

# Igneous

## Rock Gallery Stone Fountains



sponsor spotlight

Robert Wertz uses 45-million-year-old stone to create elegant, one-of-a-kind fountains

**Igneous Rock Gallery  
Stone Fountains**  
4702 Carlisle Pike  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050  
[www.igneousrockgallery.com](http://www.igneousrockgallery.com)  
717-805-4304

**Name:** Robert Wertz  
**Position:** Owner  
**Industry:** Stone Fountains

Robert Wertz, owner of Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains, first saw the multi-hued stone – andesite, or basalt -- while he was visiting a bonsai studio. It was the spring of 2007, and the stone, he says, chose him as much as he chose to begin working with it, creating fountains of extraordinary artistic and natural beauty. With a respect for the raw elegance and 45-million-year-old history of his medium, Robert crafts each fountain “one at a time, one of a kind,” even venturing to the quarry in Washington state to better understand and incorporate the stone’s “creation story” into his work.

To learn more about Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains, including photos and videos of ongoing projects, visit [igneousrockgallery.com](http://igneousrockgallery.com) and the Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains Facebook page.

And stop by the gallery on the Carlisle Pike. While you’re there, take a walk along the fountain-lined path – especially captivating at twilight – and see what our planet was up to at the dawn of time.

### **What prompted you to start Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains?**

As a landscaping/hardscaping contractor, I was stymied by the lack of

aesthetically pleasing self-contained water features available at garden centers. I set out to find the most beautiful natural stone on the planet and then make custom fountains with it. The first time I laid eyes on our stone of choice, I was taken by the elegance, curious lines and diverse color palette of this incomparable wonder of nature.

### **Tell us about Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains, the stone and where it comes from?**

I create custom-designed stone fountains for indoor and outdoor, residential and commercial applications. Our signature material, Beaver Canyon andesite, is extremely old, having formed 45 million years ago during the Eocene geologic era in what is now known as the Okanogan Highlands of Washington State, just below the Canadian border. Not merely ancient, it is also very rare, an exceptionally small lava deposit by any standard. Through special permission from the State of Washington, our supplier has exclusive rights to quarry this material and is ultimately responsible for restoring the natural setting to its original pristine talus slope disposition.

### **What makes your fountains so special?**

Our singular focus is on the most exotic and beautiful columnar stone on the planet. We are currently the only customer of this stone quarry. The diverse color palette, dramatic height-to-width ratio and wavy lines set this columnar rock apart from other more common and drab lavas. With few exceptions, we limit our focus to the design and presentation of this incomparable artistic medium.

### **What inspires you the most about what you do for a living?**

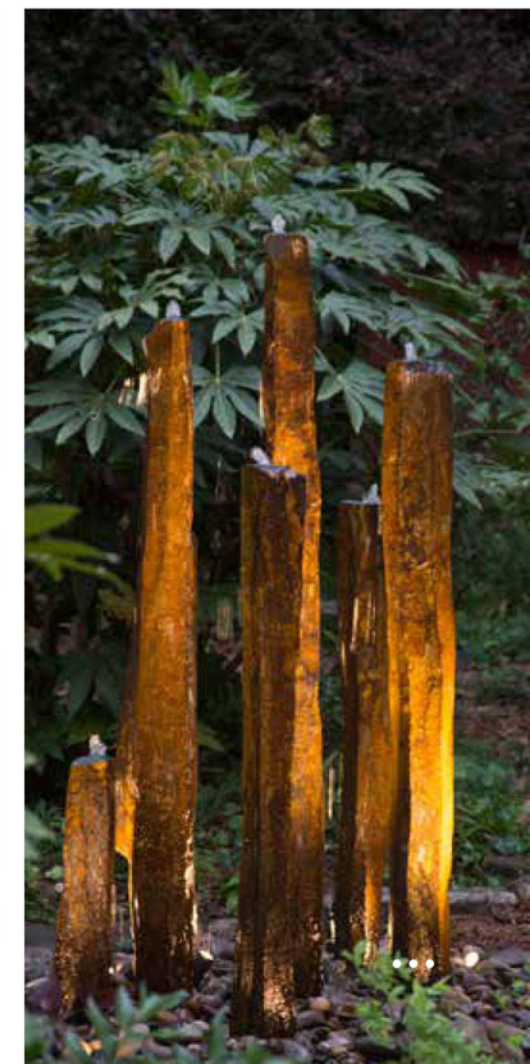
Life is typically hectic, and moments of true relaxation are fleeting. When it comes time to unwind, you should



Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains' 2018 Harrisburg Artsfest Display



Beaver Canyon andesite is the most colorful and slender columnar lava on the planet.





