

Butcher Block Counters: Varnique Semi-Gloss vs. Natural Oil Finish

What is the difference between the Varnique semi-gloss finish and the natural oil finish? Which one is right for you?

If you intend to use your butcher block as a cutting surface, you should purchase one with a natural oil finish. The food-safe natural oil finish seals and protects the surface of the butcher block and, unlike Varnique semi-gloss, it can be cut upon directly. For all oil finished butcher block products, it is recommended that you re-oil the surface every 4-6 weeks. This keeps the butcher block from drying out, helps preserve the block and extend its life over time. After years of use, if you need to renew your butcher block surface, you can easily sand the surface with a piece of fine steel wool or heavy duty grit sandpaper and then re-oil it, bringing it back to like-new appearance.

If you're going to use your butcher block counter, butcher block kitchen cart, or butcher block table mainly for aesthetic purposes or for general food preparation tasks, including rolling dough, but you do not wish to cut upon it directly, then Varnique semi-gloss is an excellent option. Varnique semi-gloss is virtually maintenance free. It can be easily cleaned with mild soap and warm water and will not need to be refinished or re-oiled (unless the surface is cut, in which case, just like with oil finished surfaces, it would need to be resealed). Varnique semi-gloss, though not impermeable, is more resistant to water spotting and staining. On Varnique semi-gloss, it is safe to use most household cleaning products, but the use of harsh chemicals or detergents can damage the finish and is therefore not recommended.