

Tops Terrazzo: Diner's Rebuild Serves Up Award-Winning Style

New Jersey diner culture is redefined in Tops Diner's new edition, which has been recognized for its terrazzo floor's design and craftsmanship.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, USA, May 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Golemis brothers, the owners of Tops Diner, expanded the iconic 1942 diner's footprint to spark a rebirth of the New Jersey diner culture, opening a new restaurant in 2021. Built on the original site, the new diner is three times larger and designed to accommodate up to 20,000 customers weekly. Crafted to capture the retro feel of the old-school diner but with a futuristic vibe, the new restaurant brings back terrazzo, a staple of the traditional American diner aesthetic. The new diner, envisioned by [Parts and Labor Design](#) of New York, is a winsome update on nostalgia that harmoniously blends form, light, and color. Its handcrafted terrazzo floor has now been recognized with a national award.



TERRAZZO flooring at the new Tops Diner was recognized by the National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association's 2024 Honor Award program. Photos by Jon Lattin

“

Terrazzo gave us the creative freedom to push the design language at Tops Diner. The way forward is to continue to push ourselves in the built environment and bring pleasure and joy to occupants.”

*Luke Lasky, Studio Director,
Parts and Labor Design*

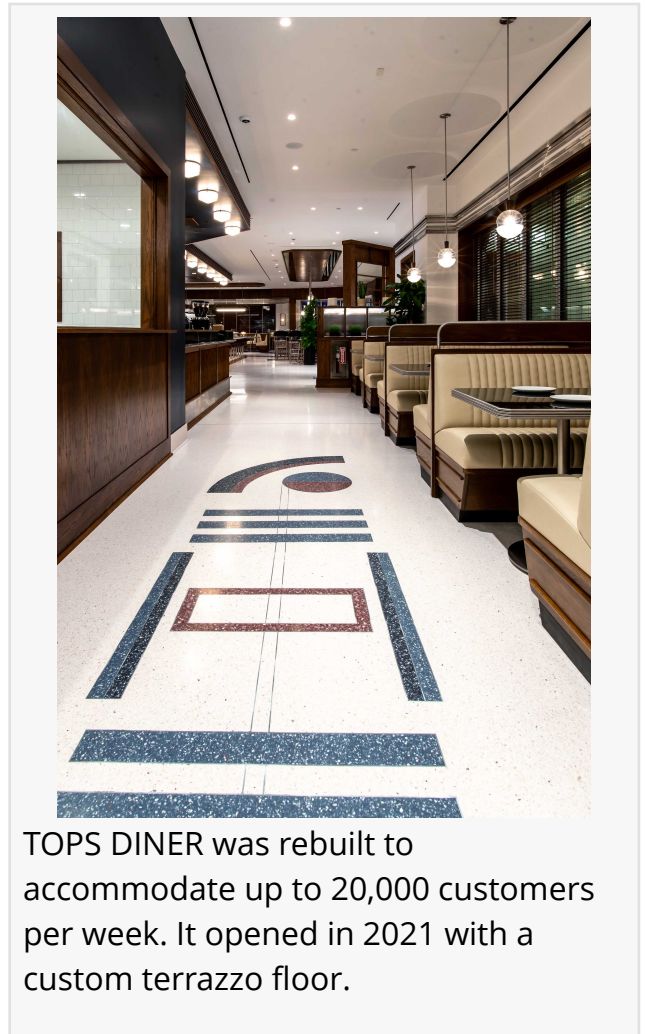
Imperial Flooring of Freehold, New Jersey, the terrazzo contractor on the project, was recognized by the [National Terrazzo & Mosaic Association](#) (NTMA) with a 2024 Honor Award for the installation. The award, presented in Tucson on April 17 at the association's annual convention, is based on the project's design, craftsmanship, and scope.

The terrazzo floor, a masterpiece of design and quality, is a testament to Imperial Flooring's skill. Four colors of epoxy terrazzo, blended with mother-of-pearl, marble, and onyx aggregate chips and divided by zinc strips, were poured in place. The custom-designed floor patterns and mid-

century-style motifs serve as subtle wayfinding within the restaurant while reinforcing the design intent. Everything from benches to lighting was custom-designed, including terrazzo tabletops to match the floor.

Many of the radial strips and larger logo designs were produced in a metal fabrication shop and soldered to mesh for installation. Each patterned section came together like a puzzle, with some composed of up to 10 separate pieces.

Parts & Labor Design's studio director, Luke Lasky, recognized that the project was a challenging and exciting opportunity. He explained that because the identities of Tops Diner and the Golemis family are so strong in the community and the state, in addition to the state's famous diner culture, the design team "was apprehensive but confident. We understood the pressure of the situation." Tops Diner, purchased by the Golemis family in 1972, has been named the "most iconic" restaurant in New Jersey and "the best diner in the country."