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have an inviting space to do so. I enjoy creating the aesthetic focal point for such a space.

**Describe your process when taking on a new client.**

The process for local clients typically starts with an on-site assessment at the client's property to determine the best location for a water feature. We discuss scale and budget parameters before going to the gallery, where they can inspect twenty or more indoor and outdoor features typically on display, most of them flowing and lighted, some newly designed and ready for water and lights.

Most folks prefer to limit their selection to our finished features on hand. Others enjoy selecting their stones from the hundreds of columns in our loose inventory and then participating

somewhat in the design process. My challenge is to encourage their participation while ensuring the beauty of the finalized arrangement.

**Have you won any awards?**

Most recently, Best of Show at Harrisburg Artsfest!

**Given your expertise and the nature of what you do, do you have any advice to offer to our readers?**

When possible, find a profession you love to do and that you feel passionate about. A major portion of our time and energy is necessarily devoted to work, so make your work enjoyable. I would not want to work this hard at something boring or unfulfilling.

I am blessed to have discovered a medium which melds my creative and artistic aptitude with a background in landscape design and project execution. And, it is a pleasure working with and for people I count as friends.



At the Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains, customers can select their own fountain columns and participate in the design process. Maggie is the official greeter.



Beverly and Robert Wertz in Siesta Key, FL, taking a break from exhibiting at an art festival.



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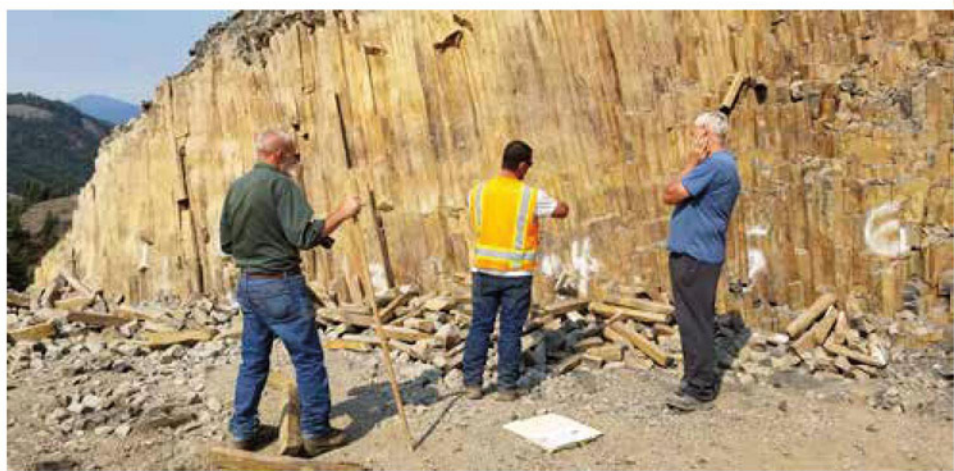


sponsor spotlight

# Igneous ROCK GALLERY

*A trip to the Beaver Canyon quarry*

Robert Wertz's stone is sourced from one small deposit of columnar lava, the most slender and colorful on the planet.



Robert assists in blasting loose this exposed face.

This past August, Robert Wertz, owner of Igneous Rock Gallery Stone Fountains, visited the Beaver Canyon andesite quarry to assist in blasting loose the stone he uses in creating his unique fountains. "I'd been to the quarry many times before," Robert says. "But I had always arrived a few days after blasting, or too early." This time around, Robert was on site for blast day, even helping to place the explosives.

The Beaver Canyon quarry is located in the Okanogan Highlands of Washington state. The history of the rock used in Robert's stone fountains begins 45 million years ago when lava flowed into the landscape and cooled into solid rock. Unique to Beaver Canyon, the rock columns formed by cracking were small in diameter – an average of about 4 inches – and the colors a vibrant palette of yellows, purples, greens, rust and blues.

Robert shares some of the photos from his trip to this extraordinary geological locatoin. Check out the Igneous Rock Gallery Facebook page for more photos and video from the trip – including a video of the blast!

Beaver Canyon andesite in its natural setting ready and waiting (45 million years) to become an Igneous Rock Gallery fountain.



Explosives specialist Tom Johnson, left. Geologist Greg Prescott, right. Steady now, it's a long way down!

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