

A photograph of a kitchen interior. The cabinets are a dark, rich wood color. A stainless steel range hood is mounted above a countertop. The lighting is warm, creating a cozy atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Mer-Krete products highlight the beauty of efficiency at The Atlantic condominium tower

by Randy Schultz

Even in today's troubled economic times, cities must grow and evolve. Landscapes change and skylines reflect new visions and shifting directions. Though not immune from construction pullbacks, Atlanta, Ga., continues to reinvent itself and make its case as one of the South's most enduring symbols of urban energy and hospitality.

Atlantic Station, a 138-acre live-work-play community featuring high-rise residences, office towers, retail establishments and a flagship hotel, offers proof that Atlanta is still planning its future with verve and imagination. One of the keystones of this dynamic project is The Atlantic, an elegant 46-story Art Deco-style condominium tower offering upscale living quarters with dazzling views of Buckhead and Midtown. In keeping with the building's sophisticated, contemporary tone, the residences feature sleek architectural lines and an abundance of rich tile accents. Clearly, the tile and stone installations here required experienced hands and innovative products.

Steady performer

That's why Andrews & Associates, the primary tile installer at The Atlantic, called upon a familiar, trusted name in Mer-Krete Systems to provide all of the stone and tile underflooring products. Mer-Krete, a division of ParexLahabra, had assisted Andrews on the very successful renovation of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport a couple of years earlier. Mer-Krete's steady performance on



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- BRIGHT WHITE
- MEETS LEED (IAQ CR 4.1)



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that job, coupled with the convenience of its Dalton, Ga., manufacturing facility, convinced Andrews to return to its dependable source once more.

Mer-Krete provided, through the largest U.S. distributor Daltile, a host of vital components, including Mer-Krete's patented 801 Self-Curing Thin-Set, Mer-Stik dry polymer mastic adhesive and the Sound-Shield 7000 sound-suppression mat, in addition to Mer-Krete grouts and other installation enhance-

Mer-Krete 801 Thin-Set plays an integral role in the Sound-Shield 7000 noise reduction system. Since the product is self-curing, it dries quickly and delivers superior, shrinkage-free bond strength.



ments. All of the residential entryways, bathroom floors, backsplashes, tub and shower surrounds, as well as the lobby areas, required numerous problem-solving materials from the Mer-Krete arsenal – approximately 170,000 square feet in the residences and 20,000 square feet in the lobbies and common areas.

“It’s been a dream job so far,” said Jim Nassar, Andrews & Associates’ senior project manager for The Atlantic. “All of the products are performing extremely well, and the Mer-Stik mastic has been a perfect choice for working in a 46-story building such as this. Because Mer-Stik comes in powder form, it’s lightweight and easy to carry around, so we save a lot of time bringing it up and down. It mixes up smoothly and it sets quickly, enabling us to grout our tiles in less than four hours. Mer-Stik also maintains its consistency so you just cover the pail at the end of the day and use it again the next morning. It’s a truly revolutionary concept in adhesive technology.”

Keeping it quiet

The Andrews team, led by Nassar and John Melilli, director of operations, selected Mer-Krete’s Sound-Shield 7000 sound mat for multiple reasons, as well. Sound-rated up to 63, more than 20 percent higher than the recommended IIC rating number, fiber-reinforced Sound-Shield 7000 is also an ANSI A118.2 rated anti-fracture membrane and acts as a 100 percent water vapor barrier. Mer-Krete 801 Thin-Set plays an integral role in the Sound-Shield noise reduction system since, typical of effective



sound-reducing materials, the mat is non-porous, leaving no room for moisture release when laying porcelain tile on top. But the 801 product is a self-curing mortar that dries quickly without requiring a traditional evaporative process and delivers superior, shrinkage-free bond strength. The 801 Thin-Set has provided such outstanding results that Andrews Tile is utilizing it on all of the flat surface areas, even those without the sound mat.

Versatile Mer-Stik mastic adhesive is designated as a zero VOC product.

