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THE BEACON OF THE STONE INDUSTRY

FEBRUARY 2017

Double ramp and twist staircase fabricated from Alabama limestone, installed in the RSA Judicial building in Montgomery, Alabama.



Crystal Marble Company: Legacy and Tradition

When Crystal Marble Company's founder Ralph Brannon opened their doors for business in 1971, he did so with a vision of growth through great service and high quality at a fair price. Today, over 45 years later, with sons Brent, Brad and Cliff Brannon manning the helm, the three have confidently navigated the company through both calm and stormy waters to continue that vision.

Serving the greater Atlanta area, Crystal Marble Company continues to be mostly a dimensional stone company, servicing a 700-mile radius from its Cumming, Georgia location, explained co-owner Cliff Brannon. "Dimensional stone facades are our forte and what we are best at. We do have a fabrication facility and have had one since the early 1970s, but it's always been the

Peter J. Marcucci

Photos Courtesy
Crystal Marble Company

backup system for our dimensional stone projects. At the same time we keep the shop going by doing kitchens and vanities for people in the community, the architects that we work with and the general contractors that we know."

With interests in both residential and commercial work, the company has worked closely with such notables as Balfour Beatty, Batson & Cook, Brasfield & Gorrie, Hardin Construction, HC Beck Construction, Turner Construction, Steve Ayers Construction and Holder Construction. Hotels, condos, apartments and offices as well as residential has been the norm.

[Please turn to page 2](#)

The Husband Edge

MY husband Ken and I used to run a small shop and showroom together in San Jose, California. One of my pet peeves with designers and architects is that they do not always take into consideration how customers use the products we install for them, with regard to edge profiles.

An occupational hazard of owning our own business is that I check out surfaces and people using those surfaces constantly. It used to drive my son crazy when we would be out somewhere and he would find me "petting" the countertop and seams!

For me, there is nothing more frustrating than going to a potential customer's home to bid on bathroom surfaces and as we inevitably walk by the kitchen, asking the home owner, how did

Jodi Wallace
Stone Industry Consultant

they like their countertops? I was shocked at the number of times I would look at kitchens with \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 or more worth of gorgeous stone and have a response of, "It's alright."

Seriously? For me, if my customers don't say they absolutely love their countertops, I have not done my job correctly. In fact, anyone who has done business with us will tell you I will not sell a customer a color they look at and deem "just alright." If your appraisal of that choice is that it is "just alright," we keep looking until we find one and they go, "Wow, I really like that one!" Now, that is the right choice.

In most cases when I asked a few more questions, it turned out that although achingly large amounts of time were spent pick-

ing out the stone, when it came to edge profiles, customers were generally shown a paper and told "pick one," or hurriedly shown an edge board and told, "Point to what you want." In my book, that's a huge mistake.

At 4'-11-1/4", (stop laughing!) I am very conscious of how an edge feels when I touch it, lean against it, or run my hand over it. I consider the choice of an edge detail just as important as the choice of design or color.

Since I am the one who runs our showroom, I spend a lot of time with my customers on what I call "Countertops 101," (more on this at a later date). Although I may allow a husband or boyfriend to zone out when we are looking at colors, discussing sinks, splash options, etc., when it comes to edges, they are drawn back into the conversation willingly, or on occasion, with a nudge in the ribs (by me!), to pay attention!

[Please turn to page 14](#)

Wanna Hang?

There are many different sayings advising one to be mindful about the company you keep, the friends you hang out with, the company you work for, or the people you associate with. Folks much wiser than I have famously written, "You are only as good as the company you keep," and "A man is judged by the company he keeps." Then there is "You're known by the company you keep." Everyone has an opinion on this topic.

King Solomon, thought to be one of the wisest men of all time once said, "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*"

Aesop, a Greek philosopher

Sharon Koehler
Artistic Stone Design

who lived from 620 BC to 564 BC, even wrote a fable about this topic. To paraphrase: A man went to buy a donkey but before he bought it, he wanted to try it out, so he took it home and turned it loose in the field with the other donkeys. The new donkey walked over to the biggest, laziest donkey the man had, and the two donkeys became friends. The buyer immediately took the donkey back to the seller and said he didn't want it. The seller was confused because the man certainly had not had enough time to test the animal. The buyer said he did not need to see the donkey work.

[Please turn to page 20](#)

Crystal Marble Company: Legacy and Tradition

[Continued from page 1](#)

Crystal Marble Company also prides itself on its state-of-the-art engineering and drafting sector staffed with great minds.

“When a general contractor hires us to do a project,” continued Cliff, “they are paying us to do all the technical drawings, the engineering for the anchorage and adhering to the safety values that they are holding for the project. We have a very high tech drafting department and can do very complex projects, and the more complicated the project, the better it is for us.”

Where the Legacy Began

Founder Ralph Brannon originally worked for Reeves Marble Company in Atlanta, Georgia. At the time, Reeves had taken on two big jobs, one in Nashville, Tennessee, where Ralph was working, the other in Puerto Rico. Ralph was in his early 40s, and when the company decided to close its doors, he was faced with either going to work for another company or starting his own, recalled Cliff.

“In the beginning, dad started out subcontracting marble work from other tile and marble companies in the Atlanta area. These companies, especially with Reeves going out of business, were able to pick up lots of contracts at the time. Then, in 1971, dad started the Crystal Marble Company. He didn’t have very much money at the time, so he

sold his house, got enough working capital together and was able to get the company going.

“Later, by the 1980s, we had really gotten lucky by doing a number of the Ritz Carlton hotels, and during the 1990s we had large contracts in Hawaii, Saint Louis, Kansas City and Atlanta. These projects are really what helped cement the company in good footing. Dad retired in 1991, and I and my brothers took over the company, each owning one-third.”

Unfortunately, Ralph Brannon passed away in June 2016 at the age of 87.

The Tradition Continues

“The heart and soul of our company is the way we’ve carried on the tradition,” continued Cliff. “Between the years of experience of working with the same people, and being able to work closely with my brothers is what has allowed us to continue. Thankfully, we realized early on that we couldn’t do it as individuals, and we worked as a group. You’re stronger as a team than you are as individuals. We are also able to focus on our specific areas of expertise, which I think is nice, too. While I’m searching for new business, procuring stone and working with contractors and architects on new projects, Brad takes care of the estimating and drafting part of the company. My brother Brent’s forte has always been the installation side and managing our project managers and installation crews. Dad had put us



Backlit Onyx panels are a stunning focal point in the lobby of the RSA Building, Montgomery, Alabama. The flooring is Mesabi black from Cold Spring Granite.

in these positions in the beginning, and we just continued doing them after he retired.

“Our employees have played a huge part in the success of this company. Many of them have been with us for over 25 to 30 years and stuck by us through the good times and the bad. A lot of our installers have been with us for over 30 years, and now grandsons Kyle and Brian Brannon are working here. In our office, we have people that have been with us from five to 30 years. There are so many moving parts in our company, and I think we’ve correctly positioned our people to handle each one well. Frankly, our finished products are the best because of our employees, and we definitely couldn’t have done what we’ve done without them. No way!”

A Crystal Clear Difference

Crystal Marble’s focus and staying true to its original mission sets this company apart from the others. You see, Crystal Marble Company is neither a masonry and block company that does marble, nor a tile company that does terrazzo and marble. They are a dimensional and slab fabrication company that works with natural and engineered stone, only. The company does, however, offer a full inventory of sinks for homeowners that purchase their countertops.

Additionally, there are no quarry ownerships or leasing. Instead, they have many longtime relationships with key quarries and overseas fabricators, explained Cliff. “I think it’s pretty

unique that we are a company focused solely on natural and engineered products. One thing that makes us unique is our sourcing of material.”

[Please turn to page 29](#)

New wing and renovation on the Pickens County Courthouse in Jasper, Georgia, is faced with White Cherokee marble.



This high-rise condo in Atlanta, Georgia features Mahogany Blue Eyes granite from Labrador.

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So You Think You Know Your Customer?

Often, the days for a tile and stone business owner end in being glad to stay in the black, taking care of your team and having satisfied customers who refer new ones. Growing too fast in the industry or too slow is always on our minds while trying to actually work and still keep things going.

What if you were put on the spot about what the goals are for your business—short term vs. long term goals, and how will you go about achieving them? Do you plan to have a legacy business, or are you in planning to cash out at some point? Although one answer never fits all, we can benefit equally by knowing not just what we are working for in our businesses' future, but also how we will maintain ahead of the clients needs.

Learning early on in the tile and stone game after 20 years of entrepreneurship in various related fields to manufacturing, business development and

Michele Farry Humblestone

private consulting, I have found that knowing the strengths and weaknesses in your marketplace of residential and commercial tile and stone installations keeps goals real and productive. Focus, determination, and a solid plan are the ingredients that are needed for successful growth, sustainably and a successful marketing plan.

Thriving stone industry retailers like MSI, Artistic Tile and Walker Zanger are examples of understanding success. You have to understand your client for services like installation and fabrication when you communicate with your distributors.

What do your clients want? Holly Nelson, territorial sales representative for MS International, said, "I have found listening to my fabricators describe their clients and recent jobs helps them better know their customers, themselves. This helps MSI not overstock them with product. I



pay attention to what they tell me about their business. With less turn-around time and not burdening fabricators with overhead they won't sell, we all win by knowing the clientele better. Knowing your audience is the ultimate marketing tool I suggest for fabricators or tile installers. The more you know, the more confidence we as a distributor can offer with helpful support."

This new Slippery Rock series aims at down-to-earth advice, which can be implemented without any cost to you or need for a professional consultant. No one knows your business better than you. I will give you the basic tools to cut to the chase of what you have to know, how to establish

a few realistic goals and how to track your success.

The magic really happens when we open our eyes to our niche or piece of the pie in the market, big or small. When the dust settles and you sit back and think about what you really know about the customers you just provided services for, what is it that you've learned about them without realizing it? Ask yourself: if I was to go find my client, in what area would they likely live? Are they in your local community, or did you travel, and how far? Was it worth the travel? What kinds of restaurants do they patronize? Where do they shop? What else are they interested in besides the work you just completed for

them? What clubs or other organizations are they active in? The number one question is, "How would you reach the people you want to work with if they didn't find you first?"

The answers aren't all that complicated or out of reach. Get to know your customer and pay attention to the details. Although we have so little time left over in our schedule as business owners to make lists and create charts, it's a lot less complicated than the old business analysis and plans used to be. As an entrepreneur, business owner, manager or innovator in the tile and stone industry, knowing how to go about this is a basic step-by-step process.

[Please turn to page 7](#)



"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

— Benjamin Franklin



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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- Crystal Marble Company: Legacy and Tradition, by Peter J. Marcucci [Begins on p. 1](#)
- The Husband Edge, by Jodi Wallace [Begins on p. 1](#)
- Wanna Hang? by Sharon Koehler [Begins on p. 1](#)
- So You Think You Know Your Customer? by Michele Farry..... [Begins on p. 4](#)
- The Stone Detective, by Frederick M. Hueston [Begins on p. 8](#)
- Ain't Love Grand? by Sam Venable [Begins on p. 11](#)
- The Varmint County Chronicles, by Boomer Winfrey [Begins on p. 12](#)
- Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner, by Bob Murrell..... [Begins on p. 17](#)
- Belgian Stone Federations Support MIA+BSI's Natural Stone Promotional Campaign [Page 18](#)
- Fireplace Facelift: Remodeling Your Fireplace in Natural Stone, by Jennifer Nelson..... [Begins on p. 18](#)
- MS International, Inc. Launches New Porcelain Tile Collections at TISE in Las Vegas [Begins on p. 18](#)
- ISFA Announces CEO & Senior Management Roundtable [Page 19](#)
- Singing the Praises of Natural Stone in the Shower, by Stephanie Vozza [Page 21](#)
- Has Calacatta Marble Become Too Expensive and Too Risky to Fabricate? by Mark McMunn [Page 22](#)
- MIA+BSI and Stone World Announce Stone Industry Education Series. [Page 26](#)
- An Exceptional Stone Structure [Begins on p. 26](#)
- The Slippery Rock Classifieds [Pages 32-33](#)
- The Ten Worst Valentine's Day Gifts EVER [Begins on p. 38](#)
- A Blueprint for the Future, by Iyna Bort Caruso [Begins on p. 40](#)

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"The charge is often made against the intelligentsia and other members of the anointed that their theories and the policies based on them lack common sense. But the very commonness of common sense makes it unlikely to have any appeal to the anointed. How can they be wiser and nobler than everyone else while agreeing with everyone else?"

-Thomas Sowell

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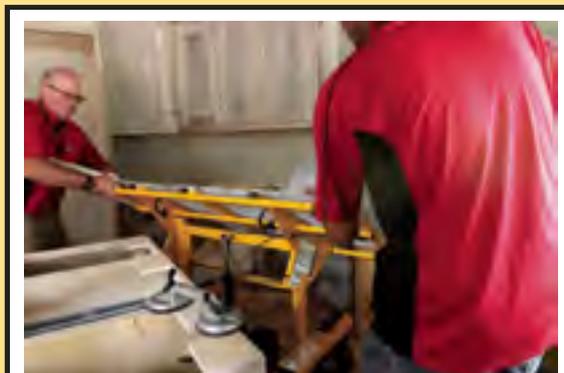
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So You Think You Know Your Customer?

Continued from page 4

Speaking with a business development industry expert and college professor Brett Golann, who just published the book *Navigating the Whitewater Rapids of Entrepreneurial Success* (now available on Amazon) said, "Knowing more about who your best customers are and what they care about not only helps you pick out the highest potential sales prospects, it also helps you craft a sales pitch that targets their real interests and communicates the value of working with you – and that leads to more sales."

This column is aimed to encourage you to take five minutes a day or even just ten minutes a week to take stock, evaluate what you think you know with a critical eye, and set a plan in motion of how to reach those customers you desire while carving out your place in the industry.

Step one—let's create a customer profile. The more specifics you know about your customer's interests, preferences, and characteristics, the better. Use a simple

pencil and paper to create three columns that look like the sample below

In the first column, write down what you already know is happening on a daily basis for your

business. For example, I know my customers usually find us by referrals. I will push a little deeper and write down the names of the builders, interior designers, real estate agents, prior clients who have given a referral to my business, or tile and stone stores that

hand out my info in the left column. In the next column, list their locations; in the next column add more detailed information about the referrals that turned into completed projects by specifying customer details like income range, average age, occupation,

lifestyle, hobbies, and interior design choices, etcetera – the more details, the better. They can always be narrowed down, and it's okay to not know every detail. But having been in your client's homes, working with them on design choices and getting a glimpse at what motivated them to work with you are critical insights. Are your customers more price-conscious or do they prefer expensive materials, with design assistance and custom profiles?

After completing these three columns put your work aside. Look in the next month's *Slippery Rock* to take this information into an action plan. I will break down some of the categories and what they imply, to help you better know your consumer.

Michele Farry has been a business development director and private consultant working in NYC, Colorado, Massachusetts and internationally. She co-owns Humblestone and is passionate about entrepreneurship and small business growth. Michele has received awards for her work with profit-based and non-profit charity organizations.

Customer Referral Sources	Location	Customer Preferences
Name: Builder One	New York City	Age range, Occupation, Education level, Income, Buying Motivations, Design Style Choices
Name: Inter-trade Referrals Example: Plumber #1	Westchester	
Name: Interior Home Designer #1	Long Island	
Name: Realtor #1		
Name: Advertising Source Example: Newspaper Ads		
Name: My Clients who referred us		

Notes: Buying Motivations example: either price motivates my clients, or design assistance and custom layout is main motivation for my clients. Education / Occupation example: My clients generally have college degree and are a business owner, teacher or doctor, vs. my clients are tradesmen and licensed professionals, vs. clients are retired.



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The Stone Detective Twelve Memorable Cases and Questions



Frederick M. Hueston, PhD

This old Stone Detective had a great holiday, but at my age, any day is a good day when I'm still breathing! I hope everyone got what they wanted for the holidays. I was thinking about the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and thought that I should answer the top twelve questions I get on a regular basis. Here we go.

1. My tiles are sounding hollow. Does this mean it's a failed installation?

While hollow tiles can be a failed installation it may not necessarily be. Sound proofing can result in a false positive. The best way to tell is to have a destructive test performed to test the bonding.

2. I have a bluish-green stain on my granite countertop that the fabricator can't seem to remove. Do I need to have it replaced or do you have any magic tricks to remove it?



A typical blue-green stain caused by cyanoacrylate glue. CA stains occur as a reaction with the minerals in certain types of granite.

I have lots of magic tricks but removing the stain will not require any magic. These stains are caused by using cyanoacrylate-type (CA) glue, and only occur on certain granites. The best way to remove them is to purchase a stain removal kit designed specifically for this type of stain.

3. After poulticing a stain on my countertop, it left a larger stain. What did I do wrong?

Sounds like you were on Santa's Naughty List. All kidding aside, it most likely is not a stain but residual moisture from the poultice. To remove, sprinkle some dry poultice powder on the area and let it sit overnight. It should remove it. If not, then you are on the Naughty List.

4. We just installed a new bathroom shower with white marble and it is turning yellow. What is causing this?

Yellow stains on white marble showers is usually caused by smoking in the shower. Well, it could, but I don't know many people who smoke in the shower. The most common cause of white marble turning yellow is iron oxidation. In other words, your stone is rusting. There is not a lot

5. Someone told me that I should only use plain water to clean my stone floor? Is this good advice?

No, it is not good advice. Using only water to clean your floor—or anything else for that matter—will not work. Imagine taking a shower without using any soap (and I'm pretty sure I don't want to imagine you not using any soap). The same thing goes for cleaning anything. Use a cleaner designed for stone surfaces and you will be OK, just don't use it on yourself when you shower—LOL!

