STONEX

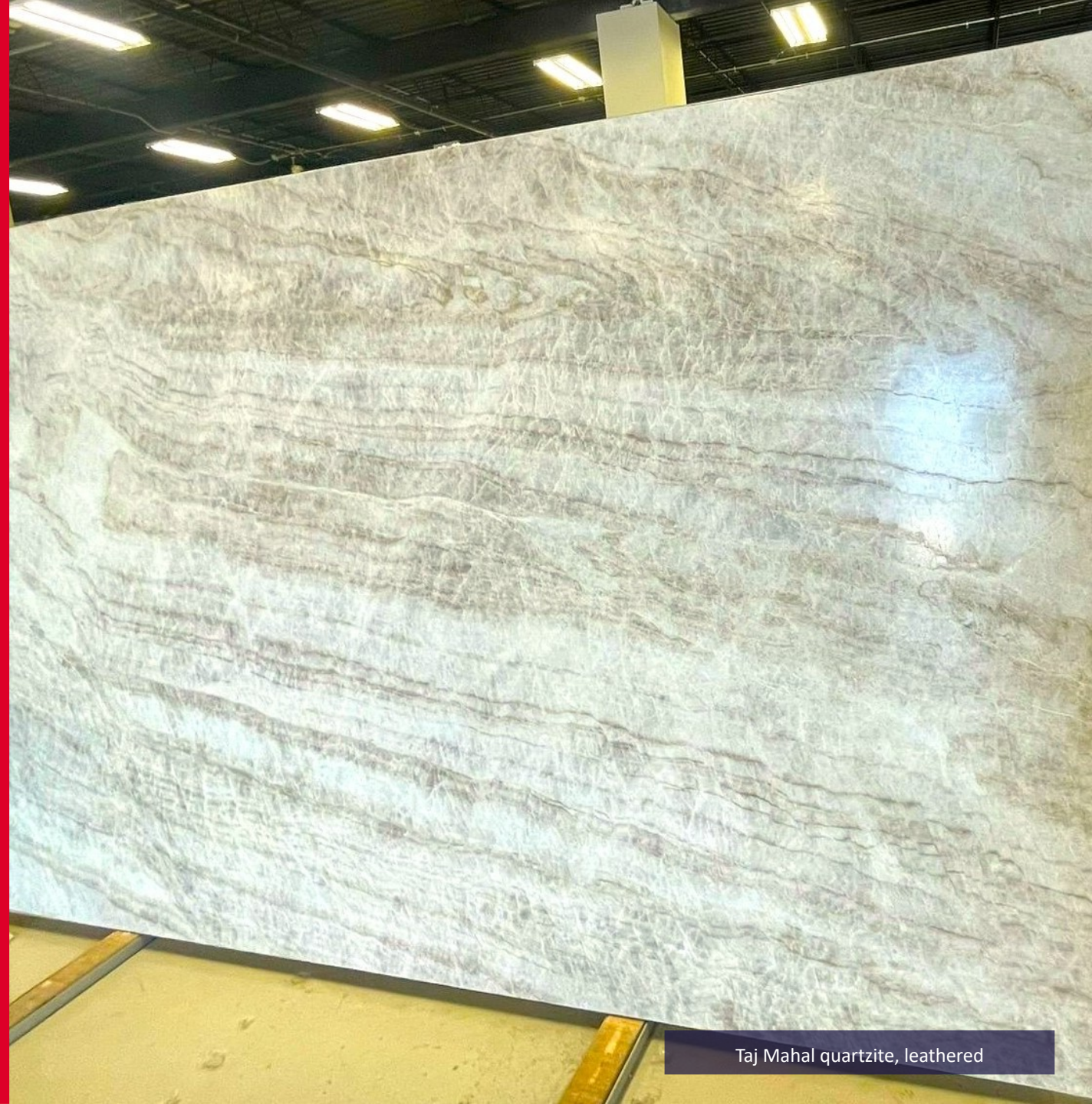
SALES TEAM TRAINING

A 101 on Natural Stones

Natural stone & engineered quartz: what each material is, how to set expectations, and how StoneX works with your homeowners.

