



B.C. ROCKHOUNDER MAGAZINE

Issue # 2 - 2020

Rockhounder Artist in Focus : SHELLEY PENNER

EDITOR'S NOTE

As Issue 2 of 2020 goes to the virtual presses, the province is just coming out of lock down, and slowly we are approaching a full return to our normal activities, or what will constitute our normal activities going forward. Many of our rock clubs have been closed and remain closed for the time being, many of our shows and other events have had to be cancelled, including the biggest show in the province that the BCLS usually hosts every year to great acclaim.

We are blessed as rockhounds in that our outdoors pursuits loan themselves to social distancing, even if we do like to go as a group at times, and that for the most part hounding can be accomplished with a small group even while under the strictest distancing rules. Social media also allows us to share a lot of our adventures with others remotely, so in a way we are doubly blessed to be followers of this passion.



With that said, I would like to thank those that contributed to this issue of the Rockhounder - it would be difficult to keep the publication moving forward without my fellow rockhounds and members of the BCLS assisting. I would also like to appeal to all members to consider contributing - be it photos or stories or sharing adventures. I have re-instituted the Artist in Focus feature... so please nominate someone to be our next participant! I would also very much like to start a series of the founding of our various clubs and how they came to be, so please consider sharing the details of your group with our readers.

I have removed our Rock Events pages for this issue. With the ongoing health crisis and cancellations being very unpredictable, I didn't want to chance providing inaccurate information. Please check the BCLS website (bclapidary.com) for show updates and other related news.

I would like to ask readers to consider sending me a brief email with any questions, opinions or suggestions - Should we have more photos, less caveman speak... any feedback is helpful. We also have a presence on Facebook and Instagram which you can use to get in touch (just click on them).

Facebook

Instagram

Greg Carson

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If you are a BCLS member and business owner / hobbyist who wishes to promote their products, consider placing an Ad here in the Rockhoulder. There is currently no charge for members, we only ask that the Ad be Rock/Lapidary related.

We are not currently accepting Ads from non-members.

rockhoulder@bclapidary.com

Greg Carson, Editor

ARTIST IN FOCUS : SHELLEY PENNER

I would like to thank Shelley for taking the time out of her busy schedule to complete our Artist Query and for agreeing to be our Artist in Focus for this issue of the Rockhounder. - Greg



What was your first artistic endeavour & in what medium? What was the inspiration?

That depends on what you mean by 'artistic endeavour'. I have done art in some form as far back as I can remember. I remember feeling frustrated with hard cakes of watercolors and newsprint to work on in elementary school. Got my first set of proper watercolors in tubes when I was 13. If by 'endeavour' you mean my first paid commission, I believe it was a portrait in pencil a very long time ago.

Have you progressed through different mediums? If so, how were you introduced to the different mediums, and what impact did working with the different mediums have on you as an Artist?

I started with Chinese watercolor (includes opaque white), graduated to transparent watercolor,



did a phase where I worked a lot in graphite pencil and colored pencils. I worked for a while as picture framer, which allowed me to frame my work at a discount, but when my boss moved the business to Vancouver, I found I couldn't afford to frame anymore, so I went looking for a way to create hangable artwork without framing. That's when I started painting with acrylics on rocks. I could see landscapes in the stone slabs, and since birds and animals were my favorite subjects, it just seemed natural to paint them into the landscape of the stones. Then a couple of years ago, a friend gave me a closet full of blank canvasses she had inherited from her mother. I borrowed an airbrush to try out and fell instantly in love. Airbrushing offered much of the same spontaneity I'd had, and missed, with watercolors. So now I almost always start a canvas with an airbrushed background. I have also tried encaustic wax, oil paints, and numerous other mediums, but watercolors and acrylics are my favorites.

Who influenced/encouraged/supported you (personal friends or other professionals etc) and what was their influence on your style/processes?

I took two and half years of art school, but I can't say any of my instructors particularly inspired me. I enjoyed art school but found it mostly a waste of time and money. A few years later, I joined the Federation of Canadian Artists so I could attend their summer workshops on Salt Spring Island. I learned more in one week at one of those workshops than I did in two and half years at Vancouver School of Art (they changed the name to Emily Carr College of Art the last year I attended. Other than that, I guess the artist you has influenced me the most is Robert Bateman. On a personal level, the artist who encouraged me to show my work was Allan Wright.

What cultural influences (if any) have been strongest in your development?

I come from a British heritage, but I don't really know of any particular cultural influence in my work.



What events/aspects of Life & Circumstance have influenced your art most strongly?

A love of nature, which I inherited from my mother, has been the strongest influence. Getting my first proper set of watercolors, some decent paper to work on at a young age would be another, and buying my first camera, which has become an invaluable 'sketching' tool.

