PebbleCrete

Understanding PebbleCrete pool finishes

Materials, design details, installation planning and care

A practical guide for pool owners, architects, builders and operators. Understand the ingredients, choose the appearance and see how the finish becomes part of a completed pool.

PebbleCrete Classic · PebbleSupreme · PebbleGlass

2025 edition · English

01 / START HERE

What is PebbleCrete

A continuous cement-based finish with visible mineral or glass particles at the surface.

PebbleCrete pool finishes use selected quartz, granite, glass beads, glass crystals or combinations of these materials. The word **aggregate** means the small solid particles in the mixture. The chosen blend is combined with the specified cement, modifier, colour components where required, and water to form a workable finishing mix.

Cement forms the matrix that holds the particles together, and the modifier is a measured component of the formulation. The applicator spreads, compacts and trowels the mix over the prepared pool. A thin surface film of cement paste is then removed to reveal the aggregate. The cement between and beneath the particles remains in place and binds the finish together.

> **Think of the finished surface as particles held in a cement matrix**
>
> It is applied as a continuous layer that follows the shape of the pool. It is not paint, a flexible liner, loose stones glued individually to the wall, or a layer made entirely of resin.

What this means in a finished pool

Instead of a repeated grid of tiles, the main interior reads as a continuous textured surface. The aggregate, the surrounding cement colour, the quality of the application and the water above it all contribute to its appearance. Planned joints, material transitions and movement details still need proper design.

READ THIS GUIDE

02 / THE THREE FAMILIES

Choose the aggregate character

The distinction is about the type of aggregate and the blend, not simply “stone versus glass”. All three families form a cement-based finish.

Product family	What defines it
PebbleCrete Classic	Quartz, granite, glass crystals or their combinations. Glass beads may provide an accent up to 5%. Glass crystals can form up to 100% of the aggregate in designated blends.
PebbleSupreme	May combine quartz, granite, glass beads and glass crystals in the same blend. Their proportions vary with the specified PebbleSupreme formulation and colour.
PebbleGlass	The aggregate component consists entirely of glass beads. Cement and the specified modifier remain part of the installed finish.

Two different forms of glass

Glass beads and **glass crystals** are separate aggregate types. The 5% limit in Classic applies to glass beads; it does not limit the glass-crystal content. A Classic finish with glass crystals therefore does not automatically become PebbleGlass. The product family follows the specified blend.

Percentages describe the aggregate component

They do not describe the entire installed surface. Even a finish with 100% glass crystals or 100% glass beads as its aggregate still contains the cement matrix and the other specified components.

03 / UNDERSTANDING THE BLEND

Four aggregate ingredients

Each colour is a composition. Its appearance comes from the selected ingredients, their proportions and the cement surrounding them.

Ingredient	Its role in the blend
Quartz	A mineral aggregate used on its own in Classic or combined with granite and glass components in Classic and Supreme blends.
Granite	A stone aggregate used alone in Classic or alongside quartz and glass components in Classic and Supreme. It contributes its own colour and visible grain.
Glass beads	Rounded glass particles. In Classic they are limited to an accent of up to 5% of the aggregate. They may also be included in Supreme, and form the entire aggregate component of PebbleGlass.
Glass crystals	A decorative glass aggregate used in Classic and Supreme blends. In Classic, it can account for up to 100% of the aggregate. It is distinct from glass beads.

The ingredients are only part of the finished colour

The visible cement between the particles also contributes to the result. Two blends containing similar aggregate can look different when the cement colour, accent distribution or degree of exposure changes. This is why a finished sample is more informative than a description of ingredients alone.

Choose a result, then specify the blend

Start with the atmosphere you want and review actual samples: a quieter mineral character, stronger contrast between particles, or a more pronounced glass effect. There is no need to choose ingredients independently unless a custom blend is part of the project. The selected product, colour and approved sample provide a practical reference for the order.

