

— 2020 OI —

Magazine of the Herend Porcelain Manufactory

No 54

Herend

HERALD

In search of mystical animals

—

Four seasons in homes

—

The automaton chess player
with a human way of thinking





Vase with phoenix bird shaped ears
06668005SP870



Dear Herend Herald Readers,

Life is fragile ...

Once upon a time - "Life" was constantly rushing about, pursuing continuous development, exhausting itself, exploiting heaven and earth, fearing to miss out on opportunities, reluctant to relax and listen to the silence. Then, abruptly, Life came to a halt, and the resulting hush was like a solar eclipse descending on nature. Life stopped. Complete silence fell, and Life was unable to put its head around this crippling silence. Not even birds sang, and crickets were still. The day was taken over by night at noon. Life had experienced nothing like this before, it had to think how to overcome the darkness of night. Life had to struggle not only for a living but also for health. It realized that while rushing around earlier at full steam, it failed to notice rainbows in the sky, smell the rain, dry its hair in the sun, hold its loved ones; it lived the life of others instead of its own. But because Life is optimistic, it lives and wants to live, it believed in sunlight returning after the eclipse. And that is precisely what happened: Life resumed just as abruptly, the Sun rose in the east and was shining light on Earth all over along its course westwards. The world woke up to a similar yet different morning where Life is capable of perceiving timeless in evanescent, hours in minutes.

Herend porcelain is eternal ...

So far, we might have thought porcelain to be fragile; but now we came to realize there are things much more fragile than that.

Beauty, artistry, uniqueness, quality, harmony of forms and patterns crafted by creative hands create eternal values of Herend. Day by day in the Manufactory, we ponder how to bequeath more value on posterity than we received from our predecessors. This is our quest that determines our days and is represented in our innovations of corporate governance, strategy and product development. In our company, innovation is the answer to the challenges of the world. Herend porcelain relieves one's solitude, provides company, conjures a festive occasion, and gives timelessness in evanescence. Value cannot be broken, value submerges but does not drown, value is eternal and constant.

Herend lived, Herend lives, Herend will live!

Thank you for your kind attention!
Sincerely,

Dr. Attila Simon
Chief Executive Officer

Wall plate
08439050SPAMA1



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Imprint

Published by the Herend Porcelain Manufactory

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Printed by Pauker Printing House
ISSN 1787-6133



Success of novelties

All those that count are present at the Ambiente in Frankfurt.

The Herend Porcelain Manufactory debuted with a completely new Herend exhibition stand at the Frankfurt Ambiente Trade Fair, which was equally innovative, trendy, elegant and underlining Herend's global leadership in handmade porcelain manufacturing. This year, 29 new decorations, 43 new products, and eight new items representing extraordinary technical feats were showcased at the fair. Our large dragon turtle figure won the first prize at the contest of *Tableware International Awards of Excellence 2020*. Moreover, our huge vase ornamented with falcons is certainly worthy of mention with its height over 2 m. Also, our carnival figure sporting a new pattern, the special design of animal figurines, the one-of-a-kind pairs of cups and the porcelain plaque also represent highlights in our 2020 product range. What is more, we presented the world's largest herbivorous lizard as a figurine and on a wall plate, while enthusiasts of tableware novelties were delighted by the colour variations of the highly successful Art Deco collection.

In Herend's Embrace

The Herend Porcelain Manufactory's exhibition called *In Herend's Embrace* attracted a large audience to the Triangulum Gallery in Győr. "Porcelain is a work of fine art. Reflecting beauty, true art gives joy to people, elevates the soul, and is capable of leading one to the love of God the Creator", this is how Diocesan of Győr, chief patron of the exhibition András Veres summed up the nature of true art. The exhibition showcased nearly 400 porcelain items.



Photo: Zsolt Batár

Magic in the Castle

Our Herend porcelain brand shop in the heart of the Buda Castle has been renovated. The completely refurbished shop has turned into a sanctuary of wonders and experiences, worthy of the exclusive brand image of the Herend Porcelain Manufactory. Situated at a tourist hotspot, our Budapest brand shop was magically transformed into an exclusive member of our network of Herend shops with high quality furniture and sophisticated, elegant solutions of interior architecture. The shop offers nearly 5,000 porcelain items of Herend.

