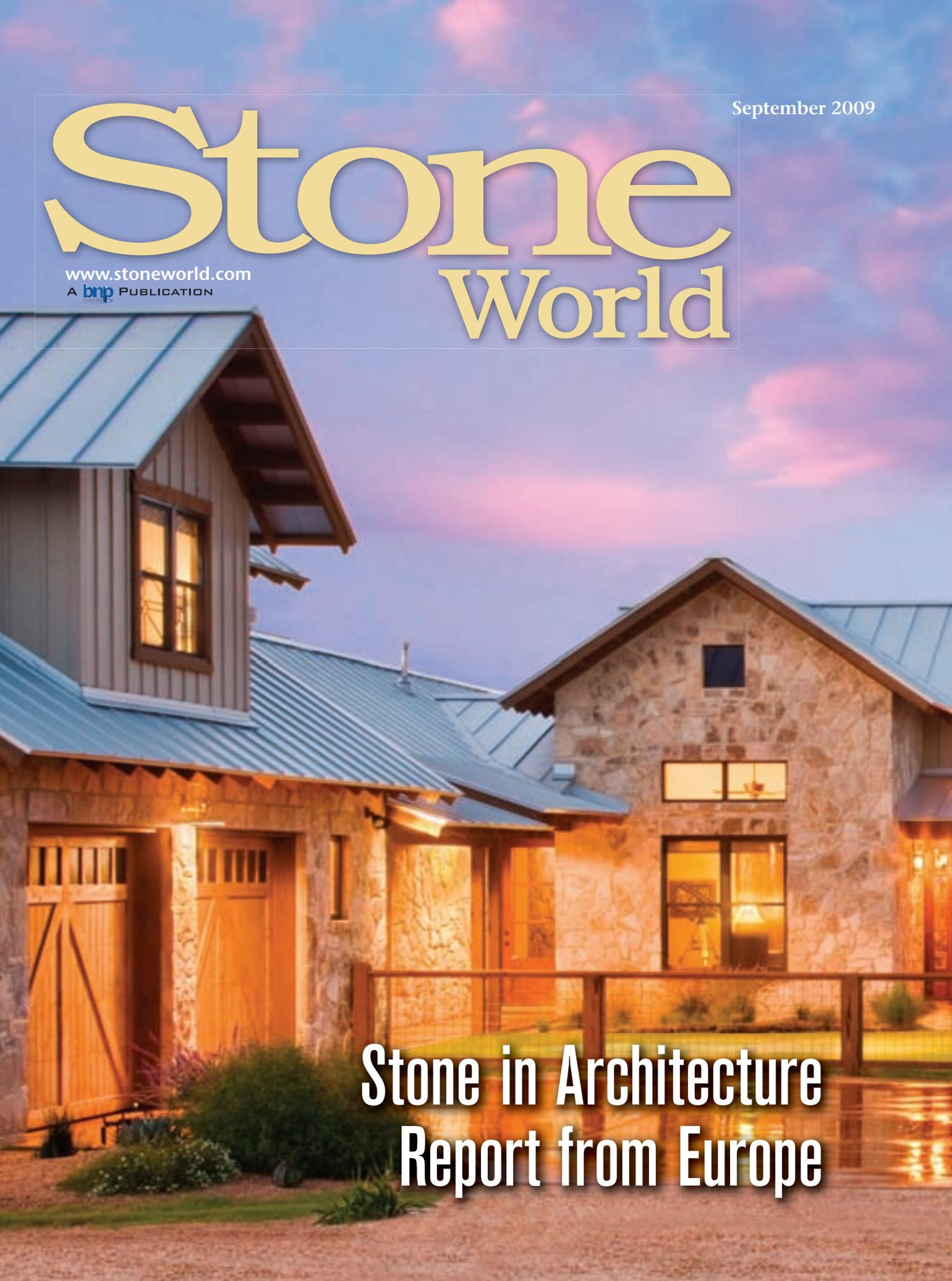


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**Stone in Architecture
Report from Europe**

A North American stone supplier with Turkish roots

Based in Toronto, Canada, Tru-Stone operates three stoneworking plants in Turkey, and it provides a range of finished products

by Alexis Fisher



Based in Toronto, Canada, Tru-Stone operates three stoneworking plants in Turkey, and it provides a range of finished products. Workers utilize a broad range of equipment in the stoneworking process.



