



# SIKA AT WORK

## RITZ-CARLTON NAPLES, FLORIDA

TILE SETTING: SikaLevel®-325, SikaTile®-100 Moisture Guard, SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set, SikaTile®-815 Secure Grout, Merkrete MK-100SC 100% Silicone Caulk

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# TILING AND THE TEMPEST

Sika and International Flooring Brave the Storm for Ritz-Carlton, Naples



International Flooring used a Sika system for the hotel's monumental renovation.

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2022.** If the sky is sullen, then the sea is downright seething. The unchecked ache in the shoulder has become a claxon portending an unforgiving storm. The Ritz-Carlton, with all its grace and splendor, will not be spared when the winds crescendo and sea overtakes the land. The power is failing. Time to lay down the trowel. Evacuate.

## RENOVATING A NAPLES JEWEL

The Ritz-Carlton, Naples has marked the high point of luxury on the affluent Gulf Coast community since 1985. The planned renovations that began in May 2021 were intended to renew the hotel's grand luster. Elevating the guest experience was the central drive behind the renovations, and the construction of the new Vanderbilt Tower, addition of 92 new suites and expansion of the Club Lounge would be central to this vision. A transfiguring marriage of marble and gold pervades the reimagined spaces. Understated creams, greys, blues and greens uphold the updated aesthetic and reflect the natural surroundings of the hotel's southwest Florida surroundings. No space of the hotel would be untouched by sweeping modernization.

PCL Construction, the project's general contractor, enlisted International Flooring Inc. (IFI) to transform the Ritz-Carlton's floors and walls. The materials that would set the nearly 12,000 sq ft of stone and tile needed to lend luxurious longevity to the installations. A SikaTile® system was chosen for its strength and timeless appearance – two essential qualities in the challenging Florida climate, which can turn from calm to calamitous with little warning.

IFI began work in September 2021. The bathrooms of the now 474 guest rooms and suites received new stone and tile for nearly all surfaces. SikaTile®-100 Moisture Guard provided a waterproof barrier that protected

the facilities and adjoining spaces. The volume of oversized stone and tile was locked into place with SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set. Silver SikaTile®-815 Secure Grout delivered the complementary elegance that accentuated the guest spaces' revised aesthetic, while Merkrete MK-100SC 100% Silicone Caulk provided the necessary expansion joints.

The new Vanderbilt Tower boasts the property's new Club Lounge. With its 70 nearby club-level guest rooms and exclusive lounge bar, the Club



IFI achieved the flatness necessary to support large tile with SikaLevel® 325.



Lounge is the largest of its kind in North America. SikaLevel® 325 was applied extensively to achieve flat surfaces that would ensure flawless installation of the stone and panel surfaces.

A complete Sika system was also applied to Ritz-Carlton's vast exterior areas, including the new outdoor restaurant, Sofra. Pool, bungalow and cabana spaces likewise received a Sika warranted system that ensures that the tilework would provide a lifetime of enjoyment for the Ritz-Carlton's valued clientele.

For PCL and IFI, the \$51-million renovation proceeded largely on schedule and without incident throughout 2021 and most of the following year. A comparatively mild hurricane season for the state instilled hope for successful completion of the tilework by year's end. Come September, however, a meandering disturbance named Ian would upset the timeline and bring catastrophe to Naples and the Ritz-Carlton.

#### **DELUGE, DAMAGE AND DEFIANCE**

On September 28, 2022, Ian strengthened to a category five hurricane. It



A complete SikaTile® system ensures the installations at Ritz-Carlton, Naples withstand all punishment.



Sofra, the hotel's new outdoor restaurant, is restored using a SikaTile® system following catastrophic flooding.

found its way to the Gulf of Mexico and started bearing eastward with its menacing 160-mph winds and gathering sea swell. When it became clear that Naples would bear the initial blow of Hurricane Ian's continental landfall, crews and personnel evacuated the Ritz-Carlton property. According to IFI Senior Account Manager Mike Grant, Ian forced rain and Gulf waters deep into the hotel. The new Vanderbilt Tower took the brunt of the storm surge. Water filled first-floor public spaces such as the pool bathrooms and cabanas, reaching as high as six feet inside the building. IFI's two tile crews were forced to wait out the storm and its lingering impact for two weeks from home. When the water rolled back and the spaces were declared safe for reentry, Grant's crews could survey the new challenges the storm presented.

The spaces protected by the SikaTile® system performed as intended, with the SikaTile®-100 Moisture Guard preventing water penetration through the tile and stone installations. This eliminated the need for floor surfaces to be repaired or replaced. Many wall surfaces, however, demanded extensive rework. While the Sika system prevented water from going through the waterproofed tile system, rising waters had unfettered access into several walls through unprotected surfaces on the opposite side. This unanticipated penetration dictated that drywall on both sides (as well as all finished wall surfaces) needed to be replaced.

Flooding of spaces storing construction materials complicated recuperative efforts. Four-foot swells rendered unprotected thin sets and mortars unusable. According to Grant, about half the materials could not be recovered, which further frustrated efforts to get back on track. It took careful coordination with Sika to arrange for timely delivery of replacement materials to the storm-ravaged location.

For weeks after work resumed, the crews at IFI had to operate under temporary, and at times uncertain, conditions. The course of the storm also altered ambient conditions that the tile work needed to be performed in. Once again, Sika personnel were ready with support to ensure successful application of its tile systems. By June 2023, IFI's crews completed the tile

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work on the troubled project, allowing the Ritz-Carlton to defiantly reopen the following month.

“Highest of compliments to our partners at International Flooring,” said Sika Director of Tile Setting Todd Boos. “They faced unimaginable circumstances that could have easily prevented them from completing this job with quality results. As expected, the Sika system performed exceedingly well under catastrophic conditions, minimizing additional labor, materials and job delay expenses related to tile re-installation. At Sika, we work tirelessly to provide our partners with the materials they need to create secure, durable installations, under the most extreme application conditions.”



SikaTile®-815 Secure Grout retains its flawless appearance after Hurricane Ian flooded the Ritz-Carlton.



SikaTile®-400 LHT Pro Set secure more than 12,000 sq. ft. of tile at Ritz-Carlton, Naples.

# TILE SETTING BEYOND THE EXPECTED.



FOR MORE PRODUCT INFORMATION,  
VISIT [WWW.SIKATILE.COM](http://WWW.SIKATILE.COM).

#### WE ARE SIKA:

The SikaTile® Secure System delivers the best Sika solution to meet project needs and overcome everyday challenges. From moisture mitigation to underlayments, patching and skimming to flooring adhesives and grouts, Sika provides a total system package.

Our most current General Sales Conditions shall apply. Please consult the Product Data Sheets prior to any use and processing.



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