



Concrete Patios

table of Contents

Building a Backyard Oasis	3
Concrete Patios: The Heart of the Backyard Oasis	4
Concrete: More Than Meets the Eye	5
Versatility	5
Durability	5
Affordability	6
Stamped Concrete Goes Above and Beyond	7
Awash in Color	8
Davis Color Chart	9
Resurfacing: Make Existing Concrete Look Like New Again	10
Concrete Patios Complement Surroundings	11
Concrete Maintenance is a Breeze	12
Get Started Today	13
Eight Tips for Hiring a Concrete Contractor	14
About The Concrete Network	15



Read More Online about [Concrete Patios](#) and [Outdoor Living Rooms](#) at www.ConcreteNetwork.com

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com



Aupperle Construction, Morton, IL

building a Backyard Oasis

Upscale landscaping is on the rise, and that includes the popularity of outdoor living space such as decks, porches, patios and small courtyards. Yesterday's boring patios with uncomfortable furniture have quickly been replaced with fireplaces, kitchens, brick pizza ovens and more, all to create dramatic al fresco "living rooms" that extend interior living space into the backyard.

According to Michelle Snyder of the American Society of Interior Designers, "It's kind of about creating a unified space between inside and outside—so that you can't tell so much where the one space ends and the other begins."

From upholstered furniture and televisions, to a tranquil spa-like setting, today's patios are blasting beyond boring and becoming the ultimate in backyard oasis.

Across the country, trends include outdoor courtyards, fireplaces and built-in grills, as well as portable gas heaters, full-scale outdoor dining areas, and spa retreats replete with hot tubs and more.

"Homeowners almost always want an extension of their house. They want something that flows with the indoor flooring, and has shade as well as sun," says Mike Boeddecker, Pristine Concrete, Paso Robles, Calif.

Backyard kitchens are also quickly outdoing their interior counterparts, with cooking equipment, wine storage units, ranges, dishwashers, refrigerators, pizza ovens and bar-beques fit to satisfy any budding chef.

"When you extend your living space outside, suddenly you have so much more space for living in general,"

- Michelle Kodis, author of *Ultimate Backyard*

While the immediate result is a great place to unwind and entertain, homeowners also see upgrading their backyards as an investment.

"We are seeing more and more homeowners interested in dressing up their outdoor living spaces....People are spending money enhancing their homes, not only as an investment vehicle, but to make living in them more pleasurable."

- Jeffrey Grieve, Concrete Art, Carlsbad, Calif.

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

concrete patios: the heart of the Backyard Oasis

While cool outdoor furniture and top-of-the-line barbecues may wow homeowners looking to revamp their backyards, every oasis must be built from the ground up.

The foundation of the backyard oasis can be found underfoot—the concrete patio. Through its versatility, concrete offers unlimited design possibilities, as well as durability and economy.

Gone are the days of boring grey concrete—today's concrete patios are as unique as their owners. From stamping, to staining, to creative color techniques, today's concrete patios will complement any landscape, as well as provide a touch of individuality to a backyard.

Bringing the style and elements of indoor rooms to the outside, concrete can match color, textures, shape and more, all while withstanding weather and remaining virtually maintenance free.

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

Top: Art Over Concrete, Murfreesboro, TN; Bottom: Action Concrete Services, Canton, MI





Custom Crete Creations, Breaux Bridge, LA

concrete: more than **Meets the Eye**

VERSATILITY

Concrete patios are unlike any other type of surface, but what makes concrete stand apart from the rest is its versatility.

"You don't have to settle for the old grey stuff anymore."

- Lawson Edwards, Concrete Creations,
Moore, Oklahoma

Concrete can be shaped into any pattern. It can be lightly smoothed or heavily brushed; surfaced with attractive pebbles; swirled or scored; tinted or painted; patterned; or molded to resemble another material, such as rock or wood. Textured concrete finishes such as float and trowel finishes can include patterns like swirls or different size arcs. The texture created can be coarse, medium, or smooth, depending on the tool used to impart the pattern. Rock salt finishes provide a surface awash in tiny holes.

