



The Craftsman Home Remodeling blog has been nominated as **Best Remodeling Blogger** in the 2010 JDR Industry Blogger Awards! Please [vote for us here](#) today!

Below are questions I have received since starting the construction and this web site. I have tried my best to answer them. Please feel free to comment and rate them, and [ask me any other questions](#) you may have.

- What tile did you use in your master bedroom fireplace and kitchen?
- How did you handle asbestos removal in your older home?
- Can you give me a cost breakdown for the job?

- Can you recommend a siding contractor?
- What was the cost of your remodel?
- How do you like your soapstone? Has it scratched much? How often do you oil it?
- What are the costs of doing plaster vs drywall? Do you have any preference between the two?
- What kind of soapstone did you use?
- I would like any input you would be willing to give me regarding saving money. I have a budget.
- How's the steam shower working? Are you glad you installed one? Can you use it with and without steam?
- I plan on putting pyramid-style columns on the front porch but am unsure of the dimensions. I noticed that you have these type of columns on your rear porch and was wondering if you could tell me the dimensions?
- I would like to know about the supports you had installed for your counter overhang.
- Who is the manufacturer of the front door and where can I purchase it?
- What window company did you use?
- Did you use Seagrass limestone in addition to your soapstone? If so, can you please comment on how practical it has been to live with in a working/real kitchen in terms of staining and marking?
- I'm wondering if you will share the paint brand and colors used on the exterior of your home?

What tile did you use in your master bedroom fireplace and kitchen?

The master bedroom fireplace tile is made up of two different tiles; the green squares/borders and the gingko borders/dots. Here are the numbers from my invoice.

62 sq ft – 71/ 4x4 Opal
56 pcs – 71/ 6" Quarter Round – Opal
20 pcs – 71/ 2 1/2x6 Cornice #1 – Opal
15 pcs – 172/ 2x8 Gingko Border: Hand Painted
11 pcs – 172/ 2x2 Gingko: Hand Painted



The kitchen tile is as follows, again off the invoice:

- 35 sheets - 167/ 1x2 Offset: custome blend 80% #05 Sandstone, 20% #08 Harvest Iridescent
- 5 sheets - 167/ 1x1 #08 Harvest Iridescent
- 45 pcs - 167/ 1x1 Quarter Round #05 Sandstone
- 50 pcs - 167/ 1x1 Quarter Round #08 Harvest Iridescent
- 5 pcs - 167/ 1x8 Quarter Round #08 Harvest Iridescent
- 42 pcs - 167/ 2x8 Canopy Liner #08 Harvest Iridescent



How did you handle asbestos removal in your older home?

Asbestos Removal and Greener Alternatives

There are many things to consider when remodeling or purchasing an older home. Homes built before 1980 have the strong likelihood of containing asbestos. Due to a steady progression of

Craftsman Home Remodeling Frequently Asked Questions

technology and green sustainable methods, there are many ways to ensure your home or property is asbestos free. If you are interested in saving money, remodeling and improving your carbon footprint, here is some information to get you on the right track.

Used in millions of homes throughout the last quarter of the 20th century, asbestos insulation can become a real dilemma for homeowners due to causing a variety of health problems, including [Peritoneal Mesothelioma](#) and [Malignant Mesothelioma](#). These types of cancer take the lives of thousands each year.

Non-regulated asbestos material can be legally performed by homeowners, regular contractors, or licensed asbestos abatement contractors as long as the [National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants](#) (NESHAP) are not violated. Asbestos removal in public facilities, homes and workplaces must be undertaken by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor. Once the removal is complete, green insulation options should be given serious consideration, such as: Cellulose, Cotton Fiber and Lcynene.

The [United States Green Building Council](#) (USGBC), in a study conducted in 2003, estimated a savings of \$50-\$65 per square foot for well-constructed green buildings in the U.S. (see table below) during that year. The numbers continue to improve as more eco-friendly options become available, and those kinds of figures have finally begun to attract those who thought eco-friendly construction was just a bunch of hogwash.

Can you give me a cost breakdown for the job?

I don't actually have a breakdown yet. I will work on a percentage breakdown by area such as Demo, Foundation, Framing, Plumbing, Electrical, Landscaping, etc. and get it here eventually.

We are planning to replace the wood shingle siding on our bungalow home. Our home is a Greene and Greene style home built in 1917, so we want to maintain the classic design. Can you recommend a siding contractor?

The siding contractors I used are a father and son team, Bill and Dave Barr, respectively. They were absolutely amazing and they worked out really well here because not only were they quick and efficient but their attention to detail was on par with mine.

For Bill Barr's contact info please see the [Contractors Used](#) page.

What was the cost of your remodel?

I would rather not say the total cost I spent on this. Let's just say it was several times the original budget. My thoughts were 'how many chances do you get in your life to do something like this'. It was at that time that the budget took a backseat to doing it as authentically as possible. On the job site I would tell the workers to get out of the mindset that they were building a house and think of it as a work of art. No details were too small.

I am so excited about my soapstone and was happy to see how fantastic yours looks. So, do you like it? Has it scratched much? How often do you oil it?

The soapstone is wonderful! I don't think I will ever put in any other type of counter for the rest of my life. Here are the reasons:

- Soapstone is non-porous which means it cannot stain and does not have to be sealed.
- It won't crack if an extremely hot pot is put on it as it dissipates heat extremely well. Remember the black soapstone countertops in your Chemistry lab?
- It has a matte finish. It blends in with the rest of the kitchen instead of being the center of attention.

SCRATCHING

Soapstone, although very dense, is also soft to the touch (ground soapstone is talcum powder). It is soft enough that it can be scratched with a fingernail. The great part is that if it scratches, you just go get a piece of fine sandpaper or steel wool and rub it out.

OILING

JUST INSTALLED - NEVER OILED



Soapstone may be oiled with mineral oil to deepen the grays into black and bring out any color veins in the stone. The only time I oil it is two days before a party as I hate clearing off the counters.

Since soapstone is very dense it will not absorb the mineral oil, but over time and multiple applications it will form a bond with the surface.

THREE DAYS AFTER OILING



The recommended oiling schedule for soapstone is as follows:

- 3 times per week for the first month
- 2 times per week for the second month
- Once a week for the third month
- As needed after the third month to keep the color

Application of the mineral oil should be done with a soft rag or paper towel. Don't apply too much!

Craftsman Home Remodeling Frequently Asked Questions

You want just enough to change the color.

Let it sit overnight and then, with a clean cloth, wipe off any excess mineral oil until it is dry.

So you see, to keep the oiled look it is a one to two day process. I think it looks great both ways which is why I only oil for parties. The pictures below show the soapstone just after installation. It has never had oil on it. The second picture shows the same counter only three days after oiling. It should be noted that the occasional oiling of a few times a year maintains the counter at a tone about half way between the two extremes.

What are the costs of doing plaster vs drywall? Do you have any preference between the two?
