



"Museums are managers of consciousness. They give us an interpretation of history, of how to view the world and locate ourselves in it."

Hans Haacke,
Artist



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REDEFINING LUXURY IN STONE

India's centuries-old legacy in natural stone continues to evolve amid rising competition from engineered surfaces, global imports, and shifting design sensibilities.



ramesh bhandari,
director, a-class marble

As the Indian market shifts toward design-led, project-based applications across residential, hospitality, and infrastructure sectors, A-Class Marble is positioning itself as a curator of rare, globally sourced stones for the country's expanding premium segment. Through strategic investments in international quarrying, advanced processing technologies, and experience-led retail formats, the company is aligning with demand for bespoke, large-format, and high-performance marble solutions.

Ramesh Bhandari, Director, A-Class Marble, speaks about evolving design preferences, sourcing strategies, and the future of natural stone in India.

Here are the key excerpts from the interview.

IFJ Plus : India has a strong legacy in natural stone. How is A-Class Marble positioning itself in a market increasingly shaped by engineered surfaces, imports, and alternative materials?

RB: India has a deep-rooted legacy in natural stone, and at A-Class Marble, we position ourselves as curators rather than just suppliers. While engineered surfaces prioritise uniformity, we celebrate the fluid, evolving, and eternally captivating nature of real marble. By curating over 600+ globally sourced varieties, including exclusive marble from our own African quarries, we offer a level of translucency and character that synthetic materials cannot replicate. We position marble as a "work of art" for clients who value provenance and long-term aesthetic value over mass-produced alternatives.

IFJ Plus : What are the primary growth drivers for A-Class Marble today in terms of domestic demand, export markets, or expansion into premium project-based segments?

RB: Our primary growth driver is the rising demand for the ultra-premium, project-based segments and high-end residential luxury. A-Class Marble is today one of the largest importers of exclusive

marble in India, offering one of the widest ranges of rare stones hand-picked from across the globe. With a state-of-the-art production unit spanning 10 lakh sq. ft., located at Asia's largest marble market in RIICO Industrial Area, Kishangarh, Rajasthan, the infrastructure and technology we offer are truly a class apart.

The launch of our 120,000 sq. ft. Moti Nagar experience centre highlighted a shift toward experience-led retail, where architects and developers can view large-scale applications. Additionally, our expansion into global quarrying (such as in Zambia) allows us to control the supply chain, ensuring we can meet the increasing domestic demand for rare, high-quality white marble that was previously difficult to source consistently. We also have a new selection of limited-edition white marble, which has been appreciated by architects at our recent exhibits. This includes Angelo White and Angelo Fiore, premium, luxurious marble varieties curated exclusively from our quarries in Zambia. These stones are known for their exceptional strength, density, and suitability for high-end residential and commercial projects.

IFJ Plus : How are demand patterns evolving across residential, hospitality, commercial, and large infrastructure projects in India's marble sector?

RB: Demand is shifting toward meaningful expression across all sectors. In residential spaces, there is a move toward quiet luxury and minimalist aesthetics, with pristine white marble.

In hospitality and commercial projects, the demand is for statement features and dramatic focal points. Large infrastructure projects now seek materials that offer both technical performance and global relevance, moving away from purely decorative use toward marble that defines the space's structural character.

IFJ Plus : With evolving design sensibilities, how is A-Class Marble responding to demand for larger formats, premium finishes, and more contemporary surface aesthetics?

RB: We have embraced the "larger format" trend by offering international-size 18–20 mm cut slabs that create seamless, expansive surfaces. Our response to contemporary aesthetics is evident in our curated collections that feature vibrant gemstone-like colours alongside restrained, modern tones. Our



new experience centre uses architectural elements such as soaring arches and fluid spatial flows to demonstrate how marble can be used in inventive, contemporary ways beyond traditional flooring.

IFJ Plus : How do you view the growing competition from engineered marble and quartz surfaces, and how is A-Class Marble responding to this shift in material preference?

RB: We view the rise of engineered surfaces not as a threat, but as a reason to highlight the authenticity of natural stone. While quartz offers uniformity, we focus on the one-of-a-kind story of every marble slab. We respond to this shift by educating clients on the soul of natural material – its ability to age gracefully and reflect light in ways that engineered surfaces cannot. By offering rare, high-performance marbles that match the durability of engineered stone while retaining natural beauty, we occupy a niche that mass-produced materials cannot reach.

IFJ Plus : What role do technology, automation, and advanced processing techniques play in enhancing product quality and operational efficiency at A-Class Marble?

RB: Just as quiet stones provide a foundational permanence to physical spaces, our technology serves as the unseen architecture of our operational efficiency and meets global standards. Committed to unveiling the strength and beauty of new-age materials in India, A-Class Marble continues to transform the landscape of luxury interiors and architecture by widening the scope of material technology, blending cutting-edge innovation with impeccable global craftsmanship.

Alongside proprietary processes such as StrenInn and advanced multiwire saw machinery, the launch of Innovire reinforces A-Class Marble's leadership. Innovire is a next-generation wire-saw technology—an intelligent, big-data- and AI-driven model that recommends optimal cutting processes for different stones and diamond wires, ensuring precision, reducing delays, and enhancing production efficiency. Through these sustained investments in material science, sourcing, and technology, A-Class Marble continues to redefine operational benchmarks while reinforcing its enduring promise: to lead with integrity, innovation, and an uncompromising standard of excellence. A few years ago, we introduced advanced surfaces such as ceramic and Italian porcelain stoneware and partnered with renowned Italian brands. This marked a deliberate step toward offering high-performance materials aligned with evolving architectural needs.



IFJ Plus : Sustainability is increasingly important in the natural stone industry. What initiatives has A-Class Marble undertaken in responsible quarrying, water conservation, and waste management?

RB: At A-Class Marble, we recognise that natural stone is inherently sustainable, primarily because of its remarkable longevity and lower carbon footprint compared to energy-intensive synthetic manufacturing. To further minimise environmental impact, we practise rigorous quarry selection and partner only with sources that adhere to ethical extraction standards.

At our Kishangarh processing units, sustainability is driven by innovation. We have invested in sophisticated water filtration and recycling systems that enable a closed-loop process, ensuring that the high volumes of water required for cooling and polishing are reused rather than discharged. Furthermore, by treating stone with eco-friendly resins and state-of-the-art strengthening technologies, we ensure the marble wears and ages beautifully. This reinforces a "buy once, last forever" philosophy, an intentional stand against the



disposable nature of synthetic alternatives, proving that true luxury lies in materials that respect both the Earth and the passage of time. Additionally, our Innovire technology further reduces waste, thereby supporting our sustainability efforts.

IFJ Plus : What do you see as the most pressing challenges currently facing the Indian marble industry – regulatory frameworks, environmental concerns, logistics, or global competition?

RB: The most pressing challenges include the logistical complexities of global sourcing and the rising costs of environmental compliance. In the Indian context, technological obsolescence in traditional quarrying and the pressure from low-cost synthetic substitutes are significant hurdles. We navigate these by moving toward a more organised and automated sector, improving supply chain transparency and ensuring that the Indian industry remains competitive with global players through stronger quality control.

IFJ Plus : What is your long-term vision for A-Class Marble, and how do you see India's position evolving in the global natural stone market over the next 5 years?

RB: Our long-term vision is to be the definitive global destination for stone innovation. Over the next five years, we see India evolving from a consumer of luxury marble to a global design influencer. By combining India's rich legacy of craftsmanship with world-class processing technology and direct global quarrying, we aim to position India as a leader in the global natural stone market, offering curated, high-performing materials that support the most ambitious architectural visions worldwide.