



# SIKA AT WORK

## WINSTON TOWERS 300

## SUNNY ISLES BEACH, FLORIDA

RERURBISHMENT: SikaQuick®-1000, Sikalastic® Deckpro

TILE SETTING: Sika® Level-02 EZ Primer, SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set, SikaTile®-450 LHT Secure Set, SikaTile®-475 LHT Premium Set, SikaTile®-800 Unsanded Grout, SikaTile®-815 Secure Grout, SikaSil® N Plus

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# PORCELAIN FOR MILES IN SUNNY ISLES

## Sika and PIF Construction Transform Winston Towers 300



PIF's Grigorios Tsiknidis applies SikaTile®800 Unsanded Grout to huge Calacattaslabs.

**OVERHEAD, GRIGORIOS TSIKNIDIS SMEARS** a dollop of grout over the stately wall slabs. He carefully works the smooth mixture in the gaps as a small crowd gathers. They mutter a mix of English and Russian as they study his technique. For months, the residents of Winston Towers 300 watched Tsiknidis and his crewmates upgrade the appearance of the lobby and pool deck. The crew at PIF Construction Group made setting the giant porcelain slabs look easy, although Tsiknidis understands the skill, team effort and specialty products that are behind such complex installations. PIF's skill with porcelain is well known in Greater Miami, and the group is spearheading Sunny Isles Beach's transformation.

### **INFLUENCE FROM A GROWING DEMOGRAPHIC**

Sunny Isles Beach, Fla., is affectionately recognized as Little Moscow. Some prefer to call it Little Minsk, Little Odessa or Little Kiev, depending on whom you ask. The nicknames spring from the large-scale immigration of post-Soviet citizens following the collapse of the USSR. The 1990s South Florida development boom coincided with an influx of wealthy former Soviets seeking to make investments in the newly accessible U.S. economy. Highrise condos like Winston Towers 300 proved attractive to affluent buyers whose taste for *roskosh*, or luxury, fueled a series of property improvements – a trend that continues. This currently manifests as a loud call for porcelain surfaces inside and out.

That is why the Winston Towers 300 Association enlisted Michael Potomkin's PIF Construction Group in late 2021 to implement a portion of Danil Ilyayev's restoration and rejuvenation design for the 23-floor condominium. The construction group was well known for its workmanship, so the association was confident the group had the expertise to resurface its 60,000-sq. ft. pool deck over the building's parking structure.

### **OVERHAUL OVERDUE**

The deck and pool needed work. Around 50 years old, The Winston Towers 300 amenities space had leaks that demanded repair and underlying surfaces that had to be restored and protected. Potomkin and the property owners understood that they needed a partner who could provide solutions for each. Sika was the natural choice.

Headquartered in Baar, Switzerland, Sika had more than a century of construction materials solution innovations behind it. Its SikaQuick®-1000 was trusted to repair and flatten uneven surfaces, and a Sikalastic® Deckpro system was applied as a waterproofing and crack-isolation system. The performance of the products and service from the Sika team led PIF and the association to consider altering their plans by also using Sika materials to set the more than one and a quarter acres of gauged porcelain tile panels to the deck.

"We were brought in by our RSB (refurbishment, sealing and bonding) team at Sika to put our tile-setting system together," said Sika Technical Sales Manager Ken Johnson. "We first did an entire presentation for the building owner. This tile project was slated to go to another manufacturer. We came down and we put a complete system together. Because we were going over a Sika membrane, we were able to couple a system warranty together." First, however, Johnson needed Potomkin's buy-in for using SikaTile® materials.

### **PROVING THE PRODUCT**

Potomkin insisted on testing the products in the environment they would be used. "Michael, being a lifetime user of another product, said, 'Well, let me test your stuff,'" explained Johnson. "When we went there, we did a bond test over top of the Sika system. He wanted to test it the way

his guys were going to set the tile and also how they weren't. He did one bond test where he didn't backbutter and just dropped it down on the trowel marks. On the other one, he backbuttered and installed it per TCNA guidelines like his team would do. Both performed very well. The bond was so tenacious over that Sika deck coating that they had a really hard time chipping it up. Both panels had to come up in little, tiny pieces. He was very, very happy with the result."

In all, 2,400 bags of SikaTile®-450 LHT Secure Set bonded the porcelain panels to the deck and the wood-look mosaic tiles to the planters located around the space. When it came to grouting, the environment presented complications that had to be addressed through product innovation.

"One of the real challenges was ... this is Miami," Johnson noted. The southern Florida weather is unpredictable and aggressive, so Sika was tasked with offering a solution that would accommodate an erratic weather schedule. "When it came to grouting, they had to use a rapid-cure grout. One of the reasons they came to us was because of our (SikaTile®-)815 Secure Grout. Several times a day it rained there, and with the flash time on our product being quick, we were able to meet the customer's needs by providing it."



PIF set a variety of gauged porcelain tiles, panels and slabs for the \$1.2 million redesign.



SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set was chosen for the first-floor bathroom due to its flexibility.

## PROJECT EXPANSION

PIF's workmanship and partnership with Sika led to an expansion of the team's involvement with Winston Towers 300's redesign. "About halfway through the pool deck project," Johnson began, "Michael had me come in and meet with the building owners again and we talked about an additional project that was on the books for the interior portion of it. They were using slabs and porcelain tile on the interior."

The interior spaces included the building lobby, the lobby restrooms and the first-floor hallways. For each area, Sika was ready with product solutions for PIF's crews to apply. Wall surfaces were prepared with Sika® Level-02 EZ Primer before SikaTile®-475 LHT Premium Set was used to install book-matched Calacatta slabs. SikaTile®-450 LHT Secure Set bonded all porcelain tiles to the floor, while SikaSil® N Plus and Sika's EMSEAL products provided the required expansion joints. In the lobby restrooms, Potomkin's teams preferred SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set because of its flexibility. Interior joints were filled with SikaTile®-800 Unsanded Grout, bright white on walls and canvas on floors.

Winston Towers 300's pool deck was completed in May 2022. The interior tiling finished about a year later. PIF's successful deployment of the Sika solution systems ensured the new porcelain pool deck would appeal to residents of Winston Towers 300 for decades to come. The product performance and workmanship likewise provided pleasing, low-maintenance interior surfaces on the lobby floor for guests and staff. Best of all, the quality of the Winston Towers 300 results led to another project for the Sika/PIF partnership.

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**WINSTON TOWERS 100**

Heading one of 300's six sister complexes, the Winston Towers 100 Association summoned PIF and Sika to undertake its own tile replacement. Fresh from the experience of setting the 300's tile, the team is well prepared for the job. Johnson understands that despite the buildings' similarities, PIF knows to expect the unexpected. "One of the benefits of working with Sika is if you have a jobsite condition that comes up, more than likely we have a solution because of the tremendous breadth and width of our product selection."



PIF and Sika were also tasked with transforming the building's lobby spaces.



The amenities area received a new porcelain deck and wood-look mosaic planters.

# TILE SETTING BEYOND THE EXPECTED.



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