

Ten years after: DuPont Corian® stands the test of time in Geneva Hospital operating complex

June 2005 - Ten years ago, in 1995, Geneva's cantonal University Hospital built a new state-of-the-art block of operating theatres. Covering 81,000 square metres, the seven-storey 'Opera' complex was meticulously designed to meet the extraordinary demands of the operating theatre environment, using materials that offered hygiene, durability, practicality and ergonomics.

DuPont™ Corian® solid surface - an exclusive product from DuPont – was one of such materials. Used extensively in the design, Corian® was selected by architects Nierle, Grand, Praplan & Associates for its hygienic benefits and physical properties. Now, after ten years, Corian® is undamaged, despite heavy daily use by staff and patients. Its ability to withstand bacterial growth and its ease of cleaning and maintenance, continue to be valued by the hospital's staff.

The 'Opera' block houses a variety of services from operations, exercise, wake-up and resuscitation to supplies. The advanced medical technology employed in the block includes a medical-technical platform, consisting of a wake-up room with 22 beds, a surgical intensive care unit with 26 beds and a 4,340 square metre surgery block with eight operating theatres.

Corian® has been used in the 'Opera' block to create wall and ceiling linings in the operating theatres and anaesthetist's rooms, babies' changing tables and baths, partitions for treatment cubicles, and work surfaces in the pathology laboratory.

In all these applications, the inherent hygiene of Corian® has provided a safe environment. Homogenous and non-porous, Corian® cannot be penetrated by liquids, and is solid all the way through, providing a crevice-free surface that does not harbour bio-hazardous pathogens. Body fluids can be removed with hose-down cleaning and even low-level radioactive contamination can be easily removed. In laboratories, Corian® is neutral and not easily affected by most common chemicals.

At the Geneva University Hospital, the surfaces made with Corian® are regularly tested for bacteria, and have been found to harbour no contamination. In general, the surfaces have been easy to care for – a factor which has had a positive impact on staff.

The durability of Corian® has also made it a satisfactory material in the 'Opera' block. Consisting of two-third natural minerals and one-third acrylic, the material is hardwearing and withstands the harsh conditions of a busy operating theatre. In many cases, such as at the Geneva Hospital, Corian® will suffer very little damage despite many years of use, and even when serious damage does occur, this can usually be repaired on-site. In addition, Corian® is renewable, allowing the material to be cut, re-joined and re-used, extending its life and making it a good long-term investment.

The creative possibilities of Corian® - which give it numerous uses in commercial and residential applications – are equally important in the healthcare environment. The availability of about 100 colours allows hospitals to use warm hues to achieve a reassuring, calming atmosphere – at the Geneva University Hospital, a soft peach has been used. As Corian® can be worked like wood, thermoformed and joined without visible seams, almost any design application is possible – from large, continuous surfaces to stylish signage to ergonomically shaped edges.

Invented by Research & Development laboratories of DuPont and produced only by DuPont, Corian® (www.corian.com) is used in a wide range of residential, commercial, furniture and specialty applications. It is a non-porous solid surface material that is stain-resistant, easy to clean, durable, renewable, repairable and even recyclable. Available in about 100 standard colours, Corian® can be shaped into virtually any conceivable design. Scratches are easily removed without marring its beauty and uniformity of colour.

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