Exposed aggregate finishes are perfect for patios, driveways, walkways, in bands or fields, and many other flatwork applications. The rock (aggregate) in the concrete mix is exposed by either water pressure, chemical application or by sandblasting.

DURABILITY

In addition to concrete's versatility, concrete is durable and can stand up to a range of weather conditions found across the country. In fact, many companies in colder climates take special measures to ensure the durability of the concrete patios they produce.

"We use a lot of steel and rebar in a 2-foot grid that controls cracking. We also apply many coats of sealer."

- Mike Verlennich, Verlennich Masonry and
Concrete, Staples, Minn

Bill Guthro of Distinctive Concrete in Rowley, Massachusetts, says stamped concrete will last longer than any other type of masonry installation.

Whereas traditional pavers and cobblestone settle unevenly during the freeze/thaw cycle of winter, stamped concrete is reinforced with 3/8-inch steel reinforcing rods placed 24 inches on-center each way, right in the middle of the concrete. This steel reinforcement gives the concrete the necessary tensile strength to resist the constant heaving produced by the freezing and thawing of the ground.

(continued on next page)

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

(continued from previous page)

Stamped concrete is also better than pavers and cobblestone in spring and summer. Pavers and cobblestones are susceptible to joint deterioration if sand is not constantly brushed into all the joints. This joint deterioration results in ant hills, growth of unsightly grass and weeds, and also produces dangerous tripping hazards when the individual pavers settle unevenly.

AFFORDABILITY

Contractors who create concrete patios and those who have concrete patios will quickly tell you concrete patios cost less than those made of stone, brick or tile. Some contractors estimate stamped concrete costs one-third less than the cost of other materials.

Many say that the lower price tag, combined with the wide array of patterns and colors available, is one of the main draws of choosing a concrete patio. Your concrete patio can be stamped to resemble brick, slate, flagstone, stone, tile—even wood.

And keep in mind that your initial outlay for a decorative concrete project is only part of the total cost equation. Concrete generally lasts longer and requires less maintenance than most other paving materials, which can add up to big savings over the pavement's lifetime. Decorative concrete also adds curb appeal and aesthetic value to your home, allowing you to maximize the return on your investment.

“Decorative concrete has become more popular than stone, brick and tile for patios because it costs less, is better in quality and it has the unlimited ability to be created into whatever you want as far as color, texture and pattern go.”

- Mark Foreman, Apex Concrete Designs,
Auburn, Calif.

Top: Art Over Concrete, Murfreesboro, TN; Bottom: Modello Designs



stamped concrete goes Above and Beyond

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then stamped concrete flatters like nothing else can, with its amazing ability to closely replicate, in both color and texture, popular paving materials such as cobblestone, brick, fieldstone and slate, to name a few.

Yet stamped concrete goes well beyond paying homage to these traditional favorites. It surpasses them in many ways, offering greater versatility, economy, long-term performance and ease of installation.

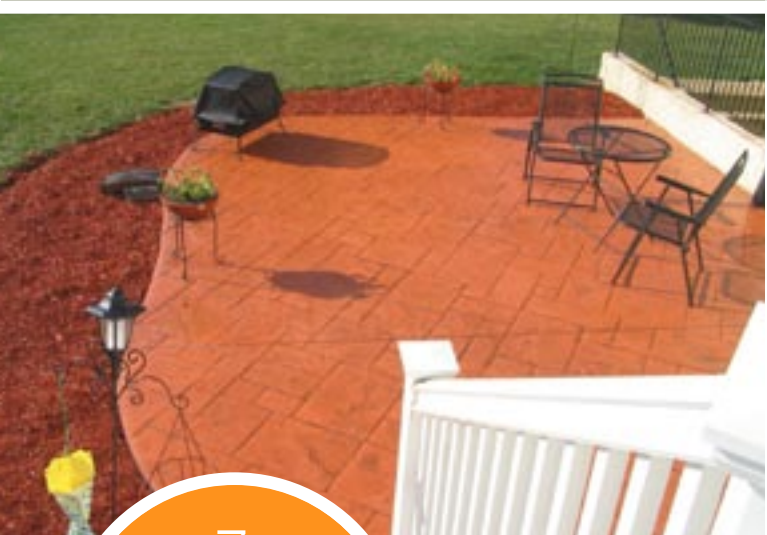
Because stamped concrete is a customized product, it can be tailored to suit your individual design goals and budget, whether you want to achieve a natural look or be wildly innovative.

