



antique clocks



Not everybody realizes the tremendous diversity that is covered by the term 'antique clocks'. Just to imagine that it covers a period of about five Centuries, many countries with their different traditions, different materials and techniques. It makes the field encyclopaedic and it is for us one of the reasons to be fascinated about these old objects. With all the diversity, there are many different stories and reasons why to admire these pieces. We have tried, just as last year, to compile a catalogue of stories about our clocks that we love to share with you.

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.





AN EXCEPTIONALLY LARGE FRENCH SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK, AMOR AND PSYCHE, CIRCA 1800

During the last third of the eighteenth century and the first third of the nineteenth century the art and culture of the classical Romans and Greeks was an important source of inspiration. Clearly, when looking at the finely cast and chiselled bronze figures, we see a classical influence. But what might not be evident to us is why these two figures are the subject of this fine mantel clock. It was not only the art of the Ancient was an inspiration: classic philosophy was also important for the elite in eighteenth-century France. In Neoplatonism there is a division between the visible tangible world and the invisible spiritual world, the former belonging to the animals and plain people, the latter to the Gods and the spiritually enlightened few. Amor, the god of physical love and desire, is often depicted as the personification of the first world, where instinct rules. For the invisible spiritual world, Psyche is the personification. Sometimes depicted as a butterfly but here as a lady, she represents the reason and higher world. Taking a step back, we might well be looking at a classical depiction of Ying and Yang, the opposites that complement each other: for us, just two beautiful sculptures entwined; for the French elite, an erudite example of opposites that attract.





A VERY SMALL ENGLISH BRASS MOUNTED TABLE CLOCK WITH QUARTER STRIKING AND UNUSUAL DIAL, MARRIOTT LONDON, CIRCA 1780



Clockmaking in London was a large industry with many specialists providing parts to the numerous clockmakers. Standardizing dimensions made supplying makers easier. Specialisation guaranteed quality but also led to a certain uniformity. Many English clocks from a certain period are very similar in appearance and dimensions. For clock lovers as us, it is therefore always nice to find English clocks that deviate from that uniformity. This lovely, well-made little clock is definitely an example of an English clock differing from the usual. First, there is the size, which is very small compared to normal English table clocks. Secondly, this clock has quarter striking instead of just the hour striking common for English clocks. The finishing of the case is also stronger, as illustrated by the chiselling of the gilt-bronze mounts and the fine mouldings. Last but not least, there is a twenty-four-hour dial, which is very uncommon, especially for eighteenth-century clocks. It takes a little more

effort to read the dial but makes this clock all the more fascinating. A lovely small and well-proportioned clock that will be a treasure in any interior and a topic for conversation with visitors.





A RARE EXHIBITION TRAVEL CLOCK ON STAND, PAUL GARNIER CIRCA 1840



Paul Garnier was an inventive clockmaker and entrepreneur who invented an affordable escapement for travel clocks around 1830. The travel clocks issued with this escapement were much cheaper than other carriage clocks, and the simple and elegant design pushed travel clock sales to unprecedented levels. By introducing a standardised travel clock he opened up an unknown market. The rich bourgeoisie in France and England were the buyers of these clocks, and the high demand caused many conventional clockmakers to start producing them as well. Large exhibitions showing the state of industry had already been organised since 1799 in Paris, the most famous of which was the 1889 event, for which the Eiffel Tower was built. Many clockmakers attended not only to show their goods but also, if possible, to sell. Beautiful displays were made to entice potential customers. Of course, these presentations needed extraordinarily pieces that showed the skills of the makers and were the highlights of the presentation. This highly individual travel clock by Garnier himself shows many characteristics typical of the 1840s. It stands out by the finely cast and chiselled case and the beautifully made movement, but becomes truly grand due to the presentation stand decorated with precious stone. This all points to the fact that this clock must have been made for an exhibition. All in all, a unique and important clock with an interesting history.





A RARE DUTCH 'GELDERN' WALL CLOCK BY JAN BENJAMIN SPRAEKEL, CIRCA 1780

Lantern clocks were made in most European clockmaking countries, such as France, England and Italy. The Dutch equivalent of this house clock was the 'stoelklok'. Although the exterior is very different, the posted movements are very similar. 'Stoel' means chair, which is not that far of the English 'stool' and refers to the wooden bracket on which these clocks are mounted. Most of these clocks come from the northern provinces of Friesland and Groningen. There, a large production



evolved from the first quarter of the eighteenth century that lasted in a slightly different form until the middle of the nineteenth century. The production consisted of many different artisans making different parts, which resulted in fairly uniform-looking clocks that were hardly ever signed.

In the province of Geldern near Zutphen and Deventer the situation was totally different. A few clockmakers made 'stoelklokken', which were signed and made much more individual. The movements are often more sturdy and have more iron components. The brackets are larger, and the clocks often have much fewer gilt lead ornaments. One of the first to start clockmaking in this region was Jurriaan Sprael, who taught and inspired other famous makers such as Ruempol and Bakker. This fine, monumental clock was made by his grandson Jan Benjamin Sprael, from whom only a few clocks are known. The resemblance to the work of Bakker is evident, but there are quite a few characteristics typical of this maker. The good and original state of this rare clock, together with its individual characteristics, make it both a collectable and interesting object.





A RARE AND FINE ENGLISH ROSEWOOD CHRONOMETER WITH 24-HOUR DIAL BY
ROBERT MOLYNEUX, CIRCA 1840



Robert Molyneux was a fine chronometer maker. Not only was he an apprentice of the great Thomas Earnshaw, who devised the chronometer escapement that is most commonly used, but he also became a judge for determining the validity of horological patents concerning chronometers. One only has to look at the movement and case to see the quality oozing through. The lovely, well-figured rosewood is certainly testament to the luxurious materials. Another nice example of the attention to detail is that the end stone of the balance is not a ruby but an actual diamond.

