

G U D E & M E I S





antique clocks



At Gude & Meis, we love clocks. And with a combined experience of nearly 60 years, there is a wealth of knowledge about them within the company. But we sometimes take this knowledge for granted and forget how special all the stories are surrounding these wonderful objects. We therefore thought that it would be nice to produce a small booklet in which we could tell these stories and show clocks from a different angle.

Gude & Meis Antique Clocks specialise in clocks, music boxes and barometers. The gallery is located in the renowned Museum quarter near the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. All objects are sold with a guarantee of authenticity and full functionality. We ship worldwide. Besides selling clocks, we provide repairs, restoration and valuations. For further information please visit; www.gudemeis.com



We have added QR codes to all our objects, scanning this code with a QR scanner which you can download to your phone or tablet, will take you to the object on our website for more information on price and current status of items: sold/available.



A FRENCH EMPIRE ORMOLU SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK
WITH SAPPHO, CIRCA 1810



Although not many of Sappho's poems still survive, many scholars of the Antiquity have expressed their admiration for her lyrical poetry. By Hellenistic scholars she was considered one of the nine Lyric Poets worthy of study, and her poems about love are the most appreciated. This well-cast and chiselled gilt-bronze clock could well have been made for an admirer of poetry and would have fitted well in a study or library. To others, the design and rarity might have been the attraction. Any which way, this is a beautiful clock and a beautiful work of art.



A SMALL, ENGLISH EBONISED
QUARTER-REPEATING TABLE CLOCK
MADE BY JAMES WITTIT, CIRCA 1740

The English table or bracket clock, as it is often called, has been universally liked for centuries. Its design remained roughly the same for a long time and underwent only minor changes due to fashion in interior design so it matched with other objects. The dimensions of these clocks are often very similar; therefore, smaller versions are collectable and sought after. But in addition to being a pretty object, it was very practical. Besides showing the time, the date and striking the hours, it has a pull-cord quarter-repeater function. Using this, one could tell the approximate time during the night without the need for a light. This feature indicates that this clock was also used in the bedroom and sheds some light on the history of this fine object.



AN AUSTRIAN GILT BRASS 'GRANDE SONNERIE' STRIKING PENDULE D'OFFICIER,
BY HAPPACHER, CIRCA 1820.



This small clock captures the attention with its lovely proportions and finely worked ormolu case. The engraved pattern on the case and dial shows the skill of the craftsman who made it. But also the movement is of the finest quality made by one of the best and renown clockmakers that Austria ever had. Not only beautiful but also very practical for travel with quarter striking with repetition and alarm. Together with its original travel case it is a piece fitting for any collector or enthusiast.



A DUTCH LOUIS XVI MAHOGANY 'BAKBAROMETER'
BY PIETER WAST, CIRCA 1810

In 1643 Torricelli invented the barometer, which measures barometric (air) pressure. With it one can make a short-term weather prediction. One of the practical problems of the approximately one-metre mercury tube is that the scale measures only about eight centimetres, and most changes only occur in millimetres. In the eighteenth century, a lot of effort was put into developing a larger barometer scale. Among these were angled or sign-post barometers, and wheel barometers, but in Holland the 'bakbarometer' was devised. The middle tube is a standard Torricelli tube, which is called the 'controller' since this is the classic barometer. The tubes either side of this are actually one tube which runs as a U through the cistern cover at the bottom. The left side is filled with mercury all the way to the bottom of the right part of the tube. Here, there is a syphon that holds oil and protrudes further to the right part of the tube. A small change in the mercury level is amplified by the syphon, forcing the oil to fluctuate over a much larger distance. This creates a scale of about 55 centimetres that is much easier to read. This fine piece, with its silvered brass plates and finely made mahogany case, was made by a member of the Wast family, who were known as the best barometer makers in Holland. Although one might no longer need a barometer, given modern weather reports, one can still use it to predict the weather, and it remains a fascinating, beautifully made object that would embellish any interior.



P. WAST Fec. Amsterdam.





A RARE, SMALL FRENCH LOUIS XVI
ORMOLU 'CARTEL D'ALCOVE'
BY COURVOISIER, CIRCA 1770

'Cartel d'alcove' literally translates to 'cartel of the bedroom'. Since a cartel is a decorative French wall clock, there must be something that sets this clock apart from 'normal' cartel clocks. First, its size is small size compared to the usual cartel, which were designed to decorate a large room rather than a smaller bedroom. But most of all it is the technical details that place this clock in a bedroom. For instance, there is no automatic hour and half-hour striking, so the clock remains silent. But the clock does have a quarter-repeater function that causes the clock to strike the hours and quarters that have passed when a cord is pulled, however. In this way, one can hear what time it is in the dark. One shouldn't forget that turning on the light wasn't an option, and starting a fire, not that easy. Lastly, this clock even has an alarm, which certainly places this piece close to a bed. But there is another remarkable feature to the movement. There is a clip that can fix the pendulum during transport. This would suggest that this piece could have been installed by the owner wherever he or she lodged. It is amazing what kind of objects were taken along on a trip by the nobility of the eighteenth century. Therefore, this is not only a beautiful little clock, but it also has very interesting history.



A SOUTHERN-GERMAN LOUIS XVI
POLYCHROME 'KUHSCHWANZ' RACK WALL
CLOCK, CIRCA 1780

Most clocks have a movement that has an energy source such as a mainspring or a weight to drive the clock. Besides that, the movement needs a regulating component that ensures the energy is released consistently. Without it, the hands would spin around uncontrollably until the spring has wound down or the weight reaches the floor. The interesting feature of this clock is that the movement and dial themselves are used as a weight. By engaging with the teeth on the 'rack', the wheels of the movement can turn. One can simply 'wind' the clock by pushing the whole mechanism back up the rack. Another amusing part of this clock is the front pendulum. This southern-German and Alpine tradition is called 'Kuhschwanz Pendel', which translates as 'cow-tail pendulum'. This is not surprising, because the pendulum swings like the tail of a cow in front of the dial. Many people are fascinated by the movement slowly descending down the rack while running. This is a beautiful object that will be a conversation piece for anyone seeing it for the first time.





