

CHESNEYS

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THE SPECIAL MATERIALS COLLECTION

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During the nineteenth century it became fashionable for Ladies to use marble eggs to cool the palms of their hands in warm weather and at social events such as Balls, so that they could offer a dance partner a cool dry hand.

THE SPECIAL MATERIALS COLLECTION

When we first started Chesneys nearly forty years ago we focused exclusively on the restoration and sale of antique fireplaces.

The foundation of our fledgling business and one of its great joys was learning about the different styles and periods of fireplaces that we were discovering. It was a steep learning curve as relatively little reference work about this niche aspect of domestic architecture was available; much of the knowledge we acquired was self-taught as we developed an understanding of the language of interior architectural design.

The same excitement applied to the materials that we were encountering for the first time and learning how best to work with them during the restoration process. Once again largely self-taught, this hands-on introduction to marbles and stones is the foundation of what we now call our ‘Special Materials Collection’.

For many years the most popular material choice in domestic fireplace design has been the muted palette that Limestone offers, but more recently there has been a sea change as the use of vibrant, beautiful marbles in the design of fireplaces has grown in popularity, and we have found ourselves seeking out rare and unusual materials for our fireplaces.

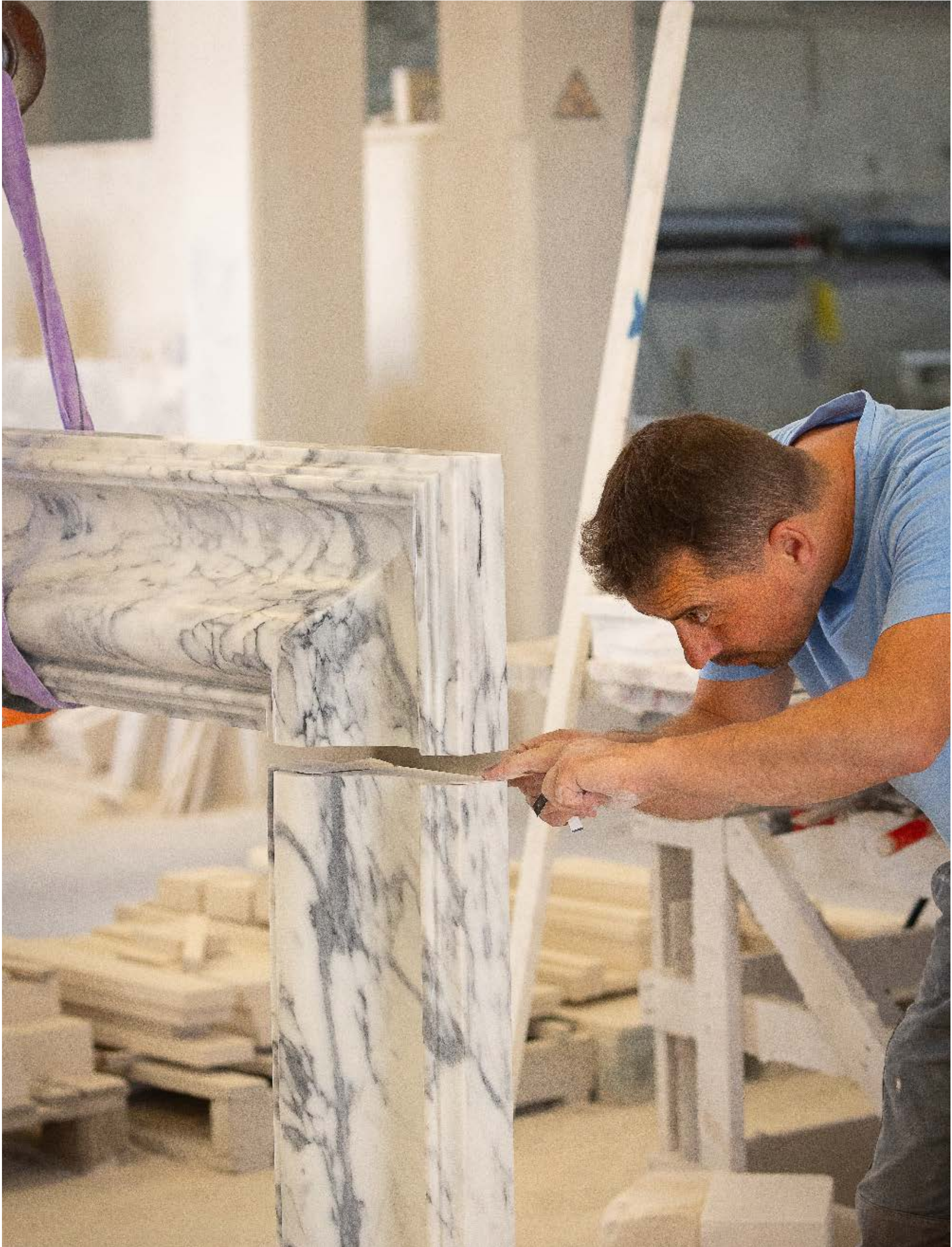
Many of the materials that we met for the first time when restoring antique chimneypieces all those years ago we now use once again in a collection of our own contemporary designs, as well as in our long established range of historical facsimiles.

Re-introducing some of these beautiful historical materials coupled with new, unusual, and luxurious marbles sourced from far and wide has been the inspiration for our in-house design team to develop an innovative collection of designs that brings a fresh perspective to the field of contemporary fireplace design, and which we call our ‘Special Materials Collection’.

Paul Chesney

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Chesney". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'P'.

Founder
Chesneys



THE MAKERS

As the architectural reclamation movement took hold in the late 1980s it was clear that demand for antique fireplaces would outstrip supply and Chesneys recognised the need to create a range of quality reproductions carved in stone and marble.

The search for a partner in this enterprise led to a small family-owned marble workshop on the outskirts of a village north of Lisbon. Over thirty years later Chesneys still work with the original Portuguese workshop. It has expanded over the years but is still family owned and run, with three generations actively involved, and many of the same masons still employed.

These are the craftsmen who have the specialist skill and experience required to produce our Special Materials Collection.





