

## Classic Marble Company: Engineered Stone: The Next Frontier

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Classic Marble Company (CMC), the connoisseurs of the imported marble industry in India began operations in 1994 and in this journey of 20 years achieved many landmarks. Armed with a vision to revolutionize marble, they are at the forefront in terms of constant innovation in terms of design and functionality.

*In Conversation with Amit Shah:*

**What are the latest developments in terms of design and innovation in your products?**

Today, engineered stones are breaking aesthetic barriers in both design and function. With its appearance of natural stone and characteristics that overcome its limitations, engineered stones are being widely preferred in many residential and commercial projects. This new age stone variety offers consistency in colors and patterns and is basically inspired by the beauty found in natural stones. KalingaStone which is Classic Marble Company's flagship brand for engineered stones offers the widest choice of over 200 varieties in both engineered marble and quartz. Its latest launch in the quartz collection has vein patterns as its characteristic differentiator from the rest and is expected to be the next big trendsetter in the industry. Released in the market under the titles – Bianco Carrara, Bianco Venatino and Statuario, this collection of quartz has a striking resemblance to the classic white Italian marble that carries similar veined patterns and is in much demand.

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The concept of surface covering is widening day by day. In the past, the stones were considered as part of functionality only and flooring was the key function. The surface covering has moved beyond flooring. In present times, it's not just functionality but they add style and glamour to the space. In most residential and commercial projects, stone application is a key part of designing and decoration. Its application areas have extended to various interior and exterior spaces such as bathrooms, kitchens, cafeterias, and entry-ways, living areas, bed rooms, lobbies and many more. Quartz, as a strong non-porous stone is mainly used for bathroom and kitchen countertops and also in vanity tops and worktops. Engineered marble outrides every single function of natural stone; be it about creating wall highlighters, engraved marble walls, marble floorings, wall claddings or even just framings.

**What are the current trends and what trends will emerge in the future?**

The concept of engineered stone is very popular and is an established product in the overseas market. However it's still an emerging segment in India and architects and decorators have begun exploring the newer design possibilities with the introduction of these stones. Architects and designers are big influencers and determine the course and success of a product. Simultaneously, today's consumer is equally equipped to identify the best that is available in the market and the prevailing trends while keeping the economics in mind. The market for engineered stones is gathering good momentum and is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years. Presently, KalingaStone is being consciously offered exclusively through company owned showrooms and dealers so that not only would we impart full knowledge on the subject while selling the products but also we would be in a better position to take perfect care of 'after sales service' which is the key to success in any line of business. This is a strategic decision made by the company and we are positive that the engineered stone market will create a new benchmark in the Indian stone industry by 2020.

**What is the volume of your exports?**

Classic Marble Company is the largest exporter of engineered stones with a 50 per cent market share in the segment. The products are exported to over 53 countries across 6 continents.

**Is it possible for India to become one of the primary exporters in the future?**

KalingaStone agglomerate marble and quartz are green products, made out of natural marble lumps. The products are of international standard, made from imported material and processed using the latest and most advanced technology. We face extremely stiff competition from neighboring Asian countries like China, Taiwan, Korea and other developing countries even after having the expertise to produce the best quality products. So, it is not that the products are not marketable in foreign countries but it is about the non-conducive export policies that make the business tough for us. Some export incentives if received from the Government, will play a vital role in improving the export market scenario for the stone industry.

**Are there any barriers that impact exports?**

We face competition on pricing from countries like China and Korea due to which we lose ground. To be competitive in the global market we request some export incentive from the Government in this area which will increase our export share in the global market. The marble industry requires assistance from the Government by giving us an MEIS incentive @5% on exports of composite marble and quartz stone. If this benefit is given we are hopeful that India's share in the global market would increase substantially.

**How is this industry incorporating the Make in India programme in its projects?**

KalingaStone products are manufactured at our state of the art plant in Silvassa with imported machinery and raw material and are exported to over 53 countries across 6 continents. The product is creating Indian foot prints in the global market and is a part of the Make in India program. KalingaStone is a green product which is sustainable, hygienic and available in over 200 colors and patterns.