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Engraved Stones : Rock Artisans Meet Technology

By Liz Hekimian-Williams

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Have you ever seen an engraved garden stone, address marker rock or memorial stone and wondered, "How did they do that?" The process of etching words and designs onto such dense and strong objects is actually accomplished through a masterful combination of imagination, art, skill, technology and nature.

Stones found in a South African cave dating back about 77,000 years, etched with lines and triangles, appear to be among the earliest hand carved engraved stones. Time intensive hand engraving with chisels and hammers actually continued as the primary manner of etching stones even into the 19th century. Technological advances, however, have since helped many stone artisans with their craft, resulting in finely engraved rocks that are created with more efficiency. And while hand engraving tools still find a place within the stone artisan's toolbox, sandblasting has become a more common technique for carving into stones nowadays.

Interestingly, the first patent for sandblasting equipment is traced back to 1870. That is when a Benjamin Tilghman is said to have obtained the British patent. However, sandblasting machines seem to have become more widely available and used only after about 1930. What is a sandblaster? It is like a pressure tool that blasts out sand. It uses compressed air or steam to force sand particles at high speed onto the rock. This wears out the targeted areas on the stone surface that the artisans direct the nozzle towards. As you can imagine, sandblasting equipment has helped stone engravers to greatly reduce their production time. So this has become an invaluable tool in their trade.

Before the actual engraving work begins, the stone engravers must first select the right stone and work on design and layout issues for each custom job. This includes deciding on or including specified font type and size, designs, and layout of the elements on the stone. Locating and selecting the right one-of-a-kind stone with attention to size, coloring and shape for the current stone engraving project also requires the artistic eye of the stone artisan. Then, a stencil is prepared and attached somehow to the stone before the engraving starts. Here again, technology has come to the rescue. It used to take the stone artisans many more hours than it does now to complete a stone engraving project. But the design and preparation phase is much speedier now thanks to computers, scanning technology,

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drawing software, rubber cutting machines and rubber or vinyl stencil sheets already complete with adhesive backings. Finally, the stone artisans use sandblasting and hand engraving as desired to deeply engrave the message or image requested into the rock. Cleaning the stone and, if requested, painting inside of the engraving, finishes up the engraved stone project.

Throughout the ages, etchings in stone and rock have been used as long lasting symbols for meaningful communication and decoration. This continues today. Personalized engraved stones and rocks can be carved to include individual names, family names, dates, corporate logos, memorial or commemorative words and sentiments, designs, single words or even your favorite saying.

Ideas for personalization and for uses are only limited by a person's imagination. Custom engraved stones are often used as home and garden décor accents and unique personalized gifts. However,

many individuals continue to use engraved stones for special and meaningful communication. A recent stone engraving project we completed illustrates how this particular person used the stone for a very important message and also as a symbol of strength and longevity, one that will stand the test of time. The engraved stone simply asked the question: "Will You Marry Me?" Romantic proposal, wasn't it?

Liz Hekimian-Williams is owner of Giftsprings.com, an online gift shop featuring gifts, home décor and personalized gifts including custom engraved stones and rocks.

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Engraved Gifts Are Special Gifts

By Sam Stone

Finding that special gift can be a difficult task. That is because you want to find something special and meaningful. Yet, the person you are buying for seems to have it all. What could you possibly buy that would mean something and be worthwhile to the recipient? The answer is an engraved gift. And fortunately, no matter what the special occasion is or who you are giving the gift to, there are many engraved gifts that would be perfect!

The following examples will help you see how an engraved personalized gift is truly the perfect gift for any occasion.

Business Achievement

If one of your employees is being recognized for his achievements you may want to commemorate the event with a special gift. In this situation an engraved crystal award would be a fantastic gift. Not to mention a gift that would be cherished for years to come. The engraved crystal award could boast the name of the company, the name of the recipient, as well as what the award is for and the date. The recipient of the engraved crystal award will definitely be appreciative and will always be able to

remember his accomplishment. Many individuals display these awards on their desk or in their office for years.

Graduation

Whether it is graduation from high school, college, or even from a professional school there is nothing like an engraved personalized gift. There are so many different gifts that can be engraved that you should have no problem finding the perfect gift. Consider an engraved pen or perhaps a blanket. Another great gift is a briefcase or computer case with a metal plaque that can be engraved with the recipient's name. You will have no problem finding just the right engraved personalized gift for the graduate in your life.

Birthdays and Holidays

With every birthday and holiday that comes around you may feel nervous about finding a good gift. Well, personalized gifts are especially for the recipient and they will always be appreciated. Think of something useful the recipient would like and then have it engraved. This will be a gift that is honored and cherished for years to come.

There are certainly many other events where engraved gifts are perfect for the recipient. Be creative and thoughtful and you can always come up with some outstanding personalized engraved gifts that will be treasured for many years in the future.

Sam Stone writes for Lasting Sentiments. Lastingsentiments.com is a multigenerational retailer of personalized products. With over 35 years of operating experience,

 is a specialist in the engraving, etching and imprinting business. Visit their website today at

to buy personalized gifts online, including crystal barware, for

yourself or for friends and family.



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