

# Santa Cecilia Cleaning / Sealing?

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We had Santa Cecilia Countertops installed in our kitchen about a year ago. I read the relevant articles about the fact that Santa Cecilia is not true geological granite but a garnet gneiss-- thank you! By their looks and behavior so far, I think that ours is a good quality slab. I have been wiping it regularly with a clean, damp cotton towel (dampened in water) and then drying it with another cotton towel and it still looks nice and shiny and smooth. However, I feel guilty that I still haven't used the Care and Maintenance Kit I was provided by the installer a year ago and was wondering if I really need to use their cleaner and sealer. The products in the kit (2 bottles) are branded as AG&M (Architectural Granite and Marble Inc.) Natural Stone Countertop Cleaner/ Restorer, and Natural Stone Countertop Sealer (impregnator for granite and marble countertops). If, according to what I have read on this wonderful forum, the installer already applied the impregnator (and I know they did because I saw them do it and they told me at the time that I should do this once a year), then I may not necessarily need to reapply the impregnator? Right? [I hope this isn't a tricky question.] As for not having used yet the cleaner/ restorer they provided, has it really been a bad (lazy) choice on my part? Has my simple routine of wiping my countertop with a damp cloth thoroughly and then drying it began any irreversible process that I may not see now but will regret later? It is not late to start using the 'natural stone cleaner', right? But then the question is also do I really need that product? Does a natural product such as stone (yes, be it the 'garnet gneiss') need a cleaning agent that may not necessarily be found in nature but manufactured and sold for profit? Your forum makes me want to think that what I have been doing so far is acceptable. But I'd like to feel assured that it is also the best way to go. Your response will be greatly appreciated. Angela

P.S. By the way, I grew up in a country (Greece) that has many architectural wonders made of stone (various kinds) still standing and looking beautiful after thousands of years. Hence my affinity to the stone and sensitivity to what it really needs.

Dear Angela :

I never even heard of those two products, but it sounds to me like a private-label deal. But that's okay: it doesn't mean that the company that actually makes the products is not a good company.

Let's talk about the sealing now.

Santa Cecilia is a very good candidate to be resined by the factory. I believe it's safe to say that the vast majority of Santa Cecilia slabs are resined. If this is the case, then your countertop never needed to be sealed -- not at the very beginning, not ever; for the resining itself does provide a permanent seal.

Regardless, I never believed in the "seal-once-a-year" theory: even the lousiest impregnator lasts at least 2 or 3 years. So, it is more some sort of marketing gimmick to sell more impregnator than anything else. Second, If your countertop needed to be sealed and was sealed properly, and at a certain point will need another application, it is never a good idea to use a product different from the original. So assuming for a minute that your countertop could be sealed again, your best bet is to find out what they used originally and then use the same stuff.

Now the question that begs to be asked is: How to find out if your countertop needs to be re-sealed?

Very simple, do this:

Spill some water in a couple of spots of your stone, let it dwell for 5 minutes or so, wipe it dry and observe if the areas under which the water has been sitting have become (temporarily) any darker than the rest. If so, then you will apply the same impregnating sealer that was originally used. If not, you won't.

Now that the sealing is out of the way, let's talk about the cleaning.

“Has my simple routine of wiping my countertop with a damp cloth thoroughly and then drying it began any irreversible process that I may not see now but will regret later?”

How could it possibly create any unforeseen “irreversible process”?... It's only water for crying out loud! If water could damage stone, then we would be in real deep trouble, for all ready-to-use cleaning products “bar none” have always a high percentage of water in them!

Let's just say that my wife and I could certainly not get away with just a damp cloth to clean our own Black Galaxy countertop: we use it too much and too intensively (we both love to cook like maniacs!), and therefore we need something much more “hard-hitting” than water alone to clean it!

A good-quality cleaner rated for stone is not meant to be used to “preserve” the stone, but to clean it (when water alone will not cut it), without adversely affecting it.

I hope I was able to clarify your way of thinking about your beautiful stone! J

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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