

1940

FIRST MARBLE EXHIBITION IN SANT'AMBROGIO DI VALPOLICELLA

The first exhibition dedicated to local marble was established in Sant'Ambrogio di Valpolicella as part of the celebrations for the Valpolicella Wine Festival. It was still an informal event, deeply rooted in the local production community of a district whose history had been linked to the extraction of Rosso Verona, Breccia Pernice and Pietra della Lessinia since Roman times. Even then, Sant'Ambrogio di Valpolicella was one of the world's leading centres for stone quarrying and processing, supported by a long-standing tradition of stonemasons and stonecutters dating back to the Middle Ages. Its proximity to the River Adige had, over the centuries, enabled the transport of materials throughout the Adriatic basin, making Verona stone and marble internationally renowned long before the exhibition's creation.

Italy was fully engaged in the Second World War. The Fascist regime pursued a policy of economic self-sufficiency and import restrictions, effectively encouraging the use and promotion of Italy's natural resources, including stone. The exhibition was established in this context to celebrate and promote the concept of the "national product".

1961

FIRST INTERNATIONAL MARBLE AND MACHINERY EXHIBITION - THE CHARTER OF MARBLE (CARTA DEL MARMO)

The 1961 edition marked a structural turning point for the exhibition. Strongly supported by the local industrial community and driven by a large group of entrepreneurs, it integrated stone-processing machinery alongside stone materials for the first time, establishing the "stone technology" format that would become the exhibition's defining DNA.

The Charter of Marble (Carta del Marmo) was drafted to set out the sector's ethical and quality principles and to launch its internationalisation process formally. The exhibition also developed a distinct B2B orientation, evolving beyond a local trade showcase.

The year 1961 marked the peak of Italy's Economic Miracle (1958–1963): GDP was growing at an annual rate of 6.3%, industrial production had increased by 84% over the course of a decade, and exports were rising by 12% per year. Italy was transitioning from an agricultural economy into a manufacturing powerhouse.

It was also the year in which the Salone del Mobile in Milan was founded, sharing the same objectives: to use the trade fair as a driver of export growth. The natural stone industry underwent rapid mechanisation: the first diamond wire saws dramatically reduced processing times and costs, transforming the sector from a craft-based activity into a scalable industrial industry.

1979

VERONAFIERE ASSUMES ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND MARMOMAC–MARMOMACCHINE IS ESTABLISHED.

Veronafiere assumes responsibility for the organisation of the event, which, while remaining based in Sant’Ambrogio di Valpolicella, adopts a more professional management structure and a broader strategic vision.

The exhibition takes the name Marmomac–Marmomacchine, formally establishing the material–technology pairing as the show's defining identity. The transition to Veronafiere represents a significant step change in scale: from a district-level event to a structured trade fair platform, with a commercial, relational and promotional framework that a local exhibition could not have developed independently.

The year 1979 marked the second oil crisis, triggered by the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Iran–Iraq War: crude oil prices doubled, severely affecting Italian industry, which depended on oil for around 70% of its energy needs. The natural stone sector, being highly energy-intensive, was among the most exposed. In this context, the decision to come together within a professional trade fair structure was not merely an organisational choice, but a strategic response to the need to internationalise sales and offset the contraction of the domestic market. The Middle Eastern markets—experiencing strong growth driven by oil revenues—became urgent strategic destinations for companies in the district.

1981

PARTNERSHIP WITH ICE ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY

Under the leadership of Veronafiere, Marmomac initiated a structured collaboration with ICE (Istituto per il Commercio Estero), the Italian government agency responsible for promoting exports. The agreement strengthened the exhibition's role as a system-wide instrument for the internationalisation of Italian marble by activating programmes to attract foreign buyers, supporting exporting companies, and providing institutional representation in target markets. This partnership remains active and central to today's event, evolving alongside ICE's transformation into ITA – Italian Trade Agency.

In the early 1980s, Italy responded to the energy crisis by placing export-led growth at the centre of its economic strategy. The government introduced policies to support the internationalisation of SMEs, with ICE becoming a key instrument in this approach. For the natural stone sector, internationalisation was no longer an option: the construction boom in the Gulf countries opened up vast markets for high-end building materials. Italian marble positioned itself as a luxury material and status symbol in the new architecture of Riyadh, Kuwait City and Abu Dhabi.

