vacuum cleaner or floor duster is all that is needed for daily/weekly maintenance.

A Hilton hotel in Houston, Texas, replaced the bar and restaurant floor in cork, plus a limited number of entry-ways, and some of the suite rooms with kitchens, Gillespie explains. “Cork lends to the performance of a wood floor, but can take everything from glides on chairs to the sweep up of grit and grime. It handles stains, too.”

Only available from Expanko, Inc., Heirloom cork flooring has a proven record of performance in commercial facilities. Heirloom cork flooring features a full ½"/12mm thick solid cork floor tile. Heirloom is available in three colors: Light, Medium and Dark. The colors are achieved through the baking process, without any dyes or tinting. Heirloom is stocked in standard 12" x 12" and 24" x 24" tiles. With installations up to 80 years old, Expanko is the pioneer of half-inch cork floors. Historical installations can still be viewed in the United States Chamber of Commerce and the Harvard Law Library. The beauty of cork flooring comes from its unique visual texture and natural resiliency.

Expanko's *Vallarex* system features multi-layered flooring with a natural cork veneer, an HDF mid-layer and a cork insulation underlayer. For cork visuals, a unique CTX ceramic technology finish is applied to the patterned cork, providing a strong, light-use commercial finish. “InterContinental IHG—hotels on a national spec—are using the Vallarex floor for entrances and even a portion of the guest room since hotel management decided



Heirloom cork can be cut in custom shapes to achieve an endless number of patterns, including Expanko's signature herringbone, as seen in the Lafayette College Law Library, Easton, Pennsylvania.

to provide workout areas with exercise balls, yoga mats, and blocks in the room,” declares Gillespie. Vallarex is not a hard surface, and it responds very well to “cleaning by ‘Swiffering.’”

“Hotel rooms are renovated every five years whether they need a refresh or not,” Gillespie notes. “Renovation is ongoing; Vallarex floors are recyclable, so they can be removed to recycle. It is sustainable to put in new floors.” For Vallarex wood and stone visuals, high-resolution digital images are printed directly onto the cork veneer, then a layer of heat applied, HTX finish is added. The HTX finish can be used in light to medium commercial spaces, with life spans up to 15 years.

A blend of recycled cork and rubber

Expanko’s Vallarex provides high design with its wood and stone visuals for a floor that is ergonomic, made of recycled materials and is easy to maintain.

XCR4 Cork/Rubber Flooring, is an easy-to-maintain, long-wearing, general purpose flooring material suitable for a wide range of commercial and hospitality—and residential applications. “XCR4 gives the durability of rubber that is not often used a lot in hospitality,” Gillespie explains. “But we find success in fitness weight rooms and workout areas with this industrial rubber due to its color line, acoustics, and good visuals.” Made from a



unique blend of recycled cork and rubber, it combines the benefits of these two components creating a colorful, water resistant, hardwearing floor that is FloorScore® Certified. Cork also can be ground up for bulletin boards or underlayment.

“Hotels are using XCR4 in weight rooms for playful and creative design. Rubber floor is antimicrobial and antibacterial and can transition to a 2.5 mm material for walk off,” explains Gillespie. “The floor can change from recycled rubber to a more refined floor surface area.” Element, a chain of Westin/Starwood Hotels, is using this technique.

Fritztile is known for its stability in high-traffic, providing longevity, low-maintenance, and many varied applications. The product resembles terrazzo in appearance, but is a more flexible material, quieter and easier to install. It is a popular choice in schools and healthcare environments and also a strong choice for motels and food service areas within the hospitality industry.

With The Stonhard Group of products, the floors are meeting the walls and creating smooth, inviting, and welcoming looks where ever they are found. The Stonhard Group’s architectural/engineering representatives are located throughout the country and work with hospitality architects and designers to create technical specifications that meet performance and construction objectives. Their extensive knowledge of Stonhard products as well as the building and design industry is available to specifiers throughout the planning stages of projects. **S**



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