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*2007 Marble Institute of America
Pinnacle Awards*

The Stone Floor

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Outdoor Kitchens

High Gasoline Prices Help Fuel Boom

Marble

*Beautiful Veining Can Make Marble a
Versatile Choice*

Stone Complimenting Art

Natural Stone Q&A



Granite *with* Spice

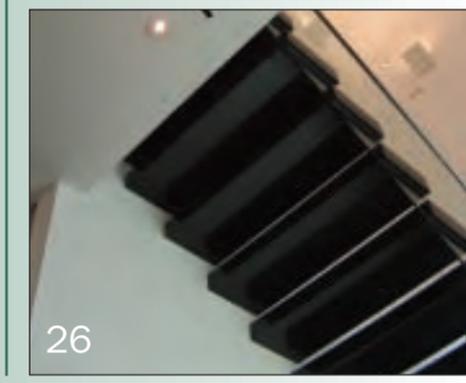
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Cover Photo

Private Home • Minnetonka, MN
2007 MIA Pinnacle Award of Merit
Twin City Tile & Marble Company
Importer, Fabricator, and Installer

For more details, see the
"Winners Circle" article on page 6.



From the Publisher

From time to time natural stone comes under attack from the producers of competing materials. Over the years, the focus of the attacks have ranged from stone being hard to care for, to stone emitting dangerous levels of radon gas, to stone being too expensive, and on and on. One of the traditional talking points utilized by marketers of these competing materials is that natural stone is not as sanitary as man-made materials, and even worse that natural stone may harbor bacteria that can infect your food. This is being said even though stone has been used in food preparation for thousands of years.

Fortunately, these attacks have been proven to be either misleading or inaccurate. Despite this fact, companies that produce competing products continue to hammer these falsehoods into the minds of the public.

First in 1999 and again in 2006, the Hospitality Institute of Technology (a research, consulting and education company that promotes correct and operationally effective food science and quality knowledge and application) conducted research looking into how stone compared with these competing surfaces with respect to cleanability. The 1999 study pitted granite against 6 competing surfaces. All of the surfaces were contaminated with e-coli and then washed and rinsed. They were later cleaned with a 10% solution of household vinegar. After the initial washing and rinsing, granite ranked #1 with respect to the greatest reduction in bacteria counts. The 2006 study compared marble, granite, and engineered quartz surfaces. Again, the results were favorable to marble and granite. Dr. Snyder concluded that "there was no statistical difference in reduction after wash and rinse for any of the four surfaces."

An important thing to remember when selecting a material to put in your home is not to believe everything you hear, conduct your own research and choose a material whose appearance and performance are pleasing to you. Don't allow yourself to be frightened into selecting a sub-par material that isn't exactly what you want.



Garen P. Distelhorst
Publisher
Marble Institute of America

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Beauty is Stone Deep for MIA Award Winners

By Amanda O'Mahony

Marble Institute of America 2007 Pinnacle Awards

Stone design and fabrication is one of the more complicated arts in kitchen and bath design. When fabricators have their noses to the grindstone, however, their precise craft can add a stunning effect.

To reward the difficulty of this work, the Marble Institute of America recently held its annual awards luncheon to celebrate the winners of its 2007 Pinnacle Awards competition.

The competition is open to all MIA-member companies around the world.

An independent panel of judges was appointed by the MIA board of directors, including two Nashville-based architects, Marion J. Adamson of Gresham Smith and Partners, and Wesley Petrouske of Architectural Affiliates, as well as former MIA president Ken Krebs, OHM International,

and Charles Muehlbauer, the technical director for the MIA.

The projects were evaluated based on excellence in design and implementation, quality, workmanship and suitability of materials in compliances with the MIA standards defined in its *Dimension Stone Design Manual*.

Project teams needed to include at least one member of an MIA company, and all projects submitted needed to have been completed between 2004 and 2007 in order to be considered for the awards. Eleven companies and designers won awards in a variety of categories, including "Residential Interior of Exterior," "Renovation/Restoration of Merit," "Renovation/Restoration of Excellence" and "Commercial Interior." According to MIA, awards were presented to projects



The winning bath remodel by Millennium Stone features Paonazetto marble flooring and walls, and took only two weeks to complete. Seventeen slabs of book-matched marble are positioned to create a mirror-like optical illusion

whose “beauty, creativity, ingenuity and craftsmanship exemplify professional mastery in the use of natural stone.”

Reflection of Excellence

The winner of the “Residential Interior/Exterior Award of Excellence,” Ralph Signorelli of the Port Chester, NY-based Millennium Stone Ltd. has worked with natural stone for more than 20 years. For this project, he and his team got personal as they went to work creating Signorelli’s own dream bath, one that would show off his and his wife’s taste in fine Italian marble while acting as a testimony to the craftsmanship that is possible designing with natural stone.

The project – which was completed in two weeks – impressed the judges, who noted that, “The design used details rarely seen and the stone drew additional interest.”

The ABC Stone Trading company was brought in to supply stone for the project.

Originally, the area for the bath was too small to accommodate the design, so the firm chose to capture space from the bedroom. The exterior wall was pushed out and a dormer was added to the roof for additional space.

The total area of the new space for the bath was approximately 384-sq.-ft. The designers chose to construct a radiant

heat system to counteract the cold marble floor. Paonazetto, a rare marble from Italy, was used for the floors, walls, moldings and trim of the bath. Seventeen slabs of marble were used in a book-matched pattern, creating the illusion that each stone’s edge is set against a mirror.

The slabs that were not used for the flooring were cut and used for the shower seat, ceiling, floors and jambs as well as the base moldings and the deck for the jetted tub. Wood paneling, an oversized window and cream-colored walls add warm tones and provide contrast.

Piece by Piece

For the St. Paul, MN-based Twin City Tile & Marble team, the remodeling of a private residence in Minnetonka, MN, including the addition of a master bath area, was completed in an astonishing 10-week period. According to the judges, “the design is simple and clean, which can be very unforgiving of errors, none of which were found.”

The project garnered the firm one of two awards of merit in the “Residential Interior/Exterior” category.

One of the oldest members of the MIA, Twin City Tile & Marble facilitated the importing, fabricating and installing of the stone from Italmarble Pocaï, the stone supplier. Criteria Architects designed the layout of the project, and Joe Lawler was brought in to contract the work. Using 28 book-matched slabs of Calcutta Gold marble measuring 1,180-sq.-ft. on its own, the bath took a total of 456 fabrication hours just on the floors and walls.

