

# surface & panel

UNITING MATERIALS, TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

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# Great Countertops

Criteria for great countertop surface materials include durability, ease of maintenance and a long lifecycle. Countertops should wipe clean, resist stains, heat, and impact and not harbor bacteria. And of course, as a central fixture in a kitchen or bath, countertops should be beautiful. It is a tall order, but there are many materials, both natural and engineered, that can meet the task. Here is a collection of some of the materials gracing countertops today.



## ^ CAMBRIA

Cambria is a stain resistant, nonporous, natural quartz surface that is hard, strong, safe and easy to care for. Its nonporous and non-absorbent nature protects against more than just stains – it's also extremely hygienic, making it a food safe choice for even the busiest of kitchens.

One of the new designs added to the Waterstone Collection is Armitage™. This design appears dark and deep with blends of black and gray, providing a neutral canvas for random hints of copper and orange. ■



## ^ PYROLAVE

The drama imparted by Pyrolave countertops goes deeper than their striking good looks – it goes to the story behind these extraordinary lava stone surfaces. The Volvic lava stone is extracted from the heart of volcanic craters in Auvergne, France. Using state-of-the-art technology, skilled engineers imbue the stone with gloriously-hued enamels and fire them at temperatures exceeding 1000° C. This work-horse of a countertop can withstand almost anything that comes its way – high temperatures, acids, corrosive products, making it ideal for many different uses, from residential and commercial kitchens to bathrooms, tabletops, swimming pools, fire-

## < BIO-GLASS

Bio-Glass is made from 100 percent recycled glass coming from beer bottles, wine bottles, water bottles, and stemware gathered from recycling centers. It is 100 percent recyclable and available in white, light green, dark green, blue, and brown ... all colors are true to their source – there are no colorants or epoxies added to Bio-Glass. The material can be used for countertops, partitions, facades, and other decorative surfaces. The layers of compressed glass create a unique pattern through which light permeates. Bio-Glass has a hard non-porous surface, which makes it easy to clean – it does not stain and it is scratch resistant. ■





^ THINKGLASS

ThinkGlass combines the art and science of glass craftsmanship. The thickness renders the glass as hard and durable as stone, with a soft, glowing radiance that no other material can duplicate. Made from 100% recyclable glass, each countertop is unique, with a huge selection of molded textures and hand-painted colors by glass artist Mailhot. Customers can select their glass thickness, edge treatments and even add LED lights. Although they appear delicate and almost ethereal, these countertops can endure high heat without cracking or scorching. Virtually maintenance-free, their textured finish hides fingerprints and is impossible to stain. Because glass is non-porous and requires no sealant, it is a healthy, hygienic choice for kitchen use. ■



^ SOLID SURFACE

Solid surface countertops are made primarily from acrylic with a few additives or from an acrylic/polyester blend. Most solid surfaces are nonporous which is what makes the countertop resistant to bacteria, mold, and germs. The acrylic can come in essentially any color or pattern imaginable, including designs that mimic common materials such as wood and stone. The countertop is first molded and designed and then can be welded together to form the solid piece countertop. Solid surface is dent-resistant, stain-resistant and easily repaired, though it may be damaged by excessive heat. ■



^ WALNUT

Walnut is an ideal wood for use as a countertop. It's a hardwood with terrific characteristics of stability and durability. With sealers ranging from 100% food safe to zero maintenance / waterproof spar varnish there's something for every design. The island top shown is made from walnut in the edge grain construction style with a large decorative profile. It's sealed using a mixture of 50 percent spar varnish, a very durable waterproof finish, with 50 percent tung-oil. The mixture is perfect for wood countertops because the tung-oil thins the spar varnish allowing it to soak deeply into the wood bringing with it resins in the spar varnish that then harden to produce a very durable, zero maintenance and water tight finish. ■



< RICHLITE

Richlite is made with both Rapidly Renewable FSC Certified paper and recycled paper fibers. It can be milled easily, like wood, but is much more dense, durable and long lasting. The color of Richlite surfaces is determined by the paper color used in the manufacturing process. The resin used in the manufacturing process darkens the color giving it deep, rich tones that run through the thickness of

IMAGE COURTESY OF J. AARON, LLC