

# Absolute Marble & Granite

By Jill Hult

"Big business craftsmanship, small company relationships"

Absolute Marble & Granite owners Derek Handegard and John Stacey started in the marble and granite industry in the late 1980's working for Portland Marble Works. With their combined experience of approximately 30 years, they decided to form Absolute Marble & Granite. They began the business without a loan which meant they had to slowly acquire the needed tools and machinery to run the business. This did not deter the pair as they like the



hands on small business atmosphere. They both say a smaller business helps when it comes to quality and training new employees.

The company is now four years old and growing strong. They looked around the Portland area for the right location, but due to growth in this

area they decided to set up in Vernonia. Within three years, the business outgrew its original thousand square foot building, so Derek and John built a larger facility now located at 2012 N Mist Drive in Vernonia. The business is still small with only seven employees including Derek and John. All employees, except for John, live in Vernonia. Most of the advertising is done by word of mouth and the local newspapers. You may also notice their trucks with their logo on the side. Their employees said they have had people write down the business info while sitting in traffic or flag them down on the road and ask for their business cards!

Absolute Marble & Granite provides kitchen and bathroom counter tops, fireplaces, vanities, tub surrounds, tabletops, and even marble outdoor BBQ's. They stay very busy with at least one job a day. Typically, it takes about three persons to do an installation. They work with general contractors on new housing developments as well as individual customers doing home improvements. In the last year they have installed seven or eight kitchens in the Vernonia area alone. They have also done work at Fishhawk Lake; about twenty percent of their business is toward the coast while the other 80% is east toward Portland. Their employees said for as small as they are, they travel a wide range of territory from the Oregon coast up into Washington. They also did work in the homes of the 2006 Street of Dreams.

Most of their clients chose granite which is more durable than marble and comes in a wide variety of colors. The average slab size for granite is 5' by 9' and costs approximately \$800-900.

Anyone who has a project and contacts Absolute Marble & Granite will be asked to supply the company with a drawing of the project area; rough measurements are fine. Derek or John will then work up a bid for the client. Once the client decides to hire them, one of them will go out to the location and get exact measurements. Those measurements are taken back to the shop where cutting begins. Then fabricating or edging is done primarily by hand with small tools in order to shape the granite into exact measurements to fit. John said it is more of an art. It takes a lot of patience and skill to get it right. The granite is then allowed to dry as most of the cutting and fabricating process involves water. When the granite is dry, sealant is applied and set. The seal is good for at least one year and clients are given the information on how to reseal if they chose to do so themselves. The last two steps are the installation itself; once installed, it must set for one day. Derek and John recommend almost any cleaner such as Windex but would avoid harsh abrasives.

While talking to the employees of Absolute Marble and Granite, they all had the same thing to say: working for Derek and John is great! They are both willing to do the work they ask their employees to do.

Brogan, who has about 10 years experience in the industry, has been working for Absolute for two years and says even with all his previous experience, he has learned a lot from Derek and John. Derek and John have developed their own effective and innovative techniques with all of the hand work. Aaron, who has about eight years of experience in the industry and one year with Absolute, agreed with Brogan and added the owners are both family men who are very understanding of the needs of their workers' families. They are definitely more personable than a larger company. Denny has one year of previous experience and is the newest member to Absolute; he has been there about two months. He said it is great that they listen to the input of their employees. Luke has been with Absolute the longest at three years and had no previous experience prior to working for Absolute. Luke said Derek and John are experts in the field and great bosses. They are all proud to be working for Absolute Marble and Granite.



## FALL schedule 2007

REGISTRATION OPENS SEPTEMBER 3rd AT 10AM  
SCHOLARSHIPS & SENIOR DISCOUNTS (65 AND BETTER, 50%)  
FOR MOST CLASSES, APPLICATIONS AT VCLC  
PLEASE CHECK NEXT MONTH'S VERNONIA VOICE FOR  
ADDITIONAL CLASSES AND EVENTS. ALSO CHECK OUR  
WEBSITE AT WWW.MYSPACE.COM/VERNONIACLCL.