The main reason for the appeal of stamped concrete is the ever-expanding array of patterns to choose from. Some stamp suppliers carry hundreds of standard patterns, offering even the more common brick, stone or slate designs in many different variations and dimensions.

For a departure from the conventional or to create a themed look, you'll also find an array of specialty stamps in intriguing categories such as plant life, sea and marine life, animal footprints and even fossils. Stamps can also be custom made to reproduce logos and other unique graphics.

Adding to the realism of stamped concrete is a broad range of integral and surface-applied coloring options that permit contractors to bring the stamp patterns to life and precisely replicate the beauty of the materials they mimic.

Salzano Custom Concrete, Centreville, VA



Stamped concrete can also be blended with other decorative concrete elements such as exposed aggregate finishes and acid-etch staining, along with a particular pattern, such as running bond brick, hexagonal tile, worn rock or stone.

Concrete provides the perfect canvas for creating an economical replica of more expensive materials, and yet still maintaining a very natural, authentic look.

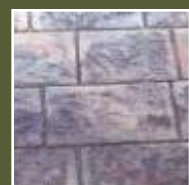
Some of the more common stamp patterns include:



Ashlar Slate



European Fan



Cobblestone



Herringbone



Weathered Wood



Roman Slate Tile



Clay Tile



Granite Tile

Many homeowners don't realize that a stamped concrete patio is a viable option and one that costs less than other patio materials.

"People don't know anything about it. Then they see stamped concrete in a magazine and they have to have it."

- Bill Guthro, Distinctive Concrete of New England

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com



Left: Nobel Concrete, Jenison, MI; Right: New England Hardscapes Inc, Tyngsboro, MA

awash in Color

One of the biggest draws of concrete patios is the expansive range of colors available. Because of ever-advancing technology and jaw-dropping chemical techniques, concrete can be colored in just about any hue you could ever imagine. Some contractors offer upwards of 250 hues and shades.

Two of the most popular methods for coloring newly-placed concrete are integral coloring admixtures and dry-shake color hardeners. Both infuse concrete with rich, long-lasting, fade-resistant color, and in the case of color hardeners, even improve surface hardness and durability.

Stamped concrete contractors often use one or both of these coloring mediums to produce a backdrop for contrasting accent or antiquing colors, such as pigmented powdered or liquid release agents, possibly supplemented by chemical stains or tints. This layering of color is what enables contractors to produce such natural tonal replications.

Color schemes for stamped concrete are often selected to blend with other architectural elements of the home or the natural surroundings. Subtle earth-tone shades are popular for outdoor pavements, but concrete can also be the canvas for bolder, more vivid color schemes. Dyes and newer acrylic-based stains are available in vibrant tones such as red, yellow, orange and cobalt blue. More decorative contractors are using these products to rev up their color palettes.

Property owners, landscape designers and landscape architects are on the constant lookout for methods to improve the appearance of their properties and projects at a reasonable cost.

Colored concrete meets that objective.

The same colored concrete can be made to look different by employing different finishing techniques: A broom finish creates one look. Brooming the concrete in opposite directions creates shadow effects. "Swirl" or "fan" patterns create a different type of look.

