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EXPO

February 24–27, 2026 ✦ Horseshoe Las Vegas



Ultra-Thin Veneer Stone — A New Frontier in High-Value Personalization

Beyond the Ordinary: Breaking the Commodity Trap with Natural Stone

Presented By Mike Nickel, V.P. Product Development, StoneLite Designs Ltd.

Are you in the right room?



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What we will cover

- About Us
- The Material – What Has Changed?
- Stone 101
- Formats and Fabrication
- Why Stone?
- Products, Profits and Business Models/Approaches



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Who We Are

Family-owned business since 1965

Commitment to old-school German craftsmanship

Cutting-edge technology

"Build-once-build-right" philosophy

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP FIRSTS

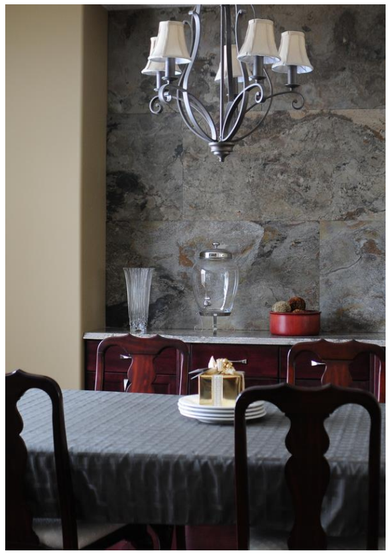
- To chemically mill stone for decorative stone tile - 1995
- To produce thin veneer granite/marble - 2000
- The only producer of RTA-stone furniture system - 2004
- To introduce stone lampshades and lighting - 2023
- To introduce thin veneer stone to the laser industry - 2024
- To commerically UV print on stone – 2024/2025
- To introduce ultra-thin veneer marble to the awards, personalization and signage industries - 2026



Ultra-Thin Veneer Consumer Products and Concepts













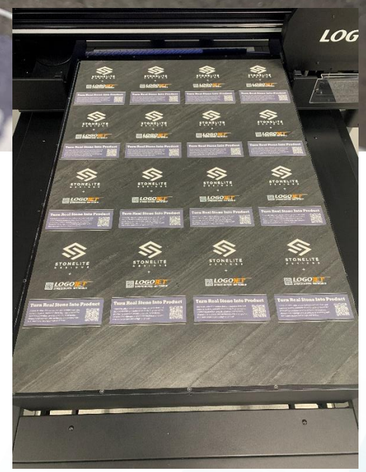


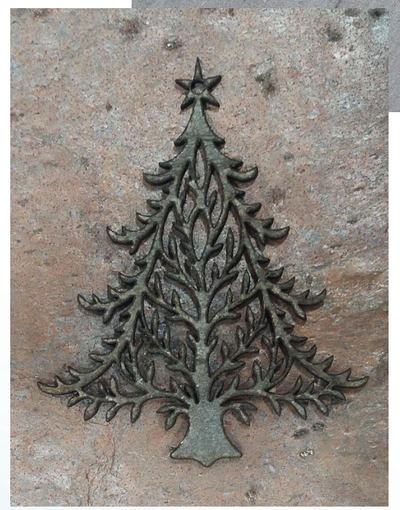
Stone Can be More















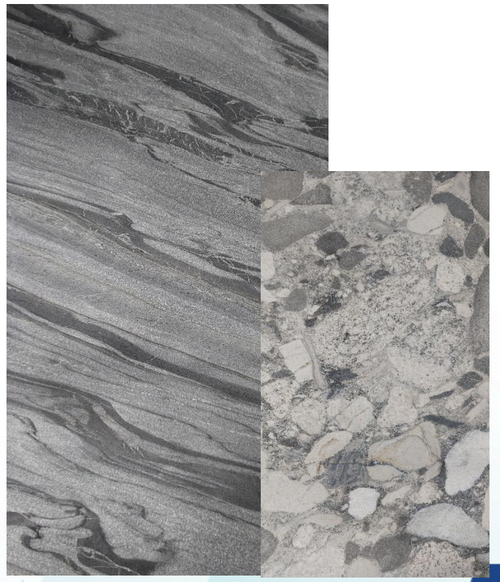


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The Material – Real Natural Stone
Q: What has Changed?
A: The Thickness – 2mm/3mm or 1/16 “



- Where you can put a Wood Veneer, you now use a REAL Stone Veneer



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Yes, it is real stone…















When a material becomes thin, its qualities change and new possibilities and uses appear.

