

London's seasons write their own rules in concrete. Spring thaws, midsummer heat, fall rains, and the kind of winter that tests every surface. When you choose a finish for a patio or a backyard path here, you are not picking from a catalog page, you are making a long term decision about traction, maintenance, longevity, and how your outdoor space will feel in January as much as July. I have watched perfect summer patios turn into skating rinks by December, and I have seen textured surfaces stay grippy under sleet and freezing rain where smoother options struggle. The right finish is rarely about trend alone. It is about understanding materials and the London, Ontario climate, then matching both to how you use the space.



## What London's climate means for concrete finishes

Concrete survives, or fails early, because of water and temperature. Our region sits in a freeze thaw band that cycles dozens of times each winter. Water finds micro voids in the paste, freezes, expands, and gradually pops off surface paste if the mix and finish are not prepared for it. Add deicing salts and you can accelerate that damage. A finish that sheds water, offers traction when the first frost hits, and plays nicely with sealers will outperform polished looks that feel great in August but betray you in December.

Air entrainment helps. Ask your contractor for air entrained exterior concrete in the 5 to 8 percent range, placed at 30 to 35 MPa compressive strength. Those tiny air bubbles give freezing water somewhere to expand without exploding the surface. Good practice also means the slab is at least 4 inches thick for a typical patio, with 5 to 6 inches under hot tubs or heavy kitchens. I still see 3 inch pours over poor base prep, then the calls start after the first winter. Spend the money on the base. A proper Granular A base, 6 to 8 inches thick and compacted to at least 98 percent modified Proctor, is the cheapest insurance you will ever buy. Get the slope right, too. A patio should fall 1 to 2 percent away from the house to move water out and away from foundations.

These details matter no matter which finish you choose. The right finish on top of a poor base still cracks and spalls. The wrong finish on a good base might be durable but annoying to live with. The sweet spot is a surface that matches your habits and the site, on top of a slab built the way it should be.

## **The main finish options, from workhorse to showpiece**

Most homeowners in London ask about four finishes for patios and backyard pathways: broomed, exposed aggregate, stamped, and smooth troweled. There are hybrids and accents, but these four are the core.

A broom finish is the workhorse. After the final trowel, a stiff broom creates fine ridges. That texture gives grip in rain and light frost, and it holds up well under shovels and snowblowers. It accepts penetrating sealers easily, and it does not flash a high gloss unless you want it to. If you have kids, if you shovel yourself, if your budget is tight but you still want something crisp and clean, a broom finish is hard to beat. I have broom finished driveways from 2009 that still look solid today because the owners sealed them every few years and stayed away from strong deicers. A patio sees less wheel load than a driveway, which helps.

Exposed aggregate is a step up in texture and visual interest. You see the stone in the mix, whether it is a local dolomitic aggregate or a seeded specialty pebble. The surface paste is washed back with a mild retarder to reveal the stones. It looks lively in sunlight, hides dirt, and offers excellent traction. It also benefits from a sealer that deepens color. The trade off is maintenance. You want to keep a film forming sealer thin to avoid a plasticky look, and you need to refresh that sealer every 2 to 3 years for the best appearance. Heavy salt use can still chew at the matrix between stones. For patios and backyard pathways in London, Ontario, exposed aggregate remains popular because it feels upscale without the pattern repetition of stamping.

Stamped concrete lands in the showpiece category. Pattern mats press textures that mimic stone, slate, or brick into the still plastic surface. With color hardeners, release powders, and integral color, you can create convincing patterns that tie into older brickwork or warm up a modern yard. I once helped a family in Old North choose a stamped ashlar slate in a soft charcoal with buff accents to echo their yellow brick. In June it was stunning. In December it was still safe underfoot because we planned for traction: a light texture, a matte sealer with a fine grit additive, and no glossy coats. Stamped surfaces have more maintenance. They want resealing, typically every 2 to 3 years depending on exposure, and they need slip resistance additives to keep shoes planted when the surface is damp or lightly iced.

Smooth steel trowel finishes look sleek but are a poor match for our winters on outdoor slabs. Smooth concrete becomes slick fast, even with dew. I only recommend a smooth finish for sheltered outdoor rooms, and even then I push for a light micro texture. When clients ask for a polished look, we usually arrive at a tight broom or a very light sandblast that keeps the minimalist vibe without creating a hazard.

There are finishing techniques that sit between these categories. Light sandblast or acid etch tightens the surface and adds micro texture. Salt finishes, once trendy, do not play well with freeze thaw in our region and can create weak planes. If you hear someone propose a high polish for an uncovered patio, be cautious. Local concrete experts will steer you toward a safer option.

