



# designing emotions

Sexyfloors has invented a product that can make a creative statement about any floor. Amanda Williamson reports.

**S**exyfloors makes environmentally friendly and unique flooring from epoxy resin. Indeed, as finalists in the HIA GreenSmart Awards 2010, the colourful, yet durable floors caught the eye of the judges in the GreenSmart Product of the Year category, and on 15 October the company won the prestigious award.

The company started trading in 2000 under the name Kelvin Shaw All About Floors before changing its name to Sexyfloors, as a result of a customer's emotional response to her newly designed floor. The product has been building its name, and a passionate following, since then.

Robyn Cooper, who has been involved in marketing at Sexyfloors since it began, says that emotion plays a big role in the company her husband Kelvin has developed.

## The company's latest development is a colour changing floor

'We sell a floor based on emotion because we deal one-on-one with customers. And every customer has a story. It's not just picking a carpet colour, getting someone to come out and lay it, and that's that. This is a very personalised product. The hardest part is picking what colour and design they want. We work closely with them on that,' she explains.

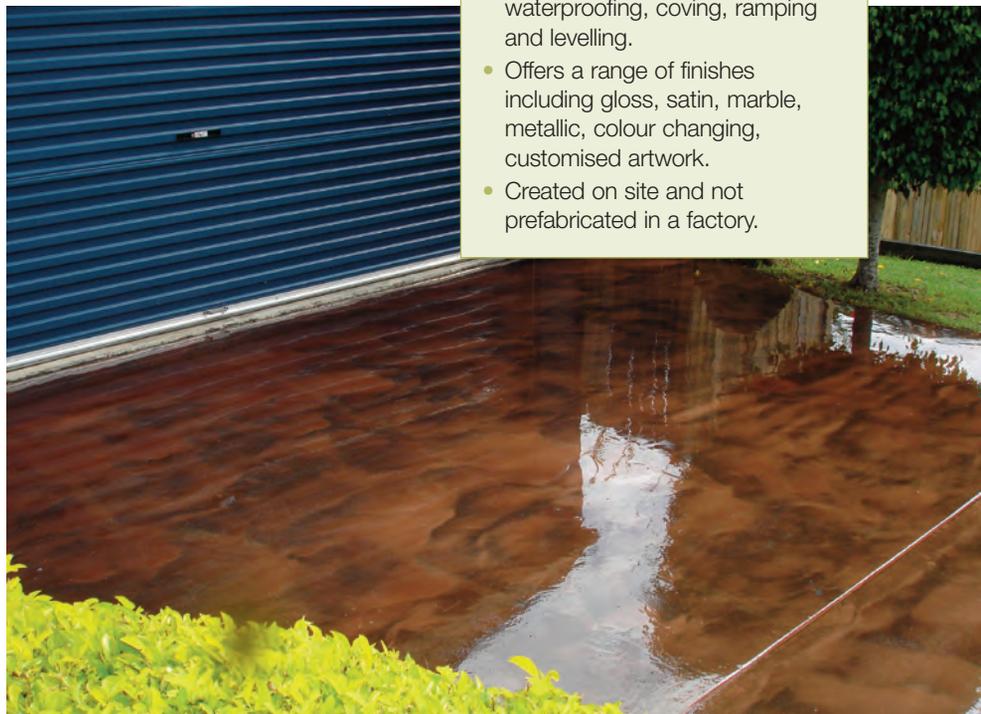
Robyn says that Kelvin came from a flooring background, and had worked on a range of different finishes, including epoxy, until 2000 when he 'could see

that epoxy could really take off' beyond industrial applications. He has since gone on to complete more than 1000 floors in domestic, commercial and industrial situations, almost all of them unique; each time developing new ideas and refining the finished product.