Presented by StoneX USA

stonexusa.com



Taj Mahal quartzite, leathered

Today's flow

01 **Granite & quartzite**

Two popular natural stones for working kitchens

02 **Marble & dolomite**

The carbonate stones, and the conversation about acids

03 **Soapstone & engineered quartz**

A soft, chemically resistant stone, and an engineered option

04 **Connect the material to the customer**

Staining vs. etching, guiding questions, the care message

05 **The StoneX sales process**

From the first showroom visit to slab delivery

06 **Q&A & closing**

Your questions, and how we work together

We start with what each material is, then how to set expectations, then how StoneX and your team serve the homeowner together.

OPENING

Six materials, two very different families

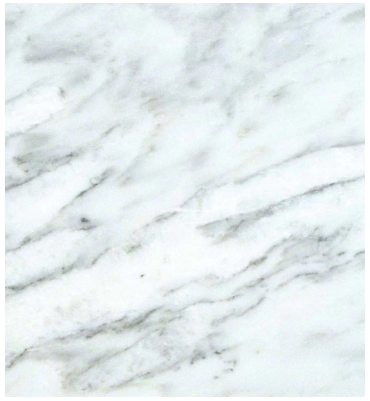
NATURAL STONE · quarried



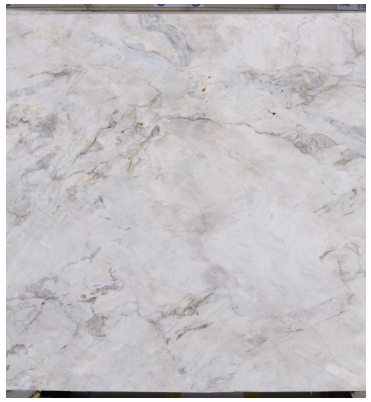
Granite



Quartzite



Marble



Dolomite



Soapstone

ENGINEERED

Mineral ingredients
+
resin binders
+
pigments

Quartz

Quartz ≠ quartzite

They sound alike, but they are different materials. Quartzite is natural stone; quartz countertops are an engineered product.

THE BEST CHOICE DEPENDS ON…

- How they use their kitchen
- The look they love
- Their budget
- Comfort with maintenance & change over time

SET UP THE COMPARISON

Durability is really four questions

1

Will it scratch?

Everyday wear from cookware, utensils and grit on the surface.

2

Will it stain?

Absorption: can liquids get into the material and discolor it?

3

Will acids change the finish?

Etching: lemon, vinegar, wine and some cleaners reacting with the surface.

4

How does it handle heat?

Hot cookware and countertop appliances sitting on the surface.

A material can perform very well in one area and need more care in another.

Keep these four questions in mind for each material that follows.

STONEX

01

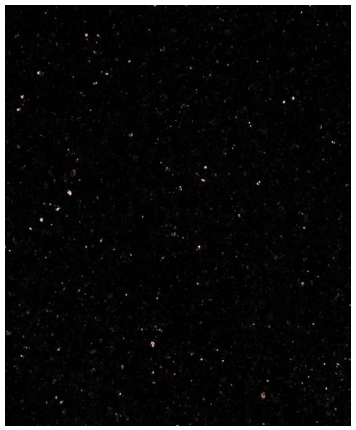
Granite & quartzite

Two popular natural stones for working kitchens.

