

# HELPFUL HINTS TO KNOW WHEN SHOPPING FOR COUNTERTOPS

BUYERS IN THE MARKET FOR COUNTERTOPS SHOULD SHOP THREE WAYS: COLOR, PRICE AND STYLE.

Choosing countertops should be determined by the designing needs and wants of an individual and the kitchen's setting. Accomplish this by committing to quality expectations. Determine the type of faucets and sinks that are going to be used. What type of look is going to be used? Will the kitchen be upgraded from traditional to contemporary? Corian, granite, laminate and marble countertops are some countertops to consider.

Most homes built in the 1970s used laminate countertops. Laminate is the most economical. One does not have to be afraid of the old laminate stereotype that's either white or avocado. They are now available in different colors. The color availability lets the straight edge laminate counter be acceptable to the beveled. Some laminate look like granite. Today the popular choices are corian "solid surface", granite and marble. It may be wise to take a picture to show installers because anything new or added is considered an upgrade.

Decide on a specific type of material and color when going from old to new countertops. Whether it's corian or another brand of countertops with finishes and colors such as granite, which is very popular, or other styles, each contains characteristics or properties that are or not to one's advantage. For instance, the corian style countertops are soft enough to scratch. Individuals with the tendency of placing heavy items on their countertops or cutting on the surfaces will not desire corian. It would be wise to select granite.

Countertops must also be compatible with the kitchen's color and accent the rest of the counter. They are going to be chosen as the main focal point. In addition, colors may be based on the flooring, which will be the neutral field. The countertop will be the bold color selection. Experts say countertops and floors may be mixed. Many buyers do not want all the same color or the same look, because there will not be a distinction between the floor to the cabinets to the countertops. Experts also advise buyers to shop for countertops by presenting a diagram of them and know the length and width to determine a price. Some design stores allow customers to select a finish in the store or out of the yard. However, the styles in the yard will look different because they are naturally made and depending on the length of time, have been in the ground or the mount. The style is different once it's cut. Buyers are given an identification number for convenience of obtaining another piece from the slab in case theirs are broken.

What's the budget? Some buyers have budgets and others do not. Pricing depends on the kitchen and the material's thickness, texture and color. Some are thin cut, which is okay. They have the bull nose underneath to make it look thick. It is also less resistant. A dropped pen would crack them faster than if they were an inch and a quarter or something that's really thick or durable.

Cost for countertops may start at \$1,500. The price may also be a lot less, because a slab will be more than a granite or marble tile. A 12 by 12 tile is a very good look. Those on a budget may order several boxes and have a master tile cut it and put in the

sinks. The advantage to having a slab is determining how to set the sinks. Changing countertops will consist of having a drop-in sink. That will cover the imperfections on the edges as the sink is placed. Additionally, a slab has one cut and may be finished in a manner to where it can be placed underneath for a more desirable look.

### **Corian**

Corian, which is referred to as the solid surface, is chemically bonded together and sanded out so visibly, there are no seems. It's a non-stainable material available in over 100 companies. Corian is very sanitary, because it does not absorb anything. It can also be done as an integrated sink and all part of the countertop, so there are no places for crevasses or build up. The installation is very nice. Once again, corian is soft and easier to scratch and may not be for individuals always placing heavy items on their countertops or cutting on the surfaces. Although corian scratches, it is a totally renewable surface and may be buffed after a long period of time to look like new.

### **Granite**

Granite is not expensive and has over 500 colors available. Granites are very attractive natural looking stones that are manmade with a natural feel. Some are crushed stones mixed with epoxy resin. Natural stones will typically contain a large number of variations of colors. Even though the bulk is green, it still includes standard colors ranging from tans to reds. Corian is also harder to scratch. Any stone material is a very solid "unforgiving" type of product, where setting down glasses and plates are always a possibility of being broken or chipped if dropped. Granites are high shine. Glossy is nice and pretty, but high shine products will require higher maintenance. It's like a new car and must be kept shining. Fingerprints, oil spots and everything else are easily seen. Granite has a slight maintenance issue where a penetrating sealer needs to be applied typically twice a year to resist staining.

### **Laminate**

Laminate is the most common kitchen countertop and a synthetic material made up of several layers: multiple sheets of kraft paper (like that used in grocery bags), a decorative paper and a melamine plastic coating. The countertop is economical and doesn't have the lasting power of stone. However manufacturers offer upgraded, high-wear surfaces with increased lifespan. Solid-color laminate, which is made of a colored plastic throughout, is a slightly more expensive alternative without dark edges. Laminate is easy to upkeep and impact resistant, but layers make it difficult to repair chips and hot items and water seeping into seams may cause layers to break apart.

### **Marble**

Marble is the most expensive, desirable and upholds longer. Sellers say the thickness, name and style make the price. Some come from India, Italy and Australia. Marble also absorbs stains and is an ideal surface for a person doing a lot of dough rolling. But, it has to be sealed for it not to stain.

Countertops should last indefinite. Yet, they may require a finish once every five years. A kit is available for purchase to make sure countertops are finish. It can be a stress free process.