

rings on absolute black granite

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I just had new absolute black 'granite' counters installed. (NOT honed). They looked great for a few days but now have what looks like water rings all over them. (6 or so rings) We had a BBQ party with limes in our beers. The rings are slightly lighter in color than the rest of the counter and can only be seen at certain angles. The same thing happen to one of my marble end tables a few years ago (limes may be banned in my house soon!!). Is there anything I can do? What about the people I bought the counters from--should they be liable? They said they were 'factory sealed'. They told me the stone was imported from China, but that's all I really know. And how do I take care of what ever it is I have? I would like to start off right and get the correct products to care for it. HELP!!

Dear Tara:

Let's start by saying that the only black mercantile granite that has the legal right to be called "Black Absolute" is the one coming from South Africa . However, in real life, when one mentions "Black Absolute 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 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 " " 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 for that kind of stone is too dense to absorb anything; 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 spills. 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 traces of 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:

4. 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 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. Keep in mind, however, that in case 2 you would end up with gray "granite" instead of black, which of course you should not accept.

No matter what, your fabricator is fully responsible. Call them back and thank them very much for the information they gave you about the factory having allegedly sealed a stone that doesn't need to be sealed. After that, you "cordially" invite them to solve the problem "which may include the replacement of the countertop" or they will have their sorry butt dragged in a court of law on consumer fraud charges. Marblecleaning.org will help you all the way and you **will** win!

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.

Until the industry will not straighten its act up by becoming serious about the classification of all the different "granites" on the marketplace and dictate strict rules and guidelines about their characteristics and implied guarantees to the consumers, my position is going to be that from now on.

You can help! Actually, as a consumer-to-be 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,

Maurizio Bertoli

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