With the advent of trains and steamships, travel was speeding up considerably in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This might well explain the use of the 24-hour divisions on the dial. When travelling around the globe at relatively great speed this division became relevant. But another use of this fine timekeeper could be explained by the whereabouts of its twin brother. In the collection in the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, which is connected to the Sydney Observatory, there is a very similar chronometer by this maker. It was used for astronomical observations and geographical determinations. Chronometers were not only used at sea but also important as timekeepers in the field while doing observations. All in all, this well-made, good-looking timekeeper has more to it than might be assumed at first sight.



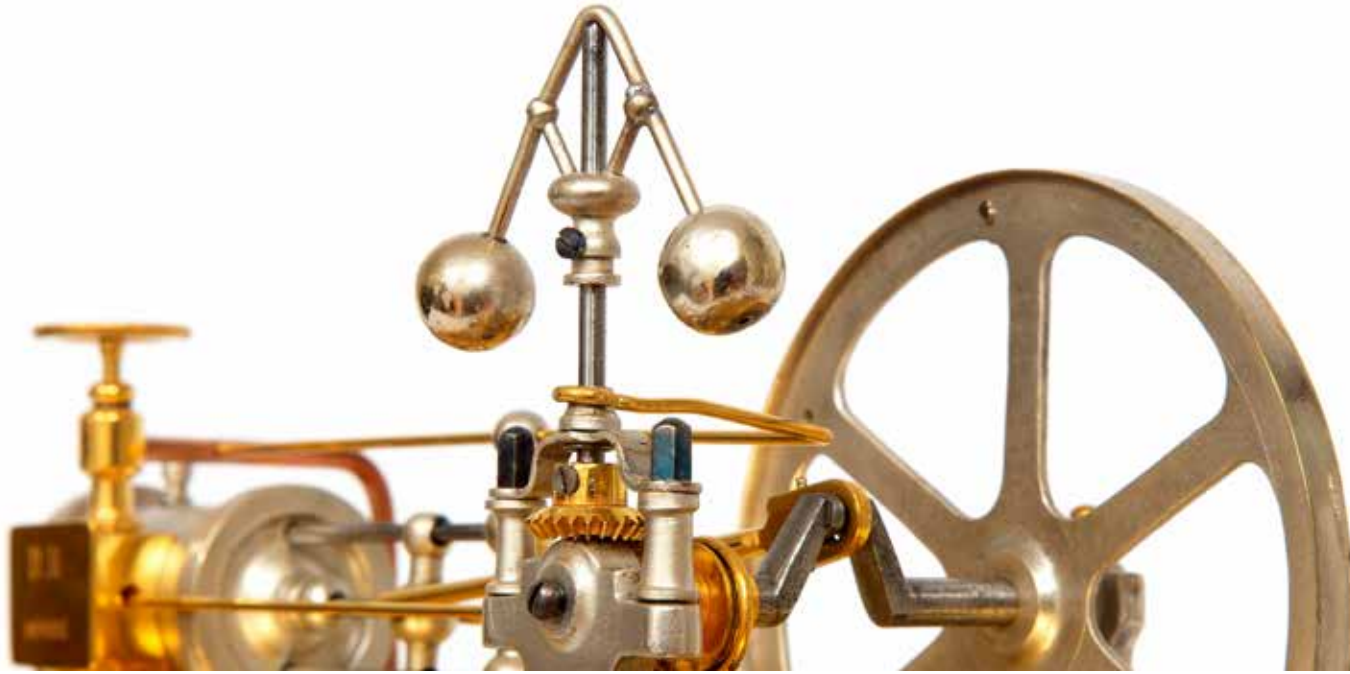


AN ENGLISH MAHOGANY MUSICAL TABLE CLOCK BY THOMAS BANNISTER, DATED 1801



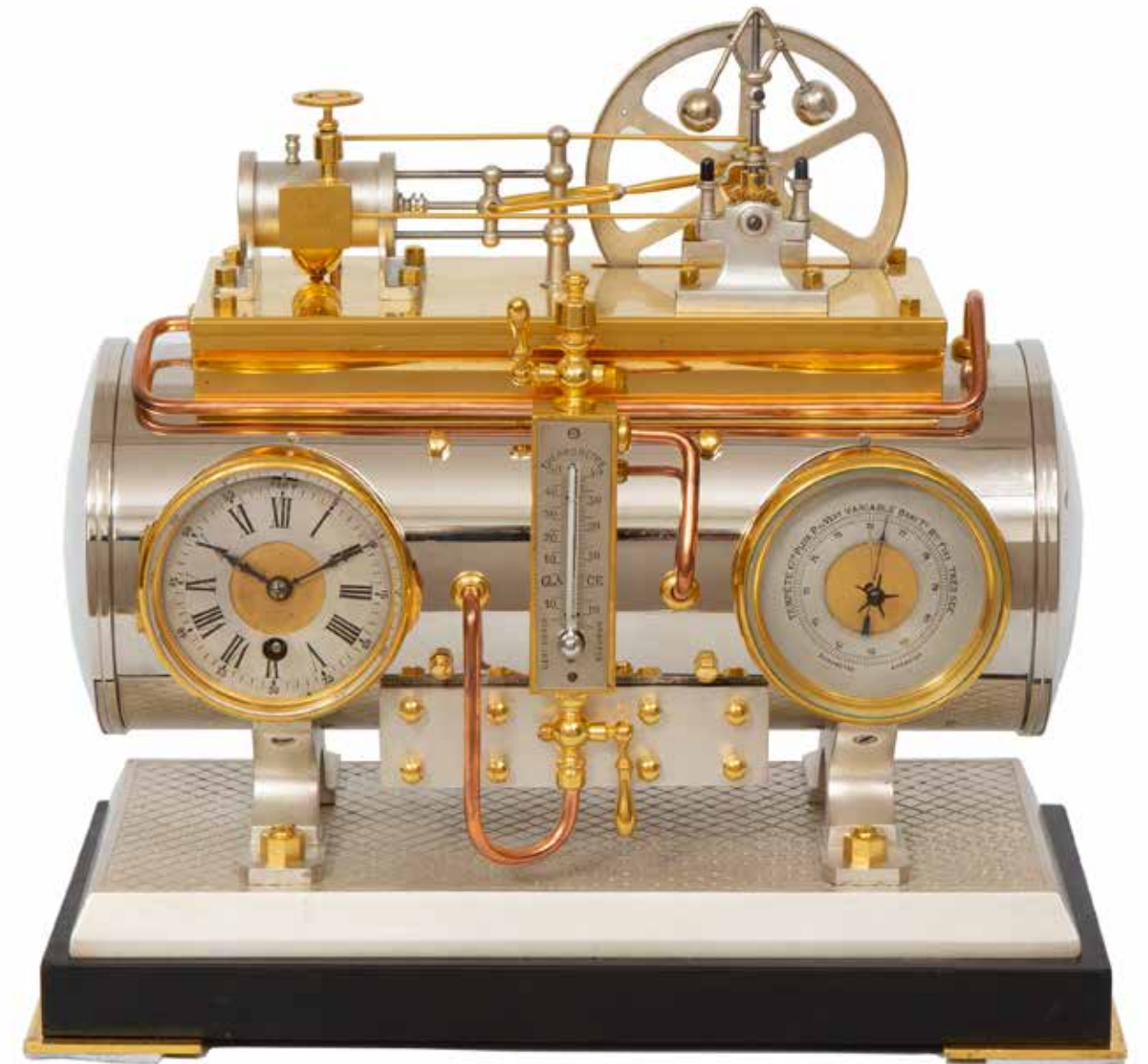
Before the George III period, dials of bracket and longcase clock were either 'square' or 'arched', with an applied or engraved chapter ring, the arched dial being a square dial with an added arch on top, usually to accommodate subsidiaries, a moon phase or a signature. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, just as in France, Classicism took hold. Although the Louis XVI style differs from that of George III, the inspiration derived from the Ancient Greeks and Romans is evident. Mahogany became the fashion, and new forms were introduced. The case of this clock, with its square cresting with inverted sides reminiscent of a pagoda, breaks totally from anything made before. Doors with only an annular window showing an annular dial were also introduced. Thomas Bannister must have thought up a solution to find space for a tune selection subsidiary. Since this clock plays one of six melodies on a series of bells, it needed a hand to select one of the tunes. He came up with an oval dial, a smart thing to do but also very beautiful. The tune subsidiary is placed above the chapter ring between classical garlands. The oval dial fits well with the George III style, and it is amazing that it wasn't followed more often. Because of the oval dial and the musical mechanism, this large but well-proportioned clock is a rare piece, but also a fine example of George III design and workmanship.





A FRENCH NICKEL-PLATED INDUSTRIAL MANTEL CLOCK 'BOILER', CIRCA 1880

