



2022 Pinnacle Awards of Excellence



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Congratulations to our winners.



Thank you to all who entered.



Recognizing Excellence in the Natural Stone Industry

AWARD

PAGE

Grande Pinnacle Award4-5

An exclusive Grande Pinnacle award, sponsored by Marmomac, is given to the best project across all categories. This award is bestowed upon the Natural Stone Institute member company and also includes a trip to Marmomac in Verona, Italy for the architect or designer of record for the project.

Pinnacle Awards of Excellence 6-23

Natural Stone Institute's prestigious Pinnacle Award honors stone companies around the world for projects that stand out above the rest.

Natural Stone Scholarship..... 25

The Natural Stone Scholarship was established to provide educational opportunities for aspiring fabricators, installers, or administrative apprentices interested in furthering their careers within the natural stone industry.

Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship..... 25

The Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship recognizes Natural Stone Institute members with a strong passion to grow their career within the stone industry. Applicants are considered who have not yet had the opportunity to attend one of the key industry events: TISE, Coverings, or an annual Natural Stone Institute Study Tour.

Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year 26

The Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year Award is designed to recognize the skilled individuals who craft and install stone and train the young people who are the future of the natural stone industry. There is nothing more important than excellence in craftsmanship to get the most out of nature's finest and most beautiful building material.

Women in Stone Pioneer Award..... 28

The Women in Stone Pioneer Award recognizes an advocate within the stone industry for their role in recruiting, retaining, and advancing women. The recipient's performance in promoting women should be exemplary, honorable, and inspirational.

Person of the Year 30

The Person of the Year Award is an important annual recognition chosen by the association leadership team. Following the tradition of the award, this year's Person of the Year has given exceptional contribution and leadership to Natural Stone Institute, as well as mentoring and guidance to its executive team.

Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement 32

The Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement was established in 2003 to recognize an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the natural stone industry and Natural Stone Institute. The award is named for Marble Institute of America's long-time technical director, the late Vincent R. Migliore, who was the first recipient.

David Fell Spirit of Service Award 34

The David Fell Spirit of Service Award is presented to a company and/or individual who participated in the Gary Sinise Foundation R.I.S.E. program to recognize their efforts for demonstrating the qualities and characteristics of leadership within their company, the community, and beyond.



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Disclaimer: Images and notations of project team members presented herein have been supplied to the Natural Stone Institute by the member company submitting the award entry. Every effort has been made for accuracy and thoroughness. The Natural Stone Institute is not responsible for errors or omissions in this documentation, which is intended to reflect the portion of a building, landscape, or other design project in which the submitting member company has been involved.



Grande Pinnacle Award

Utopia

Grand Rapids, Michigan



All photos by Epic Film Company.



The Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is home to a new and immersive experience. "Utopia" features the unique and diverse ethnic faces of women from around the world in Jaume Plensa's signature style. The expansive floor-to-ceiling walls are 6.1 m x 27.5 m and made from Blanc Absolute marble. No single piece is identical to the next. Grounded and permanent, the art installations' challenges and execution were only surpassed by its ultimate presence and natural beauty.

Efforts required early engagement at the project's most critical time and helped the artist appreciate the limits and opportunities of the pristine white marble. Working closely with the entire project team and sculptor, PICCO's considerations for material extraction and handling, cubic geometry studies, stone engineering, installation methodology, fabrication approach, and logistics proved intrinsic to meeting the delicate project requirements and high standards. This included items such as custom lifting engineering for onsite stone handling, custom frame design and engineering, and coordination with 3D point cloud scans of the cast-in-place concrete structure.

The sculpture's exacting design required precision engineering and innovation with every solution. With stone panels ranging from 80 kgs to 4,200 kgs and thicknesses exceeding 700 mm, a robust but simple steel frame system was designed as primary lateral support for the stone. The sheer mass and organic shape of the panels mandated center of gravity analysis and an eccentricity review. Additionally, disc-shaped lateral connections proved efficient and saved installation time. The natural character of marble blocks was transformed physically and spiritually by the artist's vision and skill. The essence of this prominent sculpture will endure as a testament to Women & Humanity and Art & Architecture for generations to enjoy.

Judges Comments:

A very exciting and challenging project with a tremendous amount of artistic appeal. The texture and fabric of the material reminds one of fossils, for which the color matching seems quite good. Challenging details with the cubic pieces and lifting mechanisms. These were not 2cm slabs. It was all cubic material. The sheer scope and sculptural quality as an interior wall are really something we don't see much. The subtlety in the shaping and how it goes across the stones is absolutely, stunning. Impressed by the technology used to install and support the stones. The stones are front heavy in many cases and would want to topple forward. When you stand back and look at it, it's pretty amazing.

Commercial Interior

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

PICCO Group

Concord, Ontario, Canada

Stone Engineer

Other Project Team Members

PROJECT CLIENT

Frederik Meijer Gardens
& Sculpture Park

SCULPTOR

Plensa Studio Barcelona

ARCHITECT

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects

STONE SUPPLIER

R K Marble Group

STONE INSTALLER

Precision Stone, Inc.

Stone

Blanc Absolute marble





John F. Kennedy Center Hall of Nations Engraving Washington, DC



All photos by Rugo Stone, LLC.

**Architectural
Carving/Lettering/Sculpture**

**Natural Stone Institute
Member Company**


Rugo Stone 

Lorton, Virginia

Stone Consultant/
Fabricator/Installer

Other Project Team Members

STONE SUPPLIER

Euromarble 

Stone

Carrara Acqua Bianca marble

This project involved replacing 12 large 5'x5' marble panels on the existing donor wall in the building, including re-engraving the existing names as well as adding new names on the replacement marble panels.

The first challenge was to match the existing white marble as the original quarry was closed. The Rugo team found a closely matching white marble from the Carrara region and special ordered slabs for the project.

The second challenge was to match the existing engravings. The original inscriptions on the wall were hand drawn, calligraphic Roman typeface which was designed by the original carver. There is no digital equivalent for the original font and the original font had certain nuances and inconsistencies which would not be present in any computerized font.

The carving team first traced all the existing names using carbon paper, and each of the names were cut and organized in the order of appearance they would go on the new wall. Using the traced names, Rugo Stone also created a library of characters to draw the new names needed. Then all the names were transferred to long sheets of white paper. The new stone panels were set up on a temporary wall specially built for this project at the studio in the same sequence that they would go on the building. The paper drawings were then taped on the stones with the names in their respective positions for final approval and then transferred on to the marble panels using carbon paper. This process is called pouncing of letters.

After the names were pounced, master carvers carved the letters onto the marble with great care to reproduce some of the nuances and hand-touched characteristics of the engraved lettering. The letters were also painted with appropriate color to closely match the existing names.

Judges Comments:

This was a very complex project - first, in matching the stone, and second, there was no way to use a machine to help carve the letters that could replicate the style. They made templates of each letter and used them to add to the existing names. A lot of effort went into this. The replacement stone match worked really well even though it came from a different quarry. This was beautifully executed—a great achievement and very well documented in the submission. It's difficult to tell where the existing lettering stops, and the new letters start. I don't think it could have been done any better.





National Museum of the United States Army

Fort Belvoir, Virginia



All photos by Rugo Stone, LLC.

Architectural Carving/Lettering/Sculpture

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Rugo Stone 

Lorton, Virginia

Stone Consultant/
Fabricator/Installer

Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

STONE SUPPLIER

Grupimar

Stone

Absolute Black granite

For the museum dedicated to the US Army, the Rugo Stone team sandblasted, engraved, and installed the Medal of Honor wall with roughly 3,000 names, the Lobby Honor Wall with over 250 names, and the Focal Point wall with hand V-cut letters. The selected granite is the purest black granite with no tonal color range or veining, which allows expert engraving to read in a very legible manner on the reflective surface.

The engraving on this project came with several challenges. The font selected by the owner was a custom font, which was not ideal for engraving, and the height of the text was considered small for sandblasting. The size of the panels was too big to fit inside the automatic sandblast machine.

The Rugo team performed numerous mockups to test, study, and finalize the best materials and process to use to achieve the best results. The depth of the engraved letters was mocked up and an ideal depth was approved by the owner, considering the legibility of the letters and the shadows cast on the letters as light hit the stone panels. The team used a special "photo mask" process to cut and mask the fine text on the polished black stone, which had a high gloss finish similar to glass, and used very fine sandblast media for engraving.

They fine-tuned several parameters, such as the size of the sandblast nozzle, distance from the stone panel, pressure of the air to use for sandblasting, and the number of passes needed to achieve the right results, to avoid burning or piercing of the mask, and to avoid potentially causing permanent damage to the finish on the stone. Each panel was engraved in two phases to complete the engraving on large sized panels.

