

# UNDERCOUNTER REFRIGERATOR

## BUYING GUIDE

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A step-by-step guide to find the right undercounter refrigeration or icemaker for your home or project

Published by Yale Appliance



Undercounter Refrigerators

# Overview

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Photo credit: True Residential via Houzz

Undercounter refrigeration of all types has become more popular, especially in kitchen islands and other bar applications. We have broken this guide into wine storage, beverage centers, refrigerators and icemakers.

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We discuss new trends in the undercounter refrigerator product segment



## Brands

A thorough look at the brands that manufacture these products and details of the features

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Choosing a wine storage machine depends if you're a collector or like to keep a few bottles for company



## Beverage Centers

Beverage centers offer the ability to store wine and refrigerate most common household items



## Ice Makers

We explain common products and the difference between clear and cloudy cubes



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A new innovation has seen undercounter drawers become popular



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# WHAT'S NEW

We discuss new trends in the undercounter refrigeration product segment

Photo credit: True Residential / Houzz





# What's New



New refrigerator guidelines have narrowed the field as many companies cannot produce a conforming product. You will see less brands in this market.

In terms of trends, beverage centers with the ability to hold wine, soda and beer seem to be the most popular. Customized ice cubes for specific drinks is very trendy as well.

We will break down the different cubes in the icemaker section.



# BRANDS

Features the brands and products with in-depth reviews of each

Photo credit: True Residential / Houzz



Undercounter Refrigerators

# Freestanding vs. Built-In



Freestanding refrigerators will cost about \$400-\$600 or less. Built-in refrigerators start at over \$1,000. They both have similar dimensions. What is the difference?



**Freestanding**

Freestanding units have the condenser on the back and cannot be placed between cabinets or the trapped heat will seize the compressor. They are noisier and do not maintain a constant temperature.



**Built-In**

Built-in refrigerators have static condensers and breathe through the front toe kick. They can be placed between cabinets and under a countertop.

Brands

True



- Commercial refrigeration
- 3-Year full warranty
- 6-Year warranty on the compressor
- Commercial fan built into back of unit for consistent temperature in the cabinet

Brands

# U-Line



- 15", 18", 24", 36" sizes
- Most models sit flush in standard 24" deep cabinet
- Majority of units are Energy Star rated
- 1-Year warranty
- 5-Year warranty on the compressor



Brands

# Marvel



- Large selection of models and accessories
- No additional kits required for wood front application
- Blue LED lighting on some units
- Most units have self-closing door
- 3-Year warranty on Professional series

Brands

# Sub-Zero



- Wine storage is best in class
- 2-5-12-Year warranty
- Family owned
- 27" Drawers
- 30" Drawers



Brands  
**Jenn-Air**



- Self-closing doors
- Blue LED lighting
- Beverage center has 3 different zones for flexibility
- Zero-clearance hinge



- Rollout wine storage
- 1" stainless shelf fronts
- Audible and visual door alarms
- Blue theatre style LED lighting
- 5-Year warranty



# WINE STORAGE

Wine storage offers unique considerations depending if you just like to entertain or are a collector

Photo credit: True Residential / Houzz



# Wine Storage



Most companies addressed the wine phenomenon by simply adding metal shelves to their existing units. Although this is OK for short term display, this is not a good idea for longer periods of time.

Wine storage is different than storing any other food or beverage. Wine is still technically a living grape and can be ruined with improper storage. Wine can be altered by light, vibration and humidity.



**Choosing Refrigeration  
for a Home Bar**

# Wine Storage



The only company adequately addressing these concerns is Sub-Zero, and to a lesser extent U-Line. Sub-Zero was the first company to prevent harmful UV light by featuring a Low-E, argon filled door. Instead of placing a light bulb on top of the wine cooler, Sub-Zero places low voltage lighting around the control panel. This minimizes light and heat inside the refrigerator.

Vibration is addressed in two ways. First, Sub-Zero places the compressor on rubber grommets so it will not shake the unit. Also, the shelving glides on rollers and doesn't disturb the wine upon removal.

# Wine Storage



Lastly, Sub-Zero provides two thermostats for better temperature control, allowing for two distinct environments for red and/or white wine. Most other companies operate with one setting, with the coldest air settling on the bottom. Sub-Zero eliminates temperature crossover by placing a gasket on the door.

