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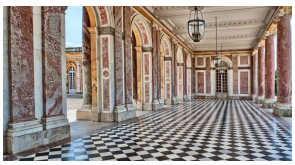
Sample of red Languedoc marble.



Large fireplace decorating The Round Room in the Grand Trianon at Versailles Palace, made out of red Languedoc marble.



Marble floor in The Round Room in the Grand Trianon at Versailles Palace, made out of Carrara, black Belgium, and red Languedoc marble.



Peristyle of the Grand Trianon at Versailles Palace. The pilasters and the monolithic columns are made out of red Languedoc marble.



Fireplace inside the music hall in the Grand Trianon at Versailles palace.

Known since ancient times, **red Languedoc marble** is extracted from several areas in the Languedoc-Roussillon region, the main and the oldest quarries being at Caunes-Minervois (Aude) and Félines (Hérault). Red Languedoc marble varies from orange red to bright red, along with large white veins. Raban Maur spoke about it and described it as being made up of “foam and mixed blood”. It is predominantly used in architecture, on wall tiles, on fireplaces, on furniture and on marquetry work.

Red Languedoc marble was extensively used to make fireplaces, especially during the 18th century. The Grand Trianon of the Versailles Palace, built for Marie-Antoinette, features several fireplaces made out of this marble, as well as a shining floor made out of Carrara marble, black Belgium marble, and red Languedoc marble found in The Round Room. The Round Room also features a fireplace made out of red Languedoc marble. The music hall inside the Grand Trianon is also decorated with a large fireplace made out of this same marble.

The exterior peristyle of the Grand Trianon of the Versailles Palace alternates between pilasters and monolithic columns made out of red Languedoc marble. Red Languedoc marble has been extracted since the roman period but exploitation was relatively low until the end of the Renaissance period. Extraction in large quantities started at the start of the 17th century. In 1615, the Abbot Jean of Alibert met the roman sculptor Stefano Sormano and asked him to find the marble quarries which were around his abbey in Caunes. After this remarkable discovery by Sormano, blocks of this marble were sent to Italy and the stone became a huge hit, under the name of *“Rossi di Francia”*. Shortly after, the exploitation of these quarries was carried out by the Italians and production was mainly sent to Italy. In 1658, a French marble-worker, Jean Baux, arrived in Caunes and red Languedoc marble started to become used in France. Jean Baux supplied red Languedoc marble to make the jube of Sainte-Marie Cathedral in Auch and altarpiece of the cathedral in Toulouse.

The quarries were made royal quarries in 1692 and were under the direct intervention of royal buildings. Called “the quarry of Roy” during the reign of Louis XIV, he himself made a lot of use out of it, in particular for the Versailles palace, for the Saint-Cloud palace and for many other royal buildings. **Red Languedoc marble** was used to build the Petit Trianon of Versailles palace, built by Ange-Jacques Gabriel. Later on, this stone was extensively used for all types of buildings in France, Europe and the United States.

There are several other quarries where red Languedoc marble is extracted from. It was extracted from the Notre-Dame-Du-Cros quarry until the end of the 20th century. Another quarry where this marble is extracted is the Saint-Nazaire-de-Ladareze quarry in the Hérault department. The marble extracted from this quarry is called “Incarnat red” and still exists today. This marble was also extracted in the south, in Villefranche-de-Conflent, under the name *“Incarnat de Villefranche”*. This quarry has been closed for a number of years. Other historical quarries are Hôpital, Portes and Alès.

See also

Griotte marble — Red of Rance — Rouge Royal marble — Palace of Versailles — Louis XIV style — Marie-Antoinette

See our marble fireplaces