A FRENCH EMPIRE PATINATED AND GILT-BRONZE SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK, CIRCA 1800

Before Napoleon had conquered Egypt, the classical art of the Ancient Greeks and Romans was often an inspiration for mantel clocks. After conquering Egypt the subject matter for works of art was enriched with the ornamentation of Ancient Egypt. For us, the harmony and symmetry of the design in combination with the fine workmanship are probably enough reason to like this clock. But for the elite of the early nineteenth century who owned clocks like this, subject matter was very important, and the figures, symbols and ornamentation had a deeper layer of meaning only understood by the upper echelons of society. The iconographical meaning of a griffin is vigilance and courage because of the combination of lion and eagle. But in Christianity it also symbolizes the supremacy over heaven (eagle) and earth (lion), like Christ. When looking at it this way, a classical and profane subject suddenly becomes very acceptable in Christian society.



A FRENCH MAHOGANY MARINE BAROMETER BY CHARLET, CIRCA 1820

A barometer was an important instrument that helped the owner forecast the weather by observing changes in barometric pressure. One can only imagine how precious a good barometer was to seamen relying on it for their safety. Although the case displays the simplicity often seen with instruments it still has beautiful designed lines. The gimbal suspension showing that it was used on a ship. Today it might not be as necessary, but it remains a lovely object with an interesting history.



A SWISS INTERCHANGEABLE-CYLINDER ROSEWOOD MUSIC BOX ON A TABLE BY BREMOND, CIRCA 1870



It might be hard to understand today, but in the nineteenth century mechanical music was a marvel of technique and only affordable for the very well off. These 'machines' are still testament to the enormous skill that the workmen must have had. Each pin had to be put in by hand with hardly any margin for error. The steel comb had to be made and tuned to perfection. The cases were often veneered with the finest woods and inlaid with marquetry ornamentation by good cabinet makers. This fine music box has six cylinders, each with six tunes, of which many are arias from operas. The sound of this fine music box is astonishing. Together with its matching table to store the extra cylinders, it must have been a prized possession of its owner.



A RARE AND INTERESTING FRENCH ENAMEL AND MARBLE MANTEL CLOCK, CIRCA 1890

At first sight, one would not directly identify this object as a clock. But when looking more closely one sees two sectors at both sides: one for hours, the other for minutes. An eight-day movement concealed in the rouge griotte base drives the arms slowly up until they fall down at the end. In this way a very decorative piece with a lovely colour combination is a clock, an object d'art and a conversation piece all in one.





A DUTCH MAHOGANY 'STANDARD TIME' REGULATOR BY KAISER, CIRCA 1850

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, each city or town had its own time. Noon was when the sun reached its highest point at that location. It didn't matter that there was a seven-minute time difference between the eastern and western borders of the Netherlands. But it started to matter when travel sped up. It was with the advent of the railways that the need for a standardised time became necessary. Most railways were single tracks, and leaving and arriving on time was the difference between safety and collisions. Around 1850, the need for 'regulators', which is the term for precision clocks, became greater and greater. French and English regulators were very expensive, and it was Alexander Kaiser, a very skilled clockmaker from The Hague, who acted on the growing demand. He devised his 'Timekeeper', a regulator with a well-made movement and a clever zinc compensated pendulum. The mechanism was housed in a simple but elegant mahogany case. The Dutch government advised stations, post offices and telegraph offices to choose this locally made precision clock. The fact that Kaiser's brother was a cabinet minister might have had something to do with that.

Dutch regulators are rare by definition, because there were only a few clockmakers that concerned themselves with precision clockmaking. A similar clock is in the Museum of Dutch clocks in Zaandam and was one of the key exhibits in the exhibition 'The Time Network', which dealt with the origins of standard time in the Netherlands. In other words, this is a rare and handsome regulator with a place in history.



A GERMAN GILT-BRASS HORIZONTAL TABLE CLOCK WITH QUARTER STRIKING AND ALARM, BY JOHANN GOTTLIEB KRIEDEL OF COTTBUS, DATED 1760

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, a clockmaking tradition started in Germany that was renowned for its fine workmanship and detail. Although the main centre for production was Augsburg, other towns also had clockmakers working in this tradition. These clocks were mostly made for the wealthy few, who regarded these clocks as symbols of wealth and esteem. This is illustrated by the fact that many noble figures had their portraits painted with a clock like this one in the picture. One of the joys of having this clock is opening the bottom lid and looking at the beautifully engraved back plate showing the detail of the workmanship. It is like opening a present each time when one does it.







A FRENCH LOUIS XVI EXPEDITION WALL REGULATOR LES FRÈRES GOYFFON, CIRCA 1770

Many people who see this rare piece are astonished by the lack of ornamentation, which gives it an almost modern look. Only the finely pierced and engraved hands together with the style of the numerals give away the age and period when it was made. But there is a logical explanation for this lack of ornamentation. Looking more closely, one can see that the pendulum rod consists of three pieces well joined by screws and can be dissembled easily. The position of the plate on which the movement is mounted and that is hung on the wall can be adjusted by large screws. And the movement is mounted in and protected by a drum case. These features indicate that this regulator was made to be easily transported and set up anywhere one needed a timepiece for reference. For instance, when there was an expedition to the southern hemisphere to record a solar eclipse, a good timekeeper was needed to record the observations. Since it was not practical to bring a regulator in a longcase, very rare pieces like this were produced for this special purpose. Because of its undecorated, modern look, this interesting and rare piece fits into any interior.



A DUTCH BURR WALNUT LONGCASE CLOCK WITH ALARM AND QUARTER STRIKING BY GERRIT KRAMER DATED 1741

In 1657 Christiaan Huygens invented the 'pendulum movement', which allowed clocks to run far more accurately than previously. Within a few years this invention spread all over Europe and changed horology significantly. In England, Fromanteel soon made the first longcase clock. This type of clock proved to be reliable and looked good in the interior. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century some English clockmakers came to Holland and introduced this type of clock to the Dutch. It soon became popular, and, with only a few regional differences, the development of these clocks progressed in a very similar way both in England and Holland. It was around 1725 that Dutch longcase design started to move away from the English designs. In contrast to the more sober and less ornamental English, the Dutch clocks became more elaborate and taller. This fine piece still has the elegant, sober lines of the earlier clocks but combines this with the burr walnut and canted corners typical of later clocks. The Dutch also liked calendar work, judging from the high number of clocks having this feature. What is also striking about this clock is the extraordinarily high level of engraving in which this calendar is executed. Together with the elaborate hands and small extra detail on many parts, this clock will remain interesting to the eye and a joy to the beholder.