However, Sub-Zero is over \$3,500 and is by far the most expensive in the industry. Yale would be number two, mostly by emulating much of Sub-Zero's innovations like the Low-E door and temperature control for much less money.



# BEVERAGE CENTERS

Beverage centers offer the ability to store wine, beer, soda, water or a 16" deli tray

Photo credit: Mrs. G TV & Appliances / Houzz



Undercounter Refrigerators

# Beverage Centers



Beverage centers are undercounter refrigerators with the ability to store wine. You can store wine, beer, soda, water as well as a 16" deli tray.

Without question, perhaps the best product we sell is True. It is a totally stainless box, engineered for a 20 year life with the most powerful compressor in the industry. All the parts are manufactured by True, right down to the bolts.



Undercounter Refrigerators

# Beverage Centers



True is also the only unit rated for indoor and outdoor installation. It can also be installed flush into your cabinets. Three different LED colors; orange, white and blue are standard inside the unit. Like Sub-Zero in wine, True is more expensive at \$3,500.

For a decent alternative, look again to Yale at \$1,799 with a 5-year warranty.



# REFRIGERATOR DRAWERS

A notable innovation has been the double refrigerator  
drawer

Photo credit: True Residential / Houzz



# Refrigerator Drawers



Refrigerators have similar characteristics as beverage centers. The notable innovation has been the double drawer. Double drawers are good in islands, especially with children, as they are a great place to store items like yogurts and juice boxes.

This type of refrigerator also eliminates bending and allows for easier access to the fridge. Double drawers were first introduced by Sub-Zero, but now every company markets drawers in 24” and 30” sizes. Sub-Zero also offers a 27” unit.





# Refrigerator Drawers



The most popular units are combinations of refrigerators in one drawer with a freezer and ice maker in the lower, second drawer.

A kitchen with white cabinetry, a patterned backsplash, and a built-in ice maker. The kitchen features white upper and lower cabinets with glass-fronted upper cabinets. A patterned backsplash is visible behind the countertop. A built-in ice maker is integrated into the lower cabinets. The countertop is a light color, and a stainless steel sink is visible. The floor is made of light-colored wood. A doorway in the background leads to another room with a patterned rug and a decorative object on a table.

# ICE MAKERS

There are three different types and then produce two different types of ice

Photo credit: D John Design / Houzz

# Ice Makers



Ice makers are a mystery to clients. Do you buy one with a pump or a gravity drain? What cube shape do they produce and what is the difference between clear and regular ice?

There are three types of icemakers: Condensation, Gravity Fed and Pump.

**Condensation:** It's an ice maker without a drain and basically what you have in your kitchen already. Condensation icemakers are less expensive but don't deliver the same volume of cubes as the other types. They also produce a cloudier ice cube because the impurities in the water remain in the cube.



# Ice Makers



**Gravity Fed:** It's an ice maker with a drain. It will produce more ice than a condensation type. However, it's the most problematic because any impurities can be lodged in the ice maker itself. Clogged drains are the main cause of repair issues with ice makers.

**Pump:** This is the best choice of all three. Cubes are plentiful and clear. Because you are pumping the water, **there are less clogs and repair issues.** Buy the unit with the pump installed, rather than adding on later. You do not need the hassle.

Please note: ice makers should be cleaned every 6 months to ensure optimal performance.



# Ice Makers



## Clear vs. Cloudy Ice

Clear ice makers spray water onto a plate from the top down. The impurities are drained, leaving clear water and then clear ice.

## Cube Size and Shape

These vary and can change. We installed a display of 6 working ice makers to show size and shape of the cube.

