

Ping Pong Porcelain

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For over two hundred years in the Bavarian region of Germany fine porcelain has been produced by Royal Bayreuth. Famed for their whimsical figural shapes, they also produced elegant pieces for the table and boudoir. Even advanced specialists were surprised to learn that Royal Bayreuth made an extensive series of porcelain with Ping Pong motif in the early 1900s.

Research

About ten years ago with some persistent digging I traced these unusual pieces to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, where Royal Bayreuth had an exhibit. By 1904 the Ping Pong craze was in decline, but the designs and production were surely done in 1902-03, during the height of the new game's popularity.

Three patterns

For those readers who are not familiar with these delicate porcelains, they were produced in three different ping pong patterns:

- US flags over the table
- Man's hand holding a bat
- Pair of crossed bats

In the latter two patterns there is a US flag leitmotif in the ribbons.

Checklist

The table below identifies the known pieces and indicates by an x if an example has been found. I've seen only one example of the wall pocket, a curved piece with flat back that can hang on the wall, probably for holding matches. Other unusual and seldom seen pieces include the wavy ashtray, the footed jam/butter dish and the two-handled chocolate cup.

English Foley porcelain



Piece	Flags	Hand	X-bats
Milk pitcher, pinched spout	x	x	x
Creamer, plain spout	x	x	x
Milk/Juice glass	x	x	
Toothpick holder	x	x	x
Sugar bowl, 3 handles	x	x	x
Hot chocolate cup, 2 handles	x	x	x
Footed bowl	x		
Ashtray	x		
Teacup		x	
Demitasse cup/saucer	x	x	x
Wall pocket			

Porcelain with early ping pong scenes were also produced in England, circa 1902. Only two pieces have been found, both showing a well-dressed couple playing the game, with an apparent green baize cloth on the table.

I will be pleased to hear from anyone who can help complete the series: museum@ittf.com