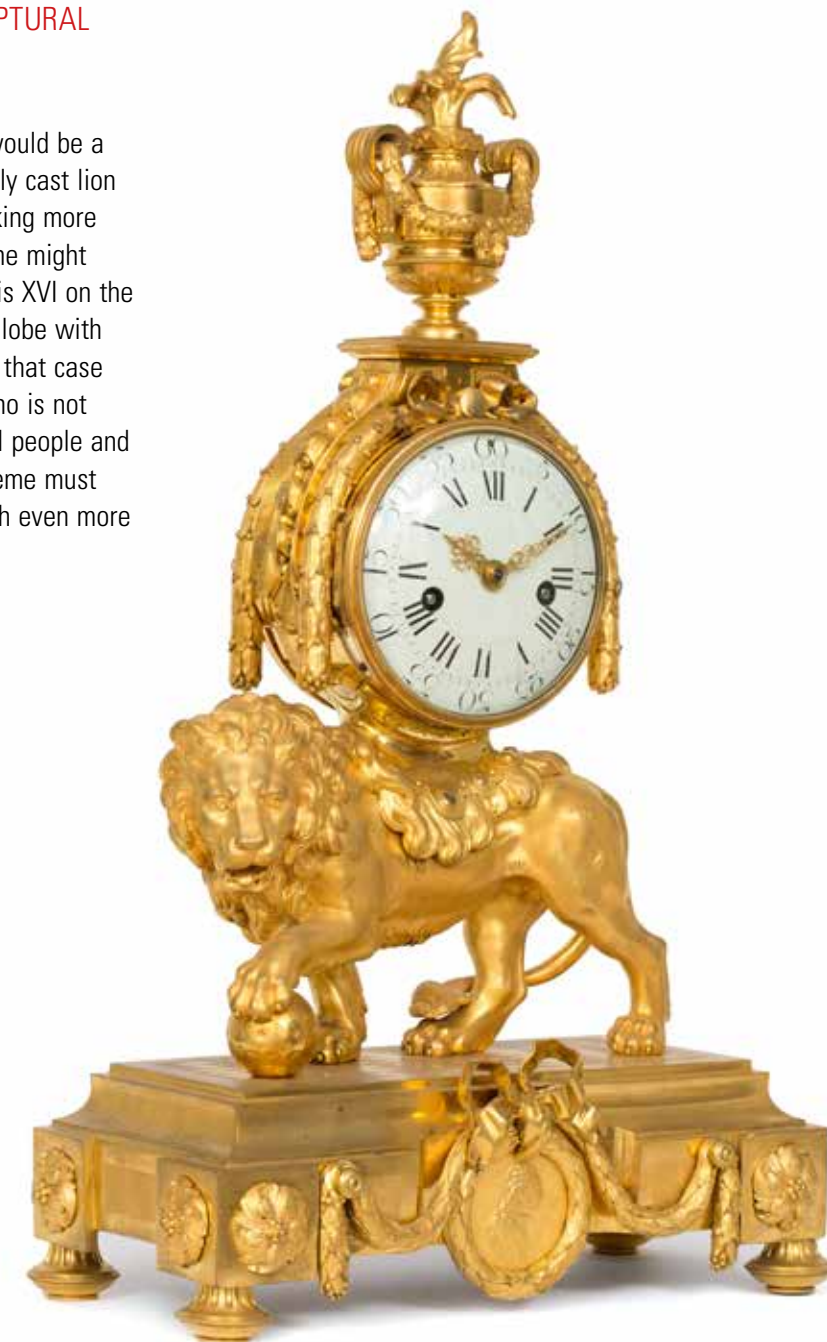
A RARE AND LARGE FRENCH BRASS QUARTER-STRIKING TRAVEL CLOCK, BECHET A LYON, CIRCA 1770

In the France of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, travel clocks were rare and differed per to clockmaker. Although this austere clock might look a little plain, the workmanship is evident when looking at the hands, movement and small details in the finishing. In its design, it has a lot in common with lantern clocks. We know from experience that just like lantern clocks, these clocks fit well in both a modern or classic interior. The plain appearance was the reason that they were called 'pendule à la Capucine', referring to the austere lifestyle of the Capucine monks. The two-tone quarter striking of the bells will bring a lovely liveliness to the home of the owner.



A FRENCH LOUIS XVI ORMOLU SCULPTURAL 'LION' MANTEL CLOCK, CIRCA 1770

To many this imposing gilt bronze clock would be a stunning piece in itself with the beautifully cast lion standing like the king of all animals. Looking more closely there is more to this clock than one might initially think. There is the portrait of Louis XVI on the base and the paw of the lion rests on a globe with stars. The last stands for the universe. In that case the lion probably personifies Louis XVI who is not only king of all the animals but king of all people and the universe. A clock with this kind of theme must have been close to the French court which even more amplifies its significance.



A VERY SMALL ENGLISH TABLE CLOCK WITH SILENT ESCAPEMENT, HOLLIWELL & SON CIRCA 1810

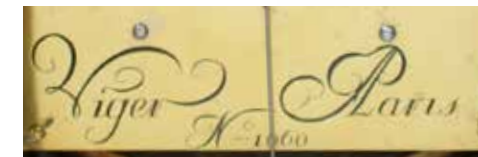


Usually, English table or bracket clocks look very similar and have the same proportions. Many collectors are therefore on the lookout for small versions. But one doesn't have to be a collector to appreciate the small and attractive dimensions of this clock. It actually also has an interesting and rare feature. Because of a special escapement, one doesn't hear it tick when it is running! Besides this, it also has an alarm. It is therefore obvious that this clock was made for the bedroom. The beautifully engraved movement made by Holliwell and son shows the attention to detail with which this clock was made. It would fit any interior because of its size and design, and any collection because of its rarity.



