Episode 36: Kitchen Design Essentials

Benchtops- Part 1

https://www.whitepebbleinteriors.com.au/benchtops-part-1/

Frances Cosway: Hi, and welcome everybody to the, My Forever Home podcast. Today, we're going to be talking about bench tops, which is a question that I get asked about all the time and I'm very lucky today to have the lovely Laura Neville from Cosentino. And we're going to be chatting about bench tops and the differences between this episode's going to cover.

Reconstituted stone, natural stone and also Dekton, which is a brand of a product. And so we'll be actually doing another episode on all the other different types of our bench tops available. But today, because we're so lucky to have it, Laura with us really wants to focus on, the three different types of products that are Cosentino.

Specialize in now we've bench tops. There are so many different types and I find that. People are generally gravitating to brand names rather than a particular product, or they may be gravitating to a particular product just because that's a product they know, rather than really exploring what else may be available.

That's going to meet their durability and functionality requirements. And also, so there are steady because each product offers a different variable in terms of its durability. In terms of its maintenance required requirements, but also the format that it's available in, which can lead then also to the aesthetic outcome.

So we're going to touch on that a little bit today as well, but I'm just going to give a little bit of an introduction on Laura. So Laura has been, working for Cosentino for over two years and she's been working closely with white pebble and he's always giving us the information we need and samples.

And so we've been working closely together since she started at Cosentino. She actually studied interior design. And has a background in advertising and marketing like I do. So, so that's great that she's now finally working in, you

know, materials and so forth for interior design applications. So Laura, welcome to the show.

Laura Neville: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Frances Cosway: Thank you for taking the time out of your day to, to come on and fabulous knowledge. So firstly, what drew you to start with working in the, I suppose the stones space, was there something that made you want to work in? Yes. Bench tops and stones and so forth.

Laura Neville: Well, look, I think I've always had an interest in, in every area of interior design and this fabulous opportunity opened up at Cosentino. Whilst I was actually on maternity leave and it was just the perfect time for me to take the jump I'm into such a great company. So I couldn't turn it down.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. And it's funny that you actually came while you were on. Mat leave and then you're replacing someone that was on mat leave. So, yeah, but we're lucky that Laura is not going anyway, so, right. So Laura, tell me when, when you have people come into, the, the showroom. So I actually let's talk a little bit about Cosentino as a company.

So for me, I have a lot of clients that say, Oh, I want it. I want to use Caesarstone. And, yeah, so I'm just going to go and choose a Cesarstone product. And then I'm starting to talk about the other companies that are available that offer, different products as well for bench tops. So just give us a little bit of an overview on Cosentino as a company.

Laura Neville: Yeah, yeah, certainly. So Cosentino is a family owned company, in Spain and they have three main brands that they have here in Australia. They, they have Silestone as the primary brand, which has been around for over 25 years now. And Silestone and it's funny, it's actually a global, number one brand in Europe and America.

Australia is a little bit of a different market for them in, they did launch, later here. So we are combating the likes of Caesarstone and other brands in this market. But they've been around for an extremely long time. So we have that as every constituted stone. And then we have Dekton, which is our ultra-compact surface, which is often compared to porcelain.

And we have a range of different natural stone. So I can elaborate on those as well.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. We're going to go through just for the listeners. We're going to go into those three different areas at quite in depth because I'm a massive fan of Dekton. And it is really, as soon as I mentioned Dekton to people, they go, Oh, that's a porcelain product.

It's like, no, no, no, no. So I'm so glad that you're here. You're going to. Be able to go into the manufacturing process and why it's different to porcelain. So when, ha when people come into the showroom, and, and so forth, how do you advise people on how to choose a bench top? Because obviously you've got three offerings.

So how do you advise them in terms of what they should be looking for their bench tops? And we're talking specifically about kitchens, obviously. Sure.

So look, I think. To have a really good idea on how they're going to use the kitchen is obviously the primary, advice as I'm sure. Obviously, you know, you know, are they cook, do they have a large family or, is budget a constraint?

