



Pair Of Louis XV Console Chests Stamped "carel"



22 000 EUR

Signature : Carel

Period : 18th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Description

A pair of console chests resting on two curved legs. The console chests open with a drawer, each revealing a leather-covered writing desk, which in turn opens to reveal a storage compartment. They are richly inlaid with amaranth, sycamore maple, and stained wood. The impressive "crossbow"-shaped band, which is also curved at the sides, is adorned with motifs of flowering tree branches set within cartouches. The pair of console chests is adorned with gilded and chiseled bronze lock plates, finials, and feet. Stamped "Carel" and bearing the JME hallmark. Louis XV period. Normal wear and tear; leather likely replaced. H. 85.5 x W. 80.5 x D. 45.5 cm. It is likely that the pair of console chests we are presenting today are the first you have ever seen. Indeed, in addition to being a very rare

Dealer

Galerie Pellat de Villedon

French furnitures of the 17th & 18th centuries

Mobile : 06 07 57 01 20

2 bis rue Carnot

Versailles 78000

piece of furniture in terms of its form, the maker's mark they bear is not commonly seen, as we shall see. Thus, the console chest is a relatively rare type in the history of 18th-century furniture. The Metropolitan Museum goes so far as to say that it corresponds to a relatively short production period, spanning the 1750s--a time when this type of furniture was in vogue. The Dauphin, for example, ordered a pair from the merchant and haberdasher Lazare Duvaux, who recorded the delivery in his journal on February 3, 1757. The Metropolitan Museum houses an example of a console chest of drawers in Coromandel lacquer made by BVRB II, a piece that attests to the elite's taste for this fanciful piece of furniture, often intended to hold a mirror or a trumeau in a dining room. Our pair of console chests is thus a rare example of the extreme inventiveness of 18th-century woodworkers. The pair of console chests bears the cabinetmaker Carel's mark on the left crossbar of each console. Jacques Philippe Carel was a cabinetmaker who received his master's certification in 1723. During his early years, he worked in Grenoble in the workshops of Thomas Hache. There he developed great dexterity in the art of veneering and, particularly in his Louis XV-style work, displayed a distinct fondness for floral marquetry. Our piece features a broad, bold motif of flowering branches that flow gracefully along the waistband. The bronze elements on our consoles are recurring motifs in Carel's work, as we find the same clogs and corner spurs on a flat desk that went up for auction at Christie's on April 27, 2021, as lot 259. Of greater interest is a wall-mounted console table that appeared at an Artémisia Auction on May 28, 2014, as lot 190. The console is very similar to ours, with a comparable choice of wood and the same crossbow-like curve. We can therefore conclude that Carel, whose body of identified works is fairly limited, produced a few consoles of this type, which are unique. Also worth noting is an order fulfilled in 1757 by the haberdasher Duvaux for the Dauphin at

Versailles: "Two types of single-drawer chests of drawers, with console-style legs, veneered in flowered rosewood, and entirely trimmed in gilded bronze with ground gold..." Carel counted among his wealthy clientele the Royal House of Sweden (Drottningholm Palace still houses one of his chests of drawers today), that of France, through the intermediary of Gaudreaus, who subcontracted work to Carel, and that of the Prince of Württemberg. His furniture is prized for its refined elegance, the selection of consistently high-quality bronze fittings, and the delicacy of its forms and veneers. The Louvre, for example, holds a two-door chest of drawers by him. The Frick Collection in New York also holds a chest of drawers with floral marquetry in end-grain wood, and the Palace of Versailles includes a pair of sloping desks in its collections. Carel left behind very few pieces of furniture bearing his mark, which enhances the value of our set. In this sense, "rarity" is perhaps the word that best describes this pair of console chests.