A FRENCH LOUIS XV 'VERNIS MARTIN' BRACKET CLOCK BY VIGER AND LIEUTAUD, CIRCA 1755

Between around 1730 and 1770, the four Martin brothers ran a factory that specialized in polychrome decoration of a wide variety of object d'art, including furniture and clocks. In England this type of decoration is called Japanning, because of the imitation of Japanese lacquer that was highly admired and valued in Western Europe. From the early eighteenth century on, Western craftsmen tried to imitate this work in both technique and décor. Later in the eighteenth century this polychrome technique was also used in Western decorative patterns such as flowers and scrolls. The Martin brothers did not invent the technique, nor were they the only ones applying it, but they were 'vernisseurs du Roi', and their name stuck to the technique in France. It is also not surprising that the well-proportioned clock with its fine bronzes is signed by the famous furniture maker Lieutaud.





A FINE GERMAN ENGRAVED GILT-COPPER 'TÜRMCHENUHR', CIRCA 1620

'Türmchen' means 'small tower' in German, and 'Uhr' means 'clock'. Looking at this finely decorated piece, it doesn't need a lot of imagination to see why this type of clock is defined by the term 'small tower clock'. In early sixteenth-century Augsburg, a clockmaking tradition started that provided fine pieces for the very rich. The clockmaker's guild in Augsburg had very strict rules defining what a clockmaker should be able to make before becoming a master. It resulted in the production of highly decorated fine pieces that ooze quality.

It becomes even clearer when one looks more closely at this piece that the maker worked with great attention and eye for detail. These clocks not only showed time but were marvels of technique and true status symbols. This is illustrated by the fact that Kings and members of the nobility are often portrayed with a clock or watch like this. This piece is a work of art, a status symbol, a piece of history and an object that belonged to an important person. Combining all these qualities, this clock would be a highlight in any interior.





A FRENCH LOUIS XIV EBONISED 'RELIGIEUSE' WALL CLOCK, JEAN DE ST BLIMOND A ABBEVILLE, CIRCA 1675

Christiaan Huygens, a scholar and astronomer, invented the pendulum movement in 1657 and had it made by Salomon Coster. Previously, clocks had run with an error margin of about ten minutes a day, which was now changed to mere seconds! Within a few years, this invention spread all over Europe, which is astonishing when one realizes that travelling was done on horseback and stage coach. In Holland, the first pendulum clocks are called Hague clocks, because they originate from that city. In France, these clocks are called 'Religieuses', not because the clergy had anything to do with it, but because 'religieux' also means 'precise'. This particular piece is rare because it combines features of both French and English clock making. The matted brass dial, the style of the silvered chapter ring and even shutters for the winding holes are all typical for English clocks from the second half of the eighteenth Century. But the shape of the case, hands and the execution of the movement are all typical of the French clock making tradition. This somewhat surprising but good looking combination can easily be explained when we realise that Abbeville is in Normandy, where English influence was strong. The result is a rare clock with a strong, austere appearance which will fit in many interiors.



A FRENCH EMPIRE GILT- AND PATINATED-BRONZE 'PENDULE D'OFFICIER', JACQUIN CIRCA 1800



Travel clocks made by good clockmakers for the rich in eighteenth-century France are usually called 'pendules d'officier', which would translate to 'officer's clocks'. Many sons of noble descent chose military careers and became officers in the French army. Officers in

those days travelled often with some luxury, and it was not unusual to have a tent furnished with a small desk, a bed and travel commode.

Besides the fact that a piece like this would fit nicely into this interior, it was very important to be punctual. Far from all travel clocks were made for officers, but the name stuck to the type. This fine clock with alarm and quarter repeater was obviously made for a bedroom. The handle on top would have fit over any hook on the wall of the room where one would lodge.

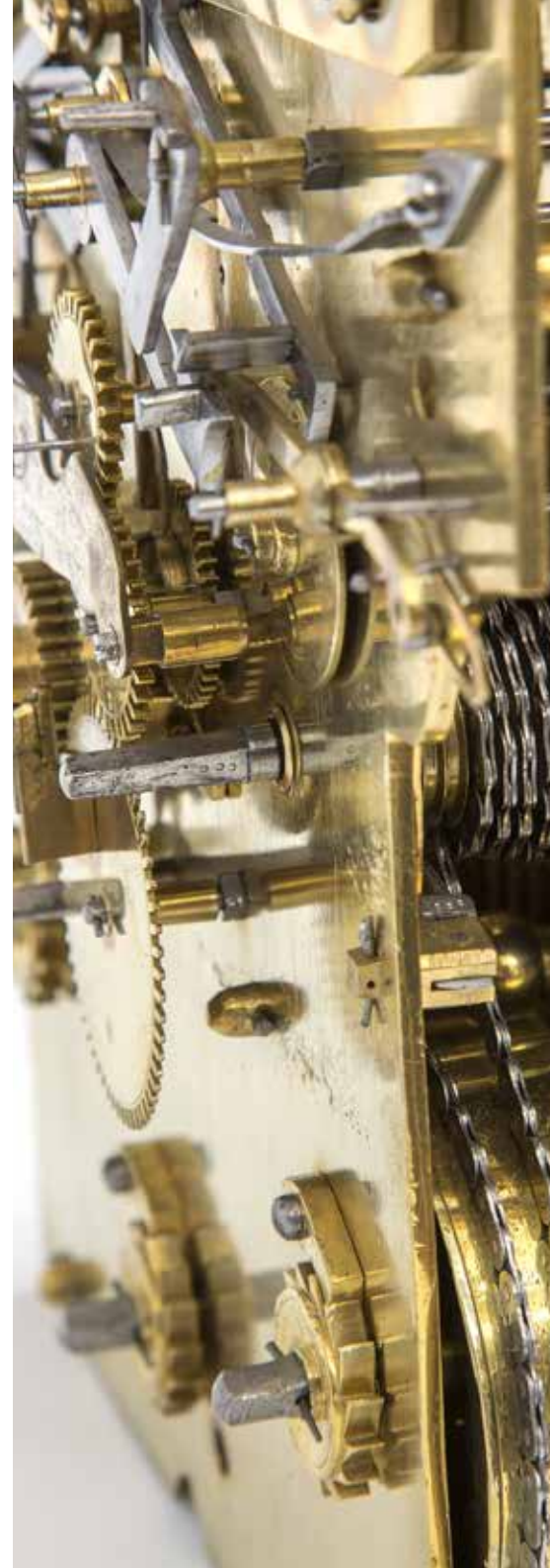




AN IMPOSING ENGLISH MUSICAL TABLE CLOCK MADE FOR THE DUTCH MARKET BY RIMBAULT, CIRCA 1745

Among the many clockmakers in London, a number worked for markets outside of England. The rich from all over Europe and the Empire were possible clients.