What creation of yours has brought you the greatest joy/pride (to date)?

Whichever one I'm working on at the moment. The joy is in the creating, in channeling the energy of the universe to make real an inspiration. To date the piece I feel proudest of is a large canvas I did a couple of years ago called 'Mother Earth Sowing the Seeds of Life'. I used an unusual technique called mural mosaic, where I created a master image, in this case, Mother Earth blowing seeds out of her hands that turn into dragonflies, butterflies and birds. I then divided the canvas into 192 squares of 2 1/2". I painted each tiny square as a painting in itself and also part of the master image. But who knows, next year I might do something I like even better.

What are your future aspirations?

To just keep creating as long as it gives me joy. At present I am working on publishing a series of sci-fi novels, because I also love to write. My first novel comes on the market Oct 6th of this year.

What advice would you offer others who may feel inclined to pursue Art of one type or another?

Have faith in yourself and don't compare yourself to others. Do it for love. Do it for joy. You may never get rich, you may never sell a single thing, but nothing will keep you saner in this crazy world than creating.



Are there particular caveats you would offer for the pursuit?

Don't give up. Don't get discouraged. We learn from failing, from making mistakes and everything gets easier with practice. If you love it enough, you'll get there. Just have faith in yourself and

Are there any medium specific caveats you would mention?

Don't keep your coffee or tea on your worktable. You will end up cleaning your brush in it, and many pigments are toxic.

Do you have any suggestions for engendering inspiration or related processes for the new Artist?

Paint what you love. If you need inspiration, look through art books (the library is a great source) or Google your favorite type of art online. Working from your imagination is hard, especially for new artists who are still developing their skills, so don't feel shy about working from photos you like. Maybe take parts of several photos to create your own composition.

Are there any art related regrets? Things done/not done? Mediums not tried, subjects not used? None. Everything happens in its own time.

Self Conception (as related to artist endeavour). How do you see yourself? Artist (or particular medium title like sculptor etc)?

I see myself as a creator rather than a painter, writer or photographer, because I am all three and all three are creative.

Are there moral/ethical guidelines you personally follow?



Not consciously, but I have no interest in creating anything unethical, immoral or hurtful to anyone. And then again, morality is a relative concept. Religious people might consider images of pagan culture immoral, but I quite enjoy them.

Are there limits in regards to subject matter or presentation?

Most definitely. See my last answer. I also have little interest in painting anything manmade – houses, cars, machinery, etc., but I have painted all three at times on commission. I have no particular interest in painting nudes, because I personally think people look a lot more interesting with clothes on.

Are financial considerations something that carry weight during the process, and if so, how do you balance those against inspiration/ideals?

Yes, I do tend to mostly paint subjects I know will sell easily, partly because I don't have a lot of



storage room, so if I can't sell, I can't paint more. Luckily, the subjects that most inspire me are also favorites for a lot of people.

Do you find money (and related concerns) inspires/constricts expression?

I think it's bound to restrict expression to a certain extent, but personally, I usually find commissions very inspiring, trying to create something to please and give joy to someone else. The money might be a motive for accepting the commission, but pleasing the customer is the inspiration that shapes the work.

Are some projects too big or too small for you to consider (as related to

financial compensation, time invested etc)?

I once turned down a \$1000 commission to paint a mural on the side of a building because ... I don't like ladders. Too small? I regularly do \$20 fridge magnets on commission. I have painted on some pretty odd stuff on occasion – sawblades, feathers, a piece of rough slate, a dragon on a silk necktie, polar bears, walrus and orcas on an enormous chunk of glass slag, just to name a few.

Can you comment on how you balance time invested versus financial payout? Or on how you value/monetize your efforts?

I am a fast painter, but really, when I'm creating, time has no relevance. Time spent gets compensated in other ways, because creating energizes and balances me spiritually. When it comes to pricing, I balance my overhead cost against a price I think the market can bear. Sometimes it means a profit of only a few dollars, sometimes it's almost pure profit. I tend to charge according to size, how much I like it and what I would be willing to pay if I was buying it. I like to keep my prices low enough that most anyone could afford to buy. I would rather have it out there in the world, being enjoyed, rather than sitting in my closet with a big price tag. The one exception is my Mother Earth canvas, which took three months of my life and has (for me) an enormous price tag. But I really don't care if it doesn't sell. It's hanging on my wall right now.

Does social convention impact your endeavours or processes?

I expect it does, but not consciously.

How much do current trends affect you, if at all?

Not at all. I am not a trendy person. For the most part, I dislike current trends toward less

attention to detail, less heart, less grace, less melody, less peace.

Do world events & political turmoil ever manifest in your works?