Judges Comments:

The work that this project took was really something. Certainly a state-of-the-art process. A wall like this may not exist anywhere else or with the extraordinary amount of lettering. The panels are enormous, and the stone was impeccably selected. Black stones are never fun to work with but the attention to detail and control measures were extraordinary. Extremely well done. Don't know how anyone could have done this better.





Venerable Cornelia Connelly Shrine

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Architectural
Carving/Lettering/Sculpture**

**Natural Stone Institute
Member Company**

Rugo Stone 

Lorton, Virginia

Stone Consultant/Installer

Other Project Team Members

STONE SUPPLIER/FABRICATOR

Pedrini Mario

Stone

Bianco Carrara Campanile marble

Giallo Siena marble

Bardiglio marble



All photos by Rugo Stone, LLC.

This small but highly artistic project was designed to honor the accomplishments of Sister Cornelia Connelly, the American-born foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a Roman Catholic religious institute.

Rugo Stone installed a beautiful 3' tall Bianco Carrara statue of the Holy Child Jesus in the shrine. Working with a client supplied digital rendering, Rugo's stone fabricator created a full-scale clay model which was 3D scanned to produce a digital model and then programmed into a CNC machine. While the CNC carving process completed about 80% of the carving, an experienced marble sculptor performed the rest of the carving by hand using hammer and chisels, especially for the most intricate details of the statue.

This shrine features raised hand-carved floral details, hand-cut letters, hand-carved relief, a small coat of arms carving, and an elegant canopy with book-matched Giallo Siena wall panels and accents of Bardiglio marble. The completion of the statue involved multiple discussions with the client to finalize appropriate finishes for each part: face and skin received a smooth honed finish; the hair received a much more textured finish; and the robe over the body received a fine finish to mimic the texture of a fabric.

Designing the support system for this project was quite challenging. Rugo Stone's team worked closely with their fabrication partner to develop a stainless-steel bracket design to be installed on the back wall to take the load of the canopy stone, while the rest of the stone assembly below was tied to the wall with stainless steel wires and plaster. 3D renderings were reviewed and approved for support systems and a pair of hidden channels were cut at the bottom of the canopy in order to receive the brackets projecting from the wall.

Judges Comments:

Complexity of the project is great. They did a really great job with the expression of the carving. The advent of CNC carving technology has improved the ability to do restoration and new work, especially in the US. The process is so exacting, and it takes out hundreds of hours of carving. We appreciated the balance of the technology and the hand finishing. The handwork is really well done. The variation in textures, particularly the robe versus some of the more textured areas, were just quite beautifully done.





Leonildo Pieropan Winery

Soave, Italy



All photos by Juergen Eheim.

Located in the hills a few steps from the walls of the medieval castle in Soave (Verona), Italy, this new winery is a dialogue between history and landscape; between contemporary forms, innovative technological solutions, and traditional materials.

Sustainability is the key word. To accomplish the project, an edge of the existing hill was increased by more than seven million cubic feet to hide the large volume necessary to the construction, letting the building fit perfectly within the environment and the surrounding landscape.

This simple concept required five years of work by the owners, the architect, and all those involved in the completion of this project, including the stone supplier.

The resulting structure of the winery develops mostly underground. It presents a single long and sinuous multi-faceted limestone façade, similar to the fascinating natural stone structures of the area and characterized by chiaroscuro effects. The trend of the jagged limestone front visually replaces an area of the pre-existing ground, wrapping the height difference between the new green roof, a raised strip of land, and the hill slope.

The material selected to create this long and sinuous multi-faceted limestone façade was Pietra di Vicenza stone with a brushed finish. Among the selection criteria were the material's durability, availability, workability, color, and particularly the specific fossilization of this stone.

15,000 square feet of cladding (2,300 pieces of stone elements), distributed in faceted columns cut by CNC, were produced and pre-assembled in large sizes to create three-dimensional prism structures that suggest a coral reef emerging from the ground.

Pietra di Vicenza limestone acquires its key role as cladding and brings the project back to its ideal state of nature through its fossilized corals and shells of marine organisms that populated the seas forty million years ago, still visible in the stone.

Judges Comments:

A lot of planning went into the design of this architecture. The whole design fits so well into the site. The local limestone really compliments the setting. From stock control, to fabrication, to the installation with really tight tolerances and complex twisting and turning geometries, everything was very well done. There are some really unforgiving sun angles in some of the photos and you do not see any lippage or warping. It's an innovative way to use thin material – almost column-like. Fell in love with it.



Commercial Exterior

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Grassi Pietre 

Nanto, Italy

Stone Supplier/Fabricator

Other Project Team Members

DESIGN FIRM

A.C.M.E. Studio

STONE INSTALLER

Progest Srl

Stone

Giallo Dorato limestone



Nicholas S. Zeppos College Vanderbilt University

Nashville, Tennessee



All photos by David M. Schwarz Architects.

The 260,000 sf Nicholas S. Zeppos College houses 335 students and features a state-of-the-art dining hall, great room, study lounges, and several other event spaces. It was designed with a red brick blend cladding, along with sandstone and limestone trims.

Stone detailing was a major area of design assist. As a masonry subcontractor aiding in stone selection, drafting, and engineering, IMS Masonry was able to devise a strategic plan to enable building schedule and sequencing and to ensure proper fit of the stone elements that added to the overall project success.

Much of the exterior is inspired by the Collegiate Gothic architecture. Native Tennessee Crab Orchard sandstone and variegated Indiana limestone were used. The Gothic style was evident in the use of stone in vertical piers, groin vault ceilings along with ogival arches. Multiple stones were carved with features unique to Vanderbilt University. Particularly unique to the Zeppos College is the 22-story tower which extends 310 feet. The upper tower is composed of slender stone column lanterns which give a display of verticality. The crown of the tower is capped with stone cupolas and topped with stone finials.

Stone arches were created from an arch profile much smaller than a loadbearing arch. This method allowed the brick masonry to cross over each arch without having to wait for the typical cure time of a traditional arch. Each stone has its own individual anchor, which was custom designed by the engineering firm. The use of the different stones with many complex angles helped portray the Gothic style architecture.

The finished product amounted to over 4.5 million pounds of cubic stone.

Judges Comments:

A really solid project. The scope is enormous, and we appreciated the different uses of stone – not only traditional ones seen in typical brick masonry construction, but elements they used to make it unique. The intricacy of the detailing, especially from a very human scale at ground level, had a balanced approach. A pleasing blend of traditional and modern uses, with intricate detailing. There is a lot of work in the layout for installing strips and bands. The ashlar piers and columns look great and compliment the more traditional trims in this kind of masonry work.

Commercial Exterior

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

IMS Masonry

Lindon, Utah

Stone Installer

Other Project Team Members

DESIGN ARCHITECT

David M. Schwarz Architects

STONE SUPPLIERS/FABRICATORS

Bybee Stone Company

Silvara Stone

STONE INSTALLER

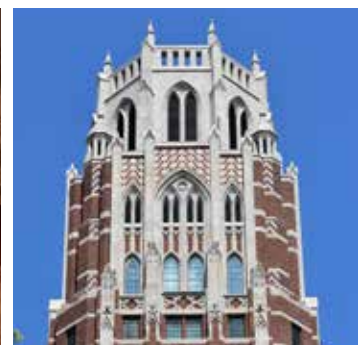
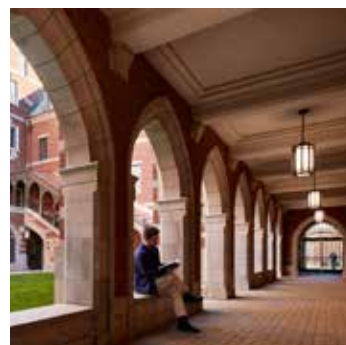
Wasco, Inc.

STONE ENGINEER

PICCO Group

Stone

Tennessee Crab Orchard sandstone
Indiana limestone





95 State Street

Salt Lake City, Utah



All photos by Martin van Hemert Photography, Inc.

Commercial Interior

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

KEPCO+ 

Salt Lake City, Utah

Installer


Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

STONE SUPPLIERS/FABRICATORS

Bestview International 

Campolonghi Italia 

Stone

Lasa marble

New Black Rain granite

The 95 State Street lobby features 220 ft long Lasa marble walls that stretch over 40 ft high and maintain a continual linear veining pattern across all courses. Before a single stone was even fabricated, it had already been assigned a specific location on the wall to ensure vein alignment over both concave and convex curvatures and recessed walls. Through value-engineering, the installer was able to decrease the specified stone thickness by 2 cm and re-engineer the attachment system to accommodate open joints while utilizing back anchors on the thinner stone. The underlayment was then painted black to add visual depth.