Lucio Cruz, founder of Lucidal (centre), Jorge Cruz (left) grandson and Production Manager,
Idilia Cruz, daughter and Office Manager

The journey from quarry to fireside has several key stages. First the block marble must be selected. This task falls to Lucio Cruz, who founded the business. He looks at the directional veining, structure, and shape of a block before he makes his selection. Blocks can be monumental in size, weighing more than 20 tonnes and it is impossible to anticipate exactly the properties of the material inside the block. Hidden venting and flaws can adversely affect the yield from the block, but Lucio has an intuitive understanding born of 50 years experience, and he seldom makes a bad choice.

Next, the block must be cut to produce the material required for the fireplaces to be manufactured. This is not a random process. The sawyer must decide whether the block is to be vein-cut against the natural grain of the material, highlighting

the banding and linear lines in the marble, or whether to cross-cut along the grain, revealing flowery, circular and cloud-like patterns. The material he is cutting will dictate the approach he takes.

Masonry, carving and polishing skills are required to transform the cut raw material into the finished article, revealing the vibrant colour, fossils and striations that lie within. There is no short cut to polishing a piece of marble and there isn't a carving machine that can match the delicate finish and detail that the chisel of an experienced carver can achieve. It is a truly transformative process founded on centuries old artisanal skills and Chesneys are proud to work with our Portuguese partners in this enterprise.

THE MAKERS



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THE MATERIALS

The marbles in our Special Materials Collection have been carefully chosen for their wide range of colour and striation, ranging from the jewel-rich tones of Breche de Vendomme and Anatolian Lilac to the monochromatic hues of Pele de Tigre and Nero Marquina.

All are naturally quarried materials that we source from countries throughout Europe and as far afield as China and Africa. We are continually searching for the new and undiscovered to enrich our collection.

Each quarry has its own story, a unique combination of people, place and history which make a visit to it a pleasurable and uplifting experience. It also serves as a reminder that the process that sees a block of marble extracted from an ancient quarry and ultimately transformed into a beautiful fireplace has changed very little over the centuries.

THE MATERIALS

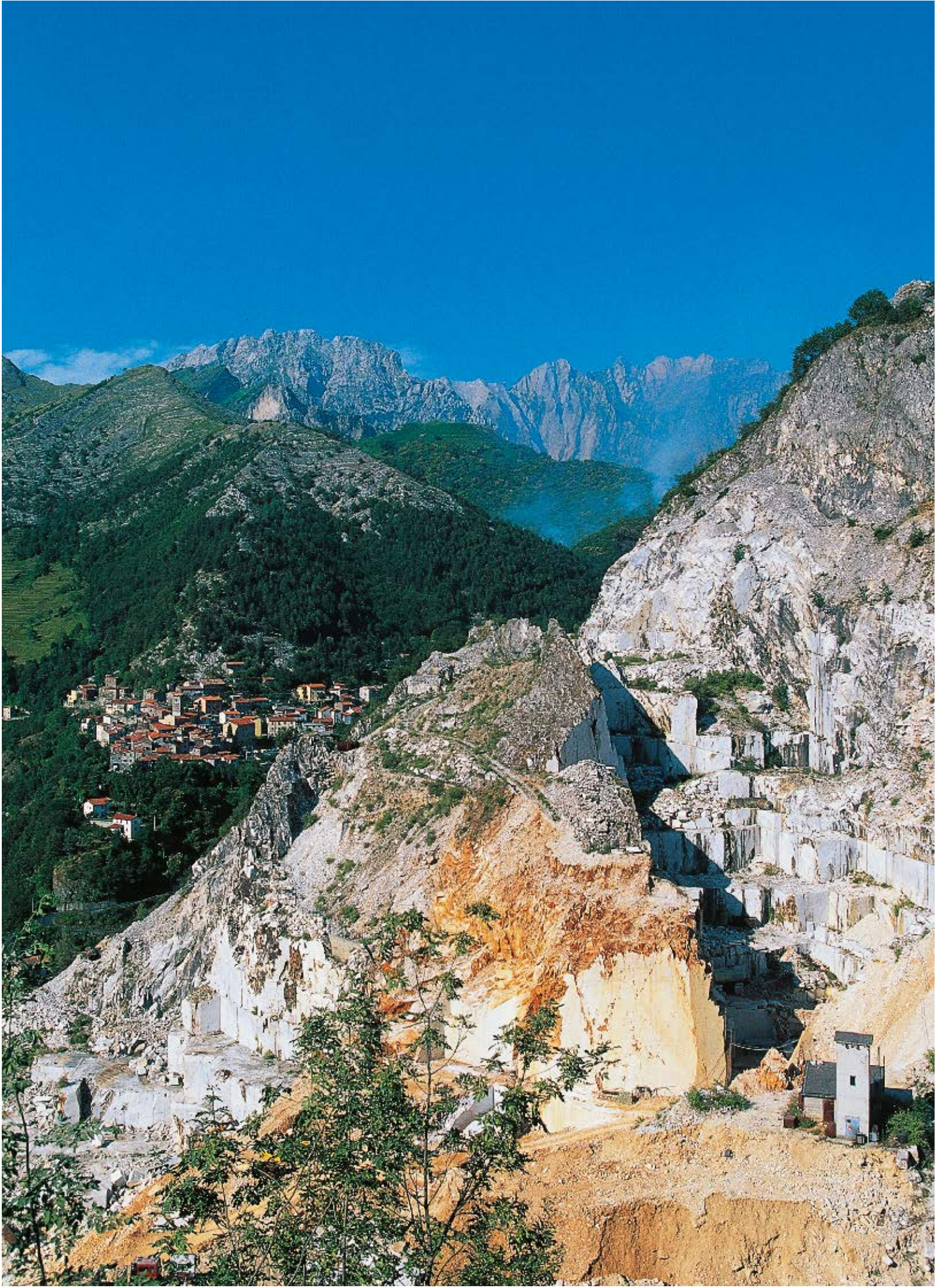


One such quarry is in Macedonia, Northern Greece where we purchase Volakas marble, one of our most popular and versatile materials characterised by a milky white background and soft grey and mushroom-coloured veining.

The journey to the Volakas quarries starts at the city port of Thessaloniki and from there follows the Aegean coast road as far as the small ferry port of Kavala, situated across from the island of Thassos, renowned for its crystalline white marble. Turning inland the next leg of the journey is across flat green

plains towards the ancient town of Drama with a break for a leisurely lunch in the town square with our long-standing local agent, Nicephoros, and the quarry owner.

