

The Musée Unterlinden's ceramics collection

The Musée Unterlinden's collection illustrates the technical and stylistic evolution of ceramic ware in Alsace and Lorraine in the 18th and 19th centuries, which was the golden age for French makers of faïence.

The Hannong dynasty: the Strasbourg and Haguenau factories

Three display cases in this gallery are devoted to the Hannong family, which ran the Alsatian pottery factories in Strasbourg and Haguenau over three generations (1721 – 1784). Both were renowned for their production of high-quality faïence. Created in 1721 by Jean-Henri Wachenfeld (1694 – 1725) and Charles-François Hannong (c. 1669 – 1739), the first pieces were of the type known as “*grand feu*” or high-fired faïence, with blue and white lambrequin* decoration. After opening an outpost in Haguenau in 1724, Charles-François retired in 1732, leaving the factories to his two sons Balthasar and Paul. Paul Hannong (c. 1700 – 1760) soon became the sole director and ran the two factories for 28 years. He was a talented ceramicist who never stopped experimenting with polychrome decoration and adding to the repertoire of forms with the creation of terrines, statuettes and trompe l'œil pieces. Polychrome decoration was first introduced with the “*fleurs des Indes*” floral motifs directly borrowed from Oriental models.



Oval dish, Strasbourg, Alsace, 1735 – 1748, tin-glazed faïence, Hannong factory

The introduction of “*petit feu*” or low-fired decoration permitted greater colour variation and warmer colours such as the famous purple-red known as the “purple of Cassius”, which became one of the defining features of the wares.



“Silverware style” round dish, Alsace, Strasbourg, 1770 – 1774, Tin-glazed faïence, Hannong Factory

One of Paul Hannong's sons, Joseph (1734 – ?), took the family business into the third generation, and under his guidance, the quality of painting reached its peak.

Lunéville ware

Founded in 1724 by Jacques Chambrette (1683 – 1758), the Lunéville factory, which was joined by the Saint-Clément factory in 1758, was the first producer of faïence in Lorraine. Its *petit feu* ware was mainly adorned with floral motifs, but the factory's reputation was made by its chinoiserie designs.

The Niderviller, Colmar and Haguenau factories

The Baron de Beyerlé (1709 – 1786), director of the Royal Mint in Strasbourg, founded a pottery factory in Niderviller, Lorraine, in 1754 with artists from Strasbourg and Saxony. The floral decorations were similar to those used by the Hannong family, but the shades of purple were softer than those used in Strasbourg. The factory was mainly renowned for its faïence groups and statuettes, as well as its trompe l'œil works.

Cloître 1 Decorative arts 16th – 19th century



Compotier with olives, Niderviller, Lorraine, c. 1760, tin-glazed faïence, Beyerlé factory

Beyerlé's right-hand man, François-Antoine Anstett (1732 – 1783), who also worked for the Hannong family, founded a factory in Haguenau in 1780. He was succeeded by his youngest son Charles-Amand (1771 – 1828), who set up a factory in Colmar producing porcelain and *faïence fine*, which was renowned for the excellence of its wares and the technique of printing on faïence, of which the museum possesses one of the first experimental examples.



Fragment of a plate with printed landscape, Colmar, Alsace, 1803, faïence fine (lead-glazed earthenware), Charles-Amand Anstett factory

Théodore Deck's collection

Théodore Deck (1823 – 1891), who originally came from Guebwiller in the Haut-Rhin, played a major role in the revival of ceramics. His technical and formal innovations were based on a profound understanding of the techniques of Western and Oriental ceramics. After an apprenticeship with the stove-maker Victor-Joseph Hugelin in Strasbourg and his journeyman years spent travelling around Europe, Deck set up his own workshop in Paris in 1856. His

pieces, many of which were the result of collaboration with painters, display a perfect technique and a palette of dazzling colours such as the famous “Deck blue”, a much-admired deep turquoise blue he created in 1861.



Chinese vase, Paris, c. 1870, Théodore Deck, faïence

He was named director of the Manufacture de Sèvres in 1887, and was the first ceramicist and genuine practitioner to hold the post. Deck was the initiator of the orientalist movement in the decorative arts, resulting in the *japonisme* and “Arabic style” that were eclipsed by Art Nouveau in the 1890 – 1900s.

Grand feu decoration : after a first firing, the body is covered with a glaze based on tin oxide. The decoration is painted directly onto the unfired tin glaze, which is still porous, meaning that no alterations can be made. “*Grand feu*” colours must be able to withstand a high-temperature firing (1200 °C). Until the 18th century, only a limited number were available : cobalt blue, copper green and manganese purple-brown.

Lambrequin : ornamentation consisting of a decorative band with its lower edge formed of festoons separated by deep notches. Lambrequin decoration was very popular in France under Louis XIV and the Regency.

Petit feu decoration : the decoration is painted onto a fired glaze, in other words a smooth, non-porous surface, which means the motif can easily be erased or altered. The decoration is known as “*petit feu*” or low-fired, because it uses colours that can be fired at a low temperature (600 to 800 °C). These colours are more numerous, and more shades are available than with “grand feu” colours : iron red, purple of Cassius*, gold, antimony yellow.

Purple of Cassius : a red mineral pigment obtained from the chemical reaction of gold chloride with tin.