Are they happy to spend a little bit extra, on something perhaps a little bit more precious, like a natural stone? So it's a really have a good think about that as well. also I guess the design, so not only the color choice, but something, That is going to create longevity for the product. It's, it's obviously not an easy thing to replace, so to change your mind.

So to really have a think about how they might be using the space in five, 10 years' time, which fits perfectly with your mantra Francis right behind mantra.

I know yet. But also as well, things like light. So, you know, do they want a polished finish? Do they want a matte finish or a suede finish?

So just really get them thinking about those kinds of things. But ultimately at the end of the day, it comes down to; you know, what, what color and design they like. Mm. Yeah. And I find that, you know, I'd go through, obviously go through those questions with, you know, in the briefing process with clients around durability and so forth.

And some of those say, look, I just want natural stone because I really want to have a massive feature. And I suppose, particularly some of the natural stone yeah. That, that you have that feature, nothing else is going to replace that such unique uniqueness. And so, you know that they're going to go down that route no matter what, because it's just such a strong. A static feature that they want to have in their kitchen.

Laura Neville: Absolutely.

Frances Cosway: And then I have others who are just so focused on your ability, because I know that their small kids are going to be knocking into it every five minutes. And who knows what crayons and texts are. Right. I'm going to reach that bench top. So functionality is so critical, so that really determines the type of product as well.

And then obviously your budget, like you mentioned. So, yeah, there's so many things to think about, but it's, I find that, clients will sometimes say, well, yeah, I just want to use a, you know, a Caesarstone and obviously as you and I. Caesarstone is a brand rather than a product and the product name for listeners, if you're not aware is actually a reconstituted stone.

That's the generic term for that product. And then Caesarstone is a brand just like Silestone is a brand sitting under the Cosentino family of products. So, and, and what is it, some of the things that you feel. Our listeners should be mindful of when they're choosing a bench top. So we've talked about durability and functionality, but other things like, slabs sizes, I was talking to a client yesterday and he's got a three and a half meter bench.

And he said, I'm just not going to be able to cope with any seam. So that obviously really, has an impact on the product that they're able to choose. So what are some of the other things that you find?

Laura Neville: Yeah, sure. So I guess, as well, you know, if budgets affect a can and they're going for a thinner slab size, can that, can that slab size be mitered and is that a factor into their design?

So just considering that as well, maintenance is definitely the biggest one. Many people don't realize how precious natural stone is and you raise a lot of upkeep on that. So you just need to be prepared for that. And also as well, I guess the design, so can that stone be molded into that type of design as well?

So, you know, can it have an exposed edge and still being, keeping with what you've decided to design, but..

Frances Cosway: Yeah. Budget, sorry, go on Laura.

Laura Neville: Yeah. Budgets are a huge factor, obviously as well. So keep that in mind.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, absolutely. I was with someone the other day and she said she wanted copper cabinetry.

And I was like, yeah, that's, it's a pretty hefty budget there. So, and that's where you've got to weigh up. What are the things that are more important, but as you said earlier, a bench tops, not something that's easy to, retrofit, it's not something that you can easily take out depending also, depending on how the floor has been finished, whether the floor runs under the vent of the Island bench or not.

So, it's really important to get it right. So reconstituted stone is probably, I'm not interested to hear your view, but certainly from my perspective is probably one of the most popular finishes that people are going for. I mean, you know, 20 years ago, laminate was the surface of choice. And probably about 10 years ago go stone.

I found that reconstituted stone was really coming into the foreign kitchens. Then it went into bathrooms and now it's gone into laundries. And now the thought of people having a laminate laundry is really the days of old. So just run me through, how reconstitute, how reconstituted stone is, is manufactured.

And then we'll go into some of the specifics around Silestone versus others.

Laura Neville: Yeah, sure. So, essentially reconstituted stone is it, do you know, and depending on the brand, but for, to speak for the Silestone is a mix of different minerals and it's held together with a binding agent of resin so, In terms of the colors that we can achieve through that process.

I mean they're obviously quite artificial, but hence why they're so popular because we can, we can create beautiful colors that are on trend and, therefore making them popular.

