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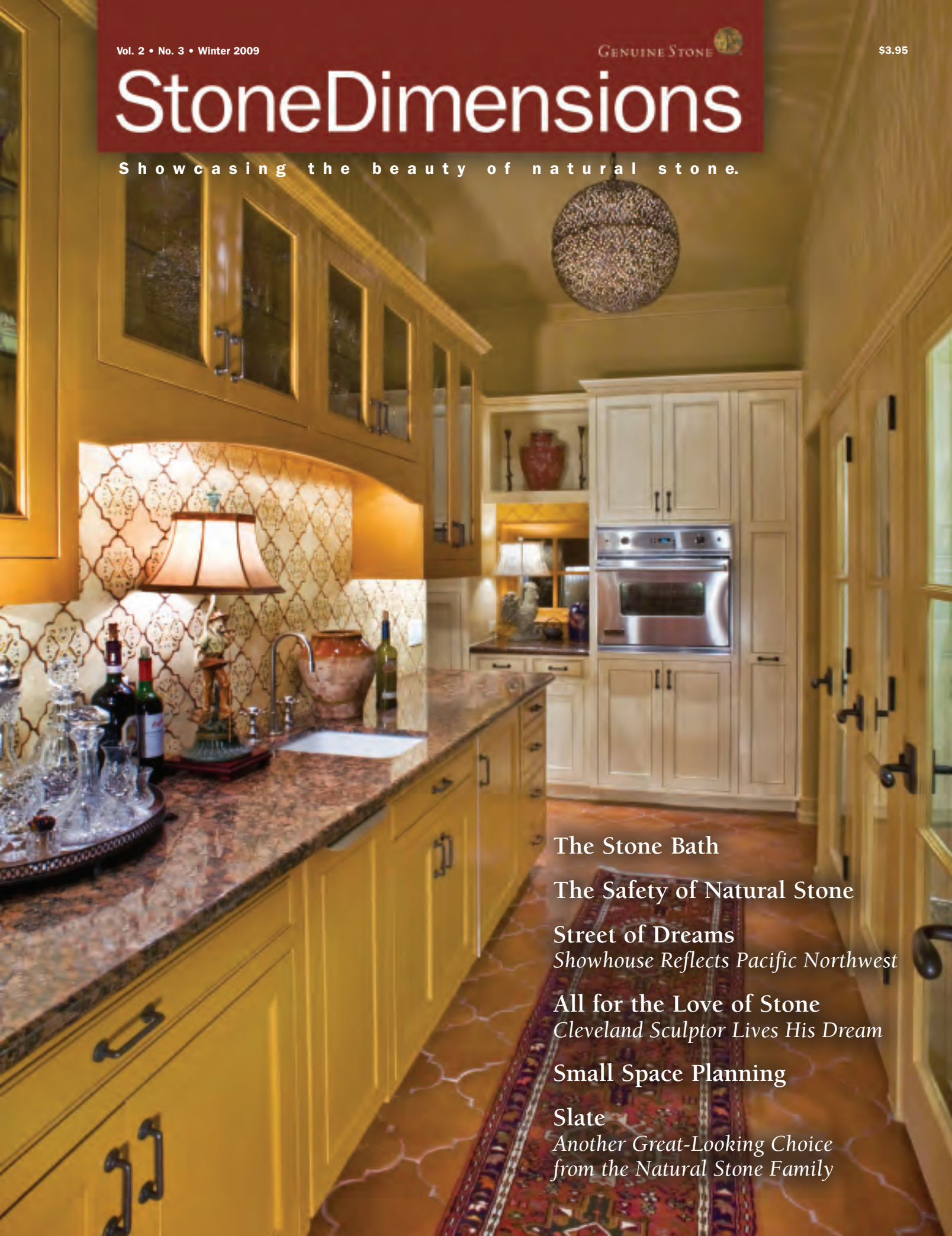

The Stone Bath

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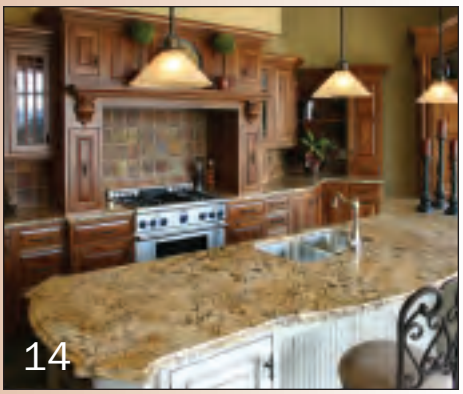

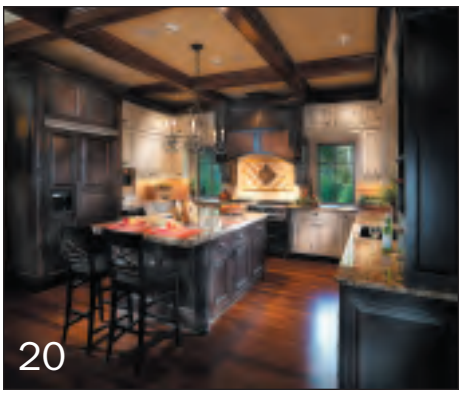

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MARBLE INSTITUTE of America

Marble Institute of America
28901 Clemens Road • Suite 100
Cleveland, OH 44145
ph: 440.250.9222 • fax: 440.250.9223
www.marble-institute.com

Publisher
Garen P. Distelhorst

Editor-in-Chief
William V. Levy

Creative Director
Susan D. Myers

Contributing Writers
Heather Adams
Garen Distelhorst
William V. Levy
Miranda Lynn
Anita Shaw

Web Site
www.stonedimensionsmagazine.com
www.marble-institute.com

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From the Publisher

StoneDimensions Readers,

I am proud to report that a new national survey finds that by overwhelming majorities U.S. consumers prefer granite countertops to any other countertop surface for their dream kitchen and believe that granite countertops increase the resale value of a home.

The survey of 2,021 U.S. adults aged 18+ was conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Marble Institute of America. It asked respondents which countertop surface they would most want in their dream kitchen. At 55 percent, "granite countertops" was by far the most popular response, followed distantly by synthetic stone at 12 percent. The survey was conducted October 7 through 9.

When asked how much they agree with the statement "granite countertops increase the resale value of a home," 90 percent of the surveyed consumers either strongly or somewhat agreed.

