

New Wilsonart Laminate Designs Provide The Look and Feel of Granite, Rustic Beauty

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The Bella Series offers old world appeal with dark greens, rich browns, cool silver gray and warm amber-beige.

"Each of these patterns is strong enough to become a focal point in a kitchen, yet also act as a neutral – complementing a wide range of decors and color schemes," Gagnon noted.

"Bella is perfect for homeowners who want a material with the good looks and durability of granite. It is easy to upkeep and on the pocketbook," he said.



The Sedona Trail pattern features rust, brown, clay tones and sienna.

The Bella Series includes:

- **Bella Venito** – Inspired by Venice and its classic architecture, this design's intricate color scheme is achieved by layering blackened green, deep olive and taupe with hints of cool blue.
- **Bella Noche** – A combination of the rich brown hues found in walnut bark and wood, mixed with red, traces of yellow and black shadows produce this striking pattern.
- **Bella Reale** – Blue, taupe and black combined with splashes of yellow-green create a cool and silvery effect. Its name is derived from the silver coin, the Spanish Reale, which was used in trade hundreds of years ago.
- **Bella Capri** – Just as with the cliffs and mountains of Capri, this pattern features a mix of gold and amber with contrasting brown and black, which provide depth.

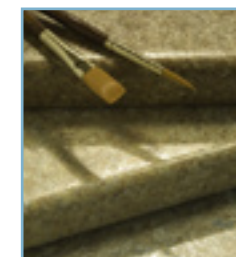
THE SEDONA SERIES

A complex layering of color combined with High Definition technology give the Sedona Series the authentic look and feel of naturally worn stone.

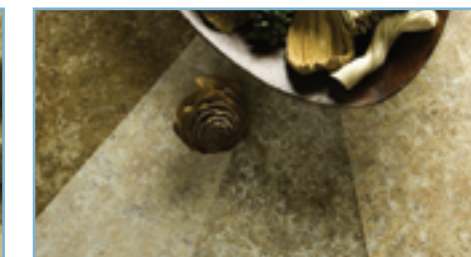
"What consumers like is that they can get a countertop with an earthy look that also has a high-end appearance," Gagnon said. "The patterns appear as if they were mined from somewhere in Arizona, New Mexico or another Southwestern state."

Four patterns in the Sedona Series include:

- **Sedona Spirit** – As natural looking as a skyline of soft white translucent clouds slowly blending with taupe and gray jagged foothills.
- **Sedona Bluff** – Yellow, orange and brown with hints of white resemble the warm reflection of the sun on the side of a bluff.
- **Sedona Spa** – The lightest of the four designs is as calming and soothing as its name. Soft shades of yellow and tan are accented with light grey and white.
- **Sedona Trail** – Rust, brown, clay-tones and sienna mingle as if on the rough-hewn trails of a mountain pass.



The Sedona Series features the look and feel of naturally worn stone.



'WilsonartHD evolved from technologies first developed for laminate flooring, which accounts for its high performance.'

"Even though the surface texture in WilsonartHD appear very dramatic, the actual surface variation is minimal so it doesn't trap dirt," Gagnon added.

The GREENGUARD Environmental Institute has awarded its Indoor Air Quality Certification to Wilsonart Laminate based on stringent testing. All GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified products ensure minimal impact on the indoor environment as a result of meeting standards for low-emitting products.

EQcountertops Approved for Listing In GreenSpecOnline Directory

VT Industries has been notified that its EQcountertops and agrifiber core architectural wood doors will be listed in the *GreenSpec Online Directory* published by BuildingGreen, Inc. (www.buildinggreen.com). Both VT products will also appear in future printed versions of *GreenSpec Directory*.



www.GreenSpec.com

Both publications are used by architects to research qualified and certified green building products that are carefully

screened by the editors of *Environmental Building News* using criteria they have developed over more than 10 years.

