



March/April 2003

Number 17

**B**uilt from over 94,545 square feet of granite, marble and quartzite, the new United Arab Emirates (UAE) Chancery in Washington, DC, stands out as one of our capital's most extraordinary pieces of architecture. Built to house the offices of the UAE ambassador and diplomatic staff, the chancery exemplifies the use of contemporary design and technique while paying homage to Arab-Islamic heritage and culture.

The design for the building was created by architect Angelos Demetriou, principal of Angelos Demetriou & Associates, who said the point was not to imitate traditional Islamic architecture, "but to create out of it." To achieve this, Demetriou specified honed, thermal and mirror-polished surfaces for the building's granite exterior, sometimes incorporating all three finishes in one piece of granite. Other features included two domes of patterned mosaic tile, solid granite portico pieces, solid marble and granite staircases, and polished radial granite spandrels in the garden.

Demetriou's vision of a "unimaterial" structure carried inside as well, with a

*[continued]*

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES CHANCERY Washington, DC



**OWNER:** Government of United Arab Emirates

**ARCHITECTS:** Angelos Demetriou & Associates  
Washington, DC

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** Whiting-Turner Contracting Co.  
Baltimore, MD

**CMU CONTRACTOR:** Caretti, Inc.  
Baltimore, MD

**STONE, TILE AND  
MOSAIC CONTRACTOR:** Rugo & Carosi, LLC  
Woodbridge, VA

**LOCAL UNION:** International Union of Bricklayers and  
Allied Craftworkers, Local #1, MD, VA, & DC

**AREA:** Includes 65,795 sq.ft. of exterior stone, 28,750 sq.ft.  
of marble, and 1,500 ceramic tile

**LEVELS:** Five Levels

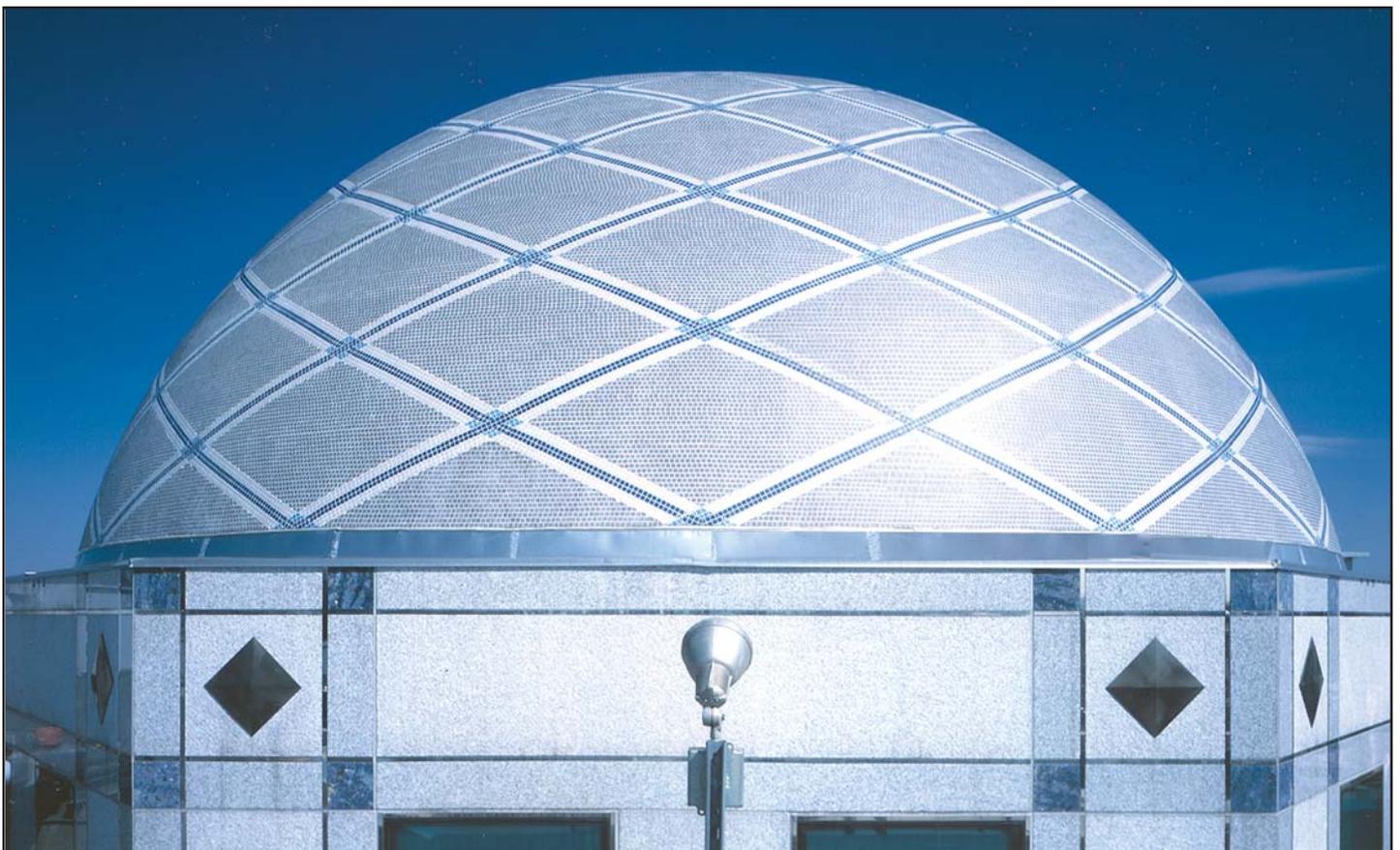
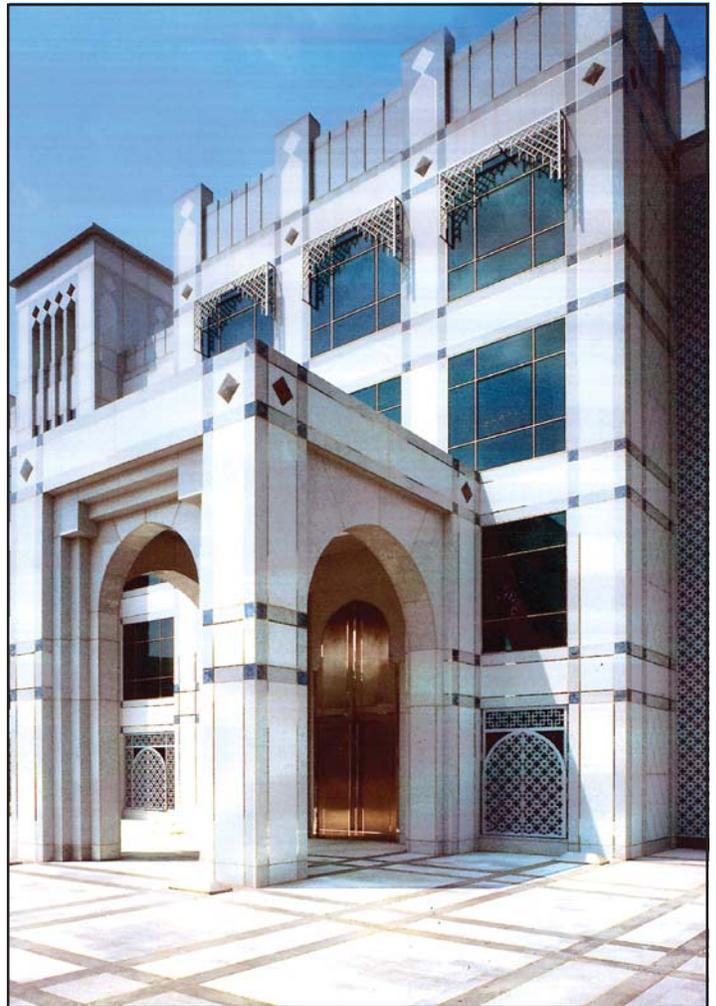
**PROJECT COST:** \$30 Million

**CONSTRUCTION TIME:** November 1999 to March 2001

design that called for solid, fully bookmatched marble for toilet partitions, vanities, and the main floor grand staircase. Flooring for the Banquet Hall would be slipmatched marble, inlaid with two large Arabic patterned marble “carpets.”