The French firm of Guilmét specialized in making clocks that stood out in their fantasy and subject. They created what we now call 'industrial clocks'. These clocks often celebrate the then new and wonderful inventions of the nineteenth century, as well as maritime subjects. It resulted in a whole line of clocks in the shape of machines, boats and the like. Not surprisingly, many were sold in the United Kingdom, which owed its prosperity to trade and the inventions of the Industrial Revolution. Typical of the firm are the marble bases and the use of an aneroid barometer and thermometer next the clock movement. The larger, more exclusive examples have an extra mechanism causing wheels to rotate or machines to run for a while. In this way, the clock, which must have had an appeal because of its subject, suddenly became a discussion piece animating those who beheld it. This boiler, which is one of the more complicated and sought-after examples, still makes people wonder and smile when they see it run.





A FRENCH LOUIS XVI ORMOLU MANTEL CLOCK, LES CORSAIRES, CIRCA 1770



In the trade and among collectors this clock is called 'Les Corsaires', which means 'pirates'. But when looking at the well-sculpted group more closely this seems a little strange. The sailor holding a peddle doesn't look very dangerous, let alone the standing lady and Cupid below. Obviously, there is something else depicted as the theme of this clock. To decipher the meaning is not that difficult when we give meaning to the figures and objects on the boat. The classical lady is a deity holding a portrait of Louis XVI. So, Louis XVI is above or protecting something. The boat filled with goods and a horn of plenty together with a sailor stand for trade and shipping. It is Louis XVI shown as the protector of shipping and trade bringing abundance. In short, the clock is actually a piece of Bourbon propaganda and probably owned by someone who wanted to be affiliated with the French Crown.





A FRENCH ENGRAVED GILT GORGE CASE CARRIAGE CLOCK, CIRCA 1870

At first glance this is a nice gilt brass carriage clock. But looking closer there is more to this clock than initially thought. Gorge means ravine or chasm, and refers to the concave and convex parts of the case. The parts of these clocks were first cast in sand and later chiselled to their final form. Logically, the parts of this type of case were much more difficult to produce than those of a plainer case, but the crispness and sharpness of the lines also show great craftsmanship and attention to detail. Furthermore, the clock and mask surrounding the dial are beautifully engraved with the same level of skill level as applied to the chiselling, which is testament to the fact that this case was made by a very skilful maker. But that is not all: the beautifully made and numbered escapement with bi-metallic compensated balance shows that there was no effort spared in the movement area. A nice feature, therefore, is the large bevelled top glass showing the moving balance and enlivening the whole even further.





