



Rhonda and Matt Novak's Dexter-area home features a rec-room countertop honed from a layer of naturally conglomerated river rock.

Over-the-top countertops

Rare geology, ingenuity rise to surface for long-lasting durability and beauty.

By Vanessa Salvia
FOR SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS
Photos by Collin Andrew

For a durable countertop, granite fits the bill. But so do alternative materials off the beaten path, including exotic natural stones, wood slabs and even man-made laminated papers.

The Novak family, for one, wanted something unusual when choosing countertops for their country home's hardworking kitchen and recreation room.

Rhonda and Matt pored over design books, but saw only a lot of what they did not like.

Finally Rhonda and the couple's daughter, Jenny, now a doctoral student in engineering at Oregon State University, stumbled upon a stunning stone called Golden Mosaico at Stone Works International Inc. in Eugene.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ID: 5206777
size: 2.072 by 346
SILVER MOON ALPACAS

ID: 5208103
size: 2.072 by 346
REGISTER GUARD-CIRCULATION

ID: 5201560
size: 2.072 by 346
GROUT DOCTOR

"We're just the type of people that didn't want the ordinary," Rhonda Novak says. "We were looking for something unique. Jenny and I found it, told Matt about it, and he was like, 'Yes that's it, that's the one!' It was just an immediate attraction."

Kim Skukas, a designer and sales representative at Stone Works, says the Brazilian stone is "geologically phenomenal." It's technically a conglomerate — not a granite — and was formed in a riverbed where stones washed down from various areas. Once the stones found their resting places, tremendous heat and pressure compressed and bonded the rocks into a matrix of basalt. It's completely natural, with nothing man-made holding the stones together.

While Golden Mosaico is not always in stock at Stone Works, it can be special ordered.

"It's not something that fits in everybody's design or décor," Skukas says. "It's definitely more in the art range, so it's not inexpensive. But it is unique; it's not something you see in a spec home."

Option to entertain

Skukas says if granites are rated in price from A to B and C to D, Golden Mosaico is "probably closer to the C range."

The Novaks have an expansive wet bar in the rec room of their home near

Dexter. Loving to entertain neighbors and friends, the family adorned this room with a pool table and taxidermy of a black bear. The bar has a small wine rack and cupboards crafted by one of their neighbors on Lost Creek Road, Ritchie Construction.

The room also features a corner shelf of the same conglomerate rock, with cabinets that hold the entertainment center.

Rhonda Novak teaches second and third grade at Marcola Elementary School, and each year invites all of her kids and their parents out for a barbecue. Their friends also use the family's tennis court — painted Beaver orange — and pool.

"It's our own little resort, Novak says. "We never leave during the summer. It's so much like a Sunriver home."

Upstairs, Novak chose an equally beautiful stone for her kitchen countertops, also from Stone Works. The kitchen holds a massive expanse of Wild Sea granite, which Skukas describes as "a gentle flow of green and eggplant color tones" that have flecks of reds, salmons and golds. "Rhonda did a really amazing job of picking the most geologically interesting stones," Skukas says.

Home show countertops

At the Good Earth Home, Garden & Living Show in Eugene this weekend,

Stone Works will display a stone called Diamond Arrow.

"It's a natural blue and white with a lot of sparkle and glitter," Skukas describes. "It's an equally phenomenal slab, but a totally different look."

Pro Contracting's Barry Winebrenner plans to exhibit countertops from EnviroGlas, IceStone and PaperStone, as well as quartz with 75 percent post-consumer recycled content.

"PaperStone is hundreds of layers of paper that's laminated together," Winebrenner says. "Very sustainable and much more reasonably priced," he says, at about half the cost of recycled glass countertops.

Countertops made by Eco sparkle with a mix of recycled glass, stone, mirror and porcelain bound with a corn-based resin.

Seth San Filippo of Springfield's Urban Lumber plans to exhibit countertops made from salvaged slabs of wood. San Filippo doesn't have pre-made countertops in stock, but has a wide selection of wood.

"We can make countertops and bar tops and butcher block anytime," he says. Urban Lumber cuts new lumber from salvaged city trees, street trees and yard trees from Eugene and Springfield. "Wood is going to expand and contract seasonally, but it's pretty durable," San Filippo explains. "It's not as hard as

stone, but generally a lot cheaper, and the material comes from right here."

Karen Ramus, organizer of the Good Earth show, says other exhibitors with interesting countertop displays will include Neil Kelly, Imperial Floors and Ecobuilding Collaborative of Oregon.

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For their kitchen, the Novaks opted for Wild Sea granite counters with eggplant/green hues.

At the Good Earth show

Companies showing green countertops at the Jan. 20-22 home show in Eugene can be found in the "Good Home" area. See directory, Page 6. Stone Works International, the company that supplied the stone countertops featured here, will occupy booths 333 and 432.

ID: 5207207
size: 2.072 by 346
WINDERMERE REAL ESTATE

ID: 5202983
size: 2.072 by 346
NATURAL CHOICE LLC

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size: 2.072 by 346
BRUCE & DANA