



## RENOVATE or REPLACE?

When looking to rejuvenate a kitchen space, replacing bench tops can provide an alternative to a full renovation. ►

**O**f all household surfaces, bench tops are the most susceptible to wear and tear. Characterised by chipped edges, stains and burn marks, they're often a giveaway that a kitchen has passed its use-by date. A full renovation can be daunting, however if you aren't looking to change the overall layout, there is an alternative.

Russell Burfield has been replacing bench-tops with natural and engineered stone for more than two decades, building a business focused on the niche market. "I receive a lot of phone calls about burn marks on laminated tops, but there's nothing that can be done," he says.

When compared to a new fit out, the benefits of bench top replacement extend past cost. Renovation time is reduced and necessities

such as the fridge and oven are generally still accessible, so inconvenience is minimised. For recent customer Karen Chapman, the major plus was having one project manager in control of the task. "For me, it was a concern," she says. "Knowing Russell would be there while other trades were coming and going was very important." Karen began investigating options when the grout lines between her tiled bench top became increasing difficult to clean and chose an engineered Caesarstone to replace them. "It's the best investment I've ever made," she says. "It's like having a brand new kitchen."

According to Russell, ease of cleaning and hygiene are two of stone's strongest selling points. "It's much less porous compared to a laminate or a timber top," he says. Functionality is balanced by a lifespan averaging 25 years and

appealing visuals that can have a substantial impact on house value. "For homes on the market, it can be a huge issue," he says.

When it comes to choosing a new top, the variation in finishes is considerable. One of Russell's preferred suppliers, Complete Marble and Granite, has a collection of more than 100 variations from sources located in Wallaroo, Brazil, India, Italy and Norway. So there's plenty of choice. It's important to remember that engineered stone provides a more consistent finish compared to the intricacies of a natural marble or granite. When comparing natural stones, marble has a tendency to stain more easily than granite, but ultimately cost and taste are the major deciding factors.

Russell insists on an in-home consultation to help customers arrive at a choice that will best suit their needs in a finish to complement existing furnishings. "I've had people spend two or three years trying to make a decision and when they can't, they just don't do anything." With available extras including cabinet adjustment, paint touch ups and the installation of soft-close drawers, the feel of a new kitchen is achievable.

**Details:** [benchtopreplacement.com.au](http://benchtopreplacement.com.au) 🏠