

Stainless Steel Finish Guide

The six surface treatments we apply to stainless steel sculpture, what each one gives you and where it holds up best.

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The grade decides how long a sculpture lasts. The finish decides what people see. We work in six surface treatments and the right one depends on the light, the setting and how close people stand to the piece.

Mirror Polished	Progressive polishing to a mirror surface with welds ground back flush first
Raw Finish	The raw colour of the material with no added colour treatment
Brushed	Directional grain that keeps the metal character and hides handling marks
Sandblasted	Even matt texture with low glare, useful in bright or high traffic settings
Electroplated	Plated colour, used on wall panels for a silver mirror effect with moving light
Spray Painting Colour	Colour constructed and produced to the ordering party requirement

Mirror Polished

Problem. A piece meant to reflect its surroundings looks dull and ordinary if the surface is only ground.

How we handle it. Progressive polishing to a mirror surface, with welds ground back flush first so no seam line reads through the reflection.

Brushed and Sandblasted

Problem. Mirror surfaces show fingerprints and water spotting in places people touch or where cleaning is infrequent.

How we handle it. A brushed or sandblasted finish keeps the metal character without the maintenance a mirror surface asks for.

Electroplated

Problem. Interior pieces often need a colour that the raw metal cannot give, such as the silver mirror effect on a wall panel.

How we handle it. Delicate electroplating that reads like a silver mirror with moving light and shadow across a shaped surface.

Spray Painted Colour

Problem. A sculpture that has to match a brand colour or a scheme cannot be left in the raw colour of the material.

How we handle it. Colours are constructed and produced according to your requirement, or you take the raw colour of the material as it comes.

Choosing a Grade Before You Choose a Finish

Why the Grade Matters More Than the Finish

Buyers usually pick a sculpture by its shape and its finish and treat the steel grade as a detail the factory can decide. Outdoors it is the other way round. The grade decides whether the piece still looks new in five years and the finish only decides how it looks on the day it is installed. Both grades we work in, 304 and 316, are stainless and both are treated ground and polished so the surface does not fade easily and stays bright after weathering wind and rain. What separates them is how they behave once salt enters the picture.

What 304 Is Good For

304 is the grade we use for most work, including the large garden spheres which are water pressured from AISI 304 alloy and mirror finished. It suits inland gardens, plazas, shopping mall atriums, hotel lobbies, park paths and any interior installation. Its surface takes a mirror polish cleanly, which matters when the whole point of the piece is the reflection of planting and sky around it. For the great majority of projects there is no technical reason to pay more.

When to Specify 316 Instead

316 is the grade to specify when the sculpture will stand in salt laden air: seafront promenades, island resorts, harbour plazas, pool decks where chlorinated water carries on the wind. In those settings 304 can develop surface staining that needs more frequent cleaning. 316 costs more and is worth it only where the exposure justifies it, so tell us the site type rather than the grade and we will confirm which one your project needs.

The Finish You Choose Interacts With the Grade

We offer six finishes: mirror polished, raw, brushed, sandblasted, electroplated and spray painted colour. A mirror polish shows fingerprints and water spotting most readily, which is one reason coastal projects often pair 316 with a brushed or sandblasted surface instead. Electroplated finishes, used on wall panels to give that silver mirror effect with moving light and shadow, sit on top of the steel and should be discussed separately for exposed outdoor sites.

How to Give Us Enough to Answer

Send the installation setting, whether the piece is indoors or outdoors, the distance to the coast if there is one, the diameter or overall size you want and any drawing or reference photo you have. We produce from your own pictures designs and sizes, so the drawing you send becomes the archived reference once both sides confirm it. A model is made before full production so the shape and the surface can be judged in the metal rather than on screen.

Frequently Asked

Which finishes can you supply

Mirror polished, raw finish, brushed, sandblasted, electroplated and spray painting colour.

Will the mirror finish stay bright outdoors

The surface is treated ground and polished so it does not fade easily and stays bright after weathering wind and rain.

Can I have different finishes on one piece

Yes. Mixing a polished body with a brushed or coloured element is common on figurative and hollow work.

How do I clean a mirror polished sculpture

Water and a soft cloth. Avoid abrasive pads, which leave permanent scratches in a mirror surface.

Do you match a specific colour

Colours are constructed and produced according to your requirement, so send the reference you want matched.