Ultimately, the bath was designed to allow space for a toilet, bath, bidet, shower, vanity room and Japanese soaking tub. Each piece of marble had to be measured, fabricated and installed before the next piece in a lengthy and challenging process.

Following the clients’ guidelines, the bath is designed to have the look of a clean, European spa and incorporates a mud set floor beginning beneath a radiant heating system which was constructed beneath the marble.

This project has skeletons: the installation of the walls incorporated copper wire and plaster, while the vanity top floats on a steel frame. According to the company, Twin City Tile specializes in fabricating natural stone and other engineered quartz products as well as hard tile installations. The fabricators also apply functional and decorative epoxies, urethane coatings and toppings for a wide range of projects, as shown neatly in this project.

Tualatin, OR-based Columbia Stone won the second of two awards of merit in the “Residential Interior/Exterior” category. The company also won the “Residential Exterior Section” category, for a designed and installed project on the exterior of a private residence in San Francisco, CA. The project used French limestone and took five years to complete. The panel of judges called it “a masterpiece.”

Other winners included Intrepid Enterprises of Harvey, LA; Carrara Marble Company of America, in City of Industry, CA, which was presented with a special “Pinnacle Award of Excellence” for its work on a new 12-story building in Los Angeles; Carnevale and Lohr of Bell Gardens, CA, which won the “Commercial Interior Award of Excellence” for its work at Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles; and Rugo Stone of Lorton, Virginia, which won the “Renovation/Restoration Award of Excellence.”

The Marble Institute of America has been a leading information resource and advocate for the natural stone industry

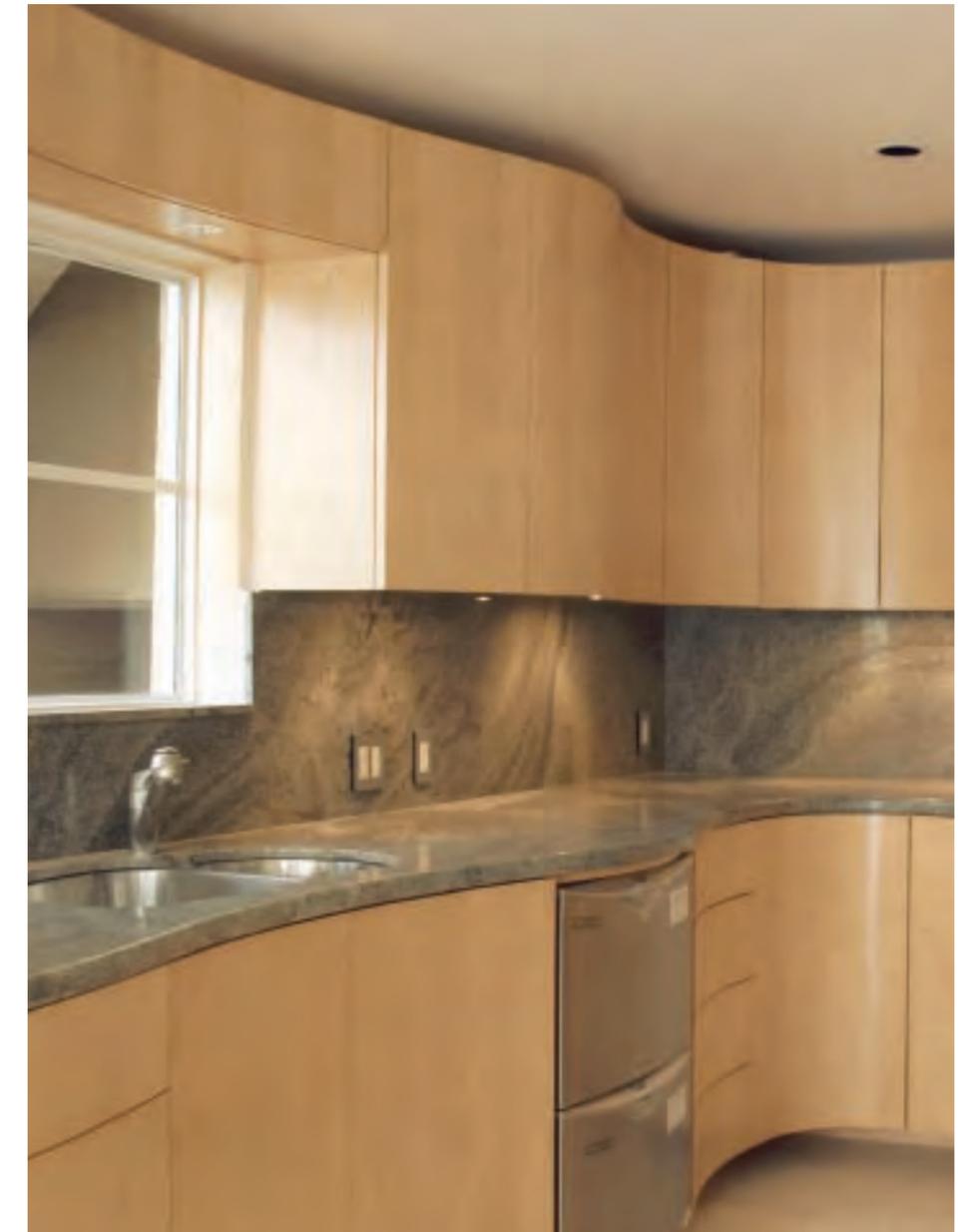
for some 65 years. MIA’s interest goes beyond those committed to workmanship and ethics within the industry; it also produces many educational materials on the subject.

Members of the MIA include limestone, granite, marble, sandstone and other natural stone producers and quarriers, distributors, fabricators, contractors and installers across the globe.

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Remodeling this master bath was no easy task for Twin City Tile & Marble. Taking a total of 456 fabrication hours for the floors and walls, the project required that each piece of stone to be measured, fabricated and installed before the next piece in the process.



Winner of a 2006 Pinnacle Award of Merit, Millienium Marble and Tile of Pembroke, FL, incorporated the motion of the pattern in the Juparana Mahogany granite, with the motion of the curved cabinets.