Among the different finished products, the company produces a range of stone tile formats.

Through technology and dedication, the owners of Tru-Stone — a family run company — have achieved operating three factories in Turkey, while being based in Toronto, Canada. Discovering the most efficient methods in its operations

has been key in giving the company an edge in its success.

After coming to Canada 18 years ago and starting out with the distribution of ceramic and porcelain tiles, Ali Bayramoglu and sons Adnan Bayramoglu and Sedat Bayramoglu,

who are all the principal owners of Tru-Stone, began importing natural stone and mosaics from Turkey in 2001. “It grew in popularity very quickly,” said Sedat Bayramoglu. “As we realized the growth and potential of this type of natural product, the opportuni-



During the production process, panels can go through one of the company's six polishing lines.



Large-format tiles are among the products offered by Tru-Stone.



There are a total of 120 workers directly employed by Tru-Stone, who are mostly stationed in Turkey

ty came for us to a purchase a factory in Afyon, Turkey.”

Throughout the years of developing and expanding its machinery, production and market share with its first Turkish factory, Tru-Stone decided to take a dive into other operations in Turkey, where it now owns a total of three in Afyon and Bursa. “Since we are

a Canadian company, one of the biggest obstacles we have had to overcome is to manage the operations of three factories from the other side of the world in Toronto, Canada,” said Bayramoglu. “With the help of cameras all over each factory, a reliable management team in each factory, the use of communication programs like skype and other online

programs, daily reports on all machinery performances and frequent visits to the factories, we have proven, although difficult, that this was indeed possible.”

There are a total of 120 workers directly employed by Tru-Stone, who are mostly stationed in Turkey, producing a range of finished products, including tiles, mosaics, pavers and split-faced stone. The operation in Toronto houses the company's head office, a showroom and a large distribution center, and it is where all of the operations are controlled, and inventory is kept. It is run by 12 individuals, including many family members, who all play major roles in the company's good fortune.

Production capacities

Depending on the item, Tru-Stone can currently produce approximately 2 to 2.5 containers of finished products a day. “I can confidently say, we are among the most efficient manufacturers in the industry,” said Bayramoglu. “With countless hours of planning, trying and sometimes even failing, we have found the most efficient techniques to produce high-quality stones.”

A demonstration of these tactics can be seen in the company's investment of a 120-blade gangsaw for tile production. “[The] gangsaw gives us on average 55 square meters of products per cubic meter of block where as a standard block cutter gives us 32 square meters of products per cubic meter of blocks,” said Bayramoglu. “This difference, looking at it in financial terms, saves us around \$100,000 per month and has quite an impact environmentally



PALIN GRANIT OY



Outdoor storage facilities allow plenty of space for the company's array of products.



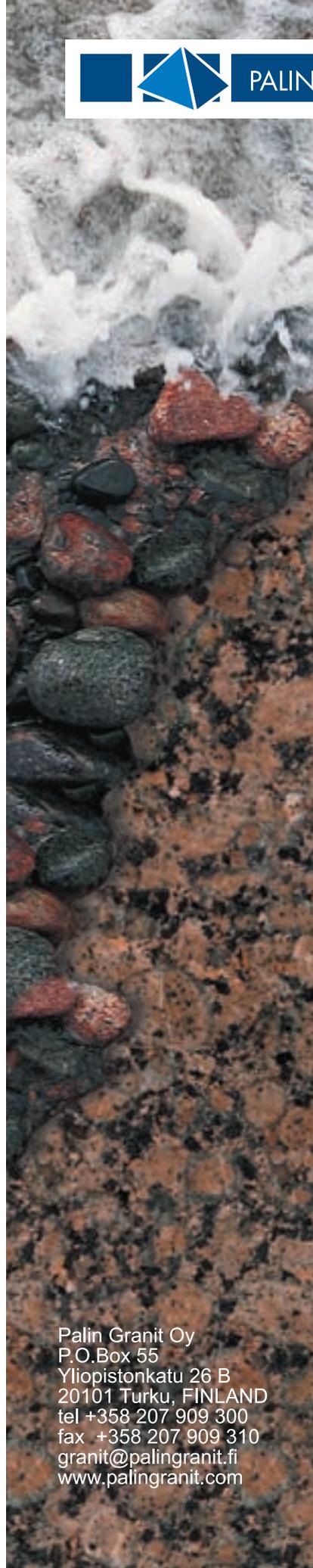
Available finished products include tiles, mosaics, pavers and split faced stone.