Frances Cosway: And the other thing with Reconstituted stone is that you're getting a consistent look. So I find that if someone's doesn't like the fact that the stone may not make consistent across each piece, you know that with a

reconstituted stone, what you see is what you're ordering and what you say as a slave is what you're going to be getting.

So if someone's very set on having something very specific, a reconstituted stone is the way to go.

Laura Neville: Definitely, Yep, absolutely.

Frances Cosway: And I think the other area is, for example, a Calcutta marble, as you said before, natural stone is, can be quite high maintenance. You have to seal it. And I'll talk about natural stone in the other episode, but, for a Stone like Calcutta marble, which is quite poor, so it's not a great friend of lemon juice and red wine, but if someone really likes it is that look all would then refer them to a reconstituted stone that has got that.

Calcutta looks with that, that heavy veining. So they're still getting the look. But they don't have that maintenance.

Laura Neville: Yeah, exactly right absolutely.

Frances Cosway: I think from what I'm hearing from, some clients that I've been chatting to, they feel that the reconstituted stone is almost like a godsend product where it's stain resistant.

It's going to be, really, really durable. It's not poorest. So just walk us through some of the misnomers about what reconstituted stone isn't.

Laura Neville: Yeah, certainly. Well, look, it's definitely, more durable than industrial. Well, starting a rehab, he had started, but started no stone is invincible, but certainly with our products, we have taken measures to make it even.

Even more durable so we treat most of our slabs with a coating called en boost. So it's a technology that they've developed where they treat slabs and it helps minimize even further the porosity of the stones. So, you know, combating things like red wine stains, turmeric union, et cetera. So look, it certainly is more durable.

But all stone carries needed.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. And so what sort of carries that, Laura? What, what sort of things would you suggest?

Laura Neville: Not much, you know, we certainly don't recommend any harsh, clean cleaning agents, so, or anything like that, but in

Frances Cosway: like, Gamson.

Laura Neville: It's nothing like that. Look hot, soapy water, just, just keeping the surface clean and, and taking care, not to leave, you know, stains on there for, for days at a time, a big coffee ring.

Yeah, so with the En boost that you're talking about. Does that mean that, cause I would always suggest to clients, look, don't leave your, if you red wine, you've got a red wine Mark on your bench. Don't leave it there overnight. So is the end booze going to prevent that stain happening or does it just give you more time to actually get to that Stain?

Laura Neville: It's still going to give you more time. I mean, over limits personally, I haven't tried it, but I would say not to do that. as I mentioned, no, no stone is indestructible, you know, but look up across all stone on my, my venture

top, and I've certainly left things there for, you know, hours while we've had a party and it's been perfectly fine.

So yeah. Whereas something likes a natural stone, wouldn't be that forgiving.

Frances Cosway: We're not; you have to get to it straight away.

Laura Neville: Exactly Yeah. Yeah. I mean, Dekton is a complete different kettle of fish.

Frances Cosway: We'll be able to take time. So, and I think some of the other, the, the, just in relation to the Saul stone, Ray constituted Stone brand, and you said it before that, it's the leading stone, in, in Europe, in the U S where here in Australia, you know, Caesarstone is.

The brand that I suppose got to the market first, but also Silestone made in Spain, I believe.

Laura Neville: Yes. Yeah. All that made in Spain.

Frances Cosway: Yes. So and then, you know, a lot of the other products are actually made elsewhere. So I think correct me if I'm wrong. It's one of the only reconstituted stones made in Europe.

Laura Neville: AB is solely in Europe.

Yeah. There are other brands that are partly made in Europe and other parts of the world. But, we make all of our, all of our brands in, at our headquarters in Almeria, in Spain.

Frances Cosway: Which is massive, A massive place.

Laura Neville: Yeah, it's absolutely huge, but you know, that's such a great advantage to us because we have complete control over our stock.

But also the follow-up service that we can offer from there as well so, you know, we've just got real control of our brand.

Frances Cosway: So tell me, then everyone will be super keen to know. Okay. So this leading product in Europe, in the us. So what is the key, core differences, I suppose, that unique things that Silestone has compared to a product like Caesarstone.