Never. I find world events and politics depressing. I hate politics and distrust most politicians. Nature has politics its too, but nature's politics make sense.

Are you interested in teaching or mentoring? Have you already & what might the future hold for you in that arena?

I taught lessons in drawing and watercolors for parks and rec for twenty-one years. At present I have no time or inclination to teach again, but some day I might turn our basement suite into a classroom.

Do you have creations that are purely for you, and have never been shared? If so, what makes these creations so personal?

I don't have anything that I won't share. It's the act of creating I value and the energy it pulls in from outside myself. Once a project is complete, it becomes dead energy, just a memory of the actions taken to bring it to reality. I can enjoy looking at it, sometimes with wonder that it came from me, but I have no trouble parting with it. Even my Mother Earth painting if someone was willing to pay my price.

If you could create a piece that was guaranteed worldwide (deep) exposure, would you want to?

Why not?

What medium do you think you would use & is there an inspiration or statement you would apply to it? (This question assumes there are no financial considerations – anything and everything would be viable).

I would like to create a sensory chamber – a 3D diorama of an alien world, similar to what you see in a museum of natural history, only a complete surround, like stepping through a door into another world, with gentle movement and stimulation for all the senses, something imaginative, peaceful. I expect it would have to be a shared project, since it would take many skills I don't have and don't have time to develop to the necessary degree. But it's something I've dreamed of since art school.

Hey all you Rockhounds! I want to hear your stories, see your pictures and share your adventures! BUT... I need you to share them with me first! Please send your submissions to me at the email below. If you want to send huge sizes, I suggest placing your files into a cloud based program and just sharing the link with me, so I can download them directly, and neither of us is limited by email size restrictions.

rockhounder@bclapidary.com

Greg Carson, Editor



Amateur Photography Contest – 2021 Calendar

Enter to WIN one of 13 feature spots in the 2021 Calendar and a lapidary related item, value not less than \$20.

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. Photos must depict the end result or findings of “Rockhounding in British Columbia” Such as rocks, minerals or fossils, which can be cut, polished or carved if desired.
No people please.

2. Photo Requirements

a. TIF and JPEG formats only

b. Images should be a minimum of 3300 pixels by 2550 pixels (landscape) and 300 dpi resolution

c. Include the details listed in #16 with each entry

d. Files are to be named with your name, the title of the photo and where the photo was taken

Examples: Suzie Smith - Goldpanning – Hope BC.jpg

3. Submitting digital files via email

a. Send photos to denisecullen@telus.net

b. Send files as attachments

4. Submitting digital files on CD

a. Seal your CD(s) in an envelope

b. Submit the envelope to:
BCLS Calendar Contest
c/o 965 Fort Fraser Rise
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 6K4

c. CD(s) will not be returned

5. Entries must be received by July 1, 2020.

6. Because of the high quality standards used in printing the calendar, reproduction quality will be considered. Images not meeting specifications indicated in #2 will not be considered.

7. If your member dues are not paid current with the Club listed in #16 your entry will not be considered. Your membership will be confirmed with your Club listed in #16.

8. The Amateur Photography Competition is open to all Club Members recognized by the British Columbia Lapidary Society.

9. Photographs that have won any other contests or have been published in magazines and newspapers (except online) are not eligible.

We define winning as having won a grand prize or 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place overall. Photos that violate or infringe upon another person's rights, including but not limited to copyright, are not eligible.

10. Photos must be taken by the entrant.

11. All decisions of the contest judges are final.

12. The prizes are: i) your picture being one of 13 featured in the 2021 Calendar, and ii) a lapidary related item valued no less than \$20.

The lapidary related prize item will be chosen at the discretion of the British Columbia Lapidary Society. The prizes must be accepted as awarded without substitution, and cannot be transferred. The prizes have no cash equivalent.

13. By entering the contest, entrants grant the British Columbia Lapidary Society a royalty-free, worldwide, perpetual, non-exclusive license to display, distribute, reproduce and create derivative works of the entries, in whole or in part, in any media now existing or subsequently developed, for any promotional, publicity, exhibition, archival and all other standard purposes. The British Columbia Lapidary Society will not be required to pay any additional consideration or seek any additional approval in connection with such uses.

14. The British Columbia Lapidary Society is not responsible for any entry which is lost, misplaced, misdirected or delayed for any reason.