From there the ascent winds upwards through wooded hills to Mount Falkiri and the quarries. These can be seen from a distance with vertical faces of pristine white marble cut into the slopes of the mountain, reflecting the sun beneath a flawless blue sky. The view from atop the quarry across mountain slope and plain to the distant Aegean Sea is breathtaking.



THE MATERIALS



Above The Gaumont surround in Silver Travertine
Opposite The Alderney surround in Arabescato

Working with natural materials whilst matching customer expectations can be challenging. Sometimes after years of consistent supply a seam of especially attractive marble may finally be quarried out. The quarry master will be philosophical, knowing that in due course he will probably uncover another similar bed, but for the client who has set his or her heart on material that is no longer available, it can be disappointing. As no two blocks of marble from a quarry will ever be the

same, a fireplace commissioned from our Special Materials Collection will be genuinely unique. Whether deeply veined and dramatic, displaying subtle pastel and ivory shades or featuring fossils formed over 250 million years ago, every fireplace from our collection is singular and exquisite. It will provide a striking and sophisticated focus in the design of any room, reflecting a tradition of manufacture that stretches back centuries, but which has an entirely contemporary application.



A GUIDE TO OUR MATERIALS

The aim of our Special Materials Collection is to highlight the natural beauty of the marbles and limestones we have selected. To best achieve this the designs we offer are simple and architectural in form, ensuring the material is easy to appreciate.

The following pages feature our entire Special Materials Collection, displayed in our most popular fireplace designs, both classical and contemporary.



NERO MARQUINA



A striking monochromatic material, Nero Marquina takes its name from the small mountain town of Markina in the Basque Country of northern Spain, where it is quarried. Nero Marquina is in fact a Limestone rather than a marble. It has a dark black background against which an abundance of strong white veining is seen when the face of the material is highly polished and lends itself to both traditional and contemporary interiors.



The Stirling in Nero Marquina

AZUL VALVERDE



Sadly, Azul Valverde is a material that will not be available for much longer. Reserves are very limited now and extraction of the material has nearly come to an end.

There are only a few quarries producing this beautiful stone and these are located by the Serra D'Aires e Candeeiros Natural Park near Valverde in the region of Alcanede, Portugal. The two mountains where the material is quarried sit above a plain commanding views of the Atlantic Ocean on a clear day. Azul is described as a grey limestone but its colour is more subtle than this suggests, with shades of moss green and lighter fossilization in places.



The Paxton in Azul Valverde

PELE DE TIGRE



Pele de Tigre is part of the extended Portuguese family of Estremoz marbles. The material has a white background, but the spread and character of the grey black veining can vary enormously. For this reason, our clients are shown a choice of blocks from which they can choose to have their fireplace made. The quarries are located around the village of Estremoz which lies inland east of Lisbon.

Estremoz marble was much prized in the past when predominantly lighter white material was quarried but this material is scarce now, which has led to the increased popularity of materials such as Pele de Tigre, with its distinctive strong grey markings.



The Kent in Pele de Tigre

BRECHE DE VENDOME



We have included Breche de Vendome in our Collection even though the material is no longer being actively quarried in France. One of the most beautiful marbles in the world, it was used extensively in the Palace of Versailles.

A brecciated marble, it combines a palette of the richest natural colours including violet, gold, ochre and grey. Occasionally it is still possible to acquire a small block extracted at some point in the past and which has been lying undiscovered in an overgrown corner of a marble yard. The material is still available in slab form and can be used for a limited number of designs in our range, such as The Manhattan.



The Milo in Breche de Vendome

IVORY TRAVERTINE



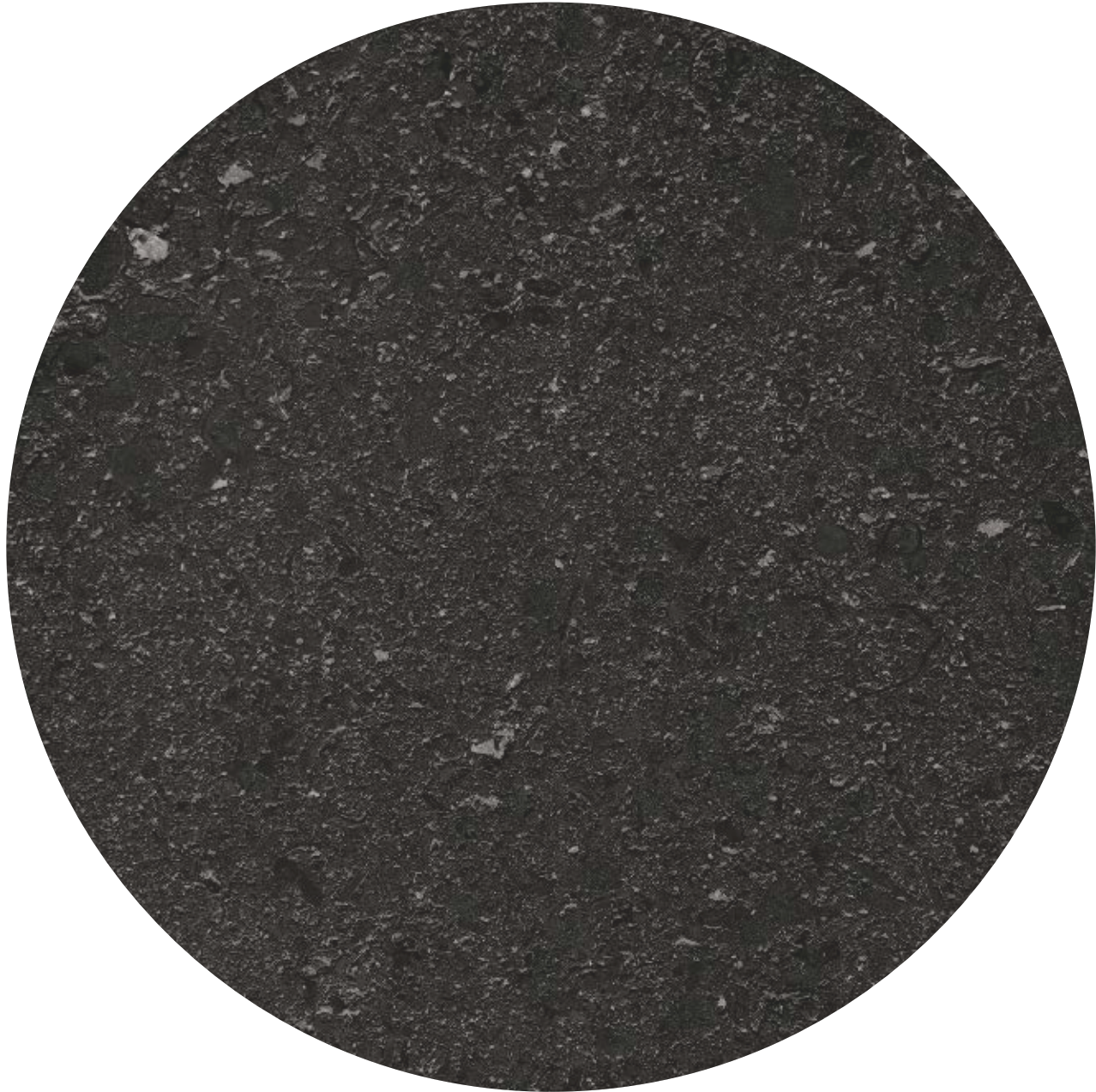
Travertine limestone comes in many different forms with deposits of the material found all over the world. Travertine was originally and most famously quarried in Tivoli, east of Rome. Its ancient name was Lapis Tiburtinus, but over time this was replaced by the term ‘Travertino’. A tough sedimentary limestone formed by calcium carbonate deposits, Travertine has been used in the construction of myriad buildings over the centuries, including the Colosseum and St. Peter’s Basilica.