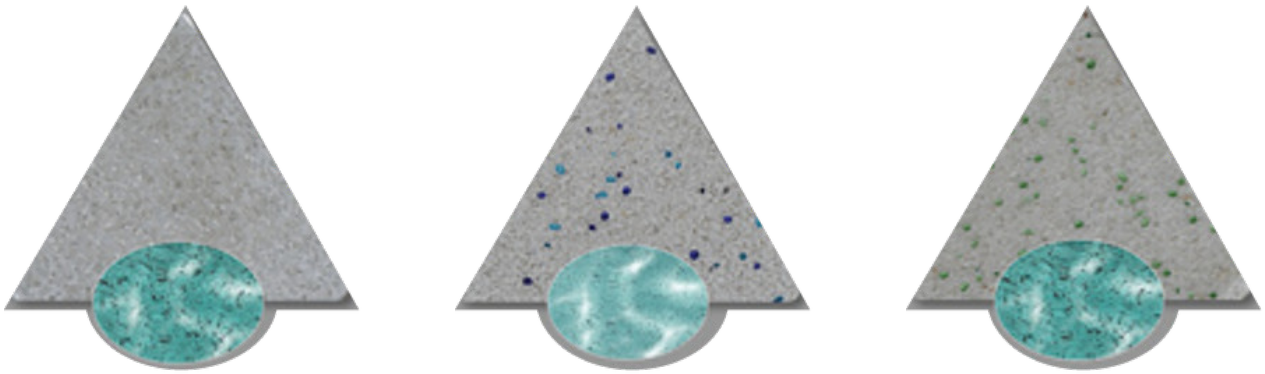
Composition does not by itself establish smoothness, grip or durability. Particle grading, placement, compaction, exposure and the complete pool system also matter. Review the wet surface and the intended use alongside its appearance.

Glass-crystal content and glass-bead content are different specifications. Keep those names distinct in sample requests, quotations and orders.

04 / COLOUR AND LIGHT

Why the water changes the colour

A material sample, an installed dry surface and the water in a completed pool show three different views of the same finish.



Pearl White **Cool Blue** **Cool Green**

Illustrative PebbleCrete Classic sample photographs. The water insets show an appearance reference, not a guaranteed water colour. Confirm the current physical sample and colour designation before ordering.

A small sample helps you see the particles and the surrounding cement. Under water, light travels through the water before and after it reaches the surface. The apparent colour therefore changes with depth, sunlight, shade, viewing angle and reflections from nearby walls, planting and the sky. Pool lighting introduces another variable after dark.

A shallow step can look noticeably lighter than the deeper floor even when the same material was used. A photograph also depends on camera exposure, white balance and editing. A colour selected only from a phone screen can therefore create an expectation that the real pool cannot reproduce exactly.

A useful sample review

- **Compare a short list.** View physical samples together in the surroundings planned for the pool, in sun and shade.
- **Review the wet appearance.** Ask to see the sample under water and compare relevant installed examples with similar depth and lighting.
- **Approve a reference.** For a design-sensitive project, agree a representative mock-up, record the product and colour, and retain the approved sample for comparison.

Slight variation in a hand-applied finish is different from a defect. The agreed sample and project acceptance criteria should guide the review; pronounced irregularities should be investigated.

05 / THE FINISH IN CONTEXT

Reading the finished pool

Look at the shape, the water and the material transitions together.

A pool from the PebbleCrete portfolio in an open coastal setting.

The SIS Kata, Phuket. Curved geometry and contrasting design elements shape the pool experience.

The finish follows the design

A continuous applied surface can follow a straight wall, a curved perimeter, a bench or a shaped step. This gives the designer freedom to develop the pool as a connected space. The geometry is formed in the base and then finished; the decorative layer does not create deep shelves or major changes in level on its own.

Contrast can be deliberate

The interior can be combined with tile, coping, markers or contrasting bands. These changes help organise the design and identify specific features. Agree where one material ends and another begins, and keep the colours and edges in the overall sample review.

Read the water and the surface separately

A wide pool photograph shows atmosphere and the relationship to the landscape. A close sample shows the aggregate and texture. Use both when choosing: the bright colour seen across a pool is not a direct colour chart for the dry material, and a close photograph does not show the full effect of water depth and surroundings.