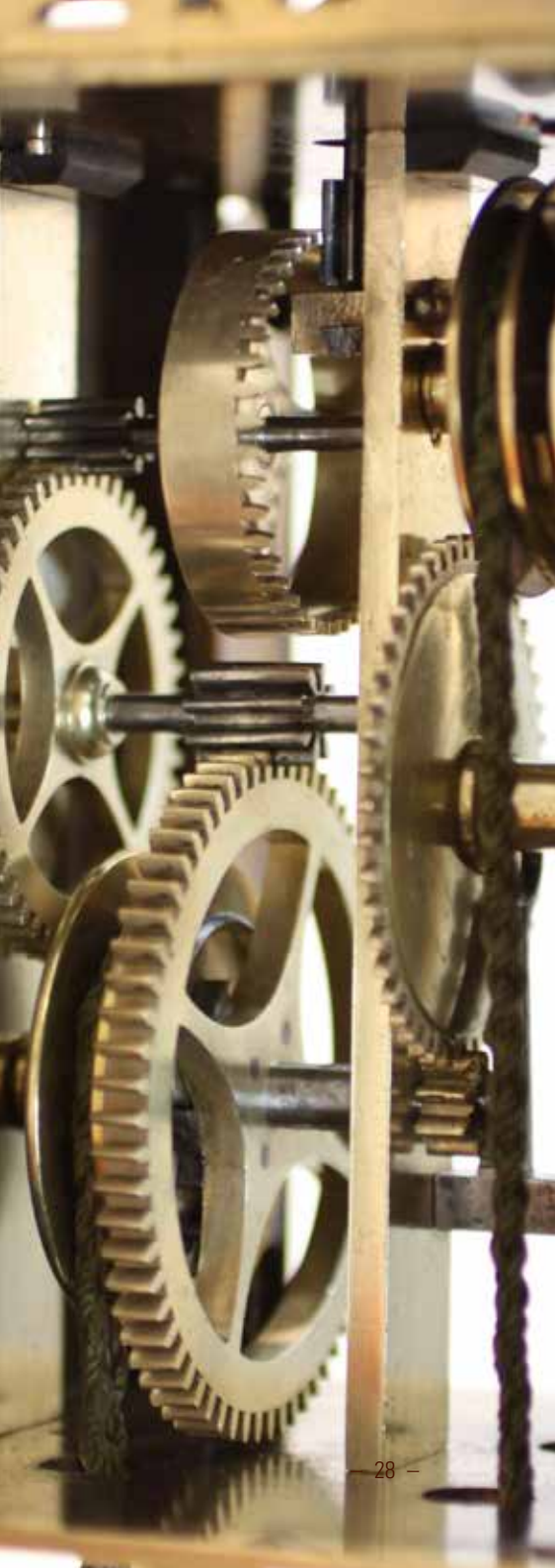
A SMALL FRENCH LOUIS XV VERNIS MARTIN BRACKET CLOCK,
MAREAU A ORLEANS, CIRCA 1740



This lovely clock of small proportions is a true example of the rococo or Louis XV style. The curved lines of the design and foliate brass mounts are, of course, associated with this period. Connoisseurs of clocks also know that the dial, which is comprised of thirteen parts, is typical of around 1740. Because it wasn't yet possible to make large enamel sheets, they used smaller parts to create this 'treize pièce' dial. A little less known is the polychrome lacquer décor of flowers on a green background, which is called 'Vernis Martin' and could be translated as 'varnish of Martin'. In the Western world lacquer work from Japan was revered, and workmen in Europe tried to emulate the technique from the early eighteenth century onwards with varying degrees of success. The technique fitted the colourful and foliate rococo style very well. It is called Vernis Martin because four brothers called Martin ran a large factory from around 1730 to 1770 and specialized in making objects d'art decorated with this décor. They didn't invent the technique, nor were they the only ones applying it, but their name stuck to it. Stylistically, the clock is an example of Louis XV applied art but also an appealing colourful highlight in the modern interiors of today.







AN EARLY FRENCH BRASS LANTERN CLOCK BY ROUSSEAU A LYON, CIRCA 1670.

Wall clocks of this type were called brass clocks or house clocks in their days. The term 'lantern clock' is a later invention. And there are actually two probable explanations for this later name. First it is obviously the shape of the clock which is usually surmounted by a bell that resembles a lantern. It is not difficult to imagine why one might have come up with this term. But what fewer people know is that another explanation might actually be even more plausible. Brass translates into 'laiton' in French and when one says 'laiton clock', it is not hard to imagine it changing over into 'lantern clock'. Although this clock was made in 'provincial' Lyon, the quality of workmanship matches the Parisian examples with ease. It does have its local peculiarities which give the clock an individual charm. The large alarm disc, the beautifully engraved front fret and the going train placed at the back of the movement are all unusual characteristics that make this clock an unique work of art.