To maintain the pristine color of the stone in an interior installation, the installer sealed each piece prior to setting. A 50 ft by 40 ft tented clean room was constructed in the structure's basement, where each individual stone was cleaned, sealed, and suspended upside down. A HEPA filtration system and evacuation system were utilized to remove the fumes and ensure dust did not settle on the stone while drying. The next day, individual pieces were handset with exacting precision so that the wall joints aligned perfectly with the joints in the granite flooring, wooden ceiling, and surrounding windows.

Travel restrictions resulting from the global pandemic required that the team employ innovative coordination methods to review stones, including Zoom calls across continents and the use of drones. The stone installer acted as liaison between the design team and the stone team to ensure all parties were well-informed despite the unprecedented conditions.

In addition to the 8,900 SF of white Lasa marble used on the lobby walls, the project also features 13,000 SF of New Black Rain granite flooring, creating a striking visual contrast. Completed in December 2021, the project stands as a testament to what can be accomplished through the trusting collaboration of stone professionals.

Judges Comments:

It's the horizontal vein match of the stone that makes this project impressive. Any time a setter is doing a job with this kind of vein matching, they know that if they ruin one piece, they can't replace it. To manage that across this many pieces should be applauded. Even the transition from the walls to the paving – with the jointing and alignment – it was beautiful.





Fairmont Century Plaza Hotel and Century Plaza Towers

Los Angeles, California



All photos courtesy SMG Stone Company

Commercial Interior

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

SMG Stone Company

Sun Valley, California

Stone Fabricator/Installer

Other Project Team Members

DESIGN FIRM

Yabu Pushelberg

ARCHITECT FIRMS

Gensler

Pei Cobb Freed & Partners

Stone

Blue Fusion quartzite

Calacatta Gold marble

White Wood marble

And many more

A rebirth of an iconic hotel in Los Angeles becomes the centerpiece of the city. A city within a city, pedestrian walkways connect the new hotel to outdoor spaces and new living spaces. The project is set over six acres of landscaped gardens, shopping areas, and dining establishments.

This historic one square mile project encompasses the renovation of the existing hotel re-envisioned to the Fairmont Century Plaza and the construction of two new North and South forty-four story towers. The project totals 731 units divided between 400 hotel rooms, sixty-three hotel condo units, 143 North tower units and 125 South tower units. The project has been under construction for five years including the duration of stone installation over a three-year period, completed in 2022.

The completion of the project in its entirety was executed solely by one stone fabrication and installation contractor. At one time, two hundred laborers were working on the project. The vast scope of work in the hotel encompassed the guest rooms, condominium units, level one and two public areas, restaurants, bars, and a 14,000 square foot spa. The historic backdrop of the hotel, which was often referred to as the "Western White House" and served as host to every modern American president during their visits to California, set the bar high for excellence and elegance.

Both the North and South tower materials were procured from four different countries (Brazil, Greece, Italy, and China), using five different suppliers; two from Italy. Ordering material became logistically complex while in-person material inspection trips were necessary and vital to the integrity of the project. All tower bathrooms were digitally dry laid overseas prior to fabrication. The public area bathrooms required field verification and were required to have an end match design during the installation. This left no room for in-field adjustments.

Judges Comments:

A lot of coordination with the quarry with everything cut to size there, rather than on the job site. It creates complexity. The digital ability of the dry laid technology and the documentation of it were impressive. This is a relatively large-scale project with a diversity of stone material, textures, and patterns. The stonework was well done, confidently cut and installed using 350 masons. That's unheard of and impressive. Just managing a project like this is award worthy.





Boyce Residence Kitchen

Huntsville, Alabama



All photos by Ben Stark Film.

Kitchen/Bath

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Ceramic Harmony 

Huntsville, Alabama


Stone Consultant/Installer

Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

Matheny Goldmon Architecture

STONE SUPPLIERS

Antolini 

Stone

Calacatta Macchia Vecchia marble
Cedar marble

This project is a private residence for a chef/restaurant owner in Huntsville, Alabama. The couple values the quality and beauty of materials that this earth provides. The goal for this kitchen was to feature the unique characteristics of natural stone. In this case, it was Calacatta Macchia Vecchia imported from Italy. It was also important to the clients to create a high-end timeless design with handcrafted features.

The scope of the work involved an island that necessitated two slabs which meant that a book matched seam was needed. The size of the island called for mitered edges to increase its visual weight. These were cut with a 5-axis angle cutting waterjet. The sink portion of the countertop included a custom fabricated Cedar marble sink with drain boards fabricated to the client's specifications. The sink was fabricated by laminating several layers of the waterjet cut marble and then hand working it to achieve a seamless finish. Moreover, the backsplash features curved moldings to give the high-end finish and detail that the project required.

A challenge presented by this project was the pattern and flow of the material. With a material as vibrant as Calacatta Macchia Vecchia, seams that flow well visually can be a challenge.

The client was very meticulous in her wishes for how the material was laid out. Using a digital layout program with 3D options proved to be a crucial part of the process.

Judges Comments:

This kitchen entry immediately impressed due to how the veining of the stone was treated, not only on the island, but specifically in the backsplash. That is the first thing you are going to see, and they did a really good job with a wild material choice. It isn't necessarily matched as much as blended and not distracting. The sink is a really nice element. You can see it is consecutive slabs of the same material that they glued together and hollowed out. That was a big effort and a beautifully executed feature.





Volpe Residence Kitchen

Bluffton, South Carolina



All photos by Oceano Blue LLC.

Kitchen/Bath

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

StoneWorks

Bluffton, South Carolina

Stone Supplier/Fabricator/Installer

Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

Markalunas Architecture Group

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Leighann Markalunas

STONE SUBCONTRACTORS

Deluxe Stone

F.D. Atkins

Lowcountry Stone Solutions

Stone

Mont Blanc quartzite

This spectacular Palmetto Bluff home features natural stone throughout its grand interior. Adjacent to the Montage Palmetto Bluff Inn, this home will serve as a high-end luxury rental property for area visitors.

Prioritizing a beautiful aesthetic above all else, the client selected Mont Blanc quartzite throughout the home for the kitchen, wet bar, pantry, and one of the bathrooms. The client wanted to create a true "wow-factor" as visitors entered each room, especially the kitchen. The Mont Blanc quartzite is honed, not polished, and serves as a true statement stone.

Mont Blanc quartzite was installed on the island with a waterfall edge. The stone's cool white background is accented with charcoal veining, which creates a sparkling and sophisticated presence throughout the kitchen. The natural wood oven range and flooring, as well as the gray-toned cabinets, make the appearance of this Mont Blanc quartzite pop.

The stone continues across both the countertops and a full height backsplash over the oven wall. One unique feature of this project is that the full height quartzite backsplash went to the very top of the wall, not just to the top of the oven. Fabrication posed a particular challenge as the quartzite required cutting and installation around the existing kitchen windows.

StoneWorks' teams intricately measured, cut, and fit the full height backsplash around the range hood all the way to the ceiling. Two book-matched slabs were required with a precise layout to match the veins on the center seam, as well as the waterfall mitered panels. StoneWorks also took great care to not chip those very brittle mitered edges when they transported the stone to the jobsite. The end results are truly stunning.

Judges Comments:

It's a fairly simple design, but the workmanship was very professionally done. The waterfall island feature was very nice. Calming. It just looks really well done. Because of the minimalist modern design and the choice of a subtly veined material, the result is a serene space.





Expedia World Headquarters Water Feature

Seattle, Washington

**Public Landscapes/
Parks/Memorials**

**Natural Stone Institute
Member Company**

Western Tile & Marble 
Contractors

Redmond, Washington


Stone Installer

Other Project Team Members

DESIGN FIRMS

ZGF Architects

STONE SUPPLIER

Savema 

STONE CONSULTANT

Keuhn Drafting

Stone

Zimbabwe Black granite
Wuchuan granite



All photos by Benjamin Benschneider.

Expedia World Headquarters in Seattle, Washington boasts a 480-foot-long stone water feature, architecturally designed to emulate a shallow waterway. The basin includes 3,000 sq ft of CNC Zimbabwe Black granite panels and 13,000 sq ft of Wuchuan granite cobbles. The water first moves over approximately 75,000 pieces of 5"x5" Wuchuan split-faced granite cobbles; every other cobble is set at a tilt with one corner of the cobble raised to disrupt the water flow. The water then flows over 233 CNC panels which were designed to mimic the waves of the campus's neighboring landscape, the Puget Sound, with each distinctive 3'x5' CNC panel having to conjoin to its neighboring panel for a puzzle-like assembly.

