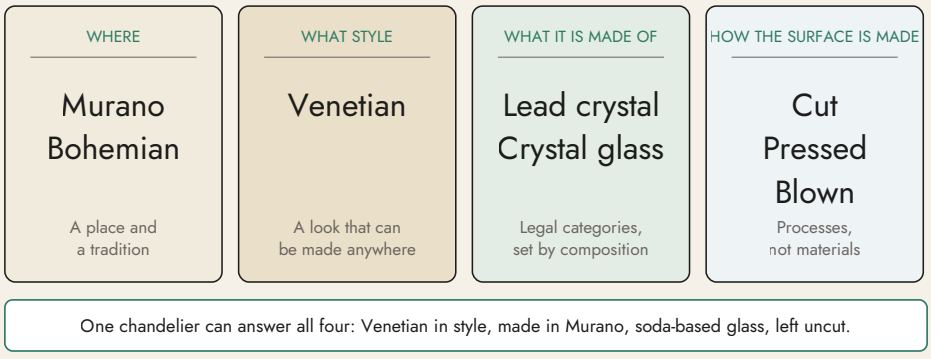
# Murano, Venetian, Bohemian and *crystal* glass: what each word means

What each word means from museum and legal sources, and wording that names the glass without relying on the word.

Compliance guidance. Legal statements are from the sources named, read on 5 November 2026. Whether the crystal descriptions reach chandelier glass is not settled by anything we read. Guidance, not legal advice: take trading-standards advice before making or relying on a crystal claim.

## AT A GLANCE

| Word | What it names | What the sources say | Worth specifying when (our reading) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Murano glass | A place and a way of working: hand-made glass from the island of Murano. | Its museum says Murano glass has always been sodium-based and that its cristallo differs from English and Bohemian crystal. | Hand-shaped form and colour. The word does not fix the composition. |
| Venetian | A style: the ornate, many-armed form, made anywhere. | The V&A says Venetian makers carried the style abroad from the later 16th century. No legal definition found. | When the form is wanted. State where it is made separately. |
| Bohemian | A place and a cut and engraved tradition. | Corning says Bohemian makers brightened glass with chalk where English makers used lead oxide. | Cut or engraved character. Ask for the composition: lead may or may not be present. |
| Lead glass, lead crystal | Glass rich in lead oxide. “Lead crystal” is also a legal description. | Corning: soft, and its refractive index suits polished facets. UK law: lead crystal is PbO 24% or more, density 2.90 or more. | When sparkle through cut facets matters. Name the category, not the word. |
| Crystal glass, verre sonore | Legal descriptions that do not need lead. | Annex I counts zinc, barium, lead or potassium oxides, singly or together, at 10% or more. | Crystal wanted without specifying lead. Ask which category. |
| Cut or pressed glass | Processes, not materials. | The V&A: cutting is a rotating wheel with abrasive, then polishing. Corning: pressing is glass pushed into a metal mould. | Specify the pattern, polish and where it is cut; ask what pressed parts are made of. |
| Borosilicate, acrylic | A composition with boric oxide as the flux; and a plastic, which is not glass. | Corning: borosilicate has low expansion. No source read on acrylic. | Our reading: glass close to heat. Say any plastic in the specification. |




Five trade words and the four questions they answer. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

## THE FOUR LEGAL CRYSTAL CATEGORIES

| No. | Description | Oxides, minimum | Density, min. | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Full lead crystal | PbO 30% or more | 3.00 | None stated |
| 2 | Lead crystal | PbO 24% or more | 2.90 | None stated |
| 3 | Crystal glass (cristallin) | ZnO, BaO, PbO or K2O, singly or together, 10% or more | 2.45 | nD 1.520 or more |
| 4 | Verre sonore (also sold as crystal glass) | BaO, PbO or K2O, singly or together, 10% or more | 2.40 | Vickers 550 plus or minus 20 |

Annex I of Council Directive 69/493/EEC. Whether the descriptions reach chandelier glass is not settled: ask for the category and declared composition.

## SPECIFICATION WORDING

### GLASS TYPE FOR EACH ELEMENT

Each glass element is to be [hand-blown soda-lime glass / crystal glass, category 3 of annex I of Council Directive 69/493/EEC / lead crystal, category 2 (PbO 24% or more, density 2.90 or more)] as stated on the shop drawing. The workshop is to declare, for each glass type, the oxide contents and density, with test evidence [ ]. 'Crystal' is not to be applied to any element unless it meets the description for the category named.

### ORIGIN, STYLE AND FINISH

Place of making for each element: [Murano / Bohemia / other, as stated by the workshop]. The style reference [Venetian] is to form only, not origin. Cutting: pattern [ ], polish [ ], cut by [ ] at [place].

### DOCUMENTS WITH THE ORDER

A composition declaration for each glass type, signed by [workshop]. Where the fitting is electrical equipment, the workshop is to state in writing how lead in glass is treated under the UK RoHS Regulations 2012 and which exemption, if any, it relies on. The declared weight of the complete fitting, with its glass types, is to be on the shop drawing.

## TERMS USED

### Lead crystal

In UK law and annex I, glass with at least 24% lead oxide and density 2.90 or more (full lead crystal: 30% and 3.00). Not the museum term lead glass.

### Crystal glass (cristallin)

Annex I category 3: zinc, barium, lead or potassium oxides, singly or together, at least 10%; density at least 2.45; refractive index at least 1.520. Lead is not required.

## STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- Council Directive 69/493/EEC, annex I (crystal categories): legislation.gov.uk, revised 1 Jan 2007; EU status not checked.
- Crystal Glass (Descriptions) Regulations 1973, SI 1973/1952: names BS 3828:1973, which BSI lists as withdrawn 13 Jun 2024 (not read).
- UK RoHS, SI 2012/3032, Schedules A1 and A2 (entry 44); UK Global Tariff, Chapter 70 notes: England, Wales and Scotland text; tariff read 5 Nov 2026.
- Museum sources: Glass Museum Murano leaflet; V&A An A to Z of glass (17 Apr 2024); Corning Museum of Glass pages (Internet Archive copies).

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/murano-venetian-bohemian-and-crystal-compared. 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.