

caesarstone or granite

Authored by: **Maurizio Bertoli** [mailto:mbstone.com]

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I am in the process of picking out a counter top and I really like the look of caesarstone, but I have very mixed messages about that product. Can you give me any recommendations? Should I go with Granite or Caesarstone?

Dear Camille:

The quartzite-based manmade stones (a.k.a. engineered stone) are gaining momentum by presenting themselves as the “anti-granite”. Many of their claims are false and unsubstantiated. They are understandable, too: the promoters of engineered stone wouldn't stand many chances to sell their very expensive manmade stuff if they were out telling the truth!

And the truth is:

1. Engineered stone (e.s.) is NOT any harder than most mercantile granites. Most of the latter are actually harder. Therefore the scratch resistance factor is in favor of the real thing. What's more, although not so easily, it is possible to find a few stone restoration contractors who could repair a scratch from most mercantile granites; I still have to meet one, or even ever heard of one, who could do that on e.s.
2. It is true that e.s. does not require the application of an impregnating sealer, but a great number of mercantile granites don't need that, either. And for those that do, the application of a good-quality impregnating sealer will take care of the problem. Certain widespread rumors that “granite should be sealed every six months or every year” no matter where they come from are total marketing hogwash. Even the worst impregnating sealers on the market will go at least three years. Some will go 10 years or better! What is also true is that while e.s. is indeed stain-resistant (like many types of mercantile granite) it is NOT totally stain-proof. I did see a couple of oil stains on e.s. and I've heard of more by reputable sources. The removal of these (rare) stains could represent a problem, because the solvent needed to poultice them out could damage permanently the resin part of e.s.
3. Although is not recommendable as a routine practice, one could put a pot off of the stove directly on any non-resined mercantile granite surface; one could not do that on e.s.: the resin part could get permanently damaged by the heat.
3. Because of the high percentage of quarts (up to 96% by weight, which correspond to approximately 70% by volume) the routine maintenance requirements for e.s. are the same as for any mercantile granite.

Now you can draw your conclusions. Bear in mind that I do not sell or fabricate stone. I'm simply a stone restoration / maintenance man.

For more information on how to properly choose the right stone and, above all, the right fabrication facility, we have available a very comprehensive article on “How to Shop for a Granite Kitchen Countertop” that will give you all the intelligence you need to venture yourself with confidence in the stone industry jungle! It does carry a small price tag, and you can order it by logging on the Educational Literature section of our website at: <http://www.mbstone.com/literature/literature.htm>. It's available in pay-per-download format and I consider it a cheap “insurance premium” to pay when there are thousands of \$ involved! Not to mention the little and much needed support you'd be giving to the cause “YOUR cause, since every single penny of the cost of the article will be used

to support it.

Moreover, do take advantage of the plethora of FREE article that you will find b y logging into the Helpful Hints section of our website at: <http://www.marblecleaning.org/helpful-hints.htm>, They're on the house!

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Thank you

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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