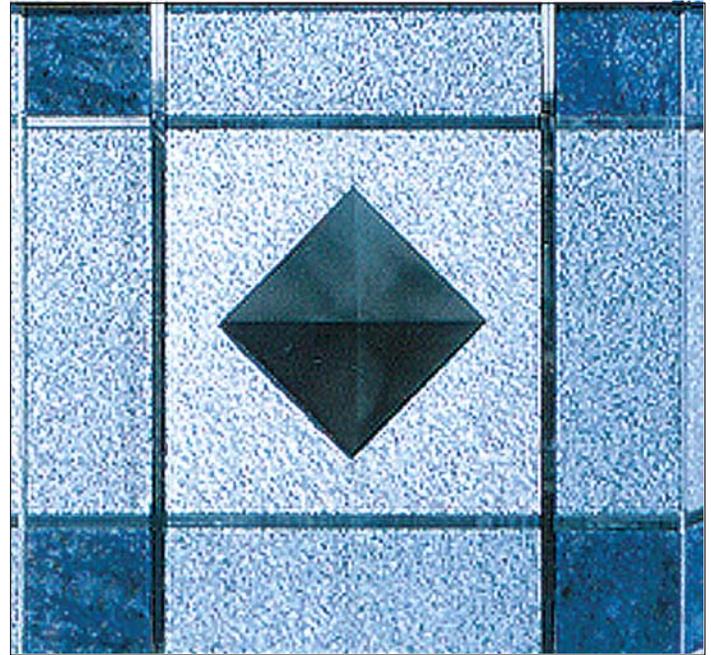
Stone and mosaic contractor Rugo & Carosi LLC of Woodbridge, VA and BAC craftworkers from Local 1 Maryland/Virginia/District of Columbia faced a number of challenges during the construction of this complex project. First among those was the sheer volume of stone required for the job - a total of 94,545 square feet. 35,011 pieces - 65 truck loads - was used for the exterior alone.

Installing the stone provided its own challenge, for the contractor, and for granite fabricator, North Carolina Granite Corp. The



