

travertine durability

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We recently had a patio installed using travertine. Our landscape contractor told us the travertine would be obtained from Turkey (the same kind of stone used to build the coliseum). The patio is less than a year old. Already we are seeing chips, cracks, pitting and one paver along a step completely crumbled when our new landscaper stepped on it. The travertine countertop along the grill suddenly developed a crack running across its width. (Nothing was dropped on it. The only thing that was ever done was that a hole was cut out to allow the installation of a sink). I called our landscaper who claims the travertine we were given is indeed from Turkey and not from Mexico, which I understand tends to be a much more porous stone. At this rate, I'm wondering if the entire patio is going to crumble within the next year... We spent a significant amount of money on this patio and before we do anything else, I want to get a straight answer. Can you help us out?

Dear Brigitte:

Not that it matters much, but just to set the historical record straight, the Romans did not need to go all the way to Turkey to get the travertine to build the Coliseum: they had (and still do) plenty of the stuff right around the corner, barely a mile away of it. Navona Travertine (a.k.a. Travertino Romano = Roman Travertine) is well known all over the world and it was quarried way before the Turkish even knew that they had travertine in their country!!

It is fact, however, that while "til a few years ago the Roman Travertine was king among the importers/distributors in this country, it lost its supremacy to the Turkish travertine, which now holds approximately the 52% of the travertine market.

Why?

Price, what else?!...

Now I have to cite yet another fact:

There's nothing wrong with Turkish travertine per se. The real good thing about travertine in general is that, because of the only way it can be formed, it is pretty much the same (with a few differences, of course), no matter where it's coming from " including the Mexican ones.

Now enter the international stone auctions. The blocks of stone get bid on and the good stuff " no matter where it's quarried " goes to the highest bidders, of course.

Alas, there are not many Americans among them!... :-(

So most of the good stuff goes in Europe , the Middle East and the Far East . Here?... "Hey, it's travertine, right?... And travertine is travertine, right?... And nobody forces us to grade the different batches, right?..."

Do I need to conclude?...

I didn't think so!

That said, aside from the obvious poor grading of the travertine they sold you, there are also major issues about the way it was installed. No stone " no matter how "poor" it is " should crack or crumble after being installed, if the installation was done right " No ifs or buts about it! The poor grading could determine the pitting and loss of filling " and little precious else.

Take the countertop, for instance; although I'm not a betting man, I'm almost tempted to wager my last buck that they did not rod the narrow strips in front and behind the hole they drilledâ€

Needless to say, you have a case as big as theâ€ Coliseum!!

Now, does the world need marblecleaning.org, or what?... (They can help you if you're willing to take this matter all the way â€ as you should.)

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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