Laura Neville: Yeah, well, and look by no means am I'm going to shoot down. Okay. The competition, to be honest, they're both, they're both really good quality products, which is really important because there are a lot of, poor quality reconstituted stones out there. I think the top. The top thing that makes both of them a good product is the minimal amount of resin that they have in them.

So, that really means they're not going to yellow over time, which is really important, right? Yeah. But some points of different differences for us, obviously, aside from the colors that we offer. So, you know, people may like that, or they may not, we offer all of our slabs in 20 and 12 mills.

So not just select ones in 12 mil, which is great in terms of, if you wanting to just do a Splash back or perhaps, you know, it's, it's an area in the house other than the kitchen where it doesn't require a 20 mil slab. So, Flexibility in the thicknesses is definitely the one. We offered the en boost technology

on most of our slabs as well, which I've touched on, but also we have, I have integrity sinks.

So basically they, their sinks that are carved out of one huge giant block of, of Silestone so there's no joints so they're incredibly strong.

Frances Cosway: Beautiful

Laura Neville: Stunning. Yep. And they come in most of the colors that are slabs come in. So you're able to match them to the bench top and have that infinity look, hence the name, or you can have a contrasting one to a completely different surface or a different color.

Silestone so there's some key points that we often get feedback on as to why. We're often chosen as well. I think the warranty for us as well. So we offer a 25 year warranty on all of our products, but, Silestone being the first one to offer that. So kind of comes back to my point about mm, how we have real control over our brand. And that warranty services, something that really demonstrates that.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. And I mean, the fact that you're prepared to put the warranty behind the product, I mean, that really says it in itself, that you really, that the company really stands behind it. They're producing. So, and look, we have clients that would prefer to have something.

Yeah. That's my in Europe, versus some of. You know the other countries where these products are made. So I think that that's a great differentiator as well. I know that a lot of people in are veering towards Australian made products. I don't think we'll be making stone anytime soon, but, you know, it's, it's certainly a good offering there.

So Laura, the other thing that I think is really interesting for a listener as well is just the difference between. Silestone and Caesarstone to some of the higher quality rate constituted Stone manufacturers versus some of the more cost effective options. I think a lot of them people feel that they are, they look the same they feel the same, so therefore they are same. So are you able to run through just, what are some of the key differences and why it's worth spending a bit [00:18:00] more to get a superior product?

Laura Neville: Yeah. Well, and look, I briefly touched on both of these points, but they are just so important and really the main ones as well. It's the quality of the product. So it's, what's going into those labs that you know, is obviously going to make the product, have any kind of longevity over time. Our product definitely has that in some cheaper ones. I can definitely say don't yeah.

Frances Cosway: In terms of the resin that they've got in them. So they've got more resin and...

Laura Neville: yeah. Yeah. But, but also, well, the things in them, so not necessarily using, you know, natural minerals and things like that. And yeah, it's, it's, it's mainly the resin that comes down to, yeah, well, it's cheaper to produce.

And so didn't have higher percentages of resin. Yeah.

Frances Cosway: And so what's the disadvantage for people. If they've got a high percentage of resin in the product you mentioned before that, you know, it can enable the slab to perhaps discolor over time, particularly, I suppose if its indirect sunlight, which a lot of kitchens are, is there any other reasons that the high resin is not a great thing?

Laura Neville: Well, that's the main one. It's the operation over time. So it's, it's not only like natural light and things like that. It's more hate to, so yeah, if you're, putting, you know, Pen, which you wouldn't do very often, but if you did, I mean, even if you put it on sale stone, once off, it's probably not going to do anything, but over time, anything that has a resonance going to yellow, in the cheaper products, that would be a real issue.

So it's more the aesthetics of it.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. Okay. Yeah, no, that, that, that's good to know. And so while we're still on reconstituted Stone, before we start getting into the other two, you mentioned to me offline about this very exciting launch that's happening because silicosis is such a hot topic. And I do get asked about it a lot in terms of the sealer the Silicon that is in, the, the Reconstituted stone. So what should, what should consumers be aware of with regards to Silicon that's a reconstituted stone and whether it is, actually in, a Silestone?

