



Concrete ideas in countertop design

Question: Would you recommend using concrete for a kitchen countertop?

Answer: I certainly would recommend using concrete in a kitchen. I tend to use concrete in most of my designs because it allows for more creativity and gives me more options. For example, I recently completed a kitchen renovation and used concrete for all the countertops. I also designed floating concrete shelves with lights, a concrete farm sink, concrete window trim and sill, and a decorative concrete panel as a backsplash behind the stove area. Metal trivets also were inlaid on either side of the stove, allowing the cook to slide hot pots directly onto them. I added the trivets because while laying a hot pot directly on concrete will not harm it, it can harm the sealer.

In another kitchen, I designed a two-level island. The lower surface was created with light-colored granite. The higher surface was completed with 2-inch thick shaped concrete. The edge had a rock face detail which tied in with the stone work throughout the rest of the kitchen. This client now enjoys a one-of-a-kind piece that will be admired for years to come.

Concrete is not for everyone. Here are a few pros and cons to help home owners better understand the product. Among the pros of concrete:

- It can be fabricated in any shape, size and color.
- Home owner's can create matching sinks, drain boards and inlaid metal trivets for hot pots.
- It's possible to add custom design details, such as stenciling or inlaying metal scroll work.
- It's a green product and is low maintenance.
- Every piece is one of a kind.

Concrete also has some cons. These include:

- The surface can chip or scratch, but easily can be repaired to look like new.
- Lead times usually are three to four weeks, depending on the size of the project.

Some common misconceptions also exist regarding concrete. One such misconception is that it is a less expensive alternative to stone. While it depends on what type of stone, typically concrete falls in the higher range due to the fact that it's custom made by hand. Another misconception is that concrete is porous and stains easily. While this is true of "raw" concrete, a sealer can be applied to protect it.

I installed a complete working kitchen with concrete countertops in my showroom, where clients can see and touch it. I also did this so I personally could see how concrete responds to everyday wear and tear. I host regular cooking events at my showroom with chefs who prepare meals directly on the concrete countertops. I have not had any issues with staining, chipping or cracking. In fact, I sit at my island everyday to work and always admire it. 🍷