

# British ceramic art re-born

Producing ceramic art of the very highest quality in the heart of Worcestershire, **Chamberlain & Co** is the new luxury fine bone china brand that has just made its industry debut at Maison & Objet, Paris

## Chamberlain & Co BY NUMBERS

**200** The number of hours it takes to create Chamberlain & Co's largest and most intricate pieces, such as the freehand painted Witley vase, which stands 85cm tall.

**10** The number of times each piece may be fired during production, necessary in order to achieve the depth of ceramic colour and the rich gold effects.

**23** The number of carats of gold that all pieces are finished with.

**16** The number of debut pieces launched within four collections, ranging from a large charger plate to the magnificent 85cm Witley vase.

**227** The number of years of ceramic production expertise – from animal sculptures and ornamental ware to special commission pieces – that Chamberlain has associated with it.

Standing 85cm tall, the impressive handmade, hand-decorated and hand-gilded fine bone china Witley vase, which has taken in excess of 200 hours to create and has passed through the hands of eight expert artisans, is the perfect representation of the company that has created it.

Enter Chamberlain & Co, a brand new prestige brand from Worcestershire, England.

Celebrating handmade art and championing the expert English ceramic skills that have been handed down from generation to generation in the heart of Worcestershire, Chamberlain & Co is committed to creating exclusive and unique ornamental ceramics of the very highest quality.

"In a world where much is mass produced, we believe there is an appreciation of, and demand for, handmade British products of the highest quality," says Matthew Riddell, Managing Director.

In fact, the Chamberlain name and that of the Royal Porcelain Works that Robert Chamberlain founded in 1788 have been synonymous internationally with quality, decorative excellence and exclusivity for more than 200 years. It is this Worcestershire heritage and exceptional regional skill base that has given birth to Chamberlain & Co, with its new range of prestige product.

"With extraordinary craftsmanship and artistry alongside a commitment to the making of exclusive ornamental ceramics, Chamberlain & Co is uniquely positioned to meet demand for luxury items that are created rather than produced," explains Matthew, further highlighting how the exceptional skills

employed in creation will ultimately be lost unless celebrated in new products.

And Chamberlain & Co are proud to be keeping these exceptional skills alive, harnessing a new generation of talented artists and craftsmen, versatile and experienced in a wide range of techniques, be it casting, painting or gilding.

"The Chamberlain & Co artists are among the most talented in England, with a long and distinguished pedigree in Worcestershire ceramics... skills that have been passed down through the generations," says Matthew. "Our aim is to raise the profile of the arts and crafts skill base of the region, helping secure it into the future."

Re-imagined for modern luxury interiors, Chamberlain & Co's designs are focused solely on prestige ornamental ceramics and its debut four collections of 16 pieces is "a celebration of British ceramic skills" delivering stunning shapes from the past, and in particular pieces produced by the Chamberlain Works from 1788, that have inspired expert sculptors of today.

"We are challenging traditional production methods to create larger scale ornamental pieces that provide higher impact and space filling potential for larger luxury homes, which are supported by specially manufactured display pedestals featuring a range of high quality finishes including mahogany and rosewood veneers together with hand-carved and water gilded detailing," says Matthew, pointing out that some of the company's vases and sculptures are assembled with over 30 pieces by master craftsmen.

The elegant shapes and intricate patterns of the first four collections are inspired by the rich heritage of British

ceramics and ornamental design – the themes of heritage, botanicals and Georgian splendour, alongside a dash of chinoiserie flavour, reflecting themes from the original Chamberlain Works that are as relevant today as they were then... the King George III collection is a celebration of Chamberlain's proud Georgian heritage; the Imperial Imari collection inspired by oriental porcelain, a nod to Chamberlain as one of the first British makers to recreate the most distinctive designs known as Imari.

Louise Adams, principal designer of Chamberlain & Co's inaugural collections observes "People are naturally fascinated by history, and behind the collections there are stories of trade between East and West; plant hunters who brought back the beautiful exotic flowers that inspire the botanical pieces," says Matthew.

It's not just the shapes and patterns inspired by English heritage, however. The fine bone china and handcrafting skills used further celebrate the heritage and beauty of English ceramics and that of the county of Worcestershire, in particular.

"We believe overseas customers have a strong appreciation for British handcrafting skills and for the very best in English fine bone china and this is linked with the heritage of the region," explains Matthew, highlighting the use of jet black bone china, virtually unique in the world of prestige ceramics, which is being used in the Chamberlain Black range, reflecting the innovation that was so key to Chamberlain's 18th century success.

All pieces are also decorated and gilded entirely by hand, all with incredible detail and expertise. "We employ decorative techniques including the application of raised paste



and enamels and the most delicate hand painting that means the feathers of a hummingbird for example, delivers a stunning three dimensional effect," explains Matthew.

Where pieces feature an entirely freehand composition, they are signed by the artist in recognition of the highest level of ceramic painting skill. So skilled are the Chamberlain & Co artists in free hand painting they are able to paint any subject matter to order, be it portrait or animal study.

Such focus on hand-crafting and hand-painting delivers not only the most luxurious and beautiful product, but also one that is entirely unique.

"All our products are completely handmade so each piece is very special; an individual work of art. And with the bespoke nature of our production, designs can be customised to suit particular tastes – maximising appeal for a particular customer or market," says Matthew, explaining how the company is perfectly positioned to undertake bespoke work without disrupting its production.

"We welcome the chance to fulfil unique customer demands. Our artists and craftspeople relish the challenge of creating entirely new pieces."

Chamberlain & Co delivered their brand to the world last month in Paris at the prestigious Maison & Objet, the official launch for the brand alongside the unveiling of their debut collections.

"With its emphasis on design and its international focus, Maison & Objet represented the ideal opportunity for us to launch," explains Matthew, adding that a further six pieces are currently in the works to be added to the four launch collections.

"Nothing rivals the beauty of handmade, hand-painted English fine bone china and those who seek the very best prestige statement pieces should not have to compromise," concludes Matthew.

## THE FOUR COLLECTIONS

**Heritage Garden** A Chinese, Worcestershire china and chinoiserie influenced design featuring floral sprays that weave around the shapes, interspersed with delicate vignettes of flowers and leaves.

**Imperial Imari** In honour of Chamberlain being one of the first British makers to recreate the most distinctive of designs, Imari, this collection is inspired by oriental porcelain from China and Japan – think a rich palette of red, blue, green and gold.

**King George III** A celebration both of Chamberlain's proud Georgian heritage and the best luxury china of the 21st century.

**Chamberlain Black** Pure, jet black bone china, this innovative range is decorated to deliver unrivalled contrast and impact, featuring designs that interleave with the King George III range.

**Did you know...?** *The new Chamberlain & Co range is produced by Bronte Porcelain Limited, historically specialised in the production of high quality, handmade and painted ceramic products in Worcestershire. All pieces are slip cast from bone china, then fettled and glazed to a near perfect finish as the base for extensive hand painting and gilding. They also cast black bone china to create luxurious jet black ceramic pieces, which is virtually unique in the world of prestige ceramics.*