

# honed black absolute

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I am very confused about honed black absolute. I need to use two different types of granite, one for countertops and one for island top. Will I have a problems with spotting on the honed black absolute countertop? I need the black absolute to look dark grey so I don't know if color enhancing it is an option. It may make it too "black". Is the only "real" black absolute from Zimbabwe? If what I have on hold is not from Zimbabwe, is it real stone or what is it????

Dear Patricia:

Starting from the end, the only stone that should legally carry the label of Black absolute (a.k.a. Nero Assoluto) is not from Zimbabwe but from South Africa. The one from Zimbabwe is a lower quality stone and is the perfect candidate for honing, because it would never become black by polishing it. That said for record's sake, mechanically Black Zimbabwe is an excellent stone.

Now, about the maintenance issues, there is a unanimous consensus about the fact that hone-finished black "granite" presents maintenance issues. The problem with honed black "granite" is that it is not, well - black any more! Most black stones are but an optical illusion: they become black only when highly polished, or when wet. (See the back of your slab to see the *real* color of your stone!) As you take gloss off the stone surface (and honing does just that) you lose depth of color and the stone turns gray; but when you wet it ... here it is black again! As you spill oily liquids, or you simply touch the stone surface with your fingers (perspiration), you're going to have all sorts of dark surface stains that are a terrible eyesore. Please notice that I said, **surface** stains, not **imbedded** stains. In fact, you can clean those stains off (though with lots of labor), while if they were imbedded you would have to poultice them out. If you apply an impregnator/sealer to the stone you will not solve your problem one bit: in fact the sealer will only prevent liquids from being absorbed by the stone (which in the case of black honed "granite" is an unlikely event to begin with), not the staining of its surface.

Any solution?

Well, yes: you have to give up the gray! (And you "can't" you're going to have a problem with no solution - as simple as that.)

If you apply a good-quality stone color enhancer to your countertop **instead of** an impregnating sealer (a good-quality stone color-enhancer like MB-6 is also an impregnator/sealer) it will turn it permanently black, while preserving the hone finish. In that way, the surface-staining problem would be minimized.

Let's just hope that your fabricator, in their "infinite wisdom," did not apply an impregnator/sealer to your stone: this would have to be stripped (not an easy feat!), or else the color/enhancer wouldn't stand a chance to work properly.

And don't you forget that in order to upkeep your stone *and* the color enhancer, your best bet is to use good-quality specialty products for stone.

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Thank you.

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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