6. I was sitting in my living room the other night and heard a large popping sound. Someone said this could be my tile coming up. What are your thoughts?

You sure it wasn't a drive-by shooting or perhaps your crazy neighbor shooting off some firecrackers? I have had several cases where homeowners have heard a large popping coming from their tile floors. This is a result of lack of expansion joints, and the tile is reacting under pressure. The tile releases from the floor causing the popping sound. So that is also the sound signaling, "It's time for a new floor, installed properly, this time."

7. I have noticed little white dots on my marble floor. What the heck are they and can they be removed?

Sounds like you may either need new glasses or someone is walking on your floor with high-heels or golf shoes. No kidding—sharp impacts from high-heels or golf shoes or anything similar will put these little white dots on certain types of marble. These are known as stuns or crystal fractures. Sadly, they rarely can be removed.

that can be done, but you can try a poultice and then have the shower sealed, which should reduce the chances of staining.

Please turn to page 16

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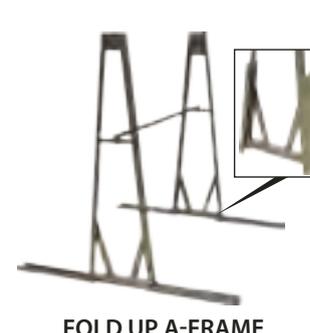


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Size: 84" x 24" x 43"
Freestanding (F) or Mobile (M)
Mobile units: (4) 5" casters



Model#s

HDT84F

HDT84M

\$545
List: \$605

\$689
List: \$765

HEAVY-DUTY SHOP CART

Size: 54" x 38" x 62"
Capacity: 4,000 lbs.
Hold-down straps & (4) 5" casters



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List: \$675



UNIVERSAL STORAGE SYSTEM

Rail Size: 60" x 6" x 3"
Capacity: 500 lbs. per opening
15 openings with (30) 40" posts

Model# USS-5

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Size: 96" x 48" x 88"
Capacity: 10,000 lbs.
Optional Caster Kit: CK-800 \$333



Model# TR-10

\$2,160
List: \$2,400

BUNDLE RACK

Rail Size: 60" x 11" x 5.5"
Capacity: 6,000 lbs.
(3,000 lbs. per post)
4 openings with (10) 60" posts



Model# 4-W60

\$518
List: \$576

HEAVY-DUTY BUNDLE RACK-LONG

Rail Size: 90" x 11" x 5.5"
Capacity: 9,000 lbs.
(4,500 lbs. per post)
5 openings with (8) 72" posts



Model# 5-H7290

\$1,147
List: \$1,274



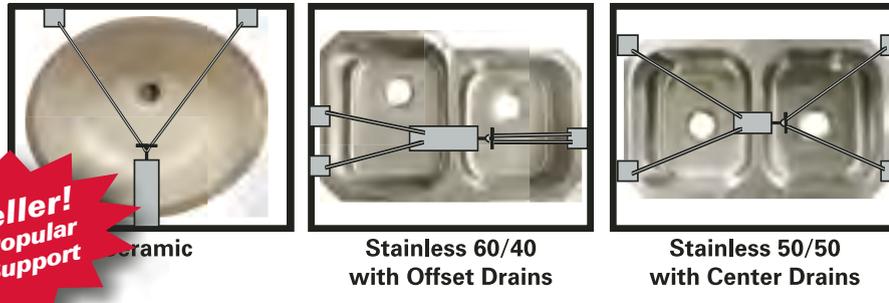
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At Last, a Simple, Fast Alternative

The Hercules® Universal Sink Harness is a simple, ingenious alternative to expensive brackets that only work on some installations, and a time-saving, more professional alternative to building a scrap wood support system to hold the sink in place while the caulk or adhesive dries. It installs without drilling into expensive countertops or cutting notches into your customer's cabinets, and without using messy epoxies or relying on adhesives to secure sinks. One of the most immediately recognizable benefits is that you won't have to make a return trip to remove bracing or jury-rigged 2 x 4 supports.

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The Hercules® Universal Sink Harness has been fabricator- and installation-tested under demanding conditions, and can be used to install the most popular types of sinks, including ceramic, stainless steel, and even cast iron undermount. **It is effective on either double bowl or single bowl steel or ceramic vanity sinks. Just imagine—one simple, inexpensive kit can do all of those sinks!** Not only is the Hercules® Universal



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HerculesSinkHarness

Sink Harness the fastest and most economical system available, it's also the most versatile.

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While the Sink Harness was being developed and tested, we discovered another notable benefit of the Sink Harness: it's a great system to repair failed undermount installations. Many fabricators are asked to repair someone else's poor sink installation job. The Hercules® Universal Sink Harness will get the job done quickly. You can become known as the guy who contractors and home owners in your area call for help.

Supports the Heaviest Sink Loads

Some clips and anchor systems rely on the countertop to support the sink—not so with the Hercules® Universal Sink Harness. Just like a suspension bridge, the Hercules® Universal Sink Harness helps to provide support and over-all strength to a countertop installation. It actually transfers all weight to the cabinet and doesn't add additional stress to the weakest and most easily damaged part of the countertop: the sink cut out. It does its primary function admirably well—support the sink under the heaviest of loads.

Try One and You'll Believe It!

Braxton-Bragg wants to prove it to everyone who's faced sink-installation problem, or just wants to save money and keep their shop profitable. Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for the complete Universal Sink Harness video.

Mistakenly Sold Lottery Ticket Earns Couple \$1 million

A mistakenly sold lottery ticket has earned a New Jersey couple \$1 million.

State lottery officials say 70-year-old Dante Castillo usually picks his own numbers. But when the Manchester man bought some tickets for the December 1 Cash4Life jackpot at a convenience store in Lakewood, New Jersey, the clerk accidentally sold him a ticket with computer-generated numbers.

That ticket proved to be the winner, matching the five main numbers drawn but not the cash ball number.

Castillo and his wife chose the \$1 million prize instead of the option to receive \$1,000 a week for life. The convenience store will receive a \$10,000 bonus check from lottery officials for selling the winning ticket.

The Cash4Life lottery game also is played in Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Frozen: The Untold Story

Police in New York broke a car window to rescue a woman who turned out to be an extremely realistic mannequin. The unusual incident happened one Friday morning in the city of Hudson.

The Times Union of Albany reports that a caller told police there was an elderly woman "frozen to death" in a parked car.

Officers rushed to the scene and found what appeared to be a woman sitting in a car's front passenger seat wearing an oxygen mask.

A sergeant busted a rear window, opened the door and discovered that the woman was in fact a very realistic mannequin.

Then the car owner arrived and told officers he uses the dummy for his job selling medical training aids.

The police chief says the owner was "incredulous" that police broke the window to rescue the mannequin.



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
17310	Hercules® Universal Sink Harness Kit	\$9.95	\$4.95

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The Unclean Getaway

Police say twin brothers stole 180 bars of soap from a New Jersey supermarket but weren't able to make a clean getaway.

Absecon police say Kenny and Lenny Stewart dumped 30 six-packs of Dove soap into a large bag and bolted for an exit with employees in pursuit one Friday.

The twins knocked themselves

down when they ran into a trash can. Police say they got back onto their feet but then fell again after running into a shopping cart. And as they limped around the corner, the twins came face to face with a police officer who was investigating an accident in the parking lot.

The Atlantic City residents are charged with shoplifting.

It's not known if they have lawyers.



Ain't Love Grand?

Everyone, everywhere, has a talent.

Sam Venable
Department of Irony

When I was in the fifth grade. I had a classmate who could transform a mundane bodily function into a work of art.

He could spit like nobody you ever saw.

Whenever a girl he admired was watching, he would part his lips and slam his tongue across the inside of his front teeth. Out squirted these little aquatic jets that arced toward their target (a tree or a rock, you understand—not the girl) with unerring accuracy. It was a marvel of hydrology and engineering the likes of which I have never seen duplicated, even in this era of chewing tobacco addiction.

All us boys loved it. The girls screamed, "gross!" and ran to tell the teacher.

I brought this up to illustrate the depths to which a young man will sink in order to impress his lady fair—even if it means a trip to the paddling table when recess is over.

We now are nearing Valentine's Day. Says so right here on my calendar. And you know what happens when a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love.

He goes bonkers. He talks like a fool and acts like a fool and generally is a fool.

Fortunately, he is not alone. In fact, almost every species of animal on Earth engages in some form of courtship display this time of year.

Some perform rituals not wholly unlike those of humans. Elephants face each other lovingly and tenderly intertwine their trunks. Some gulls and terns literally bill and coo.

The tilapia, an African fish now available at many U.S. supermarket meat counters, takes it a bit further; mama and papa slap each other with their tails and quiver their bodies.

How many times have

you seen an otherwise stumblebum boy knock 'em out on the dance floor when the ladies are around? The same thing happens with the male jumping spider. Let him spy a sweet young thing and he starts hoppin' about like all eight feet were afire. He zigs and zags 'til he's plumb worn out.

If the she-spider likes the show, she stays put and invites Twinkle Toes over for a nightcap. If not, she merely creeps away, leaving him to face the jeers of his buddies back at the bar.

How about a song? That'll please her for sure.

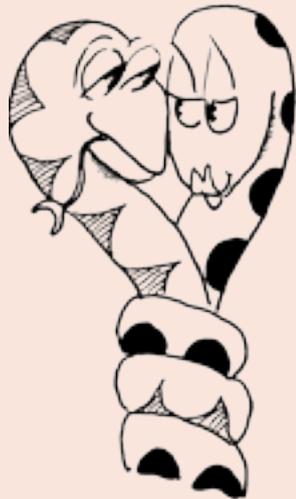
At least that's what the whippoorwill seems to think. Those sharp whistles he uncorks on spring nights aren't intended to rock you to sleep. Rather, it's the bird's way of attracting a mate.

Put an amorous Will outside your window and you'll start wondering if the Wilmas of the species can hear at all. One researcher counted 1,088 calls in succession, leading me to believe girls in that area were deaf. Or else this particular bird was as persistent as a summer cold.

Scent is another tactic. Just talk to the guy who has plunked down a buck-fifty for a bottle of Bay Rum. He splashes it on good and thick. Then he stands back and lets the gals rush him all at once. Or something like that.

But that's what happens with the emperor moth. In this case, however, it's the female wearing the smell-good.

She discharges scent from glands near the tip of her body, and the boys come flying. I don't know if it smells like fried chicken or blackberry pie, but scientists say males will be attracted from as far as 1,000 yards away.



If all else fails, you can give her a gift.

The European heron brings a stick to his intended. If she's interested, she accepts and sends him out for another. And another. Before you know it, the poor boy has brought back enough for a nest.

And then there's the American kestrel. He tells the little lady to sit tight and he'll go find her some food. This might go on for a week before the fool finally banishes her to the nest and goes out to pack his own belly.

It's everywhere. No matter where you look in the animal kingdom, you'll see outrageous displays of affection and courtship.

Some critters make noise. Some fluff their feathers. Some twist their bodies into knots. All for a sign of approval from the opposite sex.

I just wonder what have happened back in the fifth grade if the girls had reacted like female Galapagos marine iguanas. When a male iguana is hot on the trail of his sweetheart, he throws his head back and blows spray at her through his nostrils. She loves it.

Even my fifth-grade buddy, talented as he was, never tried that one.

Sam Venable is an author, stand-up comedian, and humor columnist for the Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel. Contact him at sam.venable@outlook.com.

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The Varmint County Chronicles

Varmint County is Now a 'Kinder, Gentler Place' as the Good Old Boy Paradise Ends

It doesn't seem like its been two decades since I first started reporting the goings-on here in Varmint County, but as they say, time flies when you're having fun. Varmint County hasn't always been fun, but always interesting, to say the least.

When I first moved to Lower Primroy as a junior reporter for the *War Whoop & Exterminator*, this place was one of the last great bastions of good ol' boy politics.

We had County Judge Hugh Ray Jass (they call 'em county mayors nowadays) who had inherited the office from his pappy, Cornelius Jass. The office had been in the family for the better part of the 20th

Boomer Winfrey
Varmint Co. Correspondent

Century.

Sheriff Smoky T. Bandit likewise had followed in his father's footsteps to the job of County Sheriff. Actually, old Sheriff Bandit had intended that his older son, Connie, follow his lead and prepared younger son Julie Thaddeus Bandit to be a lawyer instead.

The elder Bandit's practice of sticking his sons with girl's names to toughen them up worked too well, however, and Connie ended up in prison. The powers that be instead endorsed Julie for the job but he didn't care for the name, preferring to go by the nickname he earned by smoking smelly cigars.

Somewhere along the line, the middle initial got added when female voters couldn't read the name "Smoky T." without thinking of Burt Reynolds in the movie Smoky and the Bandit. The prospect of winning over the entire female vote of Varmint County led Sheriff Smoky to adopt his permanent moniker.

Both Sheriff Smoky and Colonel Hugh Ray Jass were part of a good old boy political system ruled over by Doc Clyde Filstrup, who held court every Friday night at a weekly poker game down at his clinic.

Road Superintendent Pothole Perkins, Criminal

Doc Clyde Filstrup was the unofficial benevolent ruler of the Varmint County Good 'Ol Boys political machine. Those old coots are mostly harmless, and I cannot image they will cease to plot and scheme during the Friday night poker game at Doc's clinic.



Court Judge "Hard Time" Harwell, Doc's son Clyde Junior and various other notables were also part of this group who decided who to endorse for political office, what policies the county commission would be bullied into approving, and so on.

The county's social life revolved around such manly pursuits as fishing out at Mud Lake, where Ike Pinetar operated the Mud Lake Marina, drinking at the Dead Rat Tavern run by Corky "Little Poison" Haig or distilling and consuming moonshine, which was the principle pastime of most members of the Haig and Hockmeyer clans.

These two clans had been embroiled in a blood feud since shortly after the Civil War, the Haigs being Rebels who migrated up from the Louisiana bayous while the hillbilly Hockmeyers had sided with the Union. The fact that the two clans were competitors in the moonshine business simply added fuel to the fire.

Elijah "Big Poison" Haig served as patriarch of his clan while Caleb Hockmeyer ruled over his family. When I first arrived, the two patriarchs had just settled on a truce to bring an end to the blood feud, agreeing to instead sponsor

an annual July 4th free-for-all between the combative young men on both sides at the county fairgrounds, with no weapons allowed.

This is the Varmint County I discovered when I arrived to take the job of political reporter back in the 1990s. One small hiccup occurred when the *War Whoop & Exterminator's* publisher, H. Harley Hamm was convicted of income tax evasion and the IRS seized the newspaper. For a year I made do pumping gas at Smiley's Gas & Tobacco Mercantile until H. Harley's daughter stepped in and saved the paper.

Virginia, or Ginnie Hamm as she preferred to be called for obvious reasons, bought the printing press at an IRS auction for nearly nothing and purchased the rights to the name for less than nothing and we were back in business.

It's hard to set an exact time when things began to change, but I believe it was when Sheriff Smoky decided to retire. He had no sons, but his attractive tomboy daughter Stephanie decided to run for Sheriff. Smoky, feeling that the rough law enforcement life was no place for his little girl, secretly campaigned for his chief deputy Hiram Potts.

Hiram won but the plan backfired when the new Sheriff ended up marrying Stephanie Bandit and making her Chief Deputy. From that point on, the domino theory took over. The county's long roll of high school football stars and boy basketball stars had to take a back seat to 6-foot 6-inch Penny Haig, who led the Lady Vipers to two consecutive undefeated seasons and state championships.

Then Toony Pyles, a popular grocery clerk at the local Stop 'N Shop, was elected to the State Legislature. Finally, when Colonel Hugh Jass finally decided to retire, Penny's former coach, Gabby Aslinger, was convinced to run for County Executive against poor Clyde Junior, whose own wife even campaigned against him.

Gabby also carried several female candidates into the county commission along with her. Camilla Clotfelter, long reputed to have inherited her granny's witch powers, won when her opponent dropped out of the race. Seems that every time he got up to speak in public, he would suffer a nosebleed.

Finally, just this fall, Corky "Little Poison" Haig shot himself while in a drunken brawl with his pet bear, Beer Barrel.

[Please turn to page 13](#)

Buff Splitface Veneer

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Field Research is a Tough Job

Charles Foster, recent recipient of the "Ig Nobel" prize in biology (and a fellow at Oxford University), has recently lived as a badger (inside a hole in Wales), an otter playing in rivers, and an "urban fox" rummaging through garbage bins in London, in addition to a red deer and ("ridiculously,"

he admits) a migratory bird mapping treetop air currents—all in order to authentically experience those creatures' lives apart from their physical appearance, which is generally all that humans know.

"We have five glorious senses," he told the Ig Nobel audience, and need



to "escape the tyranny" of the visual. "Drop onto all fours," he recommended. "Sniff the ground. Lick a leaf."

Thanks for saving us from all that leaf-licking Mr. Foster.



"A country man between two lawyers is like a fish between two cats."

—Benjamin Franklin

The Varmint County Chronicles

Continued from page 12

Corky pulled out a pistol and fired several shots. They missed the bear but one ricocheted off a brass mirror frame and struck Corky right between the eyes.

A frustrated Elijah Haig broke with precedent and handed control of the iconic Dead Rat Tavern over to his youngest granddaughter, Penny Haig's feisty kid sister Chloe. When last we visited Chloe, she had B.B. the Bear eating out of her hand, and the two of them were running a tight ship at the one-time final refuge of red-blooded Varmint County manliness.