THE AGE OF ELABORATE CODICES

Today, when we can enter thousands of characters per minute on the keyboards of our computers or smartphones, it is hard to imagine that the emergence of codices revolutionised the recording of thoughts in late antiquity.

The replacement of thin papyrus scrolls that were highly popular in ancient Egypt, Babylon and Hellas with parchment made of untanned skins of calves, sheep or goats represented a significant innovation because the animal skin when properly processed and smoothed is suitable for writing on both sides. Initially, Roman parchment codices consisted of a single sheet, which made them more similar to today's rectangular exercise books than to bulky books.

Unrestricted content length

After the technical problems of binding the sheets together had been resolved, codices consisting of as many as over 1,500 pages were made in the 4th century in the Western Roman Empire; bound in hardcovers, they were fairly durable. The name "codex" comes from Latin: caudex or codex denotes a tree trunk, a wooden writing board, or a book. Contents were written in the codex in narrow script to maximise the number majuscules that fit on the expensive parchments; however, the continuous flow of text made reading difficult.

Artistic initials

In the empire of Charles the Great (768–814 A.D.), this problem was resolved by the introduction of the Carolingian minuscule in 780 (which constitutes the basis of today's lowercase letters), also marking the beginning of the use of spaces and some primitive punctuation. Initials, i.e. ornamental or historiated initial letters that were often works of art painted in colourful ink, helped segment the text. Initials always reflected the artistic style of the given era: in the Roman period, the body of the letter consisted of human figures and meandering plants, while in the Gothic period the initial contained entire religious scenes. Often, the patron commissioning the codex, or the author or the scribe would also be depicted in the picture within the initial.



Standing figurine in mask
15032000POEM-I



Tricks of the trade in monasteries

Due to the huge size of the texts, codices were more often divided into chapters and paragraphs, subsequently, tables of contents and page numbering were also introduced for easier reference. Until the 11th century, the process of creating codices was performed almost exclusively in monasteries – starting from preparing the parchment, through drawing the borders and copying the text, to binding it in leather. Each codex was the fruit of months' or even years' worth of meticulous work by monks, which made each completed copy such a great treasure – particularly if bound in a treasure cover adorned with precious metals and gems – that they were fastened to bookshelves with a chain.

Being the bearers of God's word, codices were written in Latin, the language of the Church. They may contain any of the gospels, parts of the New Testament, or even the entire Bible; commentaries would often be added to the scriptures to facilitate interpretation. The oldest surviving codex, the *Codex Vaticanus* is one of the most valuable biblical manuscripts. Presumably dating from the 4th century, the codex has been strictly guarded in the Vatican since 1457. Still, the most well-known codex is not that but the volume known as the *Codex Gigas* – the largest codex surviving from the Middle Ages. The 624-page book weighing 75 kg was looted in Prague by Swedish troops at the end of the 30-year war in 1648. Containing the Bible, as well as historical and medical tracts, the *Codex Gigas* has been part of the Swedish Royal Library since.



Did you know?

The most important codex of Hungarians is the *Chronicon Pictum* [*Illuminated Chronicle*], which was written around 1360, ordered by King Louis I of Hungary, and which follows the historical events in Hungary up to the age of King Charles I of Hungary. Representing an unparalleled value for history and arts, the *Chronicon Pictum* is kept in the National Széchenyi Library.



Ornamental teapot
07364013 MOR

Dragon 05480000SBCH-OR
Phoenix 05379000VHSP35

Pegasus 15856000VH
Mermaid on shell 15240000VHSP2
Unicorn 15360000VH

IN SEARCH OF MYSTICAL ANIMALS

They are mysterious, special, and have superpowers. They regularly appear in tales and myths; there is no palpable evidence of their existence, though. Figments of human imagination are frequently embodied in animals that are sometimes frightening and sometimes fascinating.

