

Curb Appeal Goes Above and Beyond for Capital Car Wash—Masonry Design Showcases Six Echelon Trenwyth® Architectural Stone Products



John Imreibe's latest business venture, Capital Car Wash, welcomed its first customers in November and has accommodated large volumes of satisfied car owners ever since. Located in Glenview, a northern Chicago suburb, this flagship design will be replicated for future car wash sites. The proprietor's early passion for all-things-automotive inspired him to help customers keep their vehicles clean, which is no easy feat for drivers living in the extreme weather conditions of the greater Chicago area. Imreibe has found that many new customers are drawn to a particular car wash based on aesthetics and cleanliness, which prompted him to aim for a curb appeal design that would stand out from others.

"Intriguing people from the roadway is crucial for this type of business," the owner noted. "The look catches the attention of drivers and entices them in. The goal is to project a brand that is impressive from the outside and follow that up with an equally impressive experience in the services provided."

To bring his bold vision to life, Imreibe assembled a strong collaborative team consisting of architect Melanie Soos, President of Lincolnshire-based Soos & Associates; veteran mason Gerry Brady, owner of ENZ Masonry; and the experts from Northfield/Echelon, suppliers of Trenwyth® architectural stone.

Since function dictated a long and rectangular structure, the entrepreneur imagined a modern masonry solution for the front and rear of the building, specifically two steep-roofed flanking towers to call out the exit and entrance of the Capital Car Wash tunnel.

"I was looking for a design that would visually designate the flow of traffic for arriving customers," he said.

Once Imreibe brought his ideas to architect Soos, they discussed possibilities for turning concepts into reality. Soos & Associates had the background for this prototype build since they are known for assisting clients who are in pursuit of new opportunities and ventures. The designer recalled that the specific elements for the Capital Car Wash

required a degree of architectural finesse during the planning phase.

"Our firm has a reputation for empowering our clients as we ensure their success in the built environment," said Soos. "The strong visual elements of the pitched roof and towers flanking the low horizontal tunnel presented a challenge for us, but we doubled down on the design by playing up the geometry with the use of both Echelon Trendstone® and Mesastone® in several textures and shades."

As a woman-owned small business, Melanie Soos co-founded Soos & Associates in 1993 with husband Robert Soos. The boutique studio has provided a wide range of projects for clients across the United States including retail and restaurant chains, which gave the architect insights into Imreibe's branding goals.

"John wanted to present a building that customers would be able to identify as a Capital Car Wash site as this was the first location for the brand. With the unique layout, driven by the mere function and lineal path of how a carwash operates, we designed the façade with materials to balance and offset the entrance, tunnel and exit."



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With masonry playing a key role in the grand scheme, Gerry Brady, owner of Chicago-based ENZ Masonry, came on board to transform Soos's intricate design into a structural actuality. The Ireland native founded ENZ more than twenty years ago, and his Chicago-based firm is well known for integrity, fine craftsmanship and adaptability.

The veteran mason understood from the start that this was not going to be a standard brick structure. Brady collaborated with the experts from Northfield/Echelon, who supplied the [Trenwyth® architectural concrete masonry units](#) (CMUs) for the multicolored, multi-surfaced facades.

Aided by CAD BLOX software, the suppliers were able to provide 3-D patterns that could be viewed as a whole before beginning construction. The detailed takeoffs they communicated to the mason presented a range of precise design elements that might otherwise be difficult to determine.

Imreibe noted, "From the initial design, the Northfield team was able to provide Gerry and his team with the sheets, so that he and his team could determine the ratio and pattern for the Trenwyth® stone. That got us the precise counts, so we could get the order in and get to work."

From an architectural perspective, Soos described the ability to preview the brick layout as "manageable mapping" that helped move the plans from conception to reality.

Brady elaborated, "We were working out the design for six different products. Northfield/Echelon played a huge part—the printouts they provided made our work so much easier—their takeoff was perfect! Without the detailed sheets, I would have had to order extra because you never want to come up short on a project. I was converted. I normally avoid the use of too many products, but the result was fantastic."

This flagship project displayed the versatility of Trenwyth's product lines by showcasing the wide

range of colors, shapes, sizes, and finishes available in the CMUs. Soos, who had used [Trenwyth® stone](#) before on other retail buildings, agreed.

"I would use it again as I feel it allows incredible flexibility when designing with masonry. The variety of stone choices allowed us to create the ideal pattern to complement the steep angles."

Brady built in additional savings because of the structural integrity of the Trenwyth® stone.

He noted, "The installation went very well. These are excellent products, well made, with no breakage—the palettes arrived intact. Normally with other products, 5% is going to be broken, which is wasteful."

In addition, the block is mold and moisture resistant and virtually maintenance free. The varieties used for the Capital Car Wash towers consisted of [Mesastone®](#) (Shotblast CMU) in Haydite, [Trendstone®](#) (Ground Face CMU) in Gray Marble & Colonial Red and [Trendstone Plus®](#) (Filled & Polished CMU) in Shadow Gray and Limestone.

The variety of colors generated a great deal of interest, curiosity and a bit of skepticism during the build, but once completed, the reactions were overwhelmingly positive. People were so impressed with the outcome once the pattern emerged in its entirety.

— Gerry Brady, Owner of ENZ Masonry

Imreibe agreed, "When using so many different products in different shades and textures, our collaborative effort paid off. We're really thrilled with outcome. The quality of the business's exterior reflects the quality of its service."

And the superior service has been evidenced by the steady flow of customers entering the self-drive-through business, which provides an open space for customers to access. Soos's glass dominant extra-wide tunnel and 14-foot ceiling design helped avoid the closed-in feeling of many car washes. The bold look of the towers has drawn in new customers and helped guide arriving customers to where they need to be.

Imreibe explained, "If people pull in and don't know where to go, it's a problem. People must navigate the property on their own. Melanie's design really helps in the overall flow of the business, which equals customer satisfaction. Customers walk in and say, wow, this place is beautiful! They don't necessarily expect the car wash to have such a sleek design."

Brady reflected, "I got positive reactions about the finished product and calls from other builders, who had admired the work. I'm incredibly happy to have my name on that project."

Imreibe plans to organically grow his Capital Car Wash brand by expanding within a limited geographic area so that visual recognition occurs.

"We're currently working on plans to open more sites and keep replicating the same look. The logo and name suggest prominence and strength, and the design complements the brand," he stated.

As future locations break ground, Echelon's Trenwyth® architectural stone will continue to be integrated into the Capital Car Wash aesthetic. Learn more at www.EchelonMasonry.com

About [Echelon®](#) Masonry

Echelon Masonry is North America's largest manufacturer of the highest-quality masonry products for the architectural and masonry industries. As the consolidated masonry brand for Oldcastle APG, a CRH Company, Echelon offers the widest masonry portfolio in the industry, from trusted brands like Trenwyth to innovative product solutions like the InsulTech System, as well as the localized, one-on-one support needed to bring the most ambitious projects to life. Since 2015, Echelon Masonry has been committed to supporting the time-honored tradition of masonry and advancing the craft for the 21st century and beyond. www.EchelonMasonry.com

Project Details

Project Description:

Capital Car Wash

Location:

Glenview, Illinois

Products:

Trenwyth® Architectural Stone Products

Manufacturer:

Northfield, and Oldcastle APG Company

Architects:

Melanie Soos, President of Soos & Associates

Gerry Brady, Owner of ENZ Masonry

Masonry Contractor:

ENZ Masonry

General Contractor:

A&D Development