1987

FIRST INTERNATIONAL STONE ARCHITECTURE AWARD

Marmomac established the International Award for Stone Architecture (International Award Architecture in Stone), the first recognition in the world to link marble not to the quantity used, but to the architectural quality of the work. The inaugural jury brought together leading figures in international architectural criticism, including Mario Bellini, Kenneth Frampton, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani and Christian Norberg-Schulz. The approach was explicitly counter-trend: until then, awards had typically been given to those who used the most stone, whereas this prize was designed to recognise those who used it best. The competition became biennial and, over time, included figures such as Rafael Moneo, Arata Isozaki and Kengo Kuma. With this award, Marmomac moved beyond being a purely commercial trade fair and became a cultural observatory of contemporary stone architecture.

The 1980s were the decade of architectural postmodernism: the return to traditional materials and historical references generated new demand for stone cladding in major real estate developments in Milan, London and Tokyo. Alongside the surge in global demand for natural stone in major international cities, Marmomac in Verona consolidated its cultural positioning within the stone industry.

1992

TRANSFER TO VERONAFIERE: FROM 25,000 TO 60,000 SQM, FROM 32 TO 52 COUNTRIES

The steady growth in exhibitors and visitors made Sant'Ambrogio structurally inadequate. The exhibition was therefore permanently relocated to the Veronafiere exhibition centre, where the exhibition space nearly tripled, expanding from 25,000 to approximately 60,000 square metres. The number of participating countries increased from 32 to 52. This move marked the definitive transformation of Marmomac from a district trade fair into an international industry exhibition: Verona became the physical location that provided the event with the global projection its identity increasingly required.

1992 was a turning point for Italy. The currency crisis and the Tangentopoli corruption scandal marked the end of the First Republic. On the global stage, the Maastricht Treaty laid the foundations for the European Union and the single market, removing intra-European trade barriers. Paradoxically, the domestic economic crisis further pushed companies in the natural stone district towards international markets. Having a trade fair capable of hosting delegations from around the world was no longer a luxury, but a competitive necessity.

1998

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION: AIA, RIBA, SAIA, RAIC

Marmomac Academy was established and obtained recognition as a provider of accredited professional training by the world's leading architectural institutions: AIA (American Institute of Architects, USA), RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects, UK), SAIA (South African Institute of Architects), RAIC (Royal Architectural Institute of Canada), and later AIA Australia.

Training courses held during the exhibition began to count as mandatory professional credits for architects registered with these professional bodies. This development enhanced participation in the fair by responding directly to the continuing professional development needs of thousands of international architects.

In the 1990s, the architectural profession increasingly structured itself around mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD): the AIA introduced its formal credit system in 1994, while the RIBA consolidated its own framework in 1997. Marmomac identified this strategic opportunity: by aligning with these accreditation systems, it secured a regular presence in architects' professional agendas, effectively educating the future clients of its exhibiting companies.

2002

MARMOMAC BECOMES A SUPPLY CHAIN HUB: FROM QUARRY TO INTERIOR DESIGNER

Marmomac redefined its identity as a hub for the entire stone technology supply chain: no longer merely an exhibition of materials and machinery, but a meeting point for all actors within the value chain, from quarry extraction through to interior design, including processing, distribution and final application. Architects, designers, international buyers, machinery manufacturers, quarry operators and processors all share the same exhibition halls. This vertical integration became the competitive model that would distinguish Marmomac from all other trade fairs in the sector worldwide.

The global trade fair industry was undergoing a period of consolidation and disruption: the rise of the internet was challenging trade fairs' role as mere product showcases. The fairs that survived and grew were those that repositioned themselves as relational ecosystems—places not only to view products but also to do business, build partnerships, and gain professional updates. Marmomac responded accordingly: the fair could no longer function as a three-dimensional catalogue; it had to become a total industry experience.