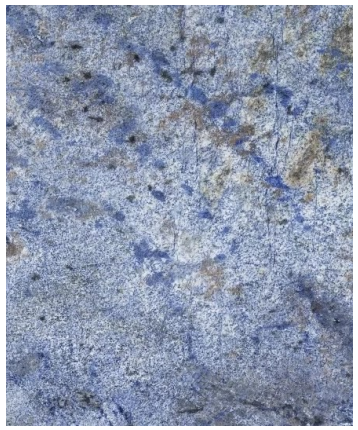


Titanium Gold granite, polished

Granite: natural variation, everyday performance



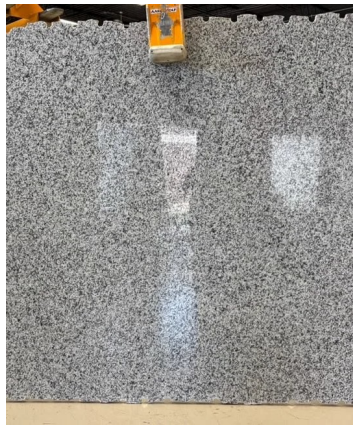
Black Galaxy



Blue Bahia



Alaska White



Fortaleza

WHAT IT IS

An igneous rock formed as magma cools and crystallizes. Mostly feldspar and quartz, commonly with mica and other minerals; that mix creates its color, grain and sparkle. The commercial “granite” category also includes some stones with other geological names.

FINISHES Polished · Leathered

Why customers choose it

- Everyday durability
- Good scratch resistance
- Heat tolerance
- A huge range of natural looks
- Natural character on a practical kitchen surface

What to explain

- Absorption varies: sealing needs depend on the actual stone
- Edges can chip
- Natural pits, mineral texture and fissures should be understood and evaluated
- Most granite handles food acids well; mineral mix and slab treatments can affect performance
- Still use cutting boards and trivets

KEY LINE *“Granite gives you natural variation with strong everyday performance.”*

FISSURES & FILL Natural fissures are expected. Resin or epoxy fill and repairs are common and can be necessary. The fabricator evaluates each slab for structural suitability.

Quartzite: a soft look on a very hard surface



Patagonia



Cristallo



Taj Mahal



Blue Roma

WHAT IT IS

Quartz-rich sandstone transformed by heat and pressure into a metamorphic rock of interlocking quartz grains. No resin binder forms the rock, though slabs may get resin treatments in processing.

FINISHES Polished · Honed · Leathered*

**In some selections. Honed is gaining interest in our showroom.*

Why customers choose it

- High scratch resistance
- Natural depth and movement
- Some offer the soft, light look people associate with marble, with better resistance to everyday scratching and food-acid etching

Verify, then explain

- Verify the material; don't rely on its name or look. Some carbonate stones are sold as quartzite or "soft quartzite"
- Genuine quartzite resists common kitchen acids; other minerals or treatments can behave differently
- Absorption varies: some need careful sealing
- Hardness doesn't prevent edge chips or fabrication challenges

KEY LINE *"Quartzite can pair a soft visual look with a very hard natural surface."*

FISSURES & FILL Natural fissures are expected. Resin or epoxy fill and repairs are common and can be necessary. The fabricator evaluates each slab for structural suitability.

STONEX

02

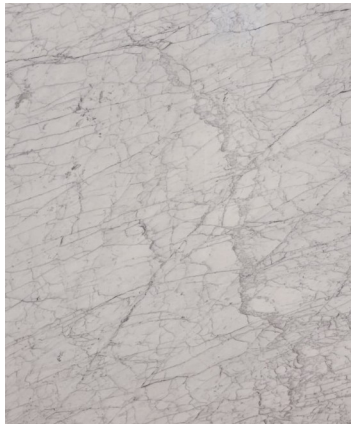
Marble & dolomite

The carbonate stones, where the conversation about acids becomes especially important.



