

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



Marie Antoinette: A Pair of Louis XVI Fauteuils

France, *circa* 1785

This elegant pair of fauteuil is likely part of a suite of furniture supplied to the château de St. Cloud in 1785. The château de St. Cloud was built during the second half of the 17th century by the Duke Philippe of Orléans, King Louis XIV's only brother. In 1784, King Louis XVI purchased the château from Philippe for his wife, Marie Antoinette for a sum of 6,000,000 livres.

The Queen took up the task of decorating the château entirely to her liking with the help of Richard Mique, a neoclassical architect. This new residence was furnished through commissions at the Garde-meuble de la Couronne and other furniture from Royal residences. This suite, along with several other commissions, were all delivered to St. Cloud in time for the King and Queen's arrival on August 29.

The original suite of sixteen pieces of seat furniture is recorded in the 'journal du Garde-mueble' on July 2 1785 as 'Hauré fera les bois cy après pour le service de la Reine à St Cloud: 1 canapé de 7 pds de long, 12 grand fauteuils mueblans à carreau, 4 bergères à carreau [...] la peinture en blanc vernis sera faite à St Cloud.' The suite was likely a collaboration between Séné, Jean Hauré, 'entrepreneur des meubles de la Couronne,' and George Jacob, who was one of the leading chair-makers in the Garde-

meuble in the 1780s.

Jean Hauré mentioned the suite in a further mémoire describing the style of carving and the decorative motifs used on them, saying 'feuilles d'acanthes sur la console, rais de Coeur autour du dossier et perles dans les ceintures, pieds tournés et callenés.'

The suite was destined for the Salone de Diane, one of the salons in the King's apartments. John Anderson wrote his reflections on his visits to Paris and the environs in his published journal, *The American in Paris* in 1838. He describes the room as full 'with the tapestry of the gobelins,' referring to the famed Gobelin tapestry manufactory. He also remarks about the thought of Marie Antoinette living at the château with the musing 'Only to think, here she used to sleep, the little queeny!'

A pair of chaises from this suite has been in the collection of Louvre since 1944. They originally came up at an auction of furniture from St. Cloud in 1794-95. The chairs at the Louvre retain the original label that is inscribed, 'pour le service de la/ Reine a St Cloud/ n.299.'

The château no longer exists today due to a fire in 1870, however it was an important part of French history. The château has been used to entertain leaders from all over the world since its building, including the Russian Tsar Peter I in 1717, Thomas Jefferson from American in 1786, and Queen Victoria from Great Britain in 1855.

SOLD

A very fine pair of Louis XVI white-painted fauteuils attributed to Jean-Baptiste Séné. Each chair with a rectangular back and seat, the back carved with leaf tips, the arms and seat rail with beading, standing on turned tapered and fluted legs headed by rosettes and terminating in turned sabots. The whole upholstered with 'Indienne' silk.

Height: 36.22 in (92 cm)
Width: 25.59 in (65 cm)
Depth: 22.64 in (57.5 cm)

Stock Number

M07.59

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