A FRENCH GILT BRASS MYSTERY CLOCK BY PLANCHON, CIRCA 1870

When we look up the name Planchon in the French clockmaker's book, we read about the 'style Planchon', the style of Planchon. That is remarkable, because to my knowledge there is no other clockmaker with a style named after him. Typical of this style is a combination of different styles, and his work always shows great quality in workmanship and well-balanced designs. He mainly combined the Louis XIV, XV and XVI styles, but there are exceptions such as this clock, which is modelled after an early eighteenth-century German hexagonal horizontal table clock. But when we look at closer we see something strange. The top of the clock consists of a dish with numerals and a small floating tortoise pointing to the correct hour. Of course, this makes people wonder how it is possible? How can we explain this mystery? A mystery clock can be defined as a clock that runs without an apparent connection between the hands or dial and the movement. This type of mystery clock was invented by Robert Houdin, a Parisian clockmaker who also held magic shows in a small theatre next to his shop. He entertained his audience with tricks and magical automata. One of his students went to America and became very famous: he called himself 'little Houdin', Houdini. Of course, I will not ruin the pleasure by telling you the secret; that is for you to find out. But this beautifully executed clock with its mystery and stories of its inventor still makes for a fascinating decorative piece.





A LARGE FRENCH BRONZE AND MARBLE
SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK WITH
CONICAL PENDULUM, FARCOT AND
LAURENT, CIRCA 1880



The rich bourgeoisie of France, England and the US were looking for beautiful objects to put in their lavish interiors. They wanted to surround themselves with objects that were not only beautiful but that would also impress visitors. Besides this, they wanted to be animated. There were mystery clocks, automated birdcages, music boxes and so on. These were all objects to entertain family and visitors, and awe them with technical marvels. A conical pendulum is a pendulum that makes circles instead of moving from side to side. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries famous inventors such as Bodeker and Huygens had already experimented with the conical pendulum, but these were abandoned since the results weren't satisfying. But in the nineteenth century the technique was picked up again and this time perfected to build these wonderful clocks with their mesmerizing circling pendulums. The patina of the female personification of time executed in finely cast and chiselled bronze signed by Laurent contrasts nicely with the gilt parts on the black marble base. The size brings a monumentality that awes the beholder even more. An eye-catching piece both in appearance and motion.





A UNIQUE DUTCH EBONISED QUARTER CHIMING AND MUSICAL TABLE CLOCK BY ANDRIES VERMEULEN, CIRCA 1725

Big, bigger, biggest. This table clock is extremely large, and one can only guess for whom and what use it was made. It certainly won't fit on a normal mantel piece. And although it has handles, it isn't an object easily carried from room to room as is sometimes suggested by connoisseurs and dealers. Maybe it was in a large public room such as a library or gentleman's club. Besides the size of the case, its shape is also unusual with the octagonal cresting and brass frets with fine engraving. Another exceptional feature are the four trains in the movement. A train is a series of wheels driven by a main spring or weight. The first two are the most common: one for timekeeping, the other for striking the hours. Normally, clocks with three trains have quarter chiming. This means that a small melody is played on the quarter-hours, getting longer for each quarter. The third train may alternatively be used to drive a musical mechanism that actually plays a choice of one or more melodies on the hour or half-hour. This unique clock with four trains has both quarter chiming and a choice of one of twelve melodies! Typically for a Dutch clock, it has calendar work indicating the date, the day of the week, the month and the phase of the moon with the day of the moon cycle. The last indication was imported for travel and commerce, as the tides are determined by the moon's gravity.

Andries Vermeulen was viewed as the most accomplished clockmaker by his peers, and nowadays as the best Dutch clockmaker ever. Several of his clocks are in the Rijksmuseum. But for all its functions and the fact that it was made by Holland's best clockmaker, it is first and foremost a beautiful and imposing piece. The beauty, appearance and size will impress everyone who sees it.





A RARE FRENCH GILT-BRONZE PORCELAIN MOUNTED 'ROCOCO CASE' CARRIAGE CLOCK, DROCOURT CIRCA 1870



It is hard to imagine that such an elaborately decorated clock with fragile porcelain panels really would have been used during travel. Although possible, it is much more likely that this clock embellished a home. The first carriage clocks had practical but elegant designs fit for travel. But after the middle of the nineteenth century, French carriage clockmakers also started to make more ornate and luxurious clocks for the interiors of Europe and abroad. This case, with its scrolls, putti and flowers, belongs to the group called 'rococo cases'. Although some of these cases can be a little crude because the lack of finishing after casting, this case stands out because of its finely cast and chiselled parts, which show great attention to detail. A few identical cases are documented but all with different panels, which makes them all look individual. All known examples are marked as Drocourt, the firm of Pierre and his son Alfred, who are deemed to be among the best makers of carriage clocks. It seems likely that this type was solely used by them. When considering that all the individual pieces first had to be cast in sand, then be made to fit and finished to the right surface structure before gilding, this was an expensive process. Also, taking into account the price of the porcelain 'Sèvres' panels and the high-quality movement, this clock must have cost a small fortune and was one of the most luxurious carriage clocks ever made.





A DUTCH WALNUT STRIKING ALARM WALL CLOCK BY HASIUS AMSTERDAM,
CIRCA 1725

In England this type of clock would probably have been called a 'hood clock', being just the hood or top of a longcase clock. The type of Dutch longcase clock that evolved from its English counterpart is called an 'Amsterdammer', an inhabitant of Amsterdam, as the type was first made in Amsterdam and developed over time by Amsterdam clockmakers. The rarer Dutch wall clock derived from this longcase clock is therefore a 'hangend Amsterdammertje', which freely translates to 'small hanging Amsterdammer'. These much more individual clocks are found in much smaller numbers than the longcase clocks. The reason can only be guessed at. But because of their proportions and rarity they are sought after by collectors all over the world.