The material is characterized by an irregular surface scored with small hollows, pit marks and troughs. These can either be filled and polished or left open. Our standard finish is the former and we vein cut the stone to reveal parallel layers of sediment, creating an appearance that is full of movement and interest. This fireplace has been crafted in Ivory Travertine.



The Scarpa in Ivory Travertine

PETIT GRANIT



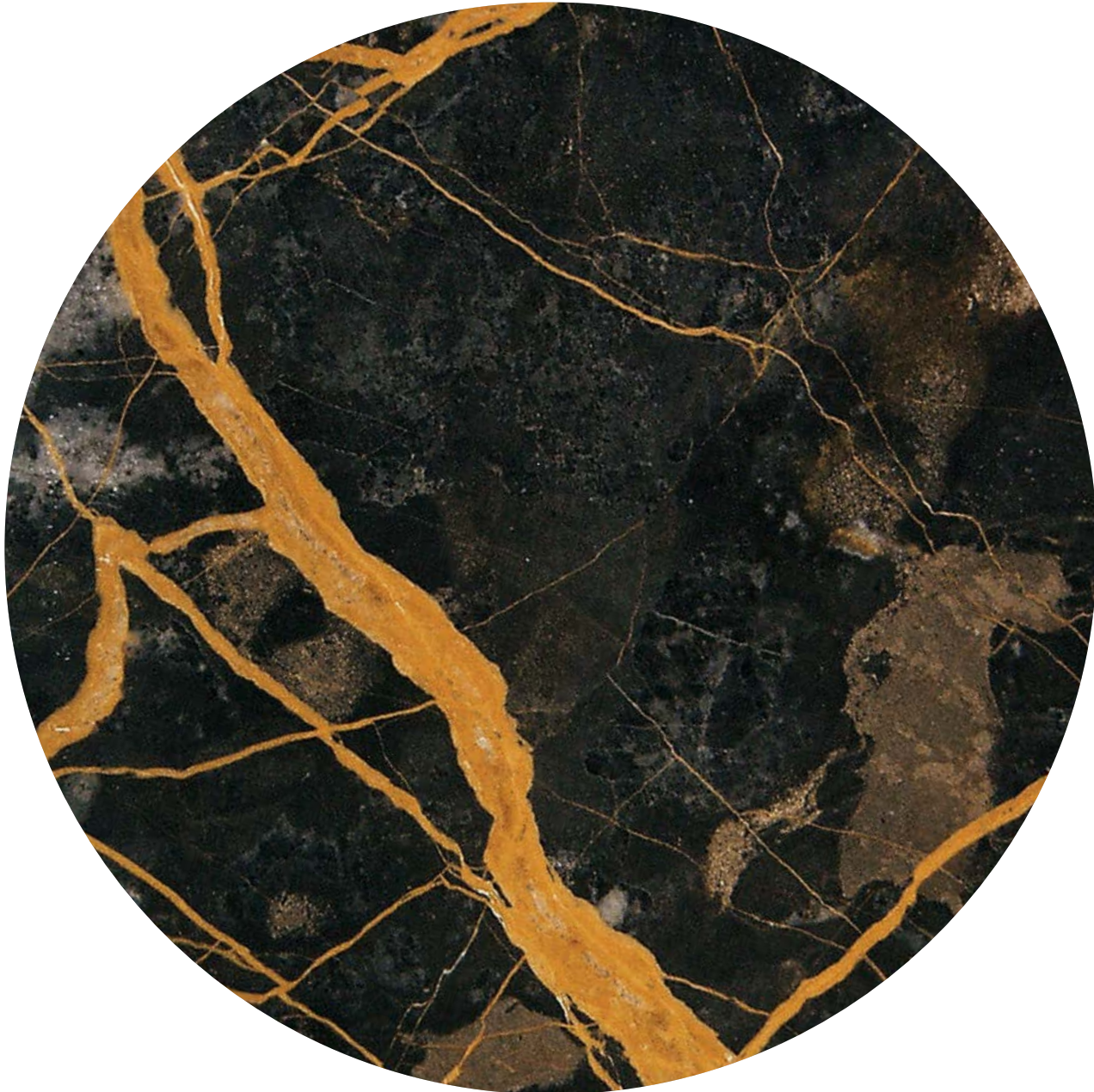
Petit Granit is a truly historical Limestone. It has been quarried near the towns of Soignies and Ecaussines in Belgium for many hundreds of years. One of the quarries boasts unbroken ownership by the same family stretching back to the seventeenth century. The material has been used for architectural and sculptural purposes throughout this period.

Its importance has been recognized by The International Union of Geological Sciences, which has designated it a Global Heritage Stone Resource. The material is in fact limestone rather than granite, but it has the appearance of the latter material, hence its description. Its main characteristic is the presence of numerous and distinct grey marine fossils, which shine out against the black background.



