



PRESS RELEASE

Hats off!

Blue limestone as never seen before

On the occasion of the 2014 Biennial for Interior Design in Kortrijk, going on until the 26th of October, Carrières du Hainaut® is breaking new ground: a surprising association with the Belgian designer Fabienne Delvigne to produce an original interpretation of blue limestone and a unique design concept.



On one hand there is Carrières du Hainaut®, producer of blue stone, the most elegant and emblematic of Belgian natural stones. On the other, Fabienne Delvigne, the fashion designer renowned for her hat creations with their distinctive qualities of lightness and airiness, and Belgian Royal Warrant Holder. The link between the two? An inherent sense of refinement and beauty, boundless inventiveness, inspired creativity in the service of the noblest materials... and a large measure of audacity!

An innovative spirit

Since 1888, the year of its creation, Carrières du Hainaut® has never ceased to innovate in realising the creative potential of blue stone. Although exceptional in terms of resistance and unique aesthetic – hence its use in many constructions and public buildings - from the very start it was a material that attracted the attention of designers. Renowned Art Nouveau architects such as Victor Horta and Paul Hankar were quick to use blue stone, for its strength in foundation works certainly, but also for its aesthetic aspect as an element in facade decoration. The systematic use of this material by these and other architects of the day inextricably associates blue stone with some of the most elegant private townhouses for which Belgium is famed.

A living and inspiring material, Belgian Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut® is closely

associated with creativity. Over the years, many innovations have highlighted its infinite possibilities in terms of resistance, applications, form, texture and colour. Art Nouveau, having highlighted the many ways it can be combined with a wide range of materials, such as glass or metal, opened the door to these surprising and impressive creative “marriages”.



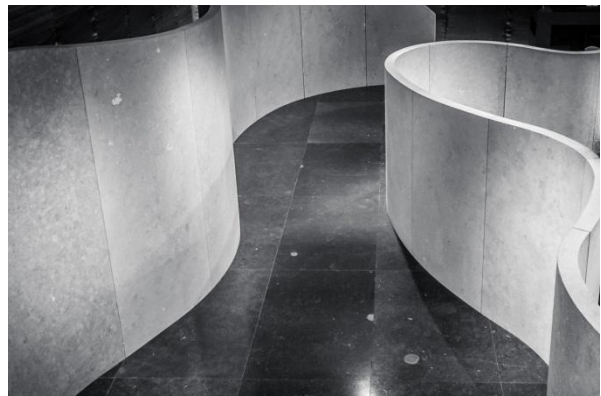
Audacity intact

A century later, the traditional audacity of the Carrières du Hainaut® remains intact. Today it is rising to the challenge of leaving the familiar world of construction and architecture to enter the realms of design and decor. Thereby creating the surprise by announcing the coming together of two very different worlds: a blue stone creation entrusted to Belgian fashion designer Fabienne Delvigne.

No: it's not a hat!

On the occasion of the 2014 Biennial of Interior Design (ongoing in Kortrijk until 26 October), **Jan Devroey** – Brand Manager of Carrières du Hainaut® – entrusted **Fabienne Delvigne** with the challenge of lending a new interpretation to Belgian Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut® by designing the 80m² company exhibition stand. The emblematic blue limestone of Belgium, a pure Belgian product, is here reworked by a Belgian designer of international renown.

“The challenge was to create the concept in line with my criteria, that is, the elegance, a touch of femininity, innovation and lightness of my creations. The question was how to transpose what are truly essential elements for me into blue stone?” explains the designer. *“The answer came to me when I first visited the Carrières, the actual quarries. To find yourself in the entrails of the earth, amid such immensity, is impressive. I was captivated by this magical place. Seeing the quarries and how the stone is worked inspired me. Suddenly I saw the stroke of the brush, the ensemble of lines and curves.”*



An artistic and technical challenge

Together, they succeeded in transforming the blue stone, initially a hard, rectilinear and massive material, into something light, airy and elegant with its curves and countercurves. *“This new concept is in marked contrast to everything we had done to date. To lend lightness to a heavy material, to create a fluid and continuous line when working with elements of this size, required many weeks of reflection and searching for new techniques to give substance to curves and countercurves in a material that is generally worked along straight lines,”* explains Jan Devroey, Brand Manager at Carrières du Hainaut®. The Carrières du Hainaut® pushed back the boundaries of working with blue stone, bringing a new inventiveness and innovation to this unique challenge.