“We really love the way that 801 Thin-Set cures,” noted

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Melilli. "It's helped to dramatically speed up our applications throughout the entire building. The combination of the 801 and 705 Thin-Sets for the different areas gives us a lot of flexibility and helps us to maintain a cost-efficient process."

Installer/supplier coordination is essential

Andrews, an established Georgia-based company that has worked on condominium projects, health facilities, hotels and upscale retail establishments, as well as the Atlanta airport concourse, is utilizing a variety of tile and stone selections for The Atlantic. Approximately 90 percent of the materials are Italian porcelain, and they include 12x12 floor tiles, 6x6 wall tiles and upgrade materials such as large-

format Carrera marble and travertine.

The marketing and sales group for The Atlantic has given homebuyers the option to customize various aspects, such as color, size and pattern, of the tile selections. As a result, Andrews' tile installation team has been working throughout the tower in specific phases. This has added another layer of scheduling and management that requires good communication and coordination between installer and supplier.

"We've been taking great care to facilitate things wherever possible," said Richard Johnson, Mid-Atlantic sales representative for Mer-Krete. "As our distributor in the area, Daltile has been very helpful, even storing some of the Mer-Krete materials at their nearby Duluth facility until Andrews has needed them. This combination of service has ensured

Mer-Krete's extensive system warranty gave tile installer Andrews & Andrews added assurance.





Homebuyers have the option to customize various aspects, such as color, size and pattern, of the tile selections.

CRACK ISOLATION

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that Andrews has received everything on time, *every* time. And, of course, on the other side, Jim Nassar and John Melilli have been very instrumental in keeping the process running smoothly.”

System warranty adds assurance

Nassar has strong praise not only for the Mer-Krete products that his company is using at The Atlantic, but also for the extensive system warranty

Virtually all Mer-Krete materials are being shipped to the site from its Dalton manufacturing facility, less than 80 miles from Atlanta, qualifying for LEED credits.



provided by Mer-Krete.

“The warranty was important to us because we always prefer single-source responsibility on a large job,” said Nassar. “Mer-Krete was the one supplier who came to the table and gave us a warranty that met our requirements and provided us with the support and assurances that we felt were necessary to move forward.”

Clint Anna, Mer-Krete national sales manager, stressed that his organization’s confidence in its products is the reason that such a significant system warranty is offered.

“We believe 100 percent in what we manufacture and sell,” Anna emphasized. “That’s why we stand so firmly behind our products and services. The warranty is an essential part of our entire marketing approach. We’ve built our name upon solid, long-term relationships with our customers, and this is another example of establishing that important trust.”

Products, local sourcing offer green solutions

Mer-Krete also offers many “green” solutions with its products, such as those being used at The Atlantic. Sound-Shield 7000 is composed of recycled tires and, like the versatile Mer-Stik mastic adhesive, is desig-

nated as a zero VOC product. Virtually all of the Mer-Krete materials are being shipped to the site from Mer-Krete's Dalton manufacturing facility, less than 80 miles from Atlanta, qualifying for LEED credits by helping to reduce gas mileage and carbon emissions.

Tile work is about 75 percent completed at The Atlantic, which will be the tallest building in Midtown Atlanta and will feature a doorman, 24/7 concierge service, a spa retreat and, just a few steps from the front door, a restaurant and lounge. Pleasant green spaces, trendy cafes and open-air retail shops will add to the upscale ambience of this "community within a community."

In many ways, that same sense of

community has contributed to the successful tile application process here at The Atlantic – the result of good communication among all members of a diversified team at every level. And all of this is held together by a strong foundation of proven Mer-Krete products that make it possible to work faster, think greener and build smarter in a construction atmosphere where every detail demands efficiency.

Randy Schultz is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer with more than 27 years of experience and over 25 national and local writing awards to his credit. He has written articles for a number of magazines, in addition to commercials, video scripts and live productions.

SOUND CONTROL

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