

## **Caring for the Natural Stone**

Natural stone countertops can provide a lifetime of functional beauty to your home. Polished natural stone, including granite, is a very durable surface, but we recommend some specific care in order to protect your investment.

### **Where does the stone in your countertop or vanity come from?**

Natural stone is cut from a quarry in huge blocks. The blocks are then cut into slabs, which are processed or pre-polished at the quarry to add a glossy or textured surface. The luster, hardness, colors and variations are a result of the stone's mineral composition and origin.

All granites are igneous and once were molten in origin, and have a high mineral and quartz content. Not generally used for counters, limestone is a sedimentary rock formed from sediments or ancient beaches or lake beds, and contains calcium carbonate, and sometimes even fossils. Slate and marble are metamorphic rocks.

Marble is a metamorphic form of limestone, or limestone that has recrystallized under enormous pressure. The beautiful layering or banding that appears in marble probably does not correspond to the original bedding of the limestone from which it was formed, but are mineral crystals. All these different natural characteristics make stone a unique, beautiful surface for your home.

### **Caring for Your Stone**

Natural stone may be hard but it is still a porous material. All stone has varying degrees of porosity depending on the density and original mineral content of the stone. If the surface is not sealed or if the seal is compromised, liquids can enter the pores. The liquid eventually evaporates but a stain is left behind.

Most marble and limestone surfaces are highly sensitive to acidic liquid spills. Highly acidic liquids such as orange juice, coffee, vinegar and wine will etch acid-sensitive stones and leave a dull-looking mark. Acid-resistant stones such as granite, slate, and sandstone will not etch, but can still be stained.

Protective sealers will provide the best defense against everyday stains and specially formulated cleaners will safely remove spills and messes. You can help preserve your stone's natural beauty by a regular schedule of cleaning and maintenance.

To ensure the lasting beauty of stone it is essential to renew the seal periodically. The easiest way to determine when it is time to reseal is to spray a small amount of water on the surface. If the water beads up like on a newly waxed car, your seal is fine. If it does not bead, it is time to reseal the surface. Many people find that a daily cleaner that contains a small amount of sealer provides the best ongoing protection and lengthens the time interval between re-sealing.