The STONE Floor

By Heather Adams

Strength, Beauty and Performance Under Foot

Created by nature and enhanced by man - natural stone is a building material unlike any other. Rich in color, tantalizing in texture and virtually indestructible, it is the perfect addition to any home. Stone used as a flooring material is not a new concept and for centuries it has been found underfoot in dwellings spanning the globe. From the narrow cobblestone streets of Europe to the walkways of New Orleans, stone has been laid before us as a pathway on which we journey through life. Many of these antediluvian examples remain in existence today more beautiful than ever with the marks of time written upon their faces. Entire markets exist merely to recreate the enduring beauty of these authentic time worn tiles. With this in mind, it is hard to believe anyone would shy away from the use of natural stone on the floor today.

Myths invariably persist and are often the driving force behind decisions to select a different flooring material. Common misconceptions portray stone as unaffordable, difficult to maintain or unable to withstand the rigors of daily abuse. In actuality, stone is unrivaled in its strength, presence and aesthetics, especially when used upon the floor.

With simple routine care and minimal maintenance, its beauty will grow exponentially over the years.

The selection process

There is much to consider when choosing stone for your home's flooring. It is a process that should be not taken lightly since this formidable material will become a permanent addition to your dwelling. Here are a few tips to get you on your way.

The planning stage

To ensure a pleasing outcome, it is imperative to begin the design process by asking yourself several specific questions before rushing out the door to the nearest tile center. Questions like ... What is the main purpose of the room in which the tile will be used? What kind of foot traffic and or abuse must it endure? What is the general impression or style I wish to convey? What other objects will be placed in the space? Once you have answered these questions, activate your visual creativity by looking at books and magazines that feature attractive interior designs. Don't limit yourself to those that simply illustrate the material you plan to use; what you're seeking at this point is strictly conceptual ideas. Search for specific details in the way the material has been laid out and how that impacts the room's visual appeal in order to discover what interests you.

Shopping for stone tile

Once you arrive at the tile center, it is easy to become distracted, so stay the course. Take it all in, explore, but don't let yourself become overwhelmed. Keep in mind that certain stone tiles have the ability to evoke a specific style, therefore limiting your preliminary selections to those that reflect the look of your home is important. This will not only be a time saver but it will halt the frustration associated with trying to force a square peg into a round hole. Even if you experience love at first sight, it is wise to take at least two other options home with you. The opportunity to compare them once you're there will help fuel confidence in your final decision.

Some popular options

Subtle & Serene:

Limestone and Travertine

Flowing uninterrupted across a room like the sands of an untraveled desert, travertine and limestone provide the perfect subtle backdrop for those wishing to highlight more prominent elements within their space. Exhibiting a fairly uniform surface with regard to color, veining and texture, limestone is the ideal choice for a subdued appearance,



fitting for the pared down minimalist setting. Formed from the sedimentary process underground and in riverbeds, you will often find characteristic seashells and fossils embedded in the surface and while it shares a color range similar to that of travertine, you will find it commonly devoid of holes and depressions. Milky whites, golden yellows, sandy beiges and smoky blue/grays are the predominant shades found within this stone's color palette.

Travertine is an exquisite flooring material that has the innate ability to transport you to another time and place, ideal for instilling Old World ambience. Its surface variation can be somewhat more diverse and rugged than limestone's, so be certain to evaluate your choice well prior to purchase. Travertine's color palette normally resides within the confines of earth tones, beginning with the palest hues of ivory and transgressing down through the rich deep shades of gold, red and brown. Its predominate color trait is that it actually never appears as one solid color, but instead the perception is swayed by inherent tonal variations and veining characteristics. Only after laying out a sizable portion of tile do you begin to perceive the overall coloration.

Rustic & Earthy: Slate

Slate is the quintessential choice when striving for a visually exciting floor. Colors and textures are so vivid they almost leap up at you. Rugged cleft surfaces invite you to kick off your shoes and experience the rough texture beneath. Notorious for its ability to withstand abuse, slate is ideal in areas where high-traffic and dirt collide.

With its deeply saturated color palette and high relief surface, slate is more suitably used where it is not in competition with rival elements. If you love the qualities of this stone, but wish to redefine its image, try a solid shade with a calibrated or honed finish. This will provide you with an even surface whose muted tones reflect an earth-like foundation, on which you can build any style. At home in areas such as the foyer, hallway, bathroom, and mudroom, this durable giant will add appeal to an otherwise uninspiring space.

Polished & Elegant: Marble and Granite

Reminiscent of a shallow reflecting pool, polished marble and granite lie unwavering, mirroring the world around them. Adding a rich, elegant touch to any space, these stones nearly always evoke formality. From the classic marble pattern of black

and white checkerboard to the intense drama of a vibrant Chinese red granite, these sparkling stones are guaranteed to make an unforgettable statement.

When considering marble as your flooring material, remember that certain types exhibit a heavily veined surface structure and can, at times, overpower a space. Treat it like slate and choose a location where its immense beauty can be enjoyed without restriction or competing elements, or seek out a marble with less variation. Tightly grained granite exhibits less movement in its surface pattern than many marbles, therefore can normally be used without fear of antagonizing the surrounding environment. Its extreme durability offers fewer care and maintenance concerns than marble when used upon the floor.

It is always important to remember that polished stones become extremely slippery when wet and marble will bear the scars of use in high traffic locations. For improved wear-ability, consider selecting a honed or brushed finish, as it will add traction to your step and ease the burden of maintenance.

Aged to Perfection: Antiquated Stone

Unequivocally, one of the best choices for flooring is an antiquated stone.



Because its beauty lies within the fact that it has already been worn, battered and roughed up, there really isn't much that you can do to destroy its charm. Its earthy, muted tones are masters of camouflage when it comes to hiding dirt, and its distressed appearance is ideally cast for depicting an authentic reproduction of many Old World periods. Options for this genre include obtaining genuine antique tiles that have been carefully reclaimed from their former applications or the more affordable option of locating reproductions of these authentic beauties.

Stone characteristics to consider

Color

If there is one single element that can instill a specific mood or feeling in a space, it is most definitely color. Color can make a very powerful statement, so

the selection process must not be taken lightly. Take cues from your surroundings, such as your choice of artwork, furniture, clothing, paint and so on, and you will probably have a good idea of what you are drawn to. You may be a lover of rich earthy naturals, quiet neutrals, or maybe you're mad about bold daring colors. Sticking with something you already feel comfortable with will be much safer than deciding to make a sudden and drastic change, especially when it involves something as permanent as stone.