Dragons

Etymologically, the word 'dragon' is derived from 'drakon' denoting huge snake. Ever since human civilisation has existed, myths of fire-breathing, flying, snake-like creatures have co-existed. In eastern cultures, dragons were often considered deities with powers to control the forces of nature and abilities to stop evil. As opposed to this, dragons in western cultures were evil deadly monsters leaving chaos in their wake.

Phoenix

Symbolising resurrection and rebirth, the Phoenix is a bird of fire in Greek mythology, which sets itself on fire at the end of its life to give life to a new, young Phoenix emerging from its ashes. This legendary creature is depicted in ancient Egyptian and Chinese cultures alike; according to some of the legends, this bird – that resembled pheasants or peacocks most – lived for thousands of years. Although the Phoenix with its red and golden plumage is clearly a figment of human imagination, zoologists admit that certain bird species love playing with fire.

Did you know?

Based on ancient descriptions, the dragon of Herend bears the features of a number of animals: antlers of a deer, head of a camel, eyes of a demon, belly of a clam, tail of a snake, claws of falcon, paws of a tiger, and ears of a buffalo.

Pegasus

The pure white horse with wings growing out of its back emerged from Greek mythology, too. Pégasos was an offspring of Poseidon and Medusa, who carried thunderbolt and lightning for Zeus. Legend says that the spring Hippocrene burst forth where he struck his hoof, with water bringing inspiration to poets. Today, Pegasus mostly inspires the transport industry: so many cars, aircraft and ships have been named after him. He is also the eponym of a constellation consisting of particularly bright stars.

Mermaids

These creatures with bodies half human half fish represent the duality of open waters: sometimes, seas and oceans sway gently but, at other times, they rise up in destructive waves; just like mermaids, who may be gentle and helpful, or may be cruel and mischief-makers. They are depicted in numerous people's folklore, but all of those describe them as alluring in appearance – often with a great mane of green hair. According to certain theories, stories of mermaids were invented to make sailing the open waters less threatening to people.

Unicorns

Today's unicorns are glittering, adorable creatures with rainbow manes – or this is how they are depicted in cartoons. If, however, we go back in time, we will mostly find unruly unicorns in ancient Hellas. At that time, these mystical creatures were believed to embody purity and grace, with magical healing power attributed to their horn. According to historians, multiple animals, including the now extinct Siberian rhinoceros, the narwhal and the goat provided inspiration for the unicorn.



FOUR SEASONS IN HOMES

Spring awakens, summer bears fruit, autumn reveals transience and winter quiets down – each season has its beauty. Each has a different atmosphere that we can borrow to slip into our homes through a few tricks of interior decoration without the need for major renovations.

The most straightforward and also the simplest way of evoking the current season is to use seasonal decorative elements. These involve minor changes that do not dominate permanent decorations and still attract attention.

Certain colours promptly call to mind a certain season. Harsh greens cry spring, various shades of blue fill us with the summer calm of the infinite sea. Use of seasonal colours is a safe choice even for minimalist homes.

We adjust our wardrobe to seasons; why not do so with certain elements of our living room, bedroom or dining room, too? If, for instance, you serve the first meal of the day on a summer-toned breakfast set, it will raise your spirits even if the weather is less merciful at the moment. The Herend Porcelain Manufactory's collection *Four Seasons* pleasantly matches every home given that its decoration is accentual and pure at the same time. Its natural and perfectly realistic painting equally matches a lavishly decorated festive table and a sleek table setting.

To be honest, we owe the beauty of each season to nature, which suggests considering also natural, organic decoration when harmonizing our living space with the current season. Evoke nature in your living room by decorating your dining table with a large fragrant bunch of cut flowers in a vase during the spring and summer, and replace it with compositions made from branches and fruits during the autumn and winter.

Did you know?

Herend's collection *Four Seasons* captures the eternal circle of nature and the change of seasons by depicting a branch that bursts forth into bloom in spring, bears fruit in summer, turns its leaves yellow in autumn, and awaits new spring, bare, in winter.



