



With Mapei's "record breaking" products the Cora chain was able to remodel its shopping centers in record time without losing a sale.

by *Aristide Mariotti*

Retail space measuring 40,000 square metres (430,520 sq. ft.), a parking garage for 2,500 cars, 450 employees, and 27 shops soon to become 47: these are some of the impressive figures that describe the latest Cora shopping center that the company recently opened in Anderlecht, Belgium.

Cora is a supermarket chain that is a familiar name in Belgium. There are five Cora centers in Wallonie plus this newest addition in Anderlecht, near Brussels. In the last few years Cora has made a big investment: 3 billion lire (\$1.72 million USD) to transform these five existing supermarkets into shopping centers and an equal amount to build the new Anderlecht shopping center.

Record breaking products for remodeling in record time

The Cora supermarkets are frequented by 12,000 people every day, so they had to remain open for business during the remodeling without inconveniencing their customers. Because of the limited time available and the special working conditions, the architects specified Mapei's "record breaking" products that are guaranteed to get the job done quickly. They dry super fast and have the high compressive strength that floors in high traffic areas require.

Another factor which contributed to Mapei products' being selected was the complete installation package Mapei offered. This led to the architects' and the contractors' decision to have the work



Cora Shopping Center in Hornu

Belgium
Remodeled floor:
7,200 m² (77,494 sq. ft.)



Cora Shopping Center in La Louvière, Belgium

Remodeled floor:
4,500 m² (48,500 sq. ft.)



Cora Center, Mesancy, Belgium
Remodeled floor: 8,000 m² (86,104 sq. ft.)



Cora Shopping Center in Rocourt
Remodeled floor: 3,500 m² (37,600 sq. ft.)



Cora Shopping Center in Chatelaineau
Remodeled floor: 3,500 m² (37,600 sq. ft.)

done at night so that during the day customers could shop uninterrupted.

The first Cora to be remodeled was the Hornu Center in the summer of 1994, where all the floors were to be replaced. After closing to the public at 8 p.m., the Cora was transformed into a job site. After thoroughly cleaning the cement based substrate, an anchor bond slurry of PLANICRETE was applied over it. PLANICRETE is a synthetic rubber latex for cement based mixes. While this was still fresh, a MAPECEM screed was formed over it. MAPECEM is a special hydraulic binder for screeds with controlled shrinkage that can be tiled over in record time. The very next day the customers would be walking on the hardened screed! Only three hours later 40x40x12 cm (16x16x5") stoneware tile flooring was set with

GRANIRAPID, a fast-setting, fast-hydrating adhesive system. The GRANIRAPID was applied using the back-buttering and float method which ensures better bonding and is essential when installing tiles larger than 30x30 cm (12x12").

The evening of the following day the tiles were grouted with KERACOLOR, a cement based grout for joints 5 to 15 mm wide that is easy to apply and easy to clean up. Because of the excellent results achieved on this job in terms of time and workmanship, the Cora management decided to continue using Mapei products to remodel the other four supermarkets.

The next was the Cora in La Louvière, again in 1994. The same system was used here, but ULTRACOLOR grout was substituted for the KERACOLOR because it sets even more rapidly, is more flexible and is watertight. 4,500 square metres (48,434 sq. ft.) of flooring were installed, including 1,300 m² (13,992 sq. ft.) installed directly over existing ceramic flooring in several retail spaces, using GRANIRAPID for setting and ULTRACOLOR for grouting.

In 1995 work was begun on remodeling the Cora Center in Rocourt: 3,500 square metres (37,670 sq. ft.) of flooring were installed using the same materials described above. When they saw the great results, the retail store



Cora Center, Mesancy, Belgium
Remodeled floor: 8,000 m² (86,104 sq. ft.)

owners in the Rocourt Center asked to have their area remodeled, too, using the same Mapei rapid system, after being assured that the substrate was compatible with the wood and resilient flooring they wanted to use (approx. 3000 m²/32,289 sq. ft.).

In 1996 the Cora supermarkets in Chatelineau and Mesancy were redone. The Mesancy job took place during a winter that was particularly harsh, with outside temperatures reaching -10°C. Despite some doubts as to using the Mapei rapid system under weather conditions very different from those experienced on the previous jobs, the work turned out beautifully. The remarkable flexibility of the system made it extremely versatile.

The new Cora in Anderlecht

In 1997 Cora decided to build a new shopping center in Anderlecht. Again their choice favored Mapei products.

