

CREATING YOUR PRIVATE MAUSOLEUM



A mausoleum is a highly individualized expression of the individual or family interred within. Discerning individuals know that only the highest-quality custom mausoleums are suitable monuments for the exceptional. Whether a custom mausoleum represents the great achievements attained in life, or immortalizes the love for and devotion to beloved family members, the mausoleum design and construction process is the culmination of a powerful partnership between the individual or family, and the custom mausoleum design professional.

Distinguished individuals choose custom mausoleums because custom mausoleums match the owners' desires. A truly custom mausoleum is:

- A showpiece of engineering;
- A paragon of a particular architectural style;
- A mausoleum with special features, such as state-of-the-art security or music system;
- A copy of an existing mausoleum or noteworthy building;
- Something eclectic and unique, like the Statue of Liberty or the St. Louis Arch.

I. INITIAL CONSULTATION

Every custom mausoleum begins with an initial consultation. During the initial consultation, the family discusses the important details of the mausoleum. Common questions during this process include:

Mausoleum design and construction requires an esoteric blending of skills; one part engineering, one part architecture, and one part art. High-end custom mausoleums are designed and built by master craftsmen, experts in their fields with decades of experience shaping raw stone into beautiful and majestic memorials.

The master craftsmen creating these one-of-a-kind custom mausoleums for Forever Legacy are award-winning craftsmen who have created noteworthy public monuments. These master craftsmen, like Forever Legacy's founders, understand the drive for perfection, and the discretion necessary when working with high-profile clients.

- How many people will be interred within the mausoleum?
- Does the family have any design preferences or architectural styles in mind?
- Should the mausoleum include wall crypts, or stand-alone crypts that will be the focal point of the mausoleum?
- Would the family like the mausoleum to include benches, or even a chapel or altar, where family members will come to visit and mourn the deceased?

Another important detail is where the mausoleum will be built, as a cemetery may have restrictions on size or design of the mausoleum. Estate mausoleums provide

more flexibility in construction, but place future limitations on the property.

Families looking for inspiration to select a custom mausoleum design should browse pictures of other mausoleums that highlight architectural styles or design details they might include. At the family's request, mausoleum builders offer basic design suggestions, or a choice of basic design options, that the family can customize by adding:

- Statuary
- Inscriptions
- Carving and scrollwork
- Custom finishes.

The design of a custom mausoleum reflects the individual or family entombed within, and is limited only by their imagination.

The goal of the initial consultation is a clear understanding of the ideas the individual or family wants to convey through construction of the mausoleum, and a sense for the design details most important to the family. All of this is done with sensitivity, understanding, and discretion; particularly if a family is in mourning for a lost loved one.



When the private mausoleum builder has a clear idea of the family’s wishes, the design process begins.

II. MAUSOLEUM DESIGN

Custom mausoleum design coalesces an extensive range of variables. Custom mausoleums incorporate ideas, design details, and symbolic elements that reflect the individual’s or family’s life, faith, and legacy. Mausoleum design must be architecturally sound, engineered to withstand the ravages of time and the elements. Careful consideration is given to structural elements such as columns, walls, cornices, and doorways; these elements must be functional and structurally sound while reflecting the architectural style and ideas that the mausoleum incorporates. The engineering must be impeccable to ensure longevity.



The design team implements the concept through architectural drawings or CAD drawings, refining as needed to match the client’s vision for the custom mausoleum. In some cases, the family may consult with the architect personally to ensure that the architect comprehends the ideal, and to refine the drawings until the custom mausoleum design is perfected.

Once the drawings are complete and approved, the mausoleum builder prepares a final proposal outlining details such as materials, costs, and timeline. When the family accepts the proposal, the granite quarrying and stonework begins.

III. GRANITE: QUARRYING AND PROCESSING

Selecting the right granite for a custom mausoleum is a very important process. Only the highest quality architectural granite is used to ensure durability. Our granite is available in a range of colors from quarries across the United States, most notably in Vermont and Georgia.

Granite is the best material for mausoleums because granite endures the elements and erosion far better than marble or softer stone. However, the hardness of granite makes it a challenging stone to work; it’s easy to inadvertently chip or flake the edges while cutting. In fact, blocks of granite may contain fissures or flaws that can split and break the granite. This is why it’s critical to have master craftsmen and stoneworkers select the best granite, and work it in a skilled way that doesn’t weaken or mar the stone.



