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Why Real Murano Glass Still Matters Today

Our Friends · Thursday, July 2nd, 2026

Is Murano glass still valued today/ And how important is its authenticity? Millions of people visit Murano Island every year in search of coveted Murano Glass, and its authenticity is very important today because, in a world of mass-produced goods, it is one of the last strongholds of handmade luxury.

Real Murano glass represents centuries of tradition, with techniques being passed down through the generations. The techniques are so intricate and specialized that they can take an aspiring glassmaker around 15 years to master.

In modern times, Murano glass artisans fight against mass-produced glass, integrating cutting-edge methods with traditional techniques, ensuring that every piece they create is one-of-a-kind.

The Masters Who Made Murano Glass Famous

The history of genuine Murano glass is defined by the figures who raised the concept of Venetian glass from the practical to the artistic. Since the 15th century, artisans have been inventing new techniques and reconstructing and redeveloping ancient methods of producing glass. By the 20th century, Murano glass had turned into the perfect blend of new artistic ideas with traditional techniques.

One of the most famous artisans of the Renaissance was Angelo Barovier. He invented Cristallo glass – a revolutionary concept then – a way to create clear, transparent glass. He and other masters then used it to make very thin glass for chalices and goblets, and many still use essentially the same technique today to make wine glasses and decanters. Barovier is famous for creating the Barovier cup, a wedding gift made from deep-blue glass and then hand-painted and gilded. Replicas are still being made in the same way as the original.

In the 19th century, after a lull in the production of Murano glass, Vincenzo Moretti revived ancient techniques and perfected the method of Millefiori, known in Italian as Murrina, a decorative technique in which multicolored patterns are created inside a glass cane. This is then sliced and incorporated into blown-glass artwork.

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Antonio Salviati was another famous name in 19th-century Murano glass-making. Originally a lawyer, he established glassworks to produce colorful glass enamel mosaics to restore the interior

of Basilica di San Marco and other Venetian churches. The glassworks became a successful business, and to this day there is never any shortage of requests for mosaics for the restoration of iconic Venetian sites. Salviati's company then worked on reinventing ancient techniques, such as Chalcedony. He is credited as a major figure in the revival of the Murano glass industry in the 1850s.

When talking about Murano glass, one cannot avoid coming across Paolo Venini, one of the most important Italian artisans of the 20th century. Through collaborations with other artisans and architects, he broke away from traditional designs and introduced objects featuring contemporary geometric and minimalist shapes.

Fulvio Bianconi inserted playfulness, vivid colors, and abstraction into traditional Murano glassmaking. He created whimsical and colorful pieces, such as his 'Commedia del Arte' figures, as well as the Fazzoletto, or handkerchief, vases, and Pezzati, or patchwork vases. For some time, he was in partnership with Paolo Venini.

Carlo Scarpa was a talented architect and designer who worked with Venini in the 1930s and 1940s. He experimented with thick, layered, and etched glass.

Current Trends in Murano Glass

Real Murano glass blends Venetian traditions and craftsmanship with contemporary ideas. There has been a move away from heavy, overly ornate and gilded designs towards fluid curves and asymmetrical shapes, in bold colors and simplistic patterns, often designed to be striking centerpieces.

Colors have moved toward soft tints such as milky white, smoke, and monochromatic clear glass, or evolved into rich, bold palettes. The former blends easily with contemporary minimalist interiors, while the latter creates a focus and a center of attention in a room that otherwise features relatively bland colors. Sometimes, the role of blown Murano glass in the room is to offset other interior decor aspects, such as features made of granite, marble, or wood. This creates an interesting contrast between textures and makes space more sophisticated.

Vintage lighting has been revived, and there has been a return to popular chandelier styles of the centuries past. Murano glass chandeliers in floral shapes and beautiful colors are again trendy, and people pick them out for their rich artistic heritage and versatility both as a light source and a focus of interior design. Modern takes on traditional Murano chandeliers are also popular, with irregular and asymmetrical, sometimes sculptural, shapes and unusual colors.

Customization is in demand as people are searching for items that are personal to them and different from what anyone else has. Customization options include personalized colors and designs, as well as customized shapes. Traditional techniques are still used, but with the customer's vision included.

