

Cheap Granite

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I am a kitchen @ bath wholesale/retailer and designer. I work in north NJ by Jersey city and there is a granite place seeming on every street corner in this part of the country. Is the \$32 a foot (templated delivered & installed) granite the same as regular granite? Is all granite the same? With a natural product it is very hard for an outsider to discern quality and source. Of course there must be quality of service differences etc,, between the 32 and 50-80 a foot granite people but is there "cheap" or "bad" granite out there? If so how can I identify it? Thanks alot.

Dear Tom:

There are over 2700 (no, it's not a typo) stones traded as granite on the market (and counting). Approximately a couple of dozens of them are true geological granite. Another two or three dozens could be classified as next of kin. All the remaining 2700 plus stones are related to granite and to each other like a cat to a cow. Many are as good as granite, many are even better, but some are a disgrace.

Q.: *But isn't that illegal?...?*

A.: *Yes, it is. It's consumer fraud big time! Welcome to the stone industry!*

Having said that, one other thing must be made real clear: the *man upstairs* did not invent geography. What this means is that the inherent quality of any given stone has nothing to do with the country it is quarried from.

Furthermore, as with any other natural commodity, it is not the inherent quality of given a stone that determines its price, but exclusively demand and supply. If a stone is attractive and there's not much of it, the price goes through the roof, no matter how good or lousy that stone might be. Just to give you a quick example, one of the most expensive *granites* on the market is a certain stone called Azul Bahia. If one goes with the assumption that the high price could be the indication of a superior quality, this one would be a very surprised individual! In fact, that stone is sodalite syenite (nothing to do with granite, of course) and has the same maintenance issues as marble: it is sensitive to acidic substances and most anything that you will spill onto it, will etch it! (That's the main reason why you do not want marble in a kitchen.)

So, what's up with this \$32/ft *granite*?

I don't know.

Maybe it's some fabricator who deals out of the back of his pick-up truck; or maybe is someone who deals with Chinese or Indian pre-fabricated strips of stones. If that's the case, you can have very good stones and with superior workmanship at a very reasonable price. Or, then again, you can have some lousy stone; but it has nothing to do with the price: it has only to do with the huge, widespread and unopposed consumer fraud going on in the stone industry.

Bottom line, you're on your own!

As the instructor-in-chief of the International Training Centers for the Stone Industry (ITCS) I tried to offer comprehensive educational seminars about stone and its requirements catering to specifiers like you. I had to give up the idea completely. You seem to be the exception to the rule, and the rule is that specifiers already know everything and then some about anything, and the last thing they will ever consider doing is to get educated by a menial maintenance man like myself.

Sorry I could not be of more help.

May I ask you now to please read and e-sign our Statement of Purpose at: http://www.marblecleaning.org/purpose.htm?_J

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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