



CASE STUDY

BIANCO

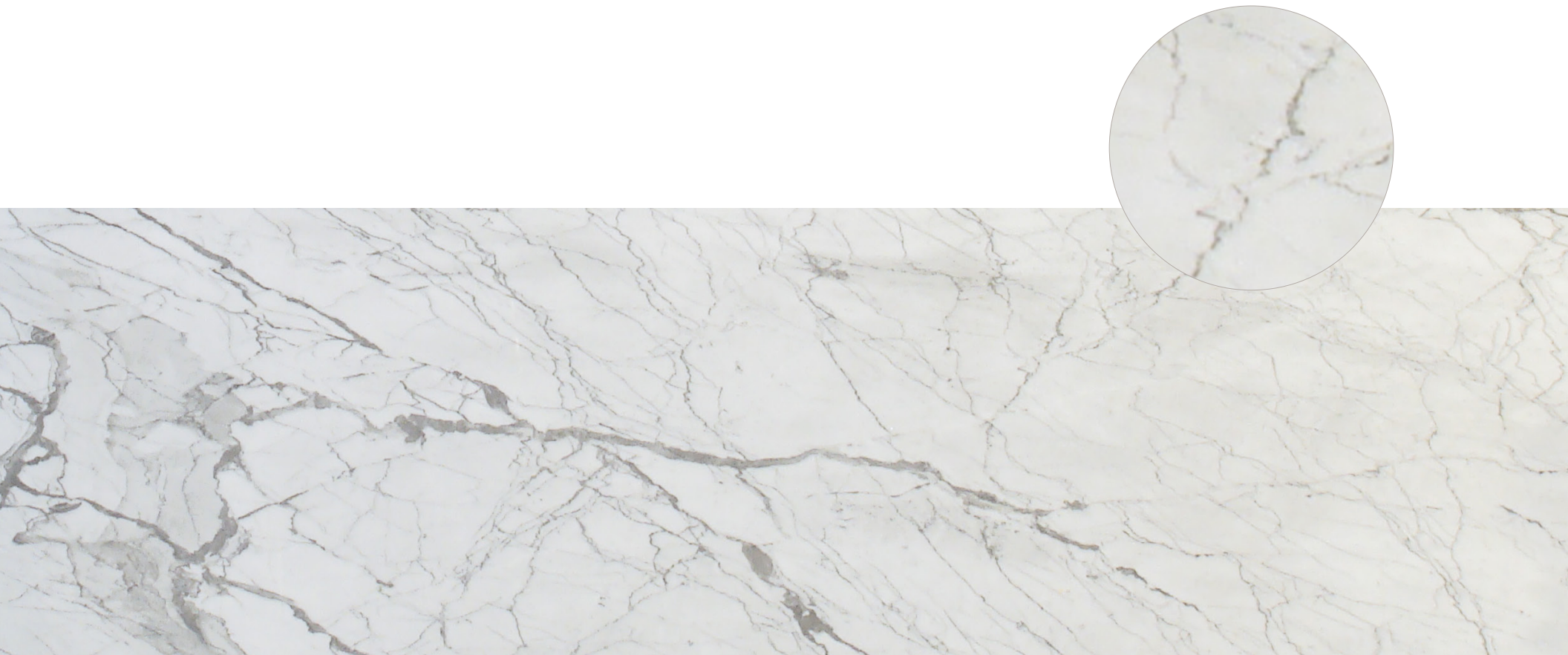
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BIANCO: COMBINING AWARD-WORTHY DESIGN WITH THE TASTE OF ITALY

Bianco is a gorgeous restaurant serving mouthwatering Italian cuisine in the heart of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Natural lighting shines in from floor to ceiling windows, industrial touches play off the concrete flooring, and stunning Daltile Carrara Gioia marble slabs create a seamless and uniquely elegant experience as the dressing for an exquisite dining experience.

A new addition to the downtown Edmonton scene, Bianco is nothing short than a labor of love. Every detail in the beautiful, Italian eatery is part of its thoughtful and intentional design. Every countertop, table top and wall serving area features beautiful Carrara Gioia marble slabs from Daltile.



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Sid Assaf of OCI Architecture, part of the design and architecture team behind Bianco, custom designed every aspect of the space from the windows, to the lighting, as well as suggestions for space utilization. "Bianco is one of the two newest and nicest spaces in Edmonton. Literally everything from A to Z was customized. I didn't want someone to get cheated from seeing the room, so every single seat in the restaurant has a unique view and a different experience. I didn't want the eating experience to be repetitive and for a patron to experience everything in one visit."