Stephen Rimbault was one of those clockmakers specialising in clocks with musical mechanisms and automaton. This clock was made for Holland, which is apparent from a number of characteristics. There are the arches in the outer minute rim, which are typical on Dutch clocks. Besides that, there is a full calendar with indications of the date, day of the week and month, which were also liked by the Dutch. Since many Dutch clients lived in coastal towns, the moonphase was very practical. High tide meant that ships could come into port or were able to sail. The well proportioned finely made case together with the full calendar are a spectacle to see but I can imagine that the musical mechanism must have impressed the beholders the most. Playing every half hour one of a pair of tunes or on demand by pulling a cord. With a choice of six pairs of tunes, there are twelve tunes altogether to choose from. It proves the skill and ingenuity of the makers looking for special features to please their clients. Only a few could afford this luxury and it is still a treasure for anyone who can own one now.





A FINE FRENCH GILT-BRONZE PORTICO
MANTEL REGULATOR BY BLED À PARIS,
CIRCA 1830

The portico mantel clock was modelled on the triumphal arches of the Romans. It was introduced in the Empire period and often used by precision makers. This clock is very decorative, and one only has to look at the finely cast and chiselled capitals to appreciate the skill and craftsmanship that went into the case. But besides being a beautiful, decorative object, it is also a precision clock. The temperature-compensated gridiron pendulum, in combination with the pinwheel escapement, make it possible for this clock to run very exactly. So this impressive clock is not only a beautiful piece for the interior but also a fine time keeper!



AN ENGLISH MAHOGANY LONGCASE CLOCK BY WILLIAM
WARD OF LONDON, CIRCA 1770

Contrary to the Dutch, the English remained much more austere in their designs of longcase clocks. Where the Dutch impressed with ornament and luxurious features, the English makers had maybe a more refined way to awe their clients. Arguably it is harder to impress with only the beauty of fine wood and a well-balanced design. And the result has a timeless quality that still fits in any interior today. A good timekeeper in a fine case like this would be an asset to any home.





AN ENGLISH MINIATURE SILVER MOUNTED TORTOISESHELL TIMEPIECE, 1906

At the end of the nineteenth century in England, production of miniature clocks started, instigated by silversmiths. The movements were imported from France and installed in either fully silver cases or tortoiseshell cases with silver mounts. The silver on this little clock is marked as 1906 and from the London silversmiths William Comyns & Sons Ltd. The firm was established in 1859 and was one of England's most successful and sought-after silversmiths, creating more than 30,000 different silver objects, including all the coronets for Queen Victoria's coronation.



A SMALL SWISS 'NEUCHÂTELOISE' ALARM WALL TIMEPIECE, CIRCA 1740

This little clock was made in the tradition of the French 'religieuses', so called because of their precision being the first French pendulum clocks. 'Religieuse', besides meaning 'religious', also means 'precise'. This piece was probably used as a bedroom clock, because it doesn't strike but has an alarm only. The tortoiseshell imitation might appear a little provincial, but the finely pierced hands and well-made movement shows high-quality work. It proves the skill of the clockmaker and the attention to detail that he had while making this clock.





A SMALL FRENCH LOUIS XV 'CORNE VERTE' BRACKET CLOCK BY COUTTEREZ A LYON, CIRCA 1745

Small bracket clocks often were made for the bedroom and lack striking work. It is a nice feature that this clock of small dimensions does strike every half hour. The strong lines of the 'waisted' case and bracket, together with the foliate bronzes make it a typical piece of the rococo of the Louis XV period. 'Corne verte' translates into 'green horn' which is exactly what it is. Thin sheets of 'bull horn' are veneered onto a green ground. This results in a stunning combination of green and gold which fitted well in the colourful Louis XV interiors. But we know that the strong vivid colour fits also very well in a modern interior. A stunning object, an antique clock and a colourful addition to any home.

A FRENCH GILT- AND PATINATED-BRONZE 'INDUSTRIAL' MANTEL CLOCK, GUILMET CIRCA 1890

Our everlasting quest to find special clocks caused us to come across this remarkable clock. It was made by the Guilmet firm, which is famous for their industrial clocks heralding the Industrial Revolution, one of the larger and most attractive models being this locomotive. Besides the barometer, thermometer and compass, this clock actually has a separate mechanism turning the wheels of the locomotive. Bought from the grandson of the first owner, this piece is in remarkable original condition. The few examples previously seen by us often had replaced parts, such as the funnel, or lacked the wheel mechanism. Or the other clocks had refinished patina, which does take some history away from the pieces. From our experience, we find that almost everybody who looks at this piece has a smile on their face or something to say. Because of that quality, this clock isn't just a lovely piece to look at but a sure conversation piece.



A FRENCH LOUIS XVI PORTICO MANTEL CLOCK BY BAUDIN, CIRCA 1770

One of the typical characteristics of the Louis XVI period is the influence of Roman architecture, art and culture. In the design of this clock, this is visible in the columns, the lion masks and the urn which surmounts the whole. It was made to embellish a fireplace, often in combination with candelabra and mirrors. The combination of the black and white marble harmonises well with the gilt-bronze mounts. To some it might come as a surprise, but because of the black and white marble this fine antique piece looks stunning in a modern interior.



A MINIATURE FRENCH BRASS LANTERN ALARM TIMEPIECE, CIRCA 1760

Small clocks are rare by definition, because they are always a second or third clock in a household. Clocks were very expensive, so the first clock in a home was for general use and therefore of normal proportions so all could read it. A second clock was a luxury, and there was a smaller market for them. This little lantern clock was probably made for the bedroom, because it doesn't have strike work but an alarm. The earlier lantern clocks have brass dials which become tarnished over time and are then harder to read. So when craftsmen were able to produce larger enamel dials, many clocks started to be fitted with them. A nice feature of this clock is that the dial isn't just a circle but follows the outline of the decorative brass surround, which is quite rare and attractive. It also shows the level of attention to detail that the maker had. Last but not least, the small size of the clock makes it easy to find a place for it in one's home.