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Stone 101 – Removing the confusion

- Cubic
- Dimensional
- Ultra Thin Veneer

Slate

Marble

Granite



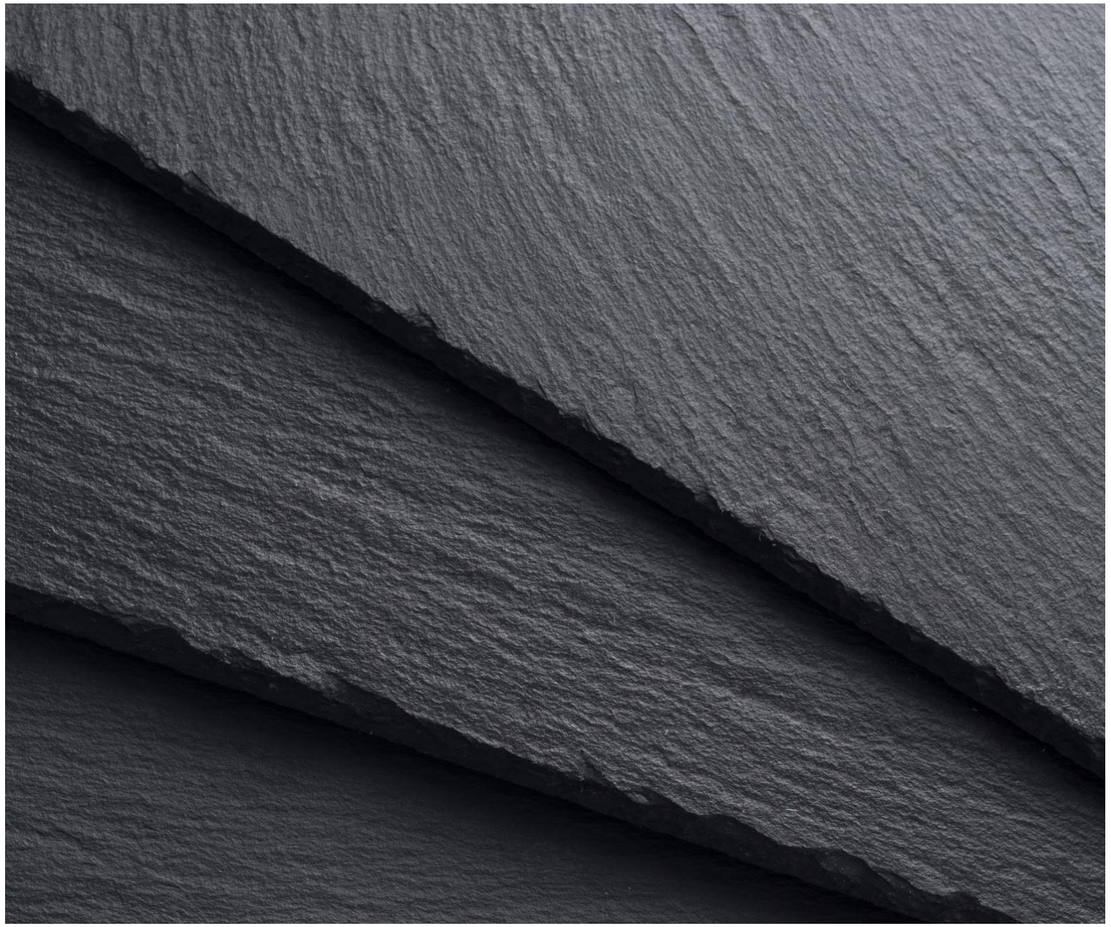
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Cubic vs Dimensional Material Formats

CUBIC STOCK	SIZE & THICKNESS	WEIGHT
Headstone, Grave Markers	3” X 3” X 3” Block or larger	135lbs – 180lbs
DIMENSIONAL STOCK		
Tile	12” X 12”, 16” X 16” | 3/8” to ½”	2lbs – 22lbs per sq/ft
Slabs	48” X 96” – 60” X 120” | ¾” to 1 ¼”	2lbs – 22lbs per sq/ft



