

# What natural stone is best to use in steam shower?

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Hi Maurizio, We are building a new home and choosing tile for the master bath. After reading your responses to other questions, I'm concerned about the choices we've made at this point. We have a steam shower. We were planning on using limestone on the floor and crema marfil marble on the walls with limestone detailed accents. If limestone is not a good stone for the shower, what would you recommend? Is travertine better? I believe you can't seal polished crema marfil marble. Am I right in saying you can't seal honed crema marfil as well? If we make sure the marble is install properly by following your guidelines, is it reasonable to expect that it won't sustain water damage? It's a big shower so I'm not sure wiping down the walls and floor after each use is something that is reasonable. If we aren't looking for something that requires a decent amount of daily maintenance, should we look toward using a porcelain instead? Thank you for your time and helpful website. Katey

Dear Katey:

Quite a few questions! Let's start from the easy one, the limestone:

By saying limestone you're saying very little "if anything at all. There are many different (and I do mean **different**) kinds of limestone that span from dense and acceptable rocks, to limestone that will actually fall apart under running water or "powder" or "bleach" (all problems with no solution), and everything in between.

So which limestone do you have in mind? In other words, if you're not positive that the limestone you'd like to select will give you no problem skip limestone and go with travertine (travertine is limestone anyway), or Ramona Gold limestone from Israel . Now the we have the limestone out of the way,

"I believe you can't seal polished crema marfil marble."

It is usually so.

"Am I right in saying you can't seal honed crema marfil as well?"

There are better chances to seal that, but the question is: why?

We're talking a bathroom here, not a kitchen, right? Are you gonna spill coffee or cooking oil in your bathroom and then let them sit there for a long time to soak in the stone?... Two factors concur to making a decision on sealing stone: 1) if the stone can be technically sealed, and, 2) the environment where the stone is going to be installed: is it prone to accidental spills that will go unnoticed? Is it going to be installed in a wet environment? (No sealing in this case!)

Remember, as a solid rule of thumb, the more you leave the stone alone like Mother Nature intended, the better it is for it. So you seal stone only when possible to begin with, and only if it makes sense. (I'm dealing right now with a huge problem caused by a guy who applied a sealer to polished marble walls in a bathroom! Can you possibly believe that??

Applying a sealer on a wall??? How brainwashed must one be?! When I asked the guy why on earth he did that, his answer was, "because everybody says so!... Oh my!...")

"If we make sure the marble is install properly by following your guidelines, is it reasonable to expect that it won't sustain water damage?"

It is more than reasonable: it is to be expected.

"It's a big shower so I'm not sure wiping down the walls and floor after each use is something that is reasonable. If we aren't looking for something that requires a decent amount of daily maintenance, should we look toward using a porcelain instead?"

Are you asking a stone man to use porcelain instead of natural stone?... J

Joking aside, of course porcelain, if well installed, is as bullet-proof as they come; but considering that's a large stall you shouldn't have many problems with the right stone installed properly, either. Over my many years of experience I reached the conclusion that the larger the stall is, the less the stone is going to be under "stress". It makes sense if you think for a minute.

Using liquid pH neutral soaps and shampoos (available at any supermarket) will go a long way, too.

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

Ciao and good luck,

Maurizio Bertoli

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