06 / TEXTURE AND WORKMANSHIP

What the surface feels like

Composition and surface treatment are separate decisions. Quartz, granite, glass beads and glass crystals describe the ingredients; exposed or polished describes the surface treatment.

An exposed aggregate finish has a visible, tactile texture. The feel depends on the particle size and shape, how closely the mix is compacted and how deeply the surface is exposed. The aim is a coherent, evenly finished surface with the aggregate securely held in the cement matrix. A glass-containing blend is not automatically smoother than a mineral blend.

Assess the finish where people will use it

Review a representative wet sample by hand and, where practical, underfoot. A wall, a swim lane, a shallow sun shelf and a step may involve different patterns of contact. Tell the designer and applicator if the pool includes shallow seating, frequent barefoot traffic or areas intended for children, so the surface and edge details can be considered together.

A mechanically ground or polished aggregate surface exposes a different face of the particles and changes the feel. It can be considered for specific waterline or coping details, but it is a separate finish treatment. Wet walking areas require their own assessment; the words “textured” or “polished” are not substitutes for relevant slip-resistance evidence.

Why preparation matters

Consistent grading and control of unwanted material help the applicator produce a consistent finish. Preparation must suit the particular raw material and blend; quartz and glass do not necessarily follow an identical production process.

01 Magnetic screening equipment used during aggregate preparation. An example of how unwanted magnetic material can be separated during aggregate preparation.

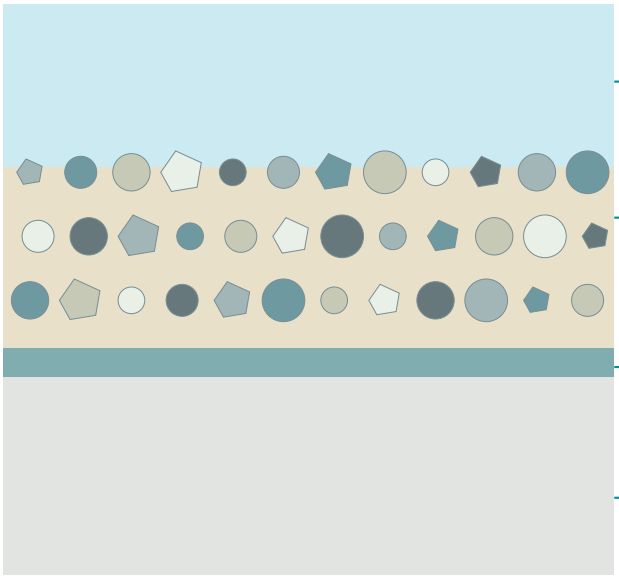
Agree the surface before the full installation

A physical mock-up can establish colour, texture and exposure quality together. It is especially useful where the finish continues onto steps, benches or detailed waterline areas.

07 / THE POOL CONSTRUCTION

Where the finish belongs

The visible surface is one part of a coordinated pool system.



Pool water

The finish is viewed through water.

Exposed aggregate finish

Visible particles held in a cement matrix.

Compatible bond coat

Connects the finish to its prepared base.

Prepared watertight base

The shell and specified preparatory layers.

Conceptual section, not to scale. The base includes the structural shell and the specified preparation, levelling and waterproofing arrangements. Their exact sequence depends on the selected construction system.

The shell and waterproofing retain the water

The pool must have a sound structure and an effective water-retaining design. Cracks, joints, penetrations, pipes and waterproofing details must be assessed and completed before the finish is installed. A decorative finish cannot be relied on to bridge ongoing movement or correct a leaking shell.

The prepared surface supports the finish

The receiving surface must be sound, clean, properly shaped and suitable for the agreed bonding system. A finish applied over a weak render, contamination or an incompatible layer can fail even if the aggregate itself is good. Layer compatibility must be checked as a system, especially where waterproofing is present.

