

Aalto is alive and well – in some new interpretations of a classic design

In 2008 Iittala introduces a number of new pieces to the Aalto collection in this year's signature colours turquoise blue and black, as well as a small collection of new premium products.



New premium products

Based on Aalto's underlying idea of free form, the premium collection consists of two vases, hand-blown in a wooden mould (400 mm and 145 mm), a smoky grey bowl (380 mm), a serving bowl (340 mm) and an Aalto flower. These will all be in smoky grey, a new and very refined colour that is perfect for bringing glass surfaces alive and creating new reflections.

Hand-blowing these new pieces calls for long experience, a careful eye, and a steady hand, and they highlight the continued importance of the craftsman in giving life to a vision like Aalto's.

New colours in 2008: black and turquoise blue

There will also be several items in turquoise blue in Aalto Collection, and the most popular piece, the 160 mm Aalto vase, will be available in black. Black is one of the hardest colours to produce well in the glass world, and Iittala's specialists have again had to call on all their expertise to make the black pieces a success. The result is a dense, deep black that gives every design in which it is used a very different and arresting feel.

Also, following the success of the range of duo-colour Aalto vases launched in 2006 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Aalto vase, for 2008 Iittala has reversed the idea, putting white glass on the inside and smoky grey and turquoise blue on the outside – again showing how a classic design can be reinterpreted, and showcasing Iittala's own skills in coloured glass.

The continuing popularity of the Aalto vase has set many scholars and commentators thinking about what makes classic works of art such as this work so well. The Finnish artist and researcher **Kimmo Sarje** has described the Aalto vase as a meta-phenomenon:

"The Savoy vase is both a simple and functional everyday object and decorative piece and a highly effective, enduring symbol."

Celebrating Finnish Glass, 125 years of Iittala, p. 110.

Sarje himself was keen to debunk the myth surrounding Aalto back in the 1980s. In a true spirit of post-modernism, he held exhibitions in which he used Aalto's signature stools in his own installations and images. He set up contrasts between old and new meanings in pieces such as a T-shirt that featured a number of Aalto's distinctive forms alongside the master's own phrase: "Form is a mystery".

In reviewing the various Aalto exhibitions held in 2006 and how they were received, he highlights the longevity of Aalto's vision. Despite all the popularisation and reinterpretations of his work:

“... the original intention of his design language is still as dynamic as ever.”

Celebrating Finnish Glass, 125 years of iittala, p. 119.

Product information, new products of 2008:

Alvar Aalto Collection - Aalto Premium products

Aalto Flower, smoky grey
Aalto serving bowl 340 mm, white and clear
Vase Premium 400 mm, smoky grey white and clear
Aalto Premium vase, 145 mm, smoky grey, white and clear
Aalto bowl, 380 mm, smoky grey

Alvar Aalto Collection

Aalto vase 160 mm, smoky grey-white and turquoise blue-white
Aalto bowl 50 x 195 mm, smoky grey-white and turquoise blue-white
Aalto bowl, stainless steel, 358 x 60 mm
Aalto wooden platter 210 x 257 mm
Aalto wooden platter 364 x 436 mm
Vase 121 mm, white
Vase 160 mm, black
Vase 160 mm, turquoise blue
Vase 120 mm, turquoise blue
Vase 95 mm, turquoise blue
Aalto bowl 30 x 98 mm, turquoise blue
Aalto bowl 40 x 136 mm, turquoise blue
Candle holder, turquoise blue

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