A RARE SWISS IRON-AND-BRASS,
DAY-AND-NIGHT TIMEPIECE, J.J. ZELLER
BASEL, CIRCA 1740

The problem of telling the time in the dark in earlier times was solved in several ways. Some clocks were fitted with small knobs on the dial so one could 'feel' the time by hand. Others had repeater work, a mechanism that would tell the time by striking either the last hour, the hours and quarters, or sometimes even the minutes. In the early nineteenth century there were even clocks made that projected a dial onto the wall. This timepiece has a pierced chapter ring that can be illuminated by a small light source from behind. Earlier clocks with this system from Italy and southern Germany often had wooden cases, which was dangerous, of course, because of the fire hazard. The compact, elegant design with folding feet suggests that these clocks were also used for travel. But the reality is that not many were made, and that not all that much is known about them. Usually, when unsigned, they are thought to have been made in Bern. But this clock, with its well-shaped cresting and baluster stem, is signed by Johann Jacob Zeller from Basel. His craftsmanship is not only proved by the fine engraving and movement but also by the fact that at least four of his clocks are in the Basel Historic Museum.



A SMALL DUTCH FRISIAN WALL CLOCK, LITTLE SKIPPER,
MADE CIRCA 1800

This little clock looks almost the same as its bigger brother, 'The Stoelklok', with its painted dial and gilt-lead ornaments. Apparently, these clocks were used on barges that were towed by man or horse, hence the name 'Schipperkje', which means little skipper. The low and fairly narrow quarters allowed only a small clock, and the verge escapement combined with a short, fixed pendulum allows the clock to run even when it is a little tilted. These clocks are rare and their small proportions make them charming and easy to fit in one's interior.



A FRENCH GILT 'BAMBOO CASE' CARRIAGE CLOCK WITH
PAINTED PORCELAIN PANELS



The bamboo case was devised because of the increasing demand for Oriental objects and art in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is a type of case that was more difficult to make than most and was used only by the better makers. The porcelain panels and dial were hand painted by F. Gardon. Clearly, this clock was used not only as a clock but also as a decorative object for an interior. Besides a clock, the owner also had four paintings!



AN ENGLISH OAK-HOOD WALL ALARM TIMEPIECE BY MARCH FROM EASTRY,
CIRCA 1750

This lovely, small wall timepiece was probably made for a rich farmer or servants quarters in a grand mansion. It showed the time, and its alarm could wake the user up for maybe milking the cows or lighting the fire. It seems relatively simple, but on closer inspection the detailed engraving shows the quality of the workmanship that has gone into it. This proves that in earlier times attention to detail was very important also in provincial England. This timepiece keeps good time and, with its small proportions, is a pleasure to behold.





A FRENCH GILT-BRASS CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL CARRIAGE CLOCK, CIRCA 1880

The first generation of carriage clocks were obviously made for travel. But after the initial success, the makers of these clocks looked to increase sales by trying to open new markets. Instead of being purely practical, they designed clocks that looked good in an interior. This led to the development of different case types and decorative techniques such as cloisonné enamel and Sevres porcelain. This clock, with its rare case and lovely, colourful décor, probably wasn't used for travel much but was a stunning piece in somebody's home, just as it still would be today.



A RARE AND AMUSING GERMAN 'SORG' ANIMATED BLINKING EYES WALL CLOCK, CIRCA 1840

Joseph Sorg specialized in making small wall clocks that would become collector's items because of their rarity and lovely, small dimensions. A few other makers also started making them, but Sorg's name stuck to the type. Even more rare are the versions with a painted animal or figure whose eyes move from side to side due to a connection to the pendulum. Although amusing, the depicted figure is not always very attractive to look at. Such a rare clock with the well-painted historical figure of Napoleon would, in our opinion, befit a museum or any clock collection.





A FRENCH EMPIRE ORMOLU AND MARBLE SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK, CIRCA 1810

At first glance one might think that this just a decorative gilt clock. And it is, but it is also so much more. It is no surprise that the well-balanced design was done by the famous sculptor Clodion. And there is, of course, the wonderful casting, chiselling and gilding which was done by a whole selection of specialists who needed years of training and experience to finally be able to produce work like this. But another dimension to this clock is the theme that is depicted here. It shows not only two well-shaped figures but the classical depiction of the divine inspiration enlightening the personification of architecture. This piece is not only beautiful but also an opportunity for the owner to show his erudition. Just as it took time to learn about classical art, it might take some time and knowledge to truly appreciate this fine piece.



A DUTCH BURR WALNUT 'AMSTERDAM' LONGCASE CLOCK WITH FULL CALENDAR AND MUSICAL MECHANISM BY ALLIN WALKER, CIRCA 1745

English clockmakers introduced the longcase clock to Holland in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century these longcase clocks had evolved into very decorative imposing pieces following Dutch furniture and interior design. Being veneered with expensive and beautiful burr walnut and embellished by finely pierced frets to the hood, they are a testament to the cabinet maker's skill. Many of these clocks have some calendar work and moonphase indication, the latter being very handy, since the accessibility of the city by ships depended on the tide. The more expensive clocks had full calendars and sometimes even extra features such as musical mechanisms or ships automaton. This fine clock has a full calendar and a musical mechanism which plays one of ten melodies every half hour. Studies have shown that a normal Dutch longcase clock would cost about a year's income of a good craftsman. Certainly, a clock with all these extra features would even have cost a lot more. It was made to impress the beholder, and it still does!



A FRENCH GILT-BRASS AND CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL 'ANGLAISE CASE' CARRIAGE CLOCK, CIRCA 1890



Before 1830, travel clocks were rare and expensive. Around that date, Paul Garnier created an attractive and affordable type of travel clock that would become a commercial success. Many clockmakers followed, and the French carriage clock industry came into being. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the emphasis of production lay on clocks made for actual travel. The makers discovered that these clocks were not only used for travel but also were seen as nice objects in an interior. After the middle of the nineteenth century, many different styles of cases were introduced, among which was the 'Anglaise', which was used only by the better makers. Around 1870, cloisonné enamel was introduced as an extra but expensive option to embellish carriage clocks. Because of their colourful appearance, these clocks were liked all over the world and still are.