The finish provides the visible interior

The finishing layer gives the pool its colour, texture and appearance. Its geometry follows the prepared base, so wall alignment, falls, step shapes and major level corrections should be resolved during preparation. Required movement joints and construction details must remain functional through the completed system.

08 / BEFORE CHOOSING AN INSTALLATION DATE

New pools and renovations

The existing structure and the condition of the receiving surface determine the preparation scope.

For a new concrete pool

Coordinate the shell, penetrations, waterproofing, levelling, tile interfaces and finish build-up before the final surfaces are formed. Water testing and the acceptance of the prepared base should be completed at the stage defined by the pool designer and the agreed system. Finishing should not be used to conceal unresolved construction defects.

For an existing tiled or plastered pool

A renovation starts with an inspection. Hollow, loose or deteriorated layers need assessment and appropriate removal. The fact that the old surface is still attached in some places does not establish that it is a suitable base everywhere. The contractor should define what is to be removed, repaired, retained and tested before a finishing price is treated as a complete renovation price.

Renovation is also the right time to review leaks, fittings, lighting, step geometry, coping, drainage and the pool equipment. Resolve any water-loss problem through diagnosis of the structure, pipework, joints and penetrations. A generic instruction to coat or fill every junction is not a substitute for finding the cause.

Three matters to settle before finishing

- **Condition.** Agree the accepted substrate, any repair work and the required water test. Photograph the prepared pool and record the inspection.
- **Dimensions.** Allow for the specified build-up around drains, lights, inlets, step markers, coping and waterline materials. Agree the completed levels, not only the unfinished shell dimensions.
- **Readiness.** Complete overhead work and other activities that could contaminate or damage the surface. Have the fill-water supply and operating equipment ready for completion.

> **A finish quotation and a renovation quotation can cover different work**
>
> Ask for the preparation scope to be written clearly. Demolition, structural repairs, waterproofing, rendering, equipment changes and the decorative finish should each have an identified responsibility.

09 / WHAT HAPPENS ON SITE

From mixed material to pool interior

This overview explains the sequence. The applicator must use the current instructions issued for the selected product and project.

1 **Confirm the prepared base**
The team checks the agreed substrate, levels, transitions and readiness for finishing. The selected bonding arrangement must be compatible with the prepared surface and the finish.

2 **Measure and mix the specified components**
The aggregate, cement, modifier, colour components and clean water are measured to the issued formulation. Repeatable batches matter: unplanned changes to water or ingredients can change handling and appearance.

3 **Place, compact and trowel**
The material is placed and worked into a continuous layer. Compaction and careful trowelling consolidate the mix, shape the surface and keep the aggregate properly embedded. Detailed areas need deliberate workmanship.

4 **Expose the aggregate**
Controlled brushing and washing reveal the particles while retaining the cement matrix that binds them. The timing and degree of exposure affect both appearance and feel. This is a specialist stage, not ordinary cleaning.

5 **Complete the prescribed finishing treatment**
The applicator completes the specified final wash and checks. Any acid treatment belongs to the controlled installation method, with the correct precautions and protection of adjacent materials; it is not an owner maintenance shortcut.

6 **Fill and begin the agreed start-up**
Once the finishing treatment is complete and the installer releases the pool for filling, filling begins promptly. The agreed start-up programme then governs circulation, brushing, water testing and chemical adjustment.

Weather, access, pool geometry and the accepted substrate affect planning. A single generic installation duration or coverage rate cannot replace a measured project plan. Installers must also follow the current safety data sheets for the actual components used.

10 / DESIGN DETAILS

Steps and a tiled waterline

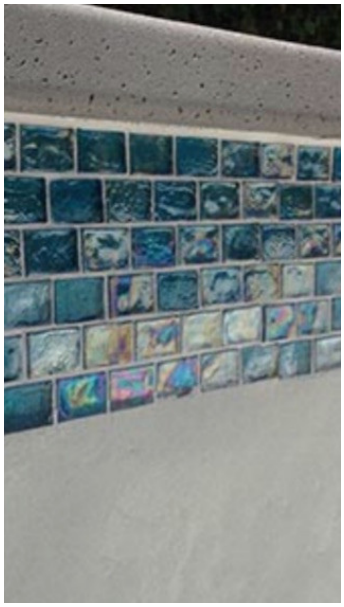
Small details help the pool read clearly and make the transition between materials deliberate.