For even more dramatic effect, the colored concrete can be lightly sandblasted or heavily sandblasted, or a retarder can be used and then the aggregate exposed.

The availability of custom colors and penetrating stains has translated into concrete patios that are natural-looking and attractive.

"As far as colors go, earth tones are big—the tans and browns."

- Lawson Edwards, Concrete Creations, Moore, Oklahoma

There are several different manufacturers that make integral colors to be mixed with concrete. On the following page you'll find a sampling from one company.

davis colors

mix-ready® Color Card

Color Group: Subtle



Sandstone
5237



Canyon
160



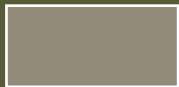
Santa Fe
1117



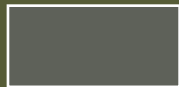
Pebble
641



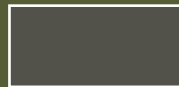
Dune
6058



Outback
677



Siversmoke
8084



Light Gray
8084



Dark Gray
8.84

Color Group: Standard



Mocha
6058



Rustic Brown
6058



San Diego Buff
5237



Sangria
1117



Sunset Rose
160



Baja Red
160



Sequoia Sand
641



Southern Blush
10134



Salmon
10134



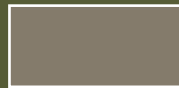
Mesa Buff
5447



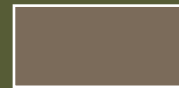
Omaha Tan
5084



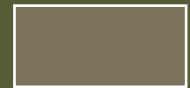
Harvest Gold
5084



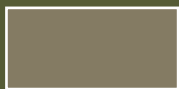
Mesquite
677



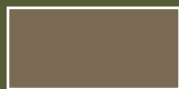
Taupe
677



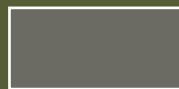
Sierra
61078



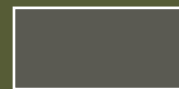
Bayou
6130



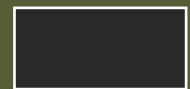
Cocoa
6130



Pewter
860



Cobblestone
860



Graphite
8084

Color Group: Premium



tile Red
1117



Brick Red
160



Terra Cotta
10134



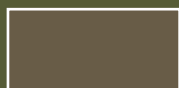
Spanish Gold
5084



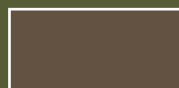
Palomino
5447



Flagstone Brown
641



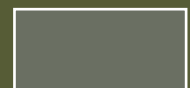
Adobe
61078



Kahlua
677



Willow Green
5376

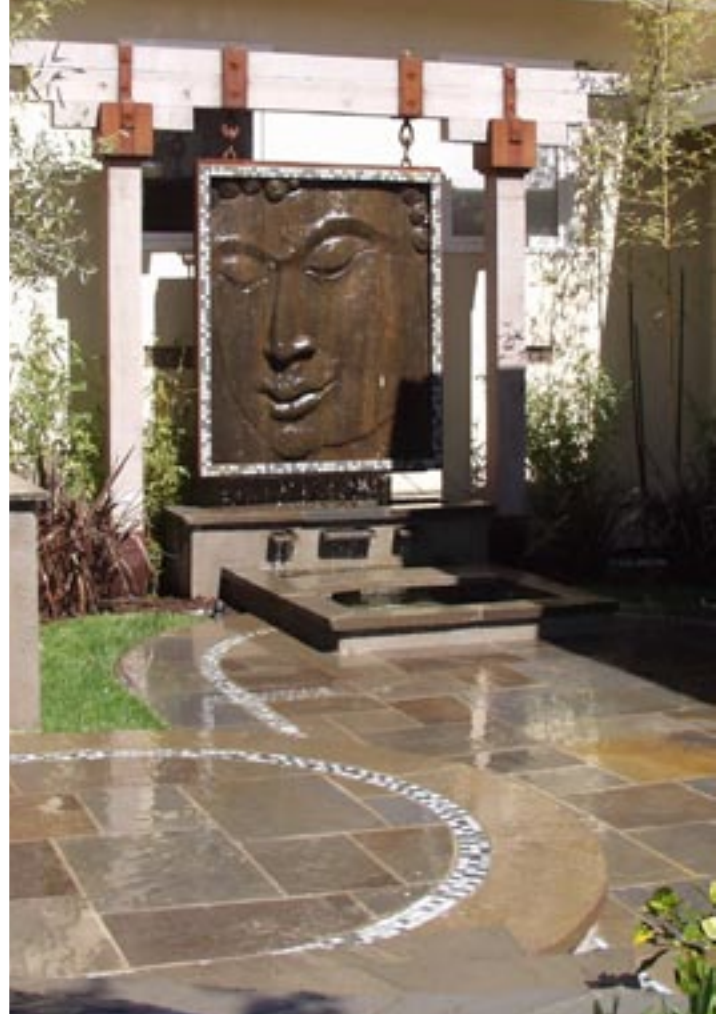


Green Slate
3685

Find more information about coloring concrete at [Davis Colors](https://www.davis-colors.com)

resurfacing: make existing concrete look like **New Again**

Top: Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, CA; Bottom: Salzano Custom Concrete, Centreville, VA



Conventional wisdom holds that old concrete, with cracks, surface discoloration or surface imperfections, must be removed and replaced if improving the look of the concrete is the goal. Often homeowners are discouraged by their cement flooring or other concrete areas, not realizing the option available to them to resurface their already existing concrete.

