

# What's Happening in Masonry

by: Gary Porter



## Spray Cork Anyone?

A few weeks ago, I was watching my favorite DIY show, Holmes & Homes with Mike Holmes. (Now his kids are into the business.) I like to watch this guy as he investigates problems in residential construction, demos the problem (this is the part the workers like) and fixes them better than they were with the motto "Do It Right The First Time".



The recent episode I watched involved a current employee's home and involved removal of an existing swimming pool that was not well maintained, turning the back yard into a nice grassy area for the dog, a new dog house, (he loved it), new kitchen and when they were looking at the exterior, which was brick, they decided to use spray cork over the existing brick? It really changed the look!

In my masonry career, I had not heard of spray cork. I know that cork as a material is green, it is renewable, it does not grow mold, it is a good insulator, has a positive aesthetic feel, sustainable. On the show, they mixed the cork with a liquid in a 5 gallon pail, then sprayed it onto the masonry with what looked like a paint sprayer and created a finish that still let the mortar joints and texture in the brick slightly visible, but added a new stucco-like look.

## Spray Cork Anyone? (cont.)

### An Eco-Friendly Solution

#### Renewable & Sustainable

Cork is a renewable resource. It's harvested from the bark of the cork tree, which grows back every 10 years. But we're not harvesting cork directly - we use cork left over from the wine cork manufacturing process that would otherwise be discarded, making spray cork both renewable and recycled.



The company that reps this cork product is in Alberta Canada.

Here are the properties of spray cork: It looks like stucco and lasts like paint.

#### Description

- Thermal Insulating ( $K=0.232$ )
- Acoustic Insulation ( $\alpha_w = 0.05$ )
- • Waterproof but water vapour-permeable ( $0.08\text{kg/m}^2\text{h}0.5$ )
- • Fire retardant (flame test:  $< 150\text{mm}$  in 60s)
- • Strong adhesion 10MPa
- • highest available cork-to-resin ratio in the industry
- • 10 Year Warranty against product defects

LEED-Certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

#### Other properties:

It resists cracks – since it is acrylic resin based not cement based. Fills a 1/8" hole!

Long lasting color – fades slowly (1%) per year where as mortar fades (10%) per year? Did not know this.

Any shade of color you can imagine

Sprays on quickly – like paint, does not slump, no leveling or troweling required.

Dries quickly – 5 hours

Keeps water out yet it is breathable. This is like the siloxane sealers for waterproofing masonry.

Spray cork can be shipped to the US or Canada. It comes in a thick or fine texture. It costs \$100/gal, and requires a primer at \$130/gal.

## Spray Cork Anyone? (cont.)

Here is a quote from Mike Holmes:

*If you are serious about saving energy and keeping your house cool in the summer (and warm in the winter), think about getting a high-quality cork spray product installed on the exterior of your home to help insulate it from the outside. It can be applied over any surface — wood, brick, stucco, steel, aluminum siding, vinyl siding, shingles, etc... I used it on my house and my energy bills have been cut by almost 40 per cent.*

Mike Holmes

Builder, Contractor and TV Host

From my investigation, this product has been available for at least 5 years. The Masonry Advisory Council is not recommending this product at this time. From all that I have read about this product and the data above, it sounds like it has many positive attributes for renovation, restoration and new construction.