

GEHMAN

CUSTOM REMODELING

355 Main Street, Harleysville, PA 19438
(215) 513-0300 * FAX (215) 513-1280

WEB: www.gehmanremodeling.com * Email: remodel@gehmanremodeling.com

Green Countertops That Set the Stage for Style

With the sustainability movement piquing interest in the minds of mainstream Americans, more people are questioning the integrity of how products are made, the use of embodied energy and the levels of carbon offset that are generated in that process. All of this is now being considered as a way to make wise, long-term purchases. And it's no different when it comes to kitchen countertops.

In starting your search, here are some materials that homeowners have been incorporating into their sustainable home designs.

Bamboo

Available in a small selection of colors, bamboo is denser and harder than most hardwood floors. In terms of upkeep, regular woods for countertops require glazing and maintenance in order to it to avoid looking distressed whereas bamboo is durable enough to sustain a little bit of wear and tear nicely. Bamboo is a great green product because it's more renewable than regular woods, growing eight to 12 inches in a single day. It costs about the same as other natural woods such as oak, pine, maple, or cherry.

Recycled Paper

This type of countertop is made with post-consumer paper using resins to create the finished piece. It can range in thickness from ¼ inch to two inches and comes in many hues. Countertops made from recycled paper are resistant to water, heat, and stains and use post-consumer recycled paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The countertop material is petroleum-free and formaldehyde-free resins. These countertops cost more than laminate countertops, but are less than granite or quartz. Consider that recycled paper countertops are more susceptible to scratches and therefore are not recommended for actively used areas. It's better for areas where you're displaying kitchen items versus cooking and cutting on them as well as for bathroom countertops, desk tops, bar tops, etc.

Recycled Glass

This creative showpiece for countertops is comprised of pieces of recycled glass which is poured into a mold and formed into one big slab of block. The small glass pieces come from anything from empty soda bottles to defunct traffic lights and can be put together to create unique mosaic-like designs within the

countertop surface. The cost of this type of countertop can be expensive as it is comparable to higher-end granite.

Recycled Aluminum

Fitting to any style of kitchen, countertops made from recycled aluminum can come in pieces up to three feet wide or could be used to create tiles. It comes in variety of contemporary colors and upholds a polished and sleek look. The finishes that are used for the countertops are typically food-safe and non-toxic. Cost wise, you'll pay a similar price as you would for higher-end granite.

Engineered Quartz

Engineered quartz countertops are comprised of a composite mixed with small pieces of quartz/granite, polymers, and epoxy. They look similar to granite and offer plenty of color options. Engineered stone is an extremely durable product that takes the heat (although you should still ALWAYS use hot pads), resists stains, and requires little maintenance. Although the quartz itself is not considered green in its natural form, the process of making the countertops is considered eco-friendly because the quartz pieces that are reused instead of being remnants left behind from granite mining.

With the various green products on the market, you no longer have to sacrifice style and design for sustainability. Enjoy your search in finding a green countertop that brings out the best in your kitchen design!