



## Natural Stone Descriptions

### Granite

Granite is by far the best choice and the most popular stone for natural countertops. It is not only the hardest and most durable material available, but also the most stain resistant. It comes in a wide variety of colors and its beauty lasts more than a lifetime. It is also easy to clean and maintain. It makes up 75% of the earth's crust and is the most common igneous rock. It was formed ages ago when magma (molten rock) cooled. It is commonly found in mountain ranges, but is also found in level regions where mountains once were. It is made up of various minerals including quartz, feldspar, and mica. All granites are approved for exterior use, which is why you see much of it cladding commercial buildings and sidewalks in many cities.

### Limestone

Limestone also offers a unique look. It is great to use for fireplace surrounds, but use caution when recommending it for kitchen countertops, and bathroom vanities. It is the softest natural material available and therefore the easiest to stain and scratch. It is extremely porous and therefore use of an acrylic based sealer (which adds a sheen to the appearance) is recommended to protect it. Limestone is produced from the mineral calcite (calcium carbonate) and sediment. It mainly comes from the beds of oceans, or evaporated seas and lakes and from sea animal shells.

### Marble

Marble is also quite popular, especially for bathroom vanities and fireplace surrounds. It is also among one of the most beautiful stones available in the market today. It is a relatively hard material, but it is not as hard as granite. Depending on the environment it is in, there is a chance of staining. Marble also comes in quite a large variety of colors. With proper care and maintenance, marble is relatively easy to maintain. It is composed of calcite or dolomite and is easily worked. It is a metamorphic limestone, or dolostone and is classified as any crystalline calcareous rock that will take a polish. Through the ages, it has been used primarily as a building and ornamental stone, and for monuments, tabletops, and other decorative applications. Very few are approved for exterior use.

### Onyx

Onyx is made up of a variety of cryptocrystalline quartz, and is made up of bands, which are parallel and regular. Its appearance is most striking when the bands are of sharply contrasting colors. It is often considered a gemstone. It is one of the most striking and beautiful stones, but is fragile. It is popular for jewelry, vases, and figurines. It can be used for fireplace surrounds, table tops, bar tops, etc., but scratches easily.

### Slate

Slate offers a unique look. It is great for floor tile and roofing shingles, but not the best choice for kitchen countertops. It is a relatively soft material and can stain rather easily. It is also not the easiest material to clean up. However if you are looking for a "weathered" look, it is quite appealing. It is a fine-grained metamorphic rock that splits into thin, smooth-surfaced layers. It can also be used for roofing.

5760 Quam Avenue N.E. • St. Michael, MN 55376 • Phone: (763) 428-4075 • Fax: (763) 428-1795  
www.paramountgranite.com • E-Mail: info@paramountgranite.com





## Natural Stone Descriptions *(continued)*

### Soapstone

Soapstone tends to be light gray in appearance and takes on a darker appearance with aging, since it goes through an oxidation process. Sealing with mineral oil is recommended every few weeks for the first year to enhance the oxidation process. Abrasive cleaners such as Ajax are not recommended. If you desire, or are looking for an aged, or weathered look, soapstone may be appealing. It is a metamorphic rock rich in magnesium and iron. It can be used for kitchen countertops and sinks and is sometimes used for fireplace surrounds because of its ability to distribute heat evenly.

### Travertine

Travertine is a porous material, which often begins as a limestone and in most applications is filled. It usually contains small fossils or hollow fossil imprints. It is made up of large quantities of calcium carbonate formed from hot springs containing calcium rich water that bubble up and then cool down. It is often considered an ornamental stone. Travertine is quite popular for flooring and is sometimes used for vanities, or in bathroom applications. It comes in a variety of colors. It usually contains small fossils or hollow fossil imprints.

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## Engineered Stone Description

### Engineered Stone

Engineered stone is a man-made product, which is comprised mostly of quartz (approximately 93% by weight, 83% Max. by volume) and plastic (approximately 7% by weight).

Most engineered stones tend to be more expensive than granite, however it does depend upon the exact color you choose. Despite what you may see, or hear advertised, engineered stone is not as hard, scratch resistant, and heat resistant as granite. Granite is formed within the earth's crust and is comprised of various different mineral composites. It has been used throughout the ages for buildings, tombstones, etc. There are even buildings that were built before Christ that are still standing, and tombstone markers that are well over 100 years old that look as good as the day they were placed in the ground. Unlike engineered stone, granite can survive various weather conditions and does not fade over time when exposed to sunlight.

And as for beauty...engineered stones are no match for the beauty of nature provided by God.

Engineered stone is a good choice for those customers looking for a consistent overall look. Engineered stone also is a good choice for customers looking for certain colors that can not be found in nature such as bright red, or blue, or for customers looking for a limestone-look, but with more durability. We offer a product called Caesarstone for those customers interested in purchasing an engineered stone. Caesarstone is the original manufacturer of engineered stone and has been around for 20 years.

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