Four seasons sets
Spring: Dinner plate 02537000QUSA1; Butter dish with rose knob 02391009QUSA1
Summer: Dessert plate 02538000QUSA2; Bowl 02365000QUSA2; Coffeecup with saucer 02725000QUSA2
Fall: Dinner plate 02537000QUSA3; Dessert plate 02538000QUSA3; Bowl 02365000QUSA3; Coffeecup with saucer 02725000QUSA3
Winter: Dinner plate 02537000QUSA4; Dessert plate 02538000QUSA4; Bowl 02365000QUSA4; Coffeecup with saucer 02725000QUSA4
Donut 05220000VH

THE SECRETS OF LITHOPHANE PORCELAIN

Lithophany is truly special even among handcrafted porcelain technologies. If you back-light luxury porcelain made using this technique, you will reveal detailed images in various shades of lightness/darkness to marvel at.

The lithophane technique relies on the fact that high-fired porcelain of a thickness of 2-3 mm permits light to pass through – the thinner the porcelain, the more so. European porcelain manufactories have made use of this translucency of the noble material since the early 19th century to create artistic images. When lit from behind, the porcelain panel displayed astonishingly realistic portraits, genres or landscapes – well before photography was invented.

The first luminous images

Lithophanes made actual technical sensations in their age. The first luminous images were awe-inspiring treasures in homes of wealthy aristocrats and bourgeois.

Even today, lithophane images are made in line with the traditional procedure, by hand and with great care: fine hand tools are used to slowly and evenly remove pieces of material from a thin, back-lit wax plate until the desired shade is achieved. The thinner the layer, the lighter the tone of the image. There is no room for mistakes here because the image is almost uncorrectable in this phase. The completed composition is transferred to the porcelain material through a plaster gypsum negative mold, then fired at 1400 degrees Celsius. No glaze is applied, it is prepared in biscuit, i.e. matte white to prevent the details from being obscured by glaze. The thickness of the completed work may be extra thin at the lightest spots – not even reaching half a millimetre (!) –, whereas thicker parts lend adequate firmness to the panel, and prevent it from becoming very fragile. Lithophane images only appear when lit from the back.



– Lithophane portrait of Prince Archbishop József Kopácsy from 1842

– Queen Elisabeth – the same lithophane image lit from the back and from the front side

Centuries-old past in Herend

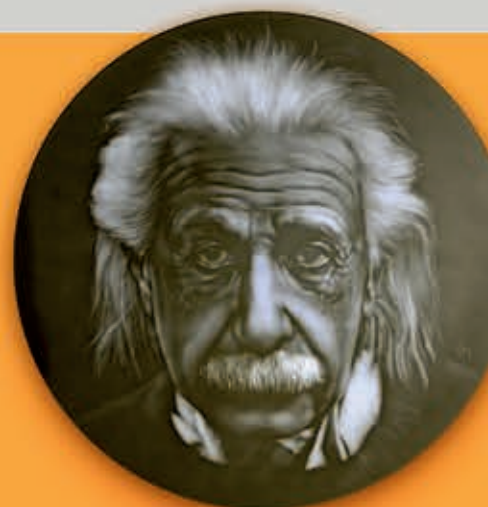
A lithophane item was made in Herend as early as in 1842, depicting a portrait of Prince Archbishop József Kopácsy, which is still on show in the Herend Porcelain Museum. However, the most significant lithophane of Herend, and also among the top ones globally, was completed in 1934: a decorative porcelain image by Károly Csapvári, reaching almost three square metres in size, consisting of 54 pieces, which ornaments the window of the Roman Catholic church in Herend, depicting a lifesize figure of Saint Elisabeth of Hungary. In the 1950s, József Garányi created a plate with a lithophane in the well, representing a vista of the Manufactory, while in 1965 and after applied artist László Horváth focused on creating lithophane works in Herend. When the Manufactory's building was architecturally redesigned in 1998, a number of interesting lithophane windows were created for the side walls of the new main entrance, as well as for the new Viktória Brand Shop; these, however, were implemented using a more recent technique called direct lithophany. The artist pressed the motifs for the modern windows into the raw porcelain sheets individually, then applied the fired elements to a glass plate. Since the 1990s, Ákos Tamás has been using an even more unique procedure to create his light porcelain lamps, where textile fibres are mixed into the material, which lend a special translucent effect through their post-firing contours and multilayer organic surfaces.

