

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Cava Surfaces prides itself on providing clients with hand-selected stone and building materials from around the world. Here, Tariq Darwish, the company's sales manager, explains the differences between the stones and the pros and cons of each.



Living Luxe: You carry natural stone, porcelain and quartz slabs. Why are these materials superior to others on the market?

Tariq Darwish (TD): All our building materials are suitable for all types of cladding/counter-top applications. While we carry the durable engineered products — quartz and porcelain — we have a true passion for hand-selecting each block of natural stone. Cava specializes in marble, quartzite, granite, limestone and soapstone, each from countries around the world. From the Apuan Alps in Italy to the mountains of Espírito Santo in Brazil, we curate some of the most unique stones and collaborate with interior designers and builders to create beautiful residential and commercial projects.

LL: What are the pros and cons of these various materials?

TD: We'll start with quartz. It's engineered to mimic natural stone and consists of natural quartz minerals and resin. It's one of the most durable materials for countertops as it's stain and scratch resistant. The drawbacks are that it's not heat resistant and may not have the depth of a natural stone or marble because the veining is artificial.

Porcelain is a mineral-clay mixture that's

baked to form a durable surface. It truly mimics marbles due to having a print on the surfaces. It replicates natural stone and will virtually never stain or etch. It's lightweight, perfect for interior and exterior cladding, walls/shower walls, fireplaces and more. Even used as countertops due to its extreme low maintenance. However, it's susceptible to chipping, due to the marble veining being a print on the surface. It's also harder to fix any chips that may occur; it's almost impossible to fix a porcelain slab once it cracks and labour for countertops can be costly.

When it comes to granite, it's some of the hardest material on Earth. Used for exterior and interior applications, it's long-lasting, very low maintenance and heat resistant. It's perfect for interior and exterior cladding and countertops, and often used for commercial building exteriors and flooring due to its resilience. It can be restored and repolished to its original state. The main cons are that the colours and patterns are consistent, so it might not be as aesthetically pleasing as marble.

Quartzite is also one of the hardest materials on the planet. Consisting mainly of quartz crystals, quartz is one of the most abundant minerals underground. It has low porosity and it has a high scratch resistance. Every block is

unique in colour, depth and rarity. Perfect for countertop use, and people often use it for feature walls and cladding. Like granite, it can be restored and repolished to its original state. Quartzite can be pricey, depending on its rarity. It also offers quite different patterns and colours than the often-desired marble look.

Finally, marble is still, by far, the most aesthetically pleasing type of stone. Each block is unique in pattern, depth, colour, veining and rarity. It's perfect for cladding walls and fireplaces and can be restored and repolished to its original state. The cons of marble are that it's very porous and can be a soft material, depending on the marble. It can scratch easily and stain if it's not sealed and maintained properly. It can also be pricey, depending on block and rarity.

LL: How do clients decide which material to use for various surfaces of their home?

TD: When it comes to deciding finishes in your home, you must consider the look you want to achieve, the pros and cons of each stone and your budget. Our team will always assist clients with selecting the best material for their space, whether it's the kitchen, bathroom or another room. **11**