After months of inaccurate reporting and questionable research aimed at raising doubts about granite, it is tremendously gratifying to know that consumers continue to feel that granite countertops are as safe as they are beautiful, practical and durable.

In fact, 84 percent of survey respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, "Granite countertops are among the most safe, beautiful and durable kitchen counter surfaces on the market today."

The survey found remarkable consistency across the United States, with minimal variance in responses from different regions of the country. It also showed the appeal of granite was consistent among both age and socio-economic groups.

I hope that this, our 6th issue of *StoneDimensions*, finds you happy and healthy.

Best wishes for a prosperous New Year.

Garen P. Distelhorst
Publisher
Marble Institute of America

The STONE BATH

By Heather E. Adams
Author, Designer

At the end of the day, there is a place to which you can escape,

to nurture your body as well as your soul; this place is the master bath.

Recently evolving into a spa-like retreat for the discriminating homeowner,

this bath is the epitome of elegance when created using natural stone.

Designs are now emerging that were once held only in homeowner's dreams. Arches of ornate decorative tile invite you to enter an oversized steam shower built for two. A deep whirlpool tub sits encased in stone while an enormous hand-carved fireplace casts a warm glows throughout the room. Today's master suite bathroom is no longer the oversized standard bath of the past, it is now an architecturally stunning hideaway that is looked upon with near reverence.

The tub

Truly one of the ultimate escapes into relaxation is the long soaking bubble bath. What can add to that experience except to open your eyes and discover yourself surrounded by nature's beauty. Once paired with the shower, the bathtub is no longer part of the space saving duo of the past. Earning a rightful place of its own, it now finds itself in various locations throughout the master bath. Standing alone in the middle of the room, set in a corner, resting on the center of a wall… sunken, elevated, or recessed into its own nook, regardless, the tub is always a tempting site at the end of a long stressful day.

Depending on its final destination, there are many options available for dressing up this bathroom feature. When it stands alone in the center of the room, the tub normally functions as the primary focal point. If it is housed in a wooden frame, you can choose to create a neo-classical look by cladding it in stone and adorning each of the four corners with Corinthian columns. If an austere appearance is more your style, simply encase the centrally located tub in monochrome slabs of silky smooth limestone or onyx.

When the bathtub rests against a wall or is situated in a corner, a backsplash is required and offers the perfect space to play with creative tile layouts. For instance, when your stone arrives on the job site, take time to cull through the crates to find very unique pieces. Often times you will discover a group of tiles cut from the block together that when placed side by side, showcase a continuous veining structure (most commonly found in cross-cut travertine). Set these aside and ask the installer to run this veining pattern along the expanse of the splash for an incredible effect. In place of large scale stone tiles, you may want to consider a splash composition of smaller tumbled stones or a field of mosaics. In the center of the field tile, why not add a handsome hand-painted mural bordered by a heavy stone molding or introduce a row of unique etched tiles. Whatever design you choose to incorporate, be sure not to skimp on the height of the splash. Many building contractors suggest a standard four or six inch splash, but the beauty lies in the grand scale, go eighteen inches or more to add significant drama.

The piece de resistance when it comes to bathtub design is undoubtedly the

large whirlpool tub recessed into its own private nook. Here you can allow for a generous deck with more than enough space to house candles, scented oils, baskets of soft terry towels or even a glass of chilled Chablis. Glimmering mosaics can be breathtaking as they climb the walls and flow over the arch of the ceiling. Enhance their sparkle and the overall space with the addition of a gilded chandelier. Do not avoid the addition of these "over the top" ideas, as they are what will set your bath above the rest.

Ideas for the tub

When installing a whirlpool tub, attempt to situate it where the access panel can be placed on an exterior wall or in an abutting closet or vanity. This will allow for an uninterrupted tile design on the face of the tub. In the case that the panel must be located on the tub apron, there are several unique products currently on the market that allow for easy access without disturbing your tile design. In addition, a seasoned installer will have a trick or two up his sleeve.

If steps are necessary to access your tub, be sure to choose a slip resistant stone finish for added traction and safety. Treat these features as a focal point and give them a unique shape or curve. Dress the front edge with a decorative bullnose or ogee trim.

When design and budget allows, place a large roof window over your tub to enjoy the moon and stars at night.

Consider the addition of a floating fireplace at the far end of the tub. Carry the stone used for the splash up and around the firebox. Be careful, submerging yourself in the warmth of the water and gazing at the flames may put you in a hypnotic state.

The stone shower

Just as the warm bath serves as closure after a hard day at work, the shower signifies a new beginning. Considered an absolute must in our hurried society, the shower now rivals the tub as the perfect tool for escapism.

Taking the ritualistic daily shower should be invigorating not only to the body, but to the mind and spirit as well. Imagine wandering into a shower clad entirely in the masculinity of rugged slate. Likened to bathing in the outdoors or a tropical rainforest, you will surely linger in the gentle sprays of water a little longer than normal. When the look of soft femininity is the goal, a creamy limestone tile in a caramel or ivory tone is ideal. Because shower walls offer a large expanse in which to be creative, do not overlook the opportunity to feature a dramatic design. Choose to dress each wall, or the most prominent wall, with a long rectangular frame. Inside the decorative borders of the frame, introduce a field of contrasting mosaic. Within this field of mosaic inset a vertical row of three unique tiles. If budget is a concern, clad the expanse of your walls in a large dark travertine tile and splurge on six decorative accents featuring an aged relief design to intersperse around the walls at eye level. Either look is simply stunning.

When designing your shower, there are more than just appearances to keep in mind, you must also consider a few necessary amenities. These include the small seat or bench and the recessed niche or exposed shelf.

The shower seat, as opposed to a bench, is most appropriate for the small walk in shower. Even the most miniscule of spaces can accept a triangular shaped seat where two walls meet. Creating this diminutive seat takes a little ingenuity

on the part of the tile setter. Normally, they will laminate two pieces of stone together, bullnose the front edge for comfort, and insert the finished piece into the area where the two walls converge. When installed correctly, this seat can hold significant weight, appearances may be deceptive, although it may not look it, it is strong.

In an oversized shower, the bench seat is appropriate, and quite wonderful. Dress up this feature by bowing out the center or enveloping its surface in micro-mosaics. Consider designing a recessed arch within the space for the bench to rest in. Add a roof window or a low-voltage halogen light to illuminate to area. For those installing a steam shower, the addition of an incline to the full length bench will encourage a long relaxing stay.