The Kingston in Petit Granit

PORT ST. LAURENT



Port St. Laurent is an African marble, quarried near Agadir in Morocco. The material has enjoyed widespread popularity for many years and can be seen in the interiors of buildings throughout Europe and the United States. It has a very distinctive appearance with a crystalline cocoa base colour behind a mixture of fine white veins with stronger veining varying in colour from coral to ochre to gold.



The Milo in Port St Laurent

LILAC



Lilac is one of our most popular materials. We first discovered this marble over ten years ago, when sourcing other stone in Turkey for an architectural project. Since then, it has become more widely known and securing good quality material has become increasingly difficult due to its popularity.

It is a calcite marble with a translucent white base colour that provides the background to strong and randomly distributed veining that moves in colour between violet, lilac and black. Amongst the most spectacular marbles in our collection, it is quarried in the Mugla region bordering The Aegean Sea in the south west corner of Turkey.



The Luna in Lilac

DARK EMPERADOR



Dark Emperador is one of the most famous Spanish marbles. It has been quarried in Northeastern Mercia for centuries. Emperador falls into several categories depending on the appearance of the marble. We only use 'First Grade' material for our fireplaces; in this form the marble displays a striking spider's web of white veining against the rich brown base colour, achieving the appearance of a richly luxurious material.



The Wessex in Dark Emperador

CALACATTA PAONAZZO



Paonazzo is another dramatic Calacatta material, that takes its name from the Italian word for purple. Extracted from the same quarries that produce Calacatta Oro and Vagli, it is characterised by a distinct and bold veining pattern in colours that include black, brown and violet against an ivory background.



The Manhattan in Calacatta Paonazzo

VOLAKAS



Volakas is probably the most versatile marble in our Collection. It has a milky white background and displays light veining in soft grey and mushroom hues. We recommend it as an alternative to traditional Carrara marble.

The Italian quarries are currently yielding Carrara material that has a much greyer and less appealing base colour than in past years and we find that Volakas provides a lighter and much more attractive solution where a neutral palette is required. The Volakas quarries are in Macedonia in Northern Greece by Mount Falkiri above the ancient town of Drama.



The Walton in Volakas

PORTORO GOLD



One of the most highly prized and exclusive materials, genuine Portoro marble is only quarried on the island of Porto Venere in the Ligurian province of La Spezia, Northern Italy. It is extracted in small volumes from vaulted chambers, supported by pillars to minimize any impact to the landscape. Its name derives from the French term 'Porte d'Or' or Golden Door. This marble has been used since Roman times, but its export outside Italy only began in the early 19th century.

The very best Portoro displays a bright black base colour with intense gold veins running through it and is undoubtedly one of the most dramatic materials in our Collection.



The Brooklyn in Portoro Gold

BRECCIA MEDICEA



Breccia Medicea is one of the most famous of all ornamental Italian marbles. Also known as Breccia di Seravezza, as it is quarried in the municipality of Seravezza in the Apuan Alps, this beautiful material has been widely used in Tuscany and beyond since the Renaissance period. It acquired its name through its connection with the Medici Family and in particular, Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who owned exclusive rights to the quarries of Seravezza. Amongst many important Florentine architectural landmarks, Breccia Medicea was used in Florence Cathedral and the fountain of Neptune in the Piazza Della Signoria.

This is material of infinite variety and nuance. Blocks extracted from the same quarry display dramatically different characteristics with its heavily brecciated appearance encompassing limitless arrangements of the soft green tones, delicate purples and ivory whites that characterise the marble.



The Chelsea in Breccia Medicea

GRIGIO GOLD



Grigio Gold is one of two African marbles in our Collection. Quarried in Northern Tunisia, it has a background colour that includes shades of soft grey and canvas. These combine with random clusters of darker grey and gold alongside dramatic veins of crystalline ivory.

For a subtle and earthy palette of colours Grigio Gold has no match.



The Milo in Grigio Gold

SILVER TRAVERTINE



Travertine limestone comes in many different forms with deposits of the material found all over the world. Travertine was originally and most famously quarried in Tivoli, east of Rome. Its ancient name was Lapis Tiburtinus, but over time this was replaced by the term 'Travertino'. A tough sedimentary limestone formed by calcium carbonate deposits, Travertine has been used in the construction of myriad buildings over the centuries, including the Colosseum and St. Peter's Basilica.

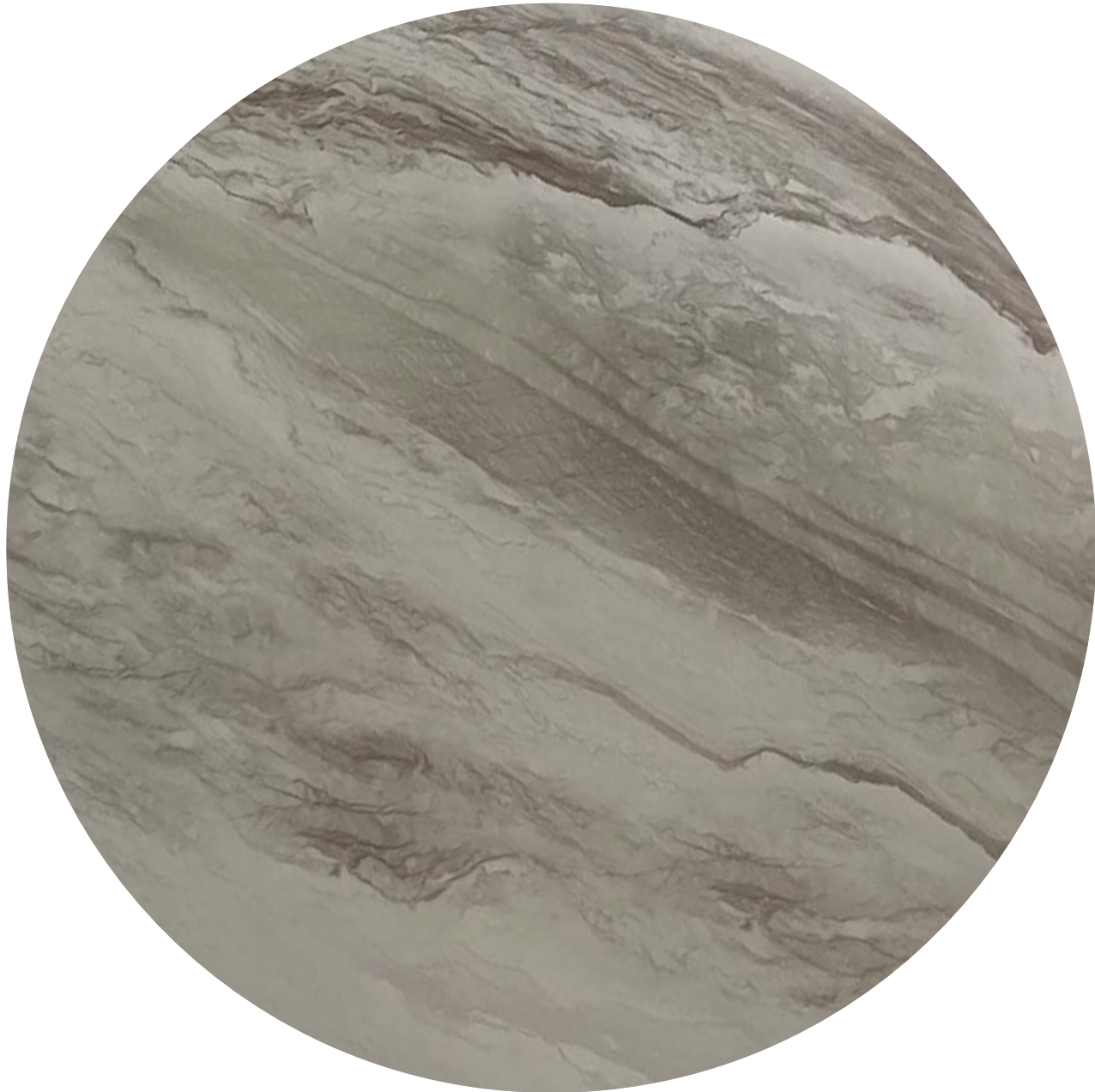
The material is characterized by an irregular surface scored with small hollows, pit marks and troughs. These can either be filled and polished or left open. Our standard finish is the former and we vein cut the stone to reveal parallel layers of sediment, creating an appearance that is full of movement and interest. This fireplace has been crafted in Silver Travertine.