The three operations in Turkey can be found in Afyon and Bursa.

by using a lot less raw materials, transportation, conserving more electricity, having a lot less wastage to dump — one truck load per day difference in left over mud alone — and using much less employees to get the job done.”

Beside the 120-blade gangsaw, Tru-Stone does still own five standard block cutters, which it reports only using for paver production or as backup. Furthermore, the three factories utilize the following equipment for production: one double-blade



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A large inventory of finished products is maintained at all times.



Efficiency practices and the customer

From 1- x 1-inch mosaics to 18- x 36- and 24- x 24-inch tiles, Tru-Stone is able to sell any size in between, which allows for little to no waste. "Our wastage is almost next to nothing in comparison to other manufacturers who sell mostly 24- x 24- or 18- x 18-inch sizes and have at least 30 to 40% breakage, which cannot be utilized so their costs end up going way up," said Bayramoglu. "Since we are able to market and sell various sizes of each product in a good balance ratio, this brings down our cost tremendously, and the savings is passed down to our clients."

Guaranteeing the best prices in the market is part of Tru-Stone's marketing strategy, which sees a client base of mostly distributors, dealers and to a lesser degree, architects builders, contractors and designers. Most of the company's sales come from Canada and the U.S. in addition to having some clients in Turkey, the Caribbean, South America and Europe, who work directly with Tru-Stone's factories in Turkey. Tru-Stone reports being able to ship most orders immediately from its Toronto warehouse.

Future plans

With customers already having the opportunity to choose from more than 250 products, Tru-Stone is in the midst of purchasing a new light beige marble quarry and a white/grey marble quarry, where it plans to produce various fin-

saw, six tile honing/calibrating and polishing lines, one slab polishing machine, one bridge saw, one diamond wire frame saw, three trimming machines, three cross cutting machines, one epoxy resin line, two drying lines, three horizontal splitting machines, three travertine filling lines, one industrial water treatment system, four mosaic cutting machines, one split-face machine, two tumbling machines, one "super thin" cutting machine, two chiseling machines, three forklifts and two cranes.

The majority of the machines are

made in Turkey from such companies as M.K.S, Sarioglar, Konmak and Toksel. Tru-Stone has also recently purchased equipment from Chinese manufacturers, including Zhongli and Tenglong Stone. "After visiting these companies and doing some careful research, we had just as much confidence in machines from China, and they have certainly proven themselves" said Bayramoglu.

In the near future, Tru-Stone plans to add another 120-blade gang saw as well as an additional polishing machine.



Additionally, a showroom in the Toronto, Canada, location allows customers to view a broad range of Tru-Stone's finished products.

ished products and sell raw blocks.

If the new equipment investments go through — including adding another 120-blade gangsaw and polishing machine — it will also allow Tru-Stone to begin slab production. "Our aggressive growth plans include increasing our inventories at our factories in Turkey and

in Toronto in order to cut lead-times," said Bayramoglu. "We also look forward to opening up another distribution center in the U.S sometime next year.

"Having healthy steady growth has always been our top priority," he continued. "Strictly using our own financial capital to run our business and make our

investments gives us a solid foundation to grow upon. Paying all of our major expenses, including transport, cost of some raw materials, packaging, etc. all up front enables us to lower our costs and always have companies lined up to work with us and give us their best to continue working with us." □



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