

Water rings on my black granite

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Hello, My husband and I recently purchased black granite countertops for our kitchen. We have notice that when we put down a glass, it leaves water rings. They are all over the counter already. The company tried to send someone out to get the rings out but it didn't work and then told us they weren't sealed properly. They told us they want to send someone else out to get the rings out. I am worried they will try to pull a fast one on us. I have also noticed several scratches that were there when they installed it. I thought granite was supposed to be rather durable and it wouldn't scratch that easily. Any suggestions, we need help!

Dear Michelle:

Ouch!... Bad news, I'm afraid.

Read this:

Let's start by saying that when one mentions Black Granite 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 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 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 due to its inherent high-density; 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 mysterious etching. Not on the stone, rather on the sealer that had no business being there.
2. The slab had been doctored by the factory by applying some sort of black shoe shine in order to make it blacker and, therefore more sellable. After a while the shoe shine will begin etching as it gets eaten away by acidic liquids. The true color of the stone is dark gray.
2. It is one of those as-rare-as-a-white-fly mutt stones with some acid-sensitive minerals in it. In this case 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:

0. Certain manufacturers apply some sort of protective wax to the slabs. It is not actual doctoring, 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 a solution of water and phosphoric acid, 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. It can be fixed professionally, of course, but it can't be prevented. Basically, the granite that's not granite is behaving like marble.

From a legal stand, cases 2 and 3 are full-fledged consumer fraud and could (and should) be prosecuted legally. And we could help big time. (See our offspring website at: <http://www.doctoredstone.org>.)

Now that you know better, what has to be determined as a first step is which of the 4 possibilities above can apply to your case. Let's try together something right now. Answer these questions:

1. Are the "stains" just a "ghost discoloration"? What is meant is, is the "stains" just a halo, but still dark and shiny, or is it remarkably lighter in color? If it is just a "ghost discoloration" the way I described to you (hoping that I was able to explain myself) chances are that it is the impregnator that they uselessly (under the circumstances) applied to your stone. Or it could be possibility No. 4 above. Once the residue of the impregnator or the "wax" are removed, everything is going to be back to normal.

2. If the "stains" is remarkably of a lighter color over the rest, is it dull or is it still nice and shiny and only gray in color? If it is still nice and shiny then it is malicious doctoring of the stone. If it is dull, then the stone is "mutt" and reacts to acidic substances.

Please, let me know your findings.

In the meantime, you can help our crusade to straighten the stone industry so that cases like that will never happen again! As a consumer of stone you're the best qualified to make things happen! Will you now please read and sign our Statement of Purpose by logging on 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 you will be rendering everybody a valuable service!

Thank you.

Ciao and good luck,

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