Slate



Sedimentary Stone

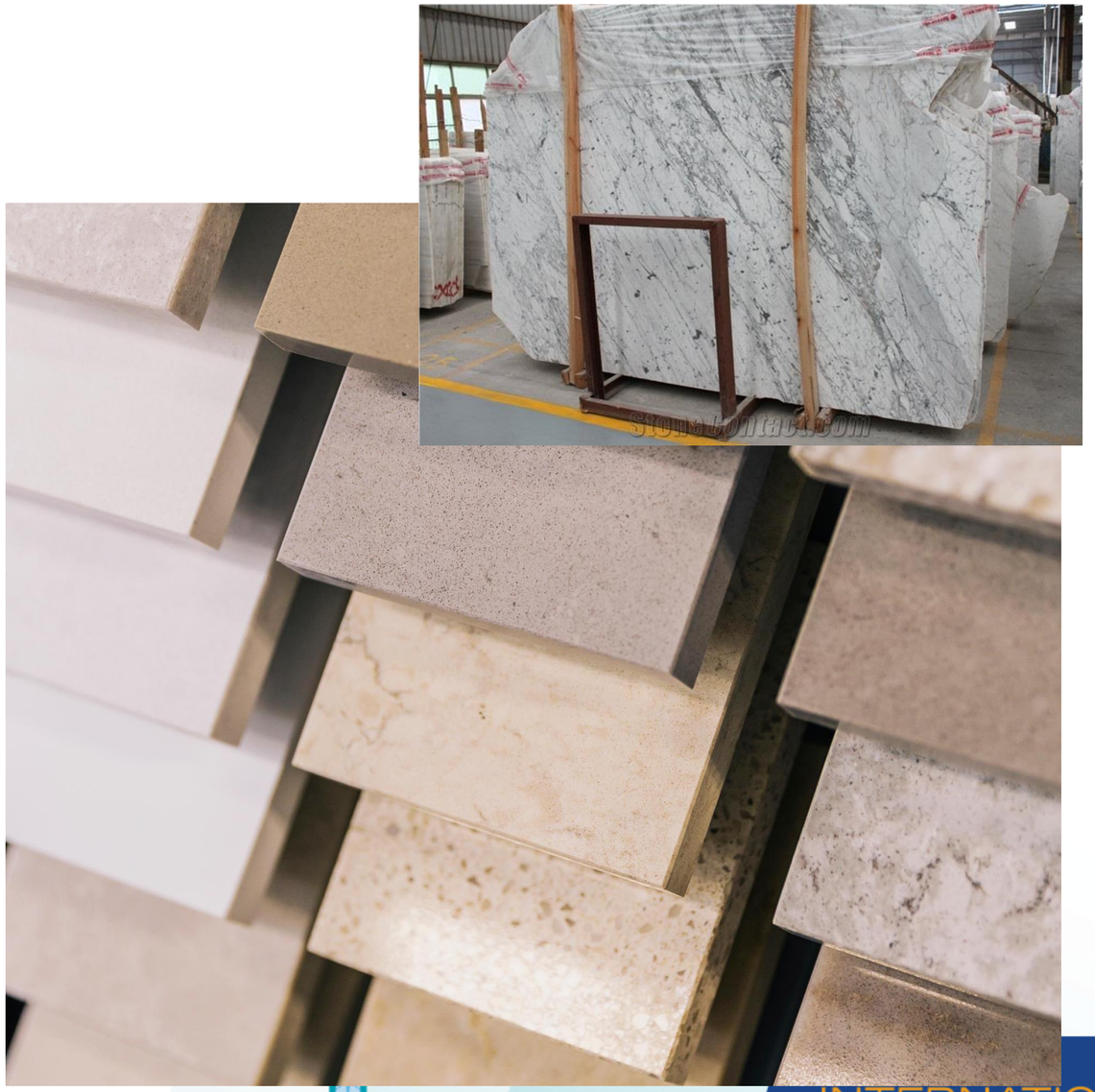
- Comes in layers
- Can be prone to shaling
- Small block sizes
- Soft
- Color Selection – wide variety/wide variation from block to block -- no white
- Pattern/Color Variation from mild to wild
- Cannot take a polish

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Marble & Limestone

Metamorphic Stone

- Very stable
- Good block size
- Medium hardness
- Color Selection – Good; veining/pattern/consistent from block to block
- Strong veining and pattern
- Most take a high polish
- Can scratch easily
- Can stain easily



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Granite





Igneous Stone

- Very hard
- Large block sizes
- Color Selection – little veining/pattern; very consistent from block to block
- Pattern/Color Variation from mild to wild
- Takes a very high polish
- Very scratch resistant

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Knowing the Difference

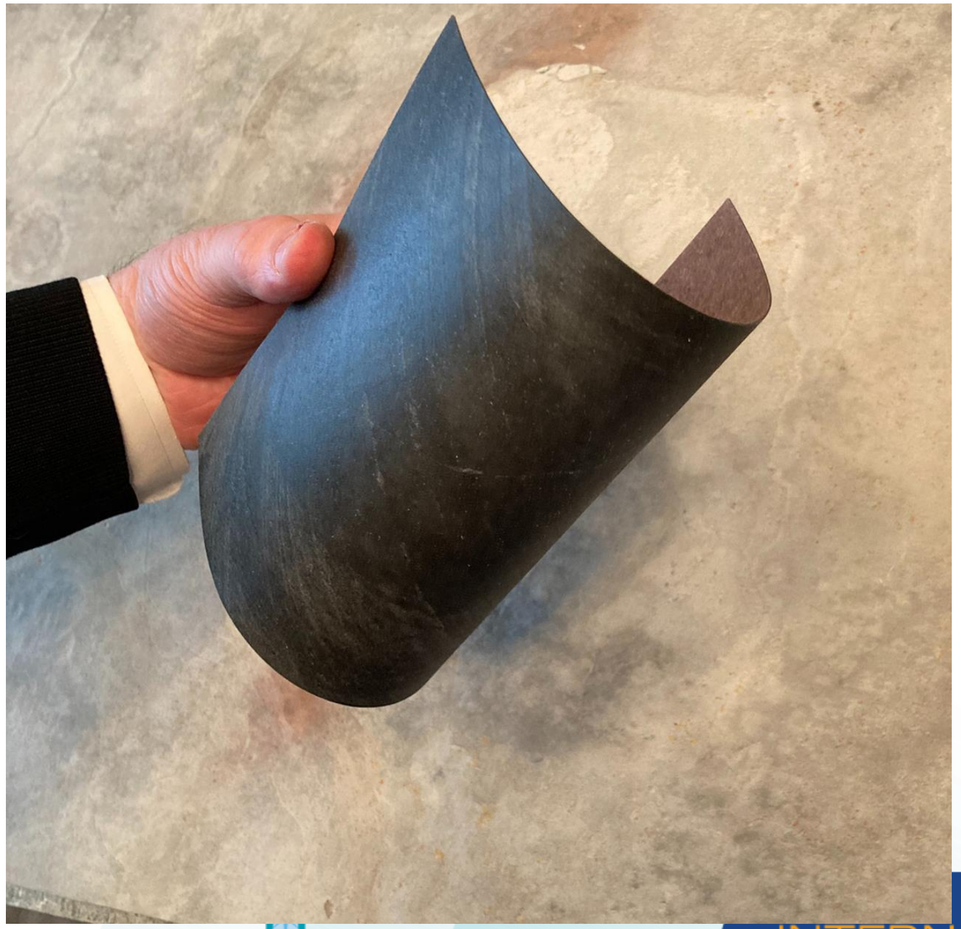
- Slate, Marble and Granite are very different products
- They are products of Mother Nature and are subject to variations in color, texture, and veining
- Great public confusion from fake claims of being stone, i.e., “Marble”
- Wrong definitions - Slate being called Marble, Marble being called Granite and so on…
- Be aware there are man made stones that are not real stone