AN ENGLISH KINGWOOD STICK
BAROMETER, JAMES LONG ROYAL
EXCHANGE, CIRCA 1780

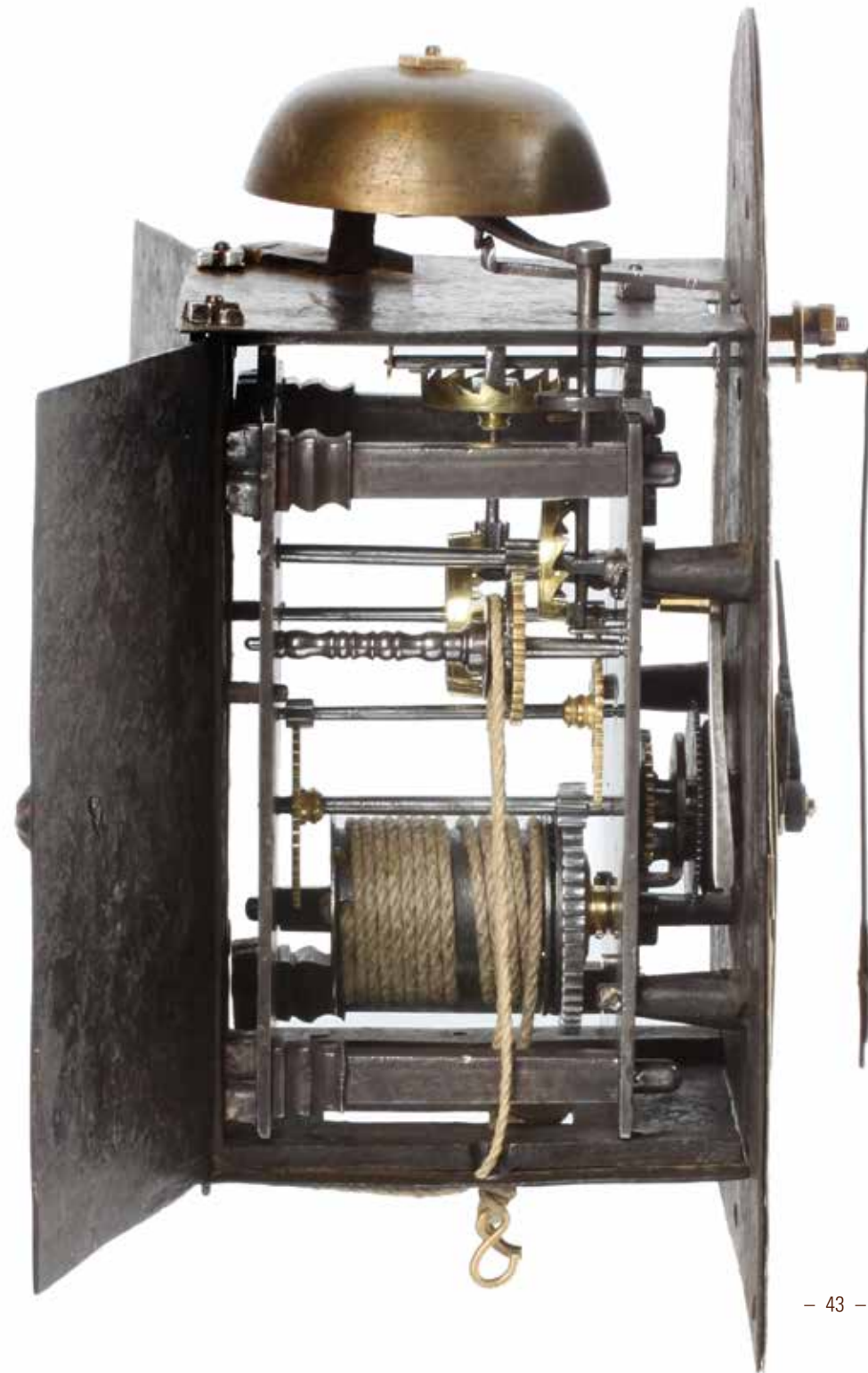


Restrained beauty is a quality that can often be attributed to English furniture and decorative artefacts. Where in other countries lavish embellishments show the value and exclusivity of an object, in England it was usually a more sober but undeniable show of beauty. It was the use of special, rare materials and the balanced and well-thought-out design that makes the difference. In the case of this barometer, it is the use of the rare kingwood, which displays lively shiny highlights together with the valuable black ebony. The pediment, with its crisp mouldings, is derived from the classical buildings that were revered in the later part of the eighteenth century. Combined with the cistern cover, which has exactly the right size, it gives the design that balanced beauty. This fine instrument, which was used as a personal weather station, shows all the qualities mentioned above. Fitting into any interior, this beautiful object shows all the refinement of eighteenth-century English design.



A SWISS IRON AND BRASS ALARM 'KUHSCHWANZ' TIMEPIECE, CIRCA 1720

There are many traditions in clockmaking, as different clockmakers had different solutions to certain problems. Soon after the invention of the pendulum movement in 1657 this stunningly accurate system spread throughout Europe. Until then clocks had been regulated by horizontal oscillating bars or balance wheels. The transition from building clocks with balance wheels to building clocks with pendulums was not done in the same way everywhere, however. In most countries the pendulum was fixed at the back of the movement, but in the Alpine region it was fixed at the front. In what is now southern Germany, Switzerland and some areas of Austria the 'Kuhsschwanz Pendel' ('cow tail pendulum') became the standard. Besides the obvious advantages of easily seeing that the clock was running and easily starting the pendulum, it also is an amusing feature. With its wide arc and energetic swing, it's not difficult to imagine why these pendulums were so named. This sturdy clock is therefore a joy to behold.





