



# BAPTISTA TILE & STONE GALLERY

## *Natural Stone Descriptions & Disclaimers*

**Considering natural stone for your slab project? Here are some things to help you decide which natural stone is right for you:**

All natural stones are unique in their own ways, both aesthetically and structurally.

All natural stones are porous, some more than others. The finish of a natural stone can make a difference in not only its aesthetics, but also its structural integrity.

Natural stone is mined from the mountains, or under the ground in blocks. These blocks are then cut into slabs. The slabs are then split up into lots and bundles. Each “lot” is an identifier of the stone's color/ shade, vein movement, and other defining characteristics. Fabricators can then use slabs from the same lot to make a project come together, especially when seams are involved. A “bundle” is a group of slabs from the same lot that are closest to one another in characteristics.

In some cases, even though the slabs are from the same lot, color matching at a seam may be difficult as the colors throughout the slab can vary in shade. No one has control over the uniqueness of natural material.

BTSG recommends sealing natural stone to better protect it from staining. The frequency at which it should be sealed will depend on material type and application. **Sealing natural stone does not protect against etching.**

**Granite** is a very durable natural stone that can hold up against scratching, heat, and staining if maintained properly. Some granites consist of many types of minerals that do not polish the same as the others. This can sometimes be felt throughout the stone. Most stones are coated with resin from the manufacturer to

strengthen the stone. This can fill voids and be visible on the stone itself. BTSG does not repolish surfaces of stone; the stone will be installed as is.

**Quartzite** is very dense and consists of many fissures (internal cracks/ micro cracks) throughout the stone. BTSG will not fabricate or install a project with a structurally compromising fissure or crack in the material. In some cases, fissures may appear to be cracked (open cracking) but actually is not. This is the nature of quartzite and will be installed as is.

**Dolomite** is a subcategory of marble. Although it is under the marble category, dolomite is a very strong stone that is commonly used in kitchen & bathroom projects. Unfortunately, many dolomite stones such as Super White and Fantasy Brown are miscategorized as quartzites because they register higher on the Moh's scale (Measure of Hardness/ scratch test). However, because they have calcium carbonate in their mineral make up, they are technically dolomite marbles. The only major usage difference between dolomites and quartzites is that dolomites have a slightly higher chance of etching.

**Calcite** is a very soft and porous stone that can scratch, chip, and/ or more easily than other types of stone. BTSG recommends the use of calcite in bathroom/ vanity applications. Polished calcites can show scratches more easily, whereas honed calcites tend to stain more easily.

**Soapstone** is a very strong stone. However, it does require some very easy maintenance, depending on the client's preference. This material does scratch very easily but can be "repaired" with simple fine grit sandpaper. At install, BTSG will

seal the soapstone with mineral oil OR wax. It is up to the client to continue maintenance from there on.

## **Disclaimers**

**-Perfection:** There is no such thing as a “perfect” natural stone. Every natural stone has its own strengths and weaknesses. Consult with your designer to discuss which natural stone is the right fit for you.

**-Natural Liability:** BTSG cannot be held liable for the natural characteristics of any natural stone during any step of the fabrication & installation process. This includes post-installation as well. BTSG is responsible for assisting the client in selecting stone, measuring, fabricating, and installing the stone.

**-Viewing:** BTSG highly recommends viewing the stone in person prior to ordering/ purchasing.

**-Customer Inspection:** Natural stones can consist of inclusions, blemishes, minor fissures, voids, and many other natural characteristics that cannot be avoided when doing a slab layout. Clients should inspect the stone prior to fabrication to ensure that they like the overall surface of the stone, as BTSG does not refinish the surface. Of course, major blemishes/ defects such as a random spot in an otherwise consistent material and/ or cracks will be avoided whenever possible.

**-BTSG Inspection:** BTSG performs inspections of all slabs prior to any fabrication. Any red flags will be presented to the client before moving forward.

**-Heat & Thermal Shock:** Natural stones can take extreme amounts of heat but BTSG always recommends the use of a trivet or heat pad rather than placing extremely hot items on the surface. While the stone can handle an extreme amount of heat, it cannot take rapid temperature changes. This rapid change can cause thermal shocking to the stone which can cause cracking due to the release of pressure in the stone, particularly at the corners.

**-Expansion and Contraction:** Natural stones expand and contract throughout the year, just like most items do. If items press against the stone while expanding, and if the stone is also expanding, it can cause cracking.

