

# Artisan aims to promote the re-introduction of plasterwork – Daily Commercial News

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## LIME PLASTER COMPANY

Plaster restoration work at Dundurn Castle in Hamilton, Ont. Below, artisan Benjamin Scott reflected in a Marmorino finish, part of a traditional three-coat lime system.

## Artisan aims to promote the re-introduction of plasterwork

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Before the days of gypsum board and drywall, lath and plaster was the material of choice for Canadian wall and ceiling construction. Toronto's Lime Plaster Company aims to promote the re-introduction of traditional plasterwork into the Canadian consciousness at both the residential and commercial level.

Owner and lead plasterer Benjamin Scott learned his trade in Devon, in the southwest of England where the construction industry continues to honour

historical building methods.

“I worked on long houses, cottages and other traditional buildings, both interior and exterior,” says Scott. “In England, the green industry is stronger, as is the connection between new and traditional construction and these trade skills are very much alive.”

Scott came to Canada not out of career conviction, but curiosity. “After I chose to live here, I decided I would be stubborn and carry on pushing lime and traditional construction skills onto the market,” he says.

He first worked in British Columbia, and then established the company in Toronto in 2009.



Benjamin Scott

Although plaster formulations differ, plaster systems can be considered 100 per cent natural. While Canada has a rich history of plaster construction, the material has fallen out of favour with the introduction of drywall during the Second World War to offset a home-front labour shortage.

“I’m not trying to re-invent the wheel here”, says Scott. “I’m re-introducing a material that has been used since Canada began. Look at some of the heritage buildings in this country and you’ll see exterior lime stucco that has withstood 150 to 250 winters.”

The U.K. lime industry, however, provided a wealth of products, including exterior application lime stucco. The North American market offers a narrower range of material and lime plaster formulations that generally provide lower calcium content than traditional British limes.

“If you look hard enough, though, you find what you need,” says Scott, who has sourced an array of serviceable hydraulic and non-hydraulic limes mortars, gypsums and American clay plasters. Wood lath is another matter — the company uses reclaimed lath derived from building demolition projects.

The company's current projects focus on heritage restoration and clients interested in sustainable and green construction. Scott recently completed work on a 3,000-square-foot retail space in Burlington and is pursuing other commercial contracts. Some large residential projects, however, have approached 20,000 square feet.

Scott notes that the most important aspect of plastering is the preparation of the substrate.

The base material is applied with traditional hawk and trowel. The material bonds better to walls and ceilings if it's pushed into place than if it's sprayed.

"You get more of a connection with the surface," he says.

"You get a certain bond and adherence created by the impact of the material. Underneath, if applied correctly, they're essentially soft materials that move with the underlying structure and crack far less than drywall."

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