

WINTER 2010

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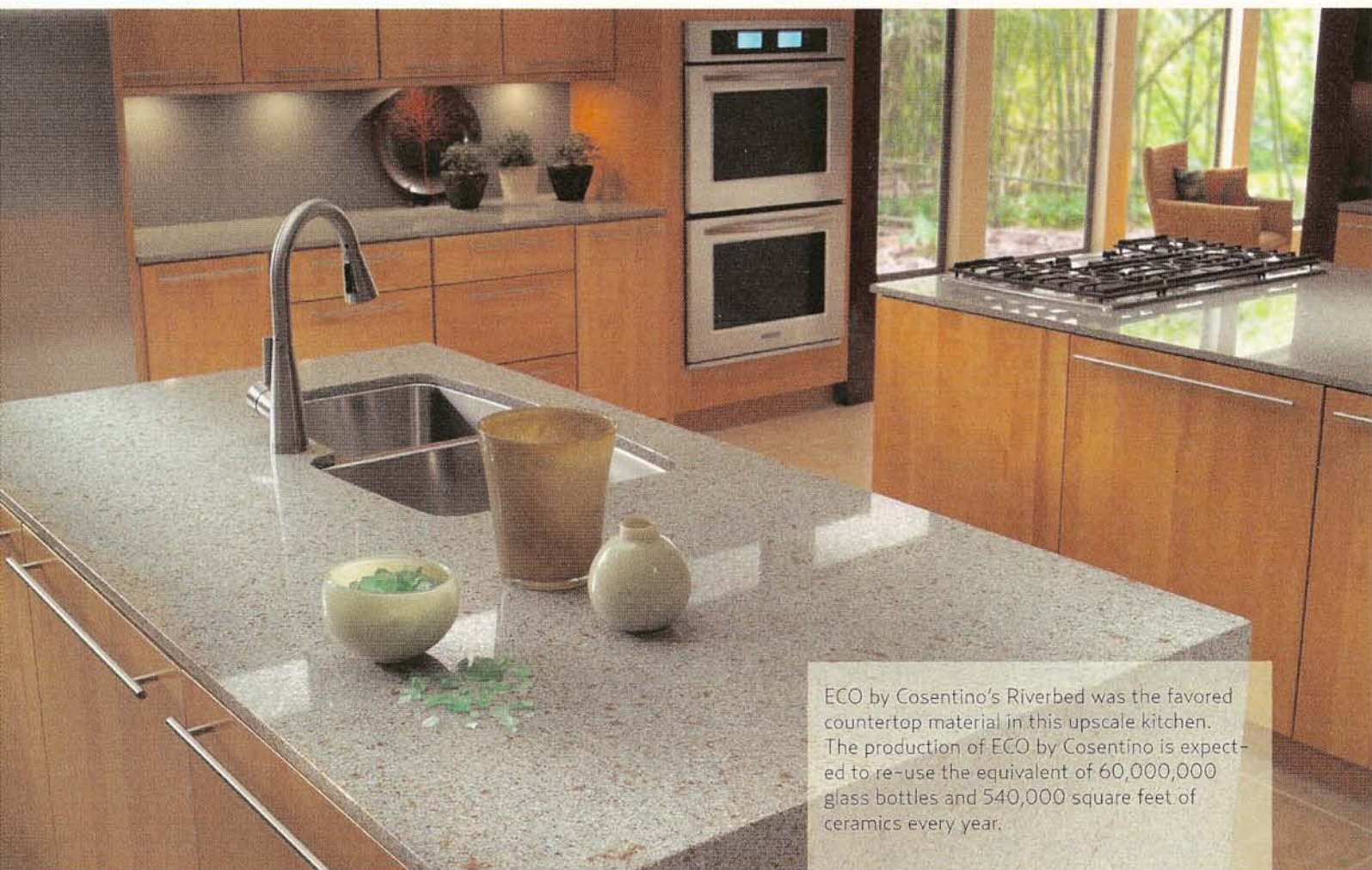
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# Counter the Granite Trend with “Green” Countertops