Resurfacing can range from simply making the concrete look like new again to upgrading the surface with a variety of colors and patterns.

It's best to consult a professional to determine if your concrete can be resurfaced, as there are instances where resurfacing is not a viable option. In general, concrete that is cracked only on the surface or has very thin cracks, where each side of the crack is still level (there is no settlement), can be successfully fixed.

Some companies also install resin-modified cementitious concrete coatings systems that simulate brick, stone, tile, slate and epoxy floors.

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

concrete patios complement Surroundings

Another appealing benefit of a concrete patio is that because it can be created in so many textures, patterns, and colors, it is the perfect choice for blending into your backyard environment, whether you have a modest-sized patio and barbecue area, or you have a sprawling, luxurious outdoor retreat spilling over with amenities.

Combining concrete with other materials like brick, tile or flagstone is also popular.

Once the concrete patio is in place, it is the perfect complement to additional amenities like swimming pools, water features, outdoor kitchens, sinks, burners, warmers, refrigerators—even storage areas.

“Lighting is also big. Homeowners want lighting that reflects their mood for parties, romance, family, or just a great backdrop...They want a vacation spot they can go to every day.”

- Mike Boeddeker, Pristine Concrete,
Paso Robles, Calif.

Many contractors view themselves as part contractor, part designer, part artisan. They'll help you create whatever you are envisioning for your concrete patio and accompanying backyard retreat.

“I take whatever abstract elements the homeowner is envisioning and with creativity and passion bring them to life.”

- Tom Ralston, Tom Ralston Concrete,
Santa Cruz, California

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

QC Construction Products





Tom Ralston Concrete, Santa Cruz, CA

concrete maintenance is a Breeze

Cleaning and sealing stamped and colored concrete should be done on a regular basis just like any other home maintenance. The frequency will depend on how high a traffic area it is, as well as what type of traffic (cars, foot traffic, water, chemicals) the concrete is exposed to.

Distinctive Concrete of New England recommends resealing every two or three years. If you wait longer, you may notice the color fade slightly. But just like waxing a car, reseal your stamped concrete and the color will be as vibrant as the day it was installed.

