



BY MARLA MILLER • PHOTOS BY BLEU COTTON

FROM THE STONE AGE & BEYOND

“WITH MORE OF US TRAVELING ABROAD, WE ARE STARTING TO DEVELOP A DEEPER APPRECIATION FOR LIVING ARTIFACTS AND ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE.”

Phoenician Stone principals Joseph and Ron Sage are proud grandsons. The seeds of their family’s business, architectural antiques acquisitions, were planted back in the 1940’s by their grandfather, Joseph Sage Sr. a larger than life kind of fellow to hear his grandsons speak. An archeologist by avocation, Joseph Sr. was a member of the British Army Corps of Engineers serving with the Degaulists French army artillery unit in North Africa. When World War II ended, he started his general contracting company. Contracts he secured included working in historical medieval alleyways along side ancient Roman and Grecian ruins. “He had an affinity for lost architectural slivers from the past,” said the younger Joseph. Soon, his passion for architectural antiques turned into a family business that his grandsons and family members in Europe still manage to this day.

Phoenician Stone, with locations in Corona del Mar and Los Angeles, is more showroom than store. The CDM double storefront space—soon to expand—is a sight for all history buffs to see. The flooring is a collection of pavers and stones, samples of what customers can purchase that average in age from hundreds to thousands of years old. Old world relics, mantles, Roman and Byzantine mosaic flooring suspended on walls, columns from Corinthian Greece, mixed with hand carved replicas crafted by Phoenician Stone artisans fill up the well lit space. Every piece offers a story about ancient times.

Joseph Sage’s grandsons are reliable narrators; each majored in art history so that both would have intimate knowledge of Phoenician Stone products. These young men speak easily about ancient times and artifacts; their reverence for history refreshing. In their showroom stands a 500 year old limestone table inlaid with a 2000 year old mosaic tile scene. “Our family acquired this artifact in 1952,” said Ron Sage. Young Joseph Sage talks about the appeal of old and new. “By adding just a few ancient elements, like a mantle or a fountain, any home, no matter how modern in design, is enhanced with this juxtaposition of sorts.”

Phoenician Stone products range from turn key wine cellar, bathrooms and kitchen stone creations, Tuscan farmhouse and villa style cladding, ancient limestone flooring from various eras, reclaimed limestone fireplace mantles, some over 600 years old, antique stone entryways from the 16th century, interior ceiling meshed stones to kitchen back splashes, inlaid shower floors and patio fountains. Clients include collectors of rare objects. Ron talks about a client in Montecito whose entire estate was adorned with a Limestone floor



called ‘Biblical Stone’ that dates back to the days of the 2nd Crusade or circa 1192A.D. “We also provide hand carved limestone architectural elements carved in our own studio.” said Ron pointing to a limestone hood range.

Joseph talks about Phoenician Stone’s global outreach; they sell and install products in five continents. Their various carving studios employ over 200 artisan carvers. Business is booming in both OC and LA stores. Since opening the CDM store four years ago, The Sage brothers have noticed a dramatic change in local interest. “With more of us traveling abroad, we are starting to develop a deeper appreciation for living artifacts and organic architecture. That’s why Phoenician Stone doesn’t sell stone per say, we sell the history and the culture

behind it, which imbue our clients’ environments with humanity & spirituality”. **L3**

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