



# Royal Albert History

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## Passionate About Florals

Romantic. Exuberant. Beautiful. Feminine. Floral. These are just some of the descriptions collectors worldwide apply to their favourite brand of bone china tableware and giftware – Royal Albert.

It's a brand that's inspired by the English country garden and the national flower, the rose. This quintessential English grace, elegance, and romance accounts for Royal Albert's timeless popularity in tableware. And the result? A touch of class for modern lifestyles that effectively fuses indulgent floral motifs with shabby chic feel. With Royal Albert you have the best of the classic and contemporary worlds.

The story of Royal Albert stretches back over one hundred years to a small pottery business established by Thomas Wild in 1896, in Longton - one of the six towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent, "The Potteries". This household name began as a family business. For it was the ability and work of Thomas and his sons – Fred and Tom (Thomas Clark or TC) – that made the company famous for bone china tea and breakfast sets.

The tribute paid to Fred Wild at his death in 1961 could equally apply to all of the others, "Much of the success of Royal Albert is a direct result of Fred's courage, foresight and enterprise".

## Royal Pedigree for Royal Albert

To own a piece of Royal Albert is to have a piece of history in your hands. For this household name had links with the royal household from the start, after Prince Albert who became King George VI in 1936. China produced at the factory was therefore initially branded as Albert Crown China. 'Royal' was added in 1904. But it soon became known familiarly as 'Royal Albert'...

Many early shapes were fluted, and included floral motifs and rich patterns in shades of red, green and blue in the style of popular Japanese Imari patterns. Above all, Royal Albert's early success was linked to an uncanny ability to cater for all tastes - from the modest to the most expensive. What's more, the first Royal Albert commemoratives were produced as early as 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. So, Royal Albert has always offered style that goes beyond the tabletop per se.

A flexible and progressive approach to products and manufacturing drove UK and, ultimately, international success for Royal Albert. In around 1910 the first overseas agency was established in New Zealand, and this was quickly followed by exports to Australia, Canada, and the USA. Moreover, TC eagerly embraced new technology and incorporated new processes for continuous improvement - Royal Albert was one of the very first in its field to install kilns fired by gas and electricity.

Yet it was Royal Albert's designers who developed its distinctively English, globally popular, style. It was they who combined the fineness, whiteness and purity of the bone china ceramic body with sensual and informal rococo shapes and floral designs. The English fondness for cottage gardens and shady woods naturally inspired thousands of designs - motifs which have been adapted and updated through period fashions, such as 1920s vivid Art Deco floral patterns. It's proved a winning tableware formula – inspired by Victorian chintz,

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Lady Carlyle has proved a popular success for over 50 years.

## Old Country Roses

When it comes to Royal Albert designers, Harold Holdcroft was probably the most famous of all. He epitomised the team's passion for flowers.

Harold Holdcroft designed Old Country Roses. Taking both rich and soft colours, he combined lush deep red roses with the warmth from the tea roses, alongside the delicacy of blush pink, all softened by a wash of green. And he completed the winning design with rich gold stipple and a burnished gold rim. This classic pattern emphasises the full bodied and curvaceous fluted Montrose tableware shape.

Since its launch in 1962, over one hundred million pieces of Old Country Roses have been sold worldwide - more than any other bone china tableware pattern.

It's an exemplary range that includes dinner, tea, and coffee ware as well as an extensive selection of giftware in a variety of decorative treatments including chintz. In addition, the design has been licensed for use throughout the home as linen, fabrics and other soft furnishings, true to Royal Albert's lifestyle approach.

## Turning Over A New Leaf

Natural design remains a passion to this day, of course. Harold was succeeded by Peter Roberts in 1972. And the current Design Studio continues the floral tradition.

And the royal links have been retained. Royal Albert has two Royal Warrants and continues to commemorate important events and anniversaries. Most recently, in 2002, Royal Albert marked the Golden Jubilee of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II, and the death of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother with small collections.

Royal Albert consistently updates its romantic, fashionable image...Thanks to a licensee agreement with fashion icon Zandra Rhodes, she is endorsing her range of "My Favourite Things" with Royal Albert, featuring her signature butterfly and wiggle as a theme across tableware, giftware, and glassware. Like Royal Albert, she has a quintessentially English appeal that reaches across the globe.

Today, Royal Albert's impressive, elegant portfolio features bone china tableware with floral hues and flowing curves that can be savoured in Old Country Roses, Lavender Rose, Lilac Lane, Paradise, Rose Clouds, Flower of the Month, and more...It's a theme that's pursued with a variety of Old Country Roses complementary giftware, alongside collectable teas and plates, and glassware.

*Royal Albert, like its customers across the world, remains "...passionate about florals".*