

cracking potential of nero marquina

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Q. Thank you so much for this service! I have chosen a honed 3/8" thick nero marquina 16" x 16" tile from a very reputable tile showroom for a kitchen floor. The tile has a mesh backing which my tiler says is a sure red flag. I am concerned that the tile may be more likely to crack and spall, though the tile sales representative said they are not aware of any problems and the product catalog states that it is appropriate for "all vertical and horizontal applications". I would really, really like to use this tile. Should I be concerned? Are there installation techniques that I should use, such as a certain subfloor thickness or a crack suppression membrane? Or, is the potential for cracking and spalling so great that I should try to find another tile? Thank you!!!

A. Hi Judy- Ok first off -- Marble in the kitchen. Nero marquina in the kitchen can require a lot of maintenance even if honed. Polished would be a maintenance nightmare.

Honed is definitely better as the etches and traffic will show less but be advised they will show and you will need the services of a bona fide stone refinisher to rehone periodically. Unless of course you don't cook, drink and hang out in your kitchen.

I have customers that have this stone in the kitchen as floors and or countertops. Some folks'others have been very frustrated. I haven'tsubfloor is marginal and there was improper crack protection. Mud floors always seem to hold up best but not always possible to use. Check out the specs at the Marble Institute of America (marble-institute.com) or post your question at www.stoneandtilepros.com. We like half inch as compared to three eights inch stone but properly installed it may not be an issue. Spalling stone is the result of moisture migration thought the stone from a moisture source below the stone (don't think that will be your issue). Another issue you need to be concerned about is will you seal the stone or color enhance it. It may have been sealed at the factory or color enhanced to bring out the color.

What will you do when the sealer or enhancer begins to degrade? There are so many materials to chose from for your kitchen why not find something that has as little maintenance as possible. I hope I didn't ruin your stone dream.

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