

Polished travertine floor and table top

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

Saved From: <https://marblecleaning.org/knowledgebase/article.php?id=1511>

I have several questions regarding my travertine floor. #1 What can I fill the holes in my travertine flooring where the fill has popped out? The flooring supplier said to use a sand based grout. #2 Is there any benefit in using a small home floor cleaner/buffer to wash and buff the floors? I have one from Sears that has two small rotating brushes for cleaning and felt pads for buffing. I used the brushes for cleaning and it did a good job however there was a residue from either the stone cleaner (Star Cleaner) or maybe the hard water. Does your stone cleaner leave a residue and is it a good idea to just towel dry the floor? #3 The travertine in my dining room is from a different supplier than that of the rest of the house as it was installed later. I notice that the finish on it does not provide a shine over the fill areas. When the light hits the floor the you can see the fill areas are dull while the other areas are shiny. My other travertine shines right over the fill areas and they don't "stick out" as dull patches. Can a professional refinisher fix that? #4 Do you have a recommendation for the San Diego area? Thank you very much! I had no idea how little I knew about my flooring! Kathy

Dear Kathy:

Okay, here we go:

â€œ#1 What can I fill the holes in my travertine flooring where the fill has popped out? The flooring supplier said to use a sand based grout. â€•

Sanded grout is the worst possible material to fill travertine holes. So forget that. Use either sand-less grout mixed on the thick side with latex or, better yet, color-matching caulk. If you choose to use the caulk, fill the holes deeply and make sure to have the filler â€œmoundâ€• over the hole. Let it cure a couple of minutes (and no more than that) and then shave it flush to the surface of the stone with a razor blade. With the same blade clean thoroughly any possible residue of the stuff still sitting as a film on the surface of the stone around the filled holes, finishing the cleaning with one finger wrapped around a damp piece of terry-cloth. Let it cure for a few hours before walking over it.

â€œ#2 Is there any benefit in using a small home floor cleaner/buffer to wash and buff the floors? I have one from Sears that has two small rotating brushes for cleaning and felt pads for buffing. â€•

It is a device that I highly recommend all the time! If your floor is polished, then you may want to consider reading our article on the maintenance of residential polished stone floors that you can find in our Educational Literature section at: <http://www.mbstone.com/literature/literature.htm> . And remember, every single penny of the cost of the literature will be used to support this site and its cause: **your** cause.

â€œI used the brushes for cleaning and it did a good job however there was a residue from either the stone cleaner (Star Cleaner) or maybe the hard water. Does your stone cleaner leave a residue and is it a good idea to just towel dry the floor? â€•

Unless you feel that you need to make some penance for your sins, there should be no reason for you to dry-towel your floor. Most likely, the product that you're using now is not a rinse-free cleaner. And no, if used on the right proportions (as indicated by the direction written on the bottle of the products), MB-1 will not leave any residue and it works splendid with floor machines – even better than with the best mop!

œ#3 The travertine in my dining room is from a different supplier than that of the rest of the house as it was installed later. I notice that the finish on it does not provide a shine over the fill areas. When the light hits the floor the you can see the fill areas are dull while the other areas are shiny. My other travertine shines right over the fill areas and they don't "stick out" as dull patches. Can a professional refinisher fix that? •

The filler that they use in the factories to fill travertine holes is cementitious material, and it could **never** polish at the same level than the rest of the stone.

So why is your table top nice and shiny all over?

My (very) educated guess is that it is coated with a layer of shellac or lacquer. They often do that in the furniture biz to overcome the major problem of all calcite-based stones (and travertine among them, of course), which is their sensitivity to acidic substances. Every time you spill any pH active liquid on a bare surface of polished travertine (or marble or any other calcareous rock), the stone will react by getting etched on its surface and the consequent surface damage will look like a water spot or ring that won't come out by cleaning it. Since there's no sealer for stone under the sun that could prevent such chemical reaction from happening, the furniture folks coat their stones with shellac or lacquer. As a by-feature, it equalizes the shine. If you ask me, however, that's the trading of a problem with a somehow difficult yet possible solution, with another one with a much more difficult solution that would imply the hard-to-do removal of the entire coating. In fact, many a times, it will scratch easily and sometimes even blister and peel off. And nobody could possibly fix that. Needless to say, one would not even think of putting some type of coating like that on a floor!

So, while keeping your fingers crossed with your table top, learn how to live with the uneven polish of your floor (MB-7 may do something about that, though, even if it is not a promise). It is the nature of the beast and if you wanted something completely uniform, you should have chosen polished marble.

œ#4Do you have a recommendation for the San Diego area? •

This is moot based on my answer above to your point # 3

Now, while I can see that you're already heading toward the right path (the little buffing machine is a great investment), 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) 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 â€” a 7-page document considered by many as an industry benchmark â€” is available in pay-per-download format in our Educational Literature section at: <http://www.mbstone.com/literature/literature.htm> .

And remember, every single penny of the cost of the literature will be used to support this site and its cause: **your** cause.

While you are in the â€œHelpful Hintsâ€” section, do spend some time reading all of the interesting FREE articles you'll find in there!

Finally, keep in mind that we need your support to help us helping you!

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

By spreading the word about this valuable site among your friend & family and the stone trades' people you've been dealing with, you will be rendering everybody a valuable service!

Thank you

Ciao and good luck,

Mauri zio Bertoli

www.marblecleaning.org â€” The **only** Consumers' Portal to the Stone Industry Establishment!