

Decorator's Notebook

For Kitchens And Baths, Stone Really Rocks

(NAPSA)—Homeowners thinking about creating or remodeling their indoor or outdoor spaces may want to consider these ideas from noted interior designer Courtney Babineaux.

Don't be afraid to take some risks. While your space needs to be a combination of both form and function, it also needs to speak to who you are. Babineaux recommends filling it with things you love, that represent your travels and interests, and make it a place that you can't wait to get home to.



Photo courtesy of Swenson Granite Works

Woodbury Gray granite, Boston Blend Ledge thin veneer, full-color natural cleft bluestone pattern pavers.

She also recommends using natural stone wherever possible. Whether interior or exterior, anytime you can use a natural material within a space, you're giving a feeling of authenticity and uniqueness, very much like a fine piece of art. The color variations and imperfections are not flaws, but rather unique touches that make your space an original.

When designing an interior space, all the elements within that room—natural stone, furnishings, paint, fabrics—should have a harmonious feel in both style and color. Whenever possible, select a hue from the color variation of the stone and use that as an accent shade. For example, if there's a copper vein in the granite on your kitchen countertops, add accents such as a copper vent hood.



Photo courtesy of Stoneshop

Silver Pearl Leathered Granite Perimeter and Mont Blanc Honed Quartzite Island.

The stone should also work with the surrounding elements. For example, an exotic granite countertop typically has a lot of color variation, so you may want something more subtle on the floor. By the same token, the colors should be harmonious. For example, you may want to pair a dark gray or dark green-colored soapstone countertop with a lighter-hued travertine.

Today's color trends of grays and "greige" are still going strong, and light-colored stone countertops coordinate well with those shades. Lighter stones also pair well with darker cabinets for a high-contrast look and serve as a nice backdrop for the strategic use of color in fabrics and accessories.

For areas like media rooms, wet bars and powder rooms, where there's an opportunity to make a statement, you can take more of a style risk, such as backlit natural onyx.

In home design today, Babineaux says, the exterior is often an extension of the interior. Outdoor living spaces are decorated to coordinate with the interior color palette, and the same materials used in the kitchen and family room areas are carried outdoors. When choosing natural stone for your exterior, you will want to consider materials that hold up to the exposure of natural elements like water, sunlight and freeze-thaw cycling. Consult with knowledgeable staff at your local stone yard about where and how the stone will be used to assist in making appropriate material choices.

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