

Granite

beautiful and practical



Photographs courtesy of the Interior Design-Build firm of Steiner & Houck, Inc.

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As you can see from these beautiful photos of interiors designed by Sandra Steiner-Houck, CKD, President of Design & Co-Owner of Steiner & Houck, Inc., granite is an incredibly beautiful surface. Although a very popular choice for countertops, granite is increasingly being used in other areas of the home where there is a demand for both beauty and durability.

The term *granite* is used to cover a group of related stones that formed in the earth's molten mantle about 2 billion years ago. As this extremely hot liquid cooled, it formed a crystalline, granular structure, hence, the term *granite*. Granite and other like stones are formed of hard minerals such as quartz, feldspar, and mica, which are fused together into a very hard stone that is ideal for kitchen countertops. It is found in many mountain ranges throughout the world.

Available in a striking array of colors, granite ranges from subtle to exotic and from very light to very dark. One of the attractions to granite is that no countertop will be exactly like another one—the unique beauty of nature becomes part of your home.

There are essentially two styles of granite slabs: consistent and variegated. Consistent granite contains somewhat of a pattern throughout the slab. The crystals tend to be smaller and more compact. Variegated slabs have movement or veining. Veining creates a swirling design in the slab, predominantly of a different color than the rest of the stone.

Granite also comes in several finishes—from a high polish, to matte honed, to a brushed or leather finish.

Durability is a compelling reason to choose granite for your countertops. It has a toughness that surpasses any other countertop material. Bacon grease, fish marinade, cranberries, Dijon mustard, tomato or grape juice, and wine will not stain granite if promptly wiped with warm soapy water. While some synthetic surfaces scratch easily and melt under hot pots and pans, granite resists scratches and heat. It will easily outlast every other element in your home.

A leading consumer magazine recently compared granite with other countertop surfaces including synthetics, ceramic tile, laminate, butcher block, and other manufac-



tured surfaces. Granite received the highest overall performance rating as a kitchen countertop.

Granite is also an excellent choice for vanities, floors, hearths, tabletops, and other heavily used surfaces.



FEATURE

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Natural Stoneworks is the premier stone fabricator, tile installer and retailer in Lancaster and the surrounding area. We are proud to offer the largest selection of beautiful and exotic stone slabs in the county.

We are a family-owned business. We have built our solid reputation by providing impeccable, personal service and unmatched craftsmanship. Our stone and tile installations have added beauty and function to many homes and businesses. We truly enjoy our work and take personal pride in each of our jobs.

Our mission is to ensure that you are not only delighted with the final result, but that you feel comfortable and confident throughout the entire experience.

Natural Stoneworks will guide you to make the best and the most appropriate choices for your home or business. Visit our showroom and indoor stone gallery. We offer quality products, the latest in home fashions, and service that continues long after the sale.

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granite

frequently asked questions

Does granite have pits or fissures? Yes. Pits and fissures are part of the natural crystalline structure of the stone. There are always tiny spaces or pits between the mineral crystals. The appearance of pits can be minimized by applying sealer to the surface of the counter. Occasionally, fissures are also visible. Fissures may resemble cracks, but they are not a structural defect. Fissures are a natural result of the incredibly high pressure and heat formed in the granite eons ago. Some styles of granite may contain more pits and fissures than other types.

Is granite porous? Although granite is porous when it comes out of the ground, the surface is filled, polished, and sealed. Thus, it does not promote bacteria growth. Chefs have been rolling dough and preparing food on stone for hundreds of years.

What about radon? A report published in 2008 states that the most comprehensive scientific study of health threats from granite countertops did not find a single stone slab that poses a health risk. Home radon levels associated with emissions from natural stone countertops are low in comparison to typical background levels of radon exposure. In other words, contrary to some media reports of questionable scientific accuracy, this study found that natural stone is a minor contributor to concentrations of radon gas within homes. "The study showed that you are more likely to have a fatal fall from bed than to develop a health problem related to the most common granite countertops," said Dr. John F. McCarthy, president of Environmental Health & Engineering.

Is granite more expensive than Corian and other solid surfaces? The price of granite has actually decreased over the past 10 years. Just like many products, new technologies have led to lower price tags. The average price of granite is comparable to Corian and solid surface tops.

How often do I need to seal my granite? We do not recommend any set schedule for re-sealing granite. Our installers will apply sealer when they install your tops. The frequency for re-sealing depends on the stone and the amount of use that the countertops see. An easy guideline is to monitor around the sink. If you begin to notice that water does not bead up, or soaks into the stone within 15 minutes, then it is probably time to re-seal. Re-sealing is easy. Simply wipe on and wipe off.

Is granite difficult to take care of? Granite is almost maintenance-free. For daily cleaning, we recommend mild dish soap and water. No Windex. Washcloths are better than sponges because sponges can leave streaks on the polished surface. For more intense cleaning, we recommend StoneTech products. The Revitalizer, which cleans, seals, and polishes all in one, is available in a spray as well as convenient wipes.

For more information on granite or any other stone or tile product, please give us a call. Better yet, we invite you to visit us and browse through our design gallery.



R&A

other stone options

MARBLE. Marble is a metamorphic rock composed of mainly calcite that retains a high polish. It is also found in mountainous areas throughout the world. Marble is ideal for foyers, bathrooms, floors, fireplace surrounds, hearths, and tabletops. Marble is very durable, however, we do not recommend it for kitchen countertops. It has the propensity to etch and scratch under heavy use. Marble adds sophistication to your home, and its style and durability contribute to its timeless beauty. Discriminating homeowners have been using marble in their homes for thousands of years!

LIMESTONE. Limestone is a sedimentary rock composed of the mineral calcite. The beauty of some limestone is in the appearance of shell and coral fossils. When these organisms died, they formed calcite deposits that hardened into limestone over millions of years. Limestone provides a soft, endless beauty and is often used for bathroom vanities, showers, tables, fireplace surrounds, and floors.

TRAVERTINE. Travertine is a porous or crystalline mineral form of calcium carbonate and has a similar appearance to limestone. The minerals were deposited in layered formations by hot and cold spring waters. The pores may

be filled and the stone polished, or left untouched. Some deposits of travertine can be found in the Western United States, however massive deposits exist in Tivoli, Italy. Mexico is also a prominent source for this stone. Various quarries around the world provide subtle colors such as light brown, cream, peach, and soft red. A timeless, "Old World" look is achieved in using travertine. It has gained tremendous popularity in this country as a choice for flooring and kitchen backsplashes.

SOAPSTONE. Soapstone is a stone of talc composition with a soapy feel. It is a popular request for kitchen countertops and has a nice matte look sometimes with soft veining.

SLATE. Slate is a fine-grained metamorphic rock that tends to split into thin, smooth-surfaced layers. Black Pennsylvania slate has been a staple in our service area for hundreds of years. Blue and gray slates are also easy to find. The world, though, supplies fabulous colors of slate to us. Multi-colored slates from Africa and China are spectacular and used in floors, showers, fireplace surrounds, and backsplashes.

bringing the
highest quality granite & tile
to your home

Marble • Limestone • Quartz • Soapstone • Artistic Tile

Our Reputation speaks for itself!

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