15. Please do not contact us about the status of entries. Winners will be notified via email or Canada Post.

16. Please include the following information with each of your submissions:

a. Name (first and last)

b. Address

c. Email Address

d. Name of the British Columbia Lapidary Society Club that holds your membership

CLUB NAME	CONTACT	EMAIL
1120 ROCK CLUB	Lindea Parnell	president@kelowna.rocks
ABBOTSFORD ROCK & GEM CLUB	Michelle Floris	marsharargentino@gmail.com
ALBERNI VALLEY ROCK & GEM CLUB	Les Bontron	lbonttron@telus.net
COURTENAY GEM & MINERAL CLUB	Russell Ball	dj_fossil@hotmail.com
COWICHAN VALLEY ROCKHOUND CLUB	Jennifer Proctor	jeproctor@shaw.ca
CREATIVE JEWELLERS GUILD OF BC	Silvia McIntosh	info@creativejewellersguild.com
CRESTON VALLEY PROSPECTORS	Gerry Rehwald	rehwaldg@telus.net
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FRASER VALLEY ROCK & GEM CLUB	Carol Alexander	cjapaints@hotmail.com
GOLDEN ROCK & FOSSIL CLUB	Stan Walker	swalker@persona.ca
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HIGH COUNTRY ROCKHOUND CLUB	Jan Kohar Gord Lavery	gkohar@telus.net glavery@telus.net
INTERLAKES ROCKHOUNDERS	Elsie Babcock	greem@shaw.ca
KOKANEE ROCK CLUB	Udo Matern	xldigger@shaw.ca
LAKES DISTRICT ROCK & GEM CLUB	Helen Brown	rkbrown49@hotmail.com

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RIPPLE ROCK GEM & MINERAL CLUB	Steve Cooley	scooley@uniserve.com
SELKIRK ROCK & MINERAL CLUB	Frank Fowler	ffowler@telus.net
SHUSWAP ROCK CLUB	Florence Jarvis	shuswaprockclub@gmail.com
SURREY ROCKHOUND CLUB	Gord Venn	gordvenn@shaw.ca
THOMPSON VALLEY ROCK CLUB	Edna Park	ednapark@telus.net
VERNON LAPIDARY & MINERAL CLUB	Tony Heisterkamp	chewe@telus.net
VICTORIA LAPIDARY & MINERAL SOCIETY	Doug McLeod	wesmac12@gmail.com

SCULPTURES BY LARRY SHABLE

Larry was kind enough to submit some pictures of some of his works, along with some details of his background. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have. - Greg



These are a few examples of carved/sculptured soapstone. I have been a woodturner and wood carver for years. Many years ago I took a course in carving, went on to teach myself and it just evolved over the years. Because of being able to carve wood, it wasn't that difficult to transition to soapstone. More or less I woke up one morning and decided to do it. Because I wasn't able to find much in ready made tools I fabricated my own, learned what worked and what could be improved upon.



Being retired, I find carving, sculpturing, and turning, a wonderful hobby, and a couple of hours working in my little shop keeps life good. From sculpturing soapstone, I have taken up carving Jade. Then I got into tumbling rock. There seems like there is no end of the things that can evolve from one hobby to another. I recently discovered that from rock tumbling, you can substitute glass, and now you can make sea glass.





B.C. MARBLE PRODUCTS

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, THEY CAN MAKE IT

by Greg Carson

Tom Smith and Steve Thorpe-Doubble opened BC Marble in July 2017, but started the commercial development work on their quarry back in November 2015, beginning with a bulk sampling permit and accessing a remote island off the west coast of Port Alberni, in Effingham Inlet. Years prior, during their work in forestry, the pair had made the discovery of a distinct two-toned marble deposit there which, when brought to market, they would end up calling Pacific Orca. When considering how to transition from the volatile forestry industry into something more stable where they could apply their professional drive and creativity, the duo began the arduous task of sourcing professional stone quarrying tools, as well as converting some of their forestry equipment. They even converted the drive mechanism of an excavator into a large quarry saw! In March this year, I had pleasure of touring the facility with my club, and Tom explained the start of the business and its' development since. He told us of how when sourcing professional grade quarry machinery, Italy is always the first stop. Italy has a centuries old and world famous quarry tradition, and to a degree, has the market cornered in expertise. However, the prices there reflect that aged speciality, so the second source for professional grade equipment is China, and that is the choice that Tom and Steve went with for their incredible large CNC wire saw, which is capable of some truly amazing cuts... but more on that later.

Currently, BC Marble has expanded to three quarry sources: their first and source of the beautiful black & white Pacific Orca marble in Effingham Inlet, as mentioned above. The second being a very bright white marble source from the Telegraph Cove area of northern Vancouver Island, and the third being locations on Gabriola Island, where the pair harvest their distinctly dense brown and blue sandstones, in high demand for historic restoration projects like Craigdarroch Castle. The journey of a block of marble from Effingham to the shop in Chemainus is achieved by barge and large truck and can take more than a month and a half, while trucking firms bring in the other materials.