Arabescato Carrara marble

Marble: classic veining with a living patina



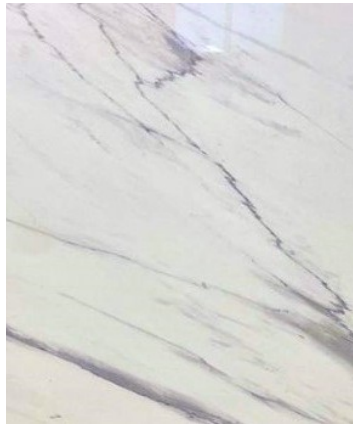
Bianco Carrara



Black Constantine



Arabescato Carrara



Calacatta Lincoln

WHAT IT IS

Limestone or dolostone changed by heat and pressure: a metamorphic stone made mostly of calcite, dolomite, or a mix. “Traditional marble” here means calcite-rich marble.

FINISHES Honed · Polished · Leathered*

**Less common, but occasionally found.*

Why customers choose it

- Natural veining, depth and a classic look
- A smooth surface that’s appealing for pastry work
- Suits customers who appreciate a surface that develops character as it’s used

What to explain

- Acid sensitivity: lemon, vinegar, wine and some cleaners can etch a dull or changed area
- Scratches more readily than granite or quartzite; can absorb staining liquids
- Sealing helps with absorption; it does not stop acid etching
- Honing may make etches less noticeable; it doesn’t make marble acid resistant

KEY LINE *“Marble is a beautiful choice for someone who appreciates both its appearance and the patina that comes with living with it.”*

FISSURES & FILL Natural fissures are expected. Resin or epoxy fill and repairs are common and can be necessary. The fabricator evaluates each slab for structural suitability.

Dolomite: marble-like beauty, marble-family care



Dolce Vita honed



Matarazzo honed

WHAT IT IS

Dolomite is the name of a mineral: calcium magnesium carbonate. In the slab trade, a countertop labeled dolomite is often a dolomite-rich marble.

STONE FAMILY Carbonate, with marble | Not quartzite

Why customers choose it

- Elegant veining
- Often soft white or gray coloring
- Dolomite-rich stone can be somewhat harder and react more slowly to acids than calcite-rich marble

What to explain

- "More resistant" doesn't mean resistant enough to ignore spills
- It can still etch, scratch and stain
- Calcite and other minerals vary, so the specific slab matters
- Discuss sealing and care with the fabricator; set the same expectations about acids and patina

KEY LINE *"Dolomite offers beautiful natural veining, with care expectations that still belong in the marble conversation."*

PRESENT IT RIGHT Dolomite belongs in the carbonate family next to marble. Don't present it as quartzite.

STONEX

03

Soapstone & engineered quartz

A softer surface with very good chemical resistance, and an engineered option.



Soapstone, honed

Soapstone: soft to the touch, tough on chemicals



Soapstone honed

WHAT IT IS

A metamorphic rock containing talc along with minerals such as chlorite, magnesite and amphiboles. Talc gives the soft feel; countertop grade has less talc than carving grade.

FINISH Honed

Hardness varies by variety.

Why customers choose it

- Tactile surface in charcoal and gray tones
- Resists many acids and chemicals
- High heat tolerance
- Very low absorption: minimal pore space
- Easy to clean; helps resist harboring bacteria when properly maintained
- Generally no impregnating sealer needed

The tradeoff: softness

- Scratches, dents and edge wear can happen; it suits a lived-in finish
- Mineral oil or a recommended wax can darken and even out the look: optional and cosmetic, not sealing
- Minor scratches may be repairable: follow the fabricator's method
- Routine cleaning is still necessary

KEY LINE *"Soapstone is a great conversation for someone who wants natural character, a soft feel, and a surface that develops patina."*

LAB HERITAGE Chemical resistance, heat tolerance and low absorption explain its traditional use for chemistry-lab worktops.

Quartz: designed looks, no routine sealing

HOW QUARTZ IS MADE

Quartz and/or other mineral ingredients

+

Polymer resin binders

+

Pigments

=

Engineered quartz slab

Formulas vary by brand and product.

WHAT IT IS

Engineered slabs made from quartz and/or other mineral ingredients, polymer resin binders and pigments. Formulas vary, so we avoid quoting one mineral percentage for all quartz.