## **Cost, value, and what you get for each dollar**

Costs move with material prices, site access, and scope, but typical ranges for patios in London look like this. A well built broom finish patio generally lands in the 14 to 20 CAD per square foot range, exposed aggregate often runs 18 to 26, and stamped concrete can push from 20 to 32 depending on pattern complexity, coloring system, and border work. If you add steps, seat walls, drainage, or a reinforced pad for a hot tub, numbers shift upward. A small 200 square foot broomed patio might come in near 3,500 to 4,500 dollars with good access. A 500 square foot stamped patio with borders and lighting slots could sit closer to 12,000 to 15,000 dollars. Prices change year to year, so treat these as ranges.

Value is not only about looks. A broom finish, done right, gives you low fuss longevity. Exposed aggregate offers traction and upscale texture with moderate upkeep. Stamped concrete delivers the richest design language but invites you to be a diligent caretaker. If you are hiring residential concrete contractors for patios London Ontario homeowners can trust through winter, ask them to quote alternate finishes. Seeing the line item differences helps rationalize where to allocate your budget.

## **Color strategy that works with London's architecture**

London has a lot of yellow brick, red brick, and mid century siding, plus the cooler palettes of modern builds. Color decisions should respect that context. Integral color pigments the entire slab and is the lowest maintenance choice for uniform tone. Color hardeners dusted and worked into the surface produce richer, more durable color but require a practiced finisher and are more common in stamped work. Release powders add antiquing to stamped patterns, settling into low points to create depth.

When we color patios behind yellow brick homes, soft charcoals, warm grays, or taupes play well. Red brick homes often like the contrast of a slate gray or the harmony of a muted russet tone in borders. For backyard pathways London Ontario residents walk all winter, avoid very dark colors that show salt rings or very light colors that telegraph every scuff. Medium tones hide the season's mess, and penetrating sealers help resist staining.

## **Sealer choices and winter behavior**

A sealer can be a friend or a nuisance. For broom and light textures, a penetrating silane or siloxane sealer is often best. It soaks in, repels water, and leaves a natural look without forming a film that can get slick. You reapply every 3 to 5 years. For exposed aggregate and stamped surfaces, a thin film forming acrylic can deepen color and add richness. Use a low solids, breathable product that will not trap moisture. Ask for a matte or satin finish and always consider adding a fine traction additive. Heavy, glossy coats are the biggest culprit when I get calls about slippery decks.

If you reseal, do it in dry, mild weather. A dewy evening, then a cold snap, can cloud a sealer or make it blush. After a new pour, stay off the salt for the first winter. Use sand for traction and a plastic shovel. Metal shovels and the wrong ice melt will chew edges and open up the surface to early scaling.

## **Joints, edges, and the details that keep cracks in line**

Concrete wants to crack as it shrinks and as temperatures shift. The job is to tell it where. Plan control joints at a spacing not exceeding 24 to 30 times the slab thickness, center to center, and cut them a quarter of the slab depth. On a 4 inch patio, that means joints every 8 to 10 feet. In complex shapes, think like water and stress do, then put joints where the slab will want to pull. I often hide joints in stamped patterns or align them with borders so they work with the design rather than fighting it.

Edges take abuse from wheelbarrows, kids' bikes, and the mower. A simple tooled edge on a broom finish resists chipping. For patios with planting beds, a clean saw cut along a border lets you tuck in an aluminum edge or a soldier course of pavers as a physical guard.

Reinforcement is not optional for large slabs. Remesh helps with shrinkage control but must be placed in the top third of the slab to be useful. That is harder to achieve than people think. I prefer a grid of 10M rebar on 16 to 24 inch centers in patios that see structures like pergolas. For general patios, synthetic fiber in the mix cuts down on plastic shrinkage cracks, then I add strategic rebar where geometry suggests stress.

## **How you use the space should steer the finish**

A family that hosts big summer dinners needs different performance than a couple looking for a quiet morning coffee nook. If you plan to slide chairs often, a very rough exposed aggregate might snag legs. If you do regular winter grilling, you will appreciate the traction of a broom finish near the door when frost hits. If you want a fire pit integrated into stamped concrete, plan for heat. Direct heat and spalling concrete do not go together. Either use a steel insert and an air gap, or build the pit in a separate masonry ring on its own footing.

Hot tubs deserve special attention. I recommend a dedicated thickened pad, typically 6 inches with double mats of rebar under the tub area, isolated from the rest of the patio ledger with an expansion joint. The finish near a hot tub needs aggressive traction. Wet feet and smooth surfaces are a bad mix, especially in January. Broom finish in a tighter pattern or a micro exposed aggregate works well.

