

Ugly Driveway? Give It A Make-Over

Framingham resident Frank Hewitt loves his landscaping and is passionate about maintaining it. Come early spring, and well into summer and fall, Frank is outside his home, mowing the lawn every three or four days. His gardens are meticulous; his back yard is as beautifully groomed as the front.

Frank loved his landscaping, but his asphalt driveway? Not so much. So when he learned of Driveway Impressions, a Roslindale-based franchise that installs decorative stamped asphalt driveways, he was intrigued and called for a free consultation. Franchise owner, Mark Myers, came to his home, measured his driveway and discussed with him the number of ways he could transform Frank's plain asphalt to look like elegant, hand-laid paving stones, for a fraction of the cost. Concerned about potential damage to the landscaping, and that the driveway design might overpower rather than complement his home, Hewitt said thanks but no thanks.

But the more he thought about it, the more he realized Driveway Impressions could provide the look he wanted at an affordable price, so he called Mark back for a second meeting, this time with his wife. "We knew we needed to have the driveway repaved anyway," Frank explained. "We had looked at alternatives to regular asphalt that were vastly more expensive, so it was simply a matter of how much we would spend to make it look how we wanted it to look." Frank decided to work with Driveway Impressions and got the look he wanted: subtle, elegant and not overpowering.

"Homeowners contact us for all kinds of reasons," says Mark, who moved from North Carolina to Roslindale with his wife and business partner, Nancy, in 2007. "They're disappointed when they drive up to their home and it doesn't look the way they want it to; they're frustrated that their driveway stands out in their neighborhood, but for the wrong reasons; they're upset because they

think all they can afford is plain black asphalt, and their driveway still won't look the way they want it to, or maybe are worried about the resale value of their home."

Driveway Impressions fills a need for customers in this region that no other industry provides. Using a proprietary asphalt stamping technology called Street-Print®, Driveway Impressions produces a decorative driveway that looks

like traditional pavers or stamped concrete, at a fraction of the cost. Using grid-style templates, the patterns are impressed directly into a heat-softened asphalt pavement of a new or existing driveway. After the pavement has been stamped, a polymer cement surfacing material is applied to produce the finished color and texture. The result is a finished driveway that dramatically increases the home's "curb appeal." The continuous, flexible pavement surface is resistant to cracking and lifting and there is no water seepage that



PHOTO COURTESY OF DRIVEWAY IMPRESSIONS

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can negatively affect the driveway structure. Plant growth that can degrade the driveway surface is eliminated and the surface can be easily repaired, changed or rejuvenated.

The service is an especially good fit in New England, where the freeze-thaw cycles cause asphalt to contract and expand on a frequent basis. Asphalt is a flexible surface that can withstand the most extreme weather conditions,

salt and other de-icing products. Stamped asphalt can also resist cracking and material breakdown, which can happen with authentic brick pavers. Driveway Impressions driveways and walkways do not support organic growth, which means homeowners won't have to fight weeds trying to break through the surface.

Stamped asphalt requires far less time to install than that of traditional pavers. It is virtually main-

tenance-free, never needs seal-coating and has all the benefits of asphalt – because it is asphalt!

Mark and Nancy looked at dozens of businesses before deciding to go with Driveway Impressions. "We wanted our own business and Massachusetts was where we wanted to be," said Mark. "We saw an ad in the Boston Globe and were intrigued. The first thing that struck us about the company was the product: it was unlike anything we had ever seen before. The Web site answered any question that we came up with and even featured a page with a blank driveway on which to test out the different designs," he continued. "The more we saw, the more we wanted to pursue the concept." They opened their business in early February 2007, with Mark handling sales and labor and Nancy focusing on advertising, marketing and promotions. They haven't looked back since.

Neither has Frank Hewitt. Spring is here and, no doubt, Frank will be out there tending to his lawn, flowers and shrubbery. Thanks to Driveway Impressions, the one thing he won't have to tend to is his driveway.