

Design Guide



Helpful tips when choosing a grave marker

1. Cemetery Regulations and Restrictions

Before you begin the process of selecting a monument you need to be aware that most cemeteries have rules and guidelines that dictate the style, size color, finish, etc. for monuments that are going in it. Most retailers will know these rules for the cemeteries in their area. It may be a good idea for you to contact a representative of the cemetery anyhow to be sure that you understand their rules.

2. Selecting Style and Size of Monument

Some family lots will have one larger monument with the family name(s) and smaller markers for each individual. Single lots will have only one monument on them. Usually these monuments are smaller than family style monuments but can be larger if desired. Most tablets and slant markers will sit on top of a base. Bases are used to provide a nice level area and can help keep a monument protected from lawn care equipment. They also give the monument added height which allows inscriptions and carvings that are near the bottom to be easily read especially if there is long grass in front of it. You can also have a base that holds vases/urns for decoration or holding flowers.

3. Color Selection

There are many granite colors to choose from. Your most common colors are gray (Barre), Mtn. rise (also known as North American Pink), Canadian pink, Mahogany and Impala black. These granites come from the U.S. and Canada and therefore cost less. Jet Black and India red are very popular import granites along with Paradisio N.H. Red, and India impala. These granites are shipped overseas from places like Africa, India, and China. Due to the added cost of shipping, import granites are more expensive. However the beauty of these imports are captivating and the colors are vibrant. One thing to consider when selecting the granite color is the contrast between the polished stone and the letters and carving that are sandblasted into it. Whenever polished granite is sandblasted it becomes much lighter and has a rougher appearance. This contrast is more apparent in some colors than others. The average time for production on a monument is 6 to 8 weeks. Usually the darker the polished granite, the greater the contrast. This contrast can make carvings and letters stand out. For added contrast, Litho (colored paint) can be added to sandblast sunk areas such as letter, panel lines and the backgrounds of carvings. Litho is great for granites that are steeled (no polish) or for highlighting the letters inside frosted panels. You should use a litho color that is recommended for your granite. In most cases litho is inexpensive and will last a long time.

4. Design Selection

When selecting monument designs and carvings it is important to avoid overcrowding the monument. If a monument has an abundance of carvings emblems, etc. then it may lose its focal point. One way of preventing this on a family monument that is already carved with a design is to choose one carving of importance for each person inscribed on the monument. For example, if one of them was in the military then maybe a military emblem for him/her, or if someone was involved in a club or organization one of those emblems might work. Someone involved in sports could have a basketball, or a person who loved nature could have a deer, and so on. This way each person has a special carving showing what they enjoyed or accomplished. A monument that has only one name inscribed could have a few more carvings of importance since no other names will be on it and therefore no confusion as to who the carvings symbolize. If you want to create your own design or add elements to an existing one then the Carving library is the place to visit. There you have hundreds of choices for floral carvings, emblems, crosses, etc. Be sure to pay attention to the size of the carvings that you are choosing. Some of them are large and may not fit onto the monument without revising them. Also a small carving may look lost on a large monument.

5. Etchings

Etchings are like photographs or drawings that have been scratched into the polish of a monument. They are ideal for portraits of people and animals. An etching can also be used for flowers and other images when great detail is desired. Etchings should only be done on darker granites. If etched in lighter granites it does not show enough contrast and is hard to see.

6. Inscriptions

When preparing the information for the inscriptions (letters) be certain that you have the correct spelling, middle names, birth and death dates, etc. To check your information for accuracy it is a good idea to spell out the names and words as you scan over them rather than just reading them. Once this information is sandblasted into the monument it is permanent. The size of the monument, the style of letters and the length of the names may dictate the size of the inscriptions. Due to these factors we will decide what size inscriptions are best. If you request a certain size we will try to make it work. You can select the letter size for the family name. Although, if it doesn't fit we will have to determine the size. In most cases inscriptions are placed inside frosted panels. A panel is usually a rectangular box surrounding the inscriptions. Some other panels used are scrolls, ribbons and books. These panels usually take up more space but can really enhance the overall design of the monument. Some colored granites will not have panels and the inscriptions are sunk into the polish. This works on the darker colors because the sandblasted letters have more contrast. Litho paint can also be added to the inscriptions to provide contrast.