The traditional lithophane technique has been preserved to date, although contemporary creators employ numerous innovations for potential applications and technological solutions involving translucent porcelain in the spirit of tradition and innovation.



– Saint Elisabeth of Hungary lithophane church window in Herend
Designed by K. Csapvári

– Lithophane window with dandelions in the Visitor Centre of the Herend Porcelain Manufactory
Designed by László Horváth



Did you know?

The word 'lithophane' comes from Greek and literally translates as translucent stone (coined from the words litho and phainein, i.e. stone and light).

Classic lithophane images are monochromic, appearing in soft brown tones to shades of grey, depending on the colour temperature of the light source (candle, light bulb).

Similar plastic images created using modern 3D programs and printers never reach the artistic value of unique handcrafted lithophane porcelains.

– Portrait of Albert Einstein
Designed by László Horváth

– Ákos Tamás preparing a lithophane image on a beeswax plate

TRADITIONS AND DANCE STEPS

You can learn more about a people if you learn the language they speak, taste their national dishes, and also if you explore their dance culture. The following dance styles need no words to speak volumes of a people's traditions.



Fiery samba

Samba is widely associated with the world-famous Rio Carnival, where the main street of Rio de Janeiro is flooded by samba dancers wearing fancy costumes adorned with sequins and headpieces with feathers to show off their dancing prowess. However, it is known to few people that samba originated in Africa, and emerged in Brazil in the 16th century. Its name can be traced back to 'semba', which refers to marked hip movements. Samba is danced to vibrant rhythms, and highly skilled dancers blend acrobatic elements in their passionate dancing.



Lively troika

One man dances with two women – this is the simplest description of one of the most ancient Russian folk dances called troika; although today even three girls may form a trio. In Russian, troika means three-horse team/gear, which equally refers to the number of dancers and the hopping dance steps imitating trotting horses. Troika is danced by multiple trios concurrently, in step with cheerful, fast-paced music, with the trios revolving in a pinwheel-like fashion. Women's folk costume is complemented by a kokoshnik, a traditional Russian headdress, while men wear kosovo-rotka (a Russian shirt).



Brisk Irish step dance

No member of any nation beats the Irish at the pace of step dancing! Either performed solo or in groups, the dancers dressed in colourful costumes and performing synchronised movements in step with the energetic music played on fiddle, tin whistle and flute will definitely cheer up anyone. A peculiarity of the genre requires step dancers to keep their upper bodies stiff most of the time, coupled with lightning-fast movements of their legs. This calls for special hard shoes that make percussive sounds similar to tap shoes on the dance floor.



Vibrant taiko

Although it may appear to be the odd one out at first glance, taiko, which is a form of ensemble drumming style, duly deserves a place in our list. Taiko drums have been used in Japanese music for centuries; playing them requires remarkable stamina, given that players perform standing, lying down and even jumping. Performances of taiko ensembles are accompanied by a spectacular series of movements that apparently follow a highly accurate choreography – and that is precisely the case. However, the choreographer directing such ensembles is no other than rhythm.



Virtuoso csárdás

The most famous Hungarian folk dance dates back to the 18th century: csárdás developed from a dance of freedom fight military recruitment, called verbunkos. Etymologically derived from 'csárda', a roadside tavern, the dance csárdás grew widespread as a dance of love performed in pairs, where the male and female dancer usually hold each other while dancing. An excellent demonstration of Hungarian bravado, such as clapping, touching ankles, slapping boots, spins and turns, lends abundant serenity to the genre, enhancing the basic steps involving two steps to the right and two steps to the left. Csárdás inspired even the greatest of classic composers, just think about Vittorio Monti's *Csárdás*.



Did you know?

Taiko groups lay major emphasis also on matching costumes. They generally wear decorative coats (happi) made of thin materials and loose trousers (momohiki), and they frame their faces with ornate accessories.



