

MOUSTIERS[★]

Sainte-Marie



EARTHENWARE - 2024





SOMMAIRE

*Exemple de vaisselle de terre cuite
Fabrication traditionnelle, genre de
Algarve - Portugal, Museu Nacional de Arte e Arqueologia*

*Sueter, fine Quarlande, manganese
1880 & 1890*

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INTRODUCTION

In the Middle Ages, three things were needed to make pottery in Moustiers: clay, wood and water. Little by little, the village grew up around this craft, becoming the capital of earthenware in the 17th century.

Moustiers clay is of incredible quality, containing enough limestone to ensure that the object does not crack after the first firing and that the glaze adheres perfectly. The fineness of the glaze meant that objects with a beautiful sound could be made.

Moustiers became famous thanks to **Pierre Clérissy**, a potter from Italy, who settled in the village and began the golden age of earthenware in 1679. At the time, the village had 2,000 inhabitants, 14 enamel workshops and 4 paper mills.

The two main artists who served as models for the Moustiers earthenware makers were : **Antonio Tempesta**, a 16th-century Italian painter and engraver and **Jean Bérain**, a 17th-century architect, draughtsman and engraver.

Today, Moustiers-Sainte-Marie boasts 7 earthenware workshops, all of which have kept the ancestral traditions alive while bringing a modern touch with their unique creations.



THE ORIGINS OF EARTHENWARE

Pottery has been made in Moustiers since the **early Middle Ages**. Pierre Clérissy, a clay potter, was the first to make the transition to earthenware. He was helped by painters from Riez for the decorations: **François Viry and his sons**.

The economic situation of the time also helped him. To meet the costs of the wars, the Sun King ordered his gold service to be melted down. He replaced it with finer, less expensive earthenware.

LEarthenware became very fashionable in France and Europe. In 1726, the Moustiéra earthenware makers **Joseph Olérys** and **Edouard Roux** left for Spain to pass on their know-how at the request of the King of Spain.

The 12 earthenware factories of the time earned more for the community than all the other factories put together. Despite this, nothing could stop fashion from changing.

The reign of Louis XVI was marked by a certain love of English manufacture. In 1786, the Treaty of Vergennes authorised English products to enter France. They were well received, particularly the white earthenware whose decoration began to be glued onto the piece rather than painted, before being covered with a layer of transparent enamel: **porcelain**.

The last earthenware workshop closed its doors in 1874 and for fifty years, no more earthenware was produced in Moustiers. The war of 1870 and industrial competition put an end to this traditional art form.



MARCEL
PROVENCE

Marcel Joannon was a journalist, writer, historian, ethnologist and above all a lover of Provence, from which he took his name. In 1928, with the help of a few friends, he revived the earthenware industry in Moustiers. At the same time, he set up the **Académie de Moustiers**, responsible for studying earthenware and village folklore. His earthenware was decorated « **Moustiers-style** », very often with a bird, which very quickly became the symbol of Moustiers earthenware. Surrounded by experienced ceramists, Marcel Provence was responsible for the renaissance of earthenware in Moustiers-Sainte-Marie.





THE EARTHENWARE MUSEUM

« Moustiers earthenware has its own accent. Touch it with your fingernail and you will hear a crystalline sound, a little low and fresh, a little like Easter bells in the mountains. »

Marcel Provence.

The **Musée de la Faïence** was inaugurated on 15 September 1929, at the instigation of Marcel Provence and the Académie de Moustiers.

The earthenware is displayed in 10 rooms covering an area of 260m², and retraces the full range of decorations from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Find out all the latest museum news on the website: musee-moustiers.fr/





STAGES OF
MANUFACTURING

Creation is a delicate process that must be approached with the utmost meticulousness. Numerous stages are involved in the manufacture of earthenware, before it can be decorated as the potter sees fit.

The different techniques used to produce ceramics:

- The earthenware maker creates his piece using one of these methods:
 - Turning**: the clay is shaped using a wheel.
 - Moulding**: slip (diluted clay) is poured into a mould.
 - Stamping**: an inscription or relief is obtained by pressing on a plaster form.
- **Firing**: An initial firing at over 1000°C creates the «biscuit».
- **Enamelling**: The biscuit is immersed in an enamel bath.
- **Decoration**: the raw enamel is then decorated with a brush, from the lightest to the darkest colours.
- **Firing**: the piece is fired a second time to fix the enamel and decoration.





LES DÉCORS

THE «BERAIN» DÉCOR



This type of decoration is mainly in **blue monochrome**. A network of perfectly symmetrical arabesques is arranged around a central figure. Busts and unreal animals can also be found. The name comes from **Jean Bérain**, who was appointed draughtsman to the King's Chamber in 1711.

HUNTING DISHES OR TEMPESTA DECOR



At the end of the 17th century and until 1730, the Clérissy family produced large dishes depicting hunting scenes, often taken from engravings by **Antonio Tempesta**, an Italian Renaissance painter.

THE GROTESQUES



Grotesques are a decoration invented by **Joseph Olérys**. This 18th century decoration depicts burlesque, whimsical characters or animals surrounded by floral motifs.

CHINESE DECOR



Chinese-inspired decorations were first used around 1730-1740 in blue monochrome. From 1760, they were used again, but using the lamppost technique. They can be found on plates, jugs, broths, etc.

THE TINSEL DECOR



Garlands are made up of **repeated arcs of flowers, foliage or branches**. They generally frame a central composition representing a mythological scene.

THE FLORAL SET



Flowers feature in many ceramic and porcelain designs. Moustiers earthenware is no exception to this rule. The **Solanaceae family** deserves a special mention. This flowering type was probably first produced in Spain and introduced to Provence by **Joseph Olerys**.



A photograph of a wooden table displaying several ceramic art pieces. In the foreground on the left is a white ceramic vase with a stylized face, featuring large black eyes, yellow cheeks, and a purple mouth. To its right is a tall, purple ceramic vase with a white face design. In the background, a white ceramic piece with a face is visible. On the right side of the table, there is a white ceramic tray with a yellow and black design. The background shows a white wall with circular decorative elements and a stone wall above.

LA FAÏENCE DE
NOS JOURS

There are 7 earthenware workshops in Moustiers-Sainte-Marie today: the **Atelier Bondil**, the **Atelier Soleil**, the **Atelier Blanc Michèle**, the **Atelier du Barri**, the **Atelier des Cigales**, the **Atelier Mufraggi** and the **Atelier Serrailier**.

From April to September, the Atelier Bondil offers **tours** of the different stages in the manufacture of a piece of earthenware. It's a real journey back in time, and an eye-opener to traditional French know-how. Other workshops are also available by appointment.



UNION OF MOUSTIERS-SAINTE-MARIE EARTHENWARE MANUFACTURERS

L'Union des Faïenciers was founded in the mid-1980s with the aim of combating the many counterfeit products being produced at the time. These imitations were damaging the image of fine earthenware, made entirely by craftsmen in the commune of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie.

Today, the Union des faïenciers is proud to be taking part in the **Salon International du Patrimoine Culturel** at the Carrousel du Louvre in Paris. This show has become the benchmark event for professionals in the field of heritage restoration and conservation. Each year, rare and exceptional skills and, above all, men and women committed to their passion are showcased at this event.

MOUSTIERS



Sainte-Marie

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