

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### CounterTopics Trivia

Take this challenge for a chance to win a VT prize. *Page 2*

### Designs and Trends

Pionite® creates excitement with Granite and StoneX finishes. *Page 3*

### The Green Scene

VT standard countertops and EQcountertops are GREENGUARD-certified. *Page 4*

### Fabricator's Forum

Avoiding stress cracking and warpage. *Page 4*

## PERSPECTIVES



By Trisha Clausen  
Marketing Communications Manager

This fall, VT Industries introduced a streamlined literature request shopping cart to better assist customers with ordering available literature and marketing materials. The new method is very user friendly – just click on the “Request Literature” icon on the Fine Laminate Countertops home page (<http://www.vtindustries.com/countertops/index.html>) to find an illustrated menu and descriptions of all VT catalogs and brochures.

This new program allows customers and architects to view literature pieces that go well together based on the previous selections they have made. The e-mail address field on the “shipping information page” remembers the customer’s e-mail address and “auto-fills,” so they won’t have to type it in each time they reorder.

Customers are also notified when their order is shipped, along with a UPS tracking number in case they want to trace their package(s).

In addition, customers have the option of selecting from VT’s Fine Laminate Countertops or Architectural Wood Door literature guides without submitting a another request or transferring to another Web site.

If you have any questions about this system, or any literature requests you may have made, please contact Corporate Marketing representative Jessica Ernst at extension 250. ➔

## VT Industries is Licensed as Silestone® Distributor Quartz Surfacing is Added to VT Product Mix

VT Industries and Cosentino® North America have reached an agreement that will increase commercial distribution of Silestone® in North America and provide current VT customers with the new, high-value option of utilizing Silestone quartz in their upcoming projects.

“As a leader in the laminate countertop industry, we are excited to partner with a leader in the quartz surfacing industry,” announced Doug Clausen, VT Industries president and CEO. “We are excited to bring quartz surfacing into our product mix to allow our customers to service more of their marketplace.



Silestone Kalahari

### CO-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR

VT is now the newest Silestone distributor and one of a select group of companies licensed to fabricate and distribute Silestone in the United States. As part of its co-exclusive distributor contract, VT will account for 85 percent of its quartz surfacing sales with Silestone.



Silestone Stellar Meadow

More than 1,200 Silestone slabs are on order for the remainder of 2007, with orders for at least 5,000 more expected in 2008. The deal is expected to increase Silestone usage among many of VT’s current commercial clients, including the Hilton and Marriott hotel chains.

Silestone’s large color palette, durability, and zero-maintenance qualities are currently in high demand in the construction industry as builders seek to add extra value and luxury to projects.

### A PERFECT FIT

“We’re very excited about our partnership with VT Industries,” says Jack Shields, Cosentino regional sales manager. “Our companies’ combined commitment to providing a quality, reliable and beautiful product to the customer makes this deal a perfect fit for both sides.”

VT will initially handle all of its Silestone fabrication from its 300,000-square-foot facility

*continued on page 2*

## Terese’s Top Works Drives Business With On the Road Truck Fleet Graphics

If a picture is worth a thousand words, Terese’s Top Works Inc. in New Orleans is speaking volumes with its traffic stopping truck fleet graphics that include a photo of the *Barcelona* contoured edge profile from VT Industries.

The graphics, which appear on the company’s three box trucks and a van, are a collaborative effort of company owners, Raymond and Robert Terese, and Installation Manager Pam Nobles, who

worked with a local printing company to create the design.

“Raymond came up with the idea of doing something with the trucks,” Nobles recalled. “Before, they were just plain white trucks. I picked out a photograph that I thought would look best on the truck and Bobby came up with the phrase ‘The Feel & Look of Luxury Without the Cost.’”

*continued on page 2*



Pictured are (from left) Raymond Terese, VT sales representative Tom Coleman and Bobby Terese.

# VT Industries is Licensed as Silestone® Distributor

## Quartz Surfacing is Added to VT Product Mix continued from page 1



Silestone Ivory Coast

in Rome, Ga. Additional facilities in Southern California, Iowa and Canada are expected to begin Silestone fabrication later in 2008-2009.

### ABOUT SILESTONE

The leader in Quartz Surfaces, Silestone was created in Spain by Cosentino, global natural stone giant. Silestone combines sophisticated style with sophisticated functionality through its on-trend color and texture offerings and its unique blend of physical attributes that make it a cleaner, safer surface. It's the only countertop in the world with Microban antimicrobial protection and NSF and GreenGuard environment certification.

Silestone's palette consists of more than 60 colors and 2 distinct textures. Additional information about Silestone is available at [www.silestoneusa.com](http://www.silestoneusa.com).