Distinctive Concrete offers the following maintenance plan:

1. Rinse dirt/debris off stamped concrete surface with a garden hose or pressure washer.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid dish soap to surface and scrub with a push broom.
3. Rinse well with a garden hose or pressure washer until there is no sign of soapsuds.
4. DRY surface completely by using a leaf blower or by waiting 24 hours to air dry.

DO NOT APPLY SEALER TO A DAMP/WET SURFACE.

5. Once the surface is completely dry, apply the sealer as follows:
 - Stir in one jar of Anti-Skid material to a 5-gallon pail of sealer.
 - APPLY SEALER USING A 1" NAP ROLLER ONLY. ANTI-SKID MATERIAL WILL NOT TRANSFER THROUGH A SPRAYER. Apply sealer in approximately 2-foot by 4-foot sections. This will ensure full coverage without missed spots. Keep stirring sealer while applying to keep the Anti-Skid suspended in the sealer.
 - Sealer should be applied when air temperature is above 55° F. Best results will be obtained by applying sealer during cooler temperatures — fall and spring — or before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. in summer months when surface temperatures should be under 90° F.
6. A second coat can be applied after the first coat is tack free (not sticky to your touch).
7. Your stamped concrete should be resealed every two to three years to protect your investment. One 5-gallon pail of sealer will cover approximately 1,000 square feet.

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com



Top: Salzano Custom Concrete, Centreville, VA; Bottom: New England Hardscapes, Inc, Tyngsboro, MA



get started Today

Clearly, concrete is the material of choice for the heart of the backyard oasis—the patio. Not only does concrete offer unlimited design possibilities, but it also provides durability at an affordable price.

Everything you wanted to know about [concrete patios](#) and [outdoor living rooms](#) is just a click away. And don't forget, you can get some amazing ideas for your project in The Concrete Network's comprehensive [photo gallery](#), so you'll know just what you want when you're ready to hire a contractor.

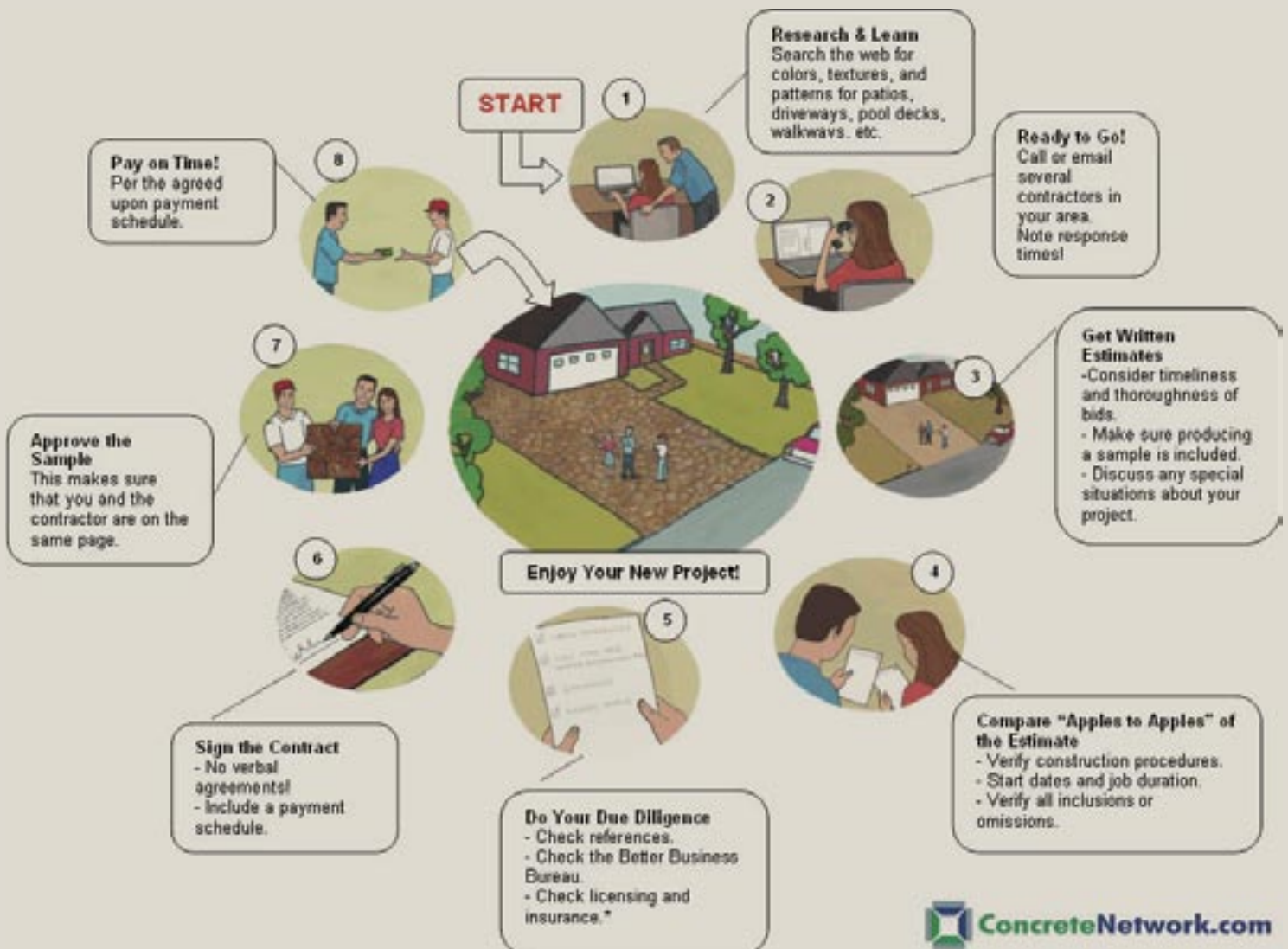
Go to ConcreteNetwork.com and [find a contractor](#) in your area who can help you get started building the backyard oasis of your dreams.