Contrasting step markers

The continuous finish can follow steps and curved surfaces. Contrasting markers can make individual treads easier to identify against the pool background. The marker layout should be agreed with the complete step design, including tread depth, riser height, edge shape and the expected water level.

Set markers securely and finish their interfaces carefully. Avoid projecting corners or sharp changes at the contact surface. Marker tiles do not remove the need for suitable joints and proper installation details.

02 Contrasting markers on the steps. Contrasting markers help distinguish one tread from the next.



A tiled waterline under coping

The waterline is exposed to changing water levels and the deposits that gather at the air-water interface. A band of pool-suitable tile is one way to create a distinct, maintainable zone above the exposed aggregate interior. Select the tile, grout, adhesive and joints as a coordinated immersed-pool detail.

Set the band against the actual operating water level and the coping position. Agree the height and the transition to the aggregate surface before installation. Clean it with products and methods suitable for the selected materials, including the neighbouring pool finish.

03 Coping above waterline tile, with the exposed aggregate finish below.

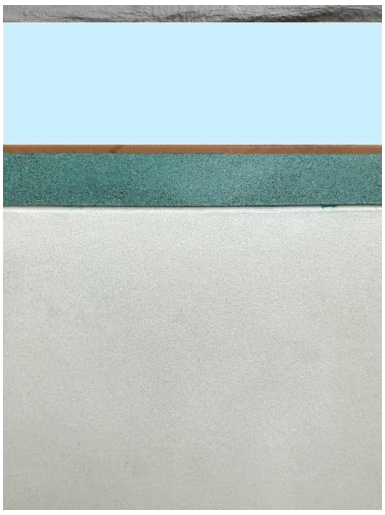
11 / DESIGN DETAILS

Polished waterline bands

A smooth aggregate band offers another way to define the waterline. The surface treatment and the junctions need their own specification.

04 A contrasting polished band between the upper edge and pool interior.

05 An angled view of a flush visual transition at the coping.



06 Front view of the same type of coping and waterline arrangement.

What “terrazzo” means in these examples

In these details, “terrazzo” describes an aggregate surface that has been ground or polished to create a smoother face. It describes the treatment of the surface, rather than a separate promise about the product composition. A band can use a complementary colour or a deliberate contrast to the main pool interior.

Design the band as a waterline component

Agree its height, finished thickness, edge shape, junctions and intended maintenance method. The operating water level should sit within the area designed to be cleaned. Review a finished sample, since the appearance of a polished aggregate surface can differ from the exposed version of a similar blend.

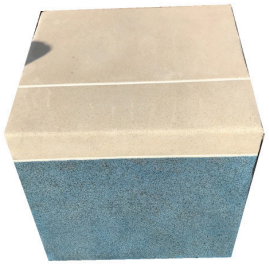
A visually flush edge does not mean the layers can be merged without considering movement and water management. The coping, deck and pool shell may have different construction requirements. The designer must resolve these connections before the finish is applied.

The models show design principles. Develop dimensions and fabrication details for the selected materials and the actual pool geometry.

12 / DESIGN DETAILS

Coping and the pool edge

The edge connects the water, the pool interior and the surrounding deck. Its shape, drainage and wet-use performance deserve as much attention as its colour.



07 A model of a rollover edge with a smooth upper surface and contrasting interior.

08 Traditional coping over a smooth waterline band and exposed aggregate below.

09 A formed coping piece showing a rounded edge profile.

Coordinate the top and the face

A coping piece can create a clear line between deck and pool. An integrated edge can create a more continuous appearance. In either case, agree the profile, projection, movement joints and transitions with the pool and deck design. The edge should not be left for the finish applicator to improvise after the main work is complete.