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What is Ultra-Thin Veneer Stone?

- By definition, Ultra Thin Veneer Stone is any stone with a thickness under 3/16” that can be fabricated and installed



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Ultra-Thin Veneers vs. Traditional Stones

Ultra Thin Veneer Stone is any stone with a thickness under 3/16” that can be fabricated and installed

Ultra-thin veneer formats are

24” X 48” to

48” X 96”

Currently available in sedimentary and metamorphic stones

- **Slate**
- **Marble**
- **Ultra-Thin Veneer Granites coming in 2027**

- What is different?
  - Radically Reduced Thickness
    - Less weight – 16 oz vs 22lbs per sq/ft
    - Material Dynamics Change:
      - Shipping & Logistics
      - Fabrication
      - Installation
      - Use cases explode beyond the traditional industry applications



Formats

Stones

- Slates and Quartzites
- Marble

Sheet Size

- 24” X 48”
- 48” X 96”

Natural Material

Types

- Hard Back
- Fabric



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Types Of Backer:

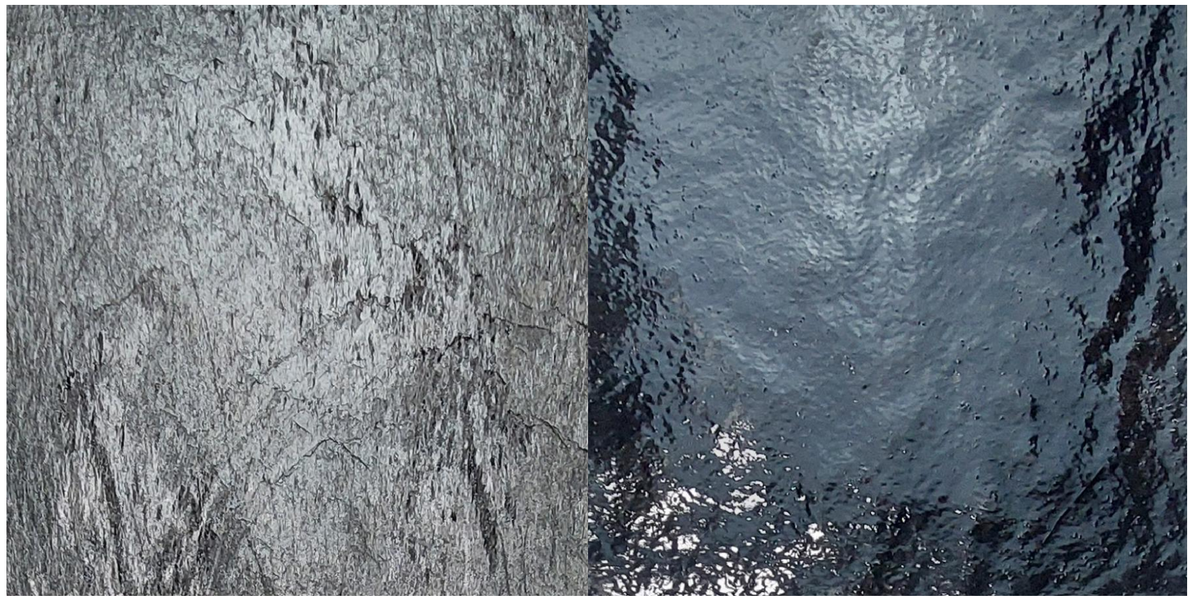
Hard Back Vs. Fabric

Hardback	Fabric
• Stiff/Rigid • Can be used outside • Rough backer • Tends to have more material on the surface • Cannot be rolled up • Can be translucent	• Very thin • Flexible • Flat backer • Indoor use only • Heat flexible • Can be rolled up • Can be translucent