2005

MARMOMAC STONE ACADEMY, THE COURSE WITH POLITECNICO DI MILANO

Marmomac Academy was developed in collaboration with the Politecnico di Milano, giving rise to the first university course entirely dedicated to the design use of natural stone in architecture and design. Today, this programme has been integrated into various architecture and building engineering courses and laboratories, and has evolved into the current Marmomac Meets Academy project. The programme was subsequently incorporated into other Italian and international universities, expanding its academic reach. In 2014, the initiative was accredited as part of the Biennale Sessions of the Venice Architecture Biennale, curated that year by Rem Koolhaas under the theme “Fundamentals”—a particularly favourable context for a project focused on the foundational elements of architecture.

In the mid-2000s, the Politecnico di Milano consolidated its position as an international centre of excellence for architecture and design. The agreement with Marmomac proved strategic for both parties: Politecnico di Milano gained access to a productive ecosystem and resources for applied research. At the same time, Marmomac gained academic credibility, positioning itself as a higher education and training environment. The 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, curated by Koolhaas (“Fundamentals”) and focused on the primary elements of architecture, including materials, provided the ideal cultural framework for a programme dedicated to stone.



2007

THE BEST COMMUNICATOR AWARD IS LAUNCHED

Veronafiere launched the Best Communicator Award (BCA), a prize dedicated to exhibitors distinguished by the quality and effectiveness of their stand communication. In its original form, the award evaluated the exhibition stand as a narrative tool and a means of brand positioning. The initiative stemmed from the belief that a company’s visual and spatial communication at trade fairs is a key indicator of its ability to build identity within the market. The BCA encouraged a general improvement in exhibition quality among more than 1,400 national and international exhibitors, transforming the halls of Marmomac into a benchmark for architectural display within the natural stone sector.

Today, the award has evolved to include a category dedicated to figures in art, design, and communication who have enhanced the material's storytelling.

In the mid-2000s, major Italian stone companies began to develop structured visual identities, designing showrooms as branded experiences and collaborating with renowned designers and architects. The BCA captured and amplified this trend: rewarding exhibition communication meant legitimising brand identity as a competitive lever, encouraging even more reluctant companies to invest in this area.

It became a market-building mechanism similar in nature to educational accreditation programmes, but focused on branding rather than professional training.

2012

MARMOMAC & THE CITY IS BORN

Marmomac extends its presence beyond the exhibition halls and into the urban fabric of Verona with the launch of Marmomac & the City: a citywide exhibition of stone sculptures and open-air installations set in squares and key locations throughout the historic centre. Organised by Veronafiere in collaboration with the Order of Architects and the Municipality of Verona, the installations remain on display throughout October, bringing natural stone to a much broader audience than the trade fair alone can. It is an operation of city branding for Verona and a strategy to extend marble's visibility beyond the fair calendar: stone leaves the exhibition and inhabits the city.

2012 marked the most acute phase of the European sovereign debt crisis and Italy's recession: GDP fell by 2.8%, and private consumption collapsed. In this context, Marmomac & the City also served as a territorial anchor, demonstrating that the stone sector remained active and capable of producing culture. On the international stage, major design and architecture fairs were experimenting with urban extensions to broaden their audiences and enhance cultural legitimacy.

2013

INTERNATIONAL CONSOLIDATION – TRADE FAIR NETWORKS IN BRAZIL, THE GULF AND AFRICA

The 48th edition of Marmomac recorded a visitor milestone, attracting professionals from 143 countries. In this context of growth, Veronafiere strengthened a network of international trade fair partnerships that brought the Marmomac brand into key markets for the natural stone sector: in Brazil, through the Vitória Stone Fair (managed by its subsidiary Milanez & Milaneze, acquired in 2013 and renamed Marmomac Brazil in 2025, later relocated to São Paulo); in the Gulf region, through organised participation in Qatar Stone Tech and Saudi Stone Tech; and in North Africa, with a presence in Egypt and Morocco. The strategy followed a radial hub model: Verona as the global epicentre, with satellite events bringing Italian marble directly into emerging markets.

