



Lord Hillborn granite Chimney in Tuxedo Park, NY. Granite stone pier in Brooklyn, NY. Another set of entrance piers in Tuxedo Park, NY.

wall of stones in a fashion similar to mosaic tiles. In a Tuxedo Park house the exterior walls are composed of chunky granite stones ranging in size from as large as a car tire, to no bigger than a textbook. The patchwork coloring of the stones ranges from creamy yellows to deep grays, peachy-tinted whites, and every combination in-between. "You set down all your big slabs first, and then you fill in with your smaller slabs," Michael says, explaining the process. "Then you finally template the smallest pieces to fit in; it's kind of like doing a big jigsaw puzzle in a way."

"Once I did a multilevel fireplace for a customer. The family had collected various stones and fossils as well as art. As I constructed the fireplace, I incorporated their items into the stonework, each level representing a different time, place and memory. It was one of my favorite fireplaces. The personality of each section came to life as I added the family's memories."

With 29 years in the business, Michael has worked with thousands of types of stones and has developed a mantra. "My theory is stonework should look like it grew out of the ground," Michael says. "So usually, if I have my say, we'll use a local material that's from the area so it looks natural." When it comes to making things look natural, Michael is an expert and recently had the artistic freedom to create a fireplace he believed would fit in. The fireplace is constructed of rounded stones stacked on top of each other, and offset by warm red bricks. "The house sits on a meandering stream with all beach pebbles, so I wanted to make it look like they might've gone down to the stream, gotten those beach pebbles, and made this fireplace." He added that he rounded and softened the edges to make all the stones look like they've been worn by the flowing water.

Michael also makes sure to recycle any unused materials and his backyard is filled with an assortment of different stones purchased from demolitions. "We recycle whatever we can," Michael says. He added that he recently acquired a façade of a Brooklyn brownstone when the house was being razed. "We're really reusing the workmanship that was done on these [stones] a hundred years ago or so. Stone has a primal and rustic quality. If you see a wall and it looks too perfect or "fake" it loses something. That is why I like the older stone", showing me his collection of stone dating back to the Revolution. "Whenever I hear of a mansion or building being demo'd, I try to get as much of the stones as possible, then re-use them in my projects. I guess you can call it re-cycling!"

Michael says his love of stone as a medium is because it's so primal and natural. His work spans from the heart of New York City, to the different villages in Rockland County, like Nyack, South Nyack, Piermont, and Tuxedo Park. His is a rare artistry that blends skill and expertise with creativity — hand cutting and carving each piece to create magnificent works of stone. Always staying true to his roots.

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