Selection criteria include recycled content, FSC-certified wood, avoidance of toxic constituents, reduction of construction impacts, energy or water savings, and contributing to a safe, healthy indoor environment.

250 CATEGORIES COVERED

Manufacturers do not pay to have products included in *GreenSpec*, according to Alex Wilson, president of BuildingGreen, Inc. "We base selections on careful in-house review by our editorial staff," Wilson noted.

"Keeping an arm's-length relationship from manufacturers allows us to be non-biased when we are evaluating company claims," Wilson added.

Directory listings cover more than 250 categories—from access flooring to doors and windows. Included in each listing are product descriptions, environmental characteristics and considerations, and manufacturer contact information with Internet addresses.

The *GreenSpec Directory* also includes guideline specifications language that can help architects and specifiers develop green project specifications.

NO ADVERTISING.

GreenSpec carries no advertising, and is not sponsored by any industry or manufacturer fees in order to ensure that subscribers receive unbiased, reliable product information.

BuildingGreen, Inc., has been providing the building industry with information on sustainable design and construction since the company was founded in 1985. The company's flagship publication, *Environmental Building News*, is the nation's oldest source of information on green building practices.

BuildingGreen's subscribers include most architecture, engineering, and construction firms with an interest in green buildings, as well as building professionals in other organizations and agencies. For information, visit www.BuildingGreen.com or call 802-257-7300.

COUNTERTOPICS TRIVIA

Congratulations to Mr. James King, Budget Build Lumber, for the correct answer to the question, "How many countertop manufacturing facilities does VT Industries operate in North America?"

QUESTION:

What is the brand name of the environmentally friendly countertops from VT Industries that can help building owners meet the U.S. Green Building Council's standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification?

Answer this question based on this issue of the *CounterTopics* for a chance to win a VT prize. Place your answer on an index card with your complete contact information, or the back of your business card, and mail to the address listed. Entries must be postmarked by October 2, 2006. Limit one entry per person, and one winning per year.

CounterTopics Trivia • Attn: Amanda Paulsen • VT Industries Inc. • P.O. Box 490 • Holstein, IA 51025

VT employees and sales representatives are excluded from this promotion.



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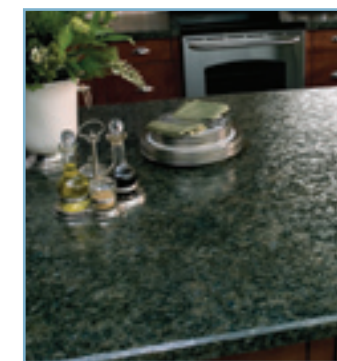
Perspectives

By Amanda Paulsen
Communications Coordinator



VT Industries fine laminate countertops are making their appearance on national TV shows including "The Today Show" and "Moving Up."

New Wilsonart Laminate Designs Provide The Look and Feel of Granite, Rustic Beauty



The Bella Venito color scheme is achieved by layering blackened green, deep olive and taupe with hints of cool blue.

Two new design series – Bella and Sedona – have been added to the WilsonartHD Laminate product line, according to Ron Gagnon, vice president of design and marketing. Each series has four patterns, raising the total number of WilsonartHD designs to 16.

Introduced in 2005 with the Deepstar Series, WilsonartHD Laminate designs offer a dual matte-gloss finish and enhanced performance that has three times greater wear resistance than the industry standard for laminate.

"WilsonartHD evolved from technologies first developed for laminate flooring, which accounts for its high performance," Gagnon said. "This product is ideal for active families and anyone who entertains frequently."

THE BELLA SERIES

Bella, which means "beautiful" in Italian, features four-color families that have a classic old world appeal: deep dark greens, rich browns, cool silver-gray and warm amber-beige.

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EQcountertops Help Albany Park Middle School Earn LEED Certification



Albany Park Middle School classrooms feature bright colors.