Backyard pathways serve as utility corridors more than showpieces. They should shed water, resist heaving, and provide safe passage under snow. A narrower width, say 36 to 42 inches, is fine for a side yard, while 48 to 60 inches feels generous for a garden path you will walk side by side. A broom finish path with a clean border reads tidy and performs well. When clients ask for flair, we add a stamped or exposed border without sacrificing the practical center tread.

## Installing in London, with permits and scheduling in mind

Patios generally do not need building permits if they sit at grade. Raised decks and structures with roofs do. If you plan a patio that changes grading near the property line or interfaces with a pool, check with the city. Drainage complaints can sour the best project.

Timing the pour matters. Spring is busy, and cold wet weather can drag timelines. Late spring through early fall is ideal. We pour in November too, but you need blankets and a crew that understands cold weather concreting. Proper curing is non negotiable. Keep traffic off for a few days, then be gentle for the first week. Concrete gains most of its strength in the first 7 days, then continues curing for 28. If we stamp, we leave it alone until release powder is washed and the first sealer goes on.

Access can add or subtract days. If the crew cannot get a buggy in and must hand tote, production slows. If a truck cannot reach, you may need a line pump. Expect to pay a bit more for tricky sites, but know that the best residential concrete contractors prefer telling you that upfront.

## A side by side snapshot of finish choices

- Broom finish: Strong traction, low maintenance, accepts penetrating sealer, cost effective. Best for utility, families, and winter use.
- Exposed aggregate: Rich texture and color, excellent grip, looks upscale. Wants periodic thin resealing and care with deicers.
- Stamped concrete: Most design flexibility, borders and patterns tie into architecture. Needs resealing and slip resistance attention to behave in winter.
- Light sandblast or micro texture: Minimalist look with improved traction over smooth. Works as a compromise when modern styling is a priority.

## Mistakes I see and how to avoid them

The most common error is picking a finish in a showroom mindset rather than a January mindset. If you visit a neighbor's glossy stamped patio in August and decide to copy it exactly, you might inherit their winter slip issues. A matte sealer with grit changes that story. Another recurring mistake is rushing curing or sealing. If a sealer goes down on a damp surface or under a cold snap, it can blush and trap moisture. Patience here pays for years.

Design scale matters. Oversized stamped patterns on small patios make the space feel crowded. Tight broom lines on a large entertaining area can look sparse. Proportion your pattern to the space and the home's scale. When we lay out backyard pathways in London, Ontario, we soften long straight runs with gentle curves that still allow a snowblower to pass. The path becomes something you want to walk, not just a [backyard walkway london ontario](#) utility strip.

Ignoring drainage sabotages even the best finish. I have ripped out beautiful surfaces that puddled against the house. A laser level and an honest conversation at the start prevent that. Sometimes you need a small channel drain or a French drain to capture water against a retaining line. Simple fixes at installation beat heroic rescues later.

## Sustainability, repairs, and living with concrete

Concrete is energy intensive to make. The most sustainable patio is one that lasts, not one poured twice. Low water cement ratios with plasticizers, proper air, and thoughtful detailing reduce rework. I encourage clients to keep a pail of leftover integral color or a tag of the mix on file. When small repairs happen, this makes it simpler to blend patches. On stamped surfaces, routine thin reseals with slip additive keep color vibrant without building up thick layers that peel.

For winter care, use calcium magnesium acetate or sand for traction. Keep chlorides to a minimum, especially the first year. Shovels should be plastic edged. Snowblower skids should be set so the auger does not kiss the slab. In spring, a gentle wash and a check for sealer wear go a long way.

## **Working with the right team**

There is no substitute for skilled hands. Local concrete experts understand which aggregates are in the regional mixes, how those stones pop in an exposed finish, and what a late September cold front does to set times. When you interview residential concrete contractors, ask about air entrainment, joint layout, reinforcement, and their sealer plan. Ask to see patios that have been through at least one winter. A contractor who happily walks you past last year's work is one you can probably trust.

Many homeowners start the search online. If you type patios London Ontario, you will see a dozen options, from sole proprietors to larger outfits. The right fit is not only price. It is scheduling transparency, clear communication about site prep, and a willingness to say no to a finish or a sealer that is risky for your use case. Custom concrete work should fit your address, not a brochure picture.

## **A short decision checklist**

- Identify how you will use the space in each season, not just summer.
- Match finish texture to winter traction needs and maintenance comfort.
- Confirm mix design, base prep, joint layout, and reinforcement in writing.
- Choose a sealer type and sheen that suits the finish and your winter habits.
- Plan drainage and access early so installation and long term performance go smoothly.