CATEGORY **Engineered product** **Not natural stone**

Why customers choose it

- Nonporous surface; no routine sealing
- Wide range of designs: coordinated color and pattern choices
- Straightforward daily care
- Generally resists everyday staining and scratching

Cautions: heat, chemicals, impact

- Direct or prolonged heat from countertop appliances can cause damage: use suitable trivets
- Edges can chip; not scratch-proof or stain-proof
- Follow the brand's approved cleaning instructions
- Not recommended for outdoor use
- Large veining and production variation: slab viewing and layout still matter

KEY LINE *"Quartz is a strong option for someone prioritizing no sealing and a broad selection of designed looks."*

QUARTZ ≠ QUARTZITE Quartz is an engineered countertop product; quartzite is natural metamorphic stone.

STONEX

04

Connect the material to the customer

Staining vs. etching, the questions that guide the choice, and the care message to repeat.

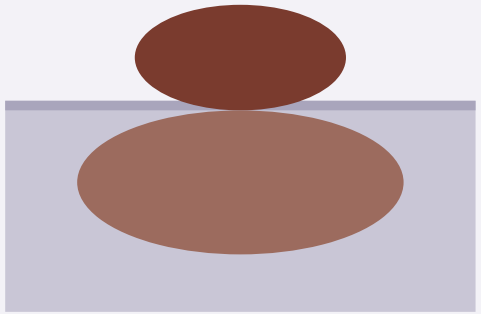


Blue Roma quartzite

Staining vs. etching: not the same thing

Stain

A discoloration caused by something getting into the material.

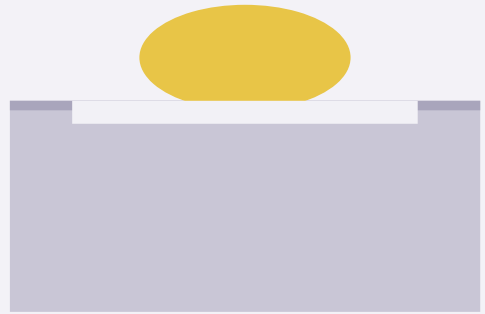


Liquid soaks IN and discolors

Sealing helps resist absorption.

Etch

A chemical reaction that changes the surface, often leaving a dull mark.



Acid reacts with the SURFACE, leaving a dull mark

Sealing does not stop acid etching.

You can have one without the other. *That's why a sealed marble countertop can still etch.*

Ask questions that guide the choice

	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
“ Do you want your countertop to keep a very uniform appearance, or are you comfortable with patina?	**Patina comfort**
“ How often do you cook, entertain, or work with citrus, wine, and oils?	**Acid & stain exposure**
“ Is avoiding sealing a priority?	**Sealing preference**
“ Do you want subtle consistency or one-of-a-kind movement?	**Look & movement**
“ What is the overall installed budget, and is there a timeline we should plan around?	**Budget & timing**

The care message to repeat, for every material

1

Cutting boards

Every surface, every time.

2

Protect from hot cookware

Use trivets for pots, pans and hot appliances.

3

Clean up spills promptly

Especially citrus, wine, oils and other liquids.

4

Non-acidic cleaners

Approved for the specific surface.

AVOID

Acidic cleaners, including vinegar- and lemon-based products.

SEALING

Follow the needs of the stone and the sealer instructions, not one calendar rule for every countertop.

Applies to granite, quartzite, marble, dolomite, soapstone and quartz alike.

STONEX

05

The StoneX sales process

Once we understand the material, our job is to help the customer connect it to their actual project.



