



How to Choose the Right Stone for Your Commercial or Residential Application

How to Choose the Right Stone for Your Home

You have many options when it comes to beautiful, long-lasting natural stones for your home's interior and exterior: Slate, granite, marble, quartz-based stone, and limestone, just to name a few. Choosing a natural stone for your home is a very personal decision, much like selecting wallpaper or artwork.

While there are scores of natural stones to consider, some are better suited than others to particular uses in and around the home. This guide, along with your architect and stone contractor, can help you explore your options and offer guidance on the right stone for the right home project.

Factors to Consider in Selecting a Natural Stone:

Color

Natural stones are available in a beautiful spectrum of colors. Colors in granite and marble, for instance, can range from soft beiges and pinks and classic black-and-whites to rich corals, greens, and multi-colors. Marble traditionally features swirls and "veins" of colors, while granite has a flecked or pebbled appearance.

Unlike the repetitive sameness of materials produced by machine or assembly line, natural stone's naturally varied appearance has wonderful character and creates a one-of-a-kind effect everywhere it is used.

Finish

Natural stone can be polished, honed, or flamed for a distinct appearance:

A polished finish has a glossy surface that reflects light and emphasizes the color and marking of the stone. This finish is typically used on walls, furniture tops, and floor tiles. A honed finish is a satin-smooth surface with relatively little light reflection. It is generally preferred for floors, stair treads, thresholds, and other areas where heavy traffic will wear off a polished finish. A flamed finish is a rough-textured surface used frequently on granite floor tiles.

Usage

The harder the stone, the more it resists abrasion. One measure of a natural stone's strength is its Measurement of Hardness (MOH) rating, on which 1 is the softest and 10 is the hardest. On the MOH scale, most marbles rate "3" and quartz-based granites rate "7." Using a softer stone simply requires the homeowner to use gentler cleansers and more frequent dusting to prevent scratching.