

[Home](#)

# THE JEWISH STATE

The Newspaper for Central New Jersey's Jewish Communities

## Bringing Jerusalem closer to home

*Remodeling firm using 'Jerusalem Gold' is flourishing*

By Jason Cohen

While experts predicted a one-percent decline in the \$280 billion home remodeling industry this year, Gill Lobel's Jerusalem Stone, a tile and stone company, has flourished.

In fact, Jerusalem Stone has tripled its revenue in the past three years.

Lobel said the idea for the business came to him four years ago, when he and his wife, Rebecca, were in Israel. They were driving toward the Dead Sea, when Lobel looked back at Jerusalem and saw how beautiful it looked.

"I thought it was the perfect idea to sell stones," he said.

Lobel works exclusively with dolomite imported from Jerusalem, which is the same kind of stone that was used to build the city of Jerusalem nearly 3,000 years ago. It was used to build the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, The Vatican Embassy and the King David Hotel. Lobel said that by city ordinance, all structures in Jerusalem are built with this golden material -- nicknamed Jerusalem Gold. Lobel owns the only stone company dedicated solely to Jerusalem stone in Colorado.

"The main theme is that we all want to support Israel," he said, adding that the company donates some of the profits to causes in Israel.

The stone is cut in a factory called Mishor Adumin in Jerusalem, and it is then shipped from there to clients. Lobel said it is mainly shipped to the office in New York, and the majority of the clients are on the east coast.

Lobel's family is originally from Israel and moved to Australia after the Six-Day War in 1967.

"I'm the only one in the states," he said. "I started the company by myself and two of my brothers help me."

"It grew 200 percent the first year, 300 percent the second year, and this year is going to be the biggest year," he said.

His startup costs included a \$20,000 loan from his brother and the sale of a home equity line of credit for \$50,000, which he used to purchase his Denver office. In less than four years, Jerusalem Stone Company has expanded and developed joint venture agreements with stone companies throughout the United States.

Lobel said the majority of Jerusalem Stone's business is with churches and synagogues. However, he said because of how much word has spread about the stone, many private homes have begun using Jerusalem Stone to help beautify their home.

"We are working with the Chabad of Houston now," he said.

Lobel said the stones cost \$16 per square foot, though prices for stone construction vary due to gas and transportation costs.

"We try to fill the containers as often as possible and I try to keep the costs low," he said.

Currently, he said, one of the projects is doing a replica of the wall at Colorado Springs.

Lobel said the primary idea behind the company wasn't turn the company into a big business, though the use of Jerusalem stone is meaningful for many prospective customers.

"My stone is stone that comes from our land," he said. "If you haven't been to Yerushalaim then it's a great way to bring it your home."

Lobel said it is vital to believe in what you are selling, which is one of the reasons his company has succeeded.

"Sell something you love," he said.

"I really enjoy the business and it's fun," he added. "The best feeling is when I see stone and 99 percent of the time the client will say it's unbelievable."

Lobel said that a rabbi from Chicago once called him and told him that people

were stopping and staring at a shul that was constructed with Jerusalem stone.

"The warmest feeling is seeing my stone up on that wall," he said.

Lobel has lived in London, Israel, Brazil, New York, Australia, and currently lives in Colorado. While living in these different places he traded commodities, he said.

"That's how I came to where I am," Lobel said.

Lobel, who was born in Australia, speaks six languages: English, Hebrew, Portuguese, Indonesian, Yiddish, and German. He has traveled to 65 countries and lived in eight before settling in the United States, in Denver. He became a United States citizen last month.

His family is very proud of what he has accomplished with Jerusalem Stone.

"My family loves what I have done," Lobel said.

Lobel has two daughters; Mya, 4; and Noa, 1.

Lobel recently moved into a 30,000-square-foot office in Denver and plans to move an office to Australia as well, he said.