

Emerald Pearl Etches?

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Hi Maurizio, After much research (including your website), I had Emerald Pearl installed as my new kitchen counters. Prior to installation, according to the fabricator, the stone was impregnated with an epoxy resin and also sealed. (It was not sealed at my home). BUT -- A day or two after installation (~3 weeks ago), 2 water glasses and a cold cocktail shaker were set on the counter which left grayish (lighter than the stone) rings, which I believe are "etches", not stains. They can be seen when looking at the counter only from certain angles and do not appear to be improving with time. I called the fabricator about it, who said that permanent water rings such as these are "normal" with granite, though I am not sure this is really true. It is not the experience of many other people I know who have granite counters. I read on your site that because Emerald Pearl is such a dense stone that it should not have been sealed in the first place and that the water etches may be in the sealant, not in the stone. I don't know if the etches are in the epoxy resin either. Anyway, I am heartbroken about the etch marks. I am worried that I cannot put drinks on my counter for any length of time without getting these etches, which basically renders my brand new counters USELESS!!! And, I am having a BIG party in a couple of weeks which is making me nervous about how my granite will be afterwards! By the way, in 2 of the 3 etches, I wiped the liquid up while it was still wet. I would really appreciate it if you could give me some ideas of how to get rid of the etch marks AND most importantly, how to prevent them in the future. You have a very good reputation for your knowledge and honesty, and I am hoping you can help me solve this problem. I don't want to risk any further damage to my counters! If you suggest removing the sealant, should this be professionally done -- should I insist that my fabricator do it -- and is there any risk to the stone or the epoxy resin by removing the sealant? Stone Care International has suggested using their GD Dark Granite Polishing Powder for dark granite to remove the etches. It can be done by the homeowner. Is this a reasonable first step or a waste of time and \$\$? Thanks so much for your time and advice, Trish

Dear Trish:

This promises to be a good one!

I called the fabricator about it, who said that permanent water rings such as these are "normal" with granite

Okay then, which is the stone that etching is not normal with??... People chose granite and mercantile granite because, unlike marble, it does not etch -- end of the debate. Even your stone, which is in reality alkaline feldspar syenite (does your fabricator know that? And if not, why doesn't he?) is never harmed by the typical household acidic substances. In other words, if that is what he told you, he's lying out of his teeth to get out of a kind of trouble that he knows nothing about.

I read on your site that because Emerald Pearl is such a dense stone that it should not have been sealed in the first place and that the water etches may be in the sealant, not in the stone

That is accurate. On top of the fact that the stone is naturally very dense, it was also allegedly resined by the factory

(the application of epoxy), which makes it totally liquid-resistant. Only a total incompetent would have ever thought to apply an impregnator to a stone like that and resined to boot. Most likely is the invisible film of impregnator left behind that's etching. It is typical.

â€œ I don't know if the etches are in the epoxy resin either. â€•

That is to be excluded. Epoxy resin does not etch.

â€œ Anyway, I am heartbroken about the etch marks. I am worried that I cannot put drinks on my counter for any length of time without getting these etches, which basically renders my brand new counters USELESS!!! â€•

I feel for you. It's hard to believe that a customer with a stone as enjoyable as Emerald Pearl has to be in a situation like that just because some incompetent applied a sealer to it blindly believing that's granite and now he doesn't give a rat's behind about your problem, which he created and is fully responsible for.

â€œ I would really appreciate it if you could give me some ideas of how to get rid of the etch marks â€•

Since the sealer is sensitive to acids, I would strip your countertop with a mild solution of water and phosphoric acid; or simply slowly rub your countertop, one section at a time, with white vinegar or lemon juice. (Always test on an inconspicuous part first, although there should not be any surprise.) That should do it.

â€œ AND most importantly, how to prevent them in the future. â€•

Once the surface of your countertop is bare, the problem will automatically cease to exist effective immediately.

â€œ If you suggest removing the sealant, should this be professionally done -- should I insist that my fabricator do it â€•

I already told you how to remove it, but it would be fun forcing your fabricator to do it! He wouldn't probably know where to begin!!!

â€œ is there any risk to the stone or the epoxy resin by removing the sealant? â€•

No. But if the testing with the white vinegar (or whatever else) will show some problem, then you will insist to have the fabricator do it and face his responsibilities. Keep me posted if the test produces unsuitable results.

Stone Care International has suggested using their GD Dark Granite Polishing Powder for dark granite to remove the etches. It can be done by the homeowner. Is this a reasonable first step or a waste of time and \$\$\$? •

What can I tell you? They would never give you any free advice unless they had a chance to sell you some of their stuff! J I have products like that, too, but they are complicated to use and could create problems. And, BTW, I don't sell vinegar or lemon juice! L

Now remember, it's never too early to think about the proper maintenance of your stone. ***The issue of what you'll be doing day in and day out to your stone is "as it should be intuitive" vastly more important than its sealing*** (if and when possible and/or advisable "which in your case it is certainly not!) and it's all too often neglected. As you can tell by reading many of this site's postings, you're not likely to get good information about routine care from your dealer or installer. Don't become another statistic! By logging into the Helpful Hints section of our website at: http://www.mbstone.com/HH_promo/helpful_hints.htm, you will be able to get the short version of our maintenance guidelines at no charge. The full version of it "a 7-page document considered by many as an industry benchmark" is available in pay-per-download format in our Educational Literature section at: <http://www.mbstone.com/literature/literature.htm>.

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Thank you

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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