Laura Neville: Yeah, certainly we'll look, this is definitely a whole another podcast, so I'm not going to touch greatly on this, but, I will say that the, the danger is in the fabrication of the star.

There's no danger to having reconstituted stone, once it's been fabricated. Yeah, so that, that's where the danger lies in terms of our new product and the way that we're moving forward as a business, we're actually launching colors that are silicosis free. So we're essentially replacing, that element with. With other ingredients, the main one that we'll be replacing it with at this point is recycled glass. So we're launching five colors that will be hopefully arriving soon. Obviously COVID, has helped me a little bit, but, yeah, really excited to have something, to be able to go out to market with to combat that issue.

Frances Cosway: That's awesome. I mean, that's, I think that's awesome on a couple of levels one being that, I mean, I have, I have clients that are really conscious from a welfare perspective. So even though they know that the Silicon is not going to affect them in their home with their bench top it's well, I care about the people that are manufacturing these products.

So that's awesome that you're getting rid of that particular ingredient, but even more exciting, I think the fact is that you're using recycled glass, which is then, you know, such a great, sustainable story as well. And as you know, I'm a bit of a sustainable, junkie, so that's just fantastic on so many levels.

Laura Neville: Yeah, absolutely. Definitely.

Frances Cosway: Lots of boxes. Can't wait.

Laura Neville: I know.

Frances Cosway: Can't wait, so that's, that's really hot news actually, because that's super new. I mean, as Laura said, they haven't even arrived yet, so I haven't even seen these and I will be really excited. And I'm assuming then that, that will roll out to a lot more colors.

Laura Neville: Absolutely. Yeah, definitely.

Frances Cosway: You got to start with the most popular.

Laura Neville: Yeah, and just getting it right. I mean, that's obviously Cosentino take a lot of care into the pro the colors and the products that they launched. So really taking the time, this has been a long time coming. It hasn't just been a quick fix. It's been something that obviously they've been developing for a long time so that we can continue to do that slowly but surely.

Frances Cosway: You're fantastic. Although that's, that's awesome. Laura. Now I really want to touch on Dekton, now Dekton. Well, for, for those of you who've been following me, you know that I'm a big fan of Dekton. My clients are a big fan of it. Laura knows that I'm a massive fan.

So, so Laura, give us the rundown on Dekton in terms of what it is, how it's made and, and maybe some of the applications.

Laura Neville: Yeah, certainly. So, get on often compared to, with the porcelain so just to kind of put that out there, there, the difference between Dekton and porcelain Dekton is actually classified as an ultra-compact surface. And the name suggests. You because it is a more compact, surface than porcelain.

So porcelain is slightly kind of biscuit in the center, whereas deck tons, completely solid the whole way through, making it that little bit stronger. Sorry. That's obviously going to make it a bit more durable. It is. Yeah, definitely. So Cosentino had, you know, Silestone, they reconstituted brands, which was inside the home and they really wanted to create something that they could fees for exterior.

So they could actually create a Dekton initially for facades. and then soon realized. Because of its durability, people were bringing it inside the home. So they've invested a lot into the look and feel of it. And we now have almost 50 colors, here in Australia that we offer in polished and matte. And, we see it in pretty much any application that you can think of.

Frances Cosway: That’s incredible.

Laura Neville: Yeah. It really is like any surface that you can think of and you can use Dekton on it because we offer so many thicknesses. So, we offer formula, which is perfect for furniture, joinery and internal cladding as well. It's a very lightweight, so even seeing it in projects, where weight is a restriction like lifts, for example right? So they're kind of the, some surfaces, we've got more standard surfaces, like our kitchen bench tops, obviously stair treads, but also flooring as well. And then some slightly more obscure ones like swimming pools, saunas.

We also do a lot of as well. And then of course, facades as well. That's part of what you do.

