HACIENDA MOSAICO
Project Spotlight

BUILDING OWNER:
Sam Leonard
Hacienda Mosaico
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

INSTALLER / DESIGNER:
Bonnie Fitzgerald
Maverick Mosaics
Vienna, Virginia
Swimmin’ with the Fishes at Hacienda Mosaico

The Situation

“Every artist was first an amateur,” said American philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century.

While Emerson’s craft was words, deep in the heart of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, an artist-owned and operated resort called Hacienda Mosaico celebrates creativity through our hands. Designed to offer accessible art and inspirational workshops to students in a non-competitive setting, the resort boasts an exotic and tropical backdrop to fuel ideas in a fun, group atmosphere.

Virginia-based artist, author and educator Bonnie Fitzgerald has been an in-house instructor at Hacienda Mosaico for six years, where she annually leads five-day workshops. As the founder and owner of Maverick Mosaics, she has gained notoriety in North America as an expert in mosaic artwork. Each year, Fitzgerald’s workshop at the resort allows students to create and install pieces to be displayed throughout the expansive property, including mosaic tables and fused glass tableware.

Along with 12 students, Fitzgerald recently designed and completed an art installation in the lush garden area surrounding the resort pool called “Swimmin’ with the Fishes.” Using LATICRETE® products, Fitzgerald’s pupils learned installation techniques, how to best choose appropriate substrates and tips to avoid substandard products that can lead to weak, crumbling outdoor mosaics.

“LATICRETE is known for delivering the highest quality products and value, which allowed me to focus on my art and not the integrity of my installation materials. With the support of LATICRETE co-owner and Senior Vice President of Training Henry Rothberg, I received all materials needed to completely transform the pool area of Hacienda Mosaico with my students,” said Fitzgerald. “The research and development of the products, as well as the customer and technical service, are all top shelf. From the beginning, LATICRETE was just a call away if help was ever needed.”

The Challenge

Simplicity: Maverick Mosaics’ workshops at Hacienda Mosaico are open to all levels of artists, including those who have zero experience with mosaics. To ensure a successful installation, the materials needed to be easy-to-handle for a professional or a complete beginner.

Weight: Fitzgerald would be tasked with flying materials from Virginia to the resort to Mexico. It was important all products selected be light, as heavyweight products would cause an additional undertaking when traveling.

A LATICRETE Solution

While at her home studio, Fitzgerald and her team of professionals cut the 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) HYDRO BAN® Board with a jigsaw into the desired shapes, including turtles, seaweed and an octopus, that would be installed with mosaic tiles at Hacienda Resort by the students attending the workshop. Due to the products’ light weight, Fitzgerald was able to travel to the Mexican resort with the pre-engineered pieces in checked suitcases.

Thanks to its waterproof high-density extruded polystyrene core and waterproof membrane on both sides, HYDRO BAN Board offers triple...
protection from water and vapor intrusion. The product benefits are ideal for outdoor installations, such as what Fitzgerald was creating at the resort pool.

“In the past, I have used locally sourced thin-set and found it was more difficult to work with given the ratio of sand to portland cement that affects the consistency of the product. I know I can count on easy-to-use LATICRETE® products for a lasting installation,” added Fitzgerald.

To adhere the mosaic designs to the exterior wall overlooking the resort pool, 254 Platinum was chosen thanks to its superior strength and bond. Designed for a simple install, the high performance polymer fortified mortar only requires water to be mixed, making it easier for the students to work with as opposed to a product with a more complicated mixing process. 254 Platinum also has a long open time for enhanced workability that allowed students to work at their own pace without having to rush.

All raw edges were covered with alkali-resistant fiberglass mesh tape and a skim coat of 254 Platinum that the students colored black with concrete colorants. A few of the pieces, including the octopus’ tentacles, that were installed with mosaic tiles around the edges to enhance its aesthetic appeal.

The 12 students who attended the workshop were hands-on throughout the entire creative and fabrication process, which Fitzgerald made as simple as possible with the installation materials chosen and her techniques. Each of the elements were built on the substrate, grouted in the studio on-site and then screwed and glued to the plaster lathe wall.

Outcome

“We are thrilled with the final result of “Swimmin’ with the Fishes” and intend to keep the project as a permanent installation at Hacienda Mosaico,” said resort owner Sam Leonard. “The work Bonnie has done to enhance Hacienda Mosaico through her workshops and use of LATICRETE® products is immeasurable and makes this place live up to its name.”

Fitzgerald’s seventh trip to Hacienda Mosaico is scheduled for January 2019.

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– Bonnie Fitzgerald,
Owner of Maverick Mosaics