When choosing color, keep in mind that light colors recede making a room appear larger whereas dark colors advance, making a space seem smaller. In warm sunny climates, light colors will evoke feelings of coolness, while going darker in colder areas will instill a feeling of warmth. Be conscious not to stray too dramatically

one way or another, as too light or too dark may not be the ideal for your particular design.

The color range and surface variations found within natural stone products can vary dramatically depending on the stone type and the location of the quarry. While granite, marble and limestone tend to be more consistent from tile to tile, slate and travertine will typically exhibit greater disparity. Regardless of which stone you choose, you should expect diversity in color. These inherent variations are one of the endearing and truly fascinating qualities that draw us to stone.

Size, shape and pattern

Most stone tiles come in sizes ranging from tiny mosaics to enormous two and three foot squares. The most commonly available sizes include 4-inch, 6-inch, 8-inch, 12-inch, 16-inch, 18-inch and 24-inches square. Thickness varies from 1/2 to 3/4 inches and as a general rule, as the overall size increases so does the thickness. The most important aspect of tile size is its scale and proportion, or its relationship to the space in which it exists. The goal is to be able to observe your selection in its intended placement and say to yourself...not too big, not too small... just right. Forget the "rules" as small spaces don't necessarily require small tiles, nor do large spaces require large tiles. The best size is determined by evaluating each room as a separate entity, and determining what size flatters it best.

Shapes abound from the routine geometry of squares, rectangles, triangles, hexagons and octagons to the more exotic profiles of diamonds and rhomboids. By combining size and shape you create pattern. Square tiles can be placed in a simple jack-on-jack grid or offset to create a running bond. Square tiles are also used for diagonal runs. Rectangles can be placed at angles to each other formulate a herringbone pattern or be off-set in a brick fashion. Diamonds or rhomboids, when blended in various color hues, offer a distinctive harlequin motif. Triangles are used to create chevron patterns while octagons allow for the introduction of a contrasting tile or decorative insert. Shape and size are not the only aspects that contribute to creating pattern, as color can work visual magic as well. Mixing color results in the likes of checkerboards, gingham, plaids, pin stripes, tumbling blocks and a variety of random looks.

Not only does pattern add interest in a room, but it can also fool the eye into



thinking the dimensions are not as they appear. Quite often, a bold pattern will make a room look smaller as a large but jointed tile in a single tone will extend the visual expanse. In addition to size, shape and color to produce pattern, the interplay of light and dark, soft and rough and glossy and matte will offer significant interest as well. Pattern is a product of contrast and juxtaposition of varying materials which in the end is what creates the illusion. Don't allow it to overwhelm a space or compete with adjacent elements. Instead, use pattern to your advantage, to induce excitement, not headaches.

Texture & finish

Texture and finish combine to form the surface layer of something in which we can savor both visually and through our sense of touch. When it comes to stone tile, textures range from butter soft and smooth to rugged and rough. These textures affect the overall character of a tile which, in turn, affects its final appearance once installed. A rough, matte finished tile will instill a relaxed and casual mood where as a glossy tile will appear more formal and elegant. Shiny finishes emphasize clear brilliant color where matte finishes tone it down. Sparkling streamlined surfaces tend to magnify dirt as tiles with varied color and texture will camouflage it.

Reviewing your choices

Once you're satisfied with your initial design, it is time to head back to the house and observe your preliminary choices. Placing the stone tiles in the exact location of their intended use will help immensely with the decision making process. You will be amazed how your perception of a tile changes after leaving the showroom and placing it in a new environment. Your first assignment will be to reexamine the color. Many variables can influence the actual shade, such as the reflection of the paint from the surrounding walls or the glare from natural light spilling across the floor. Wood tones present in adjacent furniture and cabinetry can also cause you to view the color tones with a different perspective. Taking time to investigate, explore and play with actual sample tile applications will further boost your confidence in your final choice.

Placing your order

Once you have decided on a specific stone and style and feel confident that it will work well within your design scheme, begin making preparations to place your order. Before signing on the dotted line, you should be confident that you have asked all the right questions including – Is the tile that I have chosen suitable for the area in which I plan to use it? Does it require any special care or routine maintenance? Is the material in stock? If not, what is the lead-time? Is the sample I am ordering from the current stock or has the lot changed? Would you suggest that I order a current sample or two if this one is outdated? What is your return policy? Be sure when placing your order that you purchase more square footage than you actually need (typically 7% to

10%). This surplus will be your insurance against shortages that may occur due to breakage or waste due to cuts. A wise homeowner will order extra tiles to insure against future problems should there be a need for repairs. Chances of finding an exact match years down the line are slim to none.

Receiving your order

Once your tile arrives, take the time to inspect it. As laborious as that might seem, it will save you heartache if you encounter a problem in the middle of the installation. Be sure that the tile has not been damaged during shipment and that it actually is the material you ordered. Your tile supplier should have already taken the time to explain that stone, being a natural product, possesses the potential to vary dramatically from one tile to the next. Once this explanation has been provided, it is not uncommon for a dealer to request that you sign a disclaimer. These disclaimers generally detail exactly what you should expect with regard to normal ranges of variations and what specifically would justify a return. Because stone is extremely heavy and can shift during shipment, some minimal breakage should be expected. Many of the freight carriers that deliver pallets of stone tile only extend a few days to make claims if the shipment is damaged, and the supplier typically will not accept returns once the shipment has arrived on-site and has been noted as safely delivered. Your effort here will be well rewarded.

One last note on receiving your stone tile – a common occurrence, especially with more porous stones, is for the shipment to arrive damp. This may result in the tiles appearing much darker than the samples from which you selected. Before you panic and contact your dealer regarding a shipping error. Pull several pieces from the crate and allow them to dry. You will discover that they will lighten significantly. On the opposite end of the spectrum, often the stone arrives dusty and dry, and requires cleaning and sealing and/or color enhancing to resemble the showroom sample.

If for some reason you are not satisfied with the material once it has been received or you have changed your mind all together regarding your selection, you will more than likely face a 20% - 30% restocking fee to cover the cost of returning the shipment to the supplier. Returning stone shipments is a cumbersome and

costly job; so make sure that you have done your homework prior to placing your order.