Detailed crate logs were created for all 38 containers, allowing for crucial tracing for sequential pieces as necessary for installation.

In combination with the sloping design, the project was also afflicted by the Seattle rainy season, making it imperative to construct both tents and dams to prevent the water from flowing into the working area. Tents and dams were subsequently moved as each area was completed.

Surrounding the water feature is the "collar," comprised of 640 pieces of Zimbabwe Black granite measuring 2.5'x5' by 5 ft thick, weighing more than 1,000 pounds each, and installed during the COVID-19 6 ft social distancing rule. The team was able to overcome this challenge by assembling a small gantry and chain fall hoist, enabling a three-person crew to do the install while maintaining 6 ft social distance.

With an access road causing a deficit in the workable space at the logical starting point for stone installation, a survey was required to assess an alternate site. Installation began 12 pieces in from the preferred start location. Subsequently, when the road was opened, the corner installation was completed to the original starting point, which was within ¾ inches of the original calculation.

Judges Comments:

At a scale over one and half football fields, its impressive. Then getting down to the attention to detail—the turning of the individual cobbles compared to the CNC machined stones to the flamed finish on the perimeter collar, it celebrates the simplicity of black granite being used in so many ways – differing textures. Absolutely love the design. Since water is a 50% participant in how this feature looks, it's about the quality of the installation of the stone, that if not placed correctly, can create a different kind of wave. This was a really good installation job.





Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes

Spokane, Washington



All photos courtesy of Mario & Son.

Renovation/Restoration

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Mario & Son

Liberty Lake, Washington

Stone Fabricator/Installer/Designer

Other Project Team Members

STONE SUPPLIER

Bonotti Stone Trading
International

Stone

Bianco Carrara marble
Grigio Carnico marble
Bianco Altissimo marble
Azul Bahia granite

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes has graced downtown Spokane, Washington for well over a century. The church features Romanesque Revival architecture in ornate Carrara marble embellished with a variety of other stones. It includes an impressive back altar, pulpit, and bishop's chair of the high liturgical craftsmanship typical of the era, sculpted and installed by Italian stoneworkers.

Poor remodeling left this once magnificent Cathedral a victim of changing styles over the decades. The church's new leaders wanted to restore the Cathedral to its original grandeur but figured that level of craftsmanship did not exist locally and working with contractors in Italy was beyond their comfort level.

A minor repair to a damaged fresco recently set an opportunity for the church to regain its former glory. Discovering the level of local stone fabrication had been more than capable all along, the church set a series of projects in motion, including a new altar, bishop's chair, slab stairway, baptismal font, and various niches. Lastly, a shrine to Saint Peregrine was the pièce de résistance, completing the four-year project.

Slabs of Bianco Carrara and Grigio Carnico were cut in Italy as thick as 8 inches to achieve the carvings and columns.

Azul Bahia was placed as accents, complementing the magnificent European stained-glass windows for which the church is known. The project features solid turned columns, a complex domed roof in Grigio Carnico, and a baptismal font restoration and fabrication of an ornate statue niche out of Bianco Altissimo.

The fabrication features a perfect synergy of high technology, multi-axis machining coupled with the finesse of experienced hand sculpting and finishing. The result is a wealth of new work and restoration that blends seamlessly with the original architecture and style of the Cathedral while meeting the current needs of the modern church.

Judges Comments:

Appreciated the great before and after photos which proved this was incredibly a 100 percent transformation from what it was. Remarkable. We have had a lot of church or sanctuary renovation submissions lately, and for this one, I can't find anything that wasn't well done. This is an intricate combination of different materials. The story is really well documented, and they did a great job illustrating some of the onsite design challenges – not just for the stone fabrication but for the setting process. There is a really dramatic change from before and after, all with good craftsmanship.





Chase Tower Granite Cladding Repairs


Houston, Texas



All photos by Hester + Hardaway Photographics.


Renovation/Restoration

Natural Stone Institute Member Company


Camarata 
Masonry Systems
Houston, Texas
Stone Installer

Other Project Team Members

PROJECT ENGINEER

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates 

STONE SUPPLIER/FABRICATOR

Polycor 

STONE ANCHOR SUPPLIER

Prosoco

Stone

Barre Grey granite

Completed in 1981, the Barre Grey granite-clad skin of the Chase Tower needed attention. Located in downtown Houston, TX, at 1,002 feet tall, the 75-story building is the tallest building in Texas and noted as being the tallest “5-sided” building in the world. The scope of work was to address the stone cladding wind load anchors that were now also being subjected to gravity loads. This work was to be completed with the building occupied and without removing the stone panels. A through-face anchor system was designed and engineered to meet the needs of the project.

The 15,610 stone panels on the building skin would require 46,626 anchors. In addition to the new anchors, it was necessary to ensure that all horizontal stone-to-stone and stone-to-window joints were “opened,” eliminating any transfer of deadload weight to the element below. This required the removal and replacement of 42,000 linear feet of sealant and the cutting of approximately 20,000 linear feet of stone to open the joints to a minimum joint width of 1/4 inch.

Before mobilizing, an innovative offsite training program for all personnel was completed at Camarata Masonry’s main office. Numerous workstations were built that simulated the building façade—the concrete substrate, cavity, and granite cladding. The work areas were even restricted to reflect the same constraints as would be encountered on the swing stages.

Because of the dangerous nature of the work, worker and public safety were paramount. Some of the actions taken to address safety included sidewalk overhead protection designed and built to remain in place for the entire 22-month duration, a detailed swing stage plan developed to provide enhanced worker safety, and wind protocols established to determine at what elevations and stages was it safe to work, or if it was safe to work at all.

Judges Comments:

This was an unusual project, and they came up with a very aggressive solution for how to remedy the issue at hand. The public safety hazard challenges with the instability of the stone and the need to be innovative with how to meet them was tough. Deciding what to salvage, what to replace, matching old with new, and finding solutions for securing and anchoring were all huge feats that were professionally executed.





Moynihan Train Hall

New York, New York



All photos courtesy Miller Druck Specialty Contracting.

The Moynihan Train Hall project is a comprehensive plan to transform the iconic James A. Farley Post Office Building and Pennsylvania Station into a world-class transportation hub. The total renovation, ultimately expanding Penn Station's floor space by more than 50 percent, includes the construction of the new 255,000 sf Moynihan Train Hall, waiting areas, and ticketing areas for the Long Island Railroad and Amtrak.

For exterior stone areas, work involved identifying and determining present-day sources for the granites used on the original Farley post office building, as well as advice on cleaning the existing façade. Indoors, the project incorporates carefully sourced and selected stone materials and artwork that unify the entrances and concourses. Quaker Grey marble was used extensively in the Train Hall for entrance floors at both 31st and 33rd streets in a honed finish and in a sandblasted finish for the walls. For ticketing areas, white Botticino marble in a honed finish was used for floors, walls, and soffits.

The Grand Staircase is comprised of four-wide Quaker Grey marble treads and landings, each 7 ft wide, that were vein matched and carefully blended.

Renovating an historic building came with its challenges including an ambitious schedule, the need for additional quarrying equipment, outsourced quarry personnel, and an additional fabricator. The owners also required dry lays of all the stone for blending and review, which took place at two facilities in North America and one location in Italy. Every piece of stone for the project was dry laid, totaling nearly 100,000 sf of installed stone.

Despite the monumental endeavor to maintain the project schedule while conforming with all the owners / architect's demands, requirements, changes, and a global pandemic, Moynihan Train Hall opened to the public January 1, 2021, as scheduled.

Judges Comments:

An aggressive New York City restoration project of monumental scope that ranks high in implementation of design. The virtual dry laid approach and the use of the drone was an innovative use of technologies available in the industry today. There are literally acres of Tennessee marble here that are blended well. The stairway is lovely. It's hard to find any fault and the overall layout is quite beautiful.

