

RE-EMERGING U.S. STONE INDUSTRY

Diversifying a family-run business

To meet the demands of a changing market, Amendola Marble and Stone of White Plains, NY, has expanded its operation to ensure continued success

by Jennifer Adams



Amendola Marble and Stone, Inc. of White Plains, NY, started in 1989 as a tile showroom, and today it has prospered to a full-scale fabrication operation with a subsidiary company, Custom Counters, Inc. in Waterbury, CT.

Since it first opened in 1989, Amendola Marble and Stone, Inc. of White Plains, NY, has certainly undergone a transformation. Its principals, Sergio and Maria Amendola, initially started the company as a tile showroom, and today it has flourished

into a full-scale fabrication shop that produces stone and engineered quartz products for high-end residential projects as well as large commercial jobs. Moreover, the Amendolas further expanded their business by establishing a subsidiary company,

Custom Counters, Inc. in Waterbury, CT, in 2004.

“My parents started Amendola Marble and Stone as a tile showroom,” explained Joseph Amendola, company president and CEO. “Then they started to do small jobs like saddles and corner



The company, which is an exclusive regional distributor of Silestone, has two GMM Eura bridge saws in its shop in White Plains.



shelves, and then it evolved to vanities. They started out cutting with a skill saw and garden hose."

The company steadily continued to grow, according to Amendola. "We started doing anything that could be fabricated out of slabs, such as fireplaces and countertops," he said. "We went from one to two kitchens a week to, at one point, doing 15 kitchens a day."

The original shop

Currently, Amendola Marble and Stone outputs about 10 jobs a day in its 5,000-square-foot location in White Plains — with an emphasis being placed on quality and customer service. The company's business is split evenly between residential and commercial work. Additionally, 50% of its jobs are fabricated from natural stone, while the other half is made from slabs of Silestone and CaesarStone, as the company is a distributor of both products. In fact, the primary reason for developing Custom Counters in Connecticut was to meet the need for a Silestone distributor in that area, explained Amendola.

In total, the White Plains location consists of 45 employees, including those working in the fabrication shop as well as its retail showroom, which includes a broad range of stone material on display. "We import most of our material from Italy, Brazil, India, China and France," said Amendola. "We also buy locally when we need to."

The majority of Amendola Marble and Stone's residential work is remodels. "We cover New York City, lower Connecticut and New York State as far as Orange County and even further,"

An Intermac CNC machine plays an integral role in Amendola Marble and Stone's fabrication process.



A F. Zambon radial arm polisher allows for different finishes to be given to stone pieces.



Hand tools are used to put finishing touches on the edges of natural stone and engineered quartz countertops.



Both locations are equipped with an EnviroSystem from Water Treatment Technologies of Hampton, NH.



Half of the company's business is in engineered quartz products such as Silestone and CaesarStone, while the other 50% is comprised of natural stone. A broad range of products is displayed in Amendola Marble and Stone's retail showroom.

said Amendola. "If the job is worth it, we'll travel."

The shop is equipped with two GMM Eura bridge saws — one for cutting natural stone and one for cutting engineered stone — which were purchased from GMM S.p.A. of Italy. "We try to separate them," said Lucas Alves, Product Specialist.

Additional machinery includes an Intermac CNC and a F. Zambon radial arm polisher. "The radial polisher

allows us to do different finishes," said Alves. "We are selling a lot of honed marble and travertine right now."

Water in the shop is recycled using an EnviroSystem from Water Treatment Technologies of Hampton, NH. "This is one of the best investments that we made for the business," said Amendola. "The key thing with the system though is to make sure that you buy the right size or a little oversized for your shop."

For installations, Amendola Marble and Stone has two in-house crews as well as three subcontractors. The company uses hard templates as well as PhotoTop® digital templating for its installations.

"It took seven months to get the guys trained, but it was worth it," said Amendola. "You have to learn how to incorporate it into your business. One of the advantages of using PhotoTop is that you come back to the office, and



Custom Counter, Inc.'s facility in Waterbury, CT, is set up so that the fabrication process flows smoothly. The process begins with raw slabs being placed on a conveyor belt.



Once on the conveyor, slabs are moved to the Breton Speedy Cut fully automatic bridge saw for processing.



The Speedy Cut saw can cut up to 800 square feet in eight hours and a full slab in 20 to 25 minutes.

you already have a digital template. Another nice thing about it is that we can send a file to Connecticut and have it cut there if we are busy here."

Also, by using the PhotoTop digital templating system, the company automatically obtains "before" and "after" shots of every job. This comes in handy in case there are any discrepancies with a customer after the job is completed, explained Amendola.