EQcountertops from VT Industries are helping the Public Building Commission of Chicago's new three-story Albany Park Middle School meet the U.S. Green Building Council's standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Environmentally friendly EQcountertops made from SkyBlend™ brand particleboard are certified by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) as using 100 percent consumer recycled wood fiber with no added urea formaldehyde in the manufacturing process.

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EQcountertops Help Albany Park School Earn LEED Certification

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“For this project, we had to guarantee that all our materials met the requirement of no added urea formaldehyde,” reported Stacy Stenzel, project manager for Ameriscan Designs, Inc. (www.ameriscandesigns.com), in Chicago. “That’s why we use either the Skyblend (particleboard) or a MDF (medium-density fiberboard) that’s also formaldehyde-free, to assist in the construction of cabinets and countertops in the school system.”

BRIGHT COLORS

More than 100 postformed EQcountertops (1,100 linear feet) were used in Albany Park Middle School, according to Stenzel. The postformed countertops were provided through E. Kinast Distributors, Inc., (EKD) of Franklin Park, Illinois. “We buy the countertops and customize them to size for the site,” Stenzel said.

“This is a tri-level school and we have countertops on every level,” Stenzel noted. “We have them in classrooms, the nurses station, laboratories and the library. Most of the countertops are the standard 25 3/4 inches deep on top of laminate cabinets used for storing materials. Some of the countertops in the library use supports instead of cabinets.”

The countertops are single-rolled with a VT Tempo edge style in five Wilsonart International laminate colors: Illawarra Brush (4806-50), Manatoba Maple (7911-60), Fortuneberry (D412-60), Karratha Brush (4744-60) and Lapis Blue (D417-60).

“The middle school has a very bright color palette,” Stenzel said. “Most of the cabinets are plastic laminate for easy maintenance and are very bright.”



Albany Park Middle School entrance.

LEED FEATURES

LEED is the predominant rating system for evaluating and developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED was developed by U.S. Green Building Council members representing all segments of the building industry.

VT EQcountertops can assist in achieving LEED certification in two categories: Materials and Resources and Indoor Environmental Quality.

LEED Materials and Resources requirements are intended to increase the use of products that incorporate recycled content material, such as SkyBlend particleboard cores.

With seven countertop production plants throughout North America, many EQcountertop shipments will also qualify for regional materials credit. VT has plants in Bryan, Texas; Gardena, Calif.; Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Rome, Ga.; Roseburg, Ore.; Sac City, Iowa; and Shelbyville, Ind. VT can assist with regional materials credits if the job is within 500 miles of a VT manufacturing facility.

The intent of LEED Indoor Environmental Quality requirements is to reduce the quantity of air contaminants that are odorous or potentially irritating to the comfort and health of fabricators, installers and occupants.

EQcountertops meet the LEED requirement for low-emitting adhesives and sealants by using a water-based adhesive that eliminates VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and other hazardous air pollutants. EQcountertops made from Skyblend cores with no urea-formaldehyde resins added during manufacturing also meet the requirement for low-emitting composite wood materials.

And all of the Wilsonart laminate is GREENGUARD-certified, which means significantly diminished harmful emissions.

CONSTRUCTION FEATURES

In addition to using recycled building components, Albany Park Middle School will feature a motion-activated lighting control system to save energy and a vegetative roof surface designed to capture rainwater and lower the roof temperature and conserve energy.

When the \$20 million school opens this fall, it will have 102,000 square feet with room for 26 classrooms for 7th and 8th graders.

The building is designed to be fully accessible to people with disabilities and includes a state-of-the-art computer network, two science rooms, a music room, a multipurpose room, a library media center, administrative office and student services center.



A science classroom in Albany Park Middle School featuring EQcountertops from VT Industries.

VT 50th Anniversary Celebration Draws Huzzahs From President George W. Bush, Other VIPs

The 50th Anniversary of VT Industries has attracted numerous congratulatory comments and letters from long-time customers, vendors and a distinguished line-up of public officials. Following are excerpts from a few of the letters and e-mails received by VT Industries President Doug Clausen and company founder Roger Clausen.



