

**BEST OF TABLEWARE 2023** Innovations for the well-laid table & industry trends



SERVICE & UNIQUE PIECES MADE OF PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC

Nour Al Nimer designed the decor *Gül n' Eloïse* for their own tableware brand Nimerology . Photo / Copyright: Manufacturer

Fairs like Ambiente and Maison & Objet are taking place again, but the tableware industry is struggling. Cheap producers show the way, while established manufacturers get into trouble. The table is set this year with bright centerpieces, 1980s revivals and things that look handmade but aren't. Our view with 51 photos.

by Claudia Simone Hoff, February 22, 2023

Some bad news is currently coming from the German porcelain industry. Some manufacturers are threatened with a production stop, others are increasingly outsourcing their production to Asia or giving up completely. The reasons given for the misery are almost always the increased energy prices, which have hit the porcelain manufacturers particularly hard. But if you look at the ranges of once successful companies, you have to realize that innovations have been rather rare in recent years, also in terms of design. The competition is greater today than it was just a few years ago and, above all, much faster than the often sluggish porcelain manufacturers with their own, cost-intensive production facilities. Lifestyle labels like Serax, Ferm Living and Broste Copenhagen have their products produced externally and now cover the entire spectrum of living topics, which of course also includes plates, cups, glasses and kitchen utensils such as storage containers, cheese slicers or sieves - Ikea has shown the way. Conversely, quite a few tableware manufacturers have tried to expand their offerings in the lifestyle sector in recent years. However, mostly without great success, just think of the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory.



**SERVICE & UNIQUE PIECES IN PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC *Nido***  
collection in bone china by Ann Van Hoey for Serax. Photo / Copyright: Manufacturer

### **Made in Portugal**

Porcelain manufacturers in particular do not (any longer) know how to convert their technical and craft know-how into marketable products, which is downright a tragedy in view of their tradition and history. At the Frankfurt consumer goods fair Ambiente it was possible to see what is one of the reasons for the progressive decline: cheap producers, who come in particular from Portugal, make their lives difficult. They can produce the stoneware crockery that is so popular with consumers at low cost because - funded with EU funds - they use new technical processes such as digital printing and print decorations on plates and bowls. The fact that cups, jugs and other more complex shapes are not suitable for this process does not seem to bother us much.

### **Technology creates trends**

Trends in the tableware area are therefore increasingly determined by the technical possibilities of cheap production. This is also possible because knowledge about things and how they are made is decreasing among most consumers and there is a general lack of appreciation for craftsmanship. Coupe plates, for example, are almost always available with deformed and irregular edges that look handmade, but aren't. They pretend to the buyer that they are "handmade", but are 100 percent machine-made, and the imprecise shape also means far less waste. This production method works particularly well because an interior design trend has been unbroken for years and has been intensified by the pandemic: the longing for the imperfect,





**SERVICE & UNIQUE PIECES IN PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC YII**  
Collection by Ferréol Babin for Revol. Photo / Copyright: Romain Guittet

"Meanwhile, I'm really happy when I see precise shapes somewhere," says Wiebke Lehmann. At Ambiente, the Berlin master ceramist and specialist in tableware also discovered manufacturers who draw attention to themselves with technical innovations. Grestel from Portugal with its brands Costa Nova and Casa Fina presented a tableware collection made from recycled materials. With its modern technical facilities, the producer is also able to produce high-fired stoneware CO2-free - with the help of solar and hydrogen energy as well as waste heat utilization. In addition to the Portuguese companies, which tend to cover the lower segment in terms of quality, there are of course also those that produce precise moulds. This includes, for example, Molde Ceramics with the teapots in the collection *Atlas Mate Natural*.



**SERVICE & UNIQUE ITEMS MADE OF PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC**

Finally, Raawii is bringing out a nice souvenir for the Vermeer exhibition in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. The pitcher is made of terracotta. Photo / Copyright: Manufacturer



## Centerpieces for the table

In addition to the “handmade” trend, labels such as Blomus with the Japanese-inspired *Kumi tableware and Revol with the Yli* series designed by Ferréol Babincorresponding, we discovered the characterful ceramics of the Japanese Ricca Okana. Just like the terracotta jug by Raawii, which was created as a souvenir on the occasion of the large Vermeer exhibition in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, they are suitable as decorative and at the same time functional centerpieces on the laid table. The cordless table lamps, which are now available from many manufacturers, cut a good figure there and also serve a lucrative sales market, the contract business with hotels and restaurants. The Italian manufacturer Driade surprises with a multifunctional object designed by art director Fabio Novembre:

*Welcome* creates an atmospheric lighting and at the same time serves as a stand for treats. The porcelain manufacturer Dibbern relies on a classic table lamp and brought a proven lighting expert on board with Tobias Grau Design for the *Lumen design*. The lights in four different shapes combine a body made of wafer-thin fine bone china with a lampshade made of colored glass.



**VASES & ACCESSORIES** Pop of colour: Vases from Lyngby Porcelæn's *Rhombé Color* collection in new shades. Photo / Copyright: Manufacturer



## Memphis revival & birthday bash

As in furniture design, we are now also seeing designs in the tableware area that are reminiscent of the 1980s – at least as far as the use of eccentric colors and patterns is concerned. With *Ink*, Zwiesel Glas has launched a series of mouth-blown wine and champagne glasses that stand out due to a surprising colored thread in the stem and a different-colored base plate. And while Lyngby's *Torino* drinking glass series combines colored glass handles with a transparent glass body, Repa Reverter introduces the *Sisters vase design* for Bosa Ceramiche continues the Memphis tradition with wild color combinations and decorations. By the way, there will be celebrations this year apart from the explosion of colors and patterns: KPM will be 260 years old and had the artist Rona Knobel reinterpret a classic, the *Halle* vase by Marguerite Friedlaender from the early thirties. The Mettlach porcelain manufacturer Villeroy & Boch is even 15 years older than KPM and is floating in paradise for the occasion. He dipped Helen von Boch's legendary *La Boule* crockery ball from the gaudy seventies in the historic *Paradiso* decor and released it as a limited edition.



### VASES & ACCESSORIES

Villeroy & Boch is celebrating its 275th anniversary with the *Paradiso* anniversary collection, which also includes bowls and candlesticks. Photo / Copyright: Manufacturer