A word on installation

Very few things have the capacity to impact the final appearance of a stone application than the skills of the tile installer. Hiring a qualified installer is therefore imperative. Unless you are familiar with the work of a particular tradesman, it is wise to interview several before signing a contract. During the interview process, ask about the number of years experience working with natural stone. It is important to note that the installation of natural stone products varies tremendously from that of ceramic and porcelain tiles. Even the most talented and experienced ceramic tile setter can struggle with a stone application. Request references and if possible see a sample of their work. Also, it is a good idea to have a rough estimate of the going rate for stone installations in your area. A quote that seems either much too high or too low should be approached with caution. Even if you have received an "installed" quote from your stone dealer, insist on interviewing the tile setter that will be doing the actual work before proceeding. If the dealer is reluctant to allow you to interview the installers, it might be wise to look elsewhere for your product. Don't be afraid to ask builders and architects if they know anything about the tile-setter that you are considering using. Don't forget...this is your money, your investment and your dreams that are at stake. Even if your building contractor is providing the installation of the material, complete the interview process with their installers. A good stone setter is an artist that will magnify the beauty of an already exquisite work of nature. You definitely do not want to skimp here!

Caring for your stone flooring

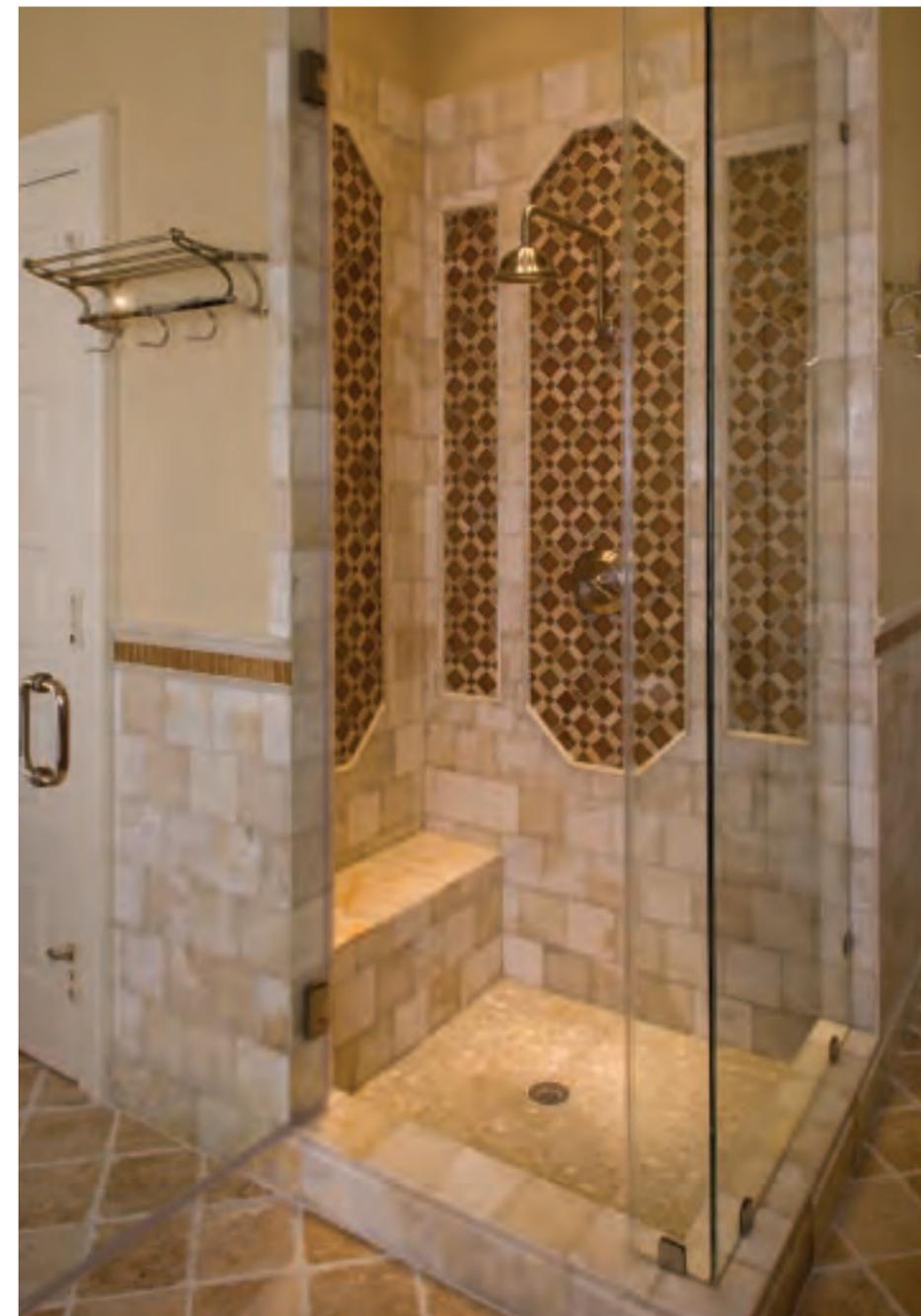
One of the major enemies for any flooring surface is abrasion, stone is no different. Wear most commonly occurs when foot traffic and dirt particles collide to create friction. Taking a few precautions to eliminate this occurrence will prevent the premature aging of your floor. Place effective floor-mats outside the entrance of each door and remember the average person must take several steps before their shoes are significantly free of dirt particles, so consider a large size mat at your main entry, as well as just inside the doorway. Next, get into the habit of dust moping routinely, preferably with a

non-treated dry dust mop. You can also simply vacuum your floors, just be certain that the vacuum you are using is in good repair and rolls freely across the floor to avoid inadvertently scratching it. Clean your stone on a regular basis with a *neutral* PH cleaner, ideally one made specifically for your stone type. These cleaners are readily available at most any home centers.

Lastly, caring for a stone floor is easy if you are informed and choose a finish that will not be difficult to maintain. The best advice is to be honest about your lifestyle, know your stone and understand its qualities and limitations prior to purchasing.

For example, you may not be thrilled with the results of a delicate polished marble at your beach house, however, that antiquated travertine will offer generations of beauty under those harsh gritty conditions. Education is the key to a successful stone floor purchase. Do your homework, be realistic and in the end, be sure and get what you love! <->

To learn more, look for the author's books "STONE" and "TILE STYLE" (Harry N. Abrams Inc. publishers - New York). These books are available through the Marble Institute of America bookstore. Visit www.marble-institute.com for information.