by Cheryl Cullen



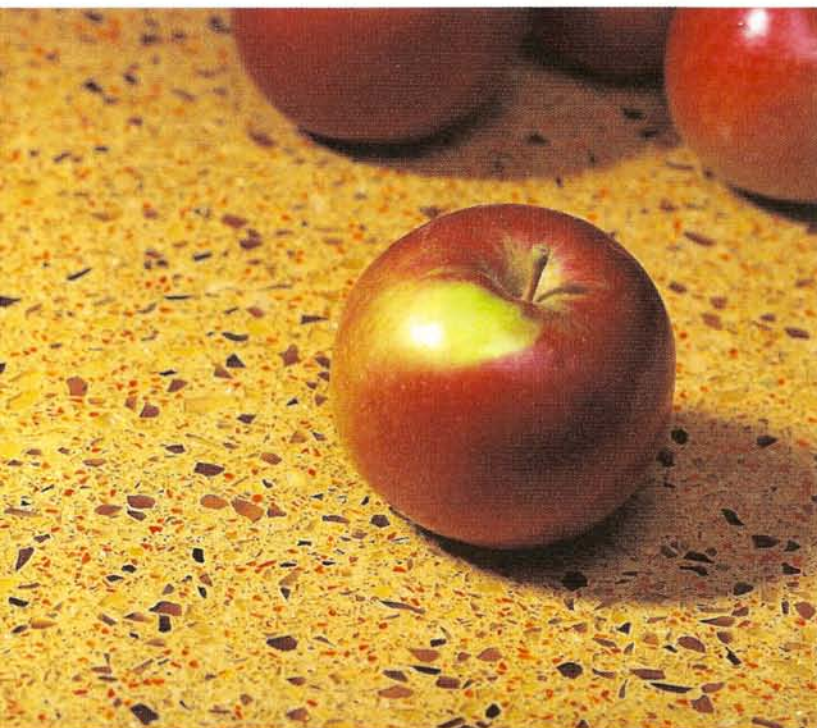
ECO by Cosentino's Riverbed was the favored countertop material in this upscale kitchen. The production of ECO by Cosentino is expected to re-use the equivalent of 60,000,000 glass bottles and 540,000 square feet of ceramics every year.

Yes, granite countertops are all the rage, but those who want something different and desire a truly environmentally friendly kitchen or bath countertop are going counter to this trend and choosing sustainable countertops.

Granite is a natural stone and therefore, a finite resource. As an alternative, consider a countertop made of recycled glass, recycled plastic, porcelain or even paper.

“The production of granite is not eco-friendly; it causes deforestation, damage to water supplies and air quality, and leads to the destruction of rainforests and other natural re-

sources,” says Lorenzo Marque, vice president of marketing for Cosentino North America. By contrast, a countertop material like ECO by Cosentino is a new green surfacing material composed of 75% post-consumer and post-industrial recycled raw materials bound together with a proprietary eco-friendly corn oil-based resin. It uses materials that would otherwise be diverted to a landfill yet “matches the sophisticated look, feel and high performance of natural stone surfaces such as granite—but it is far less damaging to the earth,” adds Marque.



IceStone makes its countertops out of 100 % recycled glass and concrete, which diverts hundreds of tons of glass from landfills each year. Shown here, IceStone's Tuscan Sunset.

The production of ECO by Cosentino is expected to utilize annually the equivalent of:

- 60,000,000 glass bottles
- 2 million standard-size bathroom mirrors
- Approximately 540,000 square feet of ceramics

"By utilizing these recycled materials, Cosentino is 'up-cycling' products that have reached the end of their lifecycle—meaning that they cannot be incorporated into any other industrial product and would otherwise collect in landfill sites," Marque explains. "When you take the above numbers into consideration, how could you not opt for a green countertop over a natural stone that has been mined from the earth?"

IceStone manufactures its countertops using 100% recycled glass and concrete, which diverts hundreds of tons of glass from landfills each year.

Richlite® is yet another option. It is made primarily of paper purchased from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified sources and/or recycled paper. The paper is treated with resin, then pressed and baked to create solid sheets. The result is a countertop with a matte finish that brings a warm, soft ambience to a room. The versatile material is dense and durable, heat-resistant up to 350 degrees and stain-resistant.



EnviroGLAS's EnviroSLAB is easy to maintain, durable and eco-friendly. Available in hundreds of resin colors, the bone-colored porcelain looks good in neutral and earth-toned resins, as well as bold resin colors like black, yellow, blue and red.

Squak Mountain Stone is yet another manufacturer of green countertops and tabletops. Their product is manufactured from a fibrous-cement material comprised of recycled paper, recycled glass, coal fly-ash and cement. The material is hand-cast into "slabs" as an alternative to natural or quarried stone and has a very rustic look that resembles soapstone or limestone.

KlipTech manufacturers EcoTop™, formed from a 50/50 blend of FSC-certified post consumer recycled paper and rapidly renewable bamboo fiber, then bound with a new 100% water-based system.

EnviroGLAS offers EnviroMODE terrazzo as well as their recycled glass terrazzo finishes in a countertop product called EnviroSLAB™. This material finds a home for old, discarded porcelain tubs, sinks and, yes, even toilets, which would otherwise end up in a landfill.

These green countertops are all elegant and comparable to granite as well as other solid surfaces. The choice becomes one of individual preference, one that will make a statement to all guests, leaving no doubt as to your stand on the environment and adventuresome spirit for running counter to the granite trend. ☀