Renovation/Restoration

Natural Stone Institute Member Companies

Swenson Stone Consultants

Hanover, New Hampshire

Stone Consultant

Miller Druck Specialty Contracting

New York, New York

Stone Supplier/Fabricator/Installer

Tennessee Marble Company

Friendsville, Tennessee

Stone Supplier/Fabricator

Other Project Team Members

STONE SUPPLIERS/FABRICATORS

A. LaCroix Granit

Coldspring

Granites of America

Marmo di Covelano

Miller Druck Italia

ARCHITECT

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Stone

Academy Black granite

Botticino marble

Madison Rose granite

Covelano Bluette marble

Quaker Gray marble





Tribune Tower

Chicago, Illinois



All photos by Jules Photography

Few buildings in America have been designed with more care to every detail of its surroundings and architectural effect than Chicago's Tribune Tower. Constructed in 1925 and designed by architects Raymond Hood and John Mead Howells, this majestic structure soars 36-stories above Chicago's Michigan Avenue. Clad in Indiana Limestone, it's an architectural masterpiece gracing the city skyline with permanence and beauty.

In 2018 planning began to convert this historic landmark from offices into luxury condominium units, all the while respecting its Chicago landmark status.

The entirety of its exterior limestone was reviewed up close, with hammer sounding of the stone surfaces used to identify deficiencies. Distress conditions including spalling, deterioration, and cracks were identified, as was stone displacement and eroded mortar joints. Ultimately, the façade conditions were documented for use in planning repairs. Some 6,000 individual pieces of limestone were replaced, including a variety of types and sizes. The stone was carefully selected to match the existing, then sandblasted in the shop after fabrication and water blasted on site to match the existing weathered finish.

Key facets of this project included rebuilding the unique, eight-story high stone flying buttresses as well as the reconfiguration of the masonry openings throughout the lower three floors of the tower's five buildings to accommodate the storefront modifications. With the goal of salvaging as much of the original stone as possible, stone was reused throughout the building and replacement pieces were seamlessly integrated into this nearly century old landmark.

Project challenges included accessing the different areas of the building, especially the towers and flying buttresses. This was accomplished using swing-stage scaffolding, mast climbers, pipe scaffolding, and aerial lifts. Additionally, many of the elaborately carved pieces of Gothic ornamentation were beyond repair and needed to be replaced so existing stones were removed and sent to the stone shop to be used as templates for carving the new stones.

Judges Comments:

A monumental project. It's an iconic structure in Chicago and must have been a daunting task to remove the exterior of this building. The sheer size and scope of the work required was complex and challenging, and they did a great job with it. Even the swing stages working at that height – that is challenging enough. The matching of the new stone to the original was exceptional. Any time you remove a stone on a building of this age, it's always a surprise what one will find. So, with that challenge in mind, this was really well done.



Renovation/Restoration

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Galloy & Van Etten

Chicago, Illinois

Stone Supplier/Fabricator

Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

Klein & Hoffman

STONE SUPPLIER

Reed Quarries, Inc.

STONE INSTALLER

Central Building & Preservation

Stone

Indiana limestone



Two Bryant Park

New York, New York



All photos by Pavel Bendov Inc.

Two Bryant Park sits at a crucial location in the city, directly between Bryant Park and Grace Plaza; however, the existing building cut the two parks off from one another and had a small, poorly positioned lobby. To better connect these spaces, the central column bay and structural slab were removed from the first and second floor, creating a double-height lobby concourse linking the two parks and pulling pedestrians from one space to the other.

Disparate textures of rugged stone and highly reflective finishes were chosen to distort and complement the natural landscapes at either side. A black and white palette consisting of Thassos marble, a large aggregate terrazzo, reflective painted aluminum, and blackened stainless-steel balances the refinement of a premium office lobby with the rustic simplicity of Thassos, the Greek island where this project's marble was quarried.

The lobby entrances are flanked by white brushed Thassos marble that flows into a luminous white ceiling surface. These large glistening slabs bring in the soft light that filters through the trees outside. To achieve this diffuse quality, a leather finish was applied that enhanced the inherent glittering of the marble while concealing discoloration and other imperfections.

Adjacent, framed by contrasting dark metallic portals, the cleft Thassos marble feature wall stands as the centerpiece of the lobby. The splitting process had never been done with Thassos marble before and required extensive research and experimentation. Every slab had a unique splitting characteristic, and each was carefully placed in relation to the other. The edges were then hand chiseled to maintain consistency between panels. The resulting feature wall is a quarry in microcosm, embodying the tension between mechanical precision and natural chaos, and reflecting the quality and proportions of the quarry from which it was mined.

Judges Comments:

This is an unusual project in that the building was renovated to create a new lobby within an existing building and the stonework is new. A split-face Greek marble was selected for the wall installation with texture and shadowing that is pretty, unique. What stands out is the control of the texture. They basically pitched everything to lines and controlled them across multiple stones, which is a traditional stone craft. Something done a lot, but not with this tight of a joint. Such control of the profiles. There were some interesting solutions to get that split face to line up with the stone next to it. An impressive combination of pneumatic splitting and hand chiseling on four sides. It's unusual to find a Greek Thassos marble in this finish.



Renovation/Restoration

Natural Stone Institute Member Companies

Euromarble

Carrara, Italy

Stone Supplier

Wilkstone

Paterson, New Jersey

Stone Installer

Other Project Team Members

ARCHITECT

MdeAS Architects

STONE ENGINEER

Gilsanz Murray Sefticek

Stone

Thassos marble



Ancestral River of Destiny

Bozeman, Montana



All photos courtesy of Ancient Art of Stone.

Residential Interior/Exterior Single Family

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Ancient Art of Stone

Cowichan Bay, British Columbia, Canada

Stone Installer/Project Designer

Other Project Team Members

HOUSE ARCHITECT

T Square Ranch

STONE SUPPLIERS

Bedrock Natural Stone

Island Stone

Monarch Stone Company

Stone

Basalt

Colorado River flats

Pennsylvania bluestone

Assorted gemstones

Clients commissioned Ancient Art of Stone to design, build, deliver, and install a unique 25 ft freestanding centerpiece fireplace for their new country home in Bozeman, Montana. An artwork which would embody the family history while incorporating the geography of this unique property.

The main structure needed to be completed in 9 months, offsite as there was no foundation nor space to begin onsite. Being the central support structure of the home, it needed heavy steel saddles accurately set into the main frame of the artwork to support the various ridge beams for the multiple roof lines. The design of Ancestral River of Destiny was inspired by the client's request for a deeply personal artwork, one intended to become a family heirloom. The building's architecture and the striking natural surroundings of the vast property informed the design.

Artistically the fireplace stone artwork mirrors the section of the East Gallatin River which flows in front of the client's home. It also symbolizes the life of their family, flowing from the past into the future.

Packing, lifting, and shipping the completed artwork across the country was a feat in thoughtfulness and ingenuity. The entire artwork was formed around a steel framework that was welded together. This contained huge threaded sleeves into which heavy capacity lifting eyes were set and from which the crane could lift.

The lifts were required to be absolutely level to keep the artwork from flexing and thus damaging the commission. The precise placement of the huge 8 ft firebox, smoke chamber, and flue inside the outer artwork with only 1/8" clearance seemed miraculous.

Initially, there was trepidation on the part of the engineers and architects, unsure that the proposed installation could work in the allotted time. Ultimately, this unique handmade natural stone commission went flawlessly from design, to build, to installation.

Judges Comments:

An unusual and highly artistic stone project with no rule of thumb to judge it on. It's very unique in that the provenance for part of the stonework is that it was meant to look like the river that flows behind the client's house. It's the cherry on top of the whipped cream! It's a different kind of stonework using what we used to call rocks, not cut stone, but it is certainly artistic and special. There is a randomness paired with certain logic in the way the project is explained. We must give credit to the creative nature and the execution of this project.





Inspiration Home

Homewood, Alabama



All photos courtesy of Triton Stone Group.

This 4,200 square foot custom build was designed with a European feel to fit into its historic neighborhood, with a cedar roof, copper gutters, and locally cut natural fieldstone to add to its charm. With outdoor views a priority, the kitchen was situated in front of a bank of windows. The kitchen rear wall is comprised of a large unobstructed bank of windows surrounded by a wall of Calacatta Macchia Vecchia honed marble from Italy. The same material is repeated with a waterfall effect on the island.

The owners' suite continues the home's European influence with marble slab fronts on the vanity and full marble slabs in the shower. The vanity consists of pure Statuario Altissimo honed marble on both countertops and drawer fronts. The deeply veined marble is repeated on shower walls with a hidden floor drain. There, a checkerboard floor, of 3"x3" Imperial Danby honed marble tile from Vermont and Italian Galaxy Grey marble offers a contrasting classic pattern.

As the powder room is often considered the jewel box of the house, the dramatic vanity was designed from a slab of Agatona gem, a semi-precious Italian stone. For the butler's pantry, inspiration from the dramatic onyx slab created an inviting niche with modern, glamorous appointments.