OUTDOOR KITCHENS



Higher Gasoline Prices Help Fuel The Boom.

With gasoline prices skyrocketing, people across America are thinking twice about using their automobiles for all but essential functions. Restaurants and retailers are suffering and we probably haven't seen the worst of it as gas heads towards \$4 a gallon and beyond. As a result, people are spending more time at home with their families and entertaining friends. More and more they are doing it in outdoor settings that include enhanced landscaping and outdoor kitchens.

According to May Jo Peterson, writing in the January 2008 edition of Kitchen & Bath Design News, “the outdoor kitchen has moved from a luxury concept to a mainstream reality, no matter where people live.” Peterson says manufacturers of cabinetry, appliances, surfaces and other components of the kitchen are taking advantage of new business opportunities as consumers embrace the concept of more outdoor meals and entertaining. “In many cases, the outdoor kitchen works in conjunction with other social areas of the home,” Peterson says. “For that reason, sometimes the best place for it is just outside the indoor kitchen. “Because most food, equipment and tableware are located nearby, this makes for easy and efficient enjoyment of the space, whether entertaining or enjoying a quiet family meal.”

Working mostly with landscape designers, companies in the genuine stone business (granite, marble, travertine, slate, limestone and other materials) are helping to create beautiful outdoor kitchens and entertainment venues. Sturgis Materials of Kansas City, Missouri has been one of the companies in the forefront of the

expanding outdoor kitchen marketplace. Owner Ed Walsh says Sturgis has been serious about outdoor kitchens for more than three years and probably has installed upwards of 100 jobs, working mostly with landscape designers and contractors.

“The outdoor kitchens can range from a simple fireplace with a countertop to full-blown kitchens with built-in appliances and more,” Walsh says. The end result can be as creative as the budget allows and usually includes a substantial amount of stone. “You can’t build a grill island out of wood,” Walsh says. Typically, an outdoor kitchen will include a grill island and escalate from there. Prices can range from \$10,000 to \$35,000 and more, depending on the grilling, refrigeration and accessory equipment selected and, of course, the landscaping.

Walsh said for about \$10,000 you can get a 72 x 36-inch grill island made of cement block and covered with thin veneer stone, a two-inch limestone top, basic stainless steel grill, single side burner and a double-door storage area that might house the propane tank. The bigger the island and

the more sophisticated the cooking equipment, lighting, and sound system, the higher the price.

While the predominant choice for indoor genuine stone countertops is granite, Walsh prefers limestone for outdoor kitchens. “Polished granite outside shows dirt,” he says “limestone doesn’t.”

“There are a lot of new products that can be incorporated into outdoor kitchens like fireplace kits and pre-made fire pits,” Walsh said. In northern climates you can even add a roof to the grill island which extends the cooking season.

Walsh says landscape designers are a good place to start when you are serious about building an outdoor kitchen. However, based on Mary Jo Peterson’s article in Kitchen & Bath Design News, mainstream kitchen and bath dealers and designers are also getting into the act. “(They are) happily (entering this market),” Peterson says, “outdoor kitchens are not going away.”

This article, in part, courtesy of Kitchen & Bath Design News. Reprinted with permission. (www.kitchenbathdesign.com)



Scheherazade Travertine, New Mexico

A genuine slice of nature.

If natural stone was part of the produce family, they’d probably call it organic.

Natural stone comes the way nature has created it over millions of years. After it is quarried, blocks of stone are cut, polished, and custom-fabricated for kitchens, baths, floors, and other residential and commercial applications. Every piece is natural. Every piece is unique.

Nothing man-made or engineered about it.

Thanks to new sources of supply around the world and the sophisticated technology that gets it out of the ground and to the fabricator at less cost, natural stone is more affordable than ever before – and in most cases less expensive than quartz surfaces and other “faux” stone products manufactured in a plant. Beautiful, versatile, affordable, durable natural stone is the natural choice for residential, institutional and commercial construction.

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*Marble:
A Versatile Choice*

There's no doubt that granite is the king of the kitchen counter arena, but don't overlook marble as a possible choice for countertops and other kitchen, bath and home applications. Traditionally, marble has been used in bathrooms for vanities, tiles, and showers, but now there is an increasing demand from the design community and from home owners to use marble for kitchen countertops.

Marble does have a couple downsides when used as a kitchen countertop. The first is that it is a calcium-carbonate based material and, thus, it is subject to attack by salt and acid. If you slice a lemon and leave it on the countertop, it may etch the material. Using a honed finish on a marble countertop is a suggestion for limiting the appearance of etching. Damage from acid or salt is not as readily discernible between the etched surface and the honed surface. Marble also tends to stain easier than granite due to the fact that marble generally has a higher rate of water absorption. There are many good sealers on the market, though, and they can reduce the likelihood of staining when applied properly.

Marble backsplashes and floors make a good complement to granite countertops in the kitchen. The wonderful soft appearance and ease of maintenance makes marble a great choice for bathroom walls, floors, vanity tops, tub decks, and showers. Marble adds a sophisticated element wherever it is used.

Marble is found in the mountainous regions of Canada, Italy, Germany, Spain, the U.S. and other countries worldwide, like Egypt and Turkey. In the US, it is quarried in Vermont, New York, Georgia and Colorado. Marble is a metamorphic rock made of limestone. When it is subjected to tremendous pressure over a long period of time, the limestone gets pressed into marble. A lot of marble is white, but it can come in many different colors, depending upon where it is quarried.

Throughout history some of the world's most important works of art and architecture, including churches and palaces, have been crafted of marble. In fact, Michelangelo frequently came to the Carrara region of Italy to find marble for his masterpieces. ⇐

See next page for another marble application.





Stone Complimenting Art

By David Uhler



Imagine a stair tower...

...three stories, thin, and stark white. Within this space is a floating stair, mysteriously hanging from the wall with no support on the ends of the treads. The stairs look like solid 4" slabs of black granite. Glass sheets become the stair rail and pierce through these granite slabs almost at the ends of their slabs. The tower walls are filled with priceless art. A feeling of museum-like quality pervades the space, leading you to contemplate the wonders of the universe.