When in the shower, you are faced with the inevitable question of where to place all of the required soaps, gels and shampoos, therefore, a recessed niche or exposed shelf will commonly provide the answer. Placing a large niche with in the center of the most predominate wall is quite an eye catcher, especially when bordered with a contrasting tile or ornate trim.

The shelf is configured and installed similar to the seat, but on a smaller scale. Your installer may inset a laminated piece of stone where the walls converge and round the edge for a soft effect. Other options include a pre-cast stone shelf with a dressy edge, a jagged piece of stone slab for the rustic effect, or a thick piece of carved stone molding on which to place an item or two.

Ideas for the shower

Use a clear or lightly frosted glass as the shower door to show off any designs featured within.

Consider designing a shower space that requires no door at all.

Specify a small tile or mosaic on the floor for added traction.

Place borders above or below eye level for a updated look.

Consider laminating pieces of stone together for a dramatic crown molding, chair rail and baseboard effect.

Add a large stone bench just outside the shower area for drying.

Choose the same tile size and pattern on the ceiling as on the shower floor. This will marry the two nicely.

When installing a steam shower, slant the pitch of the ceiling so that condensation runs down the side walls, in place of annoyingly dripping on your head.

Avoid polished marble in the shower area if possible. The acidity of most shampoos, as well as the onslaught of steam, will eventually take their toll on its pristine shine.

When choosing a polished granite for the shower walls, just keep in mind that water spots are magnified on a polished surface. This problem can be resolved by using a squeegee as needed.

When choosing unfilled travertine for the shower walls, be sure to spray a penetrating sealer with a mold and mildew repellent into all of the open pores.

The vanity

Together with the tub and shower, the vanity makes up yet another essential component of the master bath. Available in a variety of shapes and sizes, the vanity can help define the overall style of the room. Clean, reflective metal stands with cool slabs of pale colored marble are reminiscent of the classic bath. Ornate amaretto or cherry colored cabinets topped with dark marble or granite appear elegant. A sleek blonde cabinet capped with a thick slice of slate will beget a Contemporary or Asian feel. A retro-fitted antique dresser crowned with a curvatious slab of limestone will impart a feeling of romance.

When considering which stone to use for the vanity, remember the qualities each type possesses. The toll of daily contact with toothpaste, soaps and other acidic substances will cause the surface of a polished marble to etch and dull over time. Granite is the ideal choice if a reflective surface is desired, as chemicals are no threat to its shine. Travertine and limestone are suitable choices, but be aware of possible surface etching. Mosaics and tumbled stone are perfect for the vanity countertop as they will acquire a lovely patina overtime.

Sink options for the vanity range from vessels of stone, glass and metal to

porcelain and stainless under-mounts to the standard drop in. Be practical, some decorative sinks are best left to the powder bath where they don't meet the daily rituals of grooming.

After selecting a vanity base and countertop, you will need to consider the backsplash area. If a decorative trim or mosaic has been chosen for the shower walls and around the tub, it may be introduced here as well. The splash area can be as small as four inches or may span the entire area from the countertop to the ceiling, depending on the desired effect. If you are adhering to a limited budget, consider running the countertop material as your standard 4-inch height splash and then border your mirror in something special, such as an accent trim. The least expensive way to achieve drama with your splash and mirror area is to cut down pieces of field tile (your floor or countertop tile) and border the mirror with it. To liven things up, add a decorative accent in each corner and outline the space between the mirror and field tile with a strip of colorful mosaic.

On the floor

The most important factor to consider when using natural stone for the bathroom floor is surface texture. An antiquated finish, a honed marble or granite, a natural-faced slate, are all great choices for flooring in the bathroom, offering a secure foot hold. On the other hand, a highly polished stone of any kind is not always wise due to the "slippery when wet" dilemma.

When your heart is set on a sleek polished stone for the bath, consider the addition of an inlaid rug design outside each wet area in the selected stone's honed, tumbled or mosaic counterpart. This not only keeps you from slipping, but will add a distinctive touch to your space as well. If this solution does not appeal to you, placing a tasteful throw rug outside each wet area will suffice.

The powder bath

Comprised of only a sink and commode, the powder bath is a small bathroom capable of making a big statement. Used primarily by visiting friends and family, this modest sized bath offers the ideal setting for expressing your individuality. Somewhat isolated, it lends itself well to bold and daring statements. Its generally private location eliminates conventional concerns regarding tile selections that may clash with surrounding elements. Combine all this with its guest-oriented mission and it becomes possible to create unsurpassed elegance without worry. So be creative, artistic and begin to envision unique ways to impress your guests.

Take a good look at the space you have allotted to function as your powder bath. Ideally it is located in an area that offers a degree of privacy for your visitors and is large enough to move about in comfortably. Because this petite space is generally reserved for guests, it does not suffer from the blatant mistreatment normally associated with the standard bathroom, like wet floors and harsh chemical substances. Because of this, materials typically avoided may be considered, like those wonderfully delectable polished marbles and mosaics.

Let your imagination take flight. What appeals to you as far as design is concerned? Do you prefer the understated simplicity of Contemporary or the classic look of Traditional? Either way, color and lighting will play a major role in the mood and ambiance conveyed within the room. Tucked away in some obscure corner, there is little chance that you will be basking in the warmth of natural light, so choose mood-enhancing fixtures to complement and balance the room. Forget the old adage that small rooms should be light in color; select a palette that appeals to your sense of style. A rich warm shade may be just the backdrop to convey that feeling of sophistication you've been striving for. There are no hard-set rules for this bath, so here are just a few ideas you may want to consider.

Mosaics

Mosaics add instant glamour to any room. Their color and texture variations are truly mesmerizing. When confronted with a wall clad in these tiny works of art, one cannot help but glide their fingertips across it. When laid upon the floor, your guests will have to resist the urge to kick off their shoes.

By enveloping an entire room in a single-toned mosaic you can recreate the serene simplicity of a windswept beach. The sparkle of highly polished stone mosaics strewn across a backsplash and spilling over a countertop will result in the appearance of a gem-encrusted jewel box. Because of the expense involved in using large quantities of mosaic, your budget restrictions may over ride your desires. Before dismissing your dreams entirely, explore clever ways to incorporate a smaller adaptation of your original design. Remember, a little goes a long way in a room of this size and because volume is scaled down …so are costs.