## **A real world pairing that works**

A family in Westmount wanted a 450 square foot patio with a grilling station and a path to the garden shed. They had two kids and an elderly parent. We built a broom finish main patio with a tight, even texture, then set a 12 inch exposed aggregate border that tied into their river stone beds. The garden path used the same broom finish with a small stamped compass medallion at the first bend so the kids felt they had discovered something. The sealer was a penetrating product on the broomed areas and a light satin acrylic on the border, both with traction in mind. Three winters on, they shovel with a plastic blade, use a little sand on icy mornings, and the slab still looks fresh. The border brought the custom note they wanted without turning maintenance into a hobby.

## **Bringing it all together for your yard**

Choosing the finish for a patio is less about chasing a trend and more about a handful of smart decisions that add up. Respect London's freeze thaw, design for water, and decide your appetite for maintenance. If you love the look of stamped patterns, we can tune the texture and sealer to make it winter friendly. If you value a set it and forget it surface, a well executed broom finish, perhaps with a border or a band of exposed aggregate, nails the brief. For backyard pathways London Ontario homeowners live with year round, consistency and traction keep the routine smooth.

Lean on local knowledge. The right contractor listens, then shows you how each finish will live through February, not just how it photographs in July. That is how you get a patio you enjoy for a decade, not a season.

## **NAP**

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Sunday: [Not listed – please confirm]

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Ferrari Concrete is a family-owned concrete contractor serving London, Ontario with residential, commercial, and industrial concrete work.

Ferrari Concrete provides plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate concrete for driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors.

Ferrari Concrete operates from 5606 Westdel Bourne, London, ON N6P 1P3, Canada (Plus Code: VM9J+GF) and can be reached at 519-652-0483 for project consultations.

Ferrari Concrete serves the London area and nearby communities such as Lambeth, St. Thomas, and Strathroy for concrete installations and upgrades.

Ferrari Concrete offers commercial concrete services for parking lots, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, and other site concrete needs for facilities and workplaces.

Ferrari Concrete includes decorative concrete options that can help homeowners match finishes and patterns to the look of their property.

Ferrari Concrete provides HydroVac services (Ferrari HydroVac) for projects where hydrovac excavation support may be a fit.

Ferrari Concrete can be found on Google Maps here: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Ferrari%20Concrete%2C%205606%20Westdel%20Bourne%2C%20London%2C%20ON%20N6P%201P3>

## Popular Questions About Ferrari Concrete

### What services does Ferrari Concrete offer in London, Ontario?

Ferrari Concrete provides a range of concrete services, including residential and commercial concrete work such as driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors, with finish options like plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate.

### Does Ferrari Concrete install stamped or coloured concrete?

Yes—Ferrari Concrete offers decorative finishes such as stamped and coloured concrete. Availability can depend on scheduling, season, and the specific pattern/colour selection, so it's best to confirm details during an estimate.

### Do you handle both residential and commercial concrete projects?

Ferrari Concrete works on residential projects (like driveways and patios) as well as commercial/industrial concrete needs (such as curbs, sidewalks, and parking-area concrete). Project scope and site requirements typically determine the best approach.

## **What areas does Ferrari Concrete serve around London?**

Ferrari Concrete serves London, ON and surrounding communities. If your project is outside the city core, it's a good idea to confirm travel/service availability when requesting a quote.

## **How does pricing usually work for a concrete project?**

Concrete project costs typically depend on size, site access, base preparation, thickness/reinforcement needs, drainage considerations, and finish choices (for example stamped vs. plain). An on-site assessment is usually the fastest way to get an accurate estimate.

## **What are Ferrari Concrete's business hours?**

Hours listed are Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Sunday hours are not listed, so it's best to call ahead if you need a weekend appointment outside those times.

## **How do I contact Ferrari Concrete for an estimate?**

Call [\(519\) 652-0483](tel:5196520483) or email [info@ferrariconcrete.com](mailto:info@ferrariconcrete.com) to request an estimate. You can also connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). Website: <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/>

## **Landmarks Near London, ON**

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and provides concrete contractor services. If you're looking for concrete contracting in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Budweiser Gardens](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers residential and commercial concrete work. If you're looking for concrete contractor help in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Victoria Park](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and provides decorative concrete options like stamped and coloured finishes. If you're looking for decorative concrete in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Covent Garden Market](#).

Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers concrete services for driveways, patios, and walkways. If you're looking for concrete installation in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Western University](#).

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