### ABOUT COSENTINO

Cosentino, a global natural stone giant, began harvesting precious stones from the finest quarries in Europe close to a century ago. Today, Cosentino has combined its commitment to providing the highest quality in natural quartz with a dedication to innovation and technology. This combination results in unequaled manufacturing capacity, a reliable network of dedicated distributors and fashion-forward designs. Additional information about Cosentino may be found at [www.cosentino.com](http://www.cosentino.com). ↔



Silestone Capri Limestone



Silestone Blue Sahara

## Terese's Top Works Drives Business With On the Road Truck Fleet Graphics

continued from page 1

In addition to the photography, the graphic includes the company's name, telephone number and logos for Wilsonart's High Definition Laminate and VT Industries. "Once I received permission to use the logos, we were good to go," Nobles noted.

The final design was printed onto vinyl sheets with adhesive backing and applied to the vehicles using rollers.

"It really came out nice and has attracted quite a few comments," Nobles acknowledged. "We've had several customers ask us who came up with the design and where we had it printed."

"We've gotten business from it, too," Nobles added. "People have seen the trucks on the road and asked us where we're located. They love the trucks."

Located in New Orleans, Terese's Top Works has provided good service to home builders, multi-family projects, kitchen and bath dealers and commercial projects for more than 48 years. A family-owned business, Terese's Top Works serves an area bounded north to Baton Rouge, west to Lafayette and areas south of Interstate 10. ↔

## Are Retail Developers Finally Seeing Green?

Retail developers are beginning to make sustainability a part of their building programs, according to a recent white paper and cover article published by the editors of *Building Design & Construction* magazine. (See white paper at: <http://www.bdcnetwork.com/article/CA6390371.html?industryid=42784>.)

New retail stores, totaling more than 21,000 per year, constitute nearly a quarter (23 percent) of all new building projects, excluding single-family homes, according to the white paper *Green Buildings and the Bottom Line*. Through September of last year, only 185 retail projects had been registered with the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) program, according to the white paper.

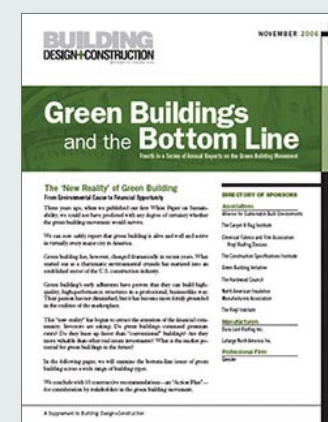
A new USGBC-sponsored pilot project under way may spawn greater adoption by retail space developers, with promising prospects for postformed laminate countertops constructed from materials that can contribute toward LEED points.

### MULTIPLE HURDLES

Costs associated with the registration process have hampered adoption. Companies that need multiple sites, such as Starbucks, Lowe's and Home Depot, have faced a LEED certification process that requires individual registration for each new building at a cost of up to \$2,800 per building,

even though designs and materials for new projects are identical or similar to those already certified and approved.

To encourage greater participation, the USGBC established the Retail Development Committee (RDC), with membership made up of executives from Toyota and other retail firms, plus designers and construction company representatives. RDC members have been working for three years to develop a streamlined process for multiple unit projects that fall under the Portfolio Program Pilot.



Among the pilot program's early successes, according to the white paper, is PNC Financial Services, the fifth largest bank in the U.S., which was able to certify two prototype design variations at regular cost. Then, based on

those certifications, the company built additional units of the same designs with no additional registration cost. By last November, the company had built 27 new units, and plans to build 73 more buildings over the next two years, the white paper said.

The white paper cited variations of the volume-build concept involving Citigroup, which intends to have all of its new office buildings attain LEED status, and Toyota, which plans to roll out green dealerships.

"The multiplier effect from certifying branch rollouts could result in hundreds, if not thousands, of new green retail buildings being certified each year," the white paper reported. ↔

## COUNTERTOPICS TRIVIA QUESTION

Congratulations to Michelle Swenson of DMS Custom for the correct answer to the question: True or False? VT Industries *Valencia* and *Barcelona* profiles will soon be available in additional laminate colors and patterns. Michelle won a VT prize for coming up with the correct answer, which was True.

