



Sinkware Frequently Asked Questions

1. What grade of stainless steel are Mercer sinks and what are the differences?

- Mercer stainless steel sinks are manufactured from premium quality stainless steel which is incapable of rusting or corroding under normal household circumstances.
- The grade of stainless-steel used is 304 with 316 being available for most New Zealand manufactured sink ware.
- 304 stainless contains 18% chromium and either 8% or 10% nickel, 18/8 & 18/10 respectively. There is no real benefit of 18/10 over 18/8 but the perception is 18/10 is better which all our stainless steel is.
- 316 contains 16% chromium, 10% nickel and 2% molybdenum. The molybdenum is added to resist pitting and crevice corrosion. This type of stainless is best suited for salt-water and marine applications, as well as highly acidic environments, needing the extra protection from chemical corrodents. e.g. laboratories

2. Will my stainless steel sink scratch?

- Yes, stainless steel will scratch. This is most noticeable to the customer when the sink is new. As time goes on, the sink will develop thousands of scratches which join to form a patina. A customer may say their new stainless-steel sink scratches easier than their old one, it is likely that they do not remember or were not present prior to the sink forming a patina.

3. Will my stainless steel sink stain or rust?

- Stainless steel sinks are stain "less" not stain "proof" and there are several contaminants that can affect the appearance of stainless steel in certain circumstances.
- Metal filings from scouring pads or filings left in water pipes will corrode on top of the stainless-steel and cause pitting into the stainless steel. These should be removed immediately, and the area thoroughly cleaned.
- The other common cause of corrosion is products containing sodium hypochlorite or other oxidising agents. Common products that should never be stored under the sink are bleach, 30 seconds, pool/spa chemicals, drain cleaners, silver cleaners and denture cleaners. Even with the lids tightly fastened the fumes will cause corrosion over time. Citrus based, or acidic products should also be avoided.
- Salt and salt water have the potential to rust stainless steel and customers often ask if the sink can be installed outdoors. We do not warranty our sinks against corrosion if they are installed outdoors in coastal regions. While generally 304 stainless steel will stand the test of time in this environment, 316 stainless steel is guaranteed to resist high exposure to salt.

4. How do I clean and maintain my stainless steel sink?

- After use, your stainless steel sink should be cleaned with soapy water and a damp cloth, rinsed and dried. A tap with a pull-out nozzle is recommended to make this process easy.
- For any stains or marks that are not easily removed with soapy water, use Autosol Stainless steel polish. Autosol works by removing the protecting oxides layer from the stainless steel along with any contaminants. This layer is quickly reformed protecting the clean stainless steel.

5. What is the PVD process that is used to colour the stainless steel Aurora range?

- PVD stands for Physical Vapour Deposition which is a vacuum coating method. These coating techniques are used to apply an extremely thin film to objects that require protective barriers, decorative colours, or various other functional benefits.
- The PVD process requires strict procedures and monitoring throughout to ensure consistency and performance.
- PVD coatings are used to increase wear resistance, reduce friction, improve appearance, and achieve other performance enhancements.
- Once applied the coating is nearly impossible to remove and will not wear off on its own.
- PVD technology has been around for a very long time and was originally developed to create a hard layer to stainless steel. Since then it has been used as a decorative technique most commonly for wrist watches, tapware and more recently sink ware.
- Our PVD partner was an early innovator using this technique on sinks for over five years, they are also the PVD partner of many European brands and are considered leaders in the field.

6. Is coloured stainless steel just a fad?

- PVD sinks made their first appearance at Eurocucina 2016 and their presence at Eurocucina 2018 has confirmed their mainstream status with many designers now confident the technology is proven to be durable.
- The Mercer Aurora range was first released in New Zealand September 2017. Since then we have supplied over 500 pieces into the New Zealand market and have not had a single complaint from a customer.

7. How will my Aurora coloured stainless-steel sink perform compared to regular stainless steel?

- PVD coloured sinks should be treated in the same way as regular stainless-steel. However, due to the PVD process applying a hard, thin coating, they will be more resistant to corrosion and scratching.

