



# THE RETURN OF GRANITE AND MARBLE TO THE KITCHEN SPOTLIGHT

**For years granite was king of the kitchen. It was the surfacing of choice for any high-end kitchen. With the development of quartz surfacing and later sintered surfacing, granite took a back seat. Marble on the other hand, was never the darling of the kitchen (unless you were a baker). Being notoriously porous and susceptible to staining it was never a well-suited option for kitchen surfacing. However... Eurocucina 2022 saw both materials making a strong come back to the kitchen but fabricated with a new look to give it a more resilient and contemporary feel.**

Both granite and marble can be fabricated and treated by processes called honing or leathering. These two techniques have given the two materials a new lease on life bringing them a look and feel that gels with the contemporary kitchen design that is thriving at present.

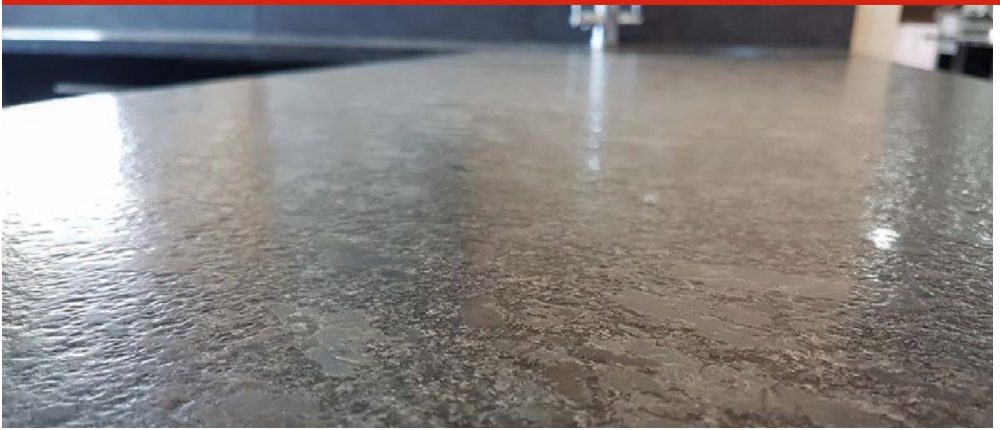


## HONING

Honed stone can be referred to as matte or buffed. It creates a smooth surface devoid of gloss and reflection. This look ties in perfectly with the growing popularity of ultra-matte finishes and colours in the kitchen.

To create this finish, the regular polishing process (a bit like sandblasting) ends before the stone is buffed to a shine. This is often called a satin finish.





As a result, honed granite does not have a shiny surface like polished granite does, but rather more of a matte appearance. Due to this the surfaces are better at hiding imperfections.

Honed granite countertops require the same basic maintenance as polished. To get a deeper clean for your counter, you can use a gentle dishwashing detergent soap and warm water or apply non-abrasive, non-acidic cleaning products that are safe to use on granite. Rinse the countertop with clear water, and wipe the stone dry using a soft cloth so that the surface does not get scratched. Some stone cleaners contain a bit of sealant, so you just spray the product, seal as you clean, and wipe the surface dry with a cloth or paper towel. You might think the added texture of a honed surface would hide water spots and fingerprints, just as it camouflages scratches. But in fact, these daily signs of use may be more visible. If the stone is sealed regularly and spills are promptly wiped up, staining and general porosity can be avoided. When selecting your material remember that the darker granites and marbles are less likely to show stains than the lighter colours.

## LEATHERING

The leathered finish, also called the brushed finish, is created by taking a honed surface and running diamond-tipped brushes over it to add texture with subtle dimples – you as the consumer can choose with your fabricator exactly how rough or textured you want the finish to be. Leathered finishes look sophisticated and expensive as they have a texture to enhance the matte finish. The finish tends to keep the colour of the natural stone better than a honed finish where the colour is dulled slightly through the honing process.

This finish is an ideal choice if you want more of a rustic / natural look to your granite countertop. Leathered granite will show more depth than honed granite. It will show off the natural characteristics of the stone and will help to hide stains, scratches, smudges and fingerprints. Natural fissures may become pronounced during this brushing process, which some people may perceive as cracks. If the fissure does not go all the way through the slab, it is a fissure, and not a crack. These are a normal occurrence in natural stone and not a defect.



As far as negative aspects go, cleaning leathered granite can be a bit more challenging than cleaning polished or honed slabs. Crumbs can find their way into its cracks and liquids can pool in its grooves. The extent of this will depend on the texture you have chosen for your leathered stone. Rougher examples will retain more waste, while smoother ones will be easier to clean. Brushing your leathered granite with a hand broom will go a long way towards keeping those crumbs at bay, while consistent washing down will ensure a clean and tidy surface. Due to the tightening of pores during the fabrication process, stains should not be a big issue but will occur if spills are not attended to.



The grooves and imperfections that make leathering such a cool and unique style of finish have the often-unforeseen potential to be chipped and cracked if they are accidentally met with a sharp or hard item. This can damage your leathered granite and make for a chalky, stone dusted surface. The best way to mitigate this is to make sure your supplier and installer seal your granite surface with a strong, quality sealant. This will also assist with stain resistance and maintaining the overall look of the stone.

While these finishes have given both marble and granite a much-needed trend upgrade it is vital that they are looked after and maintained to ensure long term integrity, durability and aesthetical appearance. It is vital you use a fabricator experienced in your chosen technique and that they guide you on the best colour and type of stone to use in the process. Make sure you have a maintenance agreement in place with them to ensure ongoing maintenance of the stone keeping it looking its best.

*Thank you to Sangengalo Marble and Granite for their help with this article.*



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