Plumbing Detectives LLC: Why Kerdi Shower Waterproofing Costs More Than Durock

Venice master plumber: both wall systems meet the same waterproofing standard — Kerdi's premium is hand-taping every seam, corner, and pipe penetration

VENICE, FL, UNITED STATES, September 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Plumbing Detectives LLC, a licensed plumbing contractor (CFC1434139) serving Venice, Nokomis, Sarasota, and the surrounding Southwest Florida area, is clarifying a common point of confusion for homeowners planning a bathroom remodel: the price difference between a Durock cement board shower with a liquid membrane and one with a Schluter-Kerdi sheet membrane has little to do with material cost — and nothing to do with one system being inferior.



Schluter-Kerdi waterproofing on a Venice, FL shower before tile: Kerdi-Board walls with every seam banded, the valve penetration sealed, and the Kerdi pan and drain installed. Photo: Plumbing Detectives LLC.

"I just finished a shower with Durock and RedGard for a customer here in Venice. It's a solid, code-compliant build," said Michael Reynolds, master plumber and owner of Plumbing Detectives LLC. "The question I get is why Kerdi costs more. It's not because Durock is worse. Durock is the substrate either way — the membrane over it is what actually stops water. The difference is what goes into installing Kerdi correctly."

Both wall systems, when properly installed, meet the ANSI A118.10 waterproofing performance standard. Cement board on its own does not: manufacturer USG states in its own product documentation that Durock is "water durable but not waterproof," and the TCNA Handbook — the industry standard for tile installation — requires a waterproofing membrane over cement board before tile goes on. With a liquid membrane such as RedGard, that means two full coats applied at the manufacturer's specified coverage rate. Kerdi reaches the same standard with an 8-mil sheet membrane bonded to the substrate with thinset.

One element does not change between the two tiers, Reynolds noted: the shower pan. "The pan is always built with Kerdi regardless of which wall system a customer chooses. I don't tier the pan."

"With a liquid membrane, you're rolling it on in broad coats across the wall," Reynolds said. "With Kerdi, every seam where two sheets meet gets a minimum two-inch overlap, embedded in thinset with no air pockets. Every inside corner gets its own prefabricated piece, lapped and embedded the same way. Every valve and showerhead penetration gets a purpose-built seal instead of a bead of caulk. That's labor, piece by piece, seam by seam — and that's where the cost difference actually comes from."

What that labor buys, according to the article, is a waterproof plane that can be inspected before tile covers it: every seam, corner, and penetration seal is visible and verifiable. With a liquid membrane, the homeowner is relying on the coats having been applied correctly — which is why a flood test, where the assembly calls for one, matters so much on those jobs.



Kerdi shower pan on a Venice, FL project: the Kerdi membrane bonded over the pan with the drain flange integrated and the floor-to-wall corners banded — the pan is built with Kerdi on every shower regardless of wall tier. Photo: Plumbing Detectives LLC.

Reynolds noted that failures in either system typically trace back to the same root cause: skipped or rushed steps, not the material itself. "The mistake I see most in this area isn't a bad Durock job — it's cement board with nothing over it at all, or a membrane that only got one coat instead of two," he said. "And a rushed Kerdi install, where a seam lap isn't filled or a corner isn't treated with the right piece, can underperform a well-executed Durock and membrane job. The premium only pays off if the labor is actually done right."

The article gives homeowners three questions to ask a contractor before tile goes up: what waterproofing method is being used and whether it meets ANSI A118.10; if it is a liquid membrane, how many coats and at what coverage rate; and whether the assembly will be flood-tested before tile is installed. It also lists warning signs in an existing shower — hollow-sounding tile, grout discoloration at floor-to-wall corners, caulk that keeps failing in the same spot, a musty smell that returns after cleaning, or softness in the floor near the drain or curb.

"Either way, the question that matters isn't which brand your contractor uses," Reynolds said. "It's whether the waterproofing step happened at all, and whether it was done to the standard

the material actually requires."

The full article, "The Shower Your Contractor Built — Two Ways to Waterproof It Right, and Why One Costs More Than Material Alone," is available at https://plumbingdetectivesfl.com/shower-waterproofing-kerdi-vs-durock-venice-fl

About Plumbing Detectives LLC
Plumbing Detectives LLC is a licensed Florida plumbing contractor (CFC1434139) based in Venice, Florida. Owner Michael Reynolds is a master plumber with 20+ years of field experience. The company serves homeowners throughout Venice, Nokomis, Sarasota, Laurel, Englewood, and surrounding Southwest Florida communities.

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