

A Positive Outlook for 2010



Trisha Schmitt
VP of Corporate Marketing

2009 has been a year of growth and expansion for VT Industries' Stone Surfaces division. With the opening of a second fabrication facility and the diversification of the Stone Surfaces product mix, VT is looking to 2010 with a positive outlook.

In the coming months, VT will continue to enhance the marketing collateral available to our stone customers. This fall, VT redesigned the color cards for our customers serviced from the California fabrication facility. Currently, VT is revamping the Georgia Stone Surfaces color cards to include not only the latest

colors and edge options for Silestone, but Caesarstone, granite, and the ECO by Cosentino product lines as well.

Additionally, the VT Stone Surfaces Web site will also see updates and changes that reflect the diversity and scope of the division while continuing to offer the most up-to-date information. These changes will be presented in a format that is consistent with the VT brand.

With the opening of the new Stone Surfaces fabrication facility in California, many customers have been participating in the Certified Stone Installer (CSI) training hosted by VT Industries. In the month of October, VT trained 14 new installers

in the first training session. Additional sessions have been planned and are filling-up fast, so be sure to reserve your space in the VT CSI training today by contacting your Territory Sales Manager.

With stone surfacing products and related services still being in high demand, VT Industries is looking to form a group of Certified Stone Installers (CSI) that would be interested in providing consultation and installation services on a national level for large commercial projects. VT Industries would actively promote this network of individuals when bidding large hospitality, multi-family, and commercial projects. If interested in this unique opportunity, please contact your Territory Sales Manager for more information.

Chip Repair: Filling the Void



By Jason Nottestad
National Customer Service
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In the last article, I offered some rationale behind the politics of when to do a chip repair, and when to charge for your work. Now that we've established the ground rules for what makes sense from a business perspective, let's take a look at the fundamentals of the repair.

The first and foremost thing to remember is that a chip repair needs to blend in enough with the countertop to not be an eye-catcher, or it's not worth doing. Ms. Jones does not want the repair to be the first thing her friends see when they walk into her kitchen.



Photo courtesy Jason Nottestad

One thing you don't want going everywhere is CA glue, which can cause hours of grunt work due to a misplaced drop. I always set up a tape dam to keep the stuff off the rest of the countertop.

Also, whoever caused the chip doesn't want it to be a daily reminder that their expensive countertops will never be perfect. If you're not confident you can make the problem area go away (so to speak), find a qualified stone professional who can. (The **Marble Institute of America** or **Stone Fabricators Alliance** could recommend someone in your area.)

This is especially true with a larger repair that involves gluing a chip back into place. You really only get one chance with that type of repair, and botching the first try through inexperience can be nasty. When in doubt, hire it out.

In order to successfully complete a repair, you need to create a step-by-step process and follow it consistently. A repair job often involves the presence of the homeowner; it can be embarrassing to forget a step in the process when you've got an audience. If getting it right means printing off a checklist and marking it as you go, so be it. It's well worth it.

Step One: Take a picture. Take several. Take a picture of the countertop around the area you're repairing as well, and let the homeowner watch you do it. This is cheap insurance in case Ms. Jones has a scratch or stain she'd like to pawn off as collateral damage.

If you find an additional issue like this, point it out before you begin working. That way, it can't come up at the end as a 'new' problem, and you may get some on-the-spot billable work for taking care of it.

Step Two: Remember where you are. You're working in someone's home. This is no longer a jobsite where a reasonable level of mess is acceptable. Request that anything of value near the area of repair is removed so it doesn't get bumped. Cover up the installed countertops if you are going to set things on them (see 'Step One').

CA (cyanoacrylate) glue can be drippy and smelly, so create a 'catch' for it out of tape and protect the cabinets, floor and dishwasher. Open a window if needed. If the repair process requires you to get out the grinder and polishing pads, cover up the cabinet faces and floor, and make sure the water from your pad spray can't fly everywhere.

Step Three: Correctly prep the repair. The repair area needs to be clean and dry in order to form a long-lasting bond with whatever medium you're using. Wipe the area down with denatured alcohol to eliminate surface dust that may weaken the bond.

If the chip is around the sink area, the countertop may be wet. Get out your heat gun and dry the area prior to making the repair. Just remember to let the countertop cool back down first; a hot countertop is the perfect tool for causing adhesive to cure more quickly than you'd prefer, making it brittle and giving you nearly no working time.

Lastly, if the chip is large, make sure to use a small wire brush on the chipped area and on the chip you're reinstalling. If a granule of countertop material is loose, it's possible for it to turn and prevent the chip from seating in the void. This is especially true of 'sugary' granites and can be a real nightmare if the chip sits higher than the top of the counter. You're left with the nearly impossible option of starting over, or moving from chip repair to top polishing and ruining your day.



Photos courtesy Jason Nottestad

Bonstone's kit, with its different granite powders, provides a smooth look for blend-ins. (left) CA glue is anything but glamorous, but this powerful adhesive really gets the job done. (right)

Step Four: Have the correct repair materials and tools on hand. CA glue from Chemical Concepts or Satellite City (Hot Stuff™), along with Bonstone's Chip and Fill kit are my favorite solutions for chip repair. Polyester will work; however, it shrinks as it cures, making it more difficult to hide a top edge repair with it.

CA glue comes in a couple of different consistencies, and trying to do an edge fill with the water-like CA glue can be frustrating. Use the CA with the consistency of cold maple syrup; it flows much more slowly and works a lot better on an edge. (But don't be fooled – it's no good on top of pancakes.)

