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(July 2012) The company's subtitle, „Nature evolved“ is revealing. Brazilian-based natural stone producer Crystalline Stone radically changes the color of natural stone in more ways than one: e.g. marble takes on color hitherto unseen in nature – but that's not all. A single slab can adopt all the colors of the rainbow.

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What's more, deep within its microstructure the properties of the stone are modified.



We talked with Pedro Deccaché at this year's Coverings trade fair. In a decade-long learning process he invented and perfected the process of coloring stone for the parent corporation Royal Group at a cost of some 20 million US-\$. The company is currently in the process introducing the multi-colored stone to the US-Market. It has been available in Brazil for some 5 years and can be purchased in Europe as well.

For Deccaché the time has come to seize stone at its core: „Architects and designers want different colors, not merely those appearing in nature – we cater to their wishes.“ His motivation is in part an ecological aspect: „Precisely because architects want rare and unusual colors, stone is quarried profusely – we can give monotonous stone bright colors.“





As far as manipulation of nature is concerned, Deccaché refers to materials like iron ore: it, too, is actually a stone, but it shows its metallic properties when molten and can be manipulated to obtain the desired properties by adding other elements.

„Intercrystalline Coloring“ is the name of the process culminating in colorful stone. The pores of the stone are opened with the help of heat, vacuum and pressure to allow liquid pigments to infiltrate the micro gaps between the crystals. The infiltration is a precondition of durable color treatment. In the case of marble the stone can imbibe color in a 2-3 cm depth, for granite 1 cm is feasible.





According to the producer, filling the micro gaps between crystals has further advantages: it strengthens the stone, lends an effective impregnation and gives added brilliance and transparency.



The colors are natural pigments on mineral of herbal basis. For red, e.g., Urucum (Bixa orellana), is used as Deccaché reveals. This is the color used by the South American indigenous peoples as a body paint. „We derived the

suitable mixture in a sheer endless series of trials“, he expounds „the most difficult part was that everything is interconnected.“

Practically the natural stone requires the same care as natural, untreated stone – for interior use as well as for exterior use.

It may be a matter of taste whether this form of „evolution“ is a step in the right direction: the question is, should an architect or designer who is not satisfied with the color pallet offered by nature seek unusual hues in engineered stone rather than manipulating natural stone. But there is already great demand in Brazil.

Much more interesting, therefore, is the question how an artist might be inspired by this new technology. Anything seems possible.

[Crystalline Stone](#)

Royal Group ([Portuguese](#))

Fotos: Crystalline Stone / Peter Becker





