

Concreting Family Scoop Awards

By Joyce Brewer



The winning team: Kieran, Martial, Jake, Jodie, Sam, Jefferson and Alfie. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The New Zealand Concrete Contractors Awards (NZCCA) and National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC), held their awards ceremonies last month.

Taking away the awards for Best Residential and Best Commercial (highly commended) at the 14 September NZCCA, was Franklin family owned business Wallen Concreting Ltd. Also on the night, 20 year old Jake Wallen won a Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) Apprenticeship award. Younger brother, 16 year old Sam Wallen, received a BCITO Concrete Construction certificate (funded by Gateway Tertiary Education). But wait, there's more! These young men's amazing mum, Jodie Wallen took home a certificate for Tradeswoman of the Year (highly commended) at the NAWIC ceremony on 28 September.

You could say that concrete is in this family's blood. Martial Wallen has been laying concrete since he was 15, learning the ropes from dad Marty (Pa) and mum Diane (Ma). Ma and Pa had a very successful concreting business in Manurewa, they were 'old school'. Pa was very particular with the quality of his workmanship and passed this trait on to Martial. "Working for my mum and dad made me who I am today and I'm very thankful for that," he says.

Growing up in Drury, Jodie was surrounded by men in construction. Her dad Kevin Waldron and older brother Jeff, were builders by trade, however Jeff has now joined the Police. Her brother Steve, is a stonemason and after meeting Martial, it was inevitable Jodie was going to be involved in concrete, one way or another!

This amazing couple have been working alongside each other for 20 years now. In that time they have had three children, Jake (20), Max (18) and Sam (16). The boys have been involved with the family business from a very

early age, often working during school holidays. Jake has been working with mum and dad now, full time for almost four years and Sam is getting set to start next year. Max has just started an apprenticeship with R.M. Shore Builders Ltd.

Over the years the Wallens have done a huge variety of concrete work, both in residential and commercial sectors. They had the contract at Punchbowl in Karaka with their operations expansions and have been working with Craig Nicholson Earthmoving, building roadways for new subdivisions in Runciman. "We also work closely together with Counties Ready Mix Ltd and other contractors. Actual Concrete Ltd, Berghan Concrete Ltd, Protec Pumps and Radius Pumps. It's good to have a great working relationship as we often help each other out on jobs."

Jodie confirmed it was really hard to get skilled, reliable, (and drug free) independent contractors in New Zealand. "There was a skill shortage so we had to look overseas to the Philippines to acquire part of our current workforce. It was a mission but well worth it," she said.

After learning they were the recipients of the NZCCA awards, Jodie and Martial were over the moon. "We were very excited and proud to win. We are extremely proud of our staff that work so hard as a team to make each job a success. Concrete laying is all about teamwork as it is always tough, no matter how big or small the job. It definitely takes a united team to make it happen."

Martial and the team are as equally proud of Jodie for her own achievement at the NAWIC conference. Jodie would like to say a special 'thank you' to Counties Ready Mix Concrete who sponsored them so they could all make it on the night.

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