



PERFECT PROPORTION

Golden Spiral Fireplace
by Liquid Stone Studios
Photos by Nicholas Halpin



“Starting with the ammonite inlay at the center and spiraling outward with each section at a different depth, this is an inspired and exquisitely crafted interpretation of the ‘golden mean’ in concrete.”

- Fu-Tung Cheng,
CHENG Concrete



Liquid Stone Studios

Golden Spiral Fireplace

Project Location: The EnSuite Showroom, Nanaimo, BC

Total Retail Price: \$6,800

Weight: 650 lbs/3 pieces

Concrete Mix: Custom

Other Materials: Reclaimed Douglas fir mantel

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Combining classical proportions and contemporary design, this beautiful showroom fireplace in Nanaimo, BC Canada is both fire frame and visual experience. Ian Wyndlow, principal of Liquid Stone Studios, thoughtfully used white concrete to set off black steel and emphasize the complex three-dimensional spiral motif created from the Golden Mean, an historic and precise mathematical proportion of artistic consequence. Concrete, non-combustible and able to take on the ideal form, surface finish, and color envisioned for the end result, was the natural choice for this project.

Project Objective + Client Feedback

From inception, Wyndlow's project challenge was to create a piece where the only available showroom space for this fireplace was a seemingly unforgiving corner under a staircase. The goal of the piece was to utilize an awkward space and highlight both the fire itself and the concrete of the fireplace. To the client's delight, the asymmetrical design transcends the spatial limitations, visually pulling the fireplace out of the corner and dramatically emphasizing the graceful sweep of the spiral.

Design + Expertise

With what most hope to get from a client, Liquid Stone Studios was given "carte blanche" for the design of the project. The challenge lay in transforming an inconspicuous corner of the room into a real show piece for the client. Brainstorming eventually led to what later seemed like an obvious design solution—the golden spiral and its proportions were calculated to scale for the project. To add depth and visual interest, each segment was slightly recessed as the spiral tightened toward the center.

A second site visit revealed that the available space was slightly smaller than required which led to a recalculation and readjustment in order for the final design to fit. Creating the three-dimensional mold in the

negative, or reverse form, was challenging and required careful double-checking, adjusting, and identification of almost forty individual mold pieces required for the three cast sections to properly flow together. A mantel of reclaimed Douglas fir—Wyndlow had been saving in the back of his barn for just the right project—became the finishing touch to complement the earthiness and enhance the spiral line of the concrete.

What began as a very difficult design challenge became, in the hands of a fine concrete craftsman, a complex, yet artful showcase stunner that highlights the very best of concrete fabrication. Asked about the client’s reaction, Wyndlow said that the client was most pleased. For himself, Wyndlow says, “Converting a series of challenges into design opportunities is the most gratifying.”

BEST FIREPLACE: Liquid Stone Studios

CHENG Concrete’s 6th Annual Members’ Circle of Distinction Design Challenge

Recognized in the industry as the pinnacle of exceptional design and craftsmanship, the 2010 CHENG Concrete Circle of Distinction Design Challenge showcases talent and technical skill of the very best in creative concrete. With over 100 entries, each were judged and then awarded in 11 categories on elements and principles of design, design planning, innovative concept/creativity, use of color, presentation, innovative forming techniques, problem solving, and creatively meeting the demands of the client.



Liquid Stone Studios’ *Golden Spiral Fireplace* was awarded the **Best Fireplace** for this year’s design challenge. *“It’s just a very clever and beautiful piece,”* says Fu-Tung Cheng, head juror. *“He [Ian Wyndlow] visually changed the whole shape of a fireplace opening. The judges all agreed that he did a great job.”*

ABOUT LIQUID STONE STUDIOS

Having seen an article featuring Fu-Tung Cheng in 2002, Ian Wyndlow set out to start a career in artisanal concrete and by 2005, invested in training and started his company. Liquid Stone Studios specializes in the design and fabrication of custom, high-quality concrete countertops, vanities and furnishings for residential and commercial settings.

Based in central Vancouver Island, British Columbia, they serve Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and beyond. Their products are tailor-made to client specifications, often combining polished concrete, metal, wood or glass to produce functional work surfaces of unique beauty that personalize your home or business. Please visit the website to learn more about Liquid Stone Studios and “the softer side of concrete.”

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