



PRESS RELEASE

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Technology trends at Stone+tec 2018: Safe processing and installation of XL ceramic slabs

Ceramic materials are becoming increasingly popular, especially for bathroom design. Floor coverings and wall claddings in Dekton, Lapitec, Neolith, Laminam and other such materials offer stonemasons a lot of benefits as a complement to their natural stone product ranges. With sheet thicknesses starting at 3 mm, processors save weight for transport and installation. In addition, the large-format raw slabs made from porcelain stoneware allow for custom solutions with a seamless look. Special tools and other aids are necessary so that nothing goes wrong when handling the costly raw slabs and workpieces. At Stone+tec 2018 from 13 to 16 June in Nuremberg, exhibitors will showcase innovative solutions for artisanal and industrial processors.

With slab thicknesses starting at 3 mm and edge lengths up to more than 3 metres, the latest generation techno ceramics are sophisticated materials. Stonemasons are therefore looking for safe and cost-effective solutions for processing, transporting and installing it. In many cases, cutting to size and edge finishing are done on machines that the stonemason also uses for natural stone. However, the new materials impose very particular requirements. The differences start with storage, as XL ceramic is usually delivered and stored flat. Special vacuum lifting equipment is necessary to be able to pick up the stacked slabs. The vacuum lifter T400 ceramic developed by Weha enables the slabs to be lifted carefully and manoeuvred directly onto the cutting bench or bridge saw. The lightweight design lifting device exerts very little pressure on the slabs when they are picked up, explains Weha product manager Roman Nagy. If a thicker slab in an upright position is taken from an A-frame storage rack, the slewing to horizontal position by maximum 90 degrees is done using a pneumatic cylinder.

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Although ceramic slabs are very strong once installed, they are susceptible to the kinds of spot stresses and thermal loads during processing caused for example by the high-speed angle grinders often used in natural stone processing. For cutting to size and drilling therefore, machines with infinitely variable speed control are recommended, explains Managing Director Peter Galeski from machine manufacturer Galeski. For example, the company's Smart Cutter 125 Vario dry cutter, which is fitted with an extraction connection, works in a range of 1,900 – 9,500 rpm and is part of the "Tile" system case. The tool set for workshop and site also includes e.g. a Genius grinding and polishing machine for dry use.

Simple and permanent bonding

Composite materials also need special consideration when it comes to construction chemicals. For bonding porcelain stoneware, XL ceramics etc., Tenax, for example, has developed the bonding system Powerbond. It consists of 37 shades in double cartridges. Resin and curing agents are pre-dosed and are mixed in the dispensing gun. According to Tenax Germany Managing Director Jost J. Plewa, Powerbond is distinguished by a short curing time of 45 – 60 minutes. Following curing the surface of the product, which is suitable for indoor and outdoor use, is smooth, glossy and easily polished. In addition, the manufacturer says that the system does not contain any volatile organic compounds (VOC) and complies with LEED standards.

Alongside ease of processing, UV resistance is also a key factor. For on-trend white and other light-coloured surfaces, Akemi has developed the polyurethane adhesive Everclear 225. The two-component adhesive in a cartridge is virtually non-yellowing and VOC-free. Its creamy consistency allows it to be used for vertical joints such as those typical of wall and facade claddings, explains Akemi Managing Director Dr Dirk Hamann. Everclear is designed for indoor and outdoor use and bonds ceramic materials as well as hard stone.

Reap the benefits of personal exchanges

At Stone+tec 2018 numerous other vendors will present their technical innovations for the processing and installation of ceramic materials. Moreover, this year's special show "Technology and Chemistry" will



specifically focus on the use of natural and engineered stone in kitchen benchtops. Anyone who is new to the processing of hard and densely fired materials would be well advised to obtain comprehensive information about this area at the trade fair. Handling XL ceramic is both technically and financially demanding, so any mistakes quickly become expensive. In personal conversations with consultants from the manufacturers of tools, machines and construction chemicals, visitors to Stone+tec can learn about what works well in individual cases and how these materials can profitably extend their existing product ranges. The trade fair also offer plenty of opportunities for knowledge-sharing with colleagues.

For more news about Stone+tec 2018, visit: www.stone-tec.com/en/news

About Stone+tec

Stone+tec, the international trade fair for natural stone and stone processing, is organised by NürnbergMesse with honorary sponsorship from the DNV (German Natural Stone Association) and BIV (Association of German Stonemasons). It also receives international support from Confindustria Marmomacchine, the Italian Association for Natural Stone Working Machinery and Equipment. With over 15,000 trade visitors in 2015, Stone+tec is the most important gathering for the natural stone industry in the German-speaking regions.

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