Monalisa granite, polished

From first visit to slab delivery

THE SHOWROOM VISIT

HAND SELECTION & DELIVERY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Greet	**Fabricator?**	**Their project**	**Slab labels**	**Worksheet & quote**	**Questions & sample**	**Hand selection**	**Hold → PO → delivery**
Welcome them to the showroom	Who are they working with?	What they're shopping for	How to read and compare	Pricing to the fabricator	A sample to take home	By appointment Monday–Friday	Slabs to the fabricator

StoneX

- Supplies the slabs
- Helps homeowners explore, compare and select
- Holds the selected slabs and delivers them after the PO

The fabricator

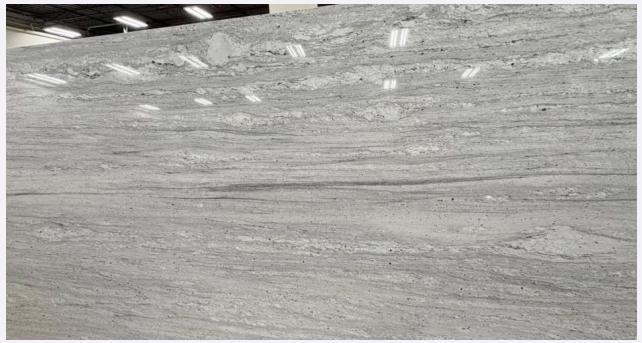
- Measures, templates, cuts, finishes and installs the countertops
- Uses our material pricing to prepare the homeowner's installed quote
- Evaluates each slab for structural suitability

Welcome, connect, understand the project

1 Greet the homeowner

Welcome them to the showroom.

We want them to feel comfortable asking questions as we help them explore their options.



River White granite, polished

2 Find out whether they have a fabricator

"Are you already working with a fabricator?"

YES Find out who they are working with.

NOT YET Explain the fabricator's role and help connect them with one.

StoneX supplies the slabs; the fabricator measures, templates, cuts, finishes and installs.

3 Ask what they are shopping for

- Kitchen countertops, a bathroom vanity, or another project?
- A particular color, material or look in mind?
- How they use the space and their care expectations
- Budget and timing

Samples and inspiration photos help guide the conversation.

How to read our showroom slab labels

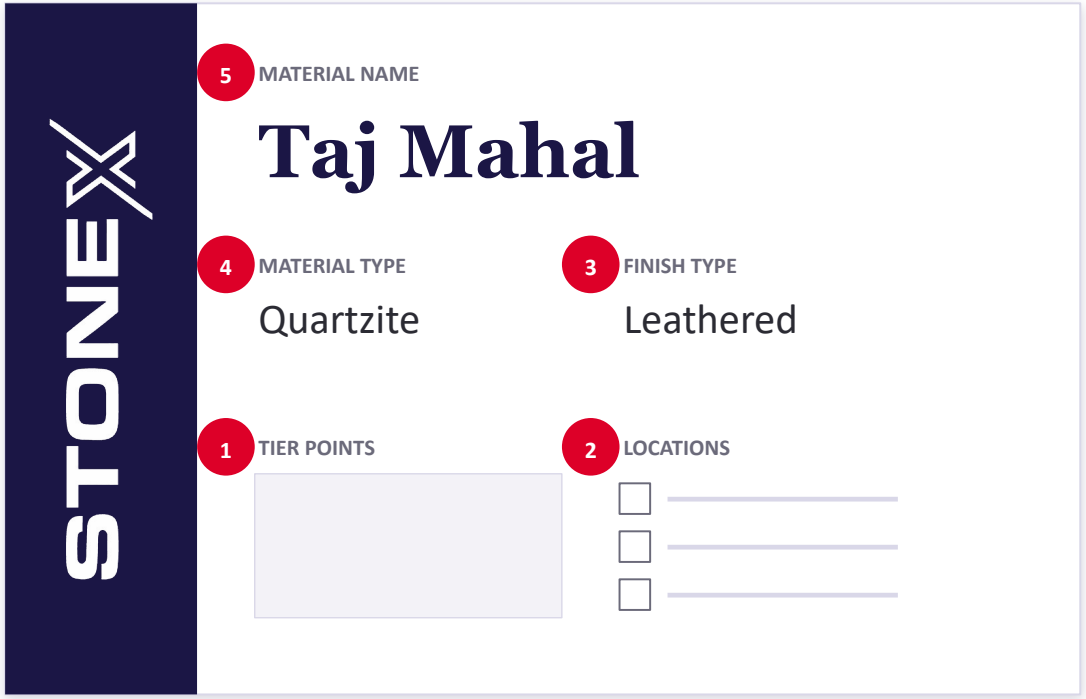


Illustration of the fields on our labels; not an exact copy of the printed label.

