

Light stains in Black Granite Counters

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I read on your site how some manufactures place a black "shoe polish" to docture the stone and I'm sure that is my case...I had my kitchen counters installed in mid December and within 2 weeks or so I was getting light round stains. I called them and after sending pictures so they could see the problem, they sent out someone to "take care" of the problem. They applied a "black polish" and used heat and after a few minutes they wiped it and the stains were gone. I asked if this was going to continue to happen in other areas and they kind of avoided the question and kept saying that it's a stone and it's not perfect. They were pretty much trying to say that I should'nt expect perfection from a natural stone to which I responded that a natural stone shouldn't "fade", right?..Recently, There was a soda spill on the counter (3 spots) and the next day or so I noticed 3 faded spots exactly where the spill was.(the spill was on the counter no mre than 15 mins.)They were not too eager to come out the first time so I'm sure they will not come back and even if they do, their repair method is not a repair at all. I spent alot of money and these counters are only about a month old. What do you recommend I do? I am very upset every time I see the discoloration...Also, they sealed the counters when they installed them. They applied the sealer and immediately wiped it off and said I should do this every 6 months. I don't think that sealer had any time to penetrate..Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated!! Thank You, Teresa

Dear Teresa:

First I will give you the scoop, and after that I will tell you what to do.

â€œBLACK ABSOLUTE GRANITE

Let's start by saying that the only black mercantile granite that has the legal right to be called â€œBlack Absoluteâ€• is the one coming from South Africa . However, in real life, when one mentions â€œBlack Absolute Graniteâ€• one's talking about a huge variety of stones coming a little bit from all over the planet, each and every one of them not a geological granite by a long shot, and each and every one of them with different characteristics. If that wasn't confusing enough, each and every one of them are processed with even if so slightly methods â€œ which again can make a difference.

There used to be three possibilities to explain the problems that you are experiencing, which are here listed in order of probability (the first being the most probable):

1. The fabricator applied an impregnator/sealer to it believing that it's granite. No impregnator/sealer will ever be absorbed by black granite; therefore it won't do the first thing about doing what's designed to do, which is prevent stains. (What you have are NOT stains, and no impregnator/sealer on the planet can prevent those.) Many a sealer turn out to be sensitive to acids; hence the â€œmysterious etching.â€• Not on the stone, rather on the sealer that had no business being there.
2. The slab had been â€œdoctoredâ€• by the factory by applying some sort of black shoe shine in order to make it â€œblackerâ€• and, therefore more â€œsellable.â€• After a while the â€œshoe shineâ€• will begin etching as it gets eaten away by acidic spills. The true color of the stone is dark gray.
2. It is one of those as-rare-as-a-white-fly â€œmuttâ€• stones with some traces of acid-sensitive minerals in it. In this cas e it is actually the stone that gets etched.

In the last couple of years there's been a change in the scenario above. Another possibility has entered the scene:

4. Certain manufacturers apply some sort of protective wax to the slabs. It is not actual "doctored," since there's no alteration to the color of the stone, but the result is the same as if the slab had been "doctored" with the "shoe-shine."

Finally, case 3 above is not as rare as it used to be anymore. At least a couple of "Black Absolute Granites" allegedly from India and China entered the scene recently and are terrible "mutt" stones. Since they are cheap (to the importers) they push them like crazy at full black absolute granite prices.

Having said all that, the remedy to the points 1, 2 and 4 is to remove whatever it is that's sitting on the stone surface, by either stripping it chemically by soaking it with Methylene Chloride, or mechanically, by rubbing on the stone surface a polishing compound for marble (NOT for granite!) with a little bit of water.

Case 3 is terminal.

All things considered, black granite "which should be considered among the most enjoyable materials as a kitchen countertop" has made it out my own list of recommended stones.

I doubt that it is the impregnator that they uselessly applied to your countertop that's doing that (but that goes to prove how much they know about stone), because, if it were, the phony black wax they applied wouldn't have worked. So it's either doctored or just a mutt stone. Either way, it's consumer fraud big time.

Now this is what you have to do:

1. Stop any direct verbal communications with them and write them a certified letter stating your case and demanding full replacement of the countertop, including the cost of the installation; or else you will take proper course of action without further ado, which will include "but will not be limited to" pressing charges on consumer fraud with the local D.A. office. (For a small \$35.00 fee, we can prepare this letter for you.)
2. If they will not comply with your request, no matter what they answer differently, your next step is to file with the Local Better Business Bureau. If a local newspaper has a section for consumer advocacy, you will also bring the issue to their attention with our technical articles and anything else I will suggest you to produce.
3. If even this will not obtain the desired result (never accept and totally ignore any compromise), you will have your attorney (but it has to be the "right" one!) write them a "nice" letter, indicating your intention to have them prosecuted on consumer fraud charges and take your case to federal court.
3. If even this will not obtain the desired results, your attorney will start the procedure, and we will be available all the time to assist you with the most bullet-proof expertise available.

Keep us posted. In the meantimeâ€¦!

May I ask you now to please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at: <http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm>?

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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