

Rock, paper, PAPERSTONE!

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What can you tell me about Paperstone? I'm interested in it for use as a work-top in a garage, and in my laundry room with my washer and dryer below.

How durable is it? Can it get wet? How does fragility or strength compare to other solutions? What about price? Availability around here?

Obviously, I'm interested in its green/sustainable characteristics, and it just sounds kind of cool ... Thanks! Great blog, btw. Your answers are more thorough than many of these things.

Jeannie S.

Jeannie,

Thanks for the complimentary remarks on the blog. It's fun and challenging for me. Thanks for thinking of my responses as "thorough"... I have been more often critiqued as "long-winded"

I have put the word out for a more complete answer to your inquiry to Anthony Brozna, proprietor of Richmond's own very groovy little green think tank / shop / supplier / distributor, ECO Supply (see <http://www.ecosupplycenter.com/>). Paperstone's website, <http://www.paperstoneproducts.com/> says that ECO distributes their product locally, so he would be a better expert than I.

I am familiar with the general product type. It is categorized as a "solid surface"... which original and familiar category entrant would be DuPont's Corian. However, the big diff here is that Paperstone, as the name indicates, is composed of recycled paper, manufactured under high pressure with water-based phenolic resins (get this...made from cashew shells!). Per info on their website, the material is indeed environmentally-friendly. It is fabricated with basic woodworking tools (although preferably by a professional fabricator familiar with its properties), and is said to be "essentially non-porous", and resistant to staining and scratching.

I do like this product's flexibility to do some things that natural stone cannot. The website references the capability to have 4-foot overhangs (we'd fear going even 12" with stone, due to its relative lack of tensile strength). ECO has some chairs in their showroom made of this material. Wow! Try that with granite!

I do have some experience with a similarly-manufactured product, Richlite. I can say that, that product had a poor supply chain in Richmond and therefore was difficult to obtain. The local fabricator that worked with that material, Hunter Webb at The Clearfield Company (see <http://www.clearfieldcompany.net/>) noted to be careful regarding your expectations of color and surface variation with Richlite. The colors are not at all homogenous, and "turn" over time and exposure. I see reference to this issue on Paperstone's site. However, this is the nature of the animal, which some folks just love, and others may dislike. If homogenous color or surface is what you seek, look for something else.

I would expect that Paperstone's price point is similar to other high-end tops, such as Corian and natural stone. Like those materials, anticipate that the price will vary based on your selection of colors, thicknesses and fabrication details, such as edge treatment. A bit pricey for a garage worktop, but I would think it might fit the bill.

Hopefully, we can get some additional information from the experts at ECO. Anthony, care to tag on a comment?

Mason