Explain the label before walking the selections: it helps the homeowner understand what they're viewing and communicate their favorites.

1 Tier points

Used when comparing selections. The fabricator provides the final installed quote.

2 Locations

Where the material can be found.

3 Finish type

Polished, honed or leathered, and how the finish affects look and feel.

4 Material type

Granite, quartzite, marble, dolomite, soapstone or engineered quartz: what to discuss about characteristics and care.

5 Material name

The particular stone or product, so we can keep track of their selections.

Record the favorites, offer a sample

5 Complete the worksheet and send the quote

DURING THE VISIT
The homeowner writes down each option they're interested in on the worksheet.

AFTER THEY LEAVE
We send their fabricator a quote under that job name for the selections of interest.

THEN
The fabricator uses the material pricing to prepare the homeowner's installed quote.

A quote is not a hold.
It does not reserve the slabs.

6 Answer questions and offer an available sample

Answer any remaining questions, and offer a sample of a material they're considering when one is available.

AT HOME, TRY IT WITH MORE THAN COLOR

- **Spices**
- **Oils**
- **Everyday ingredients**
- **Their usual cooking and heat-use habits**

Follow the material's care instructions and use trivets for hot cookware.

A small sample helps set expectations, but it does not guarantee how every slab will perform.

Hand selection, hold and delivery

Before booking, the homeowner…

- ✓ Has received pricing from their fabricator and chosen the material to move forward with
- ✓ Has a fabricator assigned to the job
- ✓ Knows how many slabs the project requires

HAND SELECTION

By appointment only Monday–Friday

Scheduled based on availability.

STEP 7 · AT THE APPOINTMENT

View
View the available slab options

Select
Select their actual slabs

Hold
Place those slab ID numbers on hold

STEP 8 · AFTER THE HOLD

Hold sheet
Send the hold sheet to the fabricator for final selection

PO
Receive the job's PO number

Deliver
Deliver the slabs to the fabricator

Our goal for every homeowner

Welcomed. Informed. Confident.

...about both their material choice and the process ahead.

