

Natural counters come out on top

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Daily Press Creative Services

At this year's Home and Garden Expo, David Floyd, Operations Manager of The Tile Shop's Marble and Granite Division, wants people to run their hands all over his company's display. "It is the best opportunity for customers to experience the rich colors and to feel the strength of a granite countertop," he says. Words coming from someone whose primary focuses on the manufacturing and installation of natural granite countertops for residential clients are words that can definitely be set in stone.

THE STRENGTH OF THE ROCK

Replacing your countertop with a natural material such as granite is an investment in the future of your kitchen. Granite countertops are heat-resistant. Pots can be taken directly off a hot stove and put on the countertop, without a thought for damage to the surface. Granite is also known for its durable finish and scratch-resistant properties. "We cut, shape and polish all our edges with a dia-

mond," says Floyd. "That is really the only thing that's going to scratch these countertops." In fact, the surface is so tough that customers, who are known to use their granite countertops as cutting boards, have needed to replace their now dulled knives. "People have different choices as far as the edge shape on their countertops are concerned," says Floyd. "We have several standard edges to choose from and then you have an edge called an Ogee edge." This edge is considered a traditional style, and is truly one of the fanciest. Resembling a waterfall, the Ogee edge is more elaborate than the others and takes four times the labor to fabricate. "But, the quality of the edge is well worth the money and additional effort," according to Floyd.

Half-bullnose or pencil-round edge is the most common type of edging. Resembling a table-

top edge, the edge is rounded on the top and squared at the bottom. Floyd recommends this style and likes to illustrate his choice with a common kitchen problem, the spill. "I always try to get people to go with a square-edged bottom," says Floyd. "If they spill liquid, it's going to come to the edge and drip straight to the floor." A full bullnose edge, which is rounded on the top and bottom, would cause liquids to roll down the face of the edge and trickle onto the face of the cabinetry.

Back edges are also important when considering your options. "Instead of running the full bullnose edge all the way to the back of the countertop to the backsplash, we'll stop that edge where the countertop will be flat, say Floyd." So, the backsplash will come out to the countertop and meet that edge." Making the countertop and the backsplash meet in a flush setting provides a more finished look.

QUARRIED COLORS

"I've been in this business for 13 years, and I haven't seen all the colors that are available," says Floyd. Staple colors include greens, tans, grays, off-whites and blues. Recently, a stone called

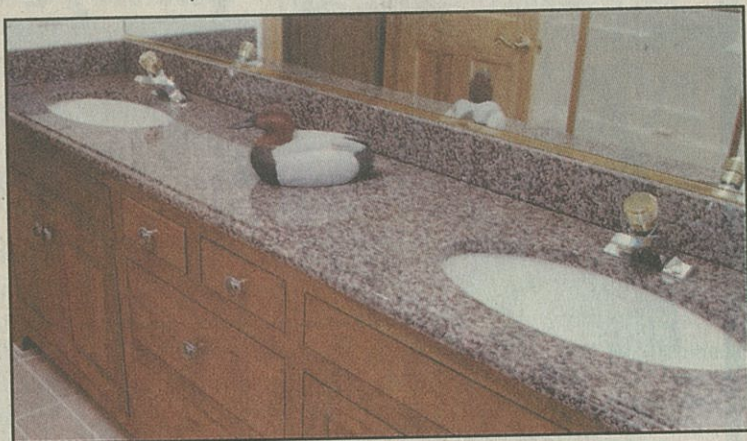


Photo courtesy of The Tile Shop: Marble and Granite Division

Discriminating customers can choose from colors like Uba Tuba, Verdi Butterfly or Pocono Green.

Gaillo Veneziano has been very popular. It is described as a stone with a tannish background with salt and pepper specs. It is so popular that the Marble and Granite Division keeps at least 10 slabs in stock at all time. But, the greens are stan-

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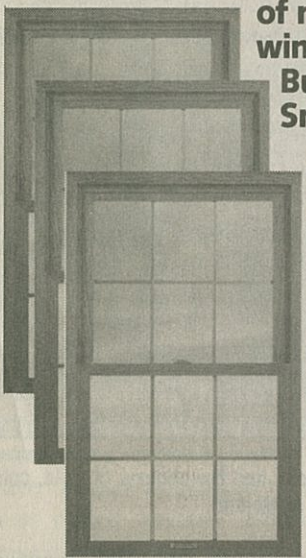
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Photo courtesy of The Tile Shop: Marble and Granite Division
Granite countertops are known for their durability and scratch-resistant properties.

dards and have graced many kitchens and fireplaces. Discriminating customers can choose between Uba Tuba, Verdi Butterfly and Pocono Green. The greens are described as being rich in color with gold content.

Granite, itself, cannot be color treated. "It is God-made, not man-made," says Floyd. He encourages customers to come to the shop to examine a full slab of granite, before they make a color decision. The color of each granite slab is determined long before they are delivered to a showroom. "When the slabs are quarried, they are pulled out in blocks and sliced like bread," says Floyd. "The slabs are then numbered and sister-slabs can be combined to guarantee matching pieces for large constructions like a floor-to-ceiling fireplace." Even though colors cannot be manufactured or altered, a consistent color for each job is possible.

This year at the Home and Garden Expo, David Floyd and his employees will be displaying a China Beach granite countertop, with an Ogee edge. The China Beach stone is an exclusive stone to the Marble and Granite division of the Tile Shop. "It is sourced from out-of-town and is not your normal stone," according to Floyd. He encourages customers and potential customers to see the beauty and feel the strength that a granite countertop could bring to your home. ♦

**The Tile Shop: Marble and Granite Division
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