

valspar

GELCOATS



ROYAL
BATHS

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FINISH FIRST



VALSPAR SOAKS IN THE BEAUTY OF ROYAL BATHS CULTURED STONE PRODUCTS

Texas tub and shower manufacturer asks Valspar for the natural look.

When your business revolves around creating products made to look like natural stone, “they really need to look like natural stone.” says Royal Baths Operations V.P. Mark Kieber.

And that was the problem Mark was having at Royal Baths, one of the largest bath manufacturers in Texas. They produce a full line of products made from cultured marble (a lower cost alternative to real marble), which is made from a composite blend of marble dust and high strength polyester resin. This mixture can be formed into bathtubs, shower bases and vanity tops in designs that would be impossible to create in real stone. Problems can develop if color levels begin falling out of tolerance—causing unnatural waves of color. “The product could become unacceptable to our end customer,” states Mr. Kieber. “Thereby turning finished product into scrap, a costly expense.

Patience and teamwork pay off for Royal Bath

Royal Baths called in a Valspar sales representative, to see if he could reduce color variability during manufacturing. Together with the Royal Baths manufacturing team, the Valspar sales representative spent an entire Saturday going over every step of their design and manufacturing process, eliminating each variable until they found the root cause. “We went back to step one because, while this isn’t the most simplified process, we knew we had to work each variable out one at a time. Sometimes you just have to go back to the basics, checking the machine variables, calibrations on the equipment—everything until we found the cause.”

Mr. Kieber, pleased with the attention to detail he received from Valspar, brought them in full time. "Since then, we've been keeping the variables in check and we've had few issues, minimal scrap and, most importantly, no loss of income down the line. We're happy, our building partners are happy and their customers are happy. That's what keeps us all in business."

When it comes to sales, it's a technical matter

Mr. Kieber says, aside from the excellent product he receives from Valspar, it's the staff's technical proficiency he appreciates the most. "I've worked with quite a few Valspar people over the years—in several capacities—and what I truly respect is how technically proficient each was." Mr. Kieber added, "I've worked with many sales people in my career and often the technical side is, shall we say, not a strong suit. But when you're dealing with a product that is influenced by so many variables like ours is—you need someone who really knows how their product performs. That's why we use Valspar for our clear marble gelcoat."

As the use of cultured products have gained in popularity, so too have the products that are offered. Unlike natural marble that must be cut and transported from far away quarries, cultured marble can be molded locally. This allows for far lower transportation costs and greater design flexibility than with stone. Best of all, the non-porous Valspar gelcoat seals and protects the product—preventing stains, mold and bacteria growth.

Royal Baths has used Valspar gelcoats for more than 4 years in both of their manufacturing plants, located in Dallas and Houston, TX. Recently, they have been producing and selling a very successful cultured granite line, dubbed "Royal Granite." Mr. Kieber explains over the noise of the production line. "The building trades are all over this material. It looks great, has high durability and is coming online just as everyone is looking for the next big thing. Thanks to our great relationship with Valspar, the gelcoats we're using are nothing short of perfect. Again, it's a win-win situation. We like those."

Hurricane Ike can't rain on this relationship

Royal Baths long-term relationship with Valspar was critical when a major hurricane shut down their Houston plant for over two weeks. "We needed to get up and running quickly. Valspar offered immediate financial incentives and logistical support so that we could ramp back up as quickly as possible. It saved us a lot of stress, and it allowed us to get needed product to our customers faster than we might have otherwise. It's just another reason why we work with Valspar."

Green Initiatives

As part of Royal Baths initiative towards 'green' manufacturing, they are working with Valspar to use and promote lower VOC products. Mr. Kieber explains "Builders want to be greener, their customers want to be greener and so do we. What makes this change easy for us is that Valspar offers low VOC gelcoats that are equal to or better quality than the more harmful old coatings—so it's a pretty simple change. But more importantly, it's the right thing to do."



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