



# Strategizing to build a successful stone business

*For more than 25 years, SMG Stone Co., Inc. of Sun Valley, CA, has steadily increased its size and production capabilities through careful planning and investments*

by Jennifer Adams



SMG Stone Co., Inc. of Sun Valley, CA, operates out of an 86,500-square-foot facility, which includes a 20,000-square-foot fabrication shop, 60,000 square feet of outside space and a 6,500-square-foot office.

**W**hen it came time to expand his stone fabrication business, Solomon Aryeh of SMG Stone Co., Inc. in Sun Valley, CA, heavily considered every step — particularly when it came to investing in machinery. In 1982, the

company opened its doors working out of a 1,200-square-foot space with one bridge saw and some hand tools. Today, SMG Stone fabricates out of a 20,000-square-foot facility with a lineup of state-of-the-art equipment that was carefully researched to boost

the fabrication operation to a broader level of success.

“We moved in 1990 from our original location to the present address,” said Aryeh. “Basically, from the beginning, we were importing stone, fabricating and installing for commercial and resi-



The fabrication shop includes 25 workers. In addition to a lineup of state-of-the-art machinery, hand tools from companies such as GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Grainger are used for finishing stone pieces.



dential [jobs], including public work and institutional. We were much smaller, though, when we first started out. We were subbing fabrication for about a year or so when we started.

“Initially, we started out as three partners, and then added a receptionist/coordinator about a year and a half after that,” Aryeh went on to explain. “I now own the business myself.” His daughter, Tiffany Aryeh, has joined the company, and Aryeh also relies on the expertise of Heidi Huber, who handles business development.

“We have grown gradually for 28 years,” said Aryeh. “Originally, we just had one bridge saw to cut large slabs, and everything else was done with hand tools. Compared to then, everything is now state-of-the-art equipment — all digitized. Everything is done through [a computer] network.”

### Machinery selection

In addition to the 20,000-square-foot fabrication shop, SMG Stone’s facility includes 60,000 square feet of outside space and a 6,500-square-foot office. The shop houses machinery from some of the leading manufacturers worldwide, and each was chosen for a specific purpose.

“We basically selected machines for each function from different manufacturers,” said Aryeh. “It was done gradually over a year and a half to two years.”

Among the state-of-the-art lineup is a Speedycut FK NC/800 automated saw from Breton S.p.A. of Italy. “This is used for sawing slabs and blocks up to 10 inches thick,” said Aryeh. “It also is great for carving profiles, and it can turn columns with an attachment.”

An Integrated Flying Bridge 6012

Among the machinery in the shop is a Speedycut FK NC/800 automated saw from Breton S.p.A. of Italy. “This is used for sawing slabs and blocks up to 10 inches thick,” said Solomon Aryeh, company owner. “It also is great for carving profiles, and it can turn columns with an attachment.”



An Integrated Flying Bridge 6012 waterjet from Flow International of Kent, WA, was put in place because it can cut any material in any shape desired.





The waterjet allows SMG Stone to complete intricate stone pieces for high-end custom jobs.



Additionally, a Maxima CNC stoneworking center from CMS/Brembana of Caledonia, MI, is used in the production process.



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waterjet from Flow International of Kent, WA, was put in place because it can cut any material in any shape desired, according to Aryeh. Additionally, he chose a Maxima CNC stoneworking center from CMS/Brembana of Caledonia, MI. "This is the most reliable, easy-to-use CNC," said the fabricator. "It can machine anything. It has up to 4 axes."

A Comandulli Snythesis is used for edge polishing during the production process. "This is one of the fastest machines around for edging countertops," said Aryeh. "We now use it for a variety of other purposes such as relieving the saws of mitering and rodding countertops."

In his search for equipment,

Aryeh also turned to Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN. SMG Stone's shop includes a Yukon bridge saw, a Pro-Edge III automated edge polisher and a Pathfinder slab photo system. And rounding out the lineup of equipment are two Foma saws. "These are old workhorses," said Aryeh. "They are standard saws, but still get the job done."

Hand tools, which are used for finishing work, are supplied by companies such as GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Grainger. The company also utilizes a Dal Forno crane and lifters and Manzelli vacuum lifters from GranQuartz.

According to Aryeh, SMG Stone operates a completely wet shop. "The shop is efficient," he said. "Our own

system was built in-house for recycling water."

### The operation

On average, the fabrication shop works on 25 projects during a week's period — with varying sizes of each job. The shop runs two shifts and includes 25 workers. In addition to a variety of stone types such as granite, marble, travertine, limestone, lava stone and soapstone, the shop also fabricates engineered stone, crystallized glass and sustainable recycled glass. "We do all of our own importing," said Aryeh.

SMG Stone maintains approximately 25 installation crews, who use Proliners from Prodim USA of Vero Beach, FL. "With this product, we are able to mea-



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SMG Stone maintains approximately 25 installation crews who use Proliners from Prodim USA of Vero Beach, FL. "With this product, we are able to measure up to 10 to 12 kitchens in one hour versus one kitchen in one hour on our commercial projects," said Aryeh. (An example is pictured.)



Workers utilize a Dal Forno crane and lifters to move slabs around the shop.

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Primarily, SMG Stone caters to the Southern California market, but the company also does some work in Northern California on occasion. "The custom homes we do are very high-end," said Aryeh.

Recently, SMG Stone has completed several large commercial jobs, including LA Live in Los Angeles, which includes a JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton. For this project, the company fabricated and installed a half million square feet of stone and tile. Included in the scope were flooring, mechanically adhered stone, conventionally adhered glass, tile, mosaics and counters.

Additionally, SMG Stone supplied and installed 22,000 square feet of stone for The Century, a luxury condominium residence in Los Angeles.

Aryeh's daughter, Tiffany, expressed plans to help the company continue its growth. "The company has been in business over 25 years," she said.

"For the long term, we are looking to expand the caliber of projects. This year, we were lucky to work on the biggest one in our portfolio so far — LA Live. We always want to do better, and we are always lucky to work with great clients. We want to maintain our clientele and find new clients as well."

Sharing his daughter's philosophy, Aryeh also believes it is important

for SMG Stone to continue to evolve. "We are continuously expanding the shop," he said. "We are always looking to improve the shop somehow, whether it is in construction or yard improvement. In every department, we continuously do new things and try to expand. We try to be more efficient and to be a better company. The challenge keeps us motivated." □

### SMG Stone Co., Inc. Sun Valley, CA

*Type of work:* high-end residential and commercial work

*Machinery:* Speedycut FK/NC 800 automated saw from Breton S.p.A. of Italy, an Integrated Flying Bridge 6012 waterjet from Flow International of Kent, WA, a Maxima CNC stoneworking center from CMS/Brembana of Caledonia, MI, a Comandulli Snythesis from Comandulli of Italy, a Yukon bridge saw, a Pro-Edge III automated edge polisher and a Pathfinder slab photo system — all from Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN, two Foma saws, hand tools and accessories, including a Dal Forno crane and lifters and Manzelli vacuum lifters from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, hand tools and accessories from Grainger

*Number of employees:* 25 shop workers, approximately 90 field workers, 22 office employees

*Production rate:* 25 projects of varying sizes per week