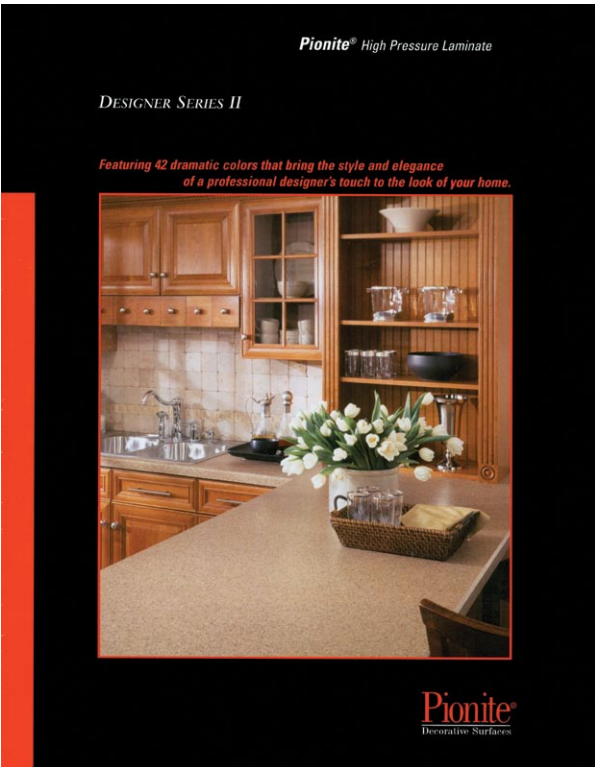
**QUESTION: True or False? VT postformed laminate countertops are the only laminate countertops that are GREENGUARD-certified.**

Answer this question based on this issue of *CounterTopics* for a chance to win a VT prize. View the newsletter on VT's Web site at [www.vtindustries.com/trivia](http://www.vtindustries.com/trivia) and submit the correct answer by filling in your contact information electronically by December 14, 2007. Limit one entry per person, and one winning per year.

VT employees and sales representatives are excluded from this promotion.

# Pionite® Granite, StoneX Finishes Are Available For Kitchen, Bath and Commercial Applications

Since their introduction earlier this year, the Granite and StoneX premium finishes from Pionite® High Pressure Laminate (HPL) have been well received in both residential and commercial markets, according to David Bell, Director of Design for Panolam Industries.™



“These finishes provide a unique, natural feel and sheen that enhances the depth and beauty of postformed high pressure laminate countertops,” Bell noted. StoneX offers a dual suede-gloss texture, while Granite features a gloss finish with fine-grit surface impressions.

“StoneX and Granite are a departure from our other traditional laminate finishes,” Bell shared. “The unique finishes enhance the aesthetics of the decorative laminate patterns by giving them a dimensional quality that consumers can see and touch.”

“Both premium finishes are available on Pionite’s full palette of colors and designs,” Bell noted. “And by not limiting these two finishes to a specific number of patterns, we’re able to offer designers and homeowners the greatest range of options and creative freedom.”

## BROAD APPEAL

“The majority of the volume for both finishes has been residential kitchen and bath applications,” Bell noted. “StoneX and Granite have given Pionite an enhanced presence in the residential countertop market, especially when used with our Designer Series II collection, which features 42 laminate patterns that mimic stone and natural elements.”

The Designer Series II was specifically chosen to work with residential decors and to enhance the design elements of kitchen countertops and bathroom vanities, entertainment centers, laundry rooms and storage areas. The combination of organic patterns and premium finishes are further enhanced by postformed countertop edge treatments.

“We have also had success in the commercial market with these new finishes,” Bell stated. “Designers have been using the Granite finish on some of our neutral patterns to mimic concrete, and these designs are finding their way into retail and commercial applications, such as schools, the fast food arena, and grocery stores for use on fixtures.”

## LASTING PERFORMANCE

Pionite HPL with Granite and StoneX finishes can be postformed into all of the edge styles offered by VT Industries, including bullnose, rounded radius and the new *Barcelona* and *Valencia* contoured profiles.

Granite and StoneX are engineered to provide the same long-lasting quality and performance as other Pionite finishes including Suede (low gloss), Gloss (high gloss), Crystal (fine pebble grained finish with medium gloss) and Soft Leather (finely grained leather finish).

Pionite HPL exceeds performance standards for wear resistance, impact and cleanability established by the American National Standard Institute/National Electrical Manufacturers Association (ANSI/NEMA). Pionite HPL can also withstand heat up to 275 degrees F (135 degrees C).

The premium finishes are easily wiped clean with a soft damp cloth or sponge using mild soap, non-bleach detergent or any of the general purpose spray cleaners. Cleaners containing bleach or anti-bacteria formulas should be avoided on all high pressure decorative laminates as they may damage the finish. Abrasive cleaners, powders or scouring pads should also be avoided as they will scratch and dull the surface.

## MAKING A SELECTION

With so many finishes, colors, patterns and edge profiles to choose from, consumers are encouraged to seek professional help when choosing a postformed countertop.

“At Pionite, we are recommending that consumers consult with their kitchen designer, contractor, or countertop manufacturer about which finishes and edge treatments are available,” Bell advised. “They can help consumers choose what’s best for their kitchen, bath and other rooms as well.”

“Compared to the higher cost and limited selection available of other surfacing materials, Pionite’s HPL offers professionals and homeowners style and elegance at a price they can afford,” Bell added.

