

# Entombment in a Mausoleum

## An alternative to burial



In contemporary North America, mausoleums are small buildings bought by a community or large organization to house the bodies of the deceased after a funeral. Entombed bodies remain above the ground in crypts. The word mausoleum comes from King Mausolus, an Egyptian monarch, who was the first person memorialized in this manner (around 350 BC). The world's most famous mausoleum is the Taj Mahal.

Mausoleums can be an expensive method for handling remains. However in some cases, the communal sharing of costs and the large number of interments in one mausoleum can make costs competitive with other kinds of interment.

### How it Works

Mausoleum crypts are designed to withstand weather and protect remains. After a casket is entombed, a granite or marble front seals the crypt. You might choose entombment in a mausoleum for several reasons:

- **Dry and clean.** A mausoleum 'burial' is above ground. Some people do not like the idea of interring remains in the ground.
- **The cost** is comparable to traditional burial, especially when the expense of a monument is taken into consideration.
- **A mausoleum** also saves on ground use.

### Cost

The cost of a mausoleum crypt generally averages at about \$4,000. Some can be had for less than \$2,000. This is equal to the average cost of a **burial** plots and **grave markers**.

### Crypt Types

Single crypts are designed for one entombment. Most mausoleums are built six or seven crypts high, with some accommodating double crypts. Double crypts come in three basic kinds:

- **Tandem crypts** accommodate two entombments lengthwise in one crypt.
- **Companion crypts** provide two entombments side by side.
- **Westminster crypts** are a special design with one entombment above ground and another below.

### Cautions

If you decide on interment in a mausoleum there are some considerations you need to be aware of. Caskets have been known to explode in a mausoleum, just as they may in a ground burial. The difference is there can be extensive damage to the mausoleum. Protective seals or liners (including those with 'burp valves') will do nothing to stop this. Whether choosing a mausoleum or sticking with a ground burial, don't bother buying a protective sealer or liner. Some mausoleums may not be as waterproof as you think and water can actually get into the caskets and cause damage.

You also need to remember that there is nothing that will protect the remains of the deceased from decomposition.

### Columbaria - Niches

If you choose cremation over a traditional funeral, cremated remains can be entombed in an **urn** called a columbarium niche.