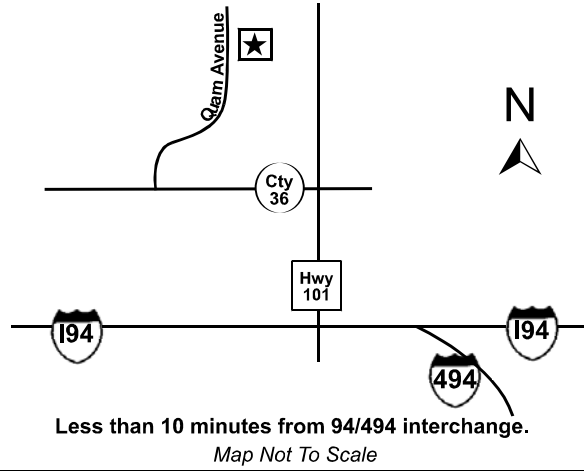


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*When it comes to counter-  
tops, if you're looking for  
quality and durability...  
Nothing stacks up to granite.*

*Granite countertops offer a  
unique, natural look  
and since granite  
was formed with the  
earth's crust  
it is one of the hardest  
materials available today.*

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**NATURAL STONE  
VERSUS/ENGINEERED  
STONE—JUST THE  
STRAIGHT FACTS**



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Compliments of:



**R**ecently we have heard numerous rumors and misconceptions regarding granite—many of which are just simply not true. These rumors have been started by companies that sell engineered stone, as a means to create a market for their product. The plain fact is that these rumors are just causing confusion for the customer.

Granite has been around since the formation of the earth. It is 100% natural. Man has attempted to mimic its' beauty for many years with the creation of engineered stones. These man-made stones just can't capture the elegance and depth of granite, so their manufacturers make false claims against granite to help promote their products.

To address these misconceptions, we'd like to present—just the straight facts regarding granite and engineered stones:

#### 1. **Scratch resistance:**

It is very difficult to scratch granite. Everyday use of knives will not scratch the surface. Cutting directly on your granite will however, dull your knives.

Some sales people for engineered stones claim that their product is just as scratch-resistant as granite, but in the same breath, recommend the use of a cutting board.

#### 2. **Stain Resistance:**

Some sales people for engineered stones claim that all granite's are high maintenance and need to be sealed. It is true that some granite's need to be sealed (less than 20%) to prevent them from staining. Sealing with a silicone impregnator is typically done before installation. As a general rule, granite should be sealed once a year. The actual sealing process is easy. The silicone impregnator is just rubbed on to the countertops with a soft terry-cloth. When sealed properly, granite is very difficult to stain. There are a few granite colors that are more porous than others that may require sealing more often.

Engineered stones do not require sealing. Some make claims that they are stain resistant

and chemical resistant, yet give information on how to remove various stains.

#### 3. **Heat/Burn Resistance:**

Granite is in fact heat resistant for everyday kitchen needs. Setting hot pots and bake-ware on your granite tops will not burn them. We actually use a propane torch periodically on our granite's when we need to speed up the drying process.

Most engineered stones claim they can tolerate hot temperatures for brief periods without being damaged. This basically means the customer should avoid direct contact with hot pots and pans, and use trivets. (Do not try a torch on engineered stones. They will burn!)

#### 4. **Mold/Mildew Resistance:**

Mold and mildew growth is purely a cleanliness issue, in regards to granite countertops. If you don't clean your countertops on a regular basis, you might just grow yourself some mold, or mildew from the left out food and bacteria. Granite does not harbor bacteria by itself.

If you don't clean engineered stones on a regular basis, you can also grow yourself some mold or mildew. Again it is a cleanliness issue.

#### 5. **Colors Available:**

Granite comes in a vast array of colors. Including imports, there are over 150 different colors available. Granite is quarried in such places as: United States, Canada, Brazil, China, Africa, Norway, India, Argentina, Portugal, Italy, Finland, Russia, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and more.

Engineered stones are made in a shop where they mix plastic and stone and pour it in a mold. Most engineered stone companies offer 30 or less color choices, all of which try to mimic the look of granite, but fall short.

#### 6. **Composition:**

Granite is the hardest natural material available for countertops. It is composed of a variety of minerals such as quartz, feldspar, and mica. Different colors reflect various combinations of the minerals.

Engineered stones are composed of 93%

quartz and 7% resin (plastic). They are man-made and try to match the characteristics of granite such as depth, and reflectiveness.

#### 7. **Maintenance:**

Granite is a very low maintenance material. Most granite surfaces only require they be cleaned with a soapy washcloth and hot water. Window cleaner, or a mixture of white vinegar and water (1:2) may also be used to bring out the shine and luster of the stone.

Most engineered stones are also relatively easy to maintain and clean. Most recommend that they be cleaned with a hot soapy washcloth, or some sort of window cleaner.

#### 8. **Durability:**

Granite is very durable. Most people are familiar with granite tombstones in cemeteries. Have you ever noticed that tombstones more than 50 years old look as beautiful as new ones? That's because granite can withstand all weather conditions.

Some engineered stones claim they have superior strength and durability because of their quartz crystals. They don't mention that a plastic resin holds the quartz together. Of 25 granite's surveyed, the modulus of rupture varied from 1,515 PSI to 3,834 PSI and compressive strength from 17,550 PSI to 33,650 PSI. Unless you plan on driving a concrete truck on your granite countertops, I wouldn't be concerned about their strength.

*(Technical Data by: Cold Spring Granite Company.)*

#### 9. **Consistency:**

Granite is not always consistent in appearance because it has been formed by nature. While some colors are more consistent than others, many possess a great deal of flow, movement or depth, which adds to their beauty.

Engineered stones offer a consistent look, which some people like. They continually attempt to match the natural beauty of granite, but always fall short.