8. Will my Aurora sink scratch and if so, what would it look like?

- It is possible to scratch an Aurora sink as the colour is a coating. If the scratch penetrates the thin layer, then regular stainless-steel will be visible. However, this is extremely rare and difficult to do as the coating is extremely hard.
- Due to the hard coating, scratches tend to be thin and hardly visible. However, we supply the Aurora sinks with a matching grid for extra protection on the high wear and tear surface of the bottom of the sink.

9. What is Duro Granite?

- Duro Granite is our range of composite sinks made in Italy. The material is made from 80% natural granite and 20% acrylic resin. This very hard composition makes the Duro Granite sinks resistant to scratches, staining and fading. The material is non-porous and is enriched with silver ions to inhibit bacteria.

10. Will my Duro Granite sink withstand high and low temperatures?

- The Duro Granite material is rated to withstand temperatures up to 250° Celsius and handles thermal shock very well compared to competitors.
- It is recommended to always place hot items from the stove or oven onto a trivet.

11. Will my Duro Granite sink maintain its appearance, and will it scratch?

- One of the most appealing features of the Duro Granite range is it will maintain its appearance indefinitely. This is in contrast to stainless steel which will scratch and form a patina over time, changing the appearance.
- Due to the material containing 80% natural granite, it is very difficult to scratch a Duro Granite sink under normal circumstances.
- The material is coloured all the way through by a process of heating to 700°C allowing the colour to penetrate the particle nucleus.

12. How should I care for my Duro Granite sink?

- Cleaning your Duro Granite sink is easy and uncomplicated. A little water, a scouring sponge and some washing-up liquid is all you need to remove stains, greasy marks and the usual signs of wear.
- Use a microfibre cloth to wipe your Duro-Granite sink dry after every use. This prevents lime scale marks and will make sure your sink retains its good looks for a long time to come.
- Use white vinegar to deep clean your Duro-Granite sink and remove even stubborn lime scale deposits.

13. What material is used to make the Mercer Ceramic Butler Sink and how are they made?

- Butler sinks have been made in the UK the same way for over 100 years and the Mercer Butler sinks are no different.
- High quality clay and water is pored into molds until they are still wet but dry enough to hold their shape. Craftsmen then hand finish the sinks using a process of sponging and “fettling” to create a smooth finish.
- The sinks are dried slowly over a few days before a final porcelain glaze is applied and the sinks are fired at extremely high temperatures of 1200°C. This ensures the sinks are strong enough to stand up to modern day kitchen demands.
- All fireclay ceramic sinks are made by hand and have a +/-5mm tolerance on measurements.

14. How do I care for my Mercer Ceramic Butler Sink?

- A soft, damp, soapy cloth is all that’s usually required to clean your Ceramic Sink.
- Metallic abrasions from pots, woks and cutlery and stains from fruit juices and tea can generally be wiped off using a scouring liquid and soft cloth. Problem spots can be treated with Methylated spirits and rinsed using warm soapy water and a soft cloth.
- Warm vinegar can treat limescale. Soak the area for 20 minutes, rinse well with warm water and finish off with warm soapy water and a soft cloth. More than one application may be required
- Avoid using cleaners containing solvents like formic acid or citric acid. Never spray oven cleaner or use a drain cleaner directly onto the surface of the sink.
- Never place anything hot directly onto the surface of the sink as a white bloom could result from the heat.

15. What is the difference between pressed, handmade and hybrid sinks?

- A pressed bowl is manufactured by pressing a single sheet of stainless steel in a press. Mercer has the largest hydraulic press in Australasia at 1300 tonnes which allows us to press the deep drawn tight radius DC range.
- Depending on how much finishing is required after pressing, this is usually the most cost-effective way to product a sink.
- After pressing, the bowls have their flange trimmed, waste hole punched, tags attached if top mount and finally polished.

