

A Word About Marble, Limestone and Travertine . . .

People often ask if polished marble can be used as countertops in the kitchen. Unless the area is going to be a strictly designated baking area, we would not recommend it.

Technically speaking, all marbles are limestone. (They are all contained within the same area in the earth's surface.) Unlike granite, which is very dense and very hard, marble and limestone are softer stones. The highly polished surface makes it almost impossible to remove stains, which may occur during normal kitchen use, without scratching the polished surface.

In Europe, a honed marble or limestone countertop is preferred and has been used throughout the centuries. A honed surface has no shine. With a honed countertop you can scrub it with cleanser, "Soft Scrub", "Scotchbright", "SOS Pads" . . . 220 sand paper if you like. There really is nothing you can do to hurt it. By using these products, you are just continuing the "honing" process of the stone.

There are some marbles and/or limestone that are more porous than others and are not recommend for honing. Ask your stone fabricator which of these stones are dense enough to be used as a honed countertop.

Polished marbles and limestone are, however, often used in the bath area for vanity tops where staining and scratching are not so much of a concern.

As with all natural stone applications, the honed marble and/or limestone countertop must be sealed with a penetrating sealer. This is done during fabrication and again during installation. The rule of thumb for re-sealing is that when water no longer beads up on the surface, it is time to re-seal.

Remember, the more polish you have, the more maintenance and "special care" you will have to keep it looking that way. Even more important to note is that polished surfaces are very slippery when wet!

In Europe, a honed stone is the preferred floor surface. Polished slabs and tiles are primarily used as wall material, not for flooring. As with honed countertops, honed floors can be scrubbed with cleanser, household cleaners, etc.

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