Undercounter Refrigerators  
**Ice Maker Display**



It's become harder to describe the shape and consistency of cubes, so we installed the 6 most popular units



**Marvel 30iM**

- 34 lbs of ice
- Clear, nugget shaped



**U-Line CLR2160S-41**

- 60 lbs of ice
- Clear, nugget shaped



**Marvel BI2115S01**

- 25 lbs of ice
- Cloudy, crescent shaped

Undercounter Refrigerators  
**Ice Maker Display**



It's become harder to describe the shape and consistency of cubes, so we installed the 6 most popular units



**Scotsman SCCP50MA-1SN**

- 65 lbs of ice
- Large, barrel shaped



**Scotsman SCN60PA-1SN**

- 80 lbs of ice
- Cloudy, small pebble "Sonic" shaped



**Sub-Zero UC15I**

- 25 lbs of ice
- Clear ice



# HOW TO BUY

How to choose the right undercounter product for your home or project

Photo credit: True Residential / Houzz



# How to Buy



Photo credit: Bill Fry Construction via Houzz

Sub-Zero and True are the market leaders with U-Line, Marvel and Jenn-Air (made by Sanyo, btw) a bit cheaper. We designed the Yale brand to be less expensive with a better 5-year warranty and upscale features like LED lighting and reversible shelving.

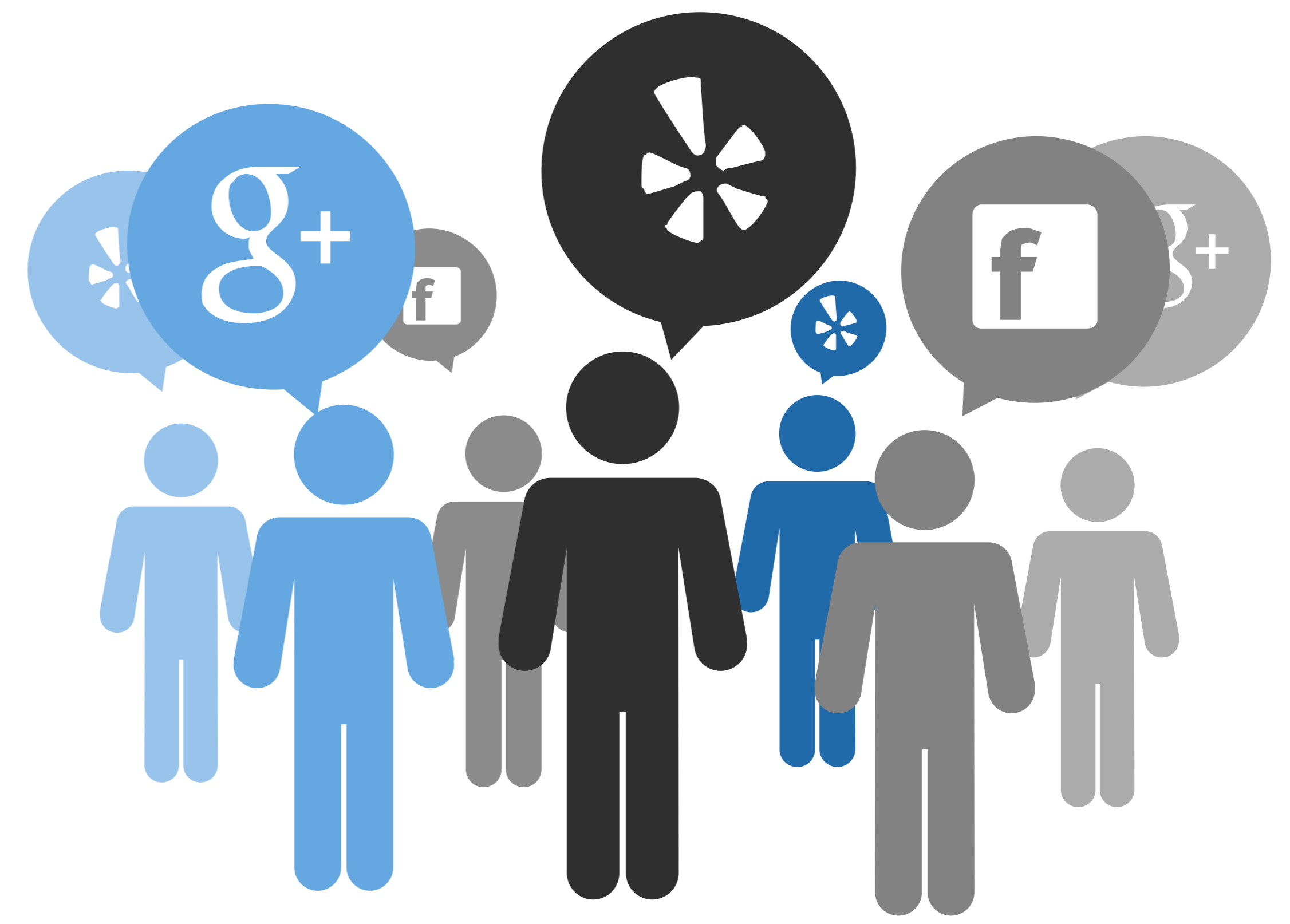
You may also want to consider the ice and refrigeration as part of a package with other appliances to maximize rebates.