- A hand made sink does not go through a press, so the stainless steel is pre-polished allowing for a much smoother and even finish.
- The sides are folded into place and a robot is used to weld the corners.
- The radius is then pressed to whatever size is required.
- The bowl flange is then trimmed, and the corner welds are polished.
- Depending on the level of craftsmanship, this process produces very high-end sinks.
- A hybrid is how most bowl with drainers are manufactured. Both the bowl and deck are pressed and then the bowl is welded in and the sink is then finished.
- As the bowl is welded in, it then needs a grind and this level of skill is what can set a high end sink apart. The smaller the bowl radius the more difficult this process is which is why the trend towards this style gives Mercer an advantage as one of the few companies able to product this style to a very high standard.

16. How thick is the stainless steel?

- Mercer sink ware comes in a variety of different thicknesses for different reasons.
- Pressed bowls tend to be less thick to enable the stainless steel to be formed easier.
- Mercer bowls are pressed from 0.9mm stainless steel
- Bowls with drainers can be pressed from a slightly lighter gauge of stainless steel as the pattern in the drainer engineer's extra rigidity and the clip rail also provides extra support. Mercer Bowl with drainers are made form 0.8mm or less.
- Handmade bowls tend to be thicker as it ensures strong welds. All Mercer handmade sinks are 1.2mm

17. What is the difference between the different edge profiles?

- There are four main styles of edge profiles i.e. flat, rolled, bevelled and laser.
- A **flat flange** is where the bowl is trimmed with no further treatment to the flange other than a deburr to remove sharp edges. This provides a flat surface which is perfect for undermounting or flush mounting but is also common for top mounting bowls that have no drainer.
- As the deck from a bowl with drainer is pressed, various other edge profiles are possible.
- A **rolled edge** is where the flange is folded back onto itself and then forms the clip rail. This is the easiest but less functional method as the flange is less able to seal with the bench
- A **bevelled edge** is where the flange is folded 45° and either trimmed or folded back on itself sharply to form the clip rail. This creates a better seal with the bench and makes it slightly easier to wipe from the bench onto the sink.
- A **laser edge** is achieved by pressing a special profile into the deck after it has been pressed. It usually slopes a few mm at 45° before flattening for a further few mm. This allows a perfect seal with the bench and allows wiping into the sink to be very easy. With this method the clip rail is glued on using ultra high bonding 3M products or spot welds which can show through to the flange.

18. What is a corner radius?

- This refers to the size of the corners at the bottom and up the sides of the sink. Historically, sinks had large radii which allowed for easy cleaning but reduced the volume of the sinks. The smaller the radius, the more usable space there is in a sink.
- Radii have been trending smaller over the years. The first 25mm radius sink coming to market over 10 years ago was a considered "tight" square design. As technology improved several manufacturers including Mercer, are now able to press 15mm radius bowls which was considered the new "tight" square design. Now with the cost of handmade sinks coming down mainly due to automation, a 10mm or smaller is now considered a tight radius square bowl.

- There is a perception in the market that a bowl with a 10mm radius is hard to keep clean. Although this is not the case if paired with a pull-out nozzle tap, this perception is impossible to change, particularly with customers who prefer the look of a larger radius.

19. What does cabinet size mean?

- Minimum cabinet sizes should be included with the specification of all sinks to ensure that a chosen sink will fit in the kitchen cabinet under the sink.
- There is a difference between the minimum cabinet size for top mount and undermount and the way the bench top is installed will also have an impact. For this reason, the cabinet size we specify is the largest required for any of these possibilities. This does mean however that our cabinet size is only a guide and it can be reduced further by changing the installation method if space is tight.
- We specify a cabinet size to be the overall width including the flange and then adding the maximum board width (18mm each side) to give the external cabinet size. The reason we include the flange is to allow the bench top to be transported to site and installed with out the bowl. There needs to be enough space to allow the bowl to be installed undermount from underneath.
- If the bench is transported to site with the bowl already installed, most flat flanges will sit on top of the cabinets.