Frances Cosway: I mean, the thing with Dekton is it's. So the slabby Stripe, it's straight points, 3.2 by one 44. If we made them be gone,

Laura Neville: Be quite hard to start fitting into jobs. I think that. Yeah,

Frances Cosway: But I think there is that, that belief that it is like porcelain. So I'm just hearing you now it's, you know, obviously a stronger, I know I had a client saying, well, can I have, you know, can we dance on it? And I said, you can absolutely dance on it. And, the thing that, you know, People also, you, you talked about it being used for joinery. So if listeners can imagine that you can actually have it on the front of your cabinetry doors and you know, it's fingerprint resistant, it's, scratch resistance.

So you never have to be wiping down and so forth. Cause I do have clients that can't handle any of the fingerprints, so that's an awesome product to be able to use. So just run down some of the benefits, cause it just the least these just so long in terms of. W what are some of the benefits and the, that the Dekton has some of the features that might get so incredibly awesome and different to a reconstituted stone.

Laura Neville: Yeah, certainly. So in terms of, for kitchen application, the main one comes down to durability. So it has virtually zero porosity. So unlike a reconstituted stone where there's still an element of prosody and, Care that is needed to look off to the surface Dekton. Like I said, has virtually zero porosity.

So if you left a red wine stain on there for a week, it could be wiped off or it could be cleaned with. You know something a little bit more substantial, but it would certainly come off. So durability number one, heat resistant as well. So unlike anything that has a resin, like a reconstituted stone Dekton doesn't.

So it's actually the process behind its manufacturing. It's. A mix of different natural minerals that are liquefied and baked, and they're actually pressed together with a giant press that I'm told is the equivalent two Eiffel towers. 25,000 tons at the time of production, yeah. So that's, and that's essentially what holds each slab together.

So there's no resin, so there's no issues with discoloration, when he touches the surface. So, great for cooks right? I mean, that's one of the things that my clients love about the fact that it's green resistant, but also that you can just slide your source, spin, cheek, leaning, induction, bench top. It can all be completely seamless and you just can slot across to the bench.

Frances Cosway: It's just such an awesome feature.

Laura Neville: Absolutely. And even, you know, with restrictions, like having it as a Splash back. There's no minimum distance that's from life to be away from the burner. So

Frances Cosway: Heat resisting.

Laura Neville: Exactly, exactly. They're the two main ones is that we see from a functionality point in the kitchen, and then obviously just the care and maintenance of it is very low, so perfect for cooks and families, et cetera.

And I think the other thing that I love about it, its UV stable. So it's not going to fight over time right. I always tell my clients that its graffiti proof. You know, if you're in a family home and the kids inevitably get the text is out and I can scribble all over it and you can just basically wipe it off.

Frances Cosway: Is there a go ahead. Sorry.

Laura Neville: Nail Polish. Yeah,

Frances Cosway: Exactly. I was just about to say, I know when we've had, the kitchen master class that I've been lucky enough to have in the Cosentino showroom and we've done, demonstrations of, what Dekton's like and you know, the nail polish, you can actually get it off with acetone.

It's just. Incredible. I mean, I think that that's now Polly; she's such an evil being that gets on anything. You can never get it off. And I think that really shows just, how awesome Dekton is. I think the question that I get asked consistently is okay, well, that's awesome. I love it. Love the product, but how much more expensive is it going to be?

Do you want us just to run through that? Yeah, it's not over, it's not over yet more expensive per square meter. So that's, a good positive way. Its Monterey constituted stone, even similar. It's probably 10% more depending on the college. Who's but you might have an entry level Dekton that's less expensive than a top end Silestone for example.

Laura Neville: Yeah. It's more the fabrication of it. So because it is dense, a stronger product, it's obviously more time consuming to fabricate. So, it depends on the design. If you're doing something a little bit more straightforward, it can be, you know, 10 to 20% more. Or if you're doing something more complicated that has mitered edges or, you know, extravagant cutouts, it could be 20 to 30% more, at the end of the day.

So it's not hugely greater, but it definitely, if budget is a, is a factor, it's definitely going to be more expensive. Yeah.