Once the materials are on-site in Chemainus, the guys begin the work of mass cutting, splitting, shaping and polishing as needed for each order. They have a large range of equipment at their disposal for these tasks including: Large CNC wire saw, smaller (but still large) custom built wire saw, large belt fed saw, splitter, large polisher deck and a number of smaller chop and slide style saws.

All of these saws require a lot of water to run, but thinking ahead and with green results in mind, Tom and Steve installed 3x 1700 gallon tanks on site through which they recycle the water after capturing the rock paste/dust from the work. This liquid material is purchased by soil manufacturers and farmers as it is mostly pure calcium carbonate and excellent for naturally adjusting pH in various applications. This means very little water or material waste from the business. The guys also have a large scraps pile that they allow people to take free samples from – as they did with all of us who toured the site. I have to admit I may have over indulged a little on the sampling but the material is just too good to pass up.

As marble is naturally prone to both hidden and healed fracture lines, Tom and Steve





often cut a bit more than the order requires to account for inevitable failed pieces, and even those are either recut for smaller projects like corners or are added to the scrap pile for folks like me to salivate over.

The large 2D CNC guided wire saw is capable of handling blocks up to 14 feet long and 8 feet tall, and runs an 8mm sintered diamond wire. The wire is tough enough to cut through reinforced concrete with rebar easily, and can create amazingly smooth and complex curves in the material. On the previous page is a large marble block undergoing a vertical cut, and above is sandstone taking a horizontal cut. All large cuts are supported with wedges and monitored closely for imperfections in the stone or process.

Quarrying is always fraught with fractures and imperfection, and marble is more challenging than you might realize. As Tom informed us during the tour, while granite quarries generally harvest four out of every five blocks worth of material cut in relatively useable format, that number falls to one in five for marble, meaning that finding a perfect block for large scale processes can be difficult.

This is where BC Marble's main saw operating profiles come into play, allowing for instant adaptation to any flaws found in the stone. The large 2D capabilities of their



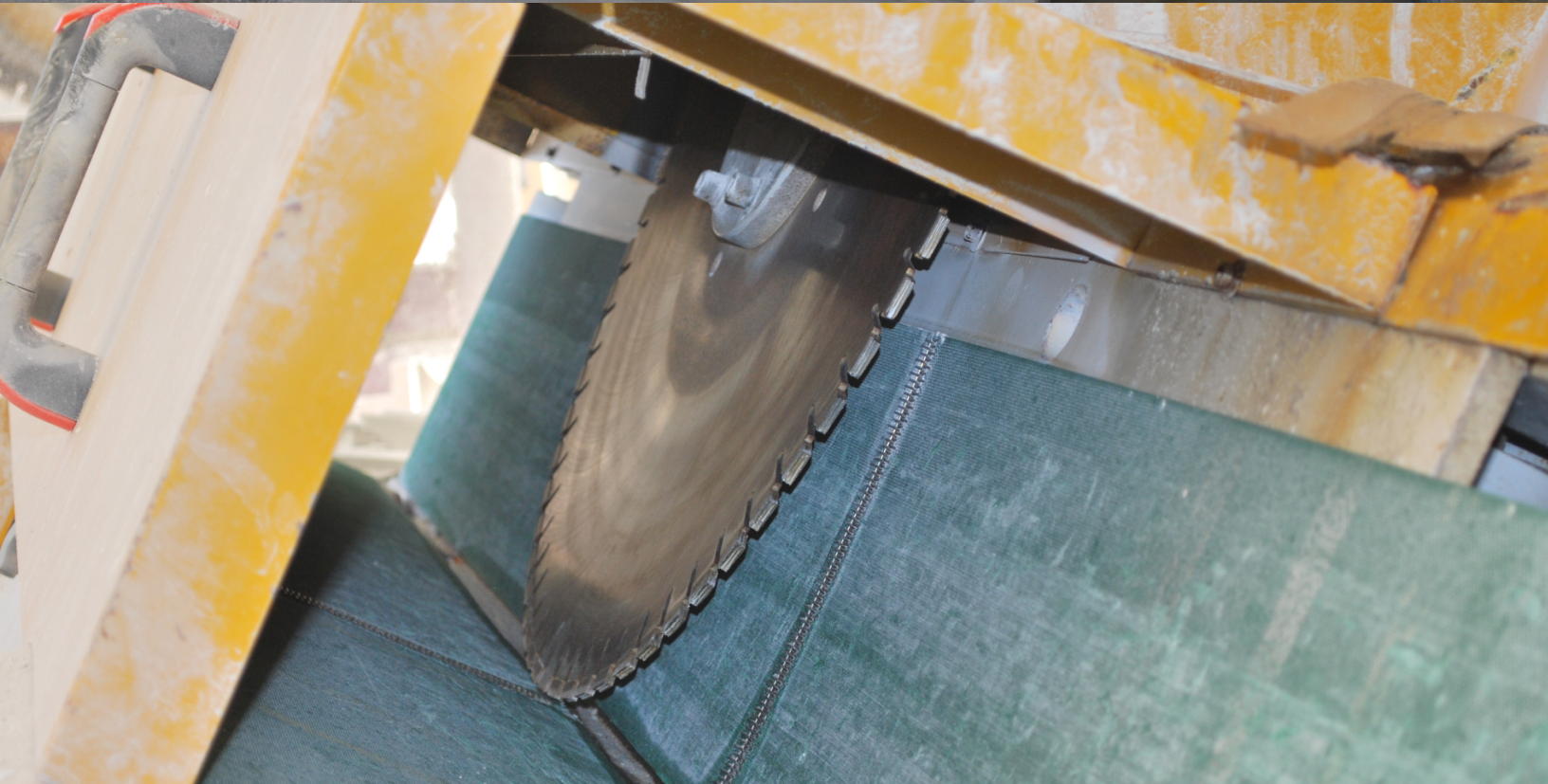
main saw allow them to carve huge blocks with amazing accuracy, working around fractures and imperfections with minimal waste, in addition to carving large beautiful shapes for custom pieces.