Teacup with saucer 033610215KA



Vase 06484000SP470
Waterlily composition 09209000CD
Waterlily leaf 09148000C

FASCINATING FLORAL GIANTS

A colourful bunch in a vase, a bursting potted plant on the window sill, or just a single flower of exceptional beauty as a gift – in our everyday lives we encounter flowers that easily fit in our hands. However, flowers can grow quite huge. Even higher than a person!

The largest

With its diameter often exceeding one metre, *Rafflesia* (*Rafflesia arnoldii*), also known as giant corpse flower, is officially the world's largest flower. It is a genuine rarity native to South East Asian forests; being a parasite, it has neither roots, nor leaves, which makes it visible at all only when it blossoms. Its five reddish brown spotted petals form a huge cup; after one week of blooming, however, the flower wilts and dies. In his mythic and fantastic novel *Up to the North Pole!* written in 1885, Hungarian writer Mór Jókai also mentions the highly endangered *Rafflesia*.

The most picturesque

Claude Monet made at least 250 paintings of his favourite flowers, water lilies. The French impressionist painter was fascinated by this aquatic weed found all over the world that features leaves spread out on the water surface and a flower with star-shaped petals blooming throughout the summer. What would he have said if he had had the opportunity to marvel at the world's largest water lily, the Amazonian Victoria water lily (*Victoria amazonica*), whose leaves of 3m in diameter are capable of holding up even a school-age child?

The most cheerful

It is not only exotic lands that can boast gigantic flowers! Here is the sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), for instance, which is a key oilseed plant in Hungary, cultivated in the largest area; moreover, it occupies an outstanding position in modern arts: just recall the series of paintings *Sunflowers* by Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh. Its cheerful yellow petals rightfully make it a symbol of summer, and certain cultivars make you smile even from afar. The stalk of the Russian giant sunflower exceeds 3 m in height, bearing flowers as large as 35 cm in diameter.

The very first

Researchers believe that magnolia – also referred to as “lily tree” in Hungarian, even though this name is somewhat deceptive as it is actually a shrub – is not only one of the largest flowers in the world but also the first flowering plant on Earth. Fossils are proof that it also existed as many as 100 million years ago! The colour of flowers ranges from white through pink to purple, with the diameter in some species (*Magnolia atlas*) exceeding 30 cm. It is among the most eye-catching plants in the spring, with a similarly charming scent. The magnolia was an inspiration also to Nobel prize winning Italian poet Eugenio Montale: he mentions it in his poem *In the park*.

Did you know?

Similarly to potatoes, corn and tomatoes, sunflower also originates from America. It was cultivated in North America as early as in the third millennium B.C. – not only for consumption but also for healing. Spanish conquistadors carried it over to the rest of the world in the 1500s.



THE FUNGUS KINGDOM

Neither plants nor animals, some species have medicinal properties, while some others contain deadly poison. No wonder that fungi with a thousand faces have inspired the master painters at Herend, too!

Although previously classified as plants, fungi are actually much closer to animals; new classifications, however, list fungi as a different kingdom. They share the general properties of reproduction through spores and being unable to produce their food on their own; consequently, they are forced to live on or in other organisms or on dead organic materials. Studying them has its challenges, given that most of them are invisible to the naked eye, and, according to estimates, we know as little as five percent of currently existing species of fungi.

In spite of that, we may encounter lots of fungi even in our environment. Edible mushrooms are important ingredients in countless dishes; however, the lead role on the culinary stage is undoubtedly played by truffle, which is also found in Hungary – not only because it is the most expensive type of mushrooms in the world but also because its taste and scent are unmatched. Speaking of scent, shiitake, also called Japanese fragrant mushroom, is similarly highly valuable and tasty, in addition to being beneficial to health. No wonder it is the oldest cultivated mushroom species.

The most colourful mushrooms, however, are found among inedible species. The bitter oyster emanates neon green light in dark, the werewere-kokako boasts a vibrant blue colour from stem to cap as if it was designed by a painter to decorate the forests of New Zealand, but the all-time favourite toadstool of children's book illustrators is and has always been fly agaric, a red-capped mushroom with white spots, even though it can cause deadly poisoning. Mushroom poisoning is caused by toxins that damage the nervous system, the liver, the kidneys, the stomach or the blood circulation, with symptoms ranging from stomach cramps through high fever to hallucinations. The largest mushroom on the planet, armillaria poses a threat to trees, not people: the cluster of armillaria in Oregon's Malheur National Forest covers nine square kilometres of the increasingly decaying forest.