Frances Cosway: And, and I think the other thing is from a design perspective, we've, we've got into a under mounted sink. We can still have the grooves put into create a drainer on a Dekton, as well as a reconstituted stone.

Laura Neville: Yeah, you definitely can. But again, it's going to cost more to fabricate.

Frances Cosway: Of course, now that that also then comes down to, the aesthetic. I mean, I always love the integrated drainers into the bench top just because it effectively is a bench top aesthetically, it looks more streamlined. So it's not that much more. And I think it's definitely worth it.

Laura Neville: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it looks something I suggest as well to people who are looking to do that. But if it does come back that it's not feasible, it's just a tilt, the tilt, the bench design. So you've got a slight slant to that drying area back into the sink, but it's not carving out drain groups, which is far more achievable in a rate constituted stone.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, no, that's a, that's a great, that, that's a great tip. So, I think we've probably covered off Dekton, look at really ease. It really doesn't take much when I'm talking to my clients about it and I sort of explain all the benefits as

you have. It's like, Oh; it's just a no brainer. Unless budget is really be constraint.

And I think just the flexibility in the slab size, if you want a super thin, bench, top the finishes, and actually just on the rate constituted Stone. What I also love about Silestone is you have you got that beautiful suede finish. you know, as well as, the satin and, you know, Dekton now comes in a really high gloss, which I know , we're not quite there yet, but you know, that was a few years ago in Europe.

So it'll take quite a few years for it to come here and it just brings out so much more detail with the gloss actually.

Laura Neville: Yeah, it's definitely like with Dekton colors will either be a gloss or a polished or they'll be a match. Whereas South, both, they come in both. So either the suede or the Polish finish.

Frances Cosway: And the suede such a beautiful finish, actually it's almost like a home it's just gorgeous. I'm actually not sure whether, the other manufacturers do such a beautiful suede finish. It's really gorgeous. Yeah.

Laura Neville: We'll come in on that one.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. Alright. So, let's talk about the natural stone product offering. I mean, I think it's, it's, most people would think that natural stone, you go to a stone merchant and you choose your slab.

And so as part of the cost container offering, you've got the natural stone, our products in the sense of range. So do you just want to talk about that a little bit?

Laura Neville: Yeah, certainly. So we have actually now to natural stone offerings. So we've, we've had sensor, which I'll touch on in a moment, but we've also just launched, softly because of COVID are natural stone range.

So to start with Sensa has been around in Australia now for about seven years and, and it consists of granite and quartzite and all this is we treat with something, a coating that we developed called sin guard. So, Natural stone Yes, it can be very precious. Granite is a hot natural stone on its own.

But with the sin guard that we treated with, it actually means that it, it has virtually zero porosity, like Dekton. It's heat resistant up to 300 degrees as well. And because of that, it can actually be used for exteriors as well. So it's always been a slightly different natural stone offering in that it doesn't need that level of care that marbles and things do.

So we have nine colors here in Australia, and we're just about to launch two more. And there, there are beautiful. They're so different. There's so many different, you've got some really striking ones and some more subtle ones. but yeah, another beautiful option as well, but I'd probably in terms of cost in terms of fabrication, in terms of, the way that it performs, I'd put it closer, definitely towards, Dekton than I would a reconstituted stone or a more precious natural stone.

Frances Cosway: So it's almost like you're getting a, a Dekton and finish this super durable hard-wearing finish, but it's a natural product, which is just, and I know I've

used some of them, you know, fan of a few of them. And they are there, they're just beautiful. So, and then in terms of pricing, are they sitting at the Dekton sort of, end, or are they a little bit higher?

Laura Neville: They were a little bit higher. They're probably, they probably start at the mid-range of Dekton and then go a little bit over that. It definitely, once you start getting into the more, the rarer finishes, then they definitely are more than, than a Dekton. And probably sit more in what you'd expect for a. Middle of the road, natural stone.

Frances Cosway: I mean, some of them, I know some of my favorites in the natural stone ranges, you know, the ones that almost look like a petrified timber and they've got these, incredible colors, these beautiful, Really soft pink and look, it's not for everyone. And some of them can be quite busy.