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The Metropolitan in Silver Travertine

PICASSO



Picasso is one of the latest additions to our Special Materials Collection.

This beautiful marble is quarried in the Piedmont region of Northern Italy, bordering The Alps.

Picasso has very delicate colouring, shading from soft pink to greys and greens.



The Kent in Picasso

CALACATTA BLUETTE



Another recent addition to our Special materials Collection, Calacatta Bluette has an unusual and delicate soft grey and light blue background with indistinct veining that appears in shades of taupe, light green and grey.

This is an ideal choice of material where a design scheme demands a more subtle and understated palette of colours. Quarried in the Apuan Alps, this is a material that is now finding a much wider audience.



The Brooklyn in Calacatta Bluette

ARABESCATO CORCHIA



A heavily brecciated material, Corchia is a member of the Arabescato family of marbles quarried in Tuscany. This material shows predominantly grey and beige veining against a background comprising elliptical shapes or clasts that range between cream and white in colour.

This material is one of the most popular of our marbles and has a timeless appeal evidenced by its widespread use since Roman times.



The Metro in Arabescato Corchia

UNFILLED TRAVERTINE



Travertine limestone comes in many different forms with deposits of the material found all over the world. Travertine was originally and most famously quarried in Tivoli, east of Rome. Its ancient name was Lapis Tiburtinus, but over time this was replaced by the term 'Travertino'. A tough sedimentary limestone formed by calcium carbonate deposits, Travertine has been used in the construction of myriad buildings over the centuries, including the Colosseum and St. Peter's Basilica.

The material is characterized by an irregular surface scored with small hollows, pit marks and troughs. These can either be filled and polished or left open. Our standard finish is the former and we vein cut the stone to reveal parallel layers of sediment, creating an appearance that is full of movement and interest. In this case Ivory Travertine has been cross cut and left unfilled to create a contoured surface with a light, dusty appearance.



The Homer in Unfilled Travertine

CALACATTA VAGLI



Calacatta Vagli is one of the most sought after Italian marbles. Its particular appeal lies in the rich grey and gold colour of the veining that appears against an ivory white background, and which makes it one of the most luxurious materials in our Collection. The material is quarried in several locations in the Carrara region, of which the most famous is Cava Ruggetta.



