



## COOKING ON STONE - ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PITT AND INTEGRATED INDUCTION COOKING

If someone had told you a few years ago that you could have a gas burner coming directly out of your stone countertop or could cook directly on the stone through induction technology, you would have laughed hysterically but today it is a reality. While the technology is very new in South Africa and not all fabricators and suppliers are on board with it, it is available and for top range luxury kitchens it is becoming a sought-after trend.

The most important thing to know is that you must be sure you are using a material that advocates its use for this style of cooking. Not all stone products are suited to pitted and integrated induction cooking and some only approve of its use with specific brands of cooking systems that they have tried and tested. It is vital that the material supplier actively promotes their material for this purpose and that using it in this manner will not affect the guarantee. If only specific brands of cooking systems are authorised by the supplier do not deviate from this. Secondly, you must use a fabricator who is experienced and trained in cutting and preparing the stone for the burners and induction plates.



Induction cooking is growing in popularity in South Africa as it is energy efficient and safe. Advancements in the technology have made it possible for induction plates to be fitted underneath your countertop, completely hidden from view. When your induction capable cookware is placed directly above the induction plate on the work surface it will heat up. Induction plates work by creating a magnetic relationship with the particles in the base of the pan causing them to vibrate and create heat very similar to the way a magnetron in a microwave works. Your control mechanism for the hob can be positioned on the countertop or controlled through an app on your phone - depending on the model and make of the plates, your personal preference and the supplier's guidelines. A big benefit to this style of cooking is ease of cleaning. The surfacing material need only be wiped down as usual and with induction there is no need to wait for the stone to cool before doing this because as soon as your cookware is removed from the area there will no longer be any significant heat.



This form of stone cooking is suitable for use with porcelain or sintered / ultra-compact surfacing, granite, marble, and ceramic surfaces. It is, however, not recommended for quartz surfacing. When it comes to installation it is vital that the material and any substrate is fully supported, leaving no gaps between countertop and that cupboards are absolutely flat or level. The same applies to the induction base plate being placed under the stone surface.

For pitt cooking the fabricator and kitchen designer work hand in hand on the countertop design ensuring there is a void for the technical

components of the gas hob to be placed under the stone and its support structure but not overly obstructing the capacity of the storage underneath it. The stone is fabricated with the necessary cut outs to allow the burners to protrude through the surface of the stone, ready for use. It is vital these cut outs are done to be smooth, as bumps and irregularities lead to micro chipping which cause weak spots that can lead to cracks. On the top and bottom of these cut outs there should be a facet of at least 1x1 mm (except when using solid surfacing).



It is vital that the material has full support to the left, right, front and back of the burner cut outs. This prevents tension in the worktop from the weight of the cooking unit and the pots and pans that could result in cracking. There should be a gap of at least 3-10mm from the worktop to the wall or adjacent cabinetry (depending on make of material) to allow the material space to expand and contract with the heat of the gas burners.

For maintenance it is vital that the underside workings of the hob are easily accessible without dismantling a cupboard or drawer.

Pitt cooking provides a unique stylish look and also allows for burners to be placed further apart than on a normal hob and in different configurations truly allowing the client to match their burner configuration to their cooking style and preferred cookware. With integrated gas burners cleaning is easy - simply wipe your countertop around the burners and the job is done. But you will need to

wait until the stone is completely cooled before doing this as expansion and contraction of the material due to quick temperature change will shock the material making it weak and susceptible to cracking.



Most pitt cooking components can be installed into a variety of surfaces including granite, quartz, glass, concrete, stainless steel, solid surfacing, and ceramics but installation into veneer, solid timber or Formica surfacing is not advised – however there are quartz brands that do not recommend it as they have concerns about expansion and contraction of the material and discolouration due to radiated heat. This is because quartz surfacing is only about 90% quartz, depending on the brand. The rest of the material is made up of pigments and resin, where resin can only withstand approximately 150 degrees C. So, exposing the material to the direct heat from pitt style cooking can put it at risk of

permanent damage. Double check that the system you are choosing is compatible with your material selection and that your chosen material approves this style of cooking. The minimum thickness of the core material is usually 4 mm (for Solid Surface, Quartz surfacing, and natural stone 10 mm). For all materials, a maximum thickness of 35 mm applies.

Porcelain or sintered surfacing materials are particularly suited to both these forms of cooking with most sintered materials being able to withstand high temperatures. These materials are also resistant to staining and scratching which is a benefit for this style of cooking. However, the material can crack if bumped or banged, especially on the edge profile and as such the cooking process must be done with care ensuring pots and pans are not dropped or banged down.

This glamorous, high-tech method of integrated cooking does not come cheap, so it is vital that both the cooking mechanism and the material is well researched so that there are no nasty surprises down the line and that your beautifully integrated cooking surfaces have a long life.

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