

Ultima Thule: 50 Years

Inspired by his deep love for Nordic nature, pioneering designer Tapio Wirkkala defied the rules of glassblowing when he created Ultima Thule with Iittala in 1968. Iittala celebrates 50 years of this now iconic series by introducing it in colour.



In a prolific career that spanned nearly four decades, designer **Tapio Wirkkala** created over 400 glass objects for Iittala, the most famous of which is the *Ultima Thule* series.

The legend is that Ultima Thule is a remote snow and ice-covered island in Wirkkala's native Finland, where the sun never sets. In his utter determination to capture this unique slice of Nordic nature, Wirkkala pushed the skills of the glassblowers at the Iittala glass factory. After nearly a thousand hours of working together, they produced the unusual organic surface by burning a mould with molten glass. What resulted was Ultima Thule, a ground-breaking glassware series with a distinctly Arctic feel.

Characterised by its round base supported by three little ice peaks that float above the surface, which is designed to resemble melting ice, Ultima Thule was an immediate success when it launched in 1968. A dynamic combination of art and function, the series' reputation as an exciting piece of international design was cemented when Finnair began using the glassware for first-

class passengers in 1969 on its newly premiered service from Helsinki to New York.

Today, the iconic Ultima Thule has been a pillar of Iittala for fifty years, with a collection that has widened from glassware to plates, serving items and interior objects in clear glass. Inspired by ice and snow, Ultima Thule allows you to hold a piece of art in your very own hands. This timeless series exemplifies innovative design which is why Ultima Thule is a beloved part of Finnish homes. Likewise, the modern classic has succeeded yet again in resonating with a new generation that appreciates the progressive design and stunning aesthetic of the Ultima Thule series.

The artist and innovator

Tapio Wirkkala was a multitalented design genius who is widely considered a leading figure of modern Finnish industrial art. Known as a master of many different materials, glass held a special significance in his work. As a close collaborator with the Iittala glass factory for forty years, Wirkkala

was highly influential in terms of Iittala's glass expertise. He and his contemporaries ushered a change in the approach to glass as a material by finding new ways to showcase the clarity and refractiveness of glass. Wirkkala even learned to polish glass and engrave his own graphite moulds, which were helicoptered into him from the glass factory to his isolated cottage in Lapland.

Despite having earned international renown for his work, Wirkkala secluded himself in the depths of Finnish nature. The wild beauty of its landscape deeply impacted Wirkkala's aesthetics. He spent hours studying textures, patterns and forms that he could later reproduce in his designs. Many of his insightful observations are replicated in the exquisite art glass he created with Iittala, with the culmination of his expertise resulting in Ultima Thule.

Another first

To honor the legendary Ultima Thule's 50th anniversary, Iittala is introducing Ultima Thule in colour for the first time ever. This classic piece of design is now offered in

rain. The mystical yet elegant shade of blue evokes the serenity of the Finnish landscape in a journey that takes you to the very northern edge of the world. Four new products are available in rain: tealight candleholder, O.F. 20 cl, bowl 115 mm and a set with pitcher + 2 O.F.



New product information, see the entire Ultima Thule Collection at iittala.com



NEW Ultima Thule O.F. pair 20cl
rain

£36.00



NEW Ultima Thule set O.F. 20cl +
pitcher 50cl rain

£145.00



NEW Ultima Thule bowl pair
115mm rain

£30.00



NEW Ultima Thule tealight can-
dleholder 65mm rain

£18.00



NEW Ultima Thule tealight can-
dleholder 65mm grey

£18.00

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