

# Rock of Ages

When it comes to looks that last, nothing beats natural stone.

By Zack Harold

If you want the best, you have to go straight to the source. That's the idea behind **Materials Marketing**. Headquartered in San Antonio, Texas, Materials Marketing not only manufactures its own architectural stone and tile products, it also owns the quarry where the stone is pulled from the heart of the earth.

It all goes back to founder **Don Rymer**—a man who believed that if he wanted something done right, he needed to do it himself. Rymer founded Materials Marketing in 1962 to import Saltillo tile from Mexico to the U.S. The family expanded its product lines as the business grew and, in the 1980s, purchased its manufacturing facilities and later added quarry operations to deliver the highest level of quality control over its products.

Today the company is the U.S.'s largest, oldest, and only fully integrated manufacturer of hand-carved architectural and dimensional stone and tile. Materials Marketing works with limestone, marble, sandstone, and travertine, each of which requires a different approach to manufacturing. The company's team of designers and artisan carvers has years of experience and knows just how to make clients' wishes come true. "If you can dream it, we can make it," says **Roger Ramirez**, Materials Marketing's vice president. >

This project incorporated a door surround in Riviera Beige (with a Honed finish) Limestone. The flooring is in Latte (with a French Quarter finish) Travertine.

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Strength and Durability

◆ Some materials require special sealing and treatments to keep them looking their best. However, the maintenance is minimal for most stones, and the product is made to last a lifetime. After all, it's earth's oldest and most durable building material, Ramirez says. "Stone is timeless. Stone was used in Mexico by the Aztecs and the Mayans for hundreds and hundreds of years."

Stone does show its age over the years, but unlike other materials, time only enhances its character. "Either you appreciate it or you don't," Ramirez says. "The same people that appreciate a really nice hardwood floor appreciate stone with a nice patina."

Versatility

◆ Because Materials Marketing owns its manufacturing facilities, customers are not limited to the 4-inch-square or 6-inch-square tiles they



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MATERIALS MARKETING



might get elsewhere. The company's artisan carvers can produce custom window and door surrounds, stair treads, and balustrades, up to large features like fireplaces and even kitchen hoods. "We like to say we're not a tile company. We're not a stone company. We're a project company," Ramirez says.

In-house designers help customers craft a plan for their spaces, providing valuable feedback and ideas. "We understand what the stone will allow us to do. That's from years of experience."

Aesthetics

◆ When some people think of stone, they think of rustic decor. Others think of Old World elegance. But Materials Marketing can adapt designs to clients' tastes—whether that means a Western-style lodge or a mid-century space filled with clean lines. "It's almost like the stone itself is the canvas and our clients are the painters," Ramirez says.

And because Materials Marketing has direct ties with the quarries that unearth

the stone, the company has access to colors other suppliers can't get. In addition to this natural palette, more than 19 finishes can be applied to the tile.

Easy Installation

◆ Materials Marketing doesn't do installations—"We stick with what we know best," Ramirez says—but does provide detailed information for builders who are tasked with turning boxes of tile into treasured designs that will last a lifetime.

Materials Marketing has nine showrooms—including the new, award-winning showroom in Chicago, where the company will host special after-hours events during NeoCon in June 2019.



To make things easy, Materials Marketing provides customers with a computer-designed plan so builders know where each stone goes. Every piece is also numbered to avoid any possible confusion. If a builder for any reason still gets stumped, Materials Marketing has an

in-house support staff that's ready to help. "We speak a lot of languages in our business," says **Jim Fanning**, president and CEO at Materials Marketing. "We speak the architect's language. We speak design, construction, and installation." **gb&d**