Congratulations to the employees of VT Industries as you celebrate 50 years of service to your customers and to the communities in which you do business... Your years of service demonstrate your commitment to your industry and contribute to the success and prosperity of our Nation. Laura and I send our best wishes for continued success.

— President George W. Bush

Congratulations to the staff of VT Industries and especially to Roger Clausen and his family for the fifty years of diligent work and attention to detail that have permitted VT Industries to grow from a two-man operation in Holstein, Iowa, to an international organization with more than 1,100 employees...This legacy of excellence enriches not only the state of Iowa, but the United States and Canada as well.

— Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor of Iowa and Sally J. Pederson, Lt. Governor of Iowa.



Your 50th anniversary is a milestone that serves as a testament to the achievements in your industry. I understand that VT Industries has grown from a small two person workshop in Holstein to an operating machine throughout North America. Your mission is admirable and your work is important to Iowa and the world.

— Tom Harkin, U.S. Senator, Iowa

Your persistence, hard work, and positive attitude have enabled you to realize this accomplishment. I join your family and friends in saluting you on this fine achievement, and I encourage you to continue pursuing excellence in the years to come.

— John Cornyn, U.S. Senator, Texas

Having chosen your hometown to be the headquarters of your corporate office enhances Holstein as a vital area of northwest Iowa. It has been a pleasure of past and present city officials to have a great working relationship with VT Industries and we look forward to a continuation of that partnership. Your pursuit of excellence will ensure the legacy of your company for many years to come.

— Mary Gross, Mayor of Holstein, Iowa



VT Industries’ commitment to customer satisfaction and company improvement exemplifies the value of Iowans. The Lean Manufacturing techniques your company utilizes, including the burning of sawdust to heat your facilities and the recycling of scraps are procedures that not only help the environment, but also gives VT Industries an advantage in a very competitive business. All of Iowa should be proud that a company like VT Industries is based in our state. The entire Clausen family should be proud of their company, products, and employees.

— Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator, Iowa

Your company is an asset to our community that helps fuel our engine for economic growth. I would also like to send a personal thank you for your company’s involvement in our community and local chamber of commerce.

— Lonnie Rubendall, Mayor of Sac City, Iowa

VT Industries has been an important part of Indiana’s economy, providing jobs to Hoosiers and servicing the State of Indiana through your Shelbyville location. I salute your commitment and contribution to the vitality of our state’s economy. Best wishes for a wonderful celebration of this landmark occasion.

— Mitch Daniels, Governor of Indiana

As one of the country’s leading manufacturers of postformed laminate countertops, as well as architectural wood doors and cabinet doors, VT Industries’ place in the United States business climate is an inspiration to us all. Within my home state of Indiana, VT Industries shines not only as a stellar employer, but as a positive addition to meeting the needs of the community.

— Dan Burton, Member of Congress, 5th District, Indiana

Your leadership has advanced the companies’ achievements through more than just great products: innovation in production, direction, and customer service...I am proud to represent a district that is home to a VT Industries plant – a leader in safety for its workers and the environment.

— Chet Edwards, Member of Congress, 17th District, Texas

I, Scott Furgeson, Mayor of the City of Shelbyville, Indiana, do hereby congratulate VT INDUSTRIES, INC. for its successes and accomplishments over the past 50 years.

— Scott A. Furgeson, Mayor of Shelbyville, Indiana

Your rise from a two-person operation in 1956 to eight manufacturing facilities throughout North America today is beyond impressive...On behalf of the City of Bryan, we extend best wishes to all those associated with VT Industries.

— Ernie Wentrcek, Mayor of Bryan, Texas

Plant Profile: VTI Texas



The 50th anniversary celebration in June at VTI Texas was a homecoming of sorts for company president Doug Clausen, who served as general manager of the manufacturing operation in 1977. At that time, the original plant location in Houston was approximately 12,000 square feet and had eight employees.