The polisher is one to make any rockhoulder drool - running eight large tool heads with grit ranging from 60 to 6000, it is capable polishing huge amounts of material in very little time, requiring only the maintenance of swapping out the heads or Frankfurt Bricks (inset image) as they are called. Once the marble is polished to the required level it can be deployed to the customer. Given that marble is largely a calcium carbonate based material, sealing is required to keep stains and damage from penetrating the stone. Tom was quick to point out that if someone were to leave a cut

lemon on any block of marble for an extended time, the acids in the lemon juices would start to etch the stone. While I have used acid for mineral sample clean up, I have to admit I never considered the potential simple food acids could have on what seems to be such a hard material. The gents at BC Marble use a specialty contractor for sealing their products, and while his formulation is a trade secret, the sealant itself is water based. Tom recommends all stone (even that of his competitors in granite and such) be resealed every six months or so, just to be certain of lasting perfection.



Some amazing examples of their work - the fireplace and mantle cut on the 2D CNC saw, the live edge table... even the clock on the mantle cut from marble into a corner stand of unparalleled appeal. This is but a small selection that Tom and Steve have in their showroom. Outside are full picnic tables, sculptures and all different shapes and sizes of marble and sandstone feature pieces. You can see more samples on the website of the business - just click: **bcmarbleproducts.com**



A giant belt fed slab saw you say? Why yes, the gents here run a colossal version, capable of some pretty amazing volume and accuracy. Can you image the samples of your favourite rock going through this monster?!



Another important tool in the business is the splitter. Used to create split face wall cladding and other rough face products, the splitter is a large machine that is capable of processing a lot of material. It produces some of the most popular sandstone material for the business, one high pressure chop after the other.

This type of wall cladding brick, made from the high density sandstone quarried locally on Gabriola Island, is used in modern architecture as well as in historical restoration projects like the work on Craigdarroch Castle. This sandstone is so dense that it can actually take a gloss polish. This same material was used (although in beautiful large blocks) in the project at Royal Roads University - visit the BC Marble Products website for some stellar examples Steve and Tom's materials and craftsmanship.