Assaf was also in charge of the renovation of the tower that Bianco is in and his firm has moved its office to the tower as well. "People are going to start accusing me of building this tower for myself, with all the beautiful features and delicious food nearby."

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Joe Viana, one of the co-owners of Bianco knows a thing or two about good food and beautiful design. He has exclusively used Daltile products in his restaurants for the last 25 years. Bianco, sister restaurant to the acclaimed Rosso Pizzeria, has a special personality from his other establishments.

"When my brother first came to me, we initially talked about using a marbleized quartz, but when we talked application and where the product was going to be used, we decided to go with natural stone," said Roy Viana, Joe's brother and director of slab division for Daltile. "I've been in the natural stone/countertop business for more than twenty-five years. I essentially live and breathe countertop products."





"My brother is very particular and has owned a few restaurants," Roy continued, "but I knew this restaurant was going to be different just due to the number of questions he asked me relating to stone and countertops. In this particular case, the white Carrara Gioia was not just the best choice, but also the better cost option – although cost didn't play a role in the decision. My brother was looking for a certain look and feel. All I did was walk him through certain products and how they perform. When he told me that some of the application areas would be interior and exterior walls; and feature areas, that's when I suggested Carrara Gioia and he decided to use the marble from Italy."

"Obviously it's an Italian restaurant and we wanted to make it feel very Italian, in addition to functional and clean. That's why we used the Carrara Gioia," Joe added. "The stone is really good for restaurants and we used it for every countertop - from the bar and pasta station to all the tables. In restaurants, three marble slabs counts as a lot. We used 26 slabs in the restaurant. Filippo Maiorana, who did the installation and has been working in the industry for 35 years, told me that this is the most marble he's ever used in one fitting."

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Maiorana describes himself as a stone purist in the sense that he loves natural material - especially marble. "Marble is delicate and there is a different scope of parameters when working with such a beautiful, soft stone. In general, marble is tougher to install because it is more fragile and therefore likely to break."

"This was one of the more detailed and difficult projects undertaken by Maiorana Stone Inc. It happened in the dead of winter in -31°C and Joe and Dave (Manna, co-owner of Bianco) had requested some of the slabs to be cut with sharp mitered corners so the pieces would fit together seamlessly. You have to have a lot of patience to complete a delivery like that without damaging any of the materials.

The hardest part was preparing the slabs for the main feature bar, which is U-shaped, and has this waterfall detail that wraps all the way around. It was an extensive process because there were so many pieces to line up and fit together," Maiorana explained.



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"However, once we got the marble onsite, the installation process was a lot easier." Maiorana continued. "The quality was excellent and very consistent. Every slab was consistent in hone and veining. It made the finished installations seamless and look like it was all cut from one block of marble. It looks very natural and planned. This is not always the case with Carrara, as it can vary from slab to slab. This product was excellent." "Have you ever been to Italy and seen the Statue of David?" Joe asked. "That's Carrara. Carrara is something that is exclusive to Italy. You can't get white marble with that same look from anywhere else. When you see it, you know it's Italian."

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"I had two goals in mind when designing this space," said Assaf, who was part of the design and architectural team working on Bianco's renovation. "First, when I went into the space, I was struck by how stark and how prevalent concrete was. This space had belonged to another restaurant that had been demolished 10 years prior and had concrete ceilings, walls, and flooring. Nobody had used this space in 10 years. Now, I love concrete, but I wanted to make the concrete feel warm, while keeping the renovation cost-effective. My second goal was to create not just a warm space, but also make it inviting enough to make patrons want to stay a long time."



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Daltile has had a similar effect on Joe. "Twenty-five years ago, I started using Daltile products in my restaurants. Those products are still there today, even in the ones I no longer own. My first experience was very good and the service from the people at the warehouse in Edmonton kept me coming back. Whenever I need help, I can just call the manager and say 'Hey Tasha, I need 40 more square feet of the octagonal tile' and she will quickly order it in from Calgary and it will be here in Edmonton just a few days later. It's wonderful that Daltile has it's very own stone division because I don't have to deal with multiple suppliers, I can deal with just one person for the different areas and products I need in my restaurant."

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