

✓ Best Buys in Countertops

Best Buy Categories:

[P]—Premium selection;

[M]—Midrange selection;

[E]—Economy selection.



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Best Buys in countertops were selected based on surface quality and style. MSRP is not listed, because manufacturers that publish MSRPs do not include the cost of fabrication variables and installation.

All laminate countertop Best Buys have a 1-year warranty.

Delivery time varies depending on which fabricator creates your countertop.

Best Price is a reflection of the lowest retail price that was available at press time and is subject to change. It includes installation, because retail prices typically include installation costs, and it might vary based on fabrication variables, such as cutouts, corners, backsplashes and edge styles.

LAMINATE COUNTERTOPS

[M] Wilsonart HD High Definition Laminate

Best Price: \$22 per sq. ft.

» Wilsonart's HD line has the thickest laminate in the industry (about one-eighth of an inch thicker than any other line), and it

has four times the wear resistance of the industry standard, according to Wilsonart. The selection includes some of the best-looking laminate designs that we could find. Its Deepstar series uses a combination of matte and gloss finishes to mimic the texture and look of natural stone better than any other laminate that we evaluated.

Features:

- Colors/patterns: 43
- Edges: Beveled, wood molding
- Delivery time: 2 to 3 weeks

[E] Formica Solid Colors

Best Price: \$18 per sq. ft.

» Formica Solid Colors is the least expensive laminate countertop that we could find that also has an industry-standard 1-year warranty. It has the largest selection of solid-color laminate choices among lines that we found. Formica's **Pattern** line, which has 162 design patterns, also is a Best Buy. Some of its patterns cost the same as the Solid Colors line, but most will cost you about \$1.40 more per square foot.

Features:

- Colors/patterns: 46
- Edges: Fabricated
- Delivery time: Not available



Wilsonart HD High Definition Laminate



Cambria Quartz

STONE & SOLID-SURFACE COUNTERTOPS

[P] Cambria Quartz

Best Price: \$78 per sq. ft.

» Cambria has at least 20 more colors and patterns than any other quartz countertop brand that is in this price range. It is available in both 2-centimeter and 3-centimeter thicknesses. No other quartz brand has a better warranty.

Features:

- Thickness: 2-cm, 3-cm
- Colors/patterns: 64
- Delivery time: Up to 3 weeks
- Warranty: Lifetime

[M] Artisan Group Classics Granite

Best Price: \$54 per sq. ft.

» Artisan Group Classics is the only national granite brand that we could find that has a lifetime warranty that covers staining and craftsmanship—including installation. However, you must make sure that an Artisan fabricator reseals your granite every 10 years to maintain the warranty. Fabricators might charge at least \$79 for this service. This countertop also has the best selection of colors and

patterns that we could find among granite brands.

Features:

- Thickness: 3-cm
- Colors/patterns: 26
- Delivery time: Fewer than 6 days
- Warranty: Lifetime

[E] Avonite Foundations Solid Surface

Best Price: \$40 per sq. ft.

» Avonite's Foundations line is the least expensive solid-surface product that we could find that has 50 color and pattern choices. The line has the best selection of styles that we found, because it has four design collections that range from neutral solids to unique red and blue stone designs. You'll pay about \$10 per square foot more for designs that have stone-like patterns in this line.

Features:

- Thickness: 1/2-in., plus 1-in. substrate
- Colors/patterns: 50
- Delivery time: 1 to 3 days
- Warranty: 10-yr.

For more information on the above Best Buys, contact the manufacturers directly. See page 72.