

## Antonella Romano, The Tile Oracle

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NORTH JERSEY HOMES



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Antonella Romano is owner of the Stone and Tile Emporium in Wycoff ([www.stoneandtilenj.com](http://www.stoneandtilenj.com)). Send your stone and tile questions to her at [emolo@northjersey.com](mailto:emolo@northjersey.com).

**QUESTION:** My neighbor has a gorgeous granite countertop, and I want my Corian countertop replaced with granite. My job is a lot bigger, though. I have a large L-shaped kitchen with a big center island, cream-colored cabinets with a chocolate glaze and beige porcelain floors. I also have three children and do a lot of cooking, so I need something low-maintenance. What color granite do you suggest?  
— *Jenny, Glen Rock*

**ANSWER:** If you want something formal, I would suggest using a dark or light brown, because it will emphasize the chocolate glaze of the cabinets and be more dramatic. However, if you want to keep the kitchen monochromatic, consider St. Cecilia, Giallo Ornamental or even Golden Beach.

But when it comes to creating a perfect stone countertop like your neighbor's, what you probably did not notice is what her countertop didn't have: a lot of seams.

Seams are divisions between the slabs assembled to make the surface. It takes a large slab or slabs to make a countertop with few or no seams. Large slabs are more expensive, you need more to do the job and this results in more wasted material.

Ideally, you would only use one slab and have no seams at all, but that's only realistic for a small project like your neighbor's. Since you have a large kitchen, you may need more than one, so I recommend using larger slabs for fewer seams.

Make sure the shop has the number of slabs you need for your project, cut from the same block. Check that they match up with each other and have a continuous vein or speckle.

Also, be conscious of where the seams will end up on your counters. They should be placed away from wet areas, because they will collect moisture and generate mold. They also should never be in the sink or near the dishwasher — its movement can actually cause the seams to open.

A good fabricator can make a seam almost imperceptible, even to the touch, especially in a solid or speckled stone.

In terms of matching up the veins on the stones, some materials are more difficult to deal with than others. A lighter granite, or one with a lot of vein "movement," will be harder to match up. If there are blotches or natural marks you don't like, maybe these areas can be placed where the sink or cooktop cutout will go and be removed.

To find fabricators who can achieve the best results, look at jobs they have done or at the displays in their showrooms. Examine the edges: see if they are polished on the bottom, as opposed to rough; look for an ogee or bullnosed edge inside the sink cutout, as opposed to just a square, polished edge; and make sure the sinks do not have seams in them. If all is well, you've probably got a fabricator who takes pride in their work and can achieve the look you truly desire.

Make sure that your new tops will be pre-sealed at the shop. In fact, your fabricator should seal your top several times before the delivery. (This is why I don't approve of the three-day turn around time that some shops are offering today, because it is not enough time to treat it properly). Your tops need to be sealed on the top and the bottom of the slab — in the shop, not in your home.

So ask the fabricator to use as few seams as possible. Buying a larger slab will cost more, but you can always use the remnants to make a nice vanity top!