



Set In (Stylish) Concrete



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Concrete has long been a part of our homes, usually on the basement and garage floors and laundry tubs that are so big and heavy that they have to be busted up to haul out. In the house I grew up in there was no better surface for roller skating than our basement. The grey concrete floor was smooth and fast with none of the pebbles or cracks that troubled my flow on the sidewalk outside. That smoothness makes concrete so appealing—one continuous slab that isn't broken up by grout or seams. It has an organic look that's is both modern and rustic. Versatile too, with the ability to take on a variety of colors through staining, dyeing or coatings to give it a rich metallic look. Cement can be polished for a shiny appearance or waxed for a more subtle finish. It's durable, of course, but also stain and moisture resistant and doesn't harbor mold, mildew or other allergens which makes it a remarkably clean surface. The drawbacks are that it's hard underfoot and cold, like tile. Radiant heat can help warm it up as can direct sunlight as concrete retains heat well. Here are some ways homeowners are using it.

Bathtubs

Since concrete holds heat well it would seem ideal for a bathtub, and it would feel as good as it looks. But concrete is heavy and that may be an issue for some homes, so check that out with a structural engineer or consider a composite concrete that's lighter (like the one pictured below); a cement wrap with a fiberglass insert.

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