Treat walking surfaces as walking surfaces

The smooth waterline face and the top of a coping have different uses. A finish that is convenient to clean on a vertical face is not automatically suitable for a wet horizontal surface. Review the intended foot traffic, drainage, profile and applicable slip-resistance requirements for each area.

Existing pools need a deliberate termination

When a deck or coping is retained, inspect its condition and define exactly where the new finish will stop. The transition must be sound and compatible with the new work. If coping is being replaced, complete and protect it before finishing the pool interior so that the new surface can be filled without waiting for additional edge work.

13 / COMPLETION AND INITIAL CARE

Plan the fill before the finish

A newly completed cement-based pool surface needs a coordinated transition from installation to water care.

Prepare the water and the equipment

Before finishing starts, identify the fill-water source and arrange any testing or treatment it needs. Clear-looking water is not necessarily free of metals or other substances that can affect a pool. This is particularly relevant when using well water or a source with a history of staining. The pool team should agree a suitable supply before it reaches the new surface.

The circulation and filtration system, inlets, drains and other necessary equipment should be ready for commissioning. Complete coping, tile and overhead work first. Assign a person who will manage the fill and a person who will take over the water-care programme; do not leave this handover until the installer is packing up.

Fill promptly when released by the installer

After the prescribed final treatment, begin filling immediately as directed by the installer and plan to continue without interruption to the agreed operating level. Protect the fresh surface from hose impact, dirt and construction traffic. If the water supply fails or the fill must stop, contact the installer promptly for instructions.

The early period needs active attention

The cement-based surface continues to develop under water. Follow the issued start-up schedule for circulation, brushing, testing and adjustment. Record the fill date, water-test results, products added and any observations. Water that looks clear is not by itself evidence that the pool is ready for use.

> ### Salt chlorination starts later
>
> Saltwater pools are compatible with an appropriately specified PebbleCrete finish, but salt is not added to a newly completed pool at first fill. Plan for the initial 30-day period before salt addition, and follow the current written start-up instructions for the selected system. The pool operator must also meet the chlorinator manufacturer’s requirements.

Keep the issued start-up schedule with the pool handover documents. It sets the chemical targets, dosing, equipment timing and release for swimming.

14 / LOOKING AFTER THE SURFACE

Water care protects the finish

The exposed particles are held in a cement matrix. The complete surface therefore needs appropriate pool-water management.

Keep a useful water-care record

Agree a testing and service programme with the pool operator. It should cover the parameters required by the issued care instructions and the equipment: sanitiser, pH, alkalinity, calcium hardness and other relevant measures, including salinity where a salt chlorinator is used. Interpret them together rather than treating one apparently acceptable reading as proof that the whole system is balanced.

Record readings, additions, unusual water changes and maintenance visits. The right service frequency depends on the installation and use. Heavy use, rain, top-up water and chemical adjustments can change the water conditions and may call for additional checks.

Use compatible cleaning methods

Use the brushes, cleaning equipment and methods approved for the finish and its stage of cure. Keep the waterline and filtration system maintained so deposits and debris do not accumulate. Confirm when an automatic cleaner can be introduced instead of assuming it is suitable immediately after filling.

Pool chemicals must be handled and added according to their labels and the issued operating instructions. Do not allow concentrated products or undissolved material to rest against the finish. If a stain or deposit appears, identify the likely cause before selecting a treatment; repeated acid washing or more aggressive scrubbing may damage the surface.

A salt pool still needs pool care

Salt chlorination changes how the sanitiser is produced; it does not remove the need to monitor the water, clean the pool and maintain the equipment. The chlorinator settings and maintenance programme must suit the pool. Salt concentration and chemical targets should come from the agreed finish-care and equipment instructions.

> **Before draining or carrying out major chemical treatment**
>
> Speak to the pool contractor or qualified operator. Emptying a pool affects the structure as well as the finish, and the appropriate procedure depends on the site and the pool design.

15 / PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

Variation and problems to investigate

Understanding normal variation helps distinguish appearance differences from issues that need inspection.