Last week Ginnie Hamm called the various reporters and other employees into the office for a staff meeting. I knew something ominous was in the air from the look on Ginnie's face.

"You know I took over this newspaper when my poppa got into trouble because I saw so much that needed to be changed here in Varmint County and felt



the newspaper could help that happen," Ginnie began. "We never made any money here and that wasn't my intention. There just isn't enough money in small town newspapers anymore to keep them afloat.

"Well, thanks to all of your efforts, I think we've succeeded beyond my wildest imagination. The good old boys no longer rule this county with their drab, petty political agendas and all the good women that we've helped gain access to power have made Varmint County a gentler, kinder place.

"I've accomplished what I really wanted to see when I first took over daddy's newspaper," Ginnie continued. "I feel it's no longer necessary for me to pour my limited money into a losing business, and so next week I'm shutting the doors and we will publish the last edition of the Varmint County War Whoop & Exterminator."

And so dear readers, with those few words, my time as your Varmint County correspondent is coming to an end. I have

no intention of landing a job at Smiley's Tobacco Mercantile this time around but must seek employment elsewhere, most likely far from these hills that I've long called home. It's been one heck-uva ride, and I hope you've enjoyed taking it with me.

Next month, a final look: Meet the real Varmint County

"A man only learns by two things: one is reading, and the other is association with smarter people."
— Will Rogers

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The Husband Edge

Continued from page 1

Edges are more than just a passing detail. At our shop, I rarely sell fancy, upgraded edges. I do have an edge board which shows what's available, if a customer specifically asks, but the displays in our showroom all have simple, clean edges.

To me, an edge detail should be almost an extension of the countertop, helping to draw the eyes upward to the top surface, complimenting, but not competing with the countertop. My best example is a brochure from one of the very popular quartz manufacturers. The picture shows an extremely busy and bright-patterned color choice with an extreme 6cm Waterfall edge. The color and edge are in so much competition with each other that neither can catch your full attention. It comes across heavy and disconnected.

In our showroom, cus-

tomers must touch, as well as aesthetically judge each edge. I believe an edge serves two purposes. The first is to compliment, but not take away from the countertop. Secondly, and even most importantly, an edge must prove the correct "feel" to the surfaces, based on how it will be utilized.

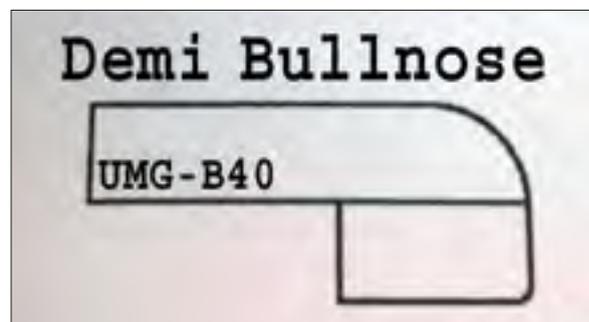
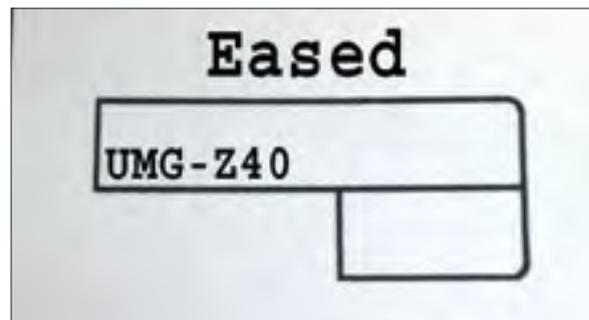
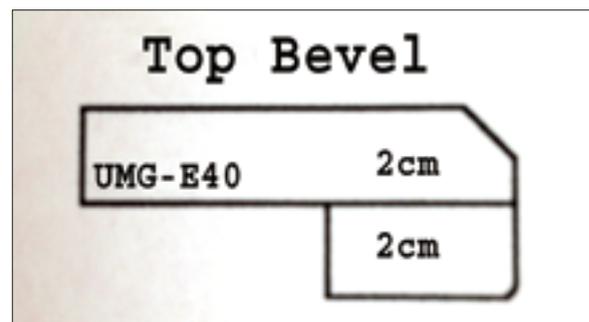
Our shop offers four standard edges, all priced the same. We feel it important a customer choose their edge based on comfort level and what they like, and not because it is the cheapest. It is a package deal, and both the edge and color/pattern must work together to provide a seamless and harmonious final product.

An Eased edge seems to be most for that contemporary and "square" look. Although it does provide a "clean" line, Eased does not rank high on the "comfort" scale and has a definite sharpness to the touch. For

customers coming in seeking that look, especially if they have children, I show them not only an Eased edge, but another not quite as square, and more comfortable to the touch.

A Double Roundover is another simple edge, which across the room provides that "thick, square" look people are seeking, but is softer to the touch than an Eased. My most popular is the 3/8" Double Roundover, top and bottom. Few shops out here I know of offer this edge, instead choosing only to offer the Eased. I do so many jobs with this edge that one of the other shops we are good friends with added it to their edge offerings.

For those with an island or peninsula who intend to have bar stools and want to be able to sit with a book or cup of coffee, or who have small children who will be leaning on the edge to do homework, the "Double Roundover" offers a simplistic square look but



with a comfort to it that cannot be found with an Eased edge.

Our third offering is a Bevel. Although a bit sharp, the 1/4" bevel offers a small accent and interest point to an edge, again without competing with the countertop itself, which should stay the focal point.

Our final choice is a Demi-Bullnose, the "softest" of our standard edges. Not to be confused with a full Bullnose, which I only rarely do in commercial applications, our Demi-Bullnose has a 3/4" radius on top, and is flat and polished on the bottom. Soft, smooth on both the top and bottom, it offers a simplistic look with a high comfort level to it. In the last year the amount of jobs I am doing with this edge is rivaling our Double Roundover. Why? Because I make my customers feel each edge, lean against it, take it for a test drive.

This pertains to men in particular, who are usually left out of the edge discussion at other shops. Men

tend to lean with their backs against a counter edge, the heels of their hand (or hands) putting their weight on the edge. (I can see all the men stopping to give thought to how they stand, about now!)

The taller the guy, the more he leans on the edge. Many times when I mention this, a wife will go, "Really? I haven't heard of that," and suddenly you can see the wheels in the husband's brain spinning as he says, "Yeah, I never thought of that, but you're right."

At that point the guy becomes very engaged and starts walking around touching and evaluating all the edges. I have wives all the time turn and whisper, "I practically had to drag him here. I can't believe this!"

I have started selling so many jobs with the Demi-Bullnose as the edge of choice that I jokingly told a couple a few months ago I was going to start referring to this as my "husband edge." We laughed about

it and I didn't think much more of it.

Several weeks later I was in LA getting ready for our daughter's wedding. My husband (who was working the showroom) called me on my cell, and in a slightly irritated voice he asked me what exactly the "husband edge" was, as he had a couple standing with him that had come saying they had met with me previously, and wanted the "husband edge" as their final choice. He obviously had no clue what they were talking about, and since they couldn't remember which one it was, he had to call me.

It took me a minute to wrap my head around the question, let alone the answer, but when I realized what was going on I quickly told him what happened and why I had called it that. Considering the showroom was very busy at the time, I'm not quite sure he saw the humor in it!

My motto is that I will put in whatever a customer likes, and when we leave, it is theirs to live with (and love or hate), forever. But I also believe we are the educators of our customers. Just because it looks good in a magazine or website doesn't mean it is the best choice for our customer. It is up to us to make sure the final fit is perfect for their needs. That is the mark of a good shop.

Jodi Wallace is a 15-year veteran of the stone industry. She also volunteers as a Disaster Responder for the American Red Cross.

"When you are dead, you don't know that you're dead. All of the pain is felt by others. The same thing happens when you are stupid."

—Sam Elliot

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Scofflaws in the News

Putting the Brakes on Stupidity

New Jersey Transit officials say a passenger pulled the emergency stop on a train so he could retrieve the cellphone he dropped on the tracks.

Authorities say Eric Jones, of Harlem in New York City, was riding on a North Jersey Coast Line train when he accidentally dropped his phone onto the tracks while he was between cars.

The train was stopped around 8:20 a.m. that Monday near the Secaucus Junction. The stoppage caused travel delays of up to 15 minutes on several lines during the morning commute.

NJ Transit issued a statement criticizing Jones' "reckless behavior," noting that he risked injury to himself and hundreds of others aboard the train.

A telephone number for Jones could not be located to verify his side of the story. He is charged with defiant trespass and interfering with transportation.

This Town Ain't Big Enough

An 80-year-old Connecticut barber is accused of trying to sabotage a barbershop that opened a few doors down.

The Connecticut Post reports that Agron Komoni, owner of Agron's Barbershop in Wilton, began having problems in August.

He says he found a key intentionally broken off inside the lock of his shop. A few weeks later, a toothpick was jammed inside. The same thing happened again four more times, so Komoni installed a video surveillance system and notified police when he caught someone in the act.

Police say the system caught Frank DiMarino in the act on the early morning hours of December 4. Mr. DiMarino co-owns Razor's Edge, a barbershop about 100 yards from Agron's Barbershop.

DiMarino turned himself in on a charge of third-degree criminal mischief for the incident.

The scofflaw did not immediately return a message seeking his side of the story. But he's old enough to know better!

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That's the Way I Roll

For motorists who think bicyclists in Chicago have been granted unconditional rights to violate every traffic law on the books, authorities were out in force one Tuesday in December to suggest otherwise.

The sting was conducted at only one intersection near downtown,

and only for two hours during the morning rush. But the site that was chosen is a complex intersection that's a magnet for bicycling commuters, widespread disregard for red lights, and plenty of accidents and close calls, officials said. Approximately 240 warnings and one citation were issued in the two-hour sting.

"IF people in the media cannot decide whether they are in the business of reporting news or manufacturing propaganda, it is all the more important that the public understand that difference, and choose their news sources accordingly."

-Thomas Sowell

The Stone Detective

Continued from page 8

8. Like you, I am also a stone and tile inspector and one of my clients asked me if I could check his shower wall with a protimeter. I know I can Google it, but I want to know if you can tell me what the heck this is?

Well, it's clear you haven't attended my stone and tile inspection and troubleshooting class—I

know, it's a shameless plug. A protimeter is nothing more than a moisture meter.

9. I just installed a green marble tile floor and my client called and said it was curling on the edges. What the heck is going on, here?

OK, here is what you need to do. Take your right hand and slap

yourself in the face. If the green marble is curling, you installed it with a water-based setting material. This is a big NO-NO. Go ahead slap yourself again, for good measure. This is a common problem with green (serpentine) marbles and you should have used an epoxy setting mortar. There is no fix, other than to tear it out and replace it.

10. I just finished fabricating a Giallo granite counter

for a customer. The edges are a lighter color than the top. I have not had this problem before — and don't tell me I don't know how to polish edges.

OK, I won't tell you. However, your problem has nothing to do with polishing technique. Chances are the slab is resined. The resin will darken over time, and if the slab was out in the sun, it has darkened. When you cut the edges, you exposed stone that was not exposed to the sun and hasn't



There are few stains sadder than rusted marble.

darkened. You will need to use a color enhancer to match the top.

11. We just had a large epoxy terrazzo floor installed in our lobby and it has all these bubbles appearing. What the heck is causing this?

Bubbling in epoxy terrazzo is a common problem and is caused by excessive moisture in the slab. The bubbling is the result of osmotic pressure lifting the terrazzo. Unfortunately, there is no fix. I would recommend you call a stone and tile inspector to perform a complete evaluation, and then you need to have a discussion with the general contractor or installer.

12. I am an engineer at a very large airport and our stone floor has these linear cracks that run across the floor every 15 feet or so. What is causing this?

This is a common problem when the installer bridges the construction joints in the slab. In other words, the installer just installed the tile right over these joints without using a fracture membrane, or placing expansion joints directly over the construction joints in the slab. This is a big NO-NO.

These are just a few of the hundreds if not thousands of questions I have received over 2016. If you have a question, send me an email and maybe it will show up in another one of my articles.

The Stone Detective is a fictional character created by Dr. Frederick M. Hueston, PhD, written to be entertaining and educational. Dr. Fred has written over 33 books on stone and tile installations, fabrication and restoration and also serves as an expert for many legal cases across the world. You can send your email comments to him at fhueston@stoneforensics.com.

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Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

Stone is Not Always Polished

Even though honed marble is becoming more and more popular, most people (meaning consumers) would think of marble as being highly polished or shiny. The same is true for granite, because almost every granite kitchen countertop is polished, as are most quartz and engineered tops.

Polished surfaces have the smallest scratch pattern, which provides the

turn also means more pores are exposed. Suffice it to say, this means there is an increased stain risk. More on this increased porosity later.

The other non-polished surface is the textured category. This collection includes natural cleft or split-faced, flamed, bush-hammered, water-jetted, sand-blasted and others. Textured surfaces are rough or uneven and have little to no light reflection. There is an exception to the no light reflection with the antiqued or leathered materials which can be finished to a higher sheen using abrasive brushes with coarse to fine grit levels. They exhibit a

nice sheen and color, but of course, no clarity.

Honed and textured surfaces offer designers a broader range of aesthetic and functionality options. Of course just as a flamed granite mixed with polished marble floor becomes a maintenance nightmare, these same areas can be intelligently combined too. For instance, high traffic elevator cabs that are honed would most definitely be easier to maintain and can look just as elegant as the polished lobby surface.

Textured stone surfaces can be used for dimension, contrast, and safety reasons. The three-dimensional profile adds character while the rough surface can provide slip resistance. In many northern cities, flamed granite is the preferred stone choice, especially for exterior horizontal surfaces and entryways. The same is true for walkways, patios and pool decks.

Slate, granite, quartzite, bluestone and brownstone are just some of the materials used for textured surfaces. Marble, limestone, granite, slate, and many others are used for honed surfaces. Both marble and granite materials can be used for antiqued or leathered surfaces.

As briefly discussed earlier, these surfaces have much more surface area exposed. This means that

they have many more open pores exposed at the surface. Because so many open pores are exposed, the probability of staining is increased many times over. Therefore I would always recommend that these surfaces be impregnated, color-enhanced, or sealed.

Impregnators, whether

product. The higher the hone level, the fewer the exposed pores and also the natural color level is more pronounced so use of a color enhancer may not be effective.

Textured surfaces will normally have the highest level of exposed open pores and can therefore usually

Bob Murrell
M3 Technologies

Photos by Bob Murrell

glow that is not too flashy. There is a wide range of what can be considered honed but these surfaces can be described as smooth with medium (on an oblique angle) to no light reflection. Because there is a larger surface scratch, there is a higher exposed surface area (think of mountains as opposed to a lake), which in



This Crab Orchard stone stacked waterfall definitely needs impregnating or color enhancing. Crab Orchard is a dense, very hard limestone from the Cumberland Plateau, in Central Tennessee and is an excellent structural stone.

lowest exposed surface area that a stone can exhibit and therefore are the most stain resistant of the three main surface groups.

However, as we have covered before, there are two other stone surface groups that are very popular and becoming even more popular as they are understood for the attributes they bring to the stone's functionality, aesthetics, and selection palette. These two surface groups are honed and textured.

Most every functional surface in Europe is honed and this is for several reasons. Honed surfaces are generally easier and more cost effective to maintain. They also provide a nice warm

This Crab Orchard flagstone porch is an excellent example of a good use of a natural, textured surface.



Three types of Crab Orchard: Top, Gray, is half treated with color enhancer to show difference. Center is treated, and bottom is half treated.



solvent-based or water-based, should not appreciably change the appearance of the surface. So when the stone's natural appearance is desired, use an appropriate high quality impregnator like the Majestic Low Odor Solvent Based Impregnating Sealer would be my recommendation. This will help protect the surface from staining of both water-based and oil-based contaminants as well as freeze/thaw concerns.

Honed surfaces have fewer exposed pores than textured surfaces have and use of an impregnator is usually the preferred course of action here. However, a very coarse hone level could possibly take a very low viscosity color enhancer

take a color-enhancing impregnator or penetrating sealer. These penetrating sealers will bring out the color of the stone as well as offer protection from staining and freeze/thaw issues.

Sealers, which are topical coatings, are generally only used for interior surfaces only as they run the risk of trapping moisture, which causes clouding up under the sealer surface, discoloration, and possibly even flaking due to hydrostatic pressures. Sealers can change and normally do change the natural appearance by adding different levels of gloss and smoothing of the surface texture, not necessarily my favorite option.

Please turn to page 34

Belgian Stone Federations Support MIA+BSI's Natural Stone Promotional Campaign

Two Belgium-based stone federations have announced their support for the MIA+BSI-led Natural Stone Promotional Campaign. The Benelux Federation of Natural Stone Wholesalers (FEBENAT) and the Belgian Fabricators & Stone Masons Federation will be leading an effort to have all stories currently posted on usenaturalstone.com, as well as social media posts, translated into French and Dutch and shared online with consumers and designers.

FEBENAT President Herwig Callewier commented: "By utilizing the resources of MIA+BSI and the Natural Stone Promotional Campaign, we will be able to expand the promotion of natural stone in Europe. We are also happy to share content we have developed to share with the North American market. MIA+BSI CEO Jim Hieb said: "We are grateful for the involvement of our international partners. With their support, we can broaden our reach and accomplish our goal of showing consumers, architects, and designers why they should choose natural stone."



Members of the MIA+BSI Board of Directors meet with Belgian stone federations at Marmomac 2016.