TOPS DINER was rebuilt to accommodate up to 20,000 customers per week. It opened in 2021 with a custom terrazzo floor.

Mr. Lasky reported that the community showed a great deal of interest in the project during construction. The owners were also personally invested in the design and functionality of the new diner—an investment that continues to pay off in the restaurant's ongoing popularity and in a facility that surpasses expectations.

"They could've knocked down the original diner and built something bland. People would have still come," Mr. Lasky said, "but they took the opportunity to not just replicate the past or keep it simple but to provide the next generation with pleasure and joy." The award-winning terrazzo floor plays a significant role in that joy.

Mr. Lasky believes the interior design "bridges the gap between generations." That their design objectives had been met was evident when an older couple asked to come in during a photo shoot before the restaurant opened. Their approval was obvious as they took pictures and recounted to Mr. Lasky their happiest memories of the historic diner.

"Terrazzo is a timeless material and one of the quintessential pieces of the American diner experience," Mr. Lasky noted. He believes the floor will be just as appropriate in 20 years as it would have been 60 years ago.

“The sky is the limit with what you can do with it graphically, by virtue of it being a poured material, for subtle wayfinding and the all-over color story,” he said. “It’s a great material; it lasts a long time and is truly beautiful.”

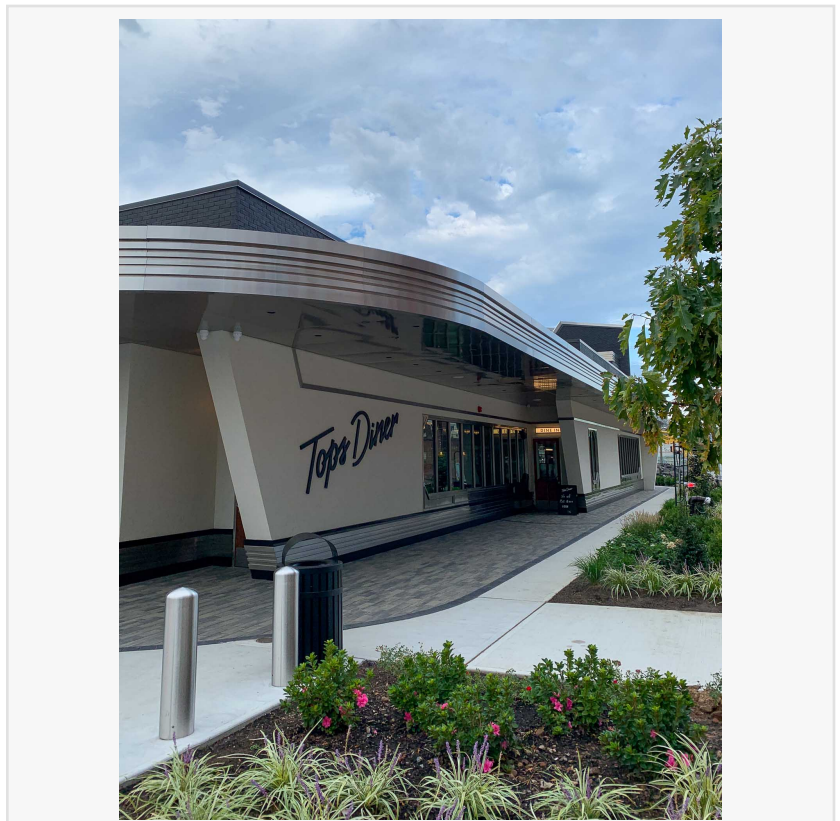
The NTMA’s annual Honor Award program recognizes outstanding terrazzo projects its members submit. The program promotes member contractors as the sole qualified resource for terrazzo installations that meet industry standards. Terrazzo veterans and design professionals evaluate the entries.

The NTMA is a full-service nonprofit trade association headquartered in Fredericksburg, Texas. Founded in 1923, the NTMA establishes national standards for terrazzo systems for floor and vertical applications. Its mission is to promote quality craftsmanship and creativity in terrazzo while supporting its 152 members in their trade and service to the construction industry.

The NTMA provides complimentary services to architects, interior designers, artists, general contractors, maintenance professionals, and property owners. From helping the design community write specifications to providing technical assistance, the NTMA’s goal is to help ensure quality terrazzo installations.

Terrazzo is a composite material. Developed in 15th-century Italy, terrazzo descended from the mosaic artistry of Ancient Rome. It evolved as a sustainable building system as resourceful Venetian marble workers discovered a creative way to reuse discarded stone chips. Terrazzo artisans still pour terrazzo by hand on the construction site, with options for precast and waterjet-cut elements.

Stone, recycled glass, or other aggregates, often sourced locally, are embedded in a cement or epoxy base and polished to reveal the chips. Terrazzo combines design flexibility with ease of maintenance and durability to last the life of the building.



THE ICONIC diner was rebuilt in a retro-modern style.



THE NATIONAL
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& MOSAIC ASSOCIATION

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