Appearance and future repairs

The aggregate distribution and the degree of exposure can vary slightly across a hand-finished surface. View the pool under agreed conditions and compare it with the approved reference. Lighting, water depth and viewing angle can exaggerate differences. If there is marked unevenness, loose aggregate, rough isolated areas or another concern, document it and ask the installer to inspect it.

Local repairs may be possible after the cause has been assessed, but a patch may remain visible. The original surface has its own aggregate distribution, exposure and service history. The practical repair method, extent and likely appearance should be discussed before work begins.

Observation	Useful information for an inspection
Staining or discolouration	When it appeared; fill and top-up water source; water-test records; products recently added; clear photographs in consistent lighting.
Deposits or a rougher feel	Location and extent; whether it can be brushed away; chemistry and cleaning history; whether it affects one area or the whole pool.
Cracks, hollow areas or material loss	Exact position; when first noticed; any water loss or movement; the layer build-up and preparation records.
Unexpected water loss	Water-level observations and operating conditions; inspection of equipment, pipes, penetrations, joints and the shell.

Durability and warranty

Service life depends on the whole installation: sound construction, suitable preparation, the specified material system, workmanship, exposure and care. A general guide cannot assign one lifespan to every pool. Applicable material and installation warranties must be stated in the written quotation or contract, with their scope, responsible party and conditions.

A photograph alone rarely establishes a cause. Keep the product and batch information, installation dates, approved samples, handover documents and maintenance records so an assessment can be based on evidence.

16 / TURNING AN IDEA INTO A SPECIFICATION

What to agree and what to order

A useful enquiry describes the complete pool and the intended supply or installation arrangement.

Specify more than a colour name

Record the product family, exact colour or agreed blend, approved sample or mock-up, surface treatment and areas to receive the finish. Include waterline materials, coping transitions, steps, markers and required joints. Identify the current installation instructions and who is responsible for substrate acceptance, finishing, start-up and ongoing care.

Measure the actual surface to be finished

The area of the water seen from above is not the finish area. A material calculation also needs the pool floor, walls, steps, risers, benches and other included features. Curves, shallow shelves, gutters and edge details can change the quantity and labour scope. Drawings and measured dimensions are more reliable than a single plan-area figure.

Allowances, batch rounding and spare material should be agreed for the project. Use the current product-specific coverage and formulation rather than copying a bag-to-area calculation from another product or an old document. Confirm colour availability and the intended order quantity before programming the installation.

Compare quotations on the same basis

A material-only offer and an installed finish price cover different responsibilities. Check whether cement, modifier, colour components, preparation, bonding materials, waterproofing, specialist finishing, transport, start-up and taxes are included. For an export enquiry, also identify who handles packing, freight, destination charges and local installation.

Send this information with your enquiry

Project location; new build or renovation; drawings, dimensions and photographs; intended pool use; preferred family and colour; step, waterline and coping details; proposed installer or requested installation support; and the target programme. State whether you need materials only or an installation proposal.

A clear written offer brings the selected finish, quantities, installation responsibilities and supply arrangements together.

17 / QUICK REFERENCE

Common questions

Use these answers to start a discussion, then agree the details for your pool.

Is it waterproof?
It is the visible decorative finish. The shell, joints, penetrations and specified waterproofing system must provide the required water retention before finishing.

Can it replace the finish in an existing tiled pool?
A renovation may be possible after inspection and suitable preparation. The removal, repair and receiving-surface requirements must be defined first.

Will more glass make it smoother?
Not necessarily. The finished sample, particle grading, compaction and exposure are more useful guides to feel than glass content alone.

Will my pool look exactly like a photograph?
No photograph can fix the effects of depth, lighting, reflections and water conditions. Choose using physical samples and relevant installed examples.

Can it include curves, steps and tile details?
Yes, these can be incorporated into a coordinated design. Agree geometry, edges, markers and interfaces before the finishing work starts.

Who should install it?
An experienced team familiar with the current PebbleCrete method for the selected product. Agree the installation scope and any required technical support before ordering.

Discuss your pool and request samples

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