This collaboration is a growing trend as several other stone associations are discussing partnering with MIA+BSI to help in the promotion of natural stone. Brazil's Centrorochas (The Center for Exporting Industries of Dimension Stones) has been working with MIA+BSI since the campaign's beginning.

To learn more about the Natural Stone Promotional Campaign, visit www.usenaturalstone.com.

MIA+BSI: the Natural Stone Institute serves more than 1900

members in 55 countries who represent every aspect of the natural stone industry, offering them a wide array of technical and training resources, professional development, regulatory advocacy, and networking events. Two prominent publications—the Dimension Stone Design Manual and Building Stone Magazine—raise awareness in both the industry and the design communities for the promotion and best use of natural stone. Learn more at www.naturalstoneinstitute.org.

Fireplace Facelift: Remodeling Your Fireplace in Natural Stone

Looking to update that old brick fireplace? Who isn't? While brick fireplaces were once a desired feature, many have been deemed outdated by age, coats of paint, or a more modern interior style. Remodeling an old fireplace with natural thin stone veneers (stones sawn typically to between 1 ½ inches down to ¾ of an inch) or full bodied natural stones provides an updated, modern look and adds natural beauty to a space while also creating an excellent return on investment (ROI) for any home.

Jennifer Nelson

Reprinted from usenaturalstone.com

"Fireplaces and hearths are usually constructed with brick," says Charlie Frattini, contractor, construction expert, and host of FYI's Hero House, which premiered Veterans Day 2016. He notes that when these brick fireplaces have been painted, chipped, or cracked, they can become unsightly and become less of a design focal point than was initially intended.

Please turn to page 39

Photo courtesy of Natural Stone Veneers International



Copper ledgestone used to reface an entire wall.

What Goes Up...

A Wyoming man has been reunited with his high school class ring more than 45 years after he threw it as far as he could in a fit of teen rage.

Mike Peyton says he's flabbergasted to get the ring back after losing it so long ago.

The Powell Tribune reports that a man with a metal detector found the 1968 Powell High School ring inscribed with Peyton's initials. The man's wife and a family friend tracked down Peyton's mother, who surprised her son with the ring a couple weeks ago.

Peyton says his girlfriend at the time was wearing the ring when they broke up in the early 1970s. He says he can laugh now about how he'd taken the ring and flung it away in a temper tantrum.

MS International, Inc. Launches New Porcelain Tile Collections at TISE in Las Vegas

MSI introduced their new porcelain tile collections – Pietra Bernini, Domino, Vintage, and Tektile—among other natural stone products—at The International Surface Event, held in Las Vegas, January 18-20, 2017.

One of North America's premium surfaces supplier, MSI exhibited a variety of new products—porcelain, decorative mosaics, and stacked stone Two standout kitchen and bath lines—Aspenwood and Pietra Bernini—are both contenders in the *Floor Covering Weekly's* Dealer's Choice Awards.

In response to the ever-increasing market demand, the MSI design team curated four new porcelain lines. Among them, Pietra

Bernini, a glazed tile collection, was inspired by travertine – complete with fossilized veining in whites, creams, and warm gray hues. To celebrate the popularity of vintage looks sweeping the design world, Domino Porcelain pairs black and white tiles together for classic—yet modern—flair. More than fifteen high-style decorative mosaics complement the line, creating greater flexibility for upscale installations. Interest in the reclaimed timber look is on the rise.

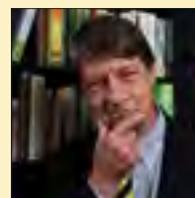
MSI also unveiled Vintage, a porcelain tile that combines the aesthetic qualities of aged barn wood – with the practical benefits of porcelain; a scraped finish affect enhances its authentic look.

Please turn to page 27

© MARK ANDERSON. www.andertoons.com



"We're still not sure what happened here, but I think we can all agree that we're glad it's over."



"People say, 'Oh, politics is so polarized today,' and I'm thinking... '1861, that was polarized.'"

—P.J. O'Rourke

“I maintain that it should cost as much to get married as it does to get divorced.

Make it look like marriage is worth as much as divorce, even if it ain't. That would also make the preachers financially independent like it has the lawyers.”

– Will Rogers

ISFA Announces CEO & Senior Management Roundtable



UPCOMING ROUNDTABLE DATES
 March 28-30
 San Antonio, Texas
 June 6-8
 Boston, Massachusetts Area

Back by popular demand in 2017 will be ISFA's CEO & Upper Management events.

These roundtables present opportunities for companies' executive management to share experiences, common concerns and best practices regarding running surfacing businesses. The gatherings bring together small groups of CEOs and management from a variety of companies to share ideas and network in a personal semi-structured environment.

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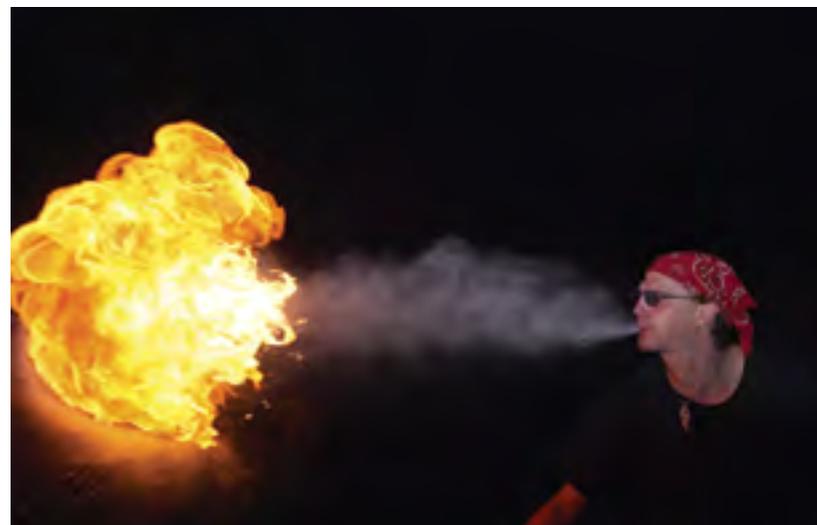
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Stand Back, I'm a Professional

New York City officially began licensing professional fire eaters earlier this year, and classes have sprung up to teach the art so that the city's Fire Department Explosives Unit can test for competence (if not "judgment") and issue the "E29" certificates. In the "bad old (license-less) days," a veteran fire eater told *The New York Times*,

a "bunch of us" performed regularly for \$50 a throw, largely oblivious of the dangers (though some admit that almost everyone eventually gets "badly burned").

For authenticity, the *Times* writer, a fire eater who dubbed herself Lady Aye, completed the licensing process herself ("it was as sexy as applying for a mortgage"), but declined to say whether she is awaiting bookings.



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Wanna Hang?

Continued from page 1

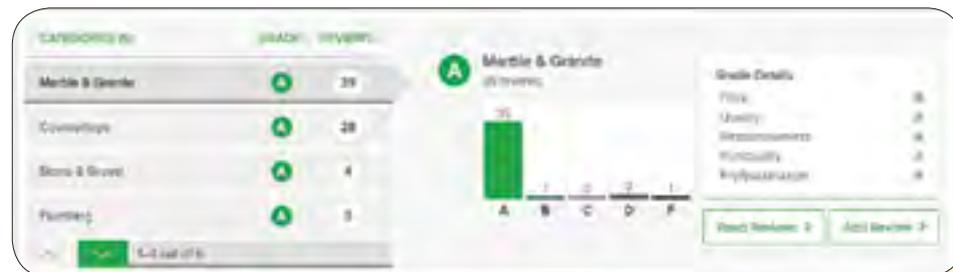
He knew he would be lazy because of the donkey he chose to be friends with: the fat, lazy one.

are in their industry. You can also make sure they are properly licensed.

Check their reviews. My gosh, there are so many sites accepting reviews now, it's

SLIPPERY ROCK GAZETTE

We have 39 reviews on Angie's list alone and 3 of them are bad. You cannot make everyone happy all the time. Some people are never satisfied and sometimes a company can just screw up. It happens. So



These days, there's a lot of controversy over people in law enforcement doing the same thing. If you hang around with criminals they assume you are one. They have words and terms for it: collusion, accomplice, acting in concert, etc. Even if you don't have a record, sometimes they assume it's just because you haven't been caught yet.

So, as we can all see, this topic has been around almost since the beginning of recorded history. Also, it has been the center of many discussions, arguments, conversations and lawsuits.

Now, back in the day, word of mouth was about the only way you could possibly, maybe hear about a disreputable business or individual (including the "WANTED" posters in the local Sheriff's office). And more often than not, you didn't hear. You had no way of knowing who was good and who was bad.

Well, times have changed! You don't have to rely on word of mouth, the Pony Express, the telegraph or wanted posters. There are so many avenues open to you now to see if you want to do business with a company.

Check their ratings with the BBB and Angie's List. Look at Houzz and Angie's List to see if they have any awards like Best of Houzz or Angie's List Super Service Award. Check to see if they have any local or regional awards. Also, look to see if they have any business associations like NARI, NKBA or whatever associations

not even funny. There's the BBB, Angie's List, Houzz, Google Plus and Yelp just to name a few. The list is almost endless. You can check their website for testimonials. Look at their social media sites, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram or YouTube (there are more but you get the idea). See how they interact with customers and potential customers. Look at what kind of pictures or videos they are posting, see what kind of comments they are making.

Before you start groaning that this is too much work, consider that it really takes less than an hour with the internet. Isn't it worth an hour of your time to make sure you don't end up partnering with someone that does shoddy work, so they have trouble getting paid, which means that more than likely, you'll have trouble getting paid? Isn't it worth an hour of your time to make sure someone won't be ruining your good reputation by being shady? It's human nature to think that maybe you can help them be better, that if they see how reputable and upstanding you are, maybe they will get inspired and do better themselves. Granted, that may happen, but it can be a long tumultuous road that may end badly, and in the meantime, your good work is being judged by the company you keep.

When you do undertake this research, be realistic. If they have one or two bad reviews or comments, weigh that against them as a whole.

There are plenty of websites where you can check customer comments and leave reviews, including the BBB, Angie's List, Yelp and Houzz, to name just a few.

out of the 39 we have, 36 are good. That's a good track record. We have nine reviews on Houzz and they are all good. Again, that's a good track record. No one should be afraid to work with us.

It should be the same if you are applying for a job or just looking for work in general. Sometimes when you need a job, you really don't care— but you should. Do the same research. Look at the same things. Do you really want to trust a company for your livelihood that has awful reviews or a low rating with the BBB? You run the risk of having them close the doors on you or worse yet, not being able to pay you. (There is still a guy out there that owes me three weeks pay from almost a decade ago.) Trust me, that stuff stings when it happens and it can be hard to recover from.

Whether business or personal, do the research. You won't regret it.

Sharon Koehler is a 10-year veteran of the stone industry and currently head of marketing for Artistic Stone Design in Richmond, Virginia. She has been a regular contributor to various trade magazines for several years. Please send your thoughts on this article to Sharon@asdrva.rocks.

Singing the Praises of Natural Stone in the Shower

When it comes to beauty, few building materials can compete with natural stone. One-of-a-kind markings, dramatic colors, and rich finishes make it a popular choice, especially in bathrooms where it can transform a utilitarian space into a spa-like retreat. Long considered a great choice for countertops, more homeowners are now also having natural stone installed in the shower.

“Stone can be a good choice for the shower, but it does require special care and maintenance,” says David Bonasera, owner of ESP, a San Jose, California-based distributor of environmentally safe cleaning and sealing products for natural stone. “The most important thing you can do is to be a good steward to the stone.”

First, Know Your Material

Your success will depend on the material you choose, says Gregory Mowat, founder of Forensic Tile Consultants in San Diego, California, who investigates stone failure and assemblies. While marble is a beautiful and popular choice for bathrooms, homeowners should be aware that it should be sealed prior to use in the shower. “Marble soundness is classified as A, B, C, or D,” Mowat says. “Soundness classifications A and B have few veins or inclusions, and marbles classified as D and C have more. When moisture gets into the vein composition it can cause damage.”

Water can also cause discoloration in white marble. According to Bonasera, this is because some white marbles contain naturally

Grey Pearl marble shower, cladding sourced from Polycor, with matching octagonal mosaic floor.

Stephanie Vozza

Reprinted courtesy
usenaturalstone.com

Montauk Black Slate large format tiles are an elegant focus in this open plan bath.



Photo courtesy MS International

occurring iron-bearing minerals. “With enough water it will start to rust. It’s vital that marble is properly sealed and maintained.”

A useful generalization is that the lighter the stone, the more porous it is. “Darker stones have a tighter molecular structure and are less likely to stain,” Bonasera says. There are many exceptions to this concept, and a knowledgeable stone supplier and fabricator can help guide you to a suitable material.

Granite is a good choice for bathrooms, says

Jacqueline Tabbah, vice president of International Stoneworks, Inc., a stone restoration company in Houston, Texas. “Most granites are easier to maintain because they don’t react to the three As: acid, ammonia and alcohol,” she says. “Acid reacts to marble and travertine, and etches the surface, removing the polished finish.”

Know How to Care for It

No matter what material you use, there will

Photo courtesy Polycor



always be maintenance, says Tabbah. “Customers may decide not to use natural stone [because they are concerned about upkeep], but porcelain tile can become discolored and grout lines can darken,” she says. “There is always upkeep, it will just be different.”

When cleaning natural stone, it is best to keep things simple. Soapy cleaners can add buildup and attract dirt, while vinegar and harsh cleaners can damage the stone. To avoid these issues, always use a neutral cleaner with a pH level of around seven.

A few quick preventative measures can keep stone surfaces looking fresh. To help avoid water marks on the stone surface, use a squeegee on the walls after showering. Bonasera also recommends leaving the door open. “Clients who keep their door open hardly have any mildew. Moisture

needs to escape, and it will take the path of least resistance.”

Bonasera also recommends using glycerin over traditional bar soap. “It’s transparent and doesn’t have a lot of fat, lye and animal byproducts that are in regular soap,” he says. “It will cut soap scum. Soap scum is a food source for mold.”

Know Its Maintenance

Stone should be sealed when used in bathrooms that receive daily use. “We recommend a penetrating sealer once a year,” says Tabbah. “It helps repel water so it beads up instead of soaking in and turning the stone darker.”

While sealing stone is something the average homeowner can do, it is important to follow the instructions. For best results, hire a stone professional or restoration specialist.

“Get a guarantee in writing from a reputable contractor, someone who will be accountable,” says Bonasera.

Even the tidiest homeowner should consider hiring a professional to come out every two to five years to have the stone rehoned or repolished, says Tabbah: “We get a lot of calls to re-finish the stone because it loses its luster over time due to water exposure or calcium deposits,” she says.

Most homeowners will agree that the beauty of natural stone is worth the upkeep. “As long as the customer is aware of how to care for and maintain it, it’s not as difficult as they might expect,” says Tabbah. “Do your homework and be knowledgeable about the material. It will look beautiful for years to come.”

Visit usenaturalstone.com for more stone care tips.

Photo courtesy Polycor



Soapstone is a striking and unusual choice for a bathroom. Generally, darker surfaces are less likely to stain, but all natural stone surfaces used in bathrooms should be sealed to prevent staining, and resealed once a year.

Has Calacatta Marble Become Too Expensive and Too Risky to Fabricate?

Calacatta marble is one of the world's most loved and cherished stones. Quarried for centuries, with installations of equal vintage all over the world, Calacatta marble stands as one of the marbles that has provided architectural ornamentation in lockstep with the rise of western civilization. How natural it seems that this marble should be one of the most expensive marbles in the world, correct? Well, Calacatta marble used to be just a little bit more expensive than travertine, but now the cost of a Calacatta slab is sometimes equal to the value of a very nice used car.

In the 1980s, Calacatta marbles could be bought for less than \$5 per square foot (psf), F.O.B. Italy all day long, before the price began to rise in the early 1990s. Today, you can buy Calacatta marble exported from Italy, anywhere in the world, from about \$45 psf to well above \$50 psf, depending on the distribution and size of the veining in the slabs. It is not unusual for slabs of Calacatta marble to sell for well over \$100 psf at many slab yards across the USA. To say that the price of the Calacatta marbles has gone up a lot would be putting it mildly. Any astute observer can see that the price is getting perhaps too high. How did this happen and why should we care?

The price rise can be attributed to many things, such as insidious inflation, the Euro, etc., but the biggest driver really has been the demand for Calacatta in Asia.

Asian demand for this material has been a good thing for the Carrara economy because it has kept the Italian white marbles relevant, even though new white marbles from around the world keep arriving in the market every year. That Asia continues to heavily demand the Calacatta whites versus its own domestic white marbles speaks volumes about the beauty and prestige that the Calacatta marbles provide. This just goes to show that prices can rise out of the blue for any number of reasons.

Now that the price of some Calacatta slabs are set above \$100 psf here in the USA, what does the fabricator need to consider? First, a fabricator needs to consider that this material is now too expensive to handle at all, and simply pass on any job of not only Calacatta, but of any material where one miscut can mean the difference between making any money at all, and taking a loss by paying north of \$5,000 for a replacement slab.

If the project happens to be a book match job, the best decision you could make is to simply walk away if your shop does not have lots of previous experience with book matching. If you want to offer book matched countertops, then cut your teeth on simpler, less expensive materials, otherwise leave a book matched Calacatta job and the risk to the much more experienced shops. Secondly, put explanations into your proposal detailing the risks and limitations of working with a material like Calacatta marble. It needs to be in writing that you will give your

Mark McMunn

Now that the price of some Calacatta slabs are set above \$100 per square foot here in the USA, weigh your options before committing to that project.