Before settling on your final plans, don't forget about the floor. A handful of dark shiny mosaics scattered across a floor of creamy travertine can be impressive. Consider a border of inexpensive field tile filled with a mosaic herringbone or basket weave pattern. Normally preset on netted sheets, mosaics are fairly easy to install. Try getting fancy by cutting

the sheets into strips to be used as borders or smaller squares to be used as inserts. Small custom medallions can also add an elegant touch for a modest investment.

Stone bowl sinks

Due to the lack of components present in this cozy little space, the sink and mirror suddenly find themselves center stage, and while we generally think of mirrors as a decorative accessory, dazzling visitors in a relatively new undertaking is the traditionally non-descript sink. Presently struggling to carve out its role as a focal point, this once uninspiring fixture is being thought of in a totally new perspective. Gone is the lackluster sink of the past and in it's place has emerged an incredible work of art.

When shopping for a sink, material choices and styles abound at every turn. Your search will unearth bowls carved from blocks of granite, travertine, limestone and marble; reflecting earth tones of ocher, sienna and bone. From round and oval to rectangle and square, shapes will vary from the traditional to the exotic and from the primitive to the ornate. Rising to take its place as one of the most beautiful design elements within the bathroom is the vessel sink. These functional pieces of sculpture are captivating when set on pedestals or floated above jagged slabs of stone. Reminiscent of your grandmother's washbasin, they are capable of successfully achieving numerous and diverse images. Placed atop a reflective sheet of glass, they appear to hover in space; the juxtaposition of new and old blending to create a unique dimension. Resting upon a ledge of weathered stone, they capture the primordial feeling of ancient Rome. An isolated sink of hand-carved granite positioned upon a floating vanity of slate will envelop your guests with a Zen-like serenity.

Cladding the wall

Because you may be able to afford a few little extras in this bath, you may want to consider treating all of the surfaces with stone tile. Walls can receive a chest-high wainscoting topped with an intricately carved rope trim or be completely encased from baseboard to crown molding. When cladding the entire wall surface in stone, visual interest can be added by breaking up the pattern through the use of dimensional trims or strips of contrasting stone. If you are setting the lower portion of your wall tile on a 90-degree angle, switch to a brick pattern or 45-degree angle above the break point for added diversity.

Final thoughts

Due to its small nature, the powder bath gives you the opportunity to stretch your imagination without stretching your budget. This may be your only opportunity to incorporate those high-end specialty tiles you've been drooling over without breaking the bank. If there was something that you were forced to eliminate from the master bath due to budget constraints, reexamine using it on a smaller scale in the powder room. Remember, through the simple addition of upgraded or wall mounted faucets, decorative inserts, mosaics or clever pattern arrangements, a rich and lavish feeling can be instilled within the room.

To learn more, look for the author's books "STONE" and "TILE STYLE" (Harry N. Abrams Inc. publishers - New York). These books are available through the Marble Institute of America bookstore. Visit www.marble-institute.com for information.

The Safety of Natural Stone

By Miranda Lynn

Are there radioactive materials in your granite countertops? Of course there are, but is Radon gas emitting from them in harmful levels? No, not as far as scientific studies have determined.

For the past few months, I have been reading articles and listening to news stories about the possibility that granite countertops may contribute to the amount of radon gas and/or radiation in your home. The media has taken the story step further to imply that any detection of radiation in granite indicates an increased risk of cancer to you and your family. As a geologist, homeowner, and mother, I can tell you the safety of granite has never been a concern of mine.

The truth is natural stone is safe, beautiful and durable. It adds an amazing texture and architectural statement to your home. A recent poll by Harris interactive found that 55 percent of American homeowners prefer granite countertops in their dream kitchen, followed distantly by synthetic stone at 12 percent. The poll also found that 90 percent of respondents agree with the statement that granite countertops increase the resale value of your home. If natural stone was found to emit radon gas in harmful levels, it would not be the most popular building material or the foundation of the construction industry. While Radon gas can exist in your home from other sources, natural stone building materials do not contribute a significant enough amount to cause concern.

Those who have studied radioactive materials know there is a flawed correlation between the radiation found in natural stones and the levels of cancer-causing radon gas detected in homes. This far-reaching conclusion is akin to assuming that, because it is raining outside, your house is going to get hit by a tornado.

Discussing this issue solely in relation to granite is misleading. All natural materials, including man-made materials composed of natural materials (e.g., concrete), contain tiny minerals that are potentially radioactive. These minerals are called trace minerals because they are tiny (about the size of a grain of salt) and compose an extremely small percentage of the rock, hence the term trace. They are made of common elements, such as silica, oxygen, phosphate, and aluminum, as well as radioactive elements like uranium, thorium, and potassium. Geologists study these trace minerals because they hold invaluable knowledge about the timing of various natural events. What trace elements do not do is cause concern when choosing to have these durable products in our homes. If anything, geologists are more comfortable with them because they respect what the trace elements can tell them and understand the composition of granite on a microscopic scale. To geologists, that makes a natural stone countertop even more beautiful.

During my graduate studies at Vanderbilt University, I had the opportunity to study radioactive trace minerals that certain industries are touting as the unsafe component of natural stone. My research consisted of collecting rock specimens in the California and Nevada deserts which were brought back to the Vanderbilt lab for study. I crushed the specimens and separated the trace minerals in order to measure the radiological data using sophisticated microscopes.

During the testing process, I was never endangered by the trace minerals found in the rock specimens. I did not wear a

lead suit to protect myself from radiation or a respirator to protect my lungs from breathing in radon gas. This danger was not a concern for my professors or the hundreds of other researchers across the world that purposefully separated these radioactive minerals out of rocks and handled them with bare hands in order to obtain valuable information. The presence of these radioactive trace minerals is just not a safety issue. As students, we were well informed of all safety hazards in the lab. If there was a radiation hazard, we would have been instructed to protect ourselves. It just was not necessary since the amount of radioactive material in these rocks was not dangerous.

