

Taking the hassle out of marble specification

Luce di Carrara has revolutionised the selection and fitting of marble by transforming the wide natural range of the material into an industrial process that offers the designer predictable consistency and aesthetics. Joe Simpson explains the process and assesses the results.



Marble retains the exclusive appeal it has enjoyed for centuries, but designers choose it with some trepidation. Will the material delivered to site match the sample? Can any pieces that break in transport be replaced with stone with the same colours and veining? Will the marble's surface get stained during installation? How wear resistant and cleanable will the finished installation prove?

Luca di Carrara aims to address all of these issues and more, taking the hassle out of marble installations and giving the designer the peace-of-mind to specify the material with utter certainty.

The company has revolutionised the concept of marble by transforming natural variations in the material (colour, veining, background, etc) into an industrial process that offers the designer utterly predictable consistency and superior aesthetic qualities. The process sorts, pre-dries, grades and selects by computer analysis each and every tile using nine different and precise parameters ensuring a homogeneous supply, and the added luxury of being able to track and match each consignment.

The nine parameters for Luce di Carrara are:

- percentage of white
- percentage of grey
- ratio grey to white

- density of veins
- quantity of veins
- orientation of veins
- cloudiness
- spiral versus. linear patterning
- amount of speckling

This sophisticated process codes the various types of marble ensuring a homogeneous supply. Each type illustrated in the catalogue can be supplied, upon request, with a light or dark tone and with a satin finish.

The sophistication of the computer-controlled scanning equipment means that Luce di Carrara's is able to subdivide its Carrara marble portfolio into nine sub-brands.

Bernini is billed as being as 'fresh and white as a mantle of snow, enriched by soft crystalline light grey speckles of colour'.

Botticelli is white with dense and intricate veining that runs through the slab in a random pattern giving support and greater strength to the marble.

Caravaggio has a compact structure with a fine grain which goes from cream white to ivory grey. The brown or ochre irregular veins go deep into the marble.

Donatello is a dry white with a strong grain, rich in sub-



Above: The retail display unit takes eight sample panels.

tile and irregular ramifications enhancing the natural beauty and uniqueness of this marble.

Leonardo has the ideal blend of elegance and sobriety. The white light of the background colour is enhanced by silvery weaves throughout the marble.

Palladio features a delicate and dense veins dispersed in a white soft cloud. The marble breathes, its soul communicates sensations and emotions.

Raffaello displays shiny silvery weaves of veins on a pure background which prompt the idea of original designs giving greater luminosity to the marble.

Tintoretto is the colour of a winter sky with nuances from a cerulean white to a pale grey. A subtle ramification of veins propagates throughout the marble almost rendering it homogeneous.

Tiziano comes across as a precious material illuminated by subtle silver rays, which enhance the background making the warmth of the marble re-emerge.

Floor slabs are offered in a range of formats: 150 by 150, 200 by 200, 300 by 300, 150 by 300, 200 by 400, 400 by 400, 450 by 450, 300 by 600, 400 by 800 and 600 by 600mm. In addition there is a selection of decorative pieces, including those with classical motifs, in 150 by 150 and 150 by 300mm. Further design flexibility is offered by 100 by 300mm architectural decorations and 100 by 200 and 150 by 150mm decorative inserts.

Laying options include Tiepolo, a staggered tile pattern, polished, in 100 by 600, 150 by 600 and 200 by 800mm. Also using a staggered pattern is Riomaggiore, this time with 100 by 500, 100 by 400 and 100 by 300mm formats. Volterra is a polished option formed from 200 by 400mm Caravaggio and 200 by 400mm Monterosso in equal quantity; while Luni features 300 by 300mm Palladio and 200 by 800mm.

The material will not present problems during laying, as long as certain simple rules are followed.

- The substrate must be dry, stable and solid. Before laying slabs, ensure that the screed is sufficiently set or use a quick drying screed such as Mapei's Mapecem.
- Only use high-quality quick drying adhesive such as Mapei's Granirapid.
- For grouting, Mapei's Keracolor is recommended.

Luce di Carrara, as with all natural stone with a high calcium carbonate content, is acid-sensitive. It can be maintained by simply using water and a neutral cleaning products. It is also recommended to treat the marble every six months with purpose-designed cleaning products.

For flooring applications, Luce di Carrara is supplied in 12mm thick slabs for greater strength and quality. This thickness, for all types, colours and sizes, allows for complete modularity. Every tile is also factory-sealed using a heat-impregnated sealer, making installation as simple as with ceramic tiles. What is more, every consignment is shipped in strong cardboard boxes with type, size and colour/sorting code clearly indicated.

The beauty of the process is that it maintains the uniqueness of each piece of Carrara Marble yet still provides the practicality of porcelain simulations.

UK Distribution

Luce di Carrara is distributed in the UK by Tile Trend. The company will be displaying this extraordinary material, recently named Natural Product of the Year at the TTA Awards, at The Tile & Stone Show. Visit stand C19 to see Luce di Carrara at first hand.

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