“best efforts” to accomplish the job as drawn, especially if the job is a book match job, but in the event of a crack or miscut, that you will only make repairs and NOT furnish a new slab.

A few years ago a volume kitchen shop got into trouble by agreeing to furnish and install a book matched split-level island top with several levels and partitions “according to plans and specs.” There were notes written on the architectural drawings stating that “no misaligned book matched veins would be acceptable, nor would any repairs.”

Naturally, a piece was miscut, and the veining became more misaligned at each level. The shop tried hard to get out of this position, but they were on the hook. The clearly stated notes by the architect on the drawings allowed no escape, and the fabricator ended up having to buy two new matching slabs and start over. That shop could have simply qualified their

DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	PRICE	TOTAL
117" x 47 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	279.50	SQ. FT.	1327.50	
117" x 40 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	289.31	SQ. FT.	1261.32	
118" x 37 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.44	SQ. FT.	1180.87	
117" x 35 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	342.00	SQ. FT.	1468.00	
117" x 31 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	327.00	SQ. FT.	1292.00	
117" x 28 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 25 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 22 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 19 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 16 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 13 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 10 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 7 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	
117" x 4 1/2" x 1 1/2" SLAB	284.75	SQ. FT.	1112.25	

This invoice from the mid 1980s shows the actual cost of Calacatta marble slabs, F.O.B. Italy, at that time. Some Calacatta slabs now exceed \$100 per square foot.

bid by excluding the notes, and giving an alternate proposal on their bid that would allow them to still come out on top if cracks or miscuts occurred. The lesson here is to read architectural notes carefully and know that you can qualify your bid, and if the customer does not accept, walk away from the job.

Something new has arrived in the marketplace that specifically addresses the problems with Calacatta marble mentioned in this article, and that is quartz stone that looks almost exactly like the real thing. First, the cost is a lot less, and therefore the risk, compared to the natural material. Second, if you make a miscut you may still have to buy another slab, but you will only have to buy one slab and not two, because quartz stone slabs have the same veining pattern repeated over and over.

Quartz stone does take a lot of the risk out of working with Calacatta marble, but this begs the question of authenticity. Even though quartz stone slabs of a

Calacatta pattern are themselves not cheap—more than \$1,250 each, or more—why would consumers want an artificial copy of the real thing? Is there something in the shape and movement of the veining against the white background of Calacatta marble that strikes a cord with us, and makes us value it above many other natural stone materials?

Many people understandably might choose to have a copy of the Mona Lisa framed on their wall, but that is a paper picture copy worth a few dollars or less for a singular historical masterpiece. So what is it then that motivates us to have this particular marble installed in our surroundings? Your guess is as good as anyone's. Maybe we should not try to answer that question and simply just enjoy the marble.

As fabricators, let's just do our job and provide the best fabrication and installations that we can and leave the heavy questions to the philosophers.

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“What? I couldn't find the vacuum.”

“Grinch Couple” Apprehended

Referring to two suspects as the “Grinch couple,” a Mississippi sheriff says a man and a woman broke into a home and ate the homeowners' Christmas treats before fleeing.

Rankin County Sheriff Bryan Bailey said in a news release that the homeowners called police on the night of Christmas Eve after a man and woman ran out of the

house as the homeowners approached the residence.

Deputies say the trespassers had made themselves at home, eating pecan treats and smoking cigarettes inside the residence.

The *Clarion-Ledger* reports that the suspects were found nearby and accused of burglary and possessing methamphetamines. They have been identified as 47-year-old Stephen Valentine of Hattiesburg and 49-year-old Victoria Valentine of Moss Point.

It is not known whether the Valentines have legal representation.



**Holy Picasso,
Batman!**

You'd think that Adam West would be sick of Batman by now. But at 88 years old, the once and future Caped Crusader is still traveling to fan conventions, doing voiceover work for the recent *Batman: Return Of The Caped Crusaders* animated movie, and basically riding this thing out as long as he possibly can. Even when he's at home in Sun Valley, Idaho, he's thinking about Batman—and he has a series of Batman-themed paintings going up at a gallery to prove it.

Local paper *Idaho Mountain Express* quotes West as saying, "Batman was a colorful and wild ride. My paintings capture the humor, zaniness and depth of the Batman villains as well as the Freudian motivations of Batman as an all-too-human, venerable and funny vigilante superhero." They also suggest that West may have been influenced by the psychedelic zeitgeist of the '60s, showing Batman villains (and caped canine companion Ace The Bat-Dog) in abstract, melting shapes and bright colors. The tongue-in-cheek 1960s series brought the Capped Crusader into the national consciousness as he battled such villains as Catwoman, the Joker, the Riddler and the Penguin.

West has been a fine artist as well as an actor and Batusi instructor for decades now, although he only started displaying his work publicly in the past few years, after people began to truly appreciate the Batman TV series' campy charms. "Unlike what some of the critics said about Batman, people are catching up. Kids love it and adults laugh along at it—it's theater of the absurd," West says.

The opening night of "Criminals on Canvas" was December 21 at the Gilman Contemporary art gallery, and West was scheduled to attend.

Prints of West's work are available for sale along with original paintings at the Gillman Gallery's website.



"Tart Words make no Friends: a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a Gallon of Vinegar."

— Benjamin Franklin

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The patent-pending Brace Setter is a high performance router housing that connects to a 5/8 x 11 angle grinder that will cut a groove 2-9/16" wide by 1/4" or 3/16" deep.

The precision router attachment cuts a precise groove for your brace in record breaking time with its two cutting blades. Each blade has 18 teeth giving you a total of 36 long lasting tungsten carbide teeth, which easily cut through hardwood, softwood, plywood, and laminates.

What's even better is the fact that the Brace Setter requires no measuring because everything is preset (width and depth), making it very measurement friendly. With just a simple cut, your work is done with the Brace Setter.

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Fabricators for
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Item #	Description	OUR Price
55228	Brace Setter Router, 1/4"	\$207.95
55230	Brace Setter Router, 3/16"	\$207.95
55229	Brace Setter Replacement Blade Set Includes: (2) Blades, (1) Spacer, (5) Bolts	\$51.95

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"Absolutely the best for the money!"

*- Frank Earls,
Trinity Custom Stone*

My boss called me into his office and asked, "Bill, why is the Viper our best-selling turbo blade year after year?" Thinking quickly, I said, "Sir, I don't know but I'll find out!" After a little checking I realized that not only has the Viper® Professional Turbo been our best-selling blade for over a decade—the race isn't even close. Braxton-Bragg has the largest selection of turbo blades in the industry but the Viper® always wins. Since sales popularity is determined by our customers, I called several shops and asked them. The overwhelming response was that the Viper® was the best value for the money.

Excited, I called the boss and shared this news with him. He responded with, "Bill, value for money is a good overall evaluation, but it doesn't tell me the details. I want to know why!"

Now, I have been in the stone industry for over 10 years, but listening to our customers, I began to learn some new things about blades.

Consistent

I was told that Viper® was consistent, but this confused me because the manufacturer is continuously improving the product and upgrading the manufacturing process. Delving deeper I learned that frequently customers try cheap blades from China in an attempt to save money. Most customers have reported that sometimes the blades work, other times they don't, and

when they don't—you can ruin the stone and damage your saw. Consistency to them means that the blade always does the job and you never have to worry about it ruining your job, reputation or equipment.



Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade

Chip Free

Smooth, chip free cutting was mentioned by several customers. They stated that blade hop, scratching and the extra work of repair are not an issue with Viper® Turbo blades. I also learned that frequently, cheap blades veer off course and flex too much. Checking with a blade manufacturer, I was told that this was usually caused by an inferior core. The lesson seems to be that saving money on a poor quality blade doesn't make sense if you lose time or have to repair the stone.

Durable

"Consistently durable" was also a frequent response. Some blades are fast, some are durable; the Viper® is consistently both fast *and* durable. Long life translates to value. Inconsistent life has been frequently mentioned as a problem with other, inexpensively-priced turbo blades.

Price

Viper® is not our least expensive turbo blade, nor is it our most expensive blade. It *is* our best-selling blade. What seems clear is that many of our customers believe that it is the best combination of quality and durability available today.

Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
1020	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 4" x 5/8", Quad Holes, 15,000 RPM	\$26.95	\$17.95
1022	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 4-1/2" x 5/8", Quad Holes, 13,300 RPM	\$28.95	\$18.95
1023	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 5" x 5/8", Quad Holes, 12,000 RPM	\$29.95	\$19.95
17453	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 6" x 5/8", Quad Holes, 10,000 RPM	\$37.95	\$24.95
1024	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 7" x 5/8" KO, 8,500 RPM	\$52.95	\$34.95
41349	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 8" x 5/8" KO, 7,500 RPM	\$61.95	\$44.95
41350	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 10" x 5/8", 6,000 RPM	\$119.95	\$89.95
41351	Viper® Turbo Granite Dry Blade, 12" x 5/8", 6,200 RPM	\$149.95	\$119.95



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(and why you'll want to call us when placing your next order... and the next... and the next... and the next)

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REASON #2 – We develop relationships with those manufactures and have them make our house brands (Viper, Talon, Scorpion, Hercules, Stone Shield). *Our customers benefit by getting consistent quality we can test and control.*

REASON #3 – We eliminate all middlemen and middlemen products. *Our customers get the savings created by eliminating the middlemen without sacrificing quality.*

REASON #4 – We continuously upgrade the quality of our offerings so that we offer the highest quality product and best value for money. *Our customers get the latest technology and advances automatically with every order.*

REASON #5 – We work with our chosen manufacturers to offer products that save labor (about a third of total expenses in any shop). *Our customers get access to tools and supplies that work the way they're supposed to work the first time – many are brand new innovations never seen in the industry (I-brace, Dishwasher Bracket, etc.). This saves time and labor, and time is money.*

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MIA+BSI and *Stone World* Announce Stone Industry Education Series



Dates and locations for the 2017 Stone Industry Education Series:

February 15: Tempe, Arizona (Arizona Tile)

March 9: Houston, Texas (MS International)

April 27: Memphis, Tennessee (Pacific Shore Stones)

May 11: Chicago, Illinois (Universal Granite & Marble)

June 1: Jessup, Maryland (MS International)

June 22: Livermore, California (Arizona Tile)

July 20: Norwood, Massachusetts (MS International)

September 14: Aurora, Colorado (MS International)

October 5: Tulsa, Oklahoma (Pacific Shore Stones)

November 2: Austell, Georgia (MS International)

For more information, visit www.stoneindustryeducation.com.

MIA+BSI: the Natural Stone Institute serves more than 1,900 members in 55 countries who represent every aspect of the natural stone industry, offering them a wide array of technical and training resources, professional development, regulatory advocacy, and networking events. Two prominent publications—the *Dimension Stone Design Manual* and *Building Stone* magazine—raise awareness in both the industry and the design communities for the promotion and best use of natural stone. Learn more at www.naturalstoneinstitute.org.

IN 2016, the Stone Industry Education Series educated a total of 335 fabricators from 195 companies. Eric Tryon (Premier Surfaces), who joined the team of Stone Summit facilitators in 2016, commented: “I’m pleased to see the momentum that seems to be building in the industry to raise the bar on performance. I’m blown away on the amount of people that continue to follow up with me months after an event with specific questions.”

MIA+BSI and *Stone World* magazine are pleased to announce the schedule for the 2017 Stone Industry Education Series. In 2017, Stone Summits will be held in ten cities across the United States.

The ten Stone Summits scheduled for 2017 will be facilitated by a team of experienced industry leaders, including GK Naquin (Stone Interiors), Tony Malisani (Malisani, Inc.), Eric Tryon, and Marco Duran (Atlas Marble and Granite). Attendees will learn how to create a plan to diversify sales, find and retain top talent, and avoid common OSHA safety violations. Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions on technical standards, business management, and marketing.

An Exceptional Stone Structure

Murshida Carol Weyland Conner, the spiritual leader of Sufism Reoriented, had a clear vision of the sacred design which would express the spiritual tenets of Sufism Reoriented to be materialized in its new home for worship. She chose Alan Ritchie, a longtime architectural partner of the renowned architect, Philip Johnson, to design the building working off conceptual drawings provided by Murshida Conner and detailed conversations about the goal to be achieved and the space requirements. His design perfectly realized Murshida Conner’s vision.

Sufism Reoriented planned for over 50 years for this ultimate home for their members and its spiritual mission. Designed to endure for over 700 years, the building is innovative in many ways, from its curved marble cladding from Carrara, Italy, to its climate control with state-of-art air filtering systems, to its green roof composition with recycled glass gravel from Germany, to its stormwater management with rain

harvesting features, to its 33 feet tall hollow bronze sculpture with seismic base isolators and acrylic butterflies, standing inside of a three-story tall room with curved glass guardrails.

The 66,500 square foot Sanctuary is circular in nature and includes eight domes, lighting with large skylights and orientation on an east–west axis with a magnificent view centered on the East Bay’s Mount Diablo.

The Sanctuary is a showcase of Carrara Marble from Italy’s Carrara region. Bianco Carrara was supplied by the Santucci Group (MIA+BSI Member) for interior and exterior installations. They provided the raw stone from ‘Bacino di Colonnata - Canaloni - Venedreta, Carrara, Italy, Quarry 121. The Santucci Group carefully fabricated 2,800 exterior segments, all of which are two inches or more thick, with honed finishes and with stainless steel attachments for the cladding. The 2,285 exterior cladding pieces were curved inside and out.

[Please turn to page 28](#)

The honed Carrara marble cladding for the Sanctuary comprises some 2,800 exterior segments, all of which are two inches or more thick.



Whoa, Mule

Farmer Joe decided his injuries from his recent accident were serious enough to take the trucking company responsible for the accident to court. In court, the trucking company’s fancy lawyer was questioning farmer Joe.

“Didn’t you say, at the scene of the accident, that you were fine?”

“Well, lemme tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule Bessie into the –”

“I didn’t ask for any details,” the lawyer interrupted. “Just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, that you were fine?”

“Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and was driving down the road –”

“Your Honor, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please instruct him to simply answer the question.”

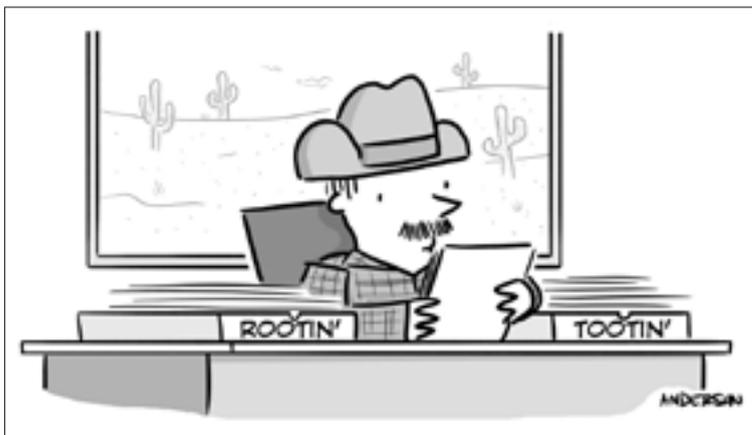
By this time the judge was fairly interested in Farmer Joe’s story, and told the lawyer, “I have a feeling this is relevant.

“Go, on sir,” he told Joe.

“Well, like I was tryin’ to say, I had just loaded Bessie – she was my favorite mule – into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge 18-wheeler come outta nowhere, ran the stop sign, and smacked into my truck and trailer. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie and the trailer was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and didn’t want to move. I could hear ol’ Bessie a-moanin’ and groanin’.

“Well, it weren’t too long when a Trooper came on the scene. He could hear Bessie a-moanin’ so he went over to her. After he looked at her he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road with his gun in his hand and looked at me. He said, ‘Your mule was in such bad shape I had to shoot her. How are you feeling?’”

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MS International, Inc. Launches New Porcelain Tile Collections at TISE in Las Vegas

Continued from page 18

The last new addition to the porcelain lineup is Tektile. A play on textile patterns, Tektile offers all the textured nuances of fabric in glazed porcelain tile. Since both Domino and Tektile work particularly well in commercial spaces, the MSI design team expects to see both porcelain collections in coffee shops and offices, respectively. Additionally, the newly launched collection of Decorative Mosaics and Wall Tiles is filled with inspired designs and modern colorways.

MSI also displayed their expanded line of Natural Stacked Stone Ledger Panels, showcasing chic new colors, looks, and finishes. Sam Kim, Vice President at MSI said, “With the outdoor season ramping up, we’re also excited to debut our new game-changing Porcelain Pavers Collection. The 2CM porcelain pavers feature high definition inkjet designs that replicate authentic looks of natural stone, cement, and wood. They’re easy to install, stain resistant, and low-maintenance—making them ideal for homeowners who want designer looks without sacrificing practicality.”

Rup Shah, President at MSI stated that his teams work tirelessly on behalf of their trade

partners to curate bestselling products, ensuring state of art access to trusted, high-quality resources for all their home and commercial projects.

In a conversation about the TISE, he said, “This show in Nevada was an exciting one for us. We expanded our most



Bernini Porcelain makes a style statement with its unique vein-cut travertine look and fossilized veining. Available in polished and matte finishes, in several sizes – 12x24, 18x18 and 4x18 – with a coordinating decorative mosaic and bullnose available.

important product lines was an ideal way to introduce these new styles to our trade partners – who saw many of them for the first time. Our industry

colleagues and customers drive all that we do, and through the years, they’ve been invaluable in helping us shape and refine our offerings.”

Visit MSIstone.com for more information on their products.