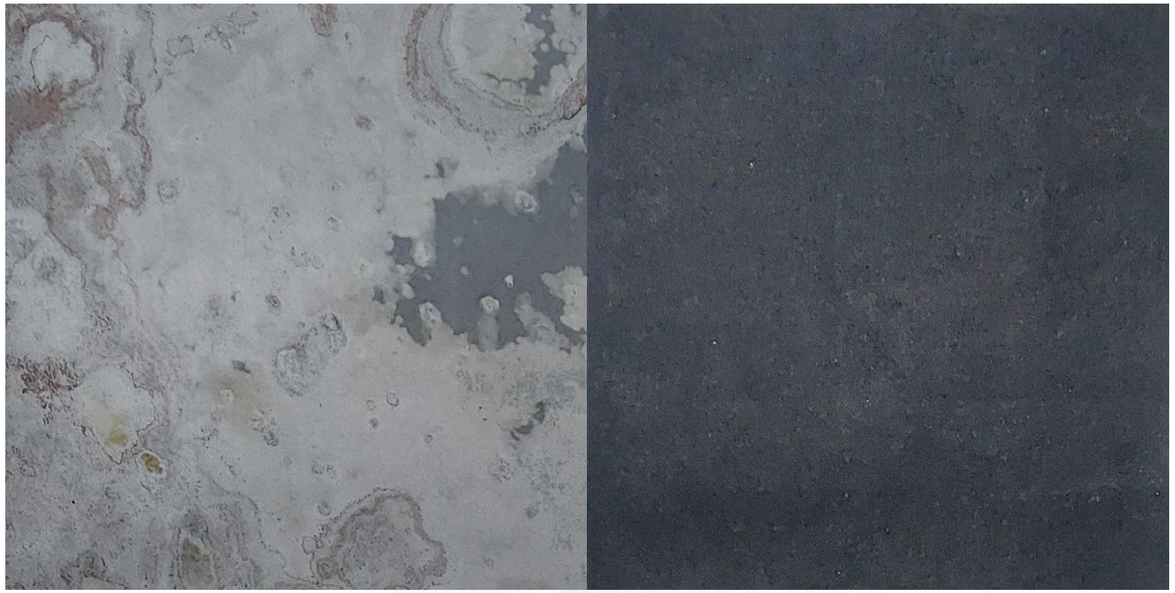


Backer – Hard Back Vs Fabric

Hard Back



Fabric



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Fabrication

- Cutting
  - Laser
  - Standard Woodworking Tools
  - Scissors/Cricut
  - Router
- Finishing
  - UV Printing
  - DTF
  - Engraving
- Lamination
- Cleaning
- Sealing



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Fabrication (continued)



Hard Back

- Laser
  - CO2 and up
- Router acceptable
- Water Jet friendly

Fabric

- Laser
  - Diode and up
  - Router and Water Jet (Recommend product be laminated)
  - Construction Scissor Friendly

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Laser Cutting

Diode

Cricut



Settings Consideration

IT IS STONE THAT COMES FROM A MOUNTAIN

DIFFERENT COLOR MEANS A DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN

THE STONE HAS TEXTURE -- ONE PART OF THE SHEET MAY BE THICKER THAN ANOTHER

STONES CONTAINING MICA CAN CAUSE ISSUES FOR LOWER POWERED LASERS (E.G. BLACK LINE VS. GOLD SHINE)

SLATE CAN SHALE

YOUR EQUIPMENT MATTERS

DO YOU SEAL THE STONE BEFORE OR AFTER – NOT ALL SEALERS ARE THE SAME

BUY A BURN TEST KIT TO TRY OUT YOUR SETTINGS

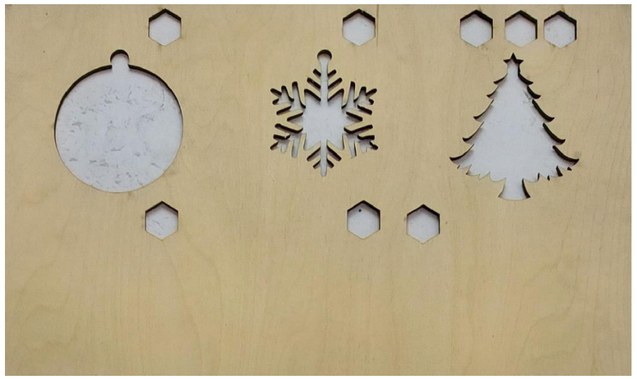


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Fabric On Birch







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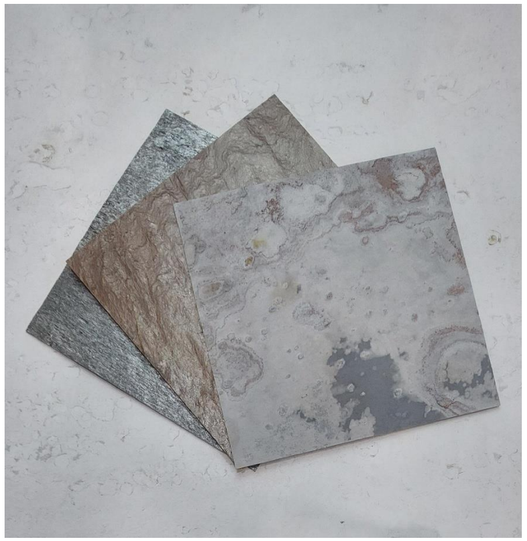
Finishing