COLLECTABLE SILVER TRANSLUCENT ENAMEL MINIATURE TIMEPIECES

From the 1830s until the first World War, with the height of production in the 1880s, the French were the dominant producers of carriage clocks. The initial production mainly consisted of functional travel clocks. From around the middle of the nineteenth century, new markets were explored by introducing more decorative and collectable models. Around 1900, French production was already declining and was decimated by the start of the First World War. On the other hand, the Swiss watch industry was on the up from the later part of the nineteenth century on, and they partly jumped into the void left by the French. Very collectable silver miniatures adorned with colourful translucent enamel over a guilloché ground were made for the wealthy. These little clocks with eight-day movements, often executed with good escapements and jewelled arbours, are not only beautiful but also very good timekeepers.





A FRENCH PROVINCIAL IRON-AND-BRASS MORBIER WALL CLOCK, BROCARD, CIRCA 1730

In the Morbier area of north-eastern France, a few clockmaking families devised a type of clock that would eventually conquer France. The blacksmith tradition of these families is evident in the construction and execution of the movements. It proved to be a very reliable and easily operated clock that could be shipped all over France, even in the first half of the eighteenth century. This was because the pendulum could be folded, and the weights and cases could be made at the location where the clock was to be sent. Later, the type would become known as Comtoise clocks. The early pieces like this are still very individual, smaller, rare and collectable. This fine example by Brocard has all the qualities that a collector would look for; a good signature and motto, original chapter ring and fret, well-made movement with beautiful details and, finally, an original iron case with high pendulum 'chimney'. For anyone else, it is a beautiful clock that would fit any interior and that runs and strikes well.



A FRENCH LOUIS XVI SCULPTURAL PATINATED AND GILT-BRONZE MANTEL CLOCK, CIRCA 1790

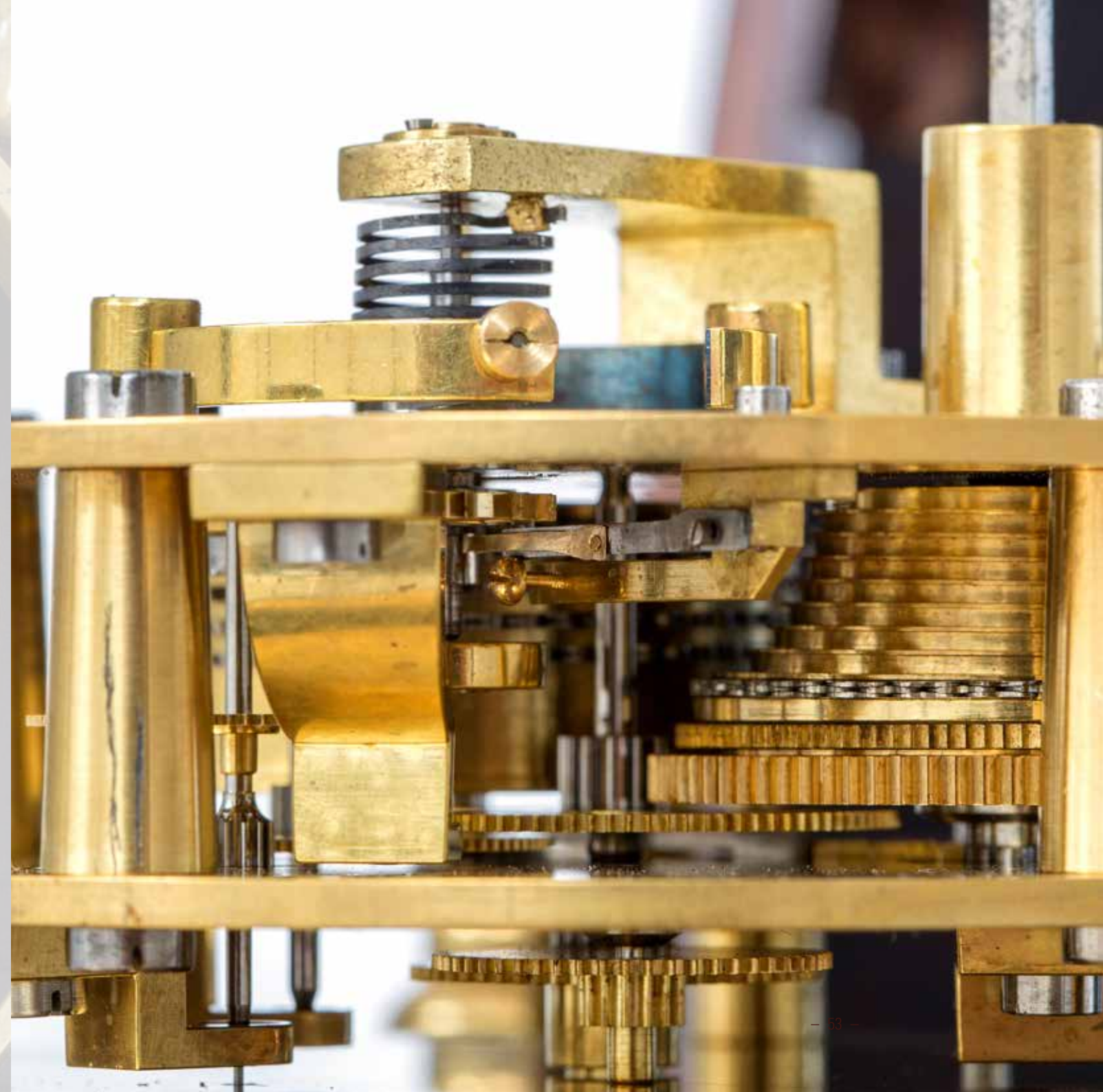
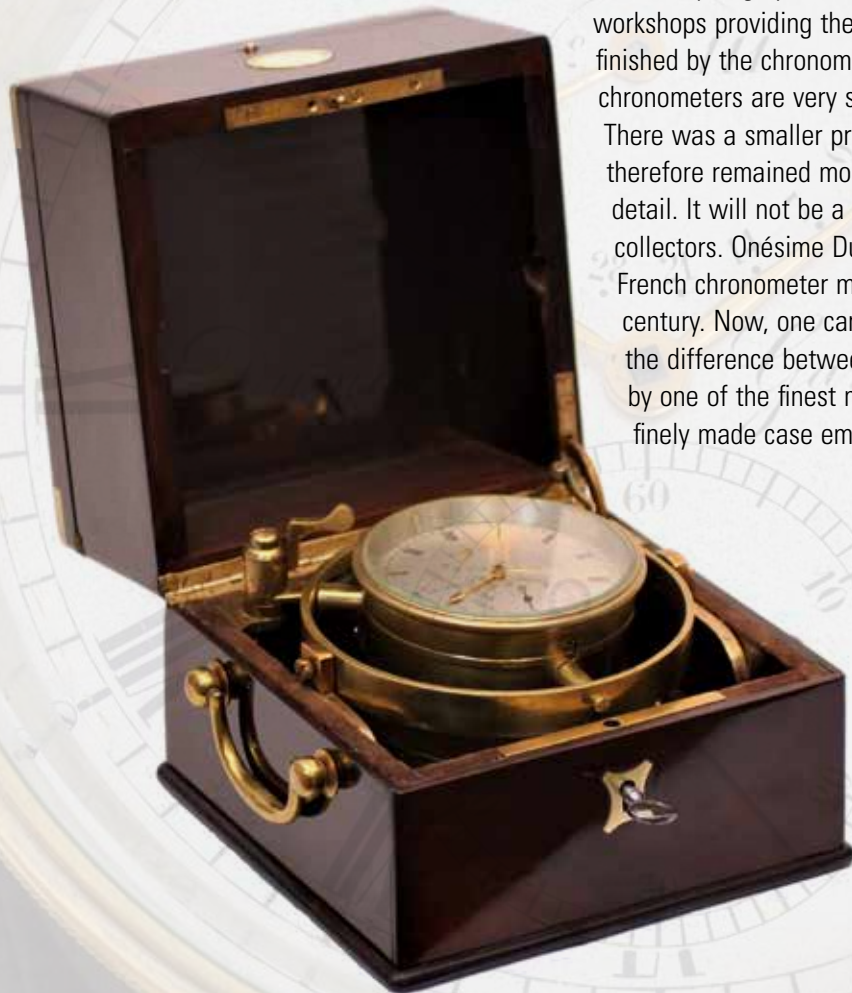
Most of us would see a beautifully designed clock with a lovely colour combination of gold, patinated bronze and rouge griotte marble. In my opinion, that's what it is, but there is more to it. Looking more closely, we see that the figures are satyrs, the helpers of Bacchus, the God of wine. They are carrying a wine vessel surmounted by a wine cup covered by vine leaves, the whole on top of a panther's skin. All these features are also connected with Bacchus and strengthen the idea that the design personifies the wine harvest. Since the French elite of the second half of the eighteenth century liked to mirror themselves to antiquity, the theme would have fitted their taste very much, just as it does fit ours nowadays.