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**Average sink is 4 linear feet*



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The Scorpion™ Soft Bond Finger Bit is ideal for hard stones like granite. Hard stone requires the finger bit bond to be softer, so that the diamonds are exposed sooner to cut the stone. Softer stones are milled best with a finger bit that has a harder bond matrix, so that the diamonds are not exposed as fast.

Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
16017	Scorpion™ CNC Granite Finger Bit, 20mm x 40mm, 1/2 Gas Thread, Orange, Twin Seg., 5,500-5,800 RPM	\$174.95	\$119.95
16018	Scorpion™ CNC Granite Finger Bit, 20mm x 40mm, 1/2 Gas Thread, Orange, 5 seg., 5,500-5,800 RPM	\$174.95	\$132.55

With the Scorpion CNC Granite Finger Bit, this customer is averaging 1100 feet per bit, which works out to about 40¢ per sink. With his previous bit, he was only averaging 500 linear feet.

“After running it extensively we took it off and it still had life after cutting 1,068 feet. We realized it had given us over double the linear feet of work from any fingerbit.”

Josh, Stone Spectrum LLC

“The Democrats are the party that says government will make you smarter, taller, richer, and remove the crabgrass on your lawn. The Republicans are the party that says government doesn’t work and then they get elected and prove it.”
– P.J. O’Rourke

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An Exceptional Stone Structure

Continued from page 26

The 1,000 pieces of interior stone primarily comprised the horizontal surfaces of the Sanctuary's Prayer Hall, the center of the Sanctuary and worship for Sufism Reoriented.

Cleveland Marble of Cleveland Ohio (MIA+BSI Member) installed interior and exterior marble material.

The center of the Sanctuary features a 25-foot symbolic emblem. Made by Creative Edge Master Shop (also an MIA+BSI Member) from marble, brass, bronze and gold infused ceramic tile, the inlaid feature expresses the group's spiritual ideals and shows symbols for religions

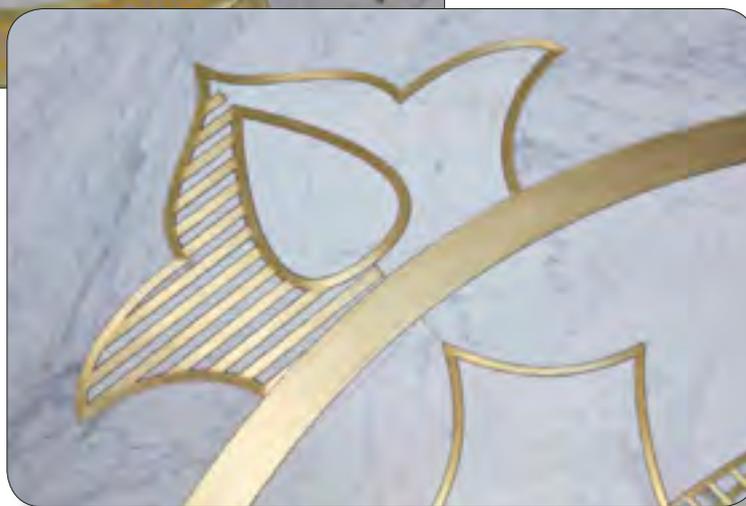


The medallion inlay includes marble, brass, bronze and gold-infused ceramic tile.

transported to Walnut Creek and then installed by Cleveland Marble.

For more information on the waterjet inlay in this project, see the Creative Edge website, creativeedgemastershop.com.

worldwide. Made in 50 segments in Creative Edge Master Shop's facility in Fairfield Iowa, the marble/metal work was



Cleveland Marble installed the exterior and interior marble material. Bianco Carrara marble sourced from Italy, and fabricated for installation by the Santucci Group



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“Oh, yeah? You try flying around shooting lovesick morons in nothing but a sash in the middle of February!”

It's All in the Marketing

Mike walked into a post office just before Valentine's Day, and he couldn't help noticing a middle-aged, balding man standing in a corner sticking "Love" stamps on bright pink envelopes with hearts all over them. Then the man got out a bottle of Chanel perfume from his pocket and started spraying scent over the envelopes.



By now Mike's curiosity had got the better of him, and so he asked the man why he was sending all those cards.

The man replied, "I'm sending out 500 Valentine cards signed, 'Guess who?'"

"But why?" asked Mike.

"Heh. I'm a divorce lawyer," the man replied with an evil grin.

Hands on the Wheel, Feet on the Floor

Tens of thousands of pedestrians are hit by cars every year in America, but rare is the driver who runs over himself.

In October in Orlando, Florida, one William Edwards, 28, leaving the Dancer's Royale strip club at 2:30 a.m., started his truck, drove a few feet, fell out, had it run over his leg, and saw the truck drift down a street and into a home, injuring the occupant.

And earlier in October, a 25-year-old man in Scugog, Ontario, backing his car down his driveway with the door open, fell out, had it run over his leg, and saw it hit two mailbox posts. (Surprise: both times, as in nearly every similar case, alcohol was involved.)

Theater of the Absurd

The rebellion against the absurdities of Black Friday this year by the organization Cards Against Humanity came in the form of raising money to dig a pointless hole in the ground.

During the last week of November, people "contributed" \$100,573, with Cards digging initially for 5.5 seconds per donated dollar.

Similarly, in 2015, according to an NPM report, Cards raised \$71,145 by promising to do "absolutely nothing" with it, and the year before, they raised \$180,000 by selling bits of bull dung – making a fairly obvious statement.

When asked why Cards doesn't just give the money to charity, a spokesperson asked why donors themselves don't give it to charity. "It's (their) money."

Source: National Public Media

Crystal Marble Company: Legacy and Tradition

Continued from page 2

“Where some of our competitors might be buying stone from the same supplier, time after time, we buy it at the source, be it Spain, Italy, Portugal, Brazil or Cold Spring, Minnesota. The other difference is the way we install. Just try to bring 10 to 20 containers to a downtown high rise. There’s no place to store it! So we bring it to our warehouse, separate it out, and then make weekly deliveries to the job. So all of this is our forte, and all of this type of work comes with a shop.”

The Shop

With well over 18,000 square feet of warehouse space, the 3,500 square foot shop houses two bridge saws, one edge profiler and a radial arm polisher. The shop also is equipped with numerous pneumatic hand tools, allowing the company to take on any size job, said Cliff. “One job we are currently fabricating is a 10-story office building that has two public

bathrooms on every floor. Each vanity has four undermount sinks, and the women’s bathrooms additionally have purse shelves. All vanities are approximately nine feet long and use 3cm engineered stone.”

Business Climate and Technology

“We are still waiting for office building projects to come back. It has begun to some degree, and it’s not that competitive, yet. On the other hand, high rise apartment work is competitive, but the numbers are still kind of low. Overall, the bigger projects are not as competitive as the smaller ones, because you’ve got a lot more people going after (bidding) the smaller scale work.”

“As far as technology, it has played a role in the fabrication end of the business; its growth has been phenomenal over the last 20 years, and it’s what has helped us to keep our costs down.”

Please turn to page 31



The lobby of Duke Energy in Charlotte, North Carolina, uses Grigio Carnico marble on the lobby walls and White Carrara for the security desk and elevator vestibules, and White Pearl and Impala granite flooring. There’s approximately 18,000 sq. ft. of white granite on the exterior. The Duke Energy building has earned a Platinum Leeds energy certification.

Bianco Antiquo granite island and counter in this Peachtree Street condo features a subtle curved edge with a mitered side panel.





Stone Shield Penetrating Sealers

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A: Your Customer. Are You Prepared?

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It's amazing, but most people do not understand that stone is porous. Neither do they understand that harsh supermarket cleaners can harm sealers.

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formulated with the latest solvent-based fluoropolymer technology to protect against all oil and water-based stains.

Stones Gotta Breathe

Unlike surface sealers, Stone Shield™ is a deep penetrating sealer that leaves a natural look and feel, allowing the stone to breathe. Small molecules allow for deep penetration and long-lasting protection of the stone without leaving a surface film that quickly wears off.

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The manufacturer of Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealers constantly tests for real life hazards. We know that you

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These surfaces need even more protection. That's why we offer Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealer in two versions. One is for traditional **Polished Surfaces** and one for **Porous Surfaces** that need extra protection.

-  **Won't change color of stone**
-  **Odorless**
-  **FDA compliant solvent**
-  **Interior and exterior use**



For Porous Surfaces

Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
4453	Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealer, Quart	\$51.95	\$39.95
4452	Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealer, Gallon	\$134.95	\$118.72

Coverage: 200-1,500 Sq. Feet/Gallon

For Polished Surfaces

Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
4450	Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealer, Quart	\$30.07	\$23.07
4451	Stone Shield™ Penetrating Sealer, Gallon	\$74.95	\$59.65

Coverage: 1,000-1,500 Sq. Feet/Gallon

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Kokomo Finds Bumper Joy

Indiana community lifts 60-year-old ban on pinball



Deaf and blind, it wasn't. But an Indiana community felt its 60-year-old ban on pinball was just plain dumb.

Surrounded by city officials at a local record shop one Tuesday, Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight signed an ordinance resting on pinball machines lifting the city's ban on the game, the *Kokomo Tribune* reported. He couldn't resist making a reference to The Who's 1969 hit, "Pinball Wizard."

"This is pretty ironic. As we look back, I was reflecting that ever since I was a young boy, I played the silver ball. From Southway up to Morgan Street, I think I played them all!" Goodnight said.

The mayor said he and city officials are pleased to "bring pinball back to its popular stature here in Kokomo," and he invited the police chief, Rob Baker, to play the first legal game of pinball in the city since 1955.

Mike Wilson, who owns the record store, American Dream Hi-Fi, said he was shocked to learn that while he's been legally selling alcohol in his shop, he's been illegally supplying free pinball games.

According to Wilson, his two pinball machines, Wizard CB Charlie and a Flying Aces, were created for home use at the peak of pinball popularity in the 1960s and 1970s.

"They invented hugs to let people know you love them without saying anything."
- Bill Keane

Crystal Marble Company: Legacy and Tradition

Continued from page 29

“Moreover, we are paying the same price or less for stone fabricated overseas than we were paying 15 years ago, mostly due to better ways of quarrying stone. This has helped keep the price down because waste is minimized. So the savings begins right there and trickles down to us. As far as it playing a role in the installation side of what we do, technology has not had much of an effect on the anchoring or attaching of stone to buildings. We’ve used stainless strap and dowel and split-tail anchors for years.”

A Future That’s Crystal Clear

“We’ve been a very successful company when it comes to customer satisfaction. If a customer is not satisfied with what we’ve done for them, we are going to do everything we can to make them happy. I’m not going to be taken for a fool, but if there’s something wrong with the color of the stone, or how we have blended it together, I’ll tear it out. We’ll do whatever it takes to satisfy the client. My dad told me a long time ago, ‘If you can satisfy just one



The façade of Duke Energy in Charlotte, North Carolina has approximately 18,000 square feet of white granite.

client, they’ll tell a few people, but if you have one dissatisfied client, they’ll tell everybody they know’. So we’ve always worked hard at keeping a great reputation.

“As you probably know, we have to bond our projects. If we get a big contract from a general contractor, they require us to get insurance to guarantee that we have a bonding company standing behind us. They also call around to ask others about our past performance. Fortunately for us, due to our reputation, they get rave reviews about Crystal Marble Company.

“As for the future, it looks promising. We are willing to do whatever it takes to stay on the cutting edge and continue being a leader in the industry.”

A Braxton-Bragg customer since 2008, Crystal Marble Company has been a Marble Institute of America member since 1976 and spent numerous years belonging to the Chamber of Commerce.

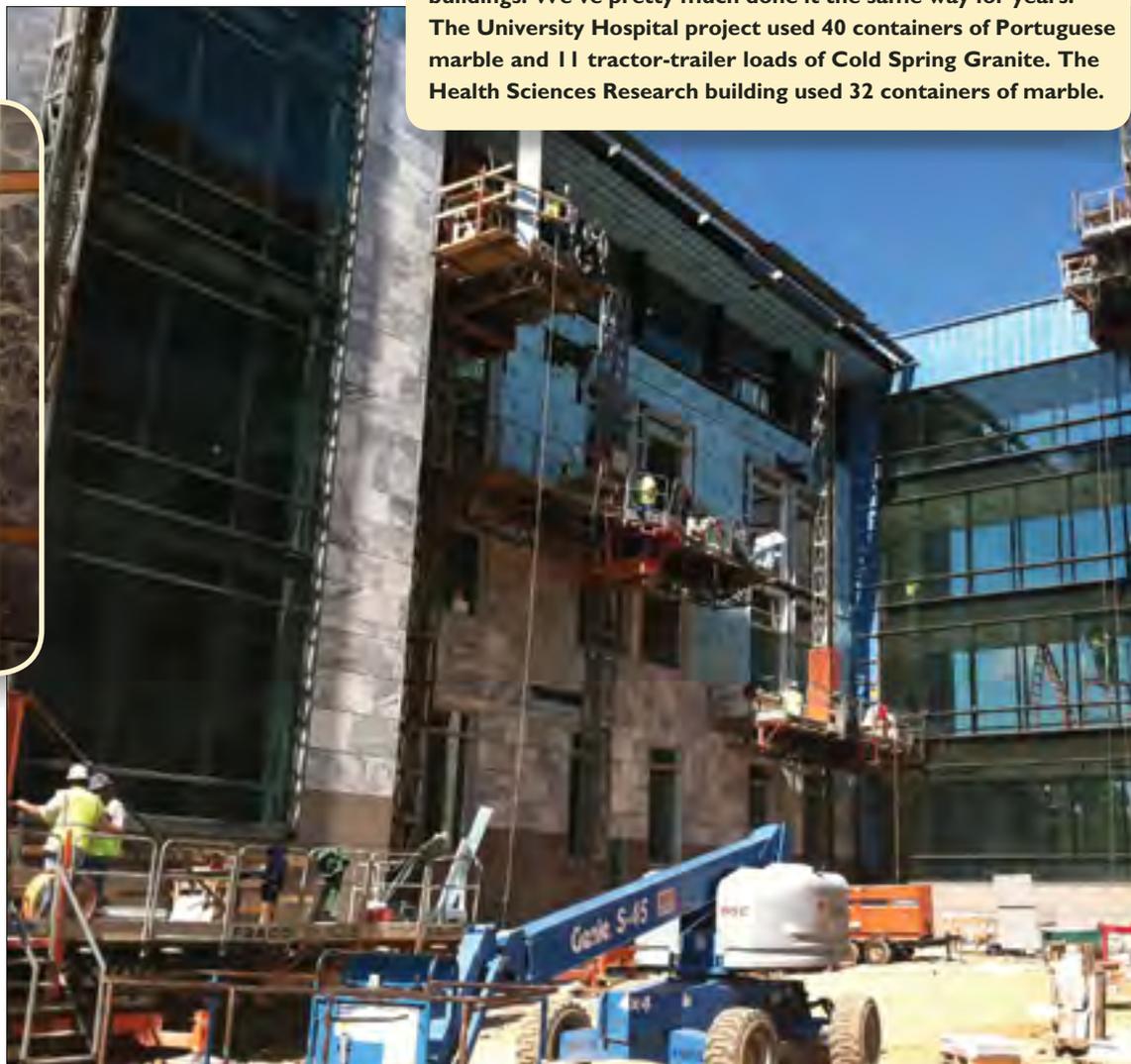
For more information visit www.crystalmarble.com.



Construction in progress on the Emory University Hospital (above) and the Emory Health Sciences Research building (below) in Atlanta, Georgia, features a multi-colored quilt of white, pink and grey marble. Cliff Brannon comments, “Technology has not had much of an effect on the anchoring or attaching of stone to buildings. We’ve pretty much done it the same way for years.” The University Hospital project used 40 containers of Portuguese marble and 11 tractor-trailer loads of Cold Spring Granite. The Health Sciences Research building used 32 containers of marble.



Lobby and elevator vestibule at 1075 Peachtree Office Building in Atlanta, Georgia, features Fior di Bosco marble wall cladding and French Vanilla dimensional marble walls.



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MARCH 2017	WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2017
APRIL 2017	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017
MAY 2017	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017

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FOR SALE: Daytona XL Automatic Edge Shaper and Polisher S N 101920052118. Year 2005. Located in Southeastern North Carolina. Bought new. Many new parts. Not currently working properly. Priced to move \$12,500.00. Buyer responsible for all moving expenses. Olive Glass and Marble 910-484-5277. Email: bette@oliveglassandmarble.com

directly from us. It is easy to sign up and we do all of the work for you! All you have to do is let us know that you're interested in becoming a participant in this program and we will print for you custom postcards and brochures to hand out to your clients and prospective customers interested in your countertop services.

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you directly. You will also receive a unique discount code that is linked to your Braxton-Bragg account, so that we can track your customers, for you to receive a rebate from us when someone purchases Supreme Surface Products. For more information about this program, please contact one of our salesmen at 800-575-4401.

What makes Supreme Surface Cleaners so special? ioSeal. The

stone conditioner in Supreme Surface cleaners is a proprietary ingredient called ioSeal. This amazing technology ionically bonds with the surface of your natural stone, sealing it and protecting it from hard water spots, mineral buildup, and stains. Supreme surface cleaners are the brainchild of stone industry veteran Tom Munro who embarked on a quest to find the BEST granite cleaner. What he found, however, was no one product that offered a no-rinse, streak-free (even on black granite), eco-friendly formula that would clean, polish,

and protect granite and other natural stones against stains, and was made in America.