- Finishing
  - UV Printing
  - DTF
  - Engraving
    - Laser
    - Sandblasting











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Engraving

- Darker material will always show better
- If you are engraving with a laser, seal the product first so that you get a better contrast with the material
- You can mask and sandblast the material (as is the traditional way of engraving marble and granite)
- Seal the stone before masking
- Be careful not to blow through the material unless that is your intention (e.g. Using a stencil application)



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Fabric Flexibility/Translucence/Sealing

Bendable with some heat

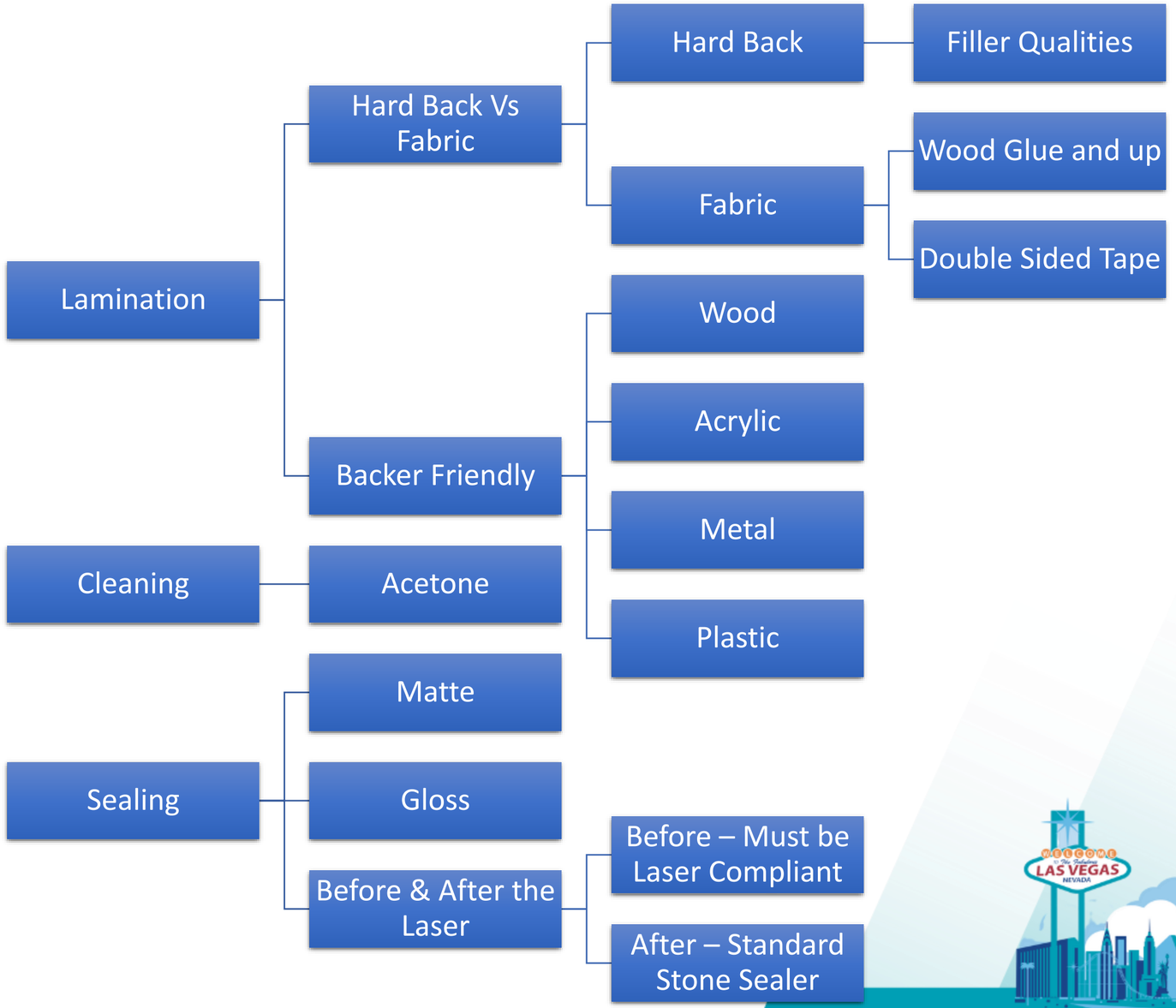
Clean raw stone with acetone to remove dust

Sealing

- All stone should be sealed
- Stone is porous so it can stain
- Sealing enhances slate’s color
  - Matte
  - Gloss
- Laser Compliant Sealer recommended