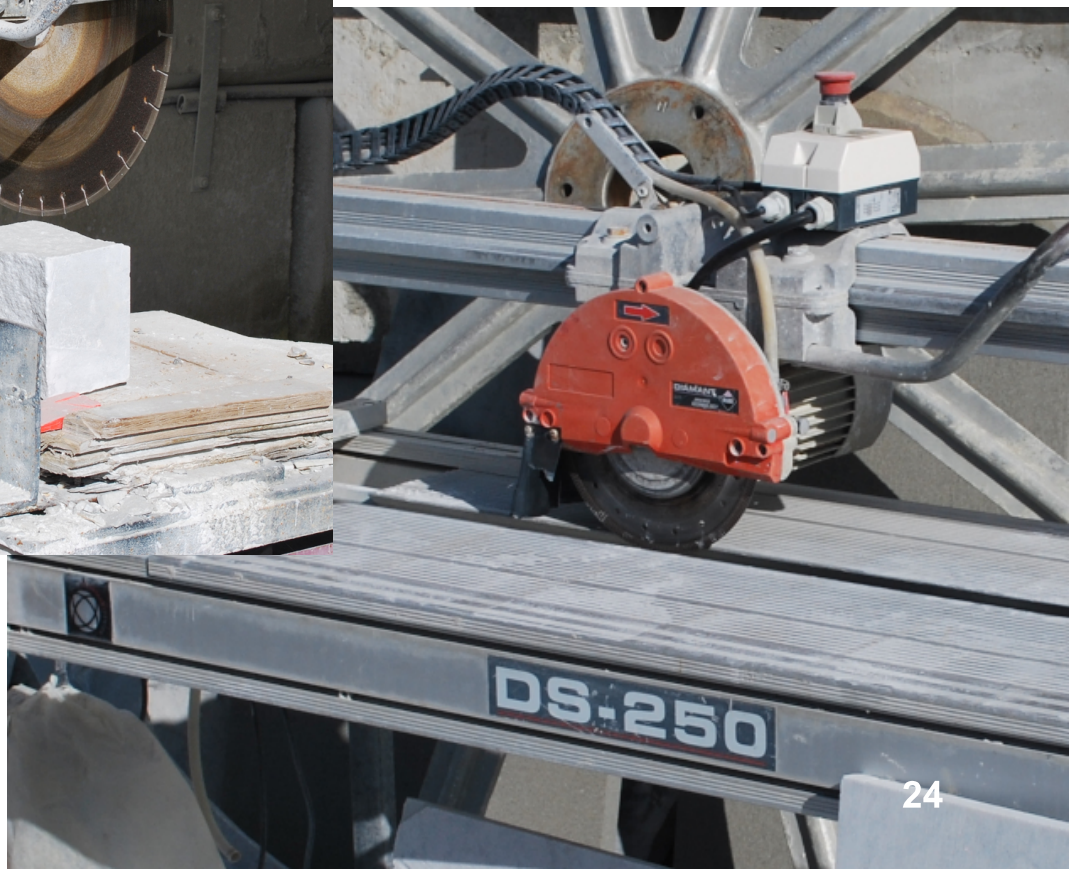
In addition to the splitter, there is a second, smaller (but still large in scale) custom made wire saw, as well as some of the other saws (see following page) that are a little more to the scale that most rockhounds are familiar with. However, as some projects require very unique shapes and various polish levels, Steve also uses a large range of power hand tools to accomplish this, be it grinding out a tighter curve or polishing into recesses that the large machines simply cannot reach.