To give you an idea of the amount of radioactive material that is present in a typical piece of granite, I would take a fist-sized piece of granite and process it down to obtain a quarter teaspoon of trace elements. Think about that in relation to your granite countertops. A few teaspoons of trace minerals sprinkled throughout the stone which are not present on the surface per se, but intermixed throughout the thickness of the slab. In order to be exposed to radiation, you would have to be in direct contact with the minerals for an extended period of time. And if those teaspoons of trace minerals are sprinkled throughout your countertop or shower stall, how many do you think you will actually touch? Moreover, will you touch them 24/7, for 72 years in a sealed room as Dr. John McCarthy, President of Environmental Health & Engineering explains? It is just not possible to be significantly exposed in this manner.

Now that the presence of radioactive minerals in granite has been explained, let us turn our attention to radon gas. Let me be clear: the amount of radioactivity that is measured in your granite does not directly correlate to the amount of radon gas that is in the air of your home[1]. The amount of radiation that the trace minerals emit is insignificant, and what does come out readily diffuses into the air. In a properly-ventilated home, it quickly disperses and does not hover around the countertop or even linger in higher concentrations in your kitchen.

The tests seen on the news where a ticking Geiger counter is run across the surface of a countertop is a measure of the radioactivity in those trace elements and not the radon gas in the air. This is a big difference since the radioactivity in your granite is not directly correlated to the amount of radon gas it will emit over the years. As a scientist, I do not appreciate scare tactics that use science to influence consumer choices. Please do not be persuaded by the dramatic findings of the ticking Geiger counter on the surface of your countertop.

It is important to mention that radon gas can enter the home though other sources, seeping in through foundation cracks from surrounding soil and bedrock in areas with poor ventilation. Please follow EPA guidelines http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html and get the facts needed to decide whether you should test your home for radon gas. Proper ventilation and a sealed, solid foundation will take care of most radon issues in homes.

If this were a credible issue, we would have learned of it long ago in relation to concrete slabs under homes, brick facades on fireplaces, and ceramic tile flooring[2]. All of these materials have bits of trace minerals in them, and in some cases, they are purposefully added to increase the strength and hardness of the material. In fact, the United States Environmental Protection Agency has radiological exposure limits on building materials to prevent such exposures from occurring. This is why it is so illogical to suddenly be concerned with radon being emitted from your granite countertops.

Granite is just one of many natural materials that are beautiful, durable, and yes, contain tiny amounts of trace minerals that may be radioactive. And remember – the concern is with radon gas, which may or may not have the chance to escape from those tiny minerals in your countertops and bathroom floor. There is more radioactive material in the soil and bedrock beneath your home than there could ever be in a few slabs of natural stone in your house. Your countertops are safe, and as beautiful as they have always been.

[1]*M Ngachin et al 2008 J. Radiological Protection. 28 369-378*

[2]*Selby, J H. Health Physics. 94(6):539-547, June 2008.*

The warm, traditional look of this kitchen reflects the Craftsman style of the home and the earthy location of the Pacific Northwest.

'Dreams' Showhouse Reflects Pacific Northwest

By Anita Shaw, Snohomish, WA

Green design is currently a central trend in kitchen and home renovation, but it has long been a key design element in the Pacific Northwest, where passions run high when discussing environmental issues. Natural products, renewable resources and energy saving items are all part of the area's design story.

This design philosophy was evident in this year's Seattle Street of Dreams showhouse presentation, which focused on a single street of homes located here. The homes, which ranged in size from 4,200 to 4,750 square feet, focused on green building and green products.

The homes on the street were judged on eight different categories by the general public, realtors and a professional committee, and Copper Falls, a home designed and built by Lockie Homes, Inc. and its president, Todd Lockie, was awarded "Best Kitchen" and "Best of Show."

Copper Falls features classic elements of the Craftsman style – "architecture with a warm, traditional touch," comments Sherry Erickson, office manager, Lockie Homes, Inc. in Snohomish. "Such design is an excellent fit for the Pacific Northwest, as the heavily textured exteriors of native wood products and stone allow for a look and feel indigenous to this earthy area."

Several lifestyles came into play when creating the overall design of the house. The home worked for the empty nester, who could live on the main floor and entertain guests there in the surroundings of the kitchen and dining area, while saving the upstairs for visiting children and grandchildren.

The house also functions well for an active family with children, according to Erickson. "The family kitchen is easy to use and enjoy, and the upstairs living space features three full baths, allowing plenty of space for everyone, without the inconveniences.

The black range from Viking Range Corp. is flanked by carved legs and topped with a range hood finished in Espresso, a dramatic contrast to the Crème Brule cabinets from Canyon Creek Cabinet Co.

Flexible style

"Flexibility is the key to the Copper Falls design," Erickson stresses. "Whether an older couple is entertaining friends with a formal meal or the school-age kids need a quick bite to eat before heading out the door, the kitchen offers versatility. The simple floor plan allows for easy maneuverability, wide countertops feature plenty of space and state-of-the-art Viking appliances provide stylish appeal." The home's overall warmth and natural feel extends into the kitchen through the use of cabinetry and countertops in robust form and tone, Erickson continues.

Cabinetry from Canyon Creek is featured throughout Copper Falls, and makes a strong design statement in the kitchen. The company's Cornerstone beaded inset cabinetry in the Mount Vernon door style in maple is used on the majority of the room's perimeter. These cabinets feature Canyon Creek's Crème Brule finish – where dark highlighting paint is applied over a Crème base in detailed areas.

The creamy tones of the perimeter cabinetry contrast the deep, rich tones of the black Viking range and range hood, which is finished in Espresso stain on cherry.

In keeping with the comfortably upscale, organic character of the kitchen, dual dishwashers and a refrigerator were also hidden behind Espresso-stained cabinet fronts, as were oven-side spice storage columns. All of the appliances in the room were provided by Viking Range Corp. and Ariston Appliances. The Mount Vernon door style and Espresso tones of the range hood and appliance fronts are reflected in the kitchen island as well.

The cabinets and range hood were embellished with carved moldings and carved legs, provided by Enkeboll Designs and Brown Wood Products. All of the cabinets were topped with granite countertops in Madagascar, a vibrant and earthy combination of brown, cream and rust tones.

Rich tones were also featured in the room's surfaces, provided by Integrity Floors in Snohomish. "The firm created the matching ceiling and inlay floor patterns, countertop textures and special tiles used within Copper Falls," comments Erickson. Above the range, a distinctive tile pattern drawing colors from the countertops makes a bold statement.

Bath style

The large living space upstairs and down in Copper Falls features multiple bathrooms.