Supreme Surface Granite Cleaner & Conditioner leaves a streak-free shine, every time—even on black granite! But Tom wasn't satisfied. To learn what others thought of his new granite cleaner he gave it away—free. "We sent our free samples across the USA to everyone that wanted it... Yes, everyone! All this, just for their feedback on how we could improve our product!" Log on to www.consumerstonecare.com.

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Advice from an Old Farmer

- Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.
 - Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.
 - Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
 - A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
 - Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.
 - Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.
 - Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
 - Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.
 - It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
 - When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
 - The best sermons are lived, not preached.
 - Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.
 - Don't judge folks by their relatives.
 - Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
 - Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
 - Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none.
 - Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.
 - If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
 - If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
- Please turn to page 46*



“Fast and easy to install, very strong and effective...”
 Troy Pilkington,
 Shop Manager TNK Design,
 Maryville, TN



Restroom vanity picture captured at a tavern in South Illinois

Install an ADA Compliant wall-hung vanity, quickly, inexpensively and beautifully!

The Stone Pro Countertop Support is ADA compliant and is one of the best ways to mount and secure wall vanities.

It's a natural stone countertop support that can be set at the appropriate height for easy counter access for someone in a wheelchair.

- 4' span – 2 brackets
- 5' span – 3 brackets
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See the video www.braxton-bragg.com



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
3743	Stone Pro, ADA Compliant Countertop Support	\$224.95	\$99.95



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“I’m not sure you understand what I mean by career goals.”



For Stock Removal and Honing Scratches on Internal Radiuses, Use...



Scorpion™ CNC Vacuum-Brazed Sink Profile Wheels

- Can be used on any type of stone
- All brazed sink wheels feature center water feed
- Available in 1/2 Gas thread
- Vacuum-brazed sink wheels with 1/2 Gas attachments are ideal for CNC applications
- They have only one diamond layer and do not change their shape
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55023	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1/2" D, 50 Grit	\$159.95	\$103.95
55024	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1/2" D, 100 Grit	\$159.95	\$103.95
55025	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1/2" D, 200 Grit	\$159.95	\$103.95
55026	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1/2" D, 400 Grit	\$159.95	\$103.95
55027	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1" D, 50 Grit	\$183.95	\$119.95
55028	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1" D, 100 Grit	\$183.95	\$119.95
55029	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1" D, 200 Grit	\$183.95	\$119.95
55030	Scorpion™ Brazed Profile Wheel, T-30, (3cm), R3, 1" D, 400 Grit	\$183.95	\$119.95



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Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

Stone is Not Always Polished

Flamed granite mixed with polished granites makes an excellent contrast for paving, but the maintenance can be a little challenging,

Continued from page 17

Maintenance of these surfaces would consist of dust mopping, vacuuming, or blowing to remove all loose soiling. Routine cleaning would be with Majestic Stone Soap through an auto-scrubber, fitted with soft brushes, for commercial interior surfaces. Smaller areas would require lint-free equipment like a micro-fiber mop. A periodic intensive cleaning should be performed quarterly or as needed using the Majestic Deep Cleaner Stripper/Degreaser to clean grout lines and generally refresh the surface. Exterior surfaces should be periodically pressure-washed gently. Impregnator and color enhancer replacement should be performed when the surface no longer adequately resists water or the color enhancement has faded. Exposure to weather and ultraviolet radiation will shorten the life of these products.

Always try to submit a test area to confirm the products, procedure, and results. And of course, partner with a reputable distributor for quality products and technical support. Let us know if you have any questions or need clarification.

Bob Murrell has worked in the natural stone industry for over 40 years and is well known for his expertise in natural stone, tile and decorative concrete restoration and maintenance. He helped develop some of the main products and processes which revolutionized the industry, and is currently the Director of Operations for M3 Technologies.



“Why don’t they pass a constitutional amendment prohibiting anybody from learning anything? If it works as well as prohibition did, in five years we will have the smartest people on earth.”

—Will Rogers, from *Weekly Articles*

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Item #	Description	OUR Price
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A Repairman's Story

My name is Bill Roberts and I repair routers for Braxton-Bragg. Over the years, I have worked on hundreds of routers made by most manufacturers including Sector, Stinger, MEM and others.

I Have Seen a Lot of Wear and Tear...

Routers get a lot of hard use. Some parts simply wear out, and some occasionally break. Over the years I saw patterns and often wondered why manufacturers did not beef up more of the critical parts.

Nobody Listened

From time to time, I communicated ideas but for the most part, did not see any changes.

Finally, Somebody Did

Then about three years ago, I was asked to provide detailed information on my experience with Hercules® Routers. Since Hercules® is our best-selling router, I had a lot of practice repairing them. Now I finally got the chance to take one completely apart and find the most worn components.

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Little Things Matter

Often it was the little things that mattered. An engineer in a lab does not know the real world of a stone shop, and how the shape of the power cord, the thickness of a belt, or the type of bearings used can affect performance.

Single Phase Power

It costs more to produce a powerful router with single phase power than with 3-phase, but when asked about making it 3-phase, I told them that many shops only had single phase power...and they listened!



I am Bill Roberts and I approve this message!

Hercules® Single Speed with Hydroplaning System

21 Improvements Later

Well, to make a long story short, the manufacturer has implemented 21 improvements in the design of the Hercules® Router. These improvements make it perform better and last longer. I believe you will agree with me that this is the most reliable router you have ever used.

Now the BEST Guarantee in the Industry—12 Months!

Because of the changes, the router is now backed by a 12-month guarantee—the longest in the industry. I would have to say that this is the most reliable router that Braxton-Bragg has ever sold.

Best Guarantee!

Bill R Roberts

Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
5368	Hercules® Router Edge Profiling Machine, Single Speed with Hydroplaning System	\$3,448.95	\$1,995.00
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Don't Cry for Me...

Although the presidential election of 2016 was certainly more volatile than usual, one reaction to the outcome was the apparent ease with which some in America's next generation of college-trained leaders were sidelined by self-described emotional pain and distress.

The Wall Street Journal reported that special attention was

given by administrators at Tufts University, the University of Kansas and Ivy League Cornell, among other places, where their young adults could "grieve" over the election and seek emotional support, such as use of "therapy dogs" in Kansas and, at the University of Michigan, the availability of Play-Doh and coloring books for distraction.

No Crunchy Roll for You

The Space World theme park in Kitakyushu, Japan, opened a popular (with visitors) ice-skating rink in November, but was forced to close it two weeks later for being hugely unpopular (with social media critics). The park had placed 5,000 fish and other sea animals in the ice deck of its "Freezing Port" rink so that skaters could look down as they glided along, gazing at marvels of nature (all dead in advance,



of course, purchased from a fish market). Nonetheless, the park manager apologized for grossing out so many people and closed the exhibit (melting the ice and conducting an "appropriate religious service" for the fishes' souls).

NJ Man Arrested for Drunken Backhoe Driving

A New Jersey man who police say was driving drunk while behind the wheel of a backhoe is facing a list of charges.

Fifty-six-year-old William Campbell was charged one Tuesday with driving while intoxicated, careless driving and failing to maintain a lane, among other offenses.

Police say a South Brunswick officer stopped Campbell Monday after observing him "drinking beer and swerving all over the road."

The officer reportedly smelled alcohol on Campbell's breath and found bottles of Jack Daniels and vodka in the backhoe.

Police say Campbell failed a field sobriety test and admitted to the officer that he didn't have a valid license.

Campbell has seven prior DWI convictions. It's unclear if he has an attorney who can comment on the charges. However, unsubstantiated comments heard at the scene include, "What the h*** were you thinking!?"

Support Art Ed

Apparently the plan by a 33-year-old unlicensed, un-car-registered driver in Perth, Australia, in November to keep from being stopped by police was to print "POLICE" in large, "official"-looking letters on the sides of her white Hyundai, using a blue dry-erase board marker. (She was, of course, quickly stopped by police.)

A woman in a quiet north Minneapolis neighborhood told reporters she became fearful after seeing a large swastika spray-painted on a garage door down a nearby alley (just after election day!). (Problem: The base "X" of the correct design has "hooks" that should always extend to the right, clockwise; three of the Minneapolis "artist's" incorrectly hook left.)

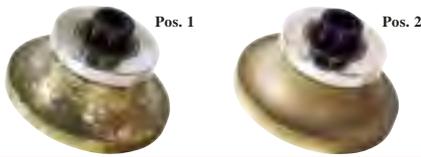
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Position 1 is a Metal Bond/Sintered Router Bit. This very aggressive and long lasting first step is used for quick stock removal and rough edge shaping. Supplied with 2 bearings. The first bearing is over-sized to allow the second tool to refine the profile edge. The second bearing is used when only using the first profile bit.

Position 2 is a Metal Bond/Sintered Router Bit. This second step removes lines, leaving a smooth, honed finish on the edge making it ready for polishing.

- Position 1 comes with 2 bearings
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- Recommend running speed is 9,000 RPM
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- Same geometry as Viper CNC profile wheels
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2cm Radius Router Bits



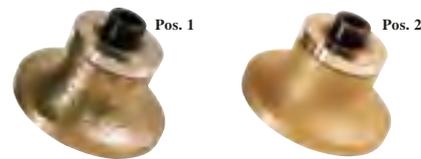
Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55000	Viper A-20 (2cm), Radius Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$275.95	\$179.95
55001	Viper A-20 (2cm), Radius Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$248.95	\$161.95



2cm Ogee Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55006	Viper F-20 (2cm), Ogee Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$349.95	\$227.95
55007	Viper F-20 (2cm), Ogee Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$334.95	\$217.95



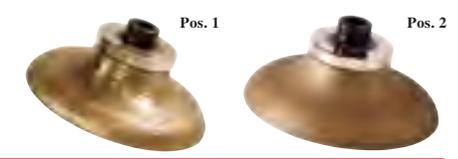
3cm Radius Router Bits



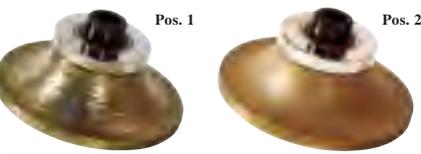
Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55020	Viper A-30 (3cm), Radius Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$415.95	\$270.95
55021	Viper A-30 (3cm), Radius Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$386.95	\$251.95



3cm Ogee Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55008	Viper F-30 (3cm), Ogee Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$423.95	\$275.95
55009	Viper F-30 (3cm), Ogee Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$340.95	\$221.95



2cm Demi Bullnose Router Bits



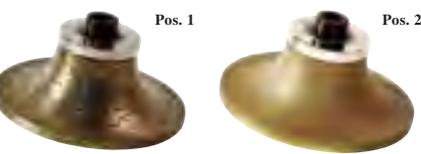
Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55002	Viper B-20 (2cm), Demi Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$388.95	\$252.95
55003	Viper B-20 (2cm), Demi Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$379.95	\$246.95



2cm Full Bullnose Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55014	Viper V-20 (2cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$362.95	\$235.95
55015	Viper V-20 (2cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$357.95	\$232.95



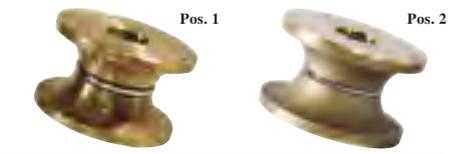
3cm Demi Bullnose Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55004	Viper B-30 (3cm), Demi Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$519.95	\$337.95
55005	Viper B-30 (3cm), Demi Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$508.95	\$330.95



3cm Full Bullnose Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55016	Viper V-30 (3cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$555.95	\$361.95
55017	Viper V-30 (3cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$526.95	\$342.95



2cm Bevel Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55010	Viper E-20 (2cm), Bevel Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$328.95	\$213.95
55011	Viper E-20 (2cm), Bevel Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$312.95	\$203.95



4cm Full Bullnose Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55018	Viper V-40 (4cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$611.95	\$397.95
55019	Viper V-40 (4cm), Full Bullnose Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$583.95	\$379.95



3cm Bevel Router Bits



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
55012	Viper E-30 (3cm), Bevel Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1	\$472.95	\$307.95
55013	Viper E-30 (3cm), Bevel Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 2	\$443.95	\$288.95



5cm Straight Z Profile Router Bit



Item #	Description	MSRP	OUR Price
10459	Viper Z-50 (5cm), Straight Z Router Profile Wheel, Pos. 1, 36 Grit, 2" OD x 2" H, 9,000 RPM Max	\$292.95	\$190.95

The Ten Worst Valentine's Day Gifts EVER

Although Valentine's Day is deemed by some to be the "most romantic holiday" of the year, the lessons below could save you from giving disastrous anniversary gifts, birthday gifts and other special occasion gifts when matters of the heart are at stake.

Anything Weight-related

Valentine's Day is not the time to suggest self-improvement—even if your sweetheart has expressed a desire to change. But you shouldn't ignore or sabotage work already in progress either, like the husband who gave his wife a new bathroom scale plus a box of chocolates. Talk about a mixed message.

Household Products

Though you certainly don't have to be frivolous, Valentine's Day may not be the best day to be super practical either. Just because she said she needs it, doesn't mean she wants it wrapped up with a bow and placed ceremoniously across her lap.

"I mentioned to my husband that we needed a new toilet seat. Six weeks later, on Valentine's Day, he presented me with...a toilet seat. How thoughtful!"

An I.O.U.

Doing nothing on Valentine's Day sends a message for the jilted party to interpret—maybe he forgot, maybe he doesn't feel the same way I do, maybe he knows it's Valentine's Day and just doesn't care. With an "I owe you," the message is loud and clear. "I know the day is important but failed to make you a priority in my week (or day, or afternoon, or drive home from work)."

The Breakup

Speaking of clear messages, why would anyone wait until Valentine's Day to deliver a relationship verdict? Crimes of passion, I understand. Breaking up with someone for giving you a bathroom scale plus an I.O.U. for a box of chocolates makes sense. But planning to dump your partner on Valentine's Day is premeditated and cold-hearted. Classic example: "He sent me



roses and chocolates along with a note asking me to meet him at a romantic, little pub. Thrilled at the prospect of a proposal, I dressed to the nines. As we ate our meal, he slid over a note telling me... he wanted out." Note: there's a *Special Place* in Hell for people that do that.

The Cop Out

You know what I'm talking about. Your significant other screwed up and didn't get you anything. But rather than accept responsibility for the Valentine's Day mess, you get a lengthy explanation about how your honey demonstrates love for you all year round, not just on one,

commercialized holiday. And just like that, you're the selfish one in the relationship.

"We've been married for almost 10 years, with four children. Each year he tells me he's already given me my gift—four times over. I love my kids, but c'mon already!"

Please turn to page 42

NO Orange Peel on Quartz!



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Viper® 6-Step In-Line Polishing System 5"			
58000	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 1	\$115.95	\$76.67
58001	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 2	\$115.95	\$76.67
58002	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 3	\$115.95	\$69.95
58003	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 4	\$115.95	\$76.67
58004	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 5	\$115.95	\$76.67
58005	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 6	\$123.95	\$85.36
Viper® 6-Step In-Line Polishing System 6"			
58006	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 1	\$132.95	\$85.36
58007	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 2	\$132.95	\$85.36
58008	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 3	\$132.95	\$85.36
58009	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 4	\$132.95	\$85.36
58010	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 5	\$132.95	\$85.36
58011	6-Step In-Line Polishing System, Step 6	\$140.95	\$85.36

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Fireplace Facelift: Remodeling Your Fireplace in Natural Stone

Continued from page 18

After painting over their brick for decades, homeowners have now made fireplace facelifts a popular remodeling trend. “Using stone to return a fireplace to its intended glory is an affordable way to accomplish this,” says Frattini. Keith Frederick, a brick and stone masonry specialist and founder of Frederick Construction of Tampa Bay, tells me he’s recently re-faced seven fireplaces.

Before You Get Started

No matter where your fireplace is located, nothing warms your home’s cockles more than a crackling fire burning in a beautifully designed focal point fireplace. Here are a few things you should know before re-fac-ing it with stone.

Keep an eye on your fire-box.

“The most important thing is the firebox itself. The opening is critical and to make it look right, you have to know what you’re doing because whatever stone you pick out, it’s going to close that opening down a little bit,” says Frederick. Some stones are thicker than others and how you lay them can vary from stone to stone. Check that your stone choice won’t im-pede the firebox opening.

Don’t cut out floor space.

“One of the biggest mistakes we see during a stone fireplace remodel is a new fireplace that juts out into the room and causes the room to lose floor space. Not only is this bad from an ROI standpoint, it will also make your fireplace stand out far too much in the room,” says Sacha Ferrandi, founder of Source Capital Funding, a real estate fi-nancier who works with cli-ents on their stone fireplace improvements. “The best remodels either reduce the size of the fireplace or move the stone chimney outside of

Photo courtesy of AAA Natural Stone



Dark Antique limestone facelift utilizes storage space on either side of the stacked stone.

the wall, effectively creating more floor space. A fire-place should be a beautiful addition to a room, but not the centerpiece.”

Ensure there is room for hanging fireplace tools.

“Even contractors forget to include a space for fireplace tools to live,” says Ferrandi. Having the tools around the outside of the fireplace can clutter your room, so be sure to create a space for tools.

Consider the style of your room and mantel.

Finished, smooth, uniform stacked stone matches more appropriately with a finished, uniform or ornate mantel. If you go for rough stone of varying sizes like field-stone, it coordinates better with barn beam mantels or simplistic mantelpieces.

Selecting Stone

Frederick says the best way to pick your stone is to see it at the stone yard. He sometimes takes clients to a quarry in Tennessee to show them all stone options being quarried since yards often only have a small selection on hand.