There are four steps to laying an epoxy floor. Initially arriving on site, Sexyfloors will repair any minor chips or cracks to an existing concrete floor, which is included in the total price, and can assist with major repair work such as levelling and waterproofing if required. They then grind the surface to ensure the concrete is clean and porous for the prime coat, which is then applied to help protect the concrete and stabilise the epoxy top coat. Finally, the 'designer', commercial grade, non-slip top coat is added. Depending on the ▶

### At a glance

- Non-toxic and environmentally friendly – contains no volatile organic compounds and has been given the tick of approval from Good Environmental Choice Australia.
- Meets Australian flooring standard R-rating certificate for R9–R13.
- Non-flammable and non-slip.
- UV inhibitors for indoors and out.
- Suited for most floor types including tiles, concrete, cement sheeting and heated floors; it is seamless and bonded direct to the concrete and applied by trowel or roll coat.
- Can be laid over new, old and damaged floor surfaces.
- Added features include waterproofing, coving, ramping and levelling.
- Offers a range of finishes including gloss, satin, marble, metallic, colour changing, customised artwork.
- Created on site and not prefabricated in a factory.





### Get on board

Sexyfloors is growing and looking to franchise across Australia. It currently operates four franchises in Brisbane, Newcastle, Gold Coast and Perth.

Robyn Cooper from the company explains that the business has grown 30 per cent every year since established in 2000, and is at the point where it is struggling to keep up with demand. She says they are looking for people who understand flooring or have building experience, but most importantly people who are dedicated to the product.

Robyn says the cost of a franchise is comparable to other flooring franchises, and potential buyers should look at the fee more as a training fee. 'We need to spend time with them. We need to train them in our particular application which could take a couple of weeks [even if they have experience in laying epoxy]. We wouldn't let them go until they were 100 per cent comfortable and when we know their technique is good,' she explains.

'For us, it is all about support. The franchisee can pick up the phone at any time and ask a question. Kelvin [Shaw, the inventor of the application] will use his expertise ... So it's an ongoing support mechanism and that is what the franchise fee represents.'

area being covered, it takes around three days to lay the epoxy, including drying time, and a further three days for it to cure and settle onto the concrete. Sexyfloors recommends a six-day timetable, and it is possible for just one person to do all the work.

While it is a low-maintenance product with no grout lines, Robyn says it is not a 'magic floor' and it does need basic cleaning with a mop or vacuum. She adds that as long as it is looked after, the epoxy floor should last as long as the concrete does, and the company offers a two-year warranty on all its finishes. So far, she says, there have been no instances of major repair work being needed to the product after installation. 'And if it's a minor crack we can just come back with a syringe and fill it up ... and possibly do a bit of a trowel across it to make sure it is even,' she explains.

Depending on the finish required, just one top coat is needed for the designer finish, such as metallic, colour change or two-tone. If a solid colour or a white floor is desired, a further two or three coats will need to be done.

Sexyfloors works on a price per square metre and has a fully inclusive, two-tier rate – one for the designer finish, and the other price – which is a little more – for the solid, plain colour. The GreenSmart judges made mention of the price being comparable to any other flooring product. Robyn says they don't charge for the design work because it is 'the fun part for us, we enjoy building our brand and want to do the most crazy and far-out things we can think of'.

Robyn says that Kelvin has not been afraid to try different things, and as a result he has perfected a 'secret formula, much like Colonel Sanders and his spices'. Through the research and development he has done in the past 10 years, his knowledge of colours and how the epoxy is going to settle and react on a floor, customers who have requested one finish often change their mind, once Kelvin arrives on site and he shows them different test patches on the floor.

She says that the company's latest development is a colour changing floor, which she finds their most exciting product yet.

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'Because of the light the floors change colour as you walk around the room. They go from pink to blue to yellow to green. [So far] people are a bit afraid to put it into their homes or showrooms, because it is so new they're not entirely sure how it's going to work,' Robyn says. However, she is so keen for someone to try it that she says if Kelvin lays it down and if they don't like it, he'll grind it back and give them the original finish they wanted.

And originality is key to the company's success. So far, no creative request from a customer has been turned down.

*For more information on the product or a franchise opportunity email [robyn@sexyfloors.com.au](mailto:robyn@sexyfloors.com.au) or call 1300 789 821. *