

# dwell

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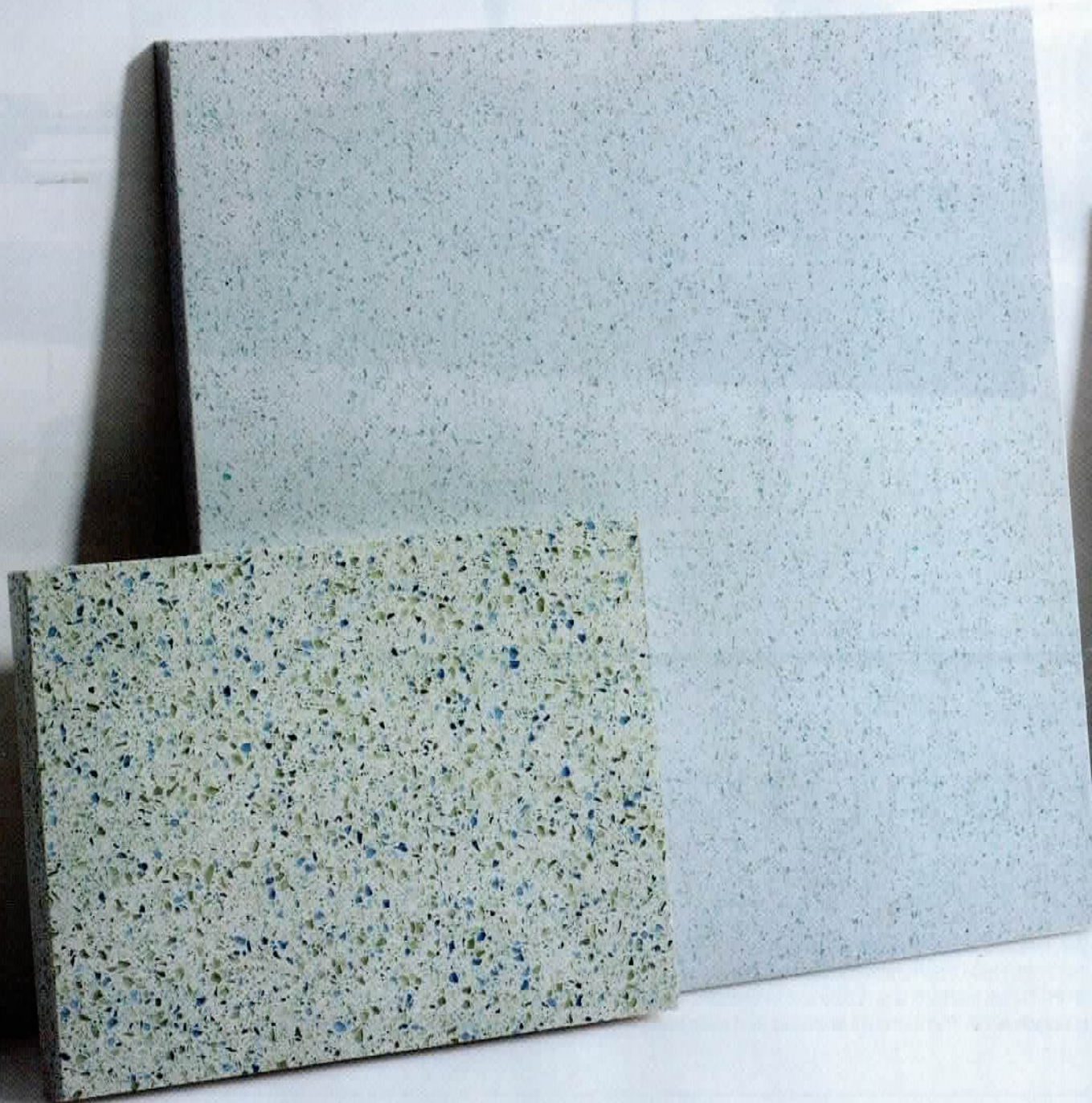
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# COUNTER




We used and abused seven eco-friendly countertops to investigate if they could stand the heat of Dwell's kitchen.