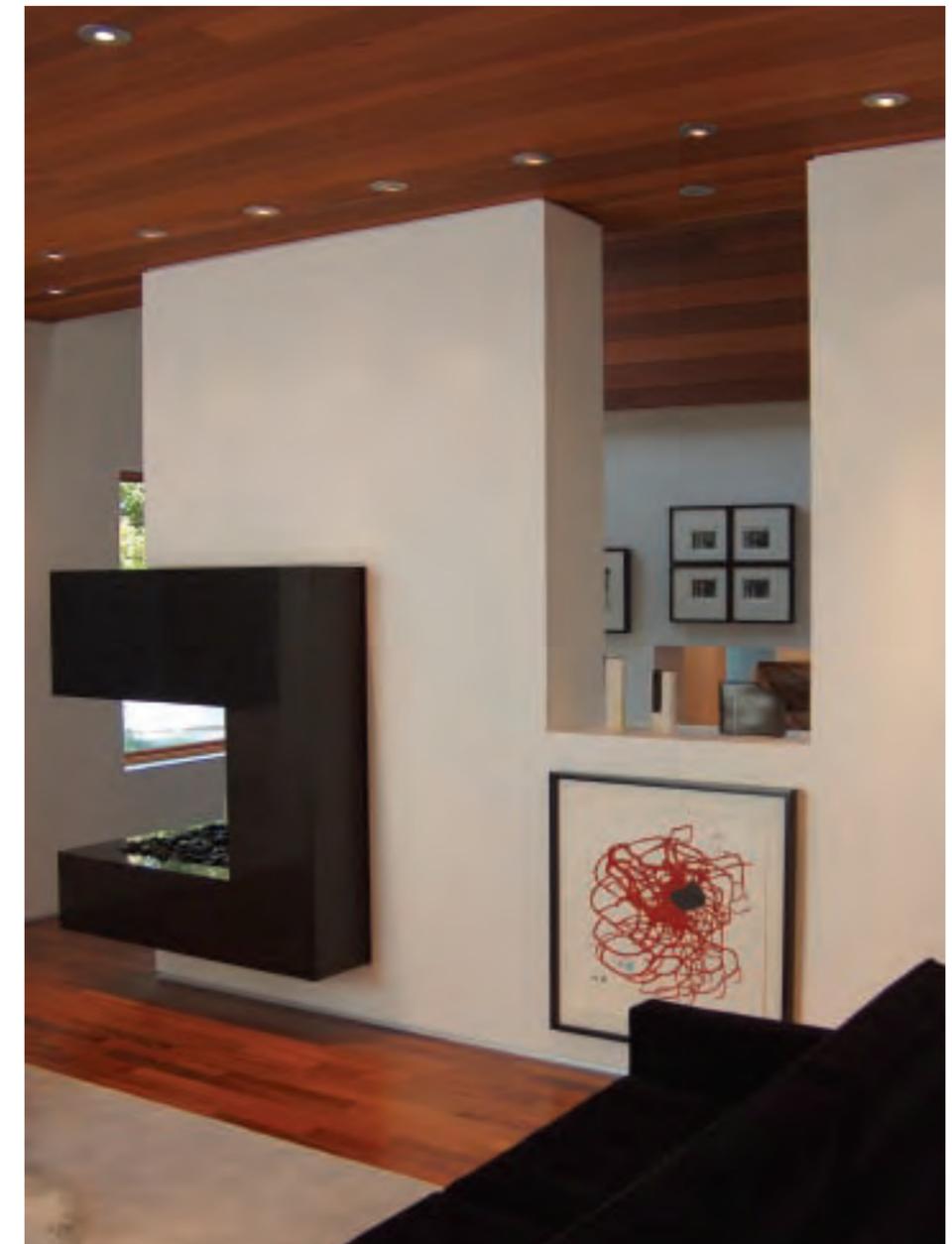
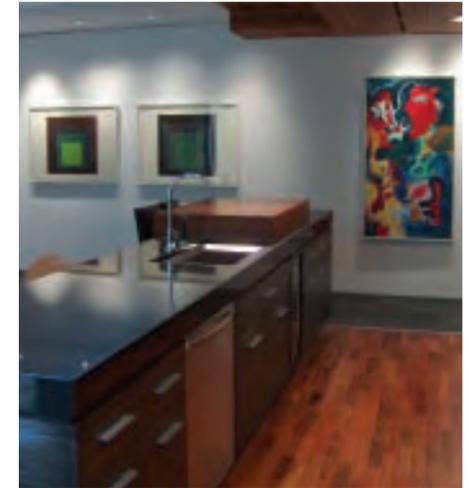
This space was designed for an art collector's home, a veritable sculpture in itself to not only dwell within, but to also house his collection of modern and contemporary art. This house was to be a contemplative space, contemporary in styling with clean lines, complementing but not competing with the art. The tower also had to follow these tenets. In order to achieve this wonderful granite staircase element, a series of design items needed to fall into place.

The stairwell became a three-story element that was formed out of concrete, glass and granite. A steel stair stringer was bolted to the concrete and a series of 2" x 12" tube steel treads were then welded to the stair stringer. This allowed the treads to cantilever or "float" out into the open space. The white painted drywall was added next. Dakota Stone Design of Fargo, North Dakota created beautifully-crafted tubes of Absolute Black granite. The slabs were mitered and cut to create a solid look in the corners of the granite instead of a joint-like appearance. Then these tubes were slid over their corresponding treads and locked into place with silicone. A gritted surface was created on the top of the tread by lightly sandblasting this side only, leaving the remaining sides polished. After the glass sheets were bolted to the tube steel by a steel plate, another granite piece was fitted over the glass plate, creating a look of only glass and granite. Each tread is roughly holding 1,000 pounds. It is a remarkably wonderful modern look.

A thin 4" landing was created in a similar manner; slabs of the same granite cover the underlying tube steel that spans the landing. Two sheets were used per side instead of one, adding a small but imperceptible seam. One sheet would have been quite dangerous and difficult to suspend from beneath for the contractor.

These edges were also mitered creating a solid 4" slab landing.

In keeping with the design theme set by the stairs, the fireplace was created to look like a massive, four foot cube of granite from which a smaller cube was extracted for the firebox. Once again, Dakota Stone cut out multiple pieces with compound miters to create a seamless look in the outside corners. Black epoxy was introduced into the small corners and then buffed smooth, creating a wonderful fireplace for the homeowner to enjoy. <=>



Q & A with Chuck Muehlbauer

Chuck Muehlbauer is the Technical Director for the Marble Institute of America.