The result is an innovative *mise en scène*: two stone walls 11m in length, with delicate, light lines composed of 15 blocks 8cm thick, each one meticulously joined to the other to produce the fluid curves. This unique composition covering 80m² required nearly six months of technical preparations and 16 tons of Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut®.

‘For the stand floor, we chose the EnoPasso® tile,’ explains Jan. *‘This dark grey to satin black tile provides the perfect combination between the aged patina aspect of the tile surface and modernity, due in particular to the non-aged sawn edges. Perfect for contemporary designs.’* These smooth and dark tiles create a subtle contrast with the impressive vertical structure that is light grey in colour and with a grainy surface.

The walls at the back of the stand are covered in an exceptional fabric: laminated banana fibre. *‘I adore this material. It looks very much like blue stone: they both shine and have these little pinpoints of light. The colour is also in the same blue-grey tones,’* explains Fabienne Delvigne. The result is magnificent: despite their difference, the two natural, living materials are a perfect match, neither taking precedence over the other. To cover the 54 m² of the stand walls, no less than 165 m of fabric were needed.

The improbable marriage of Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut® and the delicate world of Fabienne Delvigne has given birth to a surprising technical feat. Although at first these two worlds may seem poles apart, it is ultimately a matter of sculpting in a material. The coming together of two passions driven by the same criteria of excellence, creativity, elegance, refinement and fine materials results in an impressive artistic realisation.



Discover the stand of Carrières du Hainaut® from 17 to 26 October at the 2014 Biennial for Interior Design in Kortrijk, hall 2 – stand 209.

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- 2014 Biennial of Interior Design in Kortrijk : www.interieur.be / hall 2 – stand 209

Pictures available on request.

Did you know?

Belgian Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut®, a high-quality and noble material draws its origins from 345 million years ago, from the dawning of life on earth, when our regions were bathed in a tropical sea. Crinoids – fossilised elements of the fauna and flora of the day – deeply embedded in a mass of microcrystalline calcite, are transformed through sedimentation into a homogenous and very compact limestone rock. It is quarried at a depth of 75 metres.

Some emblematic works in Belgian blue limestone of Carrières du Hainaut®:

- Arcade of the Cinquantenaire in Brussels (1905)
- The Heysel Palace (1934)
- Most of the facades of houses by architects Victor Horta, Paul Hankar, Jules Brunfaut and others
- The Amsterdam Rijksmuseum
- The National University Library, Strasbourg
- The Yacht Club of Monaco
- The Jussieu Campus, Université Pierre-et-Marie-Curie, in Paris
- Bevis Marks, The City, London

About Carrières du Hainaut®

For more than 125 years by now, "Carrières du Hainaut®" has been extracting and manufacturing a unique, authentic and emblematic stone from the Belgian soil: Belgian Blue Limestone of Carrières du Hainaut®. By developing the expertise and know-how of its teams and continuously perfecting their tools, the company has today become Europe's biggest ornamental limestone quarry. Carrières du Hainaut® undertakes to supply a natural stone and service of the highest quality while respecting the environment. Respecting a socially responsible and sustainable approach to adding value to local natural resources, its



working methods guarantee responsible handling in which safety is paramount. The Carrières du Hainaut® blue stone extraction and production, carried out at a single site in Soignies, Belgium, is



unique in the sector for such a volume of stone (250 000 m³/year). Through its participation in the Centre de Formation aux Métiers de la Pierre naturelle/Centre for Stone Trades Training (CEFOMEPI), Carrières du Hainaut[®] is working to ensure that the skills of blue stone professionals are handed down to future generations.

About Fabienne Delvigne



Fabienne Delvigne has specialized since 1987 in the design and manufacturing of Haute Couture hats, headdresses, jewellery, handbags, shoes. The elegant headwear that Fabienne Delvigne has created since the late 80's has secured the Belgian milliner's position as the go-to designer for members of the Royal Families of Belgium, The Netherlands, Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and Sweden. Her know-how has been rewarded since 2001, when she was initially awarded the official patent of "Belgian Royal Warrant Holder". Fabienne Delvigne has collaborated with designers including Giorgio Armani, Chanel, Dior or Natan. Very imaginative, she likes to collaborate with other talents and to use other skills. She has for example created hats in crystal for master glassmaker Véronique Bernier and in chocolate for Neuhaus! This cooperation with Carrières du Hainaut[®] to design a space belonging to a very different world than fashion nevertheless marks a first for Fabienne Delvigne.