Salt shaker 00349091C1; Pepper shaker 00349000C
Mushrooms, menu-holder 08973000C; Salt shaker 00348000C
Mushrooms, menu-holder 08974000C

Approximately three thousand species of fungi are found in Hungary. The Herend Porcelain Manufactory's popular series called *Champignon*, i.e. Mushrooms of Hungary consists of twelve motifs depicting mushrooms found also in Hungary. Each one portrays an edible mushroom, including the field mushroom, the pine bolete, the golden chanterelle and the parasol mushroom. The pieces of the collection are decorated using the palette-painting method, where the painter mixes multiple colours on a porcelain palette with many mixing wells or on a sheet glass palette, and washes the colours together to receive soft and subtle colour gradients and particularly beautiful tones. It is among the most difficult painting techniques, given that the colours may undergo significant changes during burning; consequently, the task calls for an experienced painter.



Did you know?

The *Champignon* collection is made with a green contour line, but there are versions with brown and gold contours, too. It is also available with brown scaly decoration or a hazel-nut-coloured ornamental border.

WAKAME, THE JAPANESE SUPERFOOD

If you have ever been to a Japanese restaurant, you have probably tasted wakame. This nutrient-rich marine alga is a frequent ingredient of traditional Japanese dishes like miso soup, fried noodles and sushi. So, why is it so special?

An ancient staple

The Japanese have consumed wakame for thousands of years. Stories speak about remains of wakame found in an earthenware pot dated as ancient as around 3000 B.C., which gave rise to the belief that wakame had been part of Japanese gastronomy for so long.

Unusual tax

Wakame may have been consumed in Japan for a long time, but the first record to mention it, which is actually a law, dates back to 701 A.D. The Taihō-ritsuryō, a Japanese administrative and penal code requires wakame to be used as a type of tax. Consequently, this dark green sea vegetable was mostly enjoyed in the imperial courts and shrines, and the surplus was sold in markets by producers.

Edible treasure

The imperial court paid special attention to wakame, particularly due to its high nutrient content, which made it a proper treasure. In those times, people had difficulty sourcing edible plants, and tried to replenish their essential vitamins and minerals from wild flowers and seaweeds. Wakame has so much influence on Japanese cuisine that it is still part of the country's gastronomy even after thousands of years.

Proper medicine

This sweet and salty sea vegetable is also preferred in eastern medicine, in addition to Japanese cuisine. It has multiple recorded positive effects on the systems of the human body, including benefits for the cardio-vascular system, stimulating digestion, improving memory, and promoting a healthy endocrine system.

Makes you beautiful and keeps you young

Wakame consumption offers external benefits in addition to internal ones. Owing to its anti-aging properties, it enhances skin, and is also capable of energising hair structure. Accordingly, it is a frequent ingredient in beauty products.

Grows up high

Similarly to other types of algae, wakame has no roots, and it absorbs nutrients for growth from water, i.e. its growth requires no chemicals. And, despite its lack of roots, it is capable of anchoring itself on stones, posts and on other surfaces, where it grows fast. Underwater forests of algae occupy enormous areas in the seas of Japan, China and Korea, because wakame springs up like mushroom, given the right circumstances, and is capable of growing as much as five centimetres per day!

Tea-drinking geisha 05667000CD
Geisha 05660000CD



Did you know?

The overwhelming majority of Japan's wakame stock has come from the Sanriku Region since the 1970s.

THE AUTOMATON CHESS PLAYER WITH A HUMAN WAY OF THINKING

18th century polyhistor Farkas Kempelen (Wolfgang von Kempelen) was active in numerous branches of science; he is credited for resolving the water supply of the Buda Castle, and for designing a speaking machine for the deaf-mute and those with speech impediments. Still, instead of these engineering works, it was his chess-playing automaton that brought him real fame.