Absolute Black Gabbro

Q: I need to know what the definition for what qualifies as granite (for polished countertops) in Texas. We have a project with Absolute Black granite that is technically something other than granite, according to a geologist, but I think it is considered granite and used as granite all the time in countertops.

A: While numerous different stones are marketed as “Absolute Black”, geologically none of them are granite. (Most are classified as gabbro, which is defined scientifically as a fine or medium-grained, dark plutonic rock consisting of plagioclase and clinopyroxene with small quantities of other, and chiefly dark, minerals. Some varieties have been classified as basalt, which is the finer grained, extrusive variety of basically the same rock composition.) As a plutonic rock with performance and behavior similar to that of granite, it does fall into the commercial definition of the granite group, and is appropriately sold as “granite” in the market place despite not meeting the scientific definition of granite. The best documents available for further discussion of this point would be ASTM C119 and ASTM C1528.

Snow Melt on Marble

Q: Does salt for snow melting cause damage or affect marble when it gets walked on?

A: Common rock salt, or “halite,” would not be aggressively abrasive to a typical marble. Halite has a Mohs’ scale mineral hardness of 2.0 to 2.5, and calcite, the building block of a typical marble, has a Mohs’ scale mineral hardness of about 3.0, so the softer salt mineral is not likely to scratch the harder rock mineral with occasional, limited exposure. Three common problems occur, however, with the application of snow melting salts. One is the addition of sand, which is sometimes added intentionally for traction, or can be transported to the marble via pedestrians’ shoes from other walking surfaces. Sand is generally quartz-based, which has a Mohs’ scale mineral hardness of about 7.0, and will easily abrade the softer calcite minerals of the marble. The second problem, which is usually associated with limestones but may also occur in lower density marbles, is that the salt-water

solution penetrates the surface pores of the stone. After the water evaporates, the salt then recrystallizes, occupying more space than it did when it was in solution. This recrystallization pressure can be great enough to exfoliate the surface of the stone. The third issue with snow melting chemicals is their attack on mortar. Even if there is no degradation of the stone surface, the mortar in the pavers’ joints will likely deteriorate and subsequently allow greater amounts of water (and salt) into the setting bed if not promptly repaired. This has led to wide scale failure of some stone paving installations.

Slate Care

Q: I am installing a 3cm slate slab countertop and would like advice specific to slate regarding cleaning, sealing, and general ongoing care. I have read some of your “care of natural stone” information, but it seems that slate may be different from marble, and certainly from granite.

A: You are correct, in that slates, like all natural stones, are unique in their properties and performance. The historical treatment of slate countertops was to rub them down with boiled linseed oil upon installation, and many in the industry still prefer to use this technique. It is popular today to use commercially available impregnators, as we frequently use on most other stone types. You may want to request that the fabricator provide you with some of the waste stock when supplying the project – occasionally you will find a sealer/slate combination that doesn’t look as you intended it to, and learning this on a scrap piece is much less of a problem than learning it on the finished countertop. Ongoing maintenance is similar to other, soft stones. Neutral soaps are recommended, and depending on what sealer has been applied, there may be a recommended reapplication interval. Slates are chemically quite inert, so etching from acidic solutions is not a big concern (slates were frequently used for chemistry laboratory table tops due to their chemical resistance). Slates are rather soft, relative to many other stones, so they may be vulnerable to scratching by utensils and jewelry.

Tumbled Stone

Q: What is the process for manufacturing tumbled stone? I am constantly asked “what does tumbled mean?” and I don’t have the correct answer.

A: A traditional tumbled surface would be achieved by placing the tiles (also frequently done with cobbles) into a rotating drum, with sand, or slightly coarser medium, and rotating the drum to “tumble” the stones. This process breaks off many of the corners and distresses the edges, giving the tiles a “rounded” and “worn” look. The degree of wear and roundness can be altered by adjusting the time (and number of revolutions) in the drum. There may be products marketed as tumbled finish which are produced by a mechanical means, and there would be some visual differences in the resultant finish.

Headstone

Q: I want to purchase a marble headstone for my husband’s grave, but I am getting a lot of flack for it. We never liked the look of granite headstones, but loved the look of the plain white marble. Am I making a mistake by wanting the marble?

A: No, it would not be a mistake. In fact, in addition to other products, white marble has been purchased by the government for veteran’s markers. Yes, the weathering durability of most granites is superior to that of most marbles, but the service life of the marble is still impressively long. About 20 miles from where I live is a American/Luxembourgish cemetery where I helped a European friend of mine do research. We looked at numerous headstones in marble that have existed from about the mid-19th century. The stones had surface deterioration, but we were still able to read the inscriptions. Based on that experience alone, I would estimate that in my climate one could expect about two centuries of readability from some marble markers.

Travertine Refill

Q: What should you use to repair filler that has come out of travertine tiles?

A: It could be either cementitious or resinous, and aesthetically, it is usually preferred to use the same material as original. The cementitious may be easier to use, although the resinous may likely be more resistant to erosion from maintenance practices. Previously, polyester based resin was used in calcareous stones, but currently we are seeing epoxy based resins used almost universally.



4" Absolute Black granite countertop
California Gold slate floor

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Architect: Criteria Architects
Book-matched Calcutta Gold

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Classic silver travertine tile. (background photo)
Photo courtesy Harry N. Abrams Inc. –
Stewart, Tabori & Chang publishers.
Rustic silver travertine. (veined stone)

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Project Name: Stone Steps
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 Sun Valley, CA
Antiquated stone tile.

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Designer: Heather E. Adams
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Designer: Heather E. Adams
Stone Supplier: Palatial Stone
Slate tile.

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Walker-Zanger
Honed marble floor in front of fireplace.

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Designer: Heather E. Adams
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Slate tile.

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Project Name: Private Residence
Stone Supplier, Fabricator, and Installer:
 Marbled Design International, Inc.
Photo Credit: Mike Levy

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Stone Supplier, Fabricator, and Installer:
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 Marbled Design International, Inc.
Photo Credit: Mike Levy



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Photo Credit: Lydia Cutter Photography
2CM and 3CM Calcutta Caldia marble countertops
and full-height backsplash.

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California Gold slate floor

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Project Name: Private Residence
Stone Supplier, Fabricator, and Installer:
 Marbled Design International, Inc.
Photo Credit: Mike Levy

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