



Lifecasting titled "Anika", 25 " x 32 " by David Parvin

Mixing Forton MG Simplified

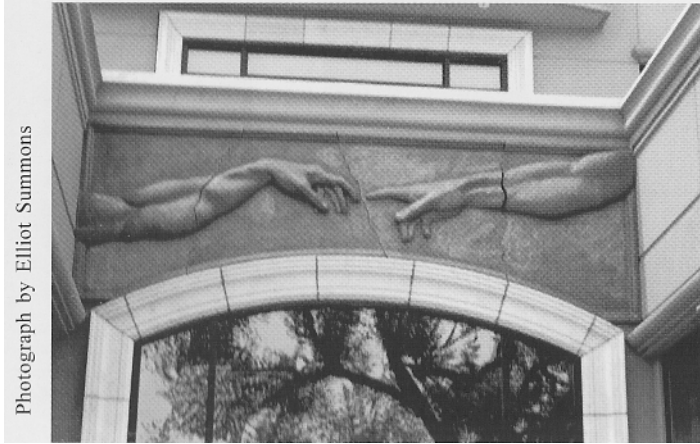
by David E. Parvin

My discovery of Forton MG has been very important to my artistic career. At that time over 13 years ago, I was about to give up on achieving a realistic marble look for a particular bas relief since several different attempts had been unsatisfactory. It was suggested that I try Forton MG with "Pool Mix" (crushed limestone) added. It worked beautifully. Since then, I have used it in many applications. For example, with the right cloth it can be used to make very thin and light yet remarkably strong mother molds. But the most important use to me has been to add metal powders to produce cold casts that look amazingly like hot cast metal. To date, my largest piece has been a bas relief 16 x 5 feet and my smallest use was a medallion about the size of a quarter. It can be painted or poured into molds. It is nontoxic and odor free.

It neither shrinks or expands. It mixes easily and is forgiving if the recommended ratios of materials are not followed exactly. It sets up in any kind of molds including alginate. Since it is water soluble until it sets up, cleanup is a snap. Though not intended for constant water contact as in a fountain, it was designed for outside applications and holds up well to the elements. The setting time can be controlled from just a few minutes to an hour.

So what's the bad news? Well for me there isn't any but I have found that some people new to it have found it confusing to mix. I have been mixing it so long that weighing out one liquid and three different powders and then using different proportions if metal powders are used is a cinch. But Hiram P. Ball, Jr. of Ball Consulting, Ltd. recently has greatly simplified the process. When he first explained it to me, I couldn't see the purpose since I wasn't having any problems in the first place. However, after giving it a try, I have to humbly admit that he is absolutely on target.

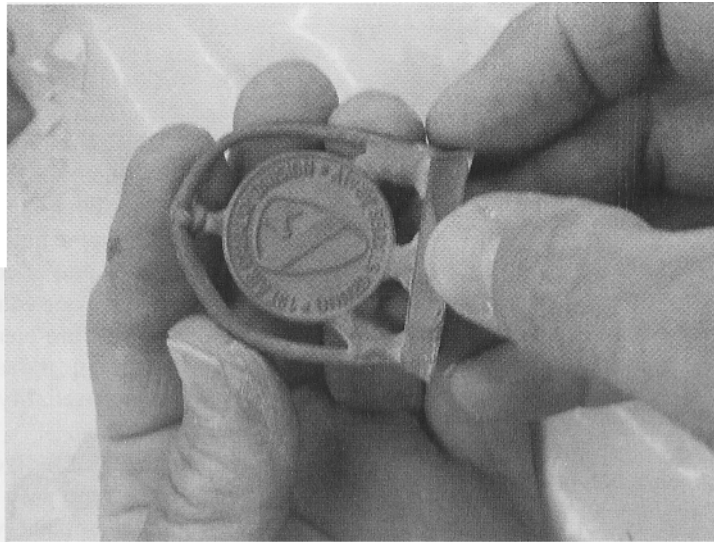
The secret is to use pre-blended ingredients which can either be purchased or blended oneself. My suggestion is if you are new to Forton MG, purchase the pre-blended. Later you have a little experience, blend it yourself and save. Once you have the pre-blended dry materials, mixing with the liquid couldn't be simpler. All you do is mix one part liquid to two parts powder either by weight or volume. What I have been doing is using two, one pint plastic cups, one for the liquid and one for the powders. (The size of the containers would of course depend upon the amount needed). I simply fill one container with the liquid and scoop out two containers of the pre-blended powders, and mix. If that weren't simple enough, the same 1 to 2 ratio works for metal powder mixtures as well. My assistants have been delighted with this simplified method. I should point out for the reader who has never used Forton MG that the ingredients are a liquid called VF-812 which looks and smells like white latex paint (which it isn't), a dry resin, and FGR 95 hydrocal. If purchased pre-blended, the FGR-95 and the resin come in the same container and separately with the right amount of VF-812. If not pre-blended, a "kit" consists of a container of VF-812 and a box of resin. The FGR-95 is purchased separately. I purchase 5 gallons of VF-812, 10 pounds of resin, and 100 pound bags of FGR-95.



Photograph by Elliot Summons

Bas relief, 16'x 5', for building at 2nd and Columine, Denver, Colorado. Sculpture by David Parvin and Eliot Summons

Do-it-yourself pre-blending is also a no-brainer. All you do is get a clean plastic bucket that can be sealed. For every 10 pounds of FGR-95 add 1 pound of dry resin and mechanically stir. To get a metal powder dry blend just add 1 and 1/2 pounds of metal powder for every pound of FGR-95 and stir until a uniform color. That's all there is to it. You can increase the metal powder ration up to 2 pounds per pound of FGR-95 for a more intense metallic look if you so desire. Any metal powders such as brass, copper, or bronze can be used individually or together, 50/50 copper and bronze mixture is an excellent choice.



Photograph by Elliot Summons

Cast of a Vietnam era medallion. 1 1/8 " in diameter. All in Forton MG with metal powders.

For more information, contact Ball Consulting by any means listed in the Ball Consulting advertising in this magazine. Or call me at 303-321-1074 since I have used tons of the stuff.