## ABOUT PIONITE

Pionite is a leader in the design and production of High-Pressure Laminate products serving architects, interior designers, store fixture designers, furniture designers and fabricators. Pionite is a brand name of Panolam Industries Inc. Pionite is manufactured in Auburn, ME. ☛



## VT Postformed Laminate Countertops Are GREENGUARD-Certified

VT Industries' postformed laminate countertops are the only laminate countertops to achieve the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute (GEI) Indoor Air Quality certification, according to Rick Liddell, senior vice president of sales and marketing. The GEI is a nonprofit organization that establishes chemical emissions standards for indoor products, environments and buildings.

"Our customers can now sell VT countertops with confidence that they are regularly tested to ensure that their chemical and particle emissions meet acceptable indoor air quality pollutant guidelines and standards," Liddell announced. "The certification is evidence of the commitment by VT Industries to bring environmentally responsible products to the marketplace."

### THIRD-PARTY TESTED

GREENGUARD Certification is a valuable tool for architects, designers, product specifiers, and purchasing organizations that want to locate, specify and purchase off-the-shelf, low emitting products for indoor environments, Liddell explained.

Under this program, VT countertops are monitored for emissions of total volatile organic compounds (TVOCs), formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by Air Quality Sciences Inc., based in Atlanta, Ga.

"Both VT standard postformed countertops and VT EQcountertops meet GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality criteria, but EQcountertops perform to a more stringent level of indoor air quality," Liddell noted. "EQcountertops incorporate a recycled wood fiber core that uses no added urea formaldehyde in the manufacturing process."



rating system, according to the USGBC. At the local level, 66 local governments have committed to using LEED in any new construction in their jurisdictions.

This fall, for example, the Ohio School Facilities Commission adopted LEED as part of its school design standards. The commission's action means that more than 250 buildings will be registering for LEED certification within the next two years.

"As the only GREENGUARD-accredited postformed laminate countertop manufacturer, VT Industries has differentiated itself from its competitors, especially within the commercial market, which is a benefit for our customers," Liddell added. "And our EQcountertops offer building owners even greater indoor air quality, and is of particular importance in schools, offices, hospitals and other public buildings."

### INDUSTRY LEED®-ER

Products that reduce the quantity of air contaminants that are odorous or potentially irritating to the comfort and health of fabricators, installers and building occupants can contribute toward achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification. Created by the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED is a widely used benchmark for the design and construction of energy efficient and environmentally conscious buildings.

In 2006, more than 775 million square feet of commercial space was registered under the LEED

### ABOUT GEI

GEI was founded in June of 2001 to establish a true third-party product certification program based on proven emissions standards and to provide specifying and procurement professionals with a resource for low emitting products. GREENGUARD's goal is to improve public health and quality of life by helping manufacturers build better and safer products. To view VT's certified products on the online product guide at no charge or to view the certificates, visit [www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org). ♣♣

## FABRICATOR'S FORUM

### Avoiding stress

Quality postformed laminate countertops are manufactured in a controlled environment (approximately 75 degrees F and relative humidity of 45 percent to 55 percent) to minimize the occurrence of stress cracking or warpage from humidity conditions that are too moist or too dry.

PVA glue lines used by postformed laminate countertop manufacturers provide the strongest possible bond between the substrate and laminate, making them more crack resistant. Poor adhesive bonding can result in the laminate separating from the substrate, as well as open joints and seams.

Good fabrication techniques in the shop or jobsite can also help to prevent stress cracking, open joints or seams and other problems associated with decorative laminate countertops. Recommended techniques include:

- Avoiding cutouts with sharp corners and rough edges as square cutouts can cause stress cracks from the corners that radiate from the cutout to the edge profile/backsplash. All cutouts should be routed or filed to ensure smooth edges and corners should have a radius of 1/8 inch or larger. A .25 inch diameter router bit is normally used to create a radiused corner.
- Making drill hole diameters 0.002 inch larger than the specified diameter of the hole.

- Always using wood to back up material being drilled to prevent breakout at the bottom of the drilled hole.

Depending on the size of mitered countertop sections, fabricators may choose to assemble the miter with the laminate side down, then turn it over to apply the endcap. Assembly can be performed either on the cabinets or with the countertop laid across two sawhorses for

easier access to the miter joint. Positioning of the assembled countertop onto the cabinets will require two to three people. With larger L-shape countertops, it's usually easier to assemble the miter with the laminate side up.

For more installation tips, see *A Professional Fit* (BJPF 0507). An online version of the brochure is available at (<http://www.vtindustries.com/countertops/WhitePaper.shtml>). ♣♣



Precision sink cutout machines are used by fabrication shops.



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