



The New Measure For Quality...
Sterling Standard

Homes Available For
Immediate Possession
All Areas

Visit sterlingedmonton.com



SUPPLIED

Mary Fadi, left, and Sue Ostrowski are co-owners of Enviro Clean Grout & Stone Care Inc., a company that has found success in the Edmonton area.



SUPPLIED

"We are very particular about our work," says Enviro Clean's Sue Ostrowski.

Small company gives new life to tile and stone

Two-woman operation relies on best machines and products to clean and restore floors

STEPHANIE DAVID
Special to The Journal
EDMONTON

When Cathy Hawkins faced the prospect of ripping out the cracked tile mosaic in the bathroom of her 1920s home in Old Strathcona, she knew she needed to find an alternative. Dirty grout made the floor look worn, but she still liked the unique design. "It was so funky and cool I wanted to keep it," she said.

Hawkins called Enviro Clean Grout & Stone Care Inc. (Enviro Clean) to clean the grout, instead of replacing the tile, and was startled with the results. "It's gorgeous," Hawkins says of the finished bathroom. "It really puts a new look to the room." The clean grout brought out the colours of the tile, she says, and gave the room a refreshing makeover. "It looks brand new and it stays that way."

Hawkins is not alone. Enviro Clean is tapping into the popularity of stone and ceramic tile floors in Edmonton homes, offering services dedicated to stone and grout restoration.

Instead of muscle power, this two-woman team is using their brains and the best machines and products they can find. The business has seen success from a modest start two years ago, to capturing the market in the Edmonton area, largely by word-of-mouth.

"We do all of the work ourselves," says Sue Ostrowski, co-owner of Enviro Clean.

"We are very particular about the work," she says. "Being as we are a small company, it is extraordinarily important that we always have the best products to complement our services." Participation in conferences and seminars in New York and Las Vegas ensure that they are exposed to new products and techniques for grout and stone care. "We are creating a large network of people we can draw on for technical assistance," Ostrowski says.

But the amazement of their customers doesn't come from the fact that they are doing all the work themselves, as much as from the results.

"We can rejuvenate an average floor in one day with no smell, no dust and no mess," says Ostrowski. They grind and polish with a wet process, she says, and can return floors to a mirror-like finish.

The business specializes in stone restoration, uses a wet method of grinding to remove scratches and marks, and can apply a seal or polish. Enviro Clean also repairs and maintains marble, travertine and limestone. "We use the same marble floor restoration techniques as people have been using for decades," says Ostrowski. "We do not crystallize or apply waxes to marble, travertine or limestone floors."

The company also specializes in cleaning and sealing grout, which can be-

"We can rejuvenate an average floor in one day with no smell, no dust and no mess."

Sue Ostrowski
of Enviro Clean

come faded and stained, making the floor look worn and dirty. This can make it seem like the entire floor needs replaced, says Ostrowski.

"What we do is come in and deep-clean it, removing old sealers, old chemicals, dirt and grime, repair minor grouting issues and apply a two-in-one product: a colour and a seal," she says. The product bonds with the grout, and creates a layer to protect it from spills and dirt.

"The preparation is critical," says Ostrowski. "Before you apply the seal you have to clean the floor so the product can bond with the grout." A non-chemical cleaning process is used where possible, she says.

"If the grout doesn't look correct for the palette, we can actually alter the colour," she adds. Colour sealers have a water-based formula that bonds to grout to create a uniform and even colour, and can be used to change the colour and prevent future stains. Homeowners can also obtain tips on how to best maintain their floors.

Cleaning and restoring floors and grout can give a room a new look, without wasting the materials and expense of ripping out the old floor and installing a new one.

"We can bring it back to an original finish," says Ostrowski. For homeowners such as Erma Nash, this is the key to rejuvenating her apartment-style condominium in the downtown core, which has seen a number of previous owners. She called Enviro Clean to clean her grout and restore her floors. "It looked brand new," she said of the finished product. "I was really surprised."

Clientele are diverse and include home buyers, sellers and renovators, ranging from new multi-million-dollar homes to older homes in need of repair.

"Some people buy a home and inherit a natural stone floor, or buy a floor and are unsure of how to take care of it," says Ostrowski. Simple maintenance procedures can ensure that the floors help retain a new look and prevent stains, as well as make cleaning easier. "People don't have to worry about their floor; they can just worry about living," says Ostrowski. "You can enjoy your family instead of scrubbing the floor."

Mary Fadi, co-owner of Enviro Clean, says that people should be thinking of sealing their floors when they are new. Without it, dirt and liquids will penetrate the grout and stains will set in. Maintenance does not always have to happen when floors are already old and worn, she says.

Enviro Clean provides free consultations.

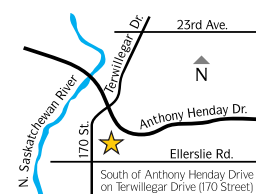
For more information, call 417-9080 or visit www.mycliangrout.com.

If you prefer choice, then you'll love Ambleside.

A variety of homes at prices that fit any budget.

- Apartment-style condos
- Single family homes with rear lanes
- Executive walkout bungalows

- Semi-detached homes
- Single family homes with front attached garage



Ambleside
IN WINDERMERE
Life Within Walking Distance