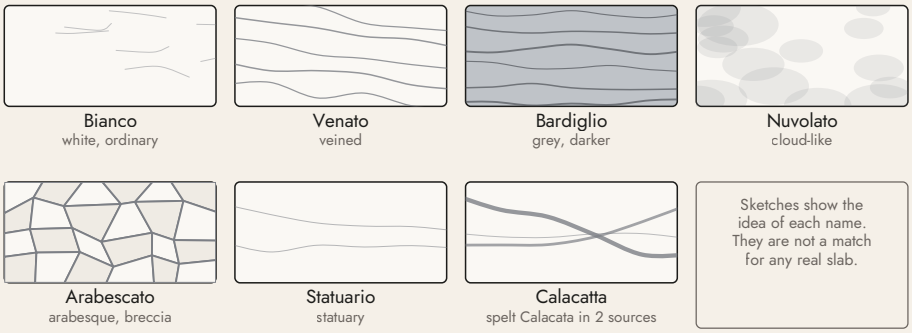
Marble *names* decoded

'Carrara' is a district, not a stone: more than 200 commercial varieties from the Apuan Alps, in seven main groups. Each splits by quarry and period, so a name never identifies a slab. Write the denomination, the quarry and a slab number into the order.

AT A GLANCE

Name	Means	What the sources say	Specification trap
Marble (the word)	A trade word wider than the geological one.	The Natural Stone Institute (NSI) describes marble as metamorphic rock built of calcite. A geological survey datasheet describes a black stone sold as marble, from Marquina in Spain, as a recrystallised limestone.	Write the petrographic name as well as the trade name.
Carrara	A district, not a stone.	Primavori (2014): a general term, used for more than 200 commercial varieties from the whole Apuan Alps, not only the town of Carrara. The IUGS page says more than 100.	'Carrara' alone does not identify a stone. Name the group, quarry and slab.
Bianco / Ordinario	White; ordinary.	Commercial designation 1 of 7 (Primavori; IUGS).	The base grade. Ask for the grade and quarry.
Venato	Veined.	Designation 2 of 7. Names a veined type, not a vein strength.	Approve the veining on a slab, not on the name.
Bardiglio	Grey.	Designation 3 of 7. An encyclopaedia entry says it has more black than the whites and was used in Roman times for facings and floors.	Grey tone varies by quarry. Approve it on a slab.
Nuvolato	Cloud-like.	Designation 4 of 7.	The cloudy pattern is variable. Approve it on a slab.
Arabescato	Arabesque-like.	Designation 5 of 7. The IUGS page calls it a metamorphic breccia.	Different pattern scale from the veined types. Say which.
Statuario (and Statuario Venato)	Statuary; the white of sculpture.	Designation 6 of 7. Two sources call the historic pure-white deposit exhausted; Primavori still lists it as a current designation.	Sources disagree on supply. Ask for the quarry and a block certificate.
Calacatta	Spelt 'Calacata' in two sources.	Designation 7 of 7.	The name is also borrowed by other materials. Name the material and the quarry.

Sources: Primavori (EGU abstract, 2014) and the IUGS Carrara Marble page for the seven designations; NSI, Stone Federation GB and a geological survey datasheet for the rest. Read 7 Nov 2026. Meanings are translations, not standards.



The seven main commercial groups, as schematic sketches of the idea of each name. Not photographs and not matches for any slab. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

STONE IDENTIFICATION

Natural stone, identified to BS EN 12440 and BS EN 12407: traditional name [ ]; commercial name [e.g. Calacatta]; petrographic name [marble / limestone / other]; quarry or area [ ]; country of origin [Italy]; petrological family [ ]. Material to be natural stone. No porcelain, sintered, quartz, resin or other manufactured product is acceptable as an alternative.

SELECTION AND APPROVAL

Stone to be selected by the designer from slab(s) no. [ ] at [stone yard / workshop] on [date], and approved on a sample cut from the production slab. Slabs to be numbered in sequence on the layout drawing [and book-matched as shown]. The partner to issue the denomination, quarry and block or slab numbers with each delivery.

SUBSTITUTION AND CHANGE CONTROL

No change of stone group, quarry, bed or block, finish, thickness or processor without the designer's written approval. A stone offered as equal to the named stone must be submitted with its full denomination, a slab photograph and a sample before it is considered.

TERMS USED

Commercial name

The name a stone is sold under, such as Calacatta. It may not follow geology, and may cover several quarries. Stone Federation GB asks for the traditional name to be established as well.

Petrographic name

The rock-science name of a stone, such as marble or limestone, found by examining a thin section. BS EN 12407 is the test method.

Denomination (BS EN 12440)

The standard way to identify a natural stone: traditional name, quarry location and country of origin, and petrological family. Stone Federation GB asks for every sample to be labelled with them.

Breccia

Rock made of angular fragments cemented together. The IUGS page calls Arabescato a metamorphic breccia.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- BS EN 12440:2017 (denomination); BS EN 12407:2019 (petrographic examination); BS EN 12670:2019 (terminology): all Current on BSI Knowledge (7 Nov 2026 and Wave 3d notes); the 2001 edition of 12440 is withdrawn. Texts not read.
- Primavori, EGU2014-3785 (2014); IUGS Heritage Stones, Carrara Marble; Stone Federation GB, Selecting the Correct Stone (SS 01): read 7 Nov 2026; not standards.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/marble-names-decoded. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.