2013 was a year in which the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) were still regarded as the main engines of global growth. Brazil was experiencing a construction boom ahead of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and the 2016 Olympic Games; the Gulf region was in the midst of a major infrastructure expansion cycle, with Qatar awarded the 2022 World Cup. The European financial crisis of 2011–2012 made this geographical diversification even more urgent: Italian stone companies increasingly needed to access markets outside Europe to compensate for the stagnation of domestic demand.

2015

STRATEGIC NATIONAL RECOGNITION: THE ITALIAN STONE THEATRE IS BORN.

Marmomac was recognised by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (MISE) as a strategic event for Made in Italy and was included in the Extraordinary Plan for the Promotion of Made in Italy, with the support of the ICE Agency (ITA – Italian Trade Agency).

In the same year, on the occasion of the fair's 50th anniversary, the Italian Stone Theatre was created: an entire hall dedicated to Italian stone excellence, where companies and designers collaborate on original installations curated by Raffaello Galiotto and Vincenzo Pavan.

The format would later evolve into The Plus Theatre in 2022 and The Bedrock in 2026, always following the same logic: a cultural stage for Italian marble understood as a system.

2015 was the year of Expo Milan ("Feeding the Planet"), which reinforced the global image of Made in Italy as a benchmark of productive and cultural excellence. The government focused on enhancing manufacturing exports through institutional promotion tools: the Extraordinary Plan for Made in Italy systematised Italy's leading trade fairs as international showcases of the national system. Within this context, Marmomac was not simply a trade fair but an instrument of industrial policy.

2017

REBRANDING – THE MARMO+MAC LOGO IS BORN

In the 2017 edition, Marmomac presented a new logo: Marmo+Mac. The "+" is not a mere graphic device; it is a statement of positioning. It declares that the exhibition is more than the sum of its parts: more than a marble fair, more than a machinery fair.

The plus sign connects material and technology, tradition and innovation, industry and culture. In a sector that had historically prioritised the product while often neglecting storytelling, Marmo+Mac visually communicates the fair's ambition to operate as an ecosystem.

The rebranding reinforces and makes visible the cultural positioning developed in previous years through initiatives such as the International Stone Architecture Award, the Best Communicator Award and The Italian Stone Theatre.

2017 was a year in which major Italian manufacturing brands invested heavily in repositioning and brand identity: rebrands of long-established companies multiplied, all seeking to communicate modernity without losing accumulated credibility.

On the trade fair side, international competition intensified. In this context, Marmomac's rebranding was not merely aesthetic: it was a strategic statement that Veronafiere competes not on exhibition volume, but on cultural positioning and brand identity.

2026

60TH EDITION – NEW CURATORSHIPS AND THE SUSTAINABLE EXCELLENCE AWARD WITH UNIVR

The 60th edition of Marmomac (22–25 September 2026) represents a moment of both celebration and renewal. The Plus Theatre evolves into The Bedrock: a new name that evokes the foundational layer on which everything else is built. The cultural hall hosts curatorial projects by Joseph Grima—architect, curator and co-founder of Alcova, an international voice on the relationship between technology, craftsmanship and design—and Davide Fabio Colaci—architect and curator, Professor of Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design at the Politecnico di Milano, known for his research into ornament and ephemeral spatial design. Both already featured in Marmomac 2025's cultural programme, their presence in the 60th anniversary edition consolidates a high-profile international artistic direction. In the same year, the International Sustainable Excellence Award was launched in collaboration with and under the patronage of the University of Verona (Univr). The award aims to recognise and promote technological solutions, systems and ideas that improve sustainability across the entire stone industry supply chain, with a focus on reducing environmental impact in production processes, enhancing efficiency and ensuring responsible resource management.

2026 marks the moment when sustainability ceases to be an additional narrative layer and becomes a structural requirement for access to international markets. EU ESG regulations, the Green Deal and the growing focus among architects and designers on low-impact materials make it essential for the stone sector to build a credible and measurable sustainability narrative. Natural stone—by definition durable, locally sourced and non-synthetic—possesses all the characteristics to position itself as a benchmark sustainable material. However, it requires cultural tools and certification frameworks to communicate this effectively. The award developed with Univr responds precisely to this need: transforming an intrinsic property of the material into a verified and internationally recognised narrative.