

HOME

Granite Countertops Still Top List of Home Improvements

NewsUSA

(NU) - Despite the sputtering economy, consumer spending on home renovation remains healthy. Across the nation, homeowners are investing in home remodeling projects – especially kitchen makeovers – either to make their homes more appealing to buyers or more comfortable and enjoyable while they ride out the housing slump.

And one of the most popular home improvements is, once again, granite countertops.

A recent study of 10,000 consumers, conducted by the Research Institute for Cooking and Kitchen Intelligence, found that kitchen renovations remain at the top of the list for consumers seeking to add value to their homes. When the study asked homeowners, “If you were changing your kitchen now and had no budget constraints, what improvement would you make?” granite countertops were among the kitchen features they coveted most.

Many consumers are tightening their belts but remain eager for granite countertops, according to Garis Distelhorst, executive vice president of the Marble Institute of America, the nation’s leading natural stone association.

“Historically, consumers recognize that granite countertops enhance the value of a home in ways few other improvements can,” said Distelhorst. “No other countertop surface can measure up to granite in terms of practicality, timeless beauty, durability and safety. This natural stone has held its value in ways more trendy materials have not.”

Consumers continue to invest confidently in kitchen makeovers because the projects typically increase the resale value of their homes. In the last five years,



Even during a recessed economy and poor housing market, kitchen renovations remain at the top of the list for consumers looking to add value to their homes.

kitchen remodeling projects have generally returned 80 to 85 percent of consumers’ investments, according to the “Cost versus Value Report” from Remodeling magazine.

Because kitchen renovations increase resale values, experts agree that if consumers can only afford to renovate one room in their homes, it should be the kitchen. In fact, an all-new kitchen “that looks great and is fun to work in” was the top priority of 2,200 home enthusiasts surveyed recently by Better Homes and Gardens magazine.

“What we’ve discovered is that the home continues to be our emotional center and the sweet spot of everyday life,” said Gayle Butler, Better Home’s editor in chief. “Economic uncertainty aside, we won’t stop spending, improving and dreaming.”

For more information, visit the Marble Institute Web site, www.usenaturalstone.com.