"The uniquely equipped, space-filled bathrooms entice the senses with state-of-the-art function found in beautiful form," emphasizes Erickson. "This is accomplished through items such as the stimulating hydrotherapy/massage master suite showering system with a digital interface and the powder room's exquisite cast bronze basin sporting an ancient look using patterned elevated ridges and scrolls that help direct water flow."

The upstairs bathroom cabinetry is outfitted with Limoge and Monticello door styles from Canyon Creek, using maple and alder woods with stain selections of Crème Brule and Honey.

"For all intent and purpose, the fine craftsmanship and loving attention to detail offer completion to the warm, natural, earthy feeling within this home," concludes Erickson.

This article was originally published in the December 2007 issue of Kitchen & Bath Design News. (www.KitchenBathDesign.com) Reprinted with permission.

All for the Love of Stone

The small industrial building on the east side of Cleveland, Ohio is about as non-descript as it gets, but inside is another story. There, a visitor will find one man's fervent passion for natural stone and wood in the form of unfinished and finished wood and stone sculptures from the hands of a craftsman who is doing the one thing he has always wanted to do – *Create with his hands.*

© Photos by Mike Levy

Giancarlo at work sculpting granite.

The man is Giancarlo Calicchia, 62-year-old native of Veroli, Italy who has seen the natural stone business from virtually every angle.

In his life before he became a full-time sculptor, part-time farmer and vineyard operator, Calichhia owned and managed one of America's most successful commercial stone companies, Calicchia Stone Industries, headquartered in Cleveland.

"I had about 20 people in the office and about 60 in the field,"Calicchia said in his dusty studio. Most of the work was commercial.

"We did have residential and maintenance divisions and we did a lot of restorative work all over the country, including some very prestigious projects," he continued.

From his first project for the world-renowned Cleveland Museum of Art in 1980, Calicchia Stone Industries was ultimately commissioned to do projects across the globe.

Then, beginning in 1992, Calicchia tired of the chaos of running a large business, and began shutting it all down. Within two years, Calicchia Stone Industries had completed all of its contracts and closed the doors for good. "I went to full-time sculpting," he said acknowledging that it was something he always wanted to do.

The road from Italy to Cleveland had many stops along the way. Uprooted at the age of 11, his family moved to Rome, New York, where he was raised. He attended the University of Syracuse and then returned to Rome. He studied stone carving throughout Italy, Mexico and America and then went to Haiti to learn wood carving.

Calicchia says each of these countries and cultures has influenced his work in unique and powerful ways. Of course, his background is steeped in his native Italy.

"America has instilled in me a desire to seek and accomplish the impossible," he said. "But it was Haiti and Mexico that brought me into confrontation with the true nature of man and art. These two cultures contain the new world in their soul. When I traveled to Haiti, I was hoping to learn how to carve wood. Instead, Haiti carved me and I am better for it."

When he moved from Haiti to Cleveland, Calicchia became a local resource for large stone projects.

"I am actually doing exactly what I want to do with my life," he said. "So, if somebody would ask me what are you

going to do when you retire, I'd say 'I'm not retiring because I am doing, I'm sculpting, I'm carving.'

"I'm able to afford it. I'm not conditioned by client or legal, or whatever ramification. I do exactly what I want to do. I enjoy doing it. I love doing it."

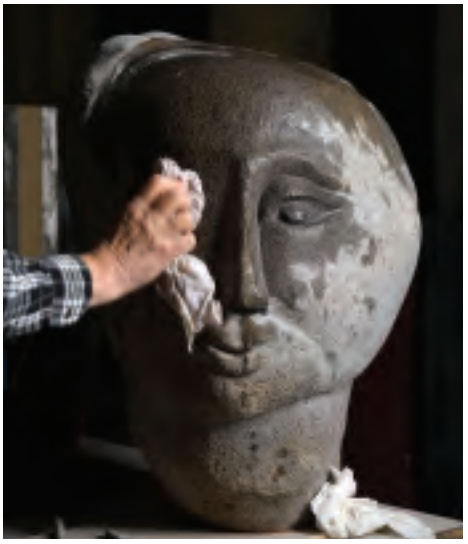
Mostly, Calicchia sculpts or carves for his own pleasure and sells the works to those who admire his style. Most of the sales come from word of mouth, but also from catalogs, the internet and his own showroom near downtown Cleveland. He will also accept commissions, but the stakes are high.

"I will accept the commission only if the commission is totally dictated by me," he says.

Spoken like a man who is doing exactly what he wants to do.

"My work celebrates living on our magical Earth," he said. "Carving and shaping for me is as important as the results. I was trained by hardened survivors of the ancient traditions of wood, stone and bronze. I am unable to compromise or forget. I live for what I do. I look for projects that challenge my passion for touching all the elements of our Earth."

White Colorado Alabaster: Untitled



Granite: Eye of Woman

Imperial Red Travertine: Emerging

John Clarry, Giancarlo's apprentice, wets the Eye of Woman sculpture to reveal the stone's true colors. Orange Mexican Onyx: Untitled (foreground)

Frequently Asked Questions

Cooking On Granite

Q: *I was just wondering about cooking on granite? What material is safe to cook on? I had a customer who was in Aruba and purchased a small granite square for cooking. What they do is heat it up to 500°F for a couple hours and then set an aluminum plate on top with a wood plate on top of the aluminum. Then you can set your meat, fish, etc. on it and slice it up and cook it. What granites are safe to cook on?*

A: As far as toxins within the stone are concerned, any of the granites would be safe. Most granite, however, would not survive repeated thermal cycling to 500°F without cracking.

We Need a (Thermal) Break

Q: *Can 3cm Honey Onyx be used on a commercial serving counter that will serve both hot and cold prepared foods? Would a thermal joint/ break be needed to separate each hot and cold serving area or could the entire 3 cm slab be used?*

A: Absolutely I would recommend a thermal break. Without it, you will have a very strong thermal gradient within the stone which could initiate fracture.