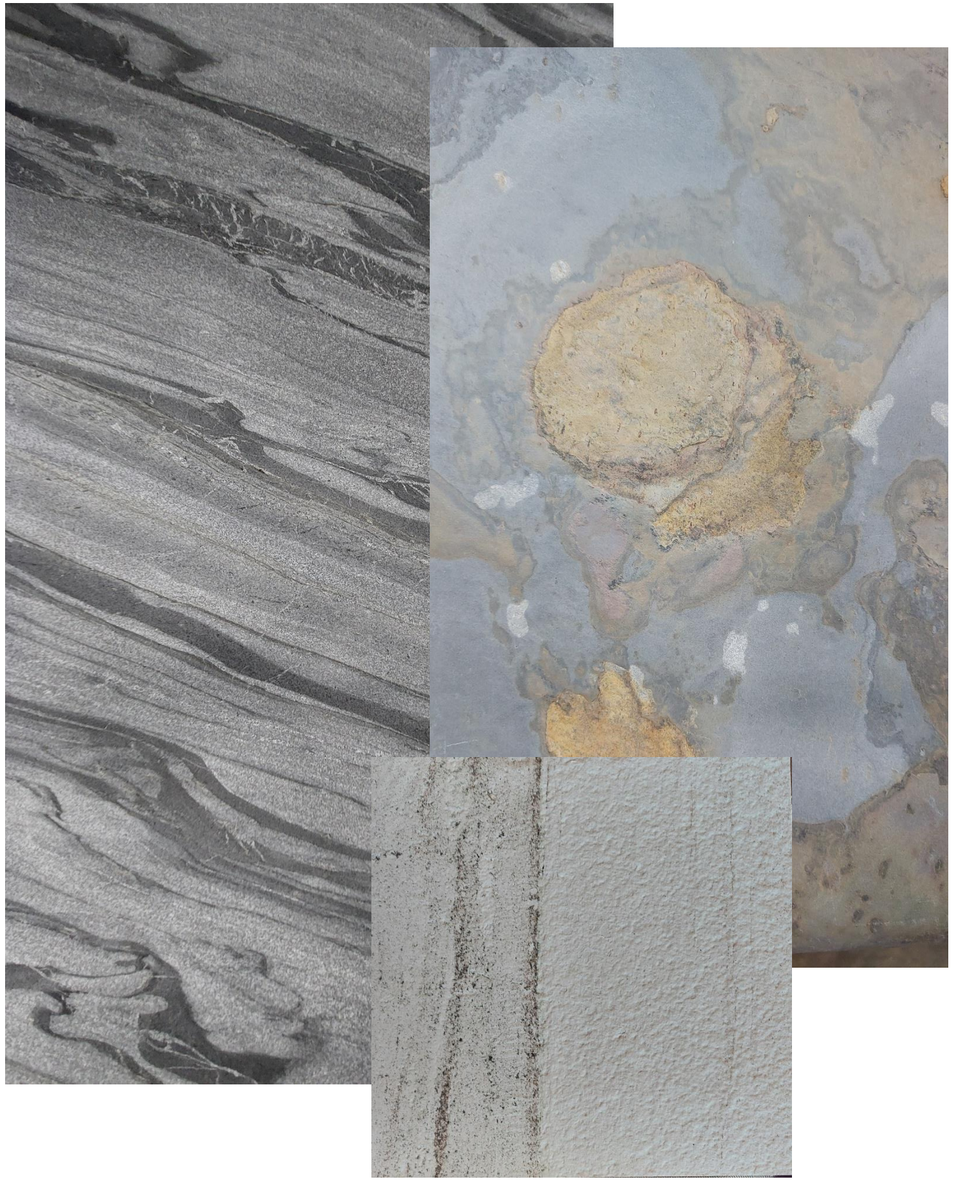
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Lamination – Cleaning – Sealing



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Why Stone? Stone Always Sells Regardless of Market Conditions



Aesthetic appeal and unique character

Natural variation in color, veining, and texture creates one-of-a-kind product pipeline

Premium, timeless look supports design goals across numerous product categories

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Why Stone? Stone Always Sells Regardless of Market Conditions



- Perceived quality and value impact
- Stone is often associated with high-end construction and lasting quality
- Can improve buyer perception and attractiveness of final products

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Why Stone? Stone Always Sells Regardless of Market Conditions

Sustainability and natural material preference

Supports biophilic and natural design trends and may align with sustainability goals

Brand and customer experience improvements

- Stone finishes can communicate luxury, authenticity, and permanence
- Helps create memorable ‘sense of place and value’ through texture and material story



What they are really buying

Stone is a Fashion Business

Buying a piece of the mountain

The stone business, like the wood business, is a veneer business -- Nobody cares if you go ½” into the material



"Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity, not a threat." — Steve Jobs

PRIMARY PAINS:

DOES IT HELP SOLVE A PROBLEM

(BEST-FIT EXISTING CHALLENGES)

COMMODITIZATION + MARGIN COMPRESSION:

NATURAL STONE GIVES YOU A STORY + VISUAL DIFFERENTIATION VS. ACRYLIC/GLASS/LEATHER/METAL-ONLY OFFERINGS, SUPPORTING HIGHER PRICE POINTS

“PREMIUM” EXPECTATIONS FROM END CUSTOMERS:

STONE READS AS DURABLE, SUBSTANTIAL, AND GIFT-WORTHY—GOOD FOR EXECUTIVE, TENURE, DONOR, AND MILESTONE AWARDS

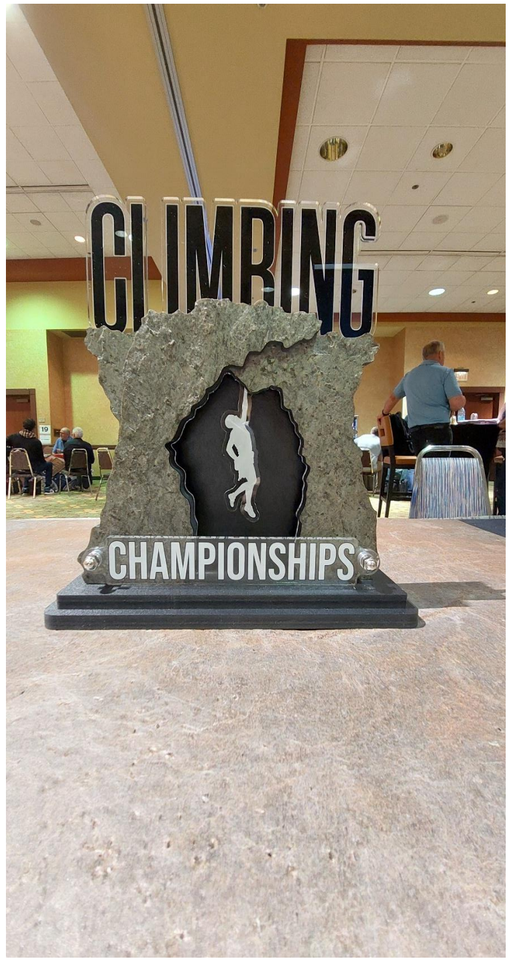
PRODUCTION RISK REDUCTION:

THE LASER-FRIENDLY POSITIONING + AVAILABILITY OF A BURN TEST KIT CAN REDUCE MISFIRES WHEN ADOPTING A NEW MATERIAL (ESPECIALLY FOR SHOPS STANDARDIZING WORKFLOWS)

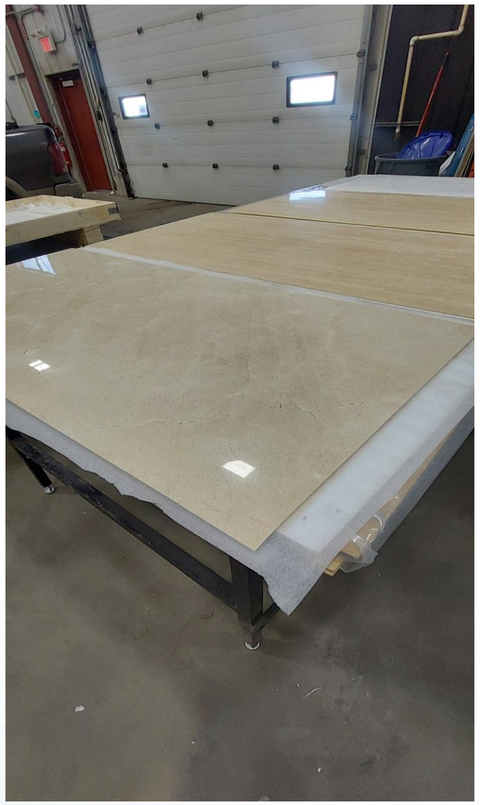


Awards – One of a Kind Customization









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Product Concepts

Start with your best sellers	• Up-value them with stone
Re-start tired product categories	• Upscaled look • Upscaled feel with texture
Be the first to do something new	• Signage – Commercial/Residential • Promotional Product • Home Décor • New Categories



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Some Ideas

Annual Plaques

- Accent
- Full background
- UV Print
- Mask and Paint
- Engrave

Baseball Cap Patches

- Black Slate if engraving
- Any color if UV printing
- 2” X 3” Size = 24 pcs per sq/ft

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Some Ideas (continued)

Key Chains, Tags & Tumblers	• Ultra-thin veneer stone is flexible
Signage	• Name Plates • House Numbers • Hotel and Commercial Signage • Custom ID Tags



Staying in front with Ultra-Thin Veneer Stone

We are all in the Fashion Business

We are at the forefront of a new material and its uses

We are at the frontier of new categories for consumer end products

Traditional Materials Combos

- Stone & Wood
- Stone & Acrylic
- Stone & Leather
- Stone & Fabric
- Stone & Metal



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Questions



- "Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity, not a threat." — Steve Jobs
- We must manage change, lest change manages us.”
- Bring US your ideas!!!

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Natural Stone for Everyone's Home

Come by our Booth #406
Featuring New Colors and Marble!



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