A FRENCH ROSEWOOD 2-DAY CHRONOMETER BY ONÉSIME DUMAS NO. 111,
CIRCA 1855



Chronometers, strictly speaking, are not clocks but instruments that aided navigators to determine their position on the globe from east to west (longitude). The term chronometer therefore means 'time measurer'. It is hard to imagine now, but the difference between life or death was having a reliable and exact chronometer. If it didn't function properly, one could easily end up shipwrecked because of navigational error. The English developed a relatively large production of chronometers, with a few workshops providing the movements, which then had only to be finished by the chronometer maker. Because of this, most English chronometers are very similar. In France it was very different. There was a smaller production by a few makers, whose work therefore remained more individual and with great attention to detail. It will not be a surprise that they are more valued by collectors. Onésime Dumas was and is regarded as the best French chronometer maker of the second half of the nineteenth century. Now, one can acquire an object that could have made the difference between life and death in earlier times, made by one of the finest makers. Use it as a clock and let the finely made case embellish your home.





A RARE FRENCH PROVINCIAL MORBIER WALL CLOCK BY CLAUDE REYMOND, CIRCA 1730

In the Franche Comté area of north-western France, a clockmaking tradition emerged at the start of the eighteenth century that would lead to the 'Morbier clocks'. There, a few families with a blacksmith tradition turned to clockmaking, as they were used to working with metal. Between 1700 and 1730 a clock was developed in a metal case with side doors, a pierced brass cresting and a strong eight-day movement with long, folding pendulum. This folding pendulum made it easy to transport the clock all over France. The weights were probably made locally where the clock was sold, as were the cases to fit local taste. Around 1750 a certain standard clock had been developed, but before that one can sometimes find different types. A rare type is the 'Morbier Lantern clock', which doesn't have a metal case but feet and finials just as would a more usual lantern clock. But it does have the typical eight-day movement with its long, folding pendulum. Early Morbier clocks are already rare, and only a few percent were made of this lantern type. A nice feature nowadays is that the movement is visible, and the clean lines make it easy to place in any interior. This well-running, easy-to-use clock is not only functional but a rare piece not often seen, even by connoisseurs.

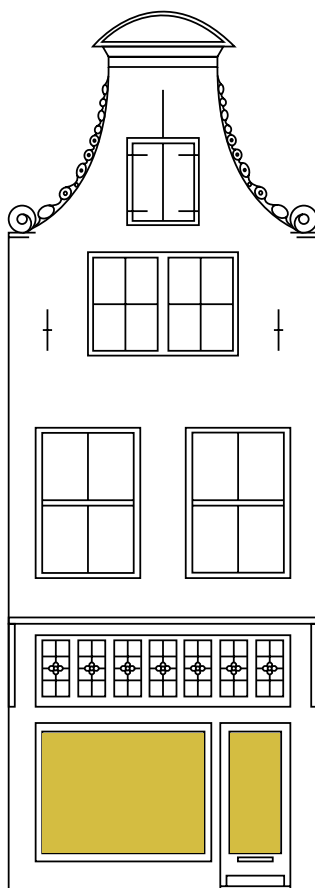


A NICKEL PLATED ART DECO 'ATMOS CLOCK' BY JEAN-LÉON REUTTER NO. 1963, CIRCA 1932

This almost modern-looking clock isn't only fascinating because of its fine clear design; it also houses a very interesting movement.

The Swiss engineer Jean-Léon Reutter invented the atmos clock in 1928. It took him quite a while and great effort to combine the torsion pendulum from the year-going anniversary clocks with his temperature-sensitive device. This device consists of a drum holding mercury in a glass tube which causes the drum to turn when the mercury expands or contracts. This motion is used to wind a small spring, which drives the movement. Because the clock doesn't need any winding due to this mechanism, he called the clock a 'pendule perpetuelle' (perpetual mantel clock).





COLOFON

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