The Manhattan in Calacatta Vagli

ARABESCATO OROBICO GRIGIO

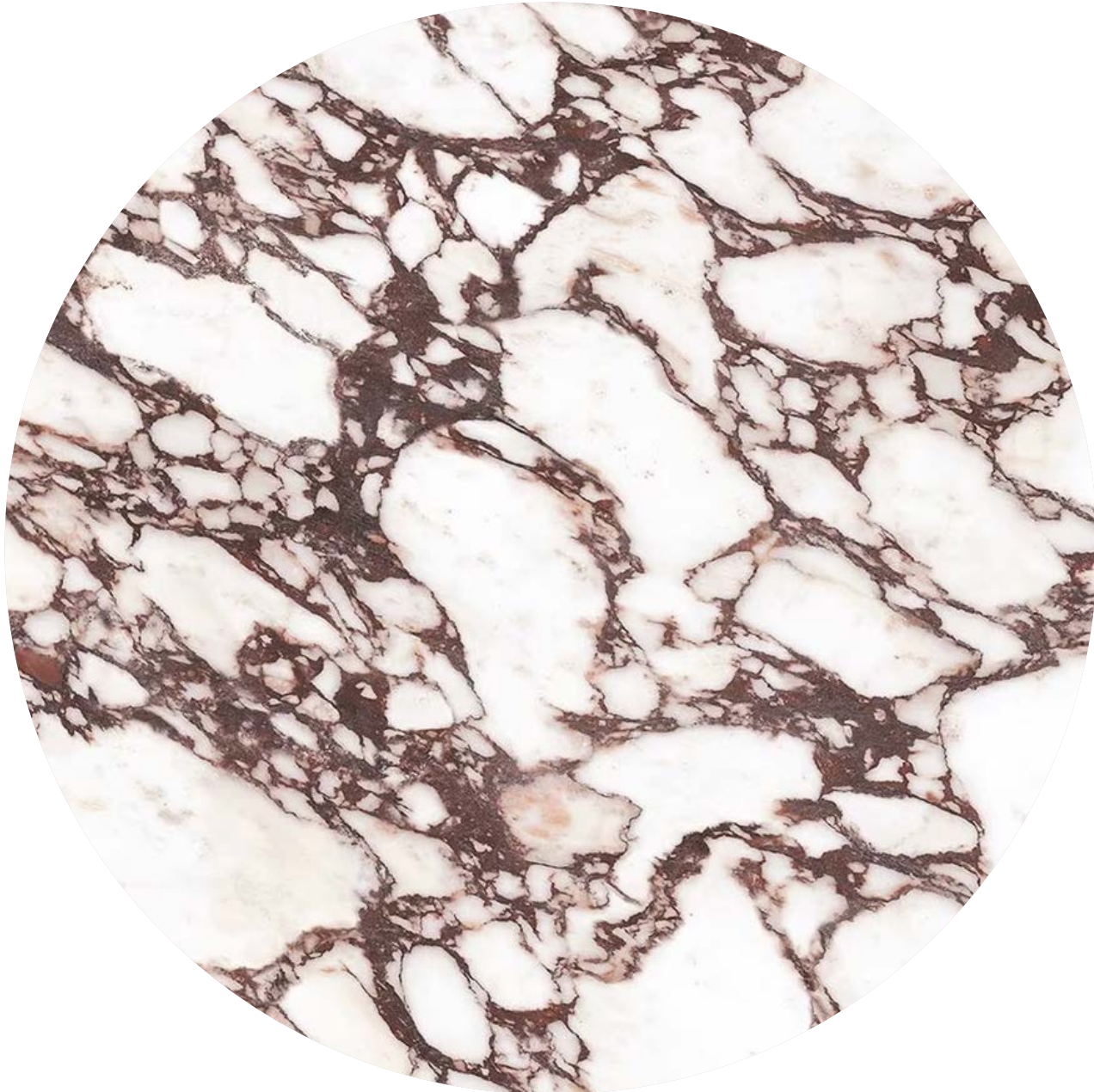


A perennial favourite in our Collection, Orobico Grigio is quarried in the Brembana Valley in the province of Bergamo in Upper Lombardy. Surrounded by the foothills of the Orobic Alps, a visit to the valley with its ancient villages is like stepping back in time. The material is characterised by unusually sinuous veining incorporating shades of light and dark grey, mauve and light pink.



The Regence in Arabescato Orobico Grigio

CALACATTA VIOLA



One of the most iconic and visually arresting Italian marbles, Calacatta Viola is instantly recognizable by the unique purple veining that it displays against a fragmented ivory background.

Quarried in small amounts in the Apuan Alps, this dramatic material is perfectly suited to fireplaces of simple architectural form.



The Milo in Calacatta Viola

BRECCIA VIOLA

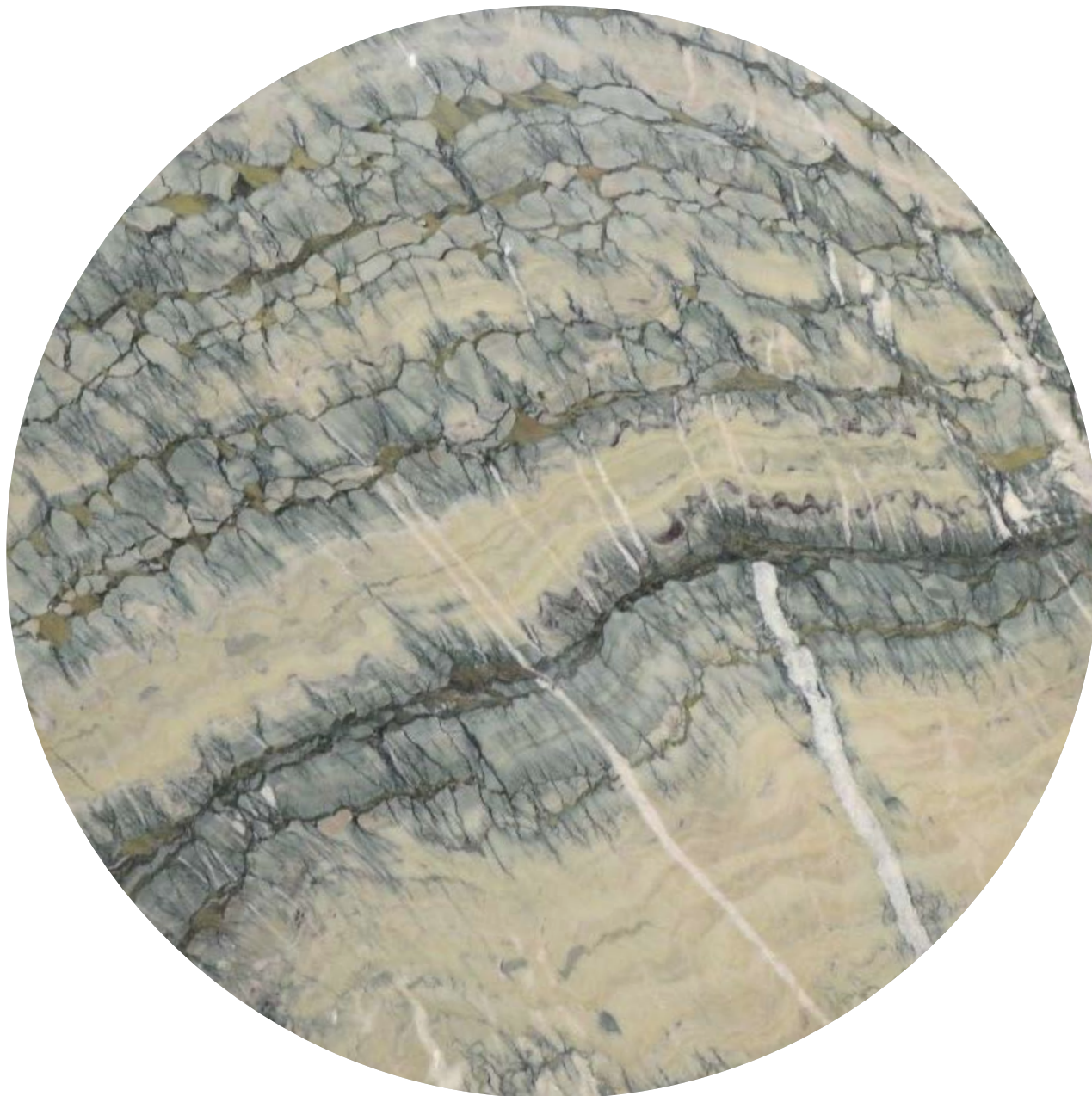


Another visually dramatic marble from the Apuan Alps, distinguished from Calacatta Viola by less fragmented and more sinuous patterns of veining and displaying slightly softer purple and rich dark red hues set against an ivory background.