Keeping outdoor entertaining in mind, another pantry was situated near the outdoor living space. It does double duty as a laundry room, with the washer and dryer hidden behind casework and cabinets designed to conceal full size laundry baskets and beautiful black soapstone countertops. A covered patio with a large fireplace helps the owners take full advantage of their surroundings.

The full-service design/build firm was able to project and track cost and save clients time through preparation and excellent communication and ensured that every detail was thoughtfully crafted into a unique, timeless work of art.

Judges Comments:

We easily agreed that the execution of this residence design was pulled off extremely well. They utilized some great materials and skillfully matched and vein-matched the stone, and used it in places we don't commonly use stone – essentially, everywhere they could squeeze it in. We've never seen vein-matched stone on the drawer fronts of cabinetry, and credit must be given to the person that did that stonework. A very nice job.

Residential Interior/Exterior Single Family

Natural Stone Institute Member Company

Triton Stone Group

Harahan, Louisiana

Stone Consultant/Supplier

Other Project Team Members

DESIGNERS

River Brook Design and Construction

Danielle Balanis Design

Laurin White

Steenhaus

Jeremy D. Clark Studio

Starling Interiors

STONE SOURCES

Antolini

Vermont Quarries

Sagevan Marmi

SK International Stones India Pvt.

STONE INSTALLER

Surface One

Stone

Calacatta Macchia Vecchia marble

Statuario Altissimo marble

Agatona gem stone

Verde Persiano onyx

Calacatta Blue marble

Black soapstone

Imperial Danby marble

Galaxy Grey marble





Pacific Heights Palazzo

San Francisco, California



**Residential Interior/Exterior
Single Family**

**Natural Stone Institute
Member Company**

QuarryHouse 

San Anselmo, California

Stone Installer

Other Project Team Members

INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM

Tucker & Marks Design

ARCHITECT

Skurman Architects

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Zeterre Landscape Architecture

STONE

SUPPLIERS/FABRICATORS

Citco

Atlantide Marmi

Stone

Botticino Classico marble
Emperador Medium marble
Oro Toscano marble
Navona travertine
Thala Beige marble
Travertino Noce
And many more

A Fiesole Palazzo inspired this Renaissance-style residence in San Francisco. Henry Clay Smith, known as "The Hillside Architect," designed the historic mansion for industrialist Milton S. Ray in 1927. After a businessman purchased the 6,848 sq ft estate in 2012, it took eight years and a team of experts to restore and renovate it. The challenges were not just aesthetic but structural for the stonemasons, as anything built needed to be earthquake resistant.

A lyrical three-story Botticino Classico marble staircase winds ribbon-like up through the spine of the building. The Bay Area-based stonemasons worked on the specifications with their partner company in Verona, Italy. A 3D model of the staircase in the CATIA program addressed the challenges of fabricating large stone pieces with tight turns. The model allowed the US and Italian teams to coordinate the marble with the staircase's massive steel frame. Onsite, the crew installed the stairs precisely.

In the grand entry, an intarsia marble floor features Oro Toscano medallions etched in Emperador Medium on a field of Botticino Classico. The stonemasons also worked on the estate's many existing fireplaces, replacing them with antiques or carving reproductions in Italy. They sourced the appropriate materials for the antique mantels' inner stone and hearth installations. Other highlights of the stonemasons' interior work are the seven and a half baths, including intricate intarsia.

The villa showcases a subterranean grotto and pool inspired by ancient Roman architecture. A hand-laid mosaic set in Navona travertine creates a Neptunian ambiance. Outside, the stonemasons complemented the Italianate Garden with a courtyard centered by a fountain of intertwined dolphins. For the fountain sculptures, urns, and rosettes, they selected Thala Beige marble. Travertino Noce served as the foundation for the paving, walls, and stairs. Scala del pesce cobblestone in golden granite covers the driveway and motor court.

Judges Comments:

Incredibly extensive and complex stonework for a residence that was pulled off beautifully by both the fabricator and installer. Despite the challenges with using two teams – one in the United States and one in Italy – it was very well executed. The staircase was especially nice, with the curving aspect of the ramp and twist, done with such fine craftsmanship. In the old days, only the best stone carver in the shop would get to work on a piece like that. Nowadays, with CNC technology it may not be such a big deal, but when you isolate a piece like that and look at it in three dimensions, it's basically a bent piece of stone. What a great project.





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Natural Stone Scholarship

Megan Ognibene didn't plan to work in the natural stone industry, but while studying Interior Design in college, her first internship experience at a granite and marble fabrication facility unearthed a fascination with natural stone. After graduating, she relocated from Illinois to Wisconsin and took a job with Buechel Stone Corporation as a Stone Design Consultant in their flagship Kohler, WI design center.

Richard Schneider, Design Center Manager at the Kohler facility, believes Megan has been an inspiring employee since joining their team in 2019. Because of the company's rapid growth, Megan was first assigned to undertake designing and building four new design centers in Kohler, Minneapolis, Chicago, and San Francisco. Design, layout, and construction all needed to happen within one year. Megan did everything to achieve that goal, from showroom design to stone panel placement and coordinating costs and contractors.

Megan's key role in the company includes guiding homeowners, designers, and trade professionals through the selection process of choosing the ideal natural stone veneer, landscape stone or cut stone products. Aesthetics play a big role in this decision making, but she



Megan Ognibene
Buechel Stone
Corporation

also recommends products that will best perform in their desired application and climate.

In just two and half years, Megan's passion for her work has developed her knowledge to the point that she now helps train new employees. She assists with discussions on quarrying locations and stone types, the durability and potential limitations of the various materials they carry, and examining the different faces of the stone and how they create the unique appearance of each product.

Megan strives to ensure natural stone is in every aspect of the trades through her local level involvement in a home builders association and leadership of a home expo committee. At the national level, she is an Industry Partner in the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

Schneider says their company believes in putting the right people in the right seat and is committed to supporting their employees, even if it means they move on to new experiences. "Megan has proven to us that she has the right seat, right here at Buechel Stone Corporation."

Congratulations, Megan.

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WOMEN IN STONE EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Bre Covell's parents raised her to admire and respect the Earth. Her extended family are all painters and sculptors, and she can recall seeing how much they drew inspiration from the Earth and her home landscape. Their art warmed her heart like nothing else—until the first time she stepped into a stone showroom.

Bre began her career in the natural stone industry working at Pacific Shore Stones, starting in 2017 as an inside sales associate, and through the company's support and encouragement, she now manages their Springdale, Arkansas store.

In describing her start, Bre acknowledges this industry is male dominated. "At first, I was very intimidated by this, but the kindness extended to me by the women in the industry made that feeling seem like only a pebble in the road. These women gave me the time of day to teach me even the smallest of things, like how to use a tape measure to more in-depth things like telling the difference between Italian and Brazilian marbles."

Marco Pereira, owner and CEO at Pacific Shores Stone sometimes forgets Bre is still young in this industry, rather than someone with a great deal more time. "In just 4.5 years, I have seen Bre evolve



Bre Covell
Pacific Shore Stones

from an inside sales staff to her present position as General Manager." Pereira continues, "Bre is a reflective, analytical young woman who readily accepts challenges. The fact that she has already been chosen to take over as General Manager in our Springdale, AR location demonstrates her intelligence and ability to work with others in a constructive and challenging manner."

Bre's colleagues have high praise for her and consider her to be a remarkable young woman who combines a high level of intellect with outstanding leadership qualities, including her passion for building her own team. Bre

takes great pleasure in seeing her new sales associates begin their own stone journey and hope they feel as encouraged and supported by her as she felt by others.

"This industry has changed my life and already given me countless blessings, including a confidence in myself, knowledge, and lifelong friendships. And for that I am truly grateful." Bre adds, "I aspire to invoke a passion for stone in other women, like others have done for me throughout the years."

Congratulations, Bre.

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Brett Rugo, president of Rugo Stone, describes Timothy Johnston as a humble craftsman who stands out in a time when most people are satisfied with mediocracy. With a career spanning nearly 40 years, Rugo cannot think of anyone more deserving to receive the 2022 Craftsman of the Year award.

Timothy Johnston began his career in the stone industry in 1985 at Wood and Stone, Inc. in Virginia, as a stone carving apprentice working hand in hand with renowned master stone carver Harold C. Vogel, also a stone restoration master from Ansbach, Germany. Johnston earned the esteemed title of master carver by 1996 and worked another 10 years at Wood and Stone, Inc. in Virginia where he completed many restoration and carving projects.

He ventured out on his own as a master carver, chasing various carving and lettering projects completed under the company name Stone Graphix by Tim.