A FRENCH EMPIRE ORMOLU CHARIOT MANTEL CLOCK, DEVERBERIE, CIRCA 1800



Many people who see this clock are impressed straight away by the balanced design and the richness of the beautiful ormolu. These undeniable qualities become even stronger when looking more closely. The finely chiselled hair of Cupid or the tails of the horses show the superb quality of the bronze work. This is no surprise when we know that this clock was made in the workshop of the great Jean-Simon Deverberie. Famous not only for his wonderful craftsmanship, but also celebrated for his designs of bronze works of art like mantel clocks. Many of his designs are still in the National Library in Paris and he is responsible for 'inventing' the 'bon sauvage' mantel clocks. We safely can say that this clock lives up to the reputation of one of the greatest bronziers of the Empire period. The named qualities make this mantel clock, an object d'art with an own independent presence.





A VERY RARE ENGLISH 'MYSTERIOUS CIRCULATOR' BY CHARLES FRODSHAM, CIRCA 1830.

The large hand in the chapter ring rotating without any apparent motivation is intriguing to many that see it. Since mystery clocks are clocks that have no apparent connection to the hand(s), this is certainly one of the best types. The system was invented in the second half of the eighteenth century in Germany. It was an English clockmaker, John Schmidt, who patented his Mysterious Circulator or Chronological Equilibrium in 1810. From his patent, Charles Frodsham modelled this well-made clock. For a serious and well-known clockmaker it might be a little too playful to make. But, thankfully, he did so and left us this skilfully made clock that is not only beautiful but also very fascinating.





A MINIATURE ENGLISH EBONISED TABLE
CLOCK WITH QUARTER REPEATING,
STEPHEN RIMBAULT LONDON,
CIRCA 1740

Since the division of work in eighteenth-century English clockmaking was already prevalent, parts were standardised. This led to high-quality clocks, because craftsmen specialised in making certain parts. But it also led to a certain uniformity in appearance and size, and very few English clocks are of divergent dimensions and looks. A clock only a third the height of the more common clocks is therefore something very rare. Sometimes proportions get lost when objects are of different sizes and end up a little awkward in appearance. Not in this case. Although the clock is extremely small for its type, the design and proportions are balanced. Besides its 'good looks' it also has a quality movement that not only shows the time and strikes the hours: by pulling a cord it winds a little spring that will activate a quarter repeating mechanism chiming on six bells. Rare, pretty and with a good movement, this little beauty ticks all the boxes.





A FRENCH GILT-BRONZE SCULPTURAL MANTEL CLOCK, VIGER AND OSMOND,
CIRCA 1770

In our opinion this clock is a perfect example of the Louis XVI style, which is basically classicism. This vocabulary of forms is based on the art of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Although there are more stylistic periods that find its inspiration in their heritage, Louis XVI Classicism goes further in following the art, philosophy and architecture than before. Since architecture was one of the most tangible legacies of the Romans and Greeks, it stood in high regard. It is therefore not strange that the two putti symbolise Architecture and Art. The ornaments on the clock amplify this, since the rosettes, garlands and the ornamental flaming urn all are typical classical stylistic features. Even the rectangular breakfront base is derived from classical architecture. The famous founder Robert Osmond was responsible for this well-balanced design. Not surprisingly, many of his designs are liked by many because of their proportions and purity of the Louis XVI style. The monumentality of this clock turns it into an independent object that, together with the fine craftsmanship, make it a 'piece de resistance'.





A FRENCH GILT BRASS 'HUMPBACK' CARRIAGE CLOCK WITH QUARTER STRIKING AND ALARM, LEROY & CIE



It was the famous Abraham Louis Breguet who introduced the 'borne' case for a number of his travel clocks in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. His production was very exclusive and individual. His clocks cost a small fortune and only the very rich could afford a clock by him. An English clockmaker named Jump also made exclusive travel clocks with similar cases naming them 'humpback'. Less expensive but nevertheless very attractive was the series made by the firm of L. Leroy & Cie at the end of the nineteenth century. Liked by many because of their strong lines and unusual dimensions, this example not only strikes the hours but also the quarters. It even has an alarm that can be set at the backplate. In this way, the well-laid-out design of the dial wasn't blurred by an alarm subsidiary, thus maintaining its sober but fine features liked by so many.





AN AUSTRIAN ENGRAVED BRASS ALARM TIMEPIECE, WELTZ S PÖLTEN,
CIRCA 1790.

Johann Georg Weltz was a fine clockmaker who worked in Sankt Pölten in Austria at the end of the eighteenth century. That is a little surprising when we look at this lovey alarm timepiece. Stylistically, it has many characteristics we usually associate with the rococo of a good fifty years earlier. The finely engraved scrolls, the wavy outline and the diamond-shaped pattern in the corners all point to this style. Scholars like to determine and classify things into an explainable order, the reality is often a little bit more capricious, and we find that certain styles in some areas remain in fashion much longer than elsewhere. In the Alpine region it is the rococo that remains a favourite, and even now is still seen as the local style. The beautiful and strong engraving, in combination with the fine movement, show the skill of this fine maker. His skill is also proved by the fact that quite a few of his clocks are found in good collections. Since one never gets tired of quality, this clock will be an asset to be admired by many who see it.