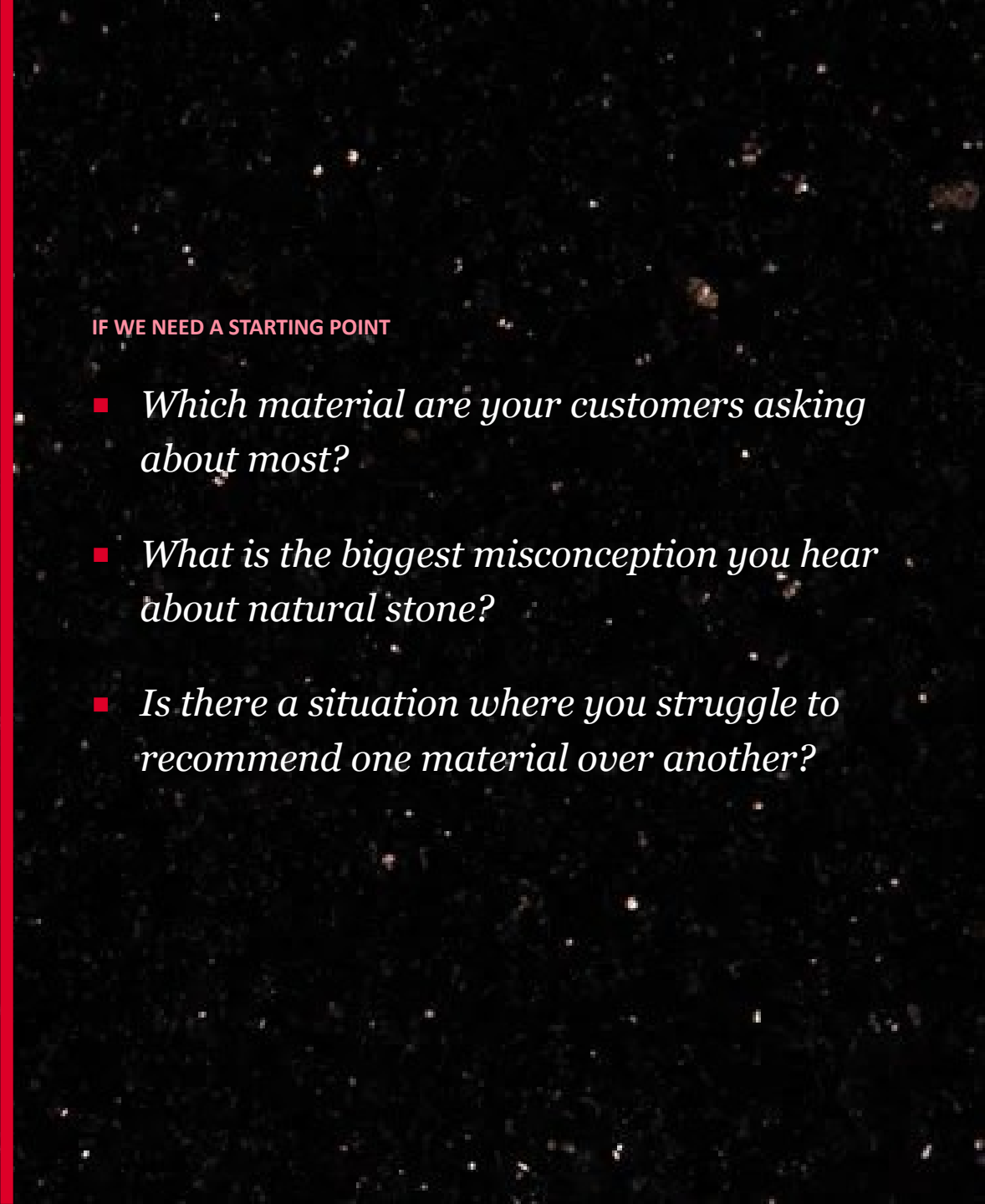


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6 · Q&A

What questions do you have?

A specific material, a care concern, or a project you're trying to solve.



IF WE NEED A STARTING POINT

- *Which material are your customers asking about most?*
- *What is the biggest misconception you hear about natural stone?*
- *Is there a situation where you struggle to recommend one material over another?*

Quick answers to questions we hear

“Which one is best?”

The best fit depends on use, design, budget, and care expectations. I would start there rather than rank them for everyone.

“Will sealing stop lemon marks on marble or dolomite?”

No. Sealing helps resist absorption; acid etching is a different process.

“Is quartz the same as quartzite?”

No. Quartz is an engineered countertop product; quartzite is natural metamorphic stone.

“Does every stone need yearly sealing?”

No. Absorption and treatment needs vary. Follow the guidance for that stone and sealer.

“Is that line a crack?”

It needs evaluation. Natural fissures can be part of the stone, but we should not assume every visible line is harmless. The fabricator needs to assess suitability before cutting.

“How much will it cost installed?”

The fabricator needs the project details and confirmed material choice to provide an installed quote.

STONEX

THANK YOU

Thank you for your partnership

Together, we help the customer feel informed, supported and confident throughout the process.

STONEX	STONEX	YOUR TEAM
Explore materials	**Select their slabs**	**Fabrication & installation**

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Taj Mahal quartzite, leathered