



Completed in 2019, the McDermott Top Shop facility is a 65,000 sq. ft. fully customized fabrication outfit.

McDermott Top Shop

By Sarah Peiper

McDermott Top Shop, located about an hour west of Milwaukee in Jefferson, Wisconsin, was founded in 1995 by Ron McDermott. Ron was working in cabinetry and countertops when he noticed a need for countertops in the area, as most customers had to travel between Milwaukee or Madison to source a fabricator. Identifying the opportunity was the first step toward what is now a bustling 65,000 sq. ft. operation with an additional service location in Appleton.

Ron started small, together with a couple of employees, doing laminate and Corian solid surface. It was a tiny facility in comparison to what he has now—a mere 1500 sq. ft. “It was exciting. As with starting any new business, there is always a level of uncertainty, but we believed in the opportunity,” recalled Ron. “Things moved quickly, and it has always been fast paced and a lot of fun.”

In 2019, McDermott Top Shop moved to a fully customized state-of-the-art facility that most only dream of. Alongside his son Travis McDermott, who serves as operations manager, and a host of longtime employees, they built a new facility with safety, efficiency, comfort and future growth in mind. “It was our chance to get things right—to build the shop of our dreams,” said Travis. “And when you’re trying to coordinate running an efficient production line with a great customer experience, there are all kinds of factors to keep in mind.”

The new shop features additional crane operations that limit the need for forklifts, a fully climate-controlled environment that keeps materials and production lines protected from Wisconsin’s harsh winters, a full sprinkler system for safety, an integrated dust collection system, water containment and an improved system flow for incoming material to fabrication to installation—a real streamlined



This apartment complex common area includes a custom club room kitchen featuring Haida Quartz by Wilsonart.



65 units in the Landmark apartment complex feature Babylon Gray Quartz from MSI.



The McDermotts didn't miss any details when it came to planning their production lines.

operation. And that's just the fabrication side. The facility also includes a full kitchen for hosting events and parties, a beautiful showroom, training and meeting spaces as well as a large office area.

The McDermotts focus is on residential work, which makes up about 90% of their business. As a wholesaler, the majority of their customers come through K&B, builders, box stores. They cover all of Wisconsin and parts of Iowa, Illinois and Michigan. Primarily working in granite, quartz, stone and solid surface, they value the ability to provide customers with all kinds of options for their projects. Working with a variety of materials enables them to go the extra mile with their customers—to offer solutions that their customers might not be aware of. McDermott Top Shop also offers plumbing solutions, custom brackets, removal services, sinks and more. The drawback is, of course, is having the space to stock all that material and making sure they get most yield. The new space was definitely built with this in mind; there is plenty of room to grow.

On the stone production line, McDermott runs a state-of-the-art dual table BACA Robo SawJet, dual table Fusion by Park Industries, three Titan CNC Routers by Park Industries, a BACA Miter Saw, and a Zoller by GranQuartz. They also use a Komo CNC router on the solid surface line, and a LT55 laser measuring system across all projects. "Technology is critical to our processes and how we do business on a daily basis," said Travis. "Investing in technology throughout our business has allowed us

to be more efficient and deliver a higher quality product to our customers."

Since many customers don't realize all the capabilities of a fabricator can do for them, McDermott Top Shop finds it imperative to review all the options early in the planning stage, so they don't reach the end of a project and realize they missed out an opportunity. "We've always offered our customers upselling items like brackets, sinks, plumbing, upgraded edges, and more," clarified Travis. "It is a great way to add to the bottom line, while getting the customers what they truly want. It's a great way to showcase everything we can do. We've just recently started working with the Hot Sauce app to offer new upgrades and help track these upgrades, and we are really excited to get it in full operation to improve our upselling game."

As with most fabricators, sustainability is important to McDermott Top Shop. They are always looking to make the most of every slab, and they find new ways to use remnants. For example, they've partnered with a local quarry to recycle granite, quartz, and solid surface offal into road base material. They have a 100% closed loop water recycling system



Travis McDermott (far left) and Ron McDermott (fourth from the right) stand alongside some of McDermott Top Shop's office staff in their company kitchen, which they use to host events and parties.



The stone fabricators pride themselves in their clean, organized workspace.

FABRICATOR PROFILE



Together with other McDermott staffers, Travis McDermott smiles next to Ron McDermott as he cuts the ribbon at the open house.

for the stone line, too. When they built the new facility, they worked with Focus on Energy, and they received grants to implement higher-efficiency lighting as well as other energy-saving systems.

McDermott proudly supports over 75 employees and runs eight installation crews. “Our employees set us apart more than anything else,” said Ron. “We have a group of dedicated, hard-working folks who all share common values and understand what we are working toward. Their dedication to our customers is what really sets us apart.”

The McDermotts attribute their success to their Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), which incorporates six key components as drivers. First, the company adheres to their vision, and they strive to make sure everyone is clear on the goals and how to get there. Second, their employees are a huge part of this, and they actively invest in their company culture to ensure openness and honesty. It’s an environment where everyone is inspired to do great work, feels valued in their opinions and understands that they are the keys to success.

Certainly, in a production environment, processes are critical, and the McDermotts have gone to great lengths to develop best practices for everything they do. With that comes a reflective piece where they look at data to understand the good and the bad—because you can’t improve that which you don’t measure, says Travis. They encourage everyone to bring issues to the forefront, and they spend a lot of time doing root cause analysis to identify opportunities for improvement.

And finally, traction is a priority. “It’s about staying



McDermott Top Shop’s installation team stands on the loading dock, which is directly adjacent to the production lines and fully enclosed from the elements.

on the pulse of what is happening in your business and in the industry,” said Ron. “You can stay where you are ... and there you are. But if you aren’t looking for what’s ahead of you, you’ll waste a lot of time trying to catch up to it.”

The McDermott team prides itself in its detail-oriented and streamlined process that focuses on a high-touch customer experience. This paired with their state-of-the-art facility differentiates them from any competition. Outside the shop, the McDermotts value industry connections through groups such as the International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) and the Rockheads.

“ISFA is a great community full of fabricators and vendors willing to pour out all kinds of information to help others,” said Travis. “ISFA’s Mixers have been a lot of fun and helped us get through the pandemic! It has been tough not being able to get in person with these groups, and we are really looking forward to getting back together.”

The McDermotts feel these groups are well worth the investment of time and money, likening it to investing in a mentor or a consultant. By doing so they gain knowledge and ideas that may have taken years (if ever) to come across on their own. “It enables us to achieve levels of growth we may have not realized otherwise,” said Travis.

Find out more about McDermott Top Shop at www.mcdermotttopshop.com. 