

Royal Copenhagen:

Founded by Frantz Henrich Müller (FM) on May 1st 1775, a recognized chemist and pharmacist. With FM's tireless efforts he made Denmark's first porcelain factory possible. He was infatuated with the thin and fine porcelain he had come across when travelling in Europe - Meissen Germany mostly. FM experimented with the manufacture of porcelain after returning from his travels- and succeeded. "Danish Porcelain Factory" opened with King Christian 7. and queen dowager Juliane Marieas protectors. The factory was situated in an old mail court in Koebmagergade, Copenhagen. Already in the initiatory production, the factory had serious problems. Rawmaterials, firing, buildings, internal disagreements etc. - everything seemed to be problematic in spite of the fierce efforts of Frantz Müller and his employees. Beginning 1779 the economy was so bad, that the factory was taken over by the king and renamed " The Royal Porcelain Factory" (RC) - Abroad known as Royal Copenhagen.

Already during the meeting when founding the factory on May 1st 1775, it was decided that the hallmark should be "Three Wavy Lines", symbolizing the three Danish straits (The Sound, The Little - and The Great Belt). With little variations this porcelain mark has been used ever since.

In spite of initial difficulties, the factory soon accomplished a high-quality production. Not until 1780 had the factory "gathered" enough articles to open up the shop that had been planned from the beginning. A shop was opened on the first floor in Koebmagergade. According to the cash book, the shop had 9/nine customers on the first day of opening. The factory did not show any profits until 1795. Still the Royal Family was their biggest client.

The production was clearly influenced by Meissen and Fürstenberg. The oldest pattern produced is the **Blue Fluted** - copied from Meissen (the original pattern came from from China). RC also produced service decorated in blue or red overglaze colour, often applied with stylized flower-patterns. "**Blue Flower**" was introduced in 1779, and it is still produced and sold today. This service was also copied from Meissen.

By 1780 the rococo style is ousted in favour of the neoclassical style with decorations in the contemporary German style. Naturalistic flowers in fresh colours as well as medallions in black or gray with typical motifs. Almost all figurines produced at the factory in those days were copies. At the same time tableware in the blue and white colours were manufactured.

The Blue Fluted service was produced right from the start, but it was the Flora Danica service that made the factory worldfamous. By late 1700 the factory survived on orders and commissions from the Royal family and the nobility. Especially tableware and big magnificent vases were popular. Articles that would today be priced in the million-kroner class. RC's first golden age ends at the beginning of the 19th century. The biggest commission ever was the Flora Danica service.

"**The Flora Danica service**" was ordered by King Christian 7. in 1790 - supposedly meant as a gift to Zarina Katarina 2nd of Russia. Due to the death of the Zarina, the set remained with the Royal family in Denmark. The set was based on the national botanical works of the same name,

published from 1762. A very closely defined job, carried out by the German flowerpainter Johann Christoph Bauer, who immigrated from Nürnberg. The job lasted from 1790 to 1802, and almost cost him his sight. When delivered the service included 1802 parts. Part of the original set is still exhibited at The Rosenborg Castle. The original set is still in the possession of the Royal family, and it is said to be used on special occasions.

Denmark, and thereby Royal Copenhagen, experienced more recession following the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 and the national bankruptcy of 1813. There was shortage on most things including raw-materials for the porcelain production. RC had to let most employees go in 1810, or put them on standby-payment. Progress in artistic development and innovation picked up in 1816.

From The Royal Academy of Art professor G. F. Hetsch was hired to be the artistic leader in 1828. He advocated for "The Pure Style" and had studied the arts and the idiom of the Antiquity in Rome. Thanks to him RC started the production of the much coveted bisquit-figurines, giving the factory a badly needed financial improvement. Moreover he was a big propagator of the late empire style. The prospect paintings were also favorites of those years. The RC employees had received education from a French painter specializing in this art form. In the following period several items with motifs of for example Amalienborg Palace, The Round Tower and Rosenborg Castle were introduced. Until 1857 G.F. Hetsch held the post as artistic leader.

The founder of Bing & Groendahl - Frederik Vilhelm Groendahl was engaged as an apprentice in the throwing-workshop in 1833. He stayed with RC until 1852.

The absolute monarchy in Denmark was abolished in 1849. The old privileges and monopolies were dissolved, and Royal Copenhagen was on its own.

Royal Copenhagen participated in its first official exhibition in London: The Crystal Palace World Exhibition in 1851 - the factory still under the artistic leadership of G. F. Hetsch.

The rival porcelain factory Bing & Groendahl was founded on April 19th 1853.

The Frederiksborg no. 1. service was originally created by RC in 1861. The designer was C. Peters. The service set was to be the first prize of a lottery, financing the reconstruction of Frederiksborg Castle, that had been destroyed in a fierce fire on December 17th 1859. The service had lilac-coloured rims and golden ornaments.