Story by Diana Budds  
Photos by Peter Belanger



If your kitchen counters look more drab than fab, consider revamping with a sustainable surface. At your fingertips is a myriad of green countertops with the look and feel of traditional materials plus environmental creds that will ease your conscience and take a load off Mother Nature. We put them to the test to see how they coped with everyday culinary maladies—stains, spills, an errant cleaver chop (or two), and heavy objects falling from great heights. Read on for the results.



# ARGUMENTS





**IceStone**  
\$49-\$64 per square foot  
(materials only), \$110-\$120  
per square foot (as installed)  
icestone.biz

IceStone is one of the most popular recycled countertops out there. All braggadocio aside, they earned a Cradle to Cradle Gold.

A spectrum of colors is available—21 to be exact. While Purple Haze may not make it into our kitchens anytime soon, any nod to Jimi fills us with burning desire.

This Leviathan of countertops was felled by the humblest of condiments: A single dollop of yellow mustard etched the surface.

IceStone is porous and should be sealed twice a year. High maintenance? We think so. Check IceStone's website for care recommendations as they're subject to change.



**Eco**  
by Cosentino  
\$68-\$118 per square foot  
(materials only)  
ecobycosentino.com

Eco by Cosentino consists of 75 percent postindustrial or postconsumer materials, which nabbed them a Cradle to Cradle Silver and Greenguard certification.

Its nonporous surface needs no sealant, which makes it low maintenance—two of our favorite words.

If your tastes run toward Technicolor, Eco might be too drab; Cosentino sticks to the neutrals: an array of whites, grays, and blacks.



**Caesarstone Recycled**  
\$12-\$18 per square foot  
(materials only), \$65 per  
square foot (as installed)  
caesarstoneus.com

Since we're not looking to replace our countertops with the seasons, there's nothing better than a lifetime warranty, which Caesarstone offers to residential customers.

Its nonporous surface and Greenguard certification give Caesarstone substance.

Do your homework: Certain colors in the collection are more recycled than others. The proportion varies from 15 to 40 percent.



**Teragren Bamboo**  
\$20-\$25 per square foot  
(materials only), \$50-\$75 per  
square foot (as installed)  
teragren.com

The edges on the countertops are easy on the eyes. We swooned over the dark chestnut slice sandwiched by two oh-so-beauteous blonde pieces.

Of all the materials, this is one that won't damage your prized Santoku should you chop directly atop.

In our tests, bamboo was most susceptible to stains. If you zealously swirl a goblet of Barolo, a sponge better be handy.

We managed to slice straight into the ends of the butcher block and the Traditional Bamboo worktop is easily marred. Opt for Teragren's much stronger Strand line.



**PaperStone**  
\$24 per square foot (materials  
only), \$75-\$90 per square foot  
(as installed)  
paperstoneproducts.com

PaperStone is made of 100 percent post-consumer paper fused with a petroleum-free resin derived from cashew liquids.

The material more closely resembles wood than stone, making it much easier to work with. Handy DIYers can even install the surface themselves.

Beware of bleach! If you're going to the lengths of installing eco-friendly countertops, this liquid likely isn't in your home, but an unattended spill will leave a light, ghostlike impression on the surface.



**Bio-Glass**  
by Coverings Etc.  
\$100 per square foot  
(materials only)  
coveringsetc.com

The material is 100 percent recycled glass and each shade represents a single waste stream, be it flat glass or water bottles, wine bottles or beer bottles.

We tried to mar Bio-Glass, cycling through soda, red wine, bleach, coffee, tea, juice, and mustard, and nothing left a blemish.

Clocking in at \$100 per square foot for just the material, Bio-Glass costs mucho moolah.



**Squak Mountain Stone**  
by Tiger Mountain Innovations  
\$32 per square foot  
(materials only), \$95-\$110 per  
square foot (as installed)  
squakmountainstone.com

Squak started as a grad school project on sustainable design. The hand-cast slabs are made of recycled paper and glass bound with low-carbon cement.

Rugged and rough around the edges, we were romanced by this stonelike material's comely imperfections.

Those imperfections come remarkably easily. Dropping a can of tomatoes and chopping on the surface carved deep divots and our sample broke in transit. Countertops that warrant kid gloves don't pass muster.

If you're a clean-cut type, "rugged" may read more "ragged." ■■■