Bonstone's Chip and Fill kit has different colors of granite powders, and the repairs work better when you've got the right color for the chip you're trying to fill.

Always check your supplies before you head off to do a repair. A return trip is not in the budget for a repair job if you're missing part of your kit. Razor blades, a very fine metal file, tin oxide, and a polisher with a full contingent of pads are all the tools you should need to complete a repair.

In our next installment, we'll finish up with some actual replacement, along with a different slant on repair from another fabricator.

Jason Nottestad, a 15-year veteran of the stone industry, is National Customer Service Manager for VT Stone Surfaces; he's now on his third year of "The Installer" columns for Stone Business. He can be reached at JNottestad@vtindustries.com.

ECO by Cosentino Features 75 Percent Recycled Material

Cosentino, the world leader in quartz surfacing and one of the world's largest natural stone importers, has introduced a revolutionary new eco-friendly countertop – ECO™ by Cosentino. ECO by Cosentino is composed of 75 percent recycled material and is the result of a \$6 million research and development investment. This innovative new product sets an unprecedented standard for the green building and sustainable design industries.



This kitchen features ECO's Riverbed color which is part of the Revive Collection.

As a green product, ECO by Cosentino does not sacrifice performance or presentation. Through state-of-the-art production processes, ECO by Cosentino delivers a hard, durable surface that has high stain, scratch, and scorch performance. It is also non-porous material which requires no sealing.

Available in two cultivated color palettes - the Revive and Green collections - there are 10 designer colors with the option of a polished or matte Leather Texture™. Both collections are suitable for residential and commercial projects.

The recycled content used to produce this product is comprised of 75 percent post-industrial and post-consumer recycled raw material. Content includes:

- Mirrors salvaged from houses, buildings and factories;
- Glass from windows and bottles;
- Granulated glass from consumer recycling practices;
- Porcelain from china, tiles, sinks, and decorative elements; and
- Industrial furnace residuals from factories in the form of crystallized ashes.

Recycled content is mixed with 25 percent natural material including stone scrap from mountains, quarries, manufacturing, and fabrication, which is bonded together with an eco-friendly corn oil resin. By utilizing these recycled materials, Cosentino is "up cycling" products that have reached the end of their lifecycle and cannot be incorporated into any other industrial product and would otherwise accumulate in landfill sites.

According to Cosentino, approximately 3,000 glass bottles equals 1 ton of raw materials. The production of ECO by Cosentino is expected to re-use the equivalent of 60,000,000 glass bottles every year. Reutilizing this huge amount of material prevents it from building up at landfills year after year, and reduces the need to mine for new resources.

ECO by Cosentino can assist in earning Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) credits. Building teams can potentially qualify for up to seven points toward LEED Certification by using this product.

ECO by Cosentino products will contribute toward obtaining the following LEED points:

- MR Credit 4.1: Recycled Content: 10% (post-consumer + ½ pre-consumer), 1 Point



ECO by Cosentino is manufactured using post-consumer and post-industrial materials and environmentally friendly practices, making it one of the most environmentally conscious surfacing products on the market.

- MR Credit 4.2: Recycled Content: 20% (post-consumer + ½ pre-consumer), 1 Point
- ID Credit 1-1.4: Innovation in Design (Exemplary performance 30% recycled content), 1-4 Points
- EQ Credit 4.1: Low Emitting Materials: Adhesive and Sealants, 1 Point

The full line of ECO by Cosentino products is now available for fabrication from VT Industries' Rome, Georgia, fabrication facility. For more information contact your Territory Sales Manager.

Partnership of VT and Counter Connections is a 'win-win'

Counter Connections, Inc., located in Southaven, Mississippi, is a small, family-owned business that was built on a reputation of hard work and great products. Owned and operated by Phillip and Kathy Jacobs, their business was started in Phillip's garage while he worked another full-time job. In the early days, they fabricated only solid surface, but today they have expanded their selection to include granite and quartz products as well.

Today, they have a modern fabrication shop and equipment. They have a CNC router for fabrication of solid surface and stone as well as the ability to thermoform solid surface. Counter Connections services both the commercial and residential markets in their area and have been doing stone installation for three years. They also provide solid service fabrication/installation for all of the Lowe's and Home Depot stores in the Memphis area.

The Jacobs chose VT Stone Surfaces for the service and quality of work provided because their own business is built on the same principles, making the partnership a win-win.

This kitchen job features Desert Gold solid surface countertops from Formica® with an Ogee Bullnose edge profile. The homeowner contacted Counter Connections because of their solid reputation for quality work. When the job was complete, the homeowner was thrilled with the results.

ABOUT COUNTER CONNECTIONS Located in Southaven, Mississippi, Counter Connections is a family-owned countertop fabrication and installation business serving the commercial and residential markets in Memphis, Mississippi, and the surrounding area. Specializing in granite, quartz and acrylic solid surface products, Counter Connections offers consultations, unsurpassed customer service and quality workmanship.



This wonderful kitchen features Formica's Desert Gold solid surface countertops, fabricated by VT Industries and installed by Counter Connections of Southaven, MS.



The breakfast bar area echoes the ogee bullnose edge profile found throughout the entire kitchen.



The ogee bullnose edge profile adds a touch of style and sophistication.



As a testament to a great installation, the seam is barely visible.