A FRENCH ORMOLU MOUNTED
MAHOGANY OSCILLATING MANTEL
CLOCK,
CIRCA 1825



The superb finishing of the gilt-bronze mounts, the fine mouldings and beautifully figured mahogany ooze quality and craftsmanship. Together with the proportions of classical architecture derived from triumphal arches, it makes a very pretty clock. But it is the movement mounted in the bob of the pendulum and thus swinging sideways that has many mesmerized. Since the clock was made to be viewed in candle light, the fine details of the gilt bronze would start to shimmer when the clock was running. Besides the visual attraction, this clock is actually pretty accurate. This is the result of the construction of the pendulum, which is made up of alternating brass and steel rods. With changes in temperature, a pendulum would normally lengthen or shorten, but in this system devised by the famous William Harrison, the expansion of the rods is compensated for by each other. This causes the centre of gravity of the pendulum to remain the same and the clock running very accurately. Therefore, this clock, which was made to please the eye and awe the beholder, is also a good timekeeper. Poetry in motion.



A SMALL FRENCH REGENCE BOULLE INLAID BRACKET TIMEPIECE, DELORME A PARIS, CIRCA 1725

With the French bracket clocks, the brackets are an integral part of the design, the inverted shape counterpointing the swaying lines of the clock. Both the bronzes and Boulle work strengthen the unity of the whole. Boulle work is the combination of tortoiseshell veneer with brass and is named after its inventor, Andre-Charles Boulle. He was an 'ébéniste', a cabinet maker, who worked in the service of Louis XIV. His name stuck to the technique for which he became famous. This small version of a French bracket clock was made for a bedroom. Since the clock doesn't have hour and half-hour striking, it doesn't wake one up. The clock does have pull-quarter repeating, however, which means that by pulling a cord, the clock strikes the hours and quarter-hours passed, thus indicating the time by sound. Nowadays we just switch on the light, but in times past this was much more difficult. Instead of throwing a switch, one needed a flame, which was not that easy to ignite. The beautiful design and small dimensions make this interesting clock a gem in any interior.





A FRENCH GILT AND PATINATED BRASS
AND MARBLE INDUSTRIAL MANTEL
CLOCK 'FIREPLACE', CIRCA 1890

In all types of production or industry, the makers need to have an edge over the competition to be able to sell. For instance, extreme cheapness, so the low price is the selling point, or extreme durability, so it is sensible to buy the product because it will last longer. The firm Guilmet aimed more at clients that wanted exclusive and amusing pieces, often with maritime themes or subjects connected to the Industrial Revolution. The more exclusive pieces featured automatons, which made these objects even more interesting. This fireplace with its contrasting colours and lovely detailed parts has the kettle swinging, as it is the pendulum for the movement. We know now from our own experience that it brings a smile to many who see it. In that regard Guilmet hit the nail on the head, because it is a real conversation piece.



A FRENCH GILT BRASS 'SEDAN CHAIR'
CARRIAGE CLOCK, CIRCA 1870



French carriage clockmakers sought to improve their sales by producing different cases. First, there were different styles of cases such as the 'gorge case' or 'case Anglaise'. Later cases were embellished with porcelain panels or colourful enamel. But certainly one of the most imaginative carriage clocks is this one shaped as a sedan chair. Of course, it is very unlikely that this clock was used during travel, but that could also be said of other so-called carriage clocks having vulnerable porcelain panels. It does show the ingenuity of the makers, though, and the lengths they went to find new buyers. This beautifully made object is a curiosity that will amaze and bring delight to many that see it.





AN ENGLISH BRASS SKELETON
TIMEPIECE BY THELWELL OF
MANCHESTER,
CIRCA 1860.

Around 1840 the English started making so-called skeleton clocks. They are so called because the plates are cut-out – ‘skeletonised’ – and show the whole movement. There had been earlier skeleton clocks made in France, but these were very exclusive and individual. In England the production was larger and aimed at a very well-to-do middle class, just as the carriage clockmakers were. Often, the plates are shaped as a ‘gothic church’ corresponding to the neo-Gothic period of 1840–1850. Most of the English skeleton clocks lack striking work but do have very strong movements and are now not only functional but also ornamental. Just as in the nineteenth century, people are often fascinated by the exposed movement showing all the wheels and the functioning of the clock. The architectural shape and openness of the design make it an independent object suiting many interiors and appealing to many tastes.





A LARGE SWISS INTERCHANGEABLE CYLINDER SUBLIME HARMONY MUSIC BOX ON STAND AMI RIVENC, CIRCA 1870

Looking at the precious veneer and sheer size of this fine music box, one can easily imagine that it was made for the very rich. Music boxes were there to marvel at and entertain with their beautiful sound and astonishing technique. Nowadays, with all our electronics, these cylinder boxes might seem simple, but in the nineteenth century they were the top of the bill. Besides the grandeur of the box, the musical mechanism is also very special. Obviously, the cylinders can be changed, which makes it possible to list forty tunes, of which many are operatic. But a less obvious feature is the 'sublime harmony' arrangement of the two combs. These combs are tuned in such a way that they can play together or contra to each other, just like a 'quatre mains' on a piano. This enables the mechanism to produce a much more complex and fuller sound. This fine box impresses not only with its appearance but also with its sound. It's a piece that will marvel and entertain just as it did more than a hundred years ago.







A FRENCH PATINATED MANTEL CLOCK, OWL, CIRCA 1880

Anyone reading this book must admit that there is great diversity among antique clocks. There is also great diversity in what makes a certain clock interesting or desirable. It might be something technical in the movement that is complicated or rare, or it might be the provenance surrounding the clock, a historical story. Sometimes craftsmanship or just beauty is the attraction. Of course, there are clocks with extra features such as automaton or musical mechanisms that make them sought after. But with this well-cast and chiselled bronze owl it was something hard to explain. It just seems to gaze in a particular way that almost makes a connection with the beholder. It just makes one stand still and look. And, from experience, I know that this is a lasting quality.



