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SECTOR Well-being & Beauty

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## AKI – an ancient object reimagined for our changing world

AKI glass oil lamps combine beauty, functionality and spirituality. A contemporary take on a vessel that has held symbolic meaning across different cultures and traditions for thousands of years, they bring light, comfort and calm into our complex, fast-paced lives.

Handmade in the Czech Republic, AKI lamps blend pure, simple forms with shimmering colours and suit a wide range of décor styles and settings. But they're about much more than aesthetics: they become part of everyday rituals, encouraging self-care and holistic wellness.

AKI were born in response to the loneliness many felt during the Covid pandemic. In 2020 we all felt fragile, unsafe and our human nature prominently resurfaced. At that time the necessity to relate with our souls and the inexplicable has been a sudden throwback. We stayed inside our homes for a sheltered life, like our ancestors in the caves. Like in the beginnings we relied on fire to illuminate the darkness both as symbolic and physical phenomena.

They were designed by Laura Ercole and sprang from her belief that nurturing our souls is as important to our wellbeing as caring for our minds and bodies. "Everything developed with Covid, when people were forced to stay at home and we were feeling lonely. The AKI oil lamp was a way to make them feel connected to others and to remind us of our basic needs as human beings – as well as to feel part of a community," she explains.

**Brighter than a candle**, the soft glow of an AKI oil lamp is particularly special. It's an antidote to the harsh blue light of the screens that dominate our modern lives. A light that our ancestors would have known. A light that links us with our past and our future.

**On an emotional level**, it's a light that allows us to step away from daily pressures and focus on ourselves. **The gently dancing flame encourages us to slow down and find a moment of calm**, quiet contemplation. In its presence, we can connect with our inner emotions and improve our spiritual wellness – a dimension that's so often forgotten amid the hustle and bustle of these complex, uncertain times.

**On a physical level**, the light of an AKI lamp creates a warm, relaxing atmosphere. It helps us escape from the digital world, unwind and live in the present moment. **It sparks a sense of wonder, revealing the hidden beauty in our surroundings** – not only in the areas it illuminates, but in the pockets of darkness and shadow it leaves behind.

**AKI design it's unique** among other oil lamps in the market that are reproduction of old ones, reinterpretation of traditional oil lamps or simple round shaped thin glass globes. Ergonomically shaped to stay in your palm AKI offers a grip to move it securely. The eye-catching design is a smart feature as the lamp keeps spinning if accidentally hit with no danger for your furniture or oil spills.

**AKI are durable objects to cherish and pass on**, as testimonial of great European craft keeping in mind a sustainable way of living. So enhanced durability it's connected with conscious consumer choices to reduce the products we buy and resources we need to produce them. They are purposefully made of glass – a material that can be recycled time and time again therefore it gives you the meaning of long life, of something that comes from the past, is in the present and can go into the future.

AKI lamps are **easy to clean and refill so to be repurposed and used to hold a small bouquet of flowers, or as a reed diffuser**. "These are all welcoming rituals," Laura explains. "So, when somebody comes into your home, and you want to create a warm cosy atmosphere, you simply light a candle or an oil lamp, arrange some fresh flowers or spread a relaxing scent. In this sense, AKI is really connected to your personal dimension. It's not just an oil lamp."

**No longer essential for light** oil lamps have acquired a new significance – one that goes beyond its continued religious usage. In our increasingly busy, fast-paced lives, it **offers comfort and companionship. It adds beauty to our living spaces**. And it encourages quiet reflection, bringing moments of calmness and clarity that connect us to our inner selves and enhance our spiritual wellbeing.

The story of the oil lamp is the story of us. And it's a story that's still being written.

The name AKI is Japanese and signifies 'sparkle', 'bright', 'autumn' and 'hope'. It reflects the timeless elegance of the lamps, which are brought to life using traditional Bohemian glass-blowing techniques, as well as the warm, tranquil atmosphere that their light creates.

The designs are available across four different collections, each with a different meaning and finish.

## The TRUE collection

Lamps in the TRUE Collection tell the story of Bohemian glass-making traditions. Only a few glassworks still practice the old method that once flourished in the Czech Republic, where expert glass blowers sculpt the raw materials using traditional birch moulds, a central furnace and several melting pots. It's a process that requires passion, dedication and perfect timing, all of which shine through in the lamps' pure, bright colours.

**RRP: from 120,00 €**

## The MISTY collection

These lamps are reborn from seconds that don't meet AKI's high standards. Rather than being melted down, they are resurfaced with a matt finish, masking defects and unveiling a new charm. Much like a fog that envelopes the landscape, the resulting vessels have an air of mystery. The glass obscures what's behind while still allowing light to pass through.

**RRP from 115,00 €**

## The JOURNEY collection

Created for wanderers, daydreamers and curious souls, lamps in the JOURNEY Collection are characterised by unique colours – some bold, some soft – formed from layers of opal and transparent glass. The more vibrant shades conjure up distant lands, wild forests and vast oceans. The softer colours are a tribute to Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, where pastel-hued buildings line the Vltava river, and eastern and western influences merge.

**RRP from 135,00 €**

## The PALACE collection

With a fusion of glass and gold inspired by ancient palaces, lamps in the PALACE collection evoke precious stones, sparkling mirrors, rich decorations and lustrous fabrics of ancient royal palaces. This collection combines glass and 24-carat gold. Fragile and graceful, glass brings to mind fine artworks, perfume bottles and sculptures. Gold, meanwhile, represents prosperity and success, as well as symbolising a connection to the divine in many spiritual and religious contexts. Each lamp in the collection can be customised with hand-painted designs in gold or enamel.

**RRP from 170,00 €**