

## LET'S REMODEL

# Granite makes an excellent countertop

**Q: I am having a new home built and cannot decide on which type of countertops to put in my kitchen. We are looking at solid surface materials such as granite. Any suggestions?**

**A:** There are two types of solid surface materials. Man-made and natural. Although both types of materials are good, you need to be sure of the advantages and disadvantages of each material.

Solid-surfacing synthetic materials are all similar in their characteristics. The man-made materials are softer and therefore scratch easily. Hot pans cannot be set on the surface and household appliances such as a coffee-maker can burn and discolor the counters. Staining is also highly probable. Many homeowners do not like the look of a solid synthetic because of the dull matte finish. Homeowners do like the fact that many sheets can be molded together and create a countertop without seams.

Marble is a natural stone but is not recommended for kitchen countertops but often used in bathrooms. It is porous and can harbor dangerous bacteria. Because it is soft it can easily stain.

Granite is a natural stone (not man-

made). The common characteristics of all types of natural stone is the fact that they took thousands of years to create. Granite is very dense and non-porous and would be my recommendation for a choice of countertop. The hardness of this stone is equivalent to 70 percent of diamond. Staining on most granites is almost impossible with an absorption rate as low as .01 percent.

Unaffected by acids or caustic agents and the ability to set hot items directly on the surface are some great reasons to consider granite. Cleaning granite is made easy because of the bright polished surface.

Both granite and solid surface materials come in a range of colors, although their looks are very different. The cost of granite is always a factor, but because of new mining methods and handling procedures, as well as the increase in volume buying, granite has become much more economical. Certain color varieties of granite are more available and may be less expensive than the norm.

When making the selection of your countertop, it is always wise to seek the services of a qualified stone designer. They can help you in choosing the right



your countertop.  
Kenny Laymons, stone designer, Marble Medic division / Alamar Inc., Lincoln Park 1-800-728-2562.

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster book, or to have the association speak at a program contact Gayle Walters, executive director of the NARI-Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-335-3232. Mail questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the MIRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. Members answer questions on "Home Improvement Radio" with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturdays. Call in at 810-544-1340.

product based on the location and the use in your home. They can also save thousands of dollars down the road by the choice of product.

Remember that you need to take care in the handling of any of these countertop materials. Find out which type of cleaning product is recommended for

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