As for the hearth, which is the most utilized aspect of the fireplace—people set things on it, kids play

on it, you can even sit on it—Frederick recommends a one-piece hearth stone for wood burning fireplaces. By code, it has to be 16 inches in front of the fire, and he typically goes with 20. “Adding a flagstone or fieldstone hearth would provide a unique and in-teresting look that would finish the transformation of your ugly fireplace into a showpiece for your home,” says Frattini.

Budgeting the Facelift

Natural stone and stone veneers are priced by the square foot and vary by type, region, size and color. Labor prices can also be all over the map depending on the experience of the stone contractor. Sealing off the room, prep work or demoli-tion, and clean up can all effect the cost of a project. Some stones are easy to lay, while others may take more time and effort. These are all considerations in pricing.

While a fireplace reface could be done as a DIY project, Frederick notes that there is an artistry involved in re-fac-ing a fireplace with natural stone. It’s like a stone puzzle that has to go up piece by piece and look stunning.



There are no ugly loves, nor handsome prisons.

—Benjamin Franklin
Poor Richard’s Almanack

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Announcing the Stone Pro SR2 Vacuum Support Rail System

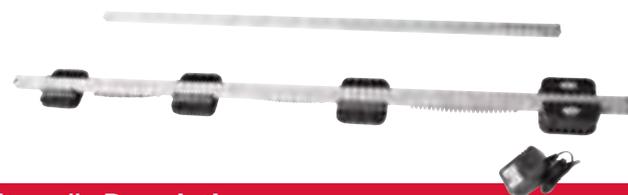
Have you ever done the fabricator’s “twist and shout?”

Imagine you’re carrying a sink section of countertop and suddenly you *twist* the slab a little too much, hear a crack and *shout* in frustration. That’s what the twist and shout is all about.

Fortunately, it doesn’t have to be this way thanks to this brand new system.

It is simply awesome! It adds rigidity to sink cutouts so you can avoid the dreaded “twist and shout.”

No one in the stone industry has anything like this that can vacuum to stone that has a textured surface. It also works great on polished stone surfaces as well.



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2743	Stone Pro SR2 Combo Pack Vacuum Support Rails With Rechargeable Cups, Includes: (1) 3-1/2 Ft Rail, (1) 7 Ft Rail, (1) Charger (4) Suction Cups, including one rechargeable master cup	\$597.95



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Items #10431 - #10433: 1" Brazed Sink Wheels are good tools to use for inside sink cutouts, corners and for tiny radiuses.

Items #10434 - #10436: 2" Brazed Sink Wheels are typically used for smoothing out the seams before joining two stone slabs together.

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55147	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1/2" x 2", 100 Grit	\$94.95	\$64.95
55148	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1/2" x 2", 200 Grit	\$94.95	\$64.95
55149	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1/2" x 2", 400 Grit	\$61.95	\$53.95
10431	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1" x 2", 50 Grit	\$134.95	\$89.95
10432	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1" x 2", 100 Grit	\$134.95	\$89.95
10433	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 1" x 2", 200 Grit	\$134.95	\$89.95
10434	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 2" x 2", 50 Grit	\$149.95	\$99.95
10435	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 2" x 2", 100 Grit	\$149.95	\$99.95
10436	Scorpion™ Brazed Sink Wheel, 2" x 2", 200 Grit	\$149.95	\$99.95



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A Blueprint for the Future

One City Reverses Course in Pursuit of Sustainable Development

About 10 years ago, officials with the city of Leawood, Kansas, began noticing problems with some of the city's commercial buildings. Facades were chipping, others fading. And the problems were occurring in buildings only a couple of years old.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Stone Industries

Iyna Bort Caruso

Reprinted from
usenaturalstone.com

reviews detailed building plans for every proposed development and like a lot of municipalities sign-off is based, in part, on whether a given project reflects the community's heritage and



REI Corporate office, featuring Chestnut Shell Kansas limestone

Leawood is a post-World War II community. It is also a success story. This Kansas City suburb, just about 10 miles southwest of downtown, is home to the wealthiest zip code in the state. Its population—just shy of 32,000—has more than doubled since 1980, and its commercial development is a fast-growing sector of a fast-growing real estate market.

Which is why construction woes in newer buildings raised red flags.

Mark Klein, a Leawood planning official, says brick dominated commercial construction up until around 2003. That was about the time when architects started to propose using manufactured stone for a number of new projects, which were approved for commercial use by the city. Leawood's planning commission

is true to its architectural integrity. "Unfortunately we started running into problems," Klein recalls. Some quality control issues were related to poor installation. The man-made stone was actually falling off the buildings. Klein noticed fading on some exteriors and chipped pieces on



The Prairie Fire Museum features Chestnut Shell, Flint Hills Mottled, Prairie Shell, and Cottonwood Kansas limestone.

others. "They looked like stone on the outside, but when it broke you could see the concrete. It ruined the illusion of a stone facade."

Around 2005-2006, the commission started to question whether construction using manufactured stone siding should continue to be greenlighted. Klein and his colleagues toured stone yards, spoke to experts and educated themselves on the properties of both simulated and natural stone. "For one thing, natural stone needs to be installed by a stone mason so there's already a higher level of skill involved," Klein says. "And if it breaks, it still looks the same. It doesn't fade, it's more durable and there's less chance of it ripping off the building than its man-made counterpart."

Manufactured or man-made stone is a concrete mix poured into molds and then colored so it resembles the tones and textures of quarried rock. By contrast, natural materials like limestone, sandstone, and granite have proven durability. For jobs such as retaining walls, pavers, bridges, and buildings, they age gracefully and weather well.

[Please turn to page 44](#)

Photo courtesy of U.S. Stone Industries

"No one is dumb who is curious. The people who don't ask questions remain clueless throughout their lives."

—Neil deGrasse Tyson

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B-30 R30	Demi Bullnose	\$443.95	\$485.95	\$485.95	\$485.95	\$136.95	\$136.95	\$136.95	\$2,311.95	
E-30	Bevel	\$393.95	\$393.95	\$393.95	\$393.95	\$174.95	\$174.95	\$174.95	\$2,099.95	
FG-30	Ogee Bullnose	\$749.95	\$549.95	\$549.95	\$549.95	\$549.95	\$199.95	\$199.95	\$3,348.95	
FZ-30	Ogee Straight	\$459.95	\$500.95	\$500.95	\$500.95	\$197.95	\$197.95	\$197.95	\$2,555.95	
T-20 R3	Double Eased	\$319.95	\$303.95	\$303.95	\$303.95	\$128.95	\$128.95	\$128.95	\$1,617.95	
T-30 R3	Double Eased	\$392.95	\$399.95	\$399.95	\$399.95	\$399.87	\$145.95	\$145.95	\$2,008.95	
T-30 R6	Double Eased	\$392.95	\$392.95	\$392.95	\$392.95	\$340.00	\$145.95	\$145.95	\$2,008.95	
V-30 R15	Full Bullnose	\$473.95	\$515.95	\$515.95	\$515.95	\$364.01	\$164.95	\$164.95	\$2,515.95	
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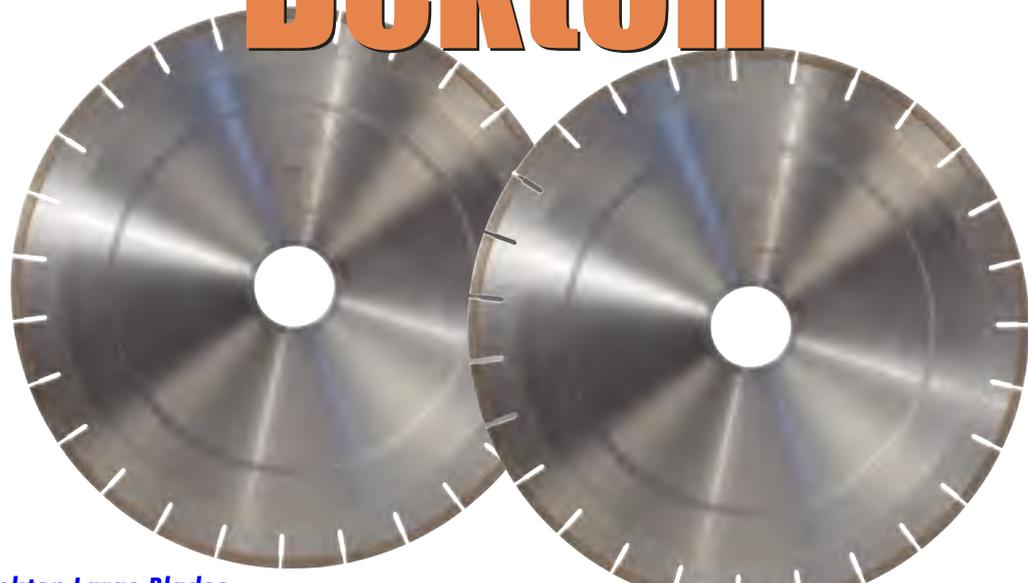
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55805	ItalDiamant Dekton Finger Bit, 1-3/8" (35mm), 4,100 RPM Max, Feed Rate: 9" to 10" per minute	\$145.95
55906	ItalDiamant Dekton Blade, 14", 10mm (H), 50/60mm 1,900-2,500 RPM Max	\$213.95
55907	ItalDiamant Dekton Blade, 16", 10mm (H), 50/60mm 1,700-2,300 RPM Max	\$259.95
55909	ItalDiamant Dekton Blade, 18", 10mm (H), 50/60mm Bushing 1,400-2,000 RPM Max	\$368.95



Dekton 5" Blade



Dekton Core Bit

Dekton CNC Core Bit

Dekton Finger Bit



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The Ten Worst Valentine's Day Gifts EVER

Continued from page 38

Avoid Anything Too Creative

A homemade card she took hours to create is sweet... a decadent dessert he tried to make are both lovely gestures. But sometimes being too creative or too literal can backfire.

"I love Slim Jims, but receiving meat sticks as a gift was quite upsetting. To make it worse, he also bought me a Slim Jim car tool because I kept locking my keys in the car."

Giving Just What YOU Always Wanted

Did the guy who gave his gal a pair of play-off hockey tickets (when she doesn't like hockey) really think he made a smart play? Presenting your sweetheart with something you've always wanted is a romantic strike-out.

"My husband gave me a new gas grill. Gosh, nothing says 'true love' like cooked meat."

The Panic Present

While the "copper-outer" attempts to cover the gaffe with words, in this scenario, Valentine tries to make something (anything!) look like a planned present. I couldn't decide which reader's disaster I enjoyed the most. Was it the puzzle shaped like a pizza? The T-shirt with a picture of a cow on it? Or the toy monkey that pooped candy? So many good stories. Here's a tip: besides finding the shelves wiped clean of legit Valentine gifts, waiting until the last minute could make you too rushed to pay attention to pertinent details.

Case in point, "He bought me a card on his way home from work that said, 'Happy Valentine's Day Mother.' He didn't even read the card before giving it to me." Don't be That Guy.

Cheap Trick

Valentine's Day does not have to be expensive. But if you dial down the extravagance to save money, then you should crank up the romantic sentiments to save face.

"He took me to dinner at a Wendy's drive-thru. We didn't even go in and sit at a table. Valentine's Day dinner in a car. Yay."

Awful Accessories

Hopefully, you know better than to pick something that requires you to guess a correct size, but choosing accessories instead may not be as simple as you think. Take a note: Diamond stud earrings when she doesn't have pierced ears, a necklace with the wrong birthstone, and a pair of bunny slippers are all great



gestures that miss the mark.

"He gave me a cheap, leather purse that was so hideous I was embarrassed to carry it."

After reading these tales, there is one other person possibly guilty of creating the *worst* Valentine's Day gift ever. It's the person who says she doesn't want anything. Don't tell your sweetheart not to make a fuss only to be disappointed later when they do exactly as instructed. So don't do that. And don't believe that. If you secretly want to receive a Valentine's Day gift, then drop that hint (in a big way). And if your love tells you she doesn't want anything, then surprise her with a little something anyway. Even a card with sweet nothings in it is better than, say, ..."NOTHING!"

"Bipolar disorder can be a great teacher. It's a challenge, but it can set you up to be able to do almost anything else in your life."

—Carrie Fisher, 1956-2016



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Don't Be a Cheapskate

Authorities arrested a Florida woman they say cut her boyfriend because he wouldn't pay for her to have her hair and nails done for her birthday.

Fort Myers police say 32-year-old Crystal Garlin was upset and grabbed a knife as they argued. Police say her boyfriend cut his wrist trying to take the knife away during the Friday evening scuffle. He declined medical treatment.

Garlin had a different story for police. She says there was an argument outside the home with a relative and that her boyfriend tried to break up the fight, then locked the house and left. Garlin said he cut his hand later trying to climb through a broken window.

She was charged with battery causing great bodily harm and released. After this, maybe Ms. Garlin will move on to someone that's not such a cheapskate.



"It is a popular delusion that the government wastes vast amounts of money through inefficiency and sloth. Enormous effort and elaborate planning are required to waste this much money."

— P.J. O'Rourke



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A Blueprint for the Future

Continued from page 40

Only diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, for instance, are harder stones than granite. Most limestone has a uniform texture that ages gracefully over time to a nice patina.

“When we talk about natural stone, there aren’t many products more sustainable, especially compared to man-made,” says Steele Crissman, Vice President Sales and Marketing at U.S. Stone Industries in Kansas City. The company is a quarryer, fabricator, and distributor of Kansas limestone with roots that go back to the 1930s.

The green aspect starts with how stone is procured. “We’re taking a natural resource and not doing anything to it with chemicals. We’re using some diesel fuel, some water, and some electricity to cut it out of the ground. That’s it,” Crissman says. “From extraction to production to shipment, we’re pretty earth-friendly.” The stone is a high yield resource with not a lot of waste. What doesn’t end up on a

job site doesn’t end up in landfills either. It’s crushed and used for gravel fill or concrete aggregate. Even stone from torn-down buildings can be repurposed.

Stone companies work with masons, builders, homeowners and/or architects in the design and budgeting process. An architect who had submitted plans to Leawood for a new senior development originally included manufactured stone in his specs. Although the city doesn’t have ordinance that specifically prohibits manufactured stone, natural stone is enthusiastically encouraged. The architect went back to the drawing board and replaced pre-cast stone with natural, working with U.S. Stone Industries on sourcing the materials.

Economics, of course, is a major driver in such decisions. However, while some builders propose manufactured stone because they’re concerned with the bottom line, Leawood city officials are more concerned about the durability of the product, what it will look like in 10, 20 or 50

Photo courtesy of U.S. Stone Industries



Charles Schwab corporate office – Cottonwood Kansas limestone

years’ time and how a remodel or an addition down the road could affect a building’s overall aesthetics. With natural stone, they’re assured the material is going to be around and it’s going to look the same.

It helps cities like Leawood that prices associated with natural stone are going down. Marketplace efficiencies have made initial cost less of a factor than in the past. Advances in quarrying, processing technology and machine automation allow fabricators to cut faster and more

consistently. The results are falling square-footage costs that are enabling natural stone to be more competitive with man-made. “Our job is to make that case to people and use the experiences of Leawood, Mission Hills, and other cities to show them the value,” says Vanessa Cobb, a project manager with U.S. Stone Industries.

In the region, Leawood was one of the first cities to back off manufactured stone, Klein says. Now other cities are starting to do it as well.

The nearby Kansas City suburb of Mission Hills has issued some of the most comprehensive design guidelines in the country. Natural stone is the material of choice for this country club community of single-family homes that Forbes ranked third in its list of most affluent neighborhoods in the U.S. just a few short years ago. Synthetic materials and those that attempt to simulate natural stone are discouraged. According to Mission Hills guidelines, natural stone plays an important role in a “home’s ability to ‘fit into’ its neighborhood context” and reflects an intention to building a community of permanence and quality. “It’s all about property values,” says Crissman.

“It ensures somebody doesn’t come in and put up some crazy modern structure that doesn’t go along with the more traditional brick and stone homes or put in something too cheap.”

Says Leawood planning official Klein, “Going and encouraging builders to use natural stone is definitely the direction the city is going on and it’s worked out well.”

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Advice from an Old Farmer

Continued from page 33

- Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.
- The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.
- Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.
- Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.

Twins Delivered Minutes Apart Have Different Birth Years

Twins delivered 10 minutes apart at an Glendale, Arizona, hospital over the New Year's weekend have different birth years.

Phoenix TV station KNXV-TV reports that parents Holly and Brandon Shay welcomed their first son, Sawyer, into the world at 11:51 p.m. Saturday at Banner Hospital.

Their second son, Everett, arrived one minute after midnight on Sunday.

The father joked that Sawyer will tease his brother about being the older sibling.

The same thing happened over the New Year weekend in San Diego.

Twin girls born at Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women & Newborns were delivered at 11:56 p.m. Saturday and at the stroke of midnight on Sunday.

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"We use them when the dishwasher is not on site. Works great, no return trips."

Jeremy Williamson, SFA
 Granite Shop Manager
 Kitchen Craft Inc.
 Osage Beach, MO



The E-Z Dishwasher Bracket attaches to the cabinet with wood screws, as well as to the countertop with impact absorbing adhesive caulk or silicone. It is made to accommodate virtually any dishwasher on the market and may be installed prior to or after countertop installation.

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Michael Peay, a veteran home builder with 30 years of experience that includes hundreds of kitchen installs, was continually confronted with a nagging problem—mounting the dishwasher. Out of frustration, Michael Peay invented and patented the solution.

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Installation Solution

Can \$3.98 solve this costly return trip? The answer is YES! It is estimated that it could cost nearly \$200 in time, labor and fuel to pull someone off another job for this one chore. There is no need for the dishwasher to be on site and you can install before or after the countertop is installed. And it is designed to fit all standard dishwashers and install them correctly.

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