

Samovar

Samovars are a necessary feature of the Russian mode of life and consequently a part of Russian applied art. It is difficult to say when the first ever samovar was made, but they became widely spread throughout the country with the introduction of tea and coffee. Samovars were produced in many towns of Russia, but most famous was Tula, an old center of metalworking.



The earliest samovars resembled English tea urns or tea vessels. They had already the principal characteristic element - a tube situated inside and a wind box, but a spout and a carrying handle instead of a tap. Later, at the end of eighteenth century, samovars began resembling vases and antique urns. Russian samovars vary in interior construction and exterior decoration and purpose. They were made of different metals - copper, iron, silver, silver plating on copper, steal, cast iron, and their decoration testifies to different stylistic art trends echoing the general tendencies in the artistic tastes of different periods.



The samovars became the symbol of Russian hospitality and family comfort as well as the sign of prosperity. Step by step a peculiar ritual of tea-drinking emerged and was adopted in every Russian home. In compliance with it, a hostess or her elder daughter poured the tea. Some families held two samovars, one, more plain, for everyday use, and a dearer one - for receptions and festivities. There were homes with separate samovar-rooms whose interior was crowned by the samovar.