Each cut of granite is carefully chosen and quarried for the private mausoleum. These large blocks are hauled from the depths of the finest granite quarries, and are taken to workshops where they fall under the aegis of master craftsmen. In all, as much as 80 tons of granite, or more, are cut for a private mausoleum. Master stoneworkers, carvers, and sculptors, using a variety of stone cutting and carving techniques, prepare each piece of stone to exacting specifications. These techniques include:

- **Diamond saw cutting:** diamond saws, in conjunction with constant application of water, are used to make large cuts and roughly shape the granite. Granite is extremely hard, so stoneworkers incorporate diamond chips into the saw blades to cut this tough stone. Applying water while cutting reduces silica dust and promotes the longevity of the blades.
- **Water jet cutting:** water jets are used in the finishing process to create a smooth, polished look on the granite face.
- **Laser or jet heat torches:** heat torches and lasers are used in a thermal finishing process to chip away granite and create a rough surface.

After the granite is cut to size, stoneworkers carve, engrave, and then finish the pieces. Master sculptors create custom sculpture and fine detailing to imbue the mausoleum with personality and a unique style—one that reflects the esteemed individuals interred within.

World-renowned master carvers can shape blocks of granite into majestic columns, and create friezes, sculptures, and bas-reliefs that provide truly unique detailing for one-of-a-kind custom mausoleums.

IV. MAUSOLEUM BUILD

After the stone is prepared, it is carefully transported to the building site, with much care taken to ensure the granite arrives in pristine condition. Builders painstakingly pack the cut,

Master craftsmen use power and hand tools to carve names, create large or intricate details, and create custom finishes on the granite. Common stoneworking techniques employed by master craftsmen to add finishing details include:

Sandblasting. Sandblasting is used to engrave names in the stone, and sometimes for decorative carvings.

Rubber templates. Stoneworkers create a rubber template on a computer to stick on the face of the granite. Then stoneworkers use hand tools or sandblasting to uncover stone around the template and create a design.

Raised Elements. Skilled stoneworkers create raised elements by carving out the stone around these elements, either using a rubber template or by using epoxy to apply design elements to trace around.

Columns. Much of the big carvings around the top and bottom of columns are done by hand using hand chippers or rotary tools like the Dremel to shape intricate details and create unique designs.

polished, carved, and sculpted pieces for transportation, labeling them carefully to ensure the on-site build proceeds in a timely manner and without error.

Transporting mausoleum granite is a substantial task. The weight of a private mausoleum is extraordinary, with some weighing 80 tons or more. The weight of the mausoleum alone demands careful transportation and preparation of the site. To support the mausoleum walls, a five-foot deep reinforced concrete foundation must be laid.



Builders specializing in granite mausoleum construction erect the mausoleum on-site. These builders use cranes and heavy equipment to carefully place each piece of the mausoleum, using specialized techniques to join the pieces and create a lasting monument that withstands the ravages of time. The smaller pieces are hand-placed, piece-by-piece-by-piece, using specialized epoxy and specific warps to ensure the longevity of the mausoleum.

At every step in the installation process, builders check to ensure segments are level, and that they fit perfectly with the adjacent sections. They constantly crosscheck the build with the design drawings to ensure that every detail is perfect.

Once the mausoleum itself has been erected, the installation team adds the interior and exterior details that make the custom mausoleum a truly unique monument. Art glass, statuary, windows, bronze doors, and other effects add to the mausoleum's appeal, and create a monument that reflects the stature, legacy, and personality of those interred within.

Landscaping adds a final touch of polish and refinement to the custom mausoleum design. The mausoleum design incorporates landscaping elements that beautify the site without distracting from the impact of the finished building such as:

- Topiaries
- Trees
- Flagstone walkways
- Statuary
- Custom lighting

Landscaping elements and subtle details create a finished piece; a perfectly unified design that blends with the construction site and provides a lasting monument.

For more information about custom mausoleums, or to schedule a consultation with a custom mausoleum builder, visit Mausoleums.com or contact Forever Legacy at (800)298-4188.