The Milo in Breccia Viola

INDIGO GREEN



Indigo Green is the most recent addition to our Special Materials Collection and is the only marble we currently use that is quarried in India. Its striking appearance and colouring set it apart from our other materials and it is seen at its best when used in fireplaces comprising flat panels as these are the perfect canvas for this unique and unusual material.



The Manhattan in Indigo Green

ANATOLIAN GREY



One of our most popular materials, Anatolian Grey is another stone that we source in Turkey.

The description of the material is misleading as the base colour is closer to a cross between a dark moss and earthy brown colour, rather than a shade of grey. This solid base colour is the background for occasional dramatic flashes of white veining.



The Brooklyn in Anatolian Grey

CALACATTA ORO



Also known as Calacatta Gold this material bears similarities to its close relative Calacatta Vagli in its general appearance but is distinguished by the honey and gold veins that appear in addition to soft grey veins which are highlighted against an ivory white background.



The Flitcroft in Calacatta Oro

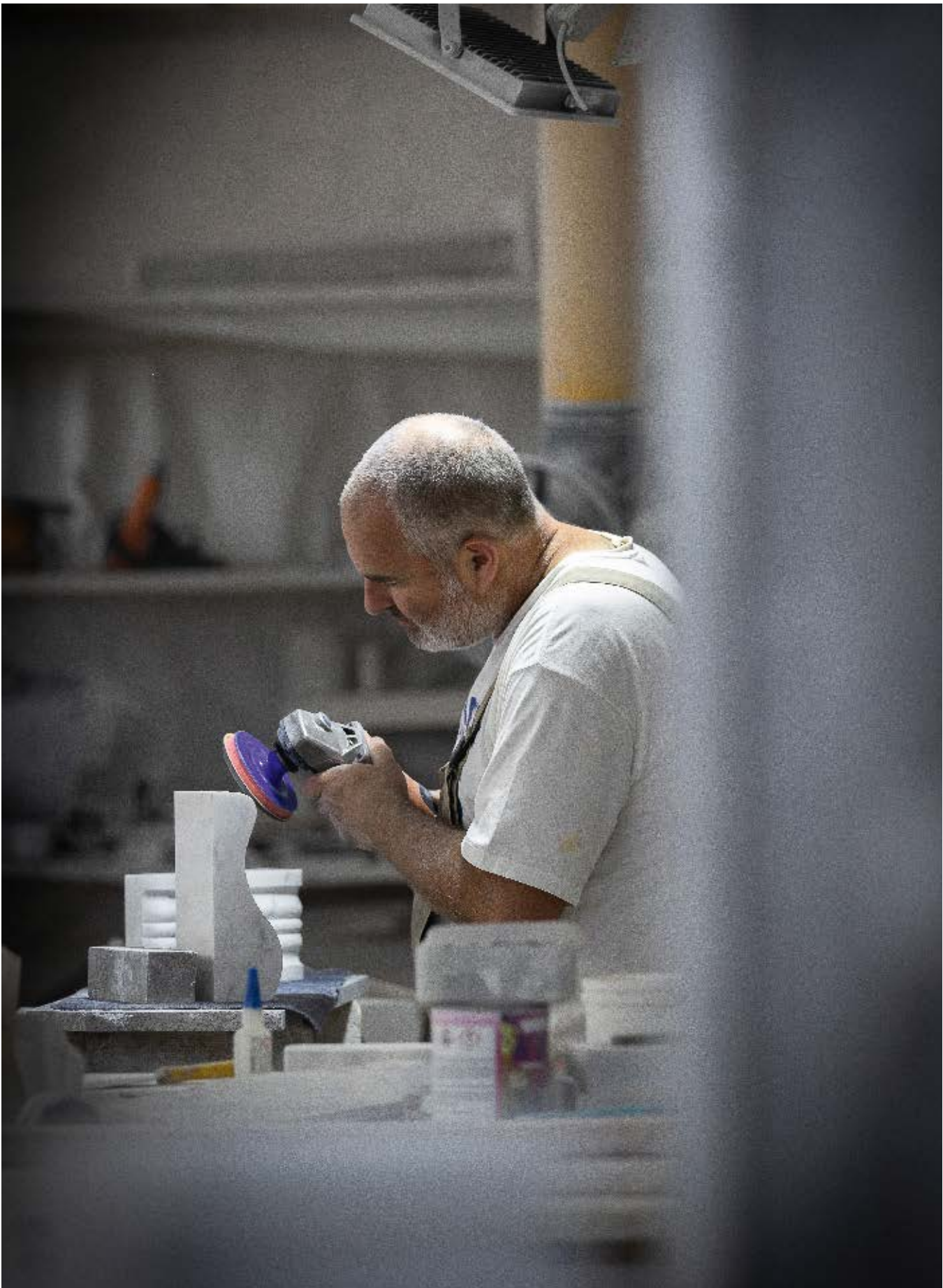
ARABESCATO



One of the most well known and widely used of all Italian marbles, Arabescato, with its palette of ivory as a background to dusty to dark grey veining is the perfect choice of material where a more neutral marble is required. Quarried in The Apuan Alps in Carrara.



The Alderney in Arabescato



CHESNEYS

LOCATIONS

Our beautifully appointed locations
display a range of our fireplaces

CHELSEA DESIGN STUDIO

570 Kings Road,
London SW6 2DY

Telephone 020 7627 1410

Email sales@chesneys.co.uk

BATTERSEA

194-196 Battersea Park Road,
London SW11 4ND

Telephone 020 7627 1410

Email sales@chesneys.co.uk

FINCHLEY

465-467 Finchley Road,
London NW3 6HS

Telephone 020 7627 1410

Email sales@chesneys.co.uk

ST ALBANS

70 London Road,
St Albans AL1 1NG

Telephone 020 7627 1410

Email sales@chesneys.co.uk

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Saturday 10:am – 5:00pm

St Albans closed on Fridays

Closed Bank Holidays.

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