Contemporary Masters

Contemporary glass artisans blend ancient techniques with modern ideas, and many of them are **influenced by Italian masters** and Murano glassmaking trends. For example, a well-known name to all contemporary glass artists around the world is Lino Tagliapietra. Born in Murano, Lino Tagliapietra is one of the most celebrated modern maestros, widely admired for his technical skills.

He became a glass apprentice at the age of 11 and has worked in glass for over 70 years, spending half of his time in Murano and the other half in the U. S. Tagliapietra is famous for pioneering unique, fluid shapes and for creating

gravity-defying installations. The Dinosaur is composed of precarious, elongated vessels with a narrow base, while the Angel Tear is an elongated teardrop shape. He has also produced two-dimensional glass ‘paintings’ and blown glass fleets that experiment with movement and light.

Davide Salvadore, born in 1953, is famous for creating bold, rhythmic shapes in vibrant colors. He often fuses traditional techniques such as incalmo, which is the joining of two or more pieces of blown glass to make one piece, with organic contemporary designs.

Oscar Zanetti was born in Murano in 1961 and started working with glass at the age of 14. He worked in some of the most renowned glass factories, such as Venini and Barovier & Toso. Since 1993, he has organized glass exhibitions and has exhibited his works at the Venezia Aperto Vetro (Venice Open Glass) exhibition as well as other local and international art glass events.

Simone Cenedese is a renowned Murano artisan, based in Venice. He runs the glassworks his father opened in the 1970s. He is especially known for his contemporary interpretations of classic chandeliers and for abstract sculptures. He likes to use the technique, Sommerso, to layer colors for dramatic effect. His glassworks create pieces for both public and private spaces throughout the world.

Where To See Murano Glass Art in Venice

To learn more about the look and feel of real Murano glass, it’s good to see it up close. This is possible at exhibitions, which keep the art form alive for generations and allow people to familiarize themselves with authentic Murano glass and distinguish it from fakes that are flooding both the high and low ends of the market.

Le Stanze del Vetro

Le Stanze del Vetro (The Glass Rooms) is an exhibition space on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, a small island in Venice opposite St. Mark’s Square. It hosts various thematic exhibitions on the subject of the rich history of Murano glass in Venice. The current exhibition, “1948 – 1958 Murano Glass and the Biennale: A Decade of Wonders,” celebrates the decade of 1948 to 1958 when glass exhibitions were resumed at the Venice Biennale and the Venetian pavilion. On display are over 180 pieces from historic glassmakers, including Paolo Venini, Barovier & Toso with Ercole Barovier, Aureliano Toso with Dino Martens, and Seguso Vetri d’Arte with Flavio Poli. This decade was a time when centuries-old techniques were reinvented, and there were new experiments in glassmaking.

Lost in a Glass of Water

Lost in a Glass of Water runs until June 21st, 2026, at the Palazzo Barovier & Toso in Murano. It is an exhibition created by video artist Fabrizio Plessi, and it explores glass through video and installations. Through this medium, traditional Murano bottles and glasses are filled with liquid. Their movements dictate the shape of the glass, which appears distorted. Practical functions become rhythmic, with light and movement highlighting the properties of liquid and glass.

Murano Glass Festival

The Murano Glass Festival is held every June in Murano. Here you can see live glassblowing demonstrations by master artisans. There are also exhibitions of both classical and contemporary glass.

Venice Glass Week

Venice Glass Week is held every year in September and is bigger and more popular than the Murano Glass Festival. For one week, Murano, Venice, and Mestre host many exhibitions, installations, live demonstrations, and meetings with master artisans.

Murano illumina il mondo (Murano Lights Up the World)

In the winter, chandeliers and light installations created by master glassmakers are placed in St. Mark's Square in Venice, transforming a dismal winter's night into a spectacle of reflection and light, highlighting the skill of Murano maestros.

Real Murano glass is still very important in contemporary times. So many products are mass-produced, including glass, and often have no character. Authentic Murano glass is the opposite and is a piece of handmade luxury that we can still enjoy today. Cultural heritage is being protected while integrating modern twists, making it relevant for today's audience.

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