



LUXURY @ HOME

Meissen multiplies its DNA

Meissen has influenced German dining culture more than any other company in the past three centuries with its porcelain tableware and patterns. Now, its traditional designs are making an impact in the world of interiors.

The scaly shimmering golden body twists and turns, snake-like, seeming to glide upwards. Feet with eagle-sharp claws, a mane like tongues of fire. The long tail is coiled like a lizard's, a long, thin tongue slithers from the sharp-toothed jaws, and devilish eyes follow a pearl encircled by fire. The customer runs her fingers tentatively over the elaborately woven, fine black fabric, tracing the writhing body of the mythical creature. On another rail, she caresses an iridescent white fabric covered with fine, golden, intersecting curved lines: Two intertwined swords, with facing hilts and cross-guards, the curved blades touching, crossing and meeting again at the weapon's most lethal point, the tip of the blade. They are Meissen swords, unmistakable, woven into the fabric in continuous arabesques.

The crossed swords have long been the trademark of Meissen, the prestigious and internationally famous porcelain manufacturer founded in 1710. They originated from the coat of arms worn by the electors of Saxony and were chosen as the company's signet as early as the 18th century to set it apart from other European manufacturers. Ever since, these two feudal weapons have gracefully joined crossed blades as the company's hallmark and as decoration on all pieces of Meissen porcelain: on coffee and tea sets, on plates, bowls, vases and ashtrays, sushi plates and more. For some years now, they have also graced other Meissen products.

MEISSEN's precious DNA

Three hundred years of Meissen porcelain are a commitment – to tradition, to superior artistic competence, to true beauty, style, timeless design, fine materials and, above all, to high-quality craftsmanship. After two world wars and the political upheavals of the 20th century, the company that has been managed under the name Staatliche Porzellan Manufaktur Meissen GmbH since 1991 is facing a new challenge in the 21st century. Demand for traditional porcelain tableware has dropped

dramatically, and many porcelain manufacturers have gone bankrupt. Traditional handcrafts are laborious and costly, and many brands today rely on industrial production or have moved their production operations to low-wage countries.

Meissen, too, is striking out in new directions, but it is doing so without betraying its name, which has earned a reputation as a premium brand of world renown thanks to 300 years of traditional craftsmanship. The company intends to live up to the high standards of the legend it embodies in the future, too. Meissen has always been an expensive luxury brand, and it plans to continue as such in future.

Beauty, rarity and utility – three qualities that an object must possess to awaken human desire, according to the alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger, who produced the first European porcelain in 1708 for Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony. In recent years, Meissen GmbH has begun setting a new course by adding new product lines to its collection. Its MEISSEN Fine Art®, MEISSEN Joaillerie® and MEISSEN HOME® brands have captured the markets for jewellery and fashion, architecture and interior design. True to Böttger’s principle and loyal to its tradition of craftsmanship, Meissen has transformed itself into an international lifestyle brand. In revamping its image and expanding into other markets, the company aims to win new clientele. It also wants to persuade the next, younger generation to buy the Meissen brand, in particular the products outside its traditional product segment of tableware.

Under the MEISSEN HOME® brand, Meissen has been producing furniture, accessories and fabric collections for superior living, dining and bedroom interiors as well as classical porcelain tableware since spring 2012. Every object made by Meissen continues to carry the company’s “DNA”, as **Creative Director Markus Hilzinger** calls it. After all, they are part of Meissen’s cultural history. Of course, in expanding its product range to include interior design, the company was able to fall back on the exceptional wealth of experience gained with Meissen porcelain, including 10,000 formulations for colours, 700,000 moulds and 6,000 decorative designs. The intention was not to throw traditional values overboard in favour of new trends, but rather to extend the company’s horizons and take traditional Meissen craftsmanship not only into the living room, but also into a new era with classic and timeless designs.

Meissen designs, moulds and handmade and painted porcelain elements can be found in the new, elaborately crafted furniture and accessories, but in different forms. The company’s history, traditions and origins are evident everywhere, but subtly: The cushions, rugs, lamp shades, chairs and sofas, paravents and fabrics embellished with variations of Meissen’s famous crossed swords or Ming dragon link the past to the present by incorporating the designs as graphic motifs. *(excerpt) Labhard Medien GmbH/Lena Lüpke*

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