But as a feature it's absolutely spectacular. I think that's also something we forgot to mention that Dekton can be used outside as well, which is fantastic when you want to have your outdoor kitchen and have it the same material as inside. We, reconstituted stone is not for an outdoor application.

Laura Neville: No, that's right. Yeah, because of that resonate element, but yes, because yeah not only facades are his desktop and applicable for, but yes, exactly. Right or Alfresco areas, even paving the swimming pools, swimming pools themselves,

Frances Cosway: table might out of it.

Laura Neville: Exactly. Finished

Frances Cosway: Indestructible.

Laura Neville: Almost

Frances Cosway: Well, almost I know I'm probably a bit loose with that wording destructive, but yeah, it's great. So I think that's just been such a wealth of information to give people on the three products. I'm not sure whether there was anything else that you wanted to

Laura Neville: Just lastly, the natural stones. I mean, Cosentino have nine quarries that they, I have around the world in Spain and Brazil. And they also have access to a plethora in Italy where they've been bringing in natural stone for years, into other parts of the world.

And we're lucky that we've just launched our natural stone range here. So, so far that includes natural stones, like a Carrera hobble, super white Elba, blue Tundra, gray. So it's just getting some really nice, Beautiful natural storylines is so, it's something we're doing more and more of, and they definitely see it in the, the area of extremely precious. They need to be taken care of, properly

Frances Cosway: Even with the Guard that you put on top of them, the treatment that they get, like your Carrera's.

Laura Neville: So Sensa which was the, which is the brand that we have for our granite and our court site. That's treated with sin guards, a natural stone will; we're just bringing it, bringing it into Australia.

It's not treated with anything. So, the natural starring that we have under a sensor umbrella because of the treated slabs. They're essentially like a gloss finish, whereas without natural stone, we're able to offer the polished, but also honed as well. And that's because it doesn't have anything on it.

Frances Cosway: Mm, so that's fantastic. So Laura, where can, where can people go and have a look at the Cosentino range of products? So you got show nationally. We do. Yes. So, we're in every major city, throughout Australia and here in Melbourne, we have, two warehouses, which, Isn't the case across every other state.

Laura Neville: So we've got kind of one in the North and one in the South. We've got a beautiful showroom that we launched about a year and a half ago now. and that Sam made sure I'm here in Melbourne, which is in Heatherton, which is close down a whole, the supplies, or if you're ever in the area, it's good to make a day of it and, and pop in.

Frances Cosway: It is. And so, and can you, in terms of sampling, I mean, obviously the website's got all the different colors that are available across all the products. But I could believe you can also order the samples online as well.

Laura Neville: Yeah, you definitely can. you cannot, like you said, yeah, you can order them online or you can pop into a showroom and we have a beautiful showroom manager who will take care of you and she'll be able to help you out with samples

Frances Cosway: You know the showrooms Fantastic. I mean, I've been lucky enough to be able to host events there. And it's the great thing about, going into the showroom. And I certainly encourage all my clients to do that and would encourage listeners to do it.

He's choosing an entire bench top, whether it's going to be for your facade or your bench top or whatever, it's going to be, particularly in a Dekton application, offer a 10 centimeter, 10 centimeter sample. I think he's risky. So I always encourage my clients to go and have a look at the slab and Cosentino

I really welcome people. You can go out to the back way, hard hat, you safety vests, and you can basically own and have a look at the slab, see what it's going to look like. And its three meters, you know, in its full length and you can really get a feel for the movement and just how much veining or color or whatever it is that's in there. So I'd encourage anyone to do that regardless.

Laura Neville: Absolutely. And wear close toed shoes.

Frances Cosway: Oh yeah. That's a very good point. Don't rock up in sandals cause you will be turned away. Oh, Laura, that's been so fabulous. Thank you so much for, for coming on today. I think that's just incredible wealth of knowledge for people looking at bench tops and just really understanding the differences and that there's so much more out there than just, you know, reconstituted stone.

Laura Neville: Yeah. Fabulous. Thank you for having me. It's I'm absolutely right. Thanks Laura. Bye for now.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

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