Since relocating to Bryan in 1983, VTI Texas has experienced steady growth, including a 20,000 square foot expansion two years ago. That expansion came just in time to meet a significant increase in demand for postformed countertops as a result of the rebuilding effort in Louisiana following hurricane Katrina.

“We’re seeing a large number of countertops going to the New Orleans market,” according to general manager Greg Petter. “We have three to four truckloads of countertops going down there every week with no letup in sight,” he noted.

“The rebuilding effort in the New Orleans market has generated great demand for countertops. I do not foresee any changes in demand for the near future,” he added.

Multi-family housing is another hot market for postformed countertops. “We have several large fabricators that service that market which has been very strong for us,” Petter said.

MANUFACTURING

“The plant has been able to respond to the high production demands through the outstanding work of our employees and their ideas for improvement,” Petter noted.

“We are constantly looking for ways to improve our process and make it serve us better. One way we drive that improvement is through our Lean Management journey,” Petter explained.

Started nearly two years ago, the Lean journey involves eight teams that meet every morning before their shift begins. The process has generated more than 2,500 ideas involving everything from plant safety, productivity and product quality improvements.

Plant employees celebrate every 100 ideas with a company-wide lunch featuring sandwiches, buffalo wings or a cookout. “We make a delicious barbecued chicken and sausage lunch on the grill that’s mighty tasty,” Petter said.

PLANT IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to its two high-speed production lines for manufacturing countertops, the plant operates a specialty line where bars and kitchen islands are postformed in 12-to-45-inch widths that are rolled on both sides.

Location: Bryan, Texas

Size: 70,000 square feet

Employees: 60 employees

Phone: 979-778-8677

Fax: 979-778-6804

General Manager: Gregory F. Petter

“We have the latest technology available for postforming in our specialty line,” Petter said. “It was installed in December 2005 and includes equipment for roll coating adhesives onto the laminate and substrate, where the conventional application method applies it to the board only.”

The plant uses environmentally friendly, water-based adhesives that eliminate hazardous air pollution and volatile organic compounds, along with state-of-the-art core fabrication machines and forming equipment.

The plant operates a VT Transportation fleet consisting of 10 tractors and 13 trailers that service Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma. “We’re currently looking at ways to get the drivers involved in the Lean Management process, which we feel is important because they’re in face-to-face contact with our customers every day,” Petter said.

HOT TRENDS

The plant stocks more than 350 laminate designs and colors from Wilsonart International, Formica, Nevamar and Pionite. “VT’s Futura and Tempo styles featuring laminate designs that resemble stone with a polished finish are the top sellers in markets serviced by VTI of Texas,” Petter said.

“The laminate companies have made real progress in colors and finishes. I anticipate a great deal of excitement for laminate colors and designs in the future,” Petter said.

Looking to the future, Petter is seeing a trend toward new profiles, new colors, and increased customer demands. “It’s going to make us rethink how we do things,” he said.

A TEAM EFFORT

For the company’s anniversary celebration, VT rolled out the red carpet with plant tours for customers and vendors, followed by an evening dinner attended by Roger, Doug and Trisha Clausen, Kent Barbee and Rick Liddell.

“We had a huge team effort to make our plant shine and I’m proud to say that we’re continuing that cleanliness today,” Petter said. “It’s helped us to raise the bar in the appearance of our facility.”

Both Doug and Roger thanked VT Texas employees and managers for their dedication which has enabled the company to grow and become an industry leader in postformed countertops over the years, Petter recalled.

That praise is shared by Petter who credits the plant’s employees and their participation in Lean Management with fulfilling the current demands on production and output. “I can’t say enough about the great job they’re doing, which has certainly driven the growth and production improvements here in Texas,” Petter added.