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com

eight tips for hiring a Concrete Contractor

Use this guide to make sure you're prepared when it comes to hiring a contractor. These 8 simple steps are your key to knowing what information you should look for, what questions you should ask, and to understanding some vital do's and don'ts during the process. Your preparedness can make a difference in how smoothly your project gets installed. Print a copy of this diagram and refer to it through each step of your project. Before you know it, you'll be enjoying your new concrete too!

Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com





Michael Rogers Studios, Salem, OR

about the Concrete Network

The Concrete Network (www.concretenetwork.com), located in Yucaipa, Calif., is the largest and most comprehensive resource online for concrete information. Over 1.1 million people visited the site in May 2007 to read articles, get design ideas, and to search its extensive directory for a concrete contractor in their area.

Established in 1999, The Concrete Network's purpose is to educate homeowners, contractors, builders, and designers on popular decorative techniques and applications. With thousands of articles, photographs, and a comprehensive directory of concrete contractors, The Concrete Network is a repository of information about the industry's products and services, including stamped concrete, stained concrete floors, concrete countertops, polished concrete, and much more.

The site excels at connecting buyers with local contractors in their area through its Find-A-Contractor service. The service provides visitors with a list of decorative concrete contractors throughout the U.S. and Canada, and is fully searchable by 23 types of decorative concrete work and 200 regional areas throughout North America. The directory is organized by area and specialty, such as patios, pool decks, driveways, countertops, floors, stamped concrete, and water features, among many others.

Site visitors can choose their local area and view concrete contractors and concrete products, obtain full contact information for the listed businesses, and contact them directly.

The Concrete Network was founded by Jim Peterson, a former Vice President of a major concrete contractor in Riverside, Calif. During the 1999 World of Concrete Trade Show in Las Vegas, Peterson had the idea to create an industry portal on the World Wide Web for all things related to concrete.



Find a Contractor in Your Local Area - www.ConcreteNetwork.com