Hot Cracked Granite

Q: *I had Absolute Black installed in my kitchen but the island has cracked two times. First time they changed it saying the crack was due to someone standing on it. The second time it cracked at the same place and on the opposite side, now they say I put hot pots on it. When I was purchasing the granite, I was told it is the hardest granite and it is often used for fireplaces, the hearth, and sometimes inside it because it is the hardest and most resilient granite on the market. I would like to know if granite can crack by putting a lukewarm pot on it. What are other elements that may cause cracking?*

A: Absolutely granite can be cracked by the application of a hot pot. You can theoretically induce enough stress into a stone via a thermal gradient with only 100°F change in temperature. The absolute temperature is not a problem, as most granite will exhibit permanent strain or hysteretic behavior until reaching temps in excess of 250°C. It is the thermal gradient, where part of the stone is cold and part of the stone is hot, causing the hot portion to expand and creating a tensile stress in the cold, non-expanding regions. MIA literature recommends the use of a trivet under hot pans and pots.

Maximizing Space, Functionality and Style

W H I L E T H I N K I N G S M A L L

By William V. Levy

One of the major challenges facing kitchen and bath dealers, interior designers and do-it-yourself consumers is how make something really special out of a small space, especially when it comes to appliance-heavy kitchens. It can be successfully done but takes a lot of creative disciplines and compromises.

To get the inside story on how to master small space, we recently paid a visit to Studio 76 Kitchens & Baths, a highly successful design firm and showroom in Twinsburg, Ohio, near Cleveland. Studio 76 Kitchens & Baths serves an area that mainly comprises Northeast Ohio, but frequently takes its talented designers out of state. We sat down with co-owners Deborah Shababy and Chip Tiber, and designer Sue Patterson, to discuss the subject. Studio 76 Kitchens & Baths takes a unique approach to its design projects. While each new job is managed by a lead person, the end result comes from input from as many as four or five of the firm's six-member design staff. Composite thinking by a team helps to maximize creativity when it comes to the whole process – from space planning, to appliance and material selection and lighting.

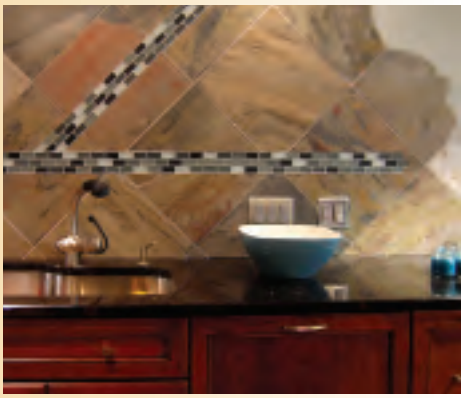
"Most homeowners don't think they can do anything with small space – just get me new cabinets and new tops ," said Deb Shababy, who recently remodeled her own small-space condominium, pictures of which are included in this article.

"Sometimes they get caught up in the actual space they have, not realizing that they may be able to take space from somewhere else – like moving a wall or a doorway," explained Sue Patterson. Chip Tiber, who is also an electrician and specializes in lighting, says creating the right space can be a time-consuming task because at the outset homeowners are not aware of the concepts that are available.

"The whole process can take months," he said.

All agreed that these were the keys to successfully making something out of a small space in a home, apartment or condominium:

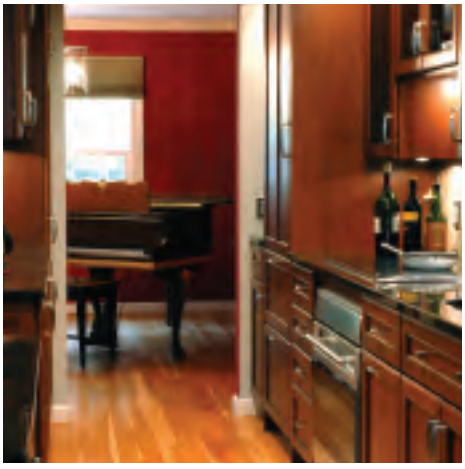
- Effective space planning, which means concept. Select the appliances first, which will determine how much space you actually have. Free-standing appliances can take over the space because of their size. Look for integrated appliances that don't take over the small space or break up the space. This will help avoid a "chopped up" look and help everything blend together.
- Second, select the cabinets, both in finish and style.
- Picking the countertop surface comes next, and the folks at Studio 76 are partial to granite. Stone can be the unifying agent in the entire project – the factor that brings it all together with multiple colors. While there are many styles and colors of cabinets, there are many more varieties of stone. You will have a lot of choices in selecting a surface that can unify the look.
- Reflective surfaces can actually make the space look larger, but not every small space is conducive to reflective surfaces. You might want to also consider a non-reflective surface, like honed or brushed, which take off some of the shine. If you decide on a non-reflective surface, it is imperative to light the room differently differently.
- Lighting is also a critical element and will help a lot, especially lighting on the surfaces. You wouldn't use the same lighting on dark granite as you would on light granite because it will reflect differently.
- Expand the use of stone. Use it for a backsplash or for an expanded wall covering that can be carried into another area. In her own new kitchen Deborah Shababy used a slate wall covering to "float" into another area.



The same goes for stone flooring. Expanding the flooring into another area can make the space look larger and more fluid.

- Be careful about changing textures. Every time you change a texture or material, you start to break up the space. The more you break it up, the smaller, more confined the space looks.
- Be judicious about selecting paint colors, wall coverings, fabrics and accessories. Accessorizing it at the very end becomes pretty important and the wrong gallon of paint can spoil the entire job.

Whether you have professional help or try to do it yourself, the bottom line in creating a beautiful, functional small-space kitchen comes down to this: Do the space planning first and that means selecting the appliances, then select the cabinet style and color and, finally, pick the right countertop surface, which will tie everything together.



Kitchen design and renovation by Studio 76 Kitchens and Baths, Twinsburg, Ohio

SLATE

Another great-looking choice from the natural stone family.

The 2 x 2 Tumbled Earth slate and 12 x 12 Autumn slate wall treatments coordinate perfectly with the island countertop of Indian Premium Black granite and perimeter countertops of Carmel Brown granite.

Heathermoor

Mottled Green/Purple

Summit Honed

Unfading Green

Unfading Purple

Unfading Red

Winchester Black

When most people think about slate they conjure up visual images of grey rooftops. Don't be fooled, because there's a whole other side of *StoneDimension's* stone of the month – slate – and it can do wonders for your kitchen and other areas of the home.

In addition to providing a handsome roof or patio for your dwelling, slate has a plethora of indoor applications; including flooring, countertops, fire place surrounds and tread risers. The best part is they don't all have to be in shades of grey.