In 2018 he joined Rugo Stone where he remains a master carver, engraver, mason, and restoration specialist. In just 4 short years Johnston has provided expert craftsmanship on some of Rugo Stone's finest award-winning projects, including engraving and restoration on The Reach Donor Wall and hand cut lettering in the Hall of Nations, both at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in DC. He performed the meticulous Astor Altar restoration at Trinity Church in New York City, as well as carved a replica of the Oval Office marble fireplace for the New York State Historical Society.



Timothy Johnston
Rugo Stone



Rugo remarks: "Tim's stone carving skill is excellent, but what separates him from so many others is his in-depth knowledge of each job, each job's stone types and their limits, and his ability to provide a constant steady onsite leadership presence." Rugo goes on to credit Tim for continuously mentoring and inspiring a younger generation of stone professionals, teaching the classical art of stone carving.

Tim has amassed an impressive portfolio of restoration and carving projects ranging from ecclesiastical statues to federal monuments. He possesses an extensive knowledge of stone restoration and carving techniques and is a highly accomplished stone engraver and hand cut letterer.

Rugo has had the great pleasure of working with Tim for over two decades. "He is a true American stone craftsman," Rugo explains, "able to take directions, perform his own layout drawings, and develop his own recommendations to meet or most often exceed the expectation of the client."

Tim's commitment to his work is exemplified by his strong work ethic. Rugo has witnessed him take work home, work countless hours at night – studying plans, checking details, talking to the project managers, all so that the next day he is fully prepared to provide his best effort and complete the project with the highest standards possible. Tim's leadership and craftsmanship for carving and engraving is evidenced by the high number of complex projects that have earned Rugo Stone so many awards.

Congratulations, Tim.

"Tim's stone carving skill is excellent, but what separates him from so many others is his in-depth knowledge of each job, each job's stone types and their limits, and his ability to provide a constant steady onsite leadership presence."

"He is a true American stone craftsman able to take directions, perform his own layout drawings, and develop his own recommendations to meet or most often exceed the expectation of the client."

Brett Rugo, President, Rugo Stone

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WOMEN IN STONE PIONEER AWARD

In her letter of recommendation to award Katie Jensen with the 2023 Women in Stone Pioneer Award, Alison Mullins, Marketing Consultant for Triton Stone Group's Richmond, VA location describes their work culture as one that empowers women. "It has been apparent and clear there are no limitations for women in this company nor in this industry. Katie's leadership in this movement should not be ignored or forgotten. She is a pioneer and an advocate for all Women in Stone."

Katie Marie Jensen is the eldest daughter in a family of seven children, born and raised in New Orleans, LA. Graduating Summa Cum Laude and Salutatorian of her class, she received an academic scholarship to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Upon graduation, she entered an elite global management development program for Maersk shipping company. In 2005, while in Denmark training for this program, Hurricane Katrina descended upon the Gulf Coast, devastating the city of New Orleans. This major event would change the trajectory of Katie's career, landing her in the stone industry.

Katie recalls the emotion at that time, of being a world away from New Orleans, not knowing in real time what was happening back home and feeling the tug to return. "I just asked myself, why am I here? Why am I across the world doing this when everything I know and love is there? I want to go back to New Orleans and do something to help with the rebuilding of it."

And she did. With their family background in trucking, shipping, and warehousing, the Jensens opened Triton Stone in August 2006. In short order, Katie and her team grew from one showroom to nine in just under ten years. The company saw great success in their "one stop shop" business model and focus on customer service. In 2017 the Triton brand, along with 5 additional showrooms, was purchased giving Jensen full control of Triton Stone. Today the company operates 29 locations throughout the Midwest and Southeast with a corporate office based in New Orleans. Those 6 siblings mentioned earlier all work together in some capacity, and the entrepreneurial spirit Jensen gained from her dad carries on today.

The importance of being a woman-led company is not lost on Katie, and she strives to be a strong example for her employees every day. Jennifer Crowe, Regional Manager at Triton Stone's San Antonio location feels extremely fortunate to be a part of this group. "Katie leads our company encouraging constant self-growth within herself and others. She has a vision to create more leaders within our organization and continues to invest to help us grow as leaders."

As a working mom of four children, Katie understands the work-life balance struggle. Julie Krebs, Director of Accounting at Triton appreciates this about her. "She embodies a working mom. And she encourages all other working moms as well. I have children of my own. I never feel torn between the two. She is always compassionate, understanding, empathetic, and encouraging. She



Katie Jensen
Triton Stone Group

has taught me over the years that women can have successful careers in high levels and still be a mother."

Kat Bertrand, manager at the Baton Rouge, LA location also acknowledges her industry status. She admits: "Initially, Katie Jensen is an intimidating woman. We all know that this industry is tough, and it takes a self-assured, ambitious, and intelligent woman to thrive in this business, let alone run one of the larger slab distribution companies in the Southeast US. Katie carries herself in a way that demands respect, while at the same time showing that she deserves said respect by conducting business in a fair, decisive, and savvy way."

Courtney Long, an Account Manager at Triton's New Orleans location agrees. "We are in a male dominated industry. I have watched Katie conduct herself in a composed, poised manner whether it be with a fabricator, a million-dollar developer, or a supplier. She is sharp and quick minded."

Bertrand goes on to say how Katie believes in putting the right people in the right places to achieve the right results. She recognizes women who share her same goals and work ethic, and this is seen across the company in the leadership positions held by women.

Lori Causey, a manager at Triton's Birmingham, AL location says: "Katie Jensen understands the meaning of hard work & portrays the highest level of standards and values. To say she leads by example is an understatement. She has empowered women to be successful in all aspects of our company. She has opened the door and given so many women the opportunity and courage to be successful in a challenging industry."

Karla Forest of Northern Stone Supply has served on the Natural Stone Institute's Gary Sinise R.I.S.E. committee with Katie and has witnessed her impressive generosity. "For many different reasons, Katie is a positive role model for all women in the natural stone industry," Karla says. "The example that comes to mind for me is how she continually chooses to give back. I am amazed at how much of her time and resources she gives so wounded veterans can have a home."

Katie's generous contributions to the industry have previously been appreciated through her receipt of the Natural Stone Institute's 2020 Person of the Year award, recognizing her dedicated leadership impacts and extensive support to the association's executive team during the year. She also has been honored for her company's belief and notable financial investment in the Natural Stone Foundation -- the philanthropic arm of the association that funds education, promotion, and standards for the sustainable future of the natural stone industry -- achieving Diamond Level Donor status in 2022, for contributions of \$100,000 or more. Katie continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the Natural Stone Institute in the role of Vice President.

Congratulations, Katie.

"The past 15 years you have been a wonderful mentor. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to grow. I am truly inspired by your leadership and look forward to many, many more years. Congratulations Katie."

Jennifer Crowe, Triton Stone Group

"The fact that Katie is receiving this award does not surprise me a bit. She has inspired women to become involved in professional organizations like the Natural Stone Institute and invest in their careers. She whole-heartedly believes in our team and has the drive and support necessary to continue to do great things."

Rachel Jones, Vice President, Triton Stone Group

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Person of the Year

The Person of the Year award is presented annually to an individual who has provided extensive support to the association's executive team during the year. As a dedicated leader and tireless volunteer, Buddy Ontra of Ontra Stone Concepts is recognized as the 2022 Person of the Year.

Buddy served as the 2022 Natural Stone Institute board president and was a member of the Natural Stone Foundation fundraising committee. However, these roles were only a portion of how Buddy contributed during the year.

CEO Jim Hieb explains why Buddy was this year's choice. "Coming out of COVID Buddy understood how important in-person events were to the industry and that it was vitally important that key volunteers be seen by the membership. Buddy not only attended the events expected of a board member, but so many others as well. In short, Buddy was everywhere!" Hieb continued by saying that Ontra attended three times the number of events expected of him, as well as helping with several key initiatives.

Ontra truly understands the value in giving back. When asked about why he spends so much time contributing to the industry Ontra shared: "I can't keep what I have unless I give it away. I don't think about it as what I'm going to get out of it. There is a bigger picture."

An avid baseball fan, Ontra would often explain complex industry topics using baseball analogies. He applied that same principle to his involvement with the association's philanthropic arm, the Natural Stone Foundation.



Buddy Ontra
Ontra Stone Concepts



Similar to how a company might make a donation for each homerun hit during a ball game, he applied that principle to select stone projects, making a donation to the Foundation for each project completed. That simple strategy now has Ontra outpacing other companies his size and serves as an inspiration for what can be accomplished over time with small contributions.