**-Liquids:** Any liquids left on the surface of the stone can penetrate the stone, even if sealed. Sealer protects the stone; it does not make it impenetrable.

**-Oils:** Oils can stain any natural stone, even when the stone has been sealed.

**-Density:** In most cases, the lighter the stone, the softer it is. The same goes for the opposite: The darker the stone, the more dense it is. There are a few exceptions to this, and density most often depends on the type of stone being used. The density of the stone can determine the strength of the stone when considering scratching, etching, etc.

**-Absorption:** Stones can absorb water during the fabrication process. This may take days, weeks or months to fully dry. Water absorption can also occur after installation when the stone is in use. For example, near and around the sink or stove, etc. BTSG has no way of knowing which stones will absorb water prior to ordering/ cutting/ fabricating/ installing and cannot control this natural characteristic of stone if it occurs. Water absorption is most common in quartzites and marbles.

**-Thickness Variance:** Stones can have varying thicknesses in the slab which in some cases may be unforeseeable. Often, this occurs in the very middle of the stone and cannot be discovered prior to cutting. This issue is the result of a bent blade or wire on the gang saw that is used to cut the stone blocks into slabs. If this occurs, BTSG will be required to mill the thicker stone down to the same thickness as the thinner stone.

**-Fissures:** Fissures are minor cracks or microcracks are a result of pressure within the stone being released due to geological reasons. If the stone has a very long fissure that extends from one end of the slab to another, or if it starts from the edge of the slab, that area of the stone will need to be avoided. Any such fissures will be marked prior to layout.

**-Resins:** Many natural stones are coated with resin to give the stone a more smooth and aesthetically pleasing appeal. Many stones have natural voids that the resin will fill. However, the resin doesn't polish as smoothly as the stone itself and can look different in certain lighting. BTSG has no control over this feature.

**-Removed Deposits:** Small deposits of stone can become removed during the fabrication process. If the dislodged piece of stone can be found, and is large enough, it can be adhered back on to the slab. This typically occurs at the edge of the countertop where the blade cut through the stone.

**-Bleeding:** “Bleeding” can occur when the stone absorbs resins or other products used to join two pieces of stone together at the seams, including mitered cuts/ edges. The area around the seam/ joint will be slightly darker as the resin bleeds into the stone along the edges where the stone has been joined. This can occur in any type of stone and is mostly unforeseeable. BTSG has no control over this occurring.

**-Blossoms:** “Blossoms” can occur when the stone comes in contact with certain chemicals used during the stone fabrication/ installation process. Blossoms are discolored areas, typically bluish or greenish in color, which is a reaction of the minerals in the stone and the chemical/ product being used. This typically occurs with lighter white/ creamy colored granites. This is largely unforeseeable, and BTSG has no control over this occurring. There are products that can remove the blossoms to a certain extent. BTSG will present the product to the client with the manufacturer’s instructions for use and option to purchase. BTSG is not responsible for removing blossoms.

**-Seams:** Natural stone may require visible seams in the layout to prevent cracking/ breaking during any part of the process.

**-Edging:** The sharper and/ or thinner the edge of a stone product, the more easily it can chip. It is recommended to have an edge with a minimum 1/8” radius. Please note: not all edge details are available with all natural stones.

**-Overhangs:** The maximum unsupported overhang for a standard 3cm (1-1/4”) stone is 12-14”, so long as the countertop has two parts supported for every one part unsupported. For example, a counter with 24” supported can have a 12” overhang. Support brackets are often required for overhangs.

**Weight:** Applying excess weight or standing on countertops can cause the countertop to crack and/ or break.

**Settling:** Stone can crack from the settling of house foundation, floor joist, or cabinets.

**Sealing:** All natural are recommended to be sealed. The amount of time between resealing depends on the type of stone, type of sealer, as well as the client's usage and care methods. To tell if it's time to reseal your stone, perform the water drop test. See your care & maintenance guide for more details.

**Daily Care:** Only use non acidic cleaners on natural stone. These can be as simple as Dawn dish soap & water, or an alkaline based cleaner can be purchased from BTSG. Do NOT use bleach or harsh chemicals on your natural stone.

**Damage:** Natural stone can become damaged from daily usage or accidents, such as dropping a pan, impact to the edge, dragging items, etc. BTSG is not responsible or liable for the natural characteristics of the stone, or its use by the client.