This new Cora center was on a much larger scale: 27,000 m² (290,600 sq. ft.) of supermarket and other retail spaces plus another 13,000 m² (139,919 sq. ft.) of boutiques and service areas. This center is divided into several sections:

- The sales floor was treated in the same way as the previous remodeling projects, the only difference being that back-buttering was not used to apply the GRANIRAPID because the stoneware

tiles used measured only 20x20 cm. (8x8").

- The restaurant spaces and the fish market needed floors that were especially resistant to kitchen oils and grease. Here, too, after a thorough cleaning, an anchor bond slurry of PLANICRETE was applied over the old floor before preparing a MAPECEM screed.

To make the new floor more resistant, after letting the MAPECEM cure for five hours at +23°C, a layer approximately 2 mm thick of MAPELASTIC, a two-part cement based flexible mortar, was applied over the MAPECEM. This was reinforced with a fiberglass mesh. After letting the MAPELASTIC cure for five days the flooring was set with GRANIRAPID and grouted with KERAPOXY, a two-part acid resistant epoxy sealant. This product is formulated for ceramic tile floors in food processing plants and so was the right choice for the fish market. In the loading zone MAPELASTIC was applied over the existing concrete before a new concrete floor modified with PLANICRETE was poured.

In the Mall the same products were used as in the other areas, the only exception being that Mapei's new product, TOPCEM, was substituted for MAPECEM. TOPCEM is a special hydraulic binder that has normal setting yet dries in ultra-fast time. It's ready for traffic in only 12 hours and completely cured in 7 days.



Aristide Mariotti congratulated by Valery Miot

Above: **Cora Shopping Center, Anderlecht, Belgium**
Flooring installed: 40,000 m² (430,520 sq. ft.)

TECHNICAL DATA, CORA SHOPPING CENTRES, BELGIUM

► **Project: Cora Shopping Center – Hornu, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1994

Architects: Coquelet, Boussu

Contractors, subfloors: Miot

Contractors, tile installation: Tradigres

Flooring: Casalgrande Padana stoneware tiles 40x40 cm (16x16")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
GRANIRAPID
KERACOLOR

► **Project: Cora Shopping Center – La Louvière, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1994

Architects: Coquelet, Boussu

Contractors, subfloors: Miot

Contractors, tile installation: Tradigres

Surface: 4,500 m² (48,500 sq. ft.)

Floor tiles: Casalgrande Padana stoneware tiles 40x40 cm (16x16")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
GRANIRAPID
ULTRACOLOR

► **Project: Cora Shopping Center – Rocourt, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1995

Architects: David, Liège

Surface: 3,500 m² (37,670 sq. ft.)

Floor tiles: Casalgrande Padana stoneware tiles 40x40 cm (16x16")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
GRANIRAPID
ULTRACOLOR

► **Cora Shopping Center, Chatelineau, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1996

Architects: David, Liège

Contractors, subfloors: Miot

Contractors, tile installation: Tradigres

Surface: 3,500 m² (37,670 sq. ft.)

Floor tiles: Casalgrande Padana stoneware tiles 40x40 cm (16x16")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
GRANIRAPID
ULTRACOLOR

► **Cora Shopping Center, Mesancy, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1996

Architects: Atelier Le Cavet, Arlon

Contractors, subfloors: Miot

Contractors, tile installation: Andreosso

Surface: 8,000 m² (86,104 sq. ft.)

Floor tiles: Casalgrande Padana stoneware tiles 40x40 cm (16x16")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
GRANIRAPID
ULTRACOLOR

► **Cora Shopping Center, Anderlecht, Belgium**

Year of execution: 1997-8

Architects: Studio Geau, Brussels, Arch. Coquelet, Boussu, Studio Georgel Mowvioc, Paris

Contractors, subfloors: Miot

Contractors, tile installation: Tradigres

Surface: 27,000 m² (290,600 sq. ft.) + 13,000 m² (139,919 sq. ft.), boutiques and service areas.

Floor tiles: Casalgrande Padana stoneware 20x20 cm (8x8")

Mapei products*:

PLANICRETE
MAPECEM
MAPELASTIC
TOPCEM
GRANIRAPID
KERAPOXY

*The materials mentioned are part of MAPEI's European product lines

In less than five years the Cora Group remodeled its five supermarkets in Belgium and opened a sixth: almost 70,000 m² (753,410 sq. ft.) of screeds and flooring were expertly installed in record time. You can see the results on these pages and ...under the feet of millions of shoppers.



Technical Data Sheets for the products cited are contained in Mapei Binder no.1, "Ceramic Tile Installation Products"