Undercounter Refrigerators  
**Wisdom of Crowds**

### Buy where you're comfortable

There are tons of stores and products, but a limited number of consumers. Check review sites like Yelp, CitySearch, Google and the Better Business Bureau before you purchase.

Remember, any store can sell an appliance; the biggest issues are shipping and service.



Exclusive Offer

# Appliance Delivery Checklist



Our free checklist will help you avoid a delivery nightmare. At the end, you will know what to ask from your local, national, or box store appliance dealer.

Delivery is one of the biggest causes for your dissatisfaction. You need to be prepared.

In the Delivery Checklist you'll learn:

- How to choose a dealer with a first class delivery experience
- Which questions to ask to spot a quality delivery team
- The importance of online reviews to help your appliance search



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# ABOUT US

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Proud to be family owned and operated since 1923.

Photo credit: J Maness Designs / Houzz

Appliances  
**About Us**



Yale has been based in Boston for over 90 years and operates three showrooms; in Boston, Framingham, and Hanover. We operate the largest independent service and repair department in New England with 60 people and 35 service technicians. Our sales staff has an average of 7 years experience, and our staff chef can help you learn to use your new appliances.

# VISIT OUR STORES

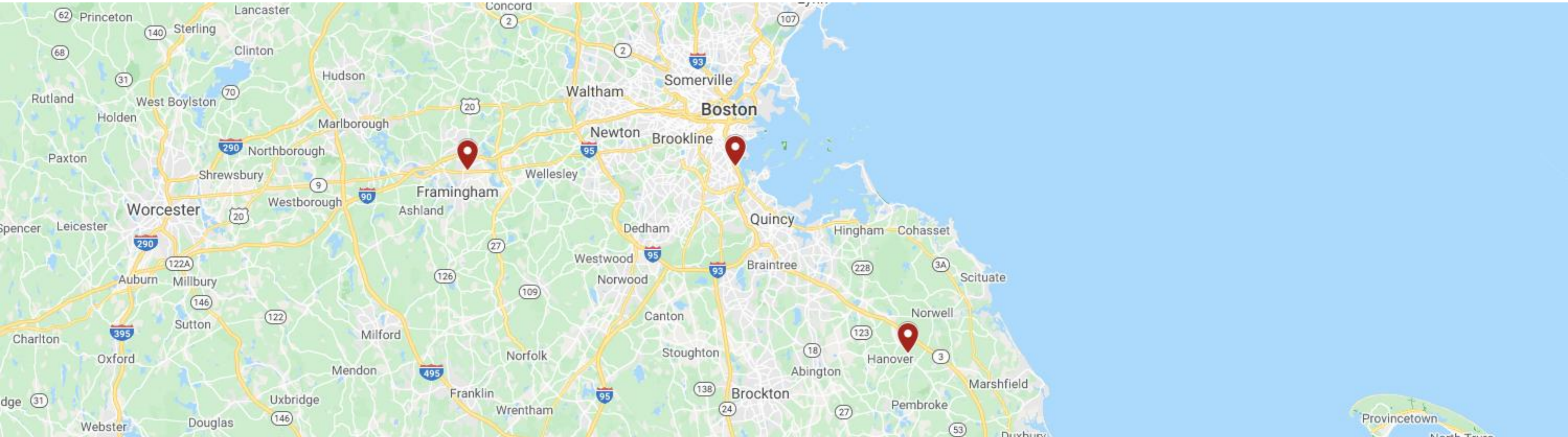
Now you can schedule a free, private showroom visit to go over the needs of your project. Choose a time that works for your schedule to visit our Boston, Framingham, or Hanover, MA showrooms.



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