

THE CULT SHOP

# a la turca

A treasure hunt through this Istanbul antiques haven turns up lessons in Ottoman history – along with a glass of cherry wine

Tucked down a side street in Istanbul's artistic and eclectic Çukurcuma district, in a spectacular 19th-century, four-storey townhouse, is a true treasure trove of Turkish antiques. Brimming with pieces you're unlikely to find assembled anywhere else, this fascinating emporium feels like the private home of a tasteful collector. Indeed, a visit to A La Turca is an education in Ottoman art history and local lore, not to mention a visual feast, full of exquisite objects that cover every available surface – all lovingly amassed by owner Erkal Aksoy (pictured right).

Visitors to his store-cum-museum are in for a treat; one that begins with a glass of cherry wine and sweets – perfect

sustenance for the hours one can spend exploring the jam-packed floors. "I love sharing my culture and history with my clients, many of whom simply come to browse," explains Aksoy – and one doesn't feel any pressure to buy.

Starting in the rug and kilim department that A La Turca is so justly known for, one finds impressive floor-to-ceiling shelves that display a colourful array of some 4,000 carpets (from €800-€18,000), made from either wool or cotton in Turkey's Konya and Sivas regions. The latter's kilims are noted for their deep red hues, while simple floral and geometric motifs dominate the entire collection. Aksoy and his assistants are happy to unfurl rug after rug, sharing their knowledge of traditional weaving techniques and ancient textiles.

In the basement there is a profusion of Turkish pottery – Aksoy's "true passion" – including green-glazed urns (€350-€4,000), vases (from €450) and assorted Aegean water jugs (€450-€4,000). The upper floors feature beautiful hand-blown glassware in translucent shades of blue (€550-€1,500) – "traditional cheese containers that are buried below ground to age", explains Aksoy. There are also classic Ottoman vintage rose water glasses (€250-€550, pictured left, top shelf) and Anatolian vintage jars (€350-€750, pictured left, bottom shelf).

One of A La Turca's most spectacular spaces houses a collection of antique



globes (€1,600-€8,500) that have been gathered from all over the world, and the Ottoman portraits of sultans painted in oils (€1,500-€15,000) that adorn the walls are particularly intriguing. Dotted around are more modern paintings (€350-€3,000), about 50-60 years old and simply framed in gilded wood, while marble vases once used for traditional boza drinks (€500-€5,000), copper statuary (from €350), embroideries (from €1,650), Arabic scrolls (from €750) and enormous custom-made "great tables" (€2,500), which Aksoy commissions

from the neighbouring Princes' Islands, round out the shop's unique offerings.

However, it is Aksoy himself – with his exacting eye and knowledge – that makes A La Turca a must. As he explains: "I am influenced by the architecture, history and chaotic energy of Istanbul, where the east meets the west." Prepare to discover a condensed cultural history in objects, cherry-picked by a discerning curator. **CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS**  
A La Turca, 4 Faikpasa, Çukurcuma, Cihangir Istanbul (+90212-245 2933; [www.alaturcahouse.com](http://www.alaturcahouse.com)).

## FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

### Join the party

Parties that raise money for charity are not unusual, but Global Party has taken the idea to a whole new level. Its organisers, Lord Stanley Fink and entrepreneur David Johnstone, first launched their venture in 2011, arranging 80 fundraising events in 71 cities to take place within a 24-hour period. This year, however, they aim to put their past efforts in the shade with the launch of Global Party 360, a three-day event in June that will see 360 parties being held in a variety of venues, such as private homes, members' clubs, yachts and hotels, in over 120 cities. Each soiree will support a local charity partner, while the £500 entry fee – for two tickets and a keyring that gives VIP privileges for life at many of the venues – will be donated to the Global Charity Trust, a newly established foundation that distributes funds to animal, education and child welfare causes worldwide. **LINDSAY MACPHERSON**  
June 27-29; [www.theglobalparty.com](http://www.theglobalparty.com).

### Here comes the sun

“ Since starting Toms Eyewear a little over a year ago, we've helped 100,000 people get their sight back. This is our first eyewear collaboration but the third time we've partnered with Charity Water, which has funded 8,000 projects reaching over 3.2m people since its launch in 2006. The money from each pair of sunglasses will not only help someone to see; \$10 will go to bringing clean drinking water to developing countries. ”

Blake Mycoskie, founder of Toms.



Windward sunglasses, £115; [www.toms.co.uk](http://www.toms.co.uk)

### Market share

The Bill Bensley-designed Shinta Mani Siem Reap in Cambodia is a boutique hotel that aims to address the country's unskilled youth population (one of the largest in southeast Asia) by offering young people 10-month apprenticeships. Now the hotel's philanthropic arm, the Shinta Mani Foundation, is launching an artisan market called Well Made, featuring an impressive roster of local work. Among the wares on offer will be candles in ceramic bowls made by Khmer potters from fair-trade operation Saarti, striking bronze jewellery by Saomao, and Eric Stocker's lacquered serving dishes. The stalls will be given to artisans in exchange for 20 per cent of their takings. This will be donated to the foundation, which also provides students with uniforms, bicycles, daily meals and a stipend of rice and money to help support their families. **SIBÉAL POUNDER**  
[www.shintamani.com](http://www.shintamani.com).