In 1769, Farkas Kempelen invented an automaton chess-player wearing a black moustache, a turban and a kaftan, called "the Turk", and presented it in the Habsburg court, claiming that the automaton was capable of defeating even the best chess players in the world. For over eighty years following its debut, the automaton chess-player toured Europe and North America, and won almost each game it played.

Defeater of Napoleon

After the death of Farkas Kempelen in 1804, the Turk carried on playing; its opponent in the Schönbrunn Castle in 1809 was no other than Napoleon Bonaparte. The Turk saluted the French emperor, and the game began. Napoleon played two games against the automaton, but lost both times. Records say that the conqueror found the amazing contraption rather entertaining.

American success

The Turk, which was owned by Bavarian inventor Johann Nepomuk Mälzel at the time, enjoyed enormous popularity overseas, too: Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America – not less importantly, the first American chess player known by name – also tried out Farkas Kempelen's invention but even he was unable to overcome. One of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll was one of the few who managed to defeat the chess machine. A pioneer of American literature, Edgar Allan Poe was so fascinated by the Turk that he even wrote an essay on the subject under the title Maelzel's Chess Player, in which he exposes the almost invincible machine.

Do not believe your own eyes!

In truth, the chess-playing automaton was only seemingly a machine! Hidden in the machine was sitting a professional chess player hired by Kempelen and subsequently by Mälzel, who was moving the Turk's arm. Certainly, the audience following the chess games was often incredulous of the automaton's abilities, which is why the inventor's assistant always showed the inside of the machine before the games. Seeing the empty wooden box, the audience's doubts were quickly dispelled, whereas the operator was already sitting inside the machine, only in a different compartment. Kempelen was a serious scientist; instead of intending to deceive people with the Turk, his original reason for building the chess-playing automaton was to fascinate Empress Maria Theresa, whom he greatly admired.

Did you know?

On 10 February 1996, a machine actually defeated human logic: chess grandmaster and world chess champion Garry Kasparov was defeated on this day in the course of 33 steps by a chess-playing computer called Deep Blue.

Chess piece, King 15114000VHNM

LAMB TENDERLOIN WITH CHANTERELLES

and chive polenta

Chanterelles are considered among the tastiest of mushrooms, which harmonise beautifully with lamb and game, due to their distinctive flavour. They are a perfect match to herbs, such as thyme, rosemary or chives.

Preparation

1. Chop the spring onion and roast on a little olive oil in a pan, add the chopped chanterelles, then season with salt, garlic and finely chopped herbs; remove from the stove when roasted.
2. Cut the lamb meat open, season with salt and pepper. Mix two-thirds of the roasted chanterelles with the egg, and stuff inside the lamb meat. Sear the meat in a pan on hot olive oil with a few cloves of garlic, then put in the oven and roast for 6 to 8 minutes at 185°C. Remove from the oven, and coat in fresh herbs, then let it rest.
3. Boil 400 ml water in a saucepan, add the butter and chives, season with salt and pepper, then, after boiling, add the cornmeal to cook. Add more water if needed to improve the consistency.
4. Pour the hot polenta on an oiled tray to cool, then mould it and sear it in a hot pan.
5. Slice the rested tenderloin, serve with the polenta and the remaining chanterelles, and garnish to taste with a little jus.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 400g cleaned lamb tenderloin
- 300g cleaned chanterelles
- 50g butter
- 300g cornmeal
- 1 spring onion
- 1 egg
- Finely chopped thyme, rosemary, chives and parsley
- Salt, ground pepper, garlic and olive oil



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Dinner plate 20524000CHMP-9

Gift Ideas

Items of use molded and painted by hand always carry some sort of extra meaning: recipients of such gifts may feel they have been given a beautiful treasure made especially for them.

- 1 Vase with button knob 06576015 SP983
- 2 Eagle 15058000 PTVH
- 3 Pierced vase 06464000 VILLE
- 4 Porcelain tile 08101091 SP914
- 5 Vase 06480000 C
- 6 Teacup with saucer 02702000 VHNVKT4
- 7 Teapot with twisted knob 02604006 VHNVKT4
- 8 Clock 08085000 ZOVA



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