### Nutrition with Heather Lewis

Tuesdays 6.30 - 8 pm  
September 25-October 23  
Join us for a continuation of the Nutrition Series. This is a fast paced course that incorporates clear concise nutrition information with hands on applications including "field trips" and recipe evaluations. This second series will focus on disease prevention and support.  
\$10 per class

### Microsoft Excel 2007 Level 1 Saturday September 29 Level 2, Saturday October 13, 9.30-4 pm

Learn how to enter and format data (both values and text), move & copy data, create formulas and functions to calculate data, format and print spreadsheets and more. The VCLC is proud to present this excellent opportunity for Vernonia residents at a very reduced rate. This company is among top choices for employers who wish to train employees.  
Please see [www.kineticoregon.com](http://www.kineticoregon.com) for entire class details.  
\$75

### Computers Made Simple

With Justin Smith  
Wednesdays, 6.30- 8 pm  
September 26-October 17  
Limited to 12 students  
\$10 per class

### Introduction to the Internet and Email

With Justin Smith  
Wednesdays, November 7 & 14  
\$10 per class  
6.30-8 pm

### Research: The Internet as a Resource Tool

Tuesdays, October 9 -30th  
Learn the vast array of discovery on the internet with four classes of precise search tips. This course is excellent for students and seeker of all types of information.  
\$10. per class

### October is Poetry Month!

Poetry Writing Workshop  
Start each session with an exercise in craft and a writing prompt, then discuss poems written by published authors and members of the workshop. Each participant will have the opportunity to present his or her poetry twice during the 6-week session, and every participant can expect individual feedback on her or his work. You must be a junior in high school or older to be a member of this workshop.  
Wednesdays October 3-October 24  
6.30-8.30pm  
\$60

### Life Skills For Young Adults

September 22, 9am - 5pm.  
Subject: Marijuana and Alcohol  
In:Charge! Presented by Quality Research Associates, Tidewater, Oregon.  
Discuss and reflect on real world issues like personal safety, dating, intimacy and decision making, partying, police, personal rights & responsibilities, blacking out, passing out, drinking games, lifesaving tip and much more! Prevent something from happening to you, your child or your friend in the future. No referral necessary, open to the public. Pre-registration necessary, forms available at the VCLC.  
\$50

### Conversational Spanish

Thursdays, October 11 for 6 weeks  
6.30-8.30 pm  
\$80

### Photoshop

Thursdays, October 4 through October 25  
6.30-8pm  
Learn to enhance, crop, and create with this creative software.  
\$50

### Health Insurance Information Session

September 13  
Open house 10-12 and 1-3, FREE  
Healthnet and Medicare questions answered!  
Free

### Writing a Business Plan

Taught by Mario Pedraza, PCC Small Business Development Center  
Mondays Sept. 24, October 8, & October 22  
6.30-9.30 pm  
Space extremely limited  
\$50

### Red Cross Babysitting Classes

Will be held in October  
Dates and times TBA  
Please call with interest

### First Time Homebuyers Class

October 2  
7pm - 9 pm  
Presented by Community Action Team and Oregon Realty  
Free

### The Art of Collage

Making art with paper, photos, found art, scraps and even bus tickets. Create your own masterpiece in this guided class.  
September 29  
10am - 2pm  
\$20 supplies included, but feel free to bring your own personal materials.

PCC WANTS TO KNOW WHICH CLASSES VERNONIANS WANT. CLASSES WILL BE HELD WHEN 8 OR MORE SHOW INTEREST. WANT TO TAKE A CLASS? WE'LL HELP YOU GET IT HERE.

vernonia

community learning center

939 bridge street  
vernonia, 97064

503.429.1030

vclc@vernonia-or.gov

Call or email to register.

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