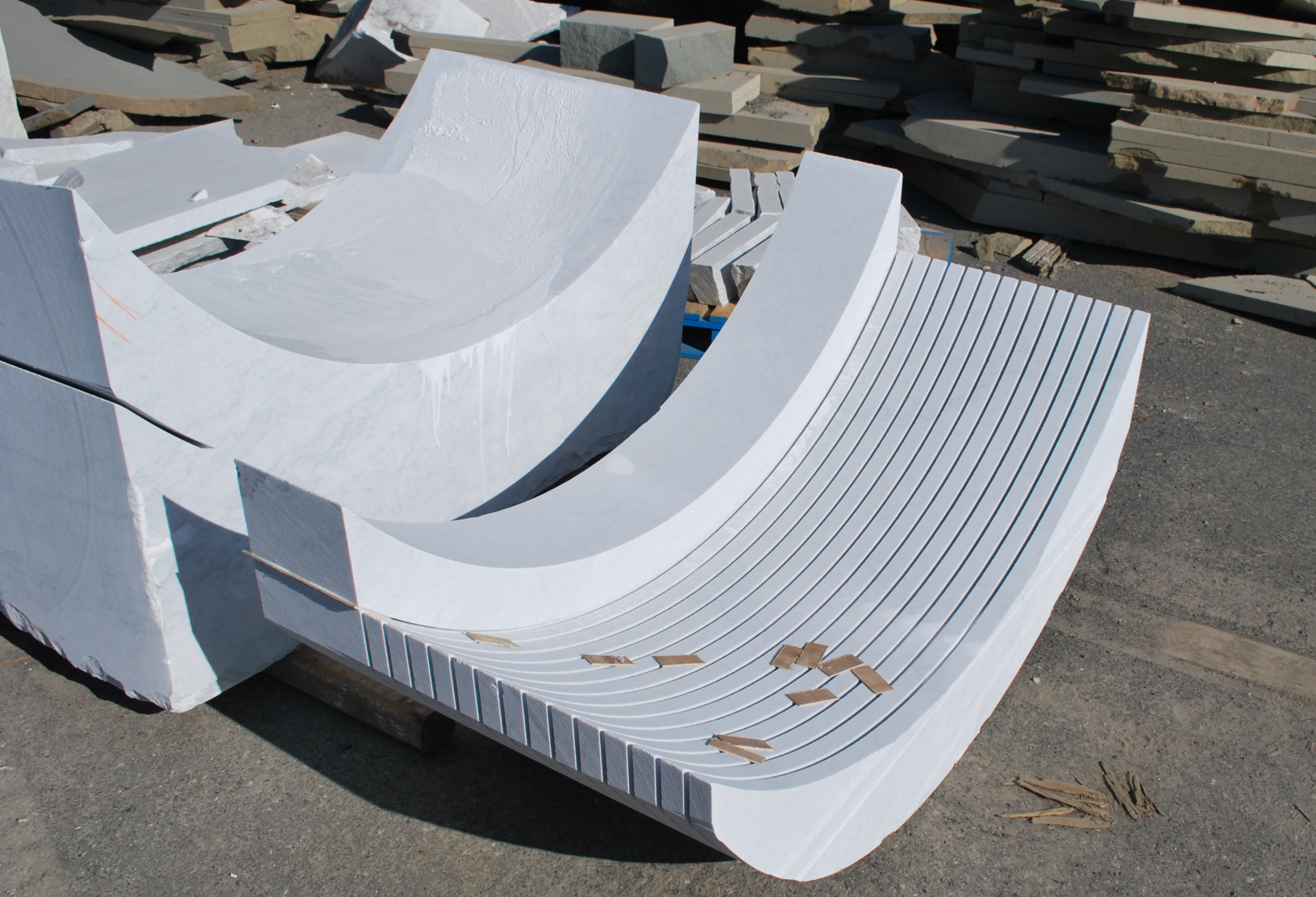


Above: The brown and blue types of sandstone available at BC Marble Products. The photo really does not do this material justice, as the colours and textures are far more vibrant in real life.

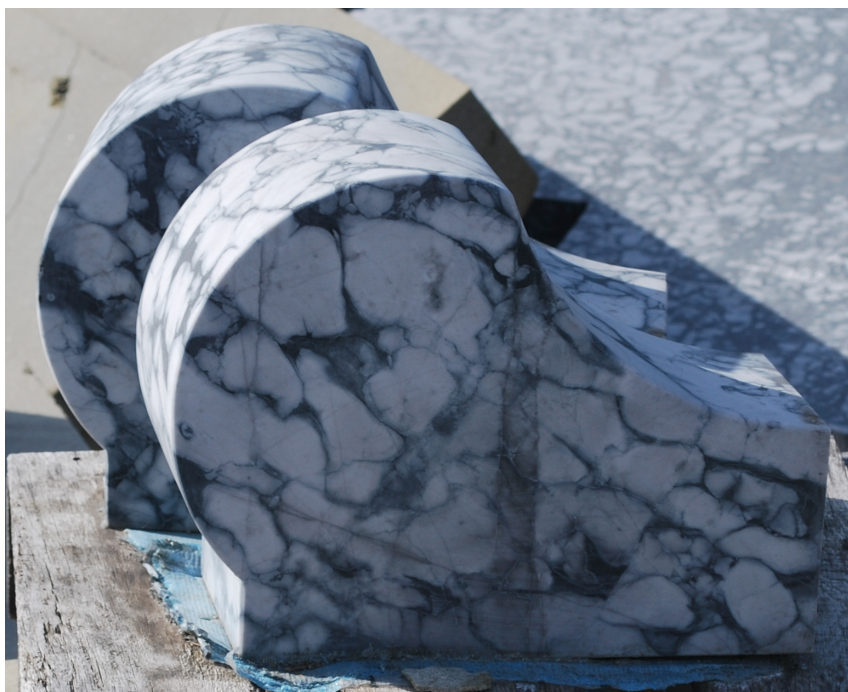


Below/Beside: The small (but huge for most lapidary folks) chop saw and the sliding saw used for the business' smaller projects and finer work. For scale, the block on the chop saw stand was at least a solid eight inches tall.





When I asked Steve if he had a favourite project or type of work to do, he stated that he enjoyed the challenge of always working on new and unique pieces. He was working on creating marble headers for a business, and took me over to see what one looked like during the process. First the huge blocks are cut with the precise



curvature needed to suit the customers needs. This is accomplished on the large CNC wire saw. The next step after shaping the crescent on both sides are the vertical slices to create the actual headers. Now to be clear, it is not as simple as chop/chop/done... there is a lot of wedging and careful detail adjustments - I am simplifying for the sake of brevity, but don't want to make the work seem easy - it takes considerable skill. Left: A small example of the kind of unique curves Tom and Steve can cut their stone into.. although small here is over a foot high with gorgeous colour.



Above: Live edge slab stock. The slightly blue hue is from shadowing on the day I took the picture - the stone is actually a very clean black and white marble. Those sharp edges are exactly how the rock was found after natural formation.

Below: Live edge slab polished and deployed beautifully as a table.





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