Because customer satisfaction is so important to the company, it takes lengthy measures to guarantee top-quality service. In addition to allowing customers to view their slabs,

Amendola Marble and Stone also marks up each slab with the layout after customers select their slab. This step gives customers the opportunity to visualize how the stone's coloring and veining will look as a countertop. "We do this with every client," said Alves. "It's required."

Custom Counters

In June of 2004, Amendola Marble and Stone branched out and started its subsidiary company, Custom Counters, Inc. in Waterbury, CT. The new operation, which is supervised by Marco Carrion, General Manager, was initially

set up for mass production.

"We don't do retail sales," said Carrion. "We set up a showroom for architects and builders." The company also supplies its material to Big Box stores in the area.

Carrion explained that Custom Counters focuses mainly on new construction. "Last year, 22,000 permits for new construction were given out in Connecticut," he said.

The Waterbury operation is comprised of about 20 employees, including a five-person office administration staff and one in-house install crew. Depending on the size of the project,



The Connecticut shop is also equipped with a GMM Eura bridge saw, which is used to cut smaller pieces.

the company produces between five to seven jobs per day. The company also works with three subcontractors for installations.

“Primarily, Cosentino needed a distributor in this area,” said Amendola. “There was a market for it.”

When planning the layout of the shop, which measures a little less than 20,000 square feet, a great amount of thought went into creating a smooth flow for the fabrication operation. “When we set this up, we had the right area to set up the flow,” said Amendola.

A main component in the shop is a Breton Speedy Cut fully automatic bridge saw, which was installed in June of 2005. The saw can cut up to 800 square feet in eight hours and a full slab in 20 to 25 minutes.

“That’s a mass production machine,” said Amendola. “We wanted something that would give us a lot of cutting capacity on one saw. We looked at other manufacturers on the market, and I liked Breton. I liked that they had an office in Florida.”

At the time, Custom Counters was the second company in the U.S. to have a Speedy Cut installed in its shop, according to Amendola. “A technician came from Italy to install it,” he said. “If there is a problem, we can troubleshoot it through the Internet. A phone line is hooked up to the machine. They can diagnosis the problem most of the time.”

As in the White Plains location, the Waterbury facility is also equipped with an EnviroSystem, an Intermac CNC machine and a GMM Eura bridge saw. “The next piece of machinery that we invest in will probably be another CNC,” said Amendola.

At the time of *Stone World’s* visit, both shops were running one shift.



An Intermac CNC machine assists Custom Counters in producing between five to seven jobs per day.



Hand tools and accessories are supplied by companies such as GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Stone Boss Industries of Woodside, NY.



While Custom Counters and Amendola Marble and Stone use PhotoTop® for digital templating, the companies still rely on hard templates as well.



“We import most of our material from Italy, Brazil, India, China and France,” said Joseph Amendola, company president and CEO. “We also buy locally when we need to.”



“[The EnviroSystem] is one of the best investments that we made for the business,” said Amendola. “The key thing with the system though is to make sure that you buy the right size or a little oversized for your shop.”

In both locations, the majority of tools and accessories are supplied by GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Stone Boss Industries of Woodside, NY.

Planning for the future

To continue on the path of success that Amendola Marble and Stone has created for itself, it is important that the company evolves with the changing market, according to Amendola. He believes that it is imperative to offer a broad range of services rather than specializing in just one.

“We built the Connecticut location for mass producing, but now the market has changed, and we want to be able to handle diversity,” said Amendola. To maintain a high standard of customer service and reliable on-time delivery, both locations use a Moraware JobTracker system from Moraware, Inc. of Reno, NV, to manage its projects.

Currently, Amendola Marble and Stone is working on several large-scale commercial projects in New York City. □

Amendola Marble and Stone, Inc. White Plains, NY

Type of work: residential remodels, commercial

Machinery: an Intermac CNC machine, two GMM Eura bridge saws from GMM S.p.A. of Italy, a F. Zambon radial arm polisher, an EnviroSystem from Water Treatment Technologies of Hampton, NH; hand tools and supplies from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Stone Boss Industries of Woodside, NY; PhotoTop® digital templating system

Number of Employees: 45

Production Rate: 10 kitchens per week

Custom Counters, Inc. Waterbury, CT

Type of work: primarily residential new construction

Machinery: a Breton Speedy Cut fully automatic bridge saw from Breton S.p.A. of Castello di Godego, Italy; an Intermac CNC machine; a GMM Eura bridge saws from GMM S.p.A. of Italy; a F. Zambon radial arm polisher; an EnviroSystem from Water Treatment Technologies of Hampton, NH; hand tools and supplies from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Stone Boss Industries of Woodside, NY; PhotoTop® digital templating system

Number of Employees: 20

Production Rate: 5 to 7 kitchens per week