

Continued from Page 2

Whitaker usually works on his own with no apprentice, meaning his designs take time to create. And all that cutting for the mosaics means he goes through a lot of saw blades.

“I like a turbo edge for the blade, and I do all dry cutting,” he said. “I don’t use the wet cut because I don’t do many straight cuts – I’m pretty nonlinear. I try to make everything as neat and tight as I can, but I like to give myself some leeway in the design.”

Because Whitaker has helped with the demolition and renovation of many historical buildings and sites, he’s knowledgeable about local history, especially in the Fountain City area where he grew up. He has a lot of souvenirs from these historical places, too, even if a lot of them are broken. Some of the pieces he’s gathered and some have been given to him, since he’s developed a reputation as a collector.

This is one of the things Whitaker likes best about his designs – they tell a story. He may actually know the story behind the objects he uses – a piece of marble that came from a historical mansion’s staircase or a brick pulled up from an old cobblestone road or a piece of metal from the Civil War. Or he might just guess the significance of the found pieces he puts in his mosaics. Either way, a story is there, and his designs are truly one of a kind.

Visit Andy Whitaker’s web site for a glimpse of more of his work, at www.ecouniquity.com



Above and Left: Andy mortars the final section of contrasting marble foliage on a cyprus tree inlay located by the entrance to Al Harb’s restaurant. Andy did the preliminary cutting with a 5-inch grinder and a dry cutting diamond blade, followed by masonry chisels, to carefully remove just enough brick to inset granite and marble pieces to form the trunk, branches, and foliage.

Right: Salvaged marble pavers, granite risers, and a Tennessee marble dogwood blossom medallion grace the entrance steps to a Craftsman-era house in Knoxville’s Fountain City neighborhood.

Below: Panorama shot of three sides of the ladies’s restroom at Harby’s Restaurant. The men’s room has a similar treatment, with a different motif, and it’s own collection of “hidden” embedded objects. Top right, inset: Marble and granite patio mandala.