There are also reddish maroon, greenish, purple, rust, pink and other colors that can enhance your home wherever this versatile natural stone material is used. Many of these colors can be complimentary with other natural stones, like granite, travertine, marble and limestone.

Slate is primarily composed of quartz and illite, with mica, calcite and other materials. The grey and black colors are due to carbon and/or graphite. Red shale is caused by the presence of Hematite, while greens colors are due to Chlorite. Shades of red, purple and tan result from the amount of iron oxides contained in the stone.

Slate was originally another kind of flat rock, called shale. Shale is made up tiny grains and clay and other minerals cemented into rock. When shale is buried deeply and exposed to great heat and pressure, the clay changes into new minerals and the shale becomes slate.

"Slate has been used widely as a versatile building material for 100-plus years, says Craig Markcrow, president of Vermont Structural Slate Company of Fair Have, Vermont, which has been in business since 1859.

Markcrow says there has been a marked increase in the use of slate for kitchen countertops over the past decade and a half. The honed finish is especially appealing to architects and designers because it has a very subtle appearance.

"Slate has very good stain resistance," Markcrow said. "Vermont slate does not need to be sealed."

Vermont Structural Slate Company specializes in custom projects and is committed to meeting the demands of architects. The company ships its material across the U.S. and into many overseas markets.

While visiting New York City, you can see a dynamic example of slate at the new Museum of Modern Art (MoMa), designed by Taniguchi and Associates. A large quantity of honed finish Vermont unfading green slate is used throughout the building.

This staircase appeared on the cover of our Fall/Winter 2007 issue. It is an excellent example of the use of Gold Green Cleft Slate on stair risers.

Index of Photographs

Cover

Project Name: Private Residence
City: Austin, TX
Architect: A. J. Tamborello, AIA, Tony Tamborello
General Contractor:
Audino Construction Company
Stone Supplier, Fabricator, and Installer:
Southwest Marble & Granite Works
Countertop: 2cm Carmen Red granite

Page 6

Photo courtesy of Palatial Stone.
www.palatialstone.com

Page 7

From the book *"STONE"* by Heather E. Adams.
Courtesy Harry N. Abrams Inc.
Stewart, Tabori & Chang publishers.

Page 8

Photo courtesy of Palatial Stone.
www.palatialstone.com

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From the book *"TILE STYLE"* by Heather E. Adams.
Courtesy Harry N. Abrams Inc.
Stewart, Tabori & Chang publishers.

Page 10

Project Name: Private residence
Location: North Carolina
Stone Supplier: Casale Marble; Delray Beach, FL
Stone Fabricator and Installer:
NSC Granite & Marble Inc.
Countertop: Peacock Supreme granite slab

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Project Name: Private residence
City: Mustang, OK
General Contractor: Jason Powers Homes Inc.
Stone Supplier, Fabricator, and Installer:
Southwest Tile & Marble
Photo Credit: Jayme Buck
Split-level vanity: 3cm Durango Ancient travertine
Edge: Chiseled with 4" splash

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Photo courtesy of Heather E. Adams.

Page 13

Photo courtesy of Palatial Stone.
www.palatialstone.com

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Project Name: Private residence
City: South Oklahoma City, OK
Designer: Richardson Homes
General Contractor: Richardson Homes
Stone Fabricator and Installer:
Southwest Tile & Marble
Photo Credit: Amy McCollom
Countertop and Island: 3cm Venetian gold granite slab

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Project Name: Minnesota Cabinets
City: Urbandale, IA
Countertop: Persa Brown granite

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Photo courtesy Walker Zanger.
Countertop: Calacatta White marble.

Page 17

Project Name: Soapstone heater with panoramic door on one side, flat door on other side.
City: Thetford Mines, Québec
Designer: Jean-François Vachon &
Le Pierres Stéatites Inc.
General Contractor: Le Pierres Stéatites Inc.
Stone Supplier and Fabricator:
Le Pierres Stéatites Inc.
Stone Installer: Jean-François Vachon
Firebox and shell: Soapstone from quarry in Quebec, Canada

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Project Name: Private residence
City: Salt Lake City, UT
Stone Supplier: Arizona Tile
Countertop: Lava granite slab

Page 19

Project Name: Country Classic
City: Washington Depot, CT
General Contractor: Big Sky Management
Stone Supplier: Dente Trading/AKDO
Stone Fabricator: Valley Marble and Slate, Corp.
Stone Installer: Tile East, LLC
Walls and tub top: Honed Carrara White marble

Pages 22-24

Photo Credit: Mike Levy

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Project Name: Private residence
City: Nashua, NH
Design/Build Company: David R. Crupi, LLC
Designer: Susan R. Crupi
General Contractor: David R. Crupi
Stone Installer: David R. Crupi
Stone Fabricator: Ripano Stoneworks, Ltd.
Photo Credit: Mike Rixon, Rixon Photography
Countertop (island): Golden Typhoon granite
Countertop (perimeter): Black Pearl granite

Pages 26 & 27

Project Name: Private residence renovation
Designer: Studio 76 Kitchens & Baths
Stone Supplier and Fabricator:
Universal Marble & Granite
Stone Installer: Studio 76 Kitchens & Baths
Countertops: Antique Brown granite
Walls: Slate

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Project Name: Spec home
City: Littleton, CO
Designer: Saddleback Design
Stone Supplier: Arizona Tile
Stone Fabricator and Installer: Majestic Stone
Countertop (island): Indian Premium Black granite slab
Countertop (perimeter): Carmel Brown granite
Wall covering: 2 x 2 Tumbled Earth slate,
12 x 12 Autumn slate

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Project Name: Private residence
City: Shaker Heights, OH
Design Consultant: Susanna Goldstein,
Somrak Kitchens, Inc.
Stone Supplier: Mont Granite
Photo Credit:
William H. Webb, Infinity Studio Photography
Stair risers: Gold green cleft slate
Stone beneath planter: Gray-blue river rock

Below

Project Name: Private residence
City: Minneapolis, MN
Architect: Otagawa-Anschel Design-Build
Designer: Michael Anschel
General Contractor: Otagawa-Anschel Design-Build
Stone Supplier, Fabricator and Installer:
Paramount Granite Company, St. Michael, MN
Remnant granite including (all honed):
Mahogany Blue, Café Brown, Antique Brown
and Blue Pearl
Range backsplash: Soapstone

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