The first female "bluepainter" was hired at The Royal Porcelain Factory in 1868. So far this job had exclusively been handled by men. Quickly this field of work was completely taken over by women.

New times of recession put RC under the ministry of the interior in 1864. By 1868 the factory was privately owned until the successful faience factory Alumina surprisingly bought the factory in 1882. Probably this was the shot in the arm, that ensured the continued existence of RC. After the takeover, The Royal Porcelain Factory moved to the Alumina premises in Smallegade,

Frederiksberg. Administratively the two factories were merged, while they otherwise continued as two separate factories. The following year the RC shop opened at Amager Torv. Arnold Krog (AK) was engaged as artistic leader, and he was responsible for the international breakthrough in Royal Danish porcelain. By the end of the 19th century the Aluminia factory "starved" in favour of RC - in all respects.

By 1885 the RC shop moved to The Alderman Court at Amager Torv 6, where it is still situated today.

When starting, AK had already decided to "straighten up" the by now somewhat "messy" patterns of the Blue Fluted porcelain. He designed the Blue Fluted pattern, as it is painted today. The Half- and Full-lace patterns of the Blue Fluted service were likewise designed by Arnold Krog in 1885.

The RC-shop in Paris opened in 1890, and 7 years later the success was followed up at the fashionable "Old Bond Street" in London. Customers across the world compete to acquire the new underglaze articles. The porcelain factories had enormous success, and the orders poured in. During this period the Christmas plate was "invented", and factories all over the world follow in the steps of the Danish factories to produce the Christmas plates (and other plates).

Around the turn of the century (about 1905) the Juliane Marie Crown is added to the RC hallmark. At first only applied to re-productions of articles from the 18th century, but later applied to all items - the crown now in a "new" look. The look of the crown has had little changes and adjustments throughout the years.

"The Fan" service was introduced in 1909 - designed by Arnold Krog. He had already in 1885 been inspired by a fan, but the service was not produced until 1909. It is also produced in green and in gold.

Knud Kyhn (KK) - sculptor, was engaged by RC in 1904, where he stayed for the next 6 years, especially creating big figurines. He is one of several artists who have worked both at B&G and RC. From 1909 he worked with Gerhard Henning (GH) at RC. GH was a Swedish-born artist who intoxicated with his opulent figurines inspired by the French 18th century art. He often created figurines with small groups of people in an adventure style a' la' the Orient. Kyhn and Henning created several of RC's big Pan figurines, today absolutely coveted. Both artists worked at RC several times.

Patrick Nordström (PN) - Swedish born ceramic artist attached to RC from 1912 to 1922. He presented stoneware in 1914, on behalf of RC, as one of the first in Denmark. Through his innovative experiments with glazes for stoneware especially, he inspired others. He strove for perfection in the combination of stoneware and glaze. He developed several new glazes.

The Royal Porcelain Factory has up through the 20th century continuously been able to renew and develop - constantly engaging new artists, and new- or re-developing various production techniques. In this text we have not spent much time telling the Royal Copenhagen history later than the 1920'ties, as - in our opinion - this part of the history is told better elsewhere. The production of already existing products and series such as Blue Fluted, Blue Flower and the Christmas plates etc. is still continued simultaneously with the development and production of numerous new products, following or ahead of styles and trends of the time.

During the 1970'ties RC experienced a large growth in the sales and production of various collectibles such as Christmas- and Mother's Day plates, Annual bells, Annual mugs etc.

The Royal Porcelain Factory bought and merged with several other manufactures of the glass-, porcelain- or design-producers in Scandinavia since the 1980'ties. Georg Jensen, KostaBoda Orrefors, Holmegaard Glassworks and others have merged with the old porcelain factory. Since the merger with Holmegaard Glassworks in 1985, The Royal Porcelain Factory has existed under the name Royal Copenhagen. The whole consortium of glass-, porcelain and design-producers has carried the name Royal Scandinavia since the buy-up of KostaBoda Orrefors in 1997.

Artists to be mentioned in recent years could be Sven Vestergaard, Ursula Munch-Petersen, Monica Ritterband and many more. New products to be emphasized are various series, such as "**Santa Claus**", "**Christmas in Denmark**" and many others. The latest addition is "**Blue Fluted Mega**" -a re-design of the original Blue Fluted, created by Karin Kjaeldgaard-Larsen. Little details from the original service are "blown up" in big size.

One major reason for RC's continuing success is the decision to prioritize the quality of decoration on figurines and tableware. Royal Copenhagen has an artistic and qualitative high standard, and they offer their employees a motivating and artistic environment.