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Enameled lava stone surfaces by Pyrolave are durable and dramatic. | Pyrolave USA

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Colorful alternatives to granite countertops

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Lava stone is a colorful alternative to granite countertops

By Jill Sell

For the upscale homebuyer who wants a natural stone countertop but wants something other than white, black or brown surfaces, lava stone is the perfect choice. How about a tomato red kitchen countertop or a deep seaweed green bathroom counter?

A bold or unusual countertop color could have an impact on the resale price a home. Many potential buyers will be thrilled to get a high-quality and beautiful countertop. Out-of-the-box color is what gets enameled lava stone noticed. But there is more to the natural stone than just eye-popping color.

Much of the world's lava stone comes from France. Pyrolave USA gets its lava stone from the center of volcanic craters in Auvergne, France. Workers mine blocks of stone by hand from an open quarry. It is cut into slabs and processed and glazed. The stone is enameled and fired at temperatures that are more than 1,000 degrees Centigrade.

Pyrolave offers 16 glossy and 16 matte finishes, and custom colors can be created. Its nature allows it to be

sculpted into extra-long lengths without any seams.

Its smooth surface "can withstand high temperatures, acids and corrosive products," indicated Pyrolave. The product does not require a sealant and can be used outdoors because it doesn't mind the cold.

In addition to countertops, lava stone can be used for wash basins, fireplace surrounds, fountains, and swimming pools. Enameled countertops are also very hygienic.

The product starts at \$225 a square foot.

This is also a product that should be professionally installed unless someone is a very experienced do-it-yourselfer.

Kohler offers Purist lava stone countertops, with or without plumbing cutouts that are made to fit specific products.

"All countertops use the natural gray lava stone material that is truly unique in color, finish, natural variation, and origin," said Kohler spokesman Vicki Hafenstein.



Pyrolave countertops and surfaces are available in many colors, including a rich indigo. | Pyrolave USA

Jill Sell is a freelance writer specializing in real estate, home and garden. Sell can be reached at jillsell@en.com.

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