

MB Stone Restoration & Supply, Inc.

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Marble Cleaning "Truths and Myths"

An article by **Maurizio Bertoli**, the founder of the "marble cleaning" company

The following is a made up, but realistic phone conversation I have had many times over the past 15 years with my customers. So common in fact, I thought it might be worth writing down for others to benefit from.

Customer	<i>"Hello! Is this the marble cleaning company?..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"Why, yes ... sorta!... What can I do for you today, sir?"</i>
Customer	<i>"Well, we have marble floors in our foyer, master bathroom, and in our shower stall. It's not shiny any more and I'd like to know if you could give me an estimate to come and clean it ..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"It'll be \$200 plus Sales Tax!"</i>
Customer	<i>"What? ... You charge that much for the estimate? ..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"Oh no you misunderstand; that IS the estimate!... That is what I will be charging you to clean your marble!"</i>
Customer	<i>"Just like that?...Don't you need to come over and take a look at the job?..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"Not really. All I have to do is come over with a mop for the floor, some scrubbing pads for the shower, and a few cleaning supplies. The whole marble cleaning job shouldn't take me more than a couple of hours ... All this, of course, for as long as you don't expect your marble to be as shiny as it was the day they installed it."</i>
Customer	<i>"What do you mean by that? Isn't it going to be shiner than now?..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"Nope: only cleaner than now. You're asking me to clean your marble, aren't you?... Well, it's going to be so clean that you could actually eat off of it!"</i>
Customer	<i>"Well, yeah ... but I thought it would become nice and shiny..."</i>
Mr. Bertoli	<i>"Not by cleaning it, it won't!... Okay, I was just pulling your leg a little bit! ... I hope you didn't mind too much: I like to kid around a lot! ... Actually, I know exactly what you're looking for. You were just using the wrong expression: 'marble cleaning!' There is no such a thing like 'marble cleaning' to bring the shine back to your marble: it's called marble restoration, or refinishing, or re-polishing. Take you pick ... The fact is that the surface of your stone lost its original</i>

finish due either to wear and tear (I bet you, folks have this nasty habit of walking on your floors!), or acidic spills, or the use of the wrong cleaning products, etc. Now the surface has to be re-ground a little (to get rid of any small scratches and acid stains) – it's called honing – and then it has to be re-polished to bring back the shine. Furthermore, Stone is not polished by applying some sort of wax on it, but rather, by abrasion and friction, like gemstone... Are you beginning to get the picture now?... The whole process is a heck of a lot more complicated than just cleaning"

"Marble Cleaning" is indeed a widespread misconception, which has never been rectified by most merchants who deal with natural stone, because they either forget, or neglect, or because, even they, just don't know any better. Don't be surprised! There are many stone dealers that haven't a clue how to properly maintain the marble they sell you. And, amazingly enough, the same thing applies to many professional contractors who install stone in people's houses.

Because of this misconception, and the consequent virtually total ignorance on how to deal with natural stone as far as maintenance is concerned, people have "unexpected" problems with their polished stones, and they automatically think that such problems – since they look "dirty" – could be solved by just "cleaning the marble."

Would it surprise you to know that statistics prove that the most popular set of key-words that end-users of natural stone with some sort of problem type in when searching the web through popular search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, Altavista, etc. are: "**Marble cleaning**" And I'm not talking by a small margin here. The next most popular set of key words is a far, far, far second!

Of course, I don't have a problem with the average consumer's lack of understanding. After all, when I am a consumer myself I'm the stupidest of the bunch! Where I do have a problem is when I realize that the merchants and the contractors involved with natural stone are just as ignorant! I believe that consumers have the right not to know the intricacies of maintaining their marble. I'm a little reluctant to grant the same right to people of the trade!

But, hey, maybe that's just me!...

The funny thing is (maybe it's not so funny after all) that if people were taught by the dealers and contractors at least the very basics about *real*

marble cleaning, then they wouldn't have to look for the *wrong* "marble cleaning" later on!

So, do you want to learn about the *real* marble cleaning?

In the [Helpful Hints](#) section of our site you will find a free of charge short version of our maintenance guidelines for residential stone installation. The captions next to each picture in the [Consumer Products](#) section should further help. For the most complete set of information, however, see the [Educational Literature](#) section for the complete guidelines – a 7 page document, which is considered by most as the industry benchmark.

Do that, and you will learn so much about marble cleaning techniques that you will be able to go out and hold seminars about it!!

And no more (expensive) "marble cleaning" telephone calls, either!

Ciao and good luck,

© Maurizio Bertoli – II/04

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maurizio Bertoli', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

[Maurizio Bertoli](#)

Vice President MB Stone and Restoration, Inc.