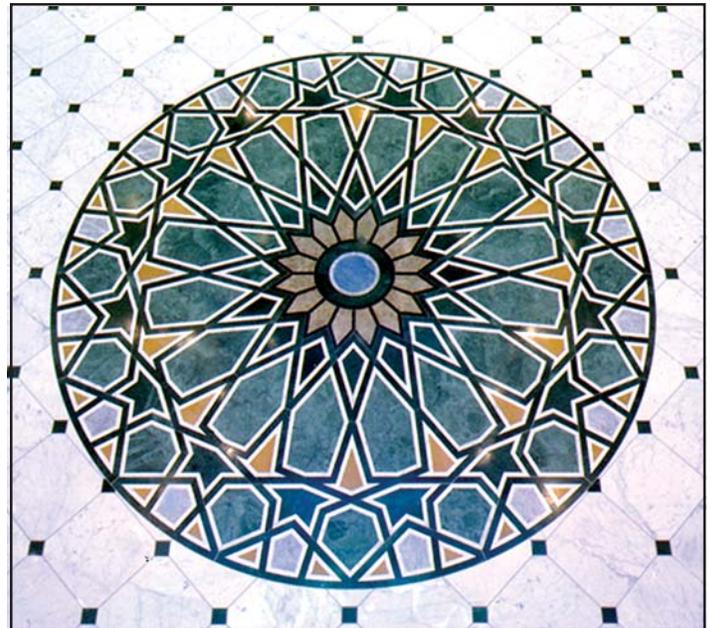
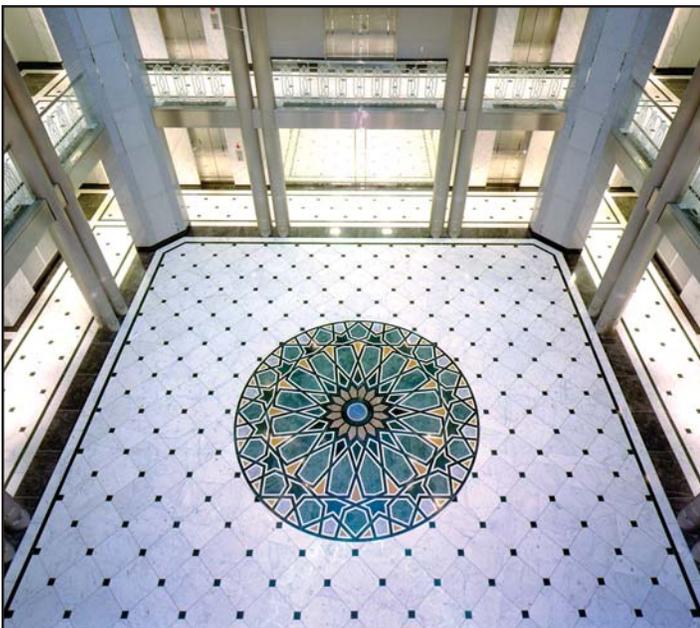
numerous pieces of Mount Airy granite used for the facade were inlaid with 1" wide polished stainless steel bar, and embellished with 1,078 pieces of Azul Bahia granite from Brazil. In addition to sawing a recess in the stone to receive the stainless steel accent bars and drilling holes for the welded studs, a great deal of hand assembly was required. Some of the exterior panels also called for false jointing to create a unique look.

Anchoring requirements for the blue accent medallions prompted President Brett Rugo to design two anchoring systems. Both epoxy and a T-31 through bolt anchoring system were used for each of the medallions, attaching them to a mother piece of the Mt. Airy granite. According to Rugo, it was a job that required using "both a belt and suspenders."



*Brett Rugo, President of Rugo & Carosi LLC, designed two anchoring systems for attaching the blue accent medallions to the Mount Airy granite.*

Inside, challenges included the precise installation of two massive marble floor medallions resembling Arabic carpets. The intricately designed carpets were preassembled and dryset by Marmi Vicentini in Chiampo, Italy, where, after pre-inspection by the architect and contractors, the individual pieces were numbered and shipped to the site. Hand selection of Statuario blocks ensured overall uniformity of color and vein character for the completed marble floor.



In all, Rugo & Carosi's team installed 65,795 sq.ft. of exterior stone, 28,750 sq.ft. of marble and over 1,500 ceramic tile to complete the project, which Rugo describes as essentially an "all stone building." Team members included 20 mechanics, three of them apprentices, plus 20 helpers for the stone work and nearly a dozen tile setters for the bathrooms and exterior domes.

Since its completion, the UAE Chancery has won several prestigious awards, which include the 2002 Prism Design Competition Grand Prize, IMI's 2002 Golden Trowel Award, and the 2002 Washington Building Congress (WBC) Craftsmanship Award.



*The building's exterior features two domes made of Arabic patterned mosaic tile, which were assembled in the field by craftworkers. Together, the two domes required 2,085 sq.ft. of tile.*

### **Stone Materials Used in Project:**

*Mt. Airy Granite - polished, thermal, honed  
Azul Bahia Granite, polished  
Azul Macauba Quartzite, polished  
Nero Assoluto Granite, polished  
Impala Black Granite, thermal  
Statuario Raviccione Marble, polished  
Verde Guatemala Marble, polished*

*Grigio Timau Marble, polished  
Giallo Ghibli Marble, polished  
Verde Saint Nicolas Marble, polished  
Fior Di Pesco Marble, polished  
Nero Belgio Marble, polished  
Greca Bronzero Marble, polished*

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