His long list of 2022 industry involvement also includes participating in the new Environmental Product Declaration for natural stone countertops, advocating for NSI involvement with the natural stone hardscape industry, leading several conversations with fabricator associations/buying groups to discuss common goals, and helping guide the key relationship between the Natural Stone Institute and the Natural Stone Foundation.

Hieb described Buddy's leadership style as open, inclusive, and always ready to listen.

When asked to reflect on his year of volunteer leadership and involvement, Ontra responded, "I've enjoyed giving back to the industry which has put food on my family's table for so many years. The efforts to expand the presence of natural stone at both StonExpo and Hardscape NA tradeshows should yield dividends for the future. While I'm proud of this and so many industry initiatives undertaken, the true reward has been the friends you make along the way."

Congratulations, Buddy.

"Buddy is super humble and he knows a lot. His humility and the way he leads is impressive."

Jeff Erickson, Cutting Edge Countertops

"Buddy is a great leader. It is inspiring to watch Buddy and he has a strong voice on any topic needing to be addressed."

Sam Arcot, Rugo Stone

"While a small business operator, he has a big passion for the industry. He also has a sense of humor which is appreciated and admired. We all want to have a little bit of 'Buddy' in us."

Jonathan Mitnick, CCS Stone





Dan Rea's long career in the natural stone industry has been marked by outstanding vision, thoughtful leadership, and unwavering commitment to promoting the benefits of natural stone as the material of choice. After 45 years at Coldspring, he has announced plans for retirement. What an opportune time to honor him as the 2022 recipient of the Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Patrick Perus, CEO of Polycor has always been inspired by Coldspring, studying them – and Dan Rea in particular – as models for how Polycor would be built. "Whoever has met Dan must have been stricken by his amazing composure. His quiet strength. You do not need to talk much to him to understand this guy has solid foundations and great values," Perus said. "To talk about Dan Rea, and his amazing contribution to our industry, we must talk about Coldspring. Dan has worked for decades at Coldspring and like many organizations, he defined what Coldspring is as much as Coldspring defined who he is as a leader."

Dan began his natural stone industry career at Coldspring in 1977, working in the company's manufacturing facility. He left to answer a call to duty in 1980, joining the United States Air Force where he served as a weather specialist and provided combat field support and weapon and radar testing until 1988. During his time of service, Dan mastered many skills that would serve him well in the natural stone industry, including discipline and understanding the science behind the work.

Dan returned to Coldspring in the role of a Drafter and by 2003 was promoted to Senior Vice President of Commercial Sales. Recognizing a need in the market to become a strong driver of sustainability efforts, Dan supported both the efforts of the industry and of his Coldspring team to push the movement forward. He committed his team's resources to strategically drive the Natural Stone Council through the development of the ANSI 373 Natural Stone Sustainability Standard, ultimately completed in 2013. His leadership and support early on were instrumental in helping get the standard to where it is now and where it is going in the future.

Perus further credits Coldspring for recognizing and understanding 20 years before the rest of the industry, the importance of developing a sustainable company, respectful of its environment. He notes: "They saw what we are all seeing today: natural stone is the future of a sustainable construction industry. They must have felt quite lonely for a while, being the only one to carry the torch. They did it for all of us. Generously. We are in the process of becoming a better industry because of Dan and Coldspring."



Dan Rea
Coldspring



Retired Coldspring Director of Marketing Kathy Spanier agrees. "His contributions and dedication have been tireless and unselfish to strengthen and unify the industry."

Through Coldspring's longtime memberships, Dan advocated for support of both the Marble Institute of America (MIA) and the Building Stone Institute (BSI) associations, fully understanding the value each brought to the industry. While serving as MIA Board President in 2015, he believed that by unifying the two associations this new joint venture would not only defend the natural stone industry from well-organized marketing campaigns touting alternative materials, but also would become a powerful force in promoting natural stone well into the future.

Dee Brown, Inc. President Rob Barnes recalls: "I was the VP of the BSI when the MIA tendered the offer to join the two associations. Dan was the VP of the MIA and we worked closely with each other and our respective committees and

boards to enter into an agreement to bring us together as the MIA+BSI. He led well and was able to do what no one had done in several previous attempts. Without his work the Natural Stone Institute as we know it would never have become a reality."

Dan has also been instrumental in the advances made for the checkoff initiative to establish a federally approved Research and Promotional Board to generate industry funding. While legislation has yet to receive Congressional approval, recent attempts have come close. When the natural stone industry finally does get this important strategic initiative approved, it will largely be thanks to Dan—no volunteer leader has dedicated more time and effort to this initiative than he has.

Today, Dan leads the Coldspring team along with Greg Flint, President and COO and George Schnepf, CFO. What they say is impressive about Dan's record of accomplishments is that he has done it all, from stone layout, drafting, project management, and cemetery construction to building and memorial sales. George and Greg agree that one of their biggest challenges these days is to recruit future employees who possess Dan's skills, values, and leadership qualities. His leadership style has helped guide the Coldspring organization and the industry for decades and his teachings will help guide both well into the future.

Congratulations, Dan.

"Dan started at Coldspring with a hammer in his hand and has maintained an innate ability to stay connected with every individual at every level, whether it be in the quarry, production office, or at the job site – he remains a man of the people and the face of Coldspring.

Despite or due to his humble beginnings he has an enduring gift of being a generous and gentle tribal elder."

Pat Alexander, CEO & Chairman; Mike O'Connor, Vice Chairman of the Board, Coldspring

"He shares his passion, his knowledge, and experience with his peers in the industry, without hesitation.

He is a sought-after mentor to those at his company and around the world."

Jonathan Zanger, Walker Zanger (retired)

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Patsy Fell-Barker & David Fell

The David Fell Spirit of Service Award is presented in memory of David Fell, President of BG Hoadley Quarries. David passed away in 2021 and his memory now lives on through this prestigious award. Presented to recognize a company or individual involved with the Gary Sinise Foundation R.I.S.E. program, the award recipient demonstrates the qualities and characteristics of leadership within their organization, the community, and beyond.

“We are so incredibly proud of this Award named for David because it conveys his belief that it’s a wonderful world when we give back by helping and serving others with our natural resources. Our nation’s heroes put their lives on the line to serve and save us!”

David’s Mother, Patsy Fell-Barker, BG Hoadley Quarries

Honorary Lifetime David Fell Spirit of Service Award Recipient



Gary Sinise

Gary Sinise Foundation – R.I.S.E. Program

Founder Gary Sinise lives out his personal mission that one can never do enough in supporting the men and women who have willingly put themselves in harm’s way to provide our freedoms and safety. Gary embodies the characteristics of being a selfless, exemplary leader who impacts everyone he encounters. It is through his passion and dedication that others are stepping



up to support his noble mission, one specifically being the R.I.S.E (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment) Program. Through R.I.S.E., the Gary Sinise Foundation builds specially adapted, smart technology mortgage-free homes for our nation’s most severely wounded heroes.



Inaugural David Fell Spirit of Service Award Recipient

Bernie Van Etten of Murphy Marble Company is the Inaugural David Fell Spirit of Service Award recipient. Bernie believes it is important to participate in the Gary Sinise R.I.S.E. program because they are blessed to be in such a great industry.

"You want to give back to society whenever you have an opportunity to do so. The Gary Sinise Foundation's R.I.S.E. program has worked hard to put together a great program to help provide homes for severely wounded veterans. Having met a few of these veterans in person, they are tremendous people and heroes in every sense of the word.

Combine that with Gary Sinise, who is one of the most incredibly generous and talented people you will ever meet. The energy and excitement the R.I.S.E. program puts forth makes you want to contribute and be a part of their incredible work. It is truly an honor to have participated with R.I.S.E. by providing smart homes



Bernie Van Etten
Murphy Marble Company

for severely wounded veterans. It never felt like work while providing the stonework for the homes we helped with."

Murphy Marble also helped provide lunch at the home dedication for U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Chad Watson. Their company, along with their local deli felt that anything they can contribute other than the money, helps the Gary Sinise Foundation put more dollars toward constructing more homes.

"Working with the R.I.S.E. program gave me a chance to meet some great people including Gary Sinise himself and Lieutenant Strickland who was the recipient of the home built in St. Louis. The entire organization and their employees give you the motivation to participate. Gary Sinise has a saying "We can all do a little more." Gary and his organization give so much of their time, talent, and finances that it's contagious. My family company and I are blessed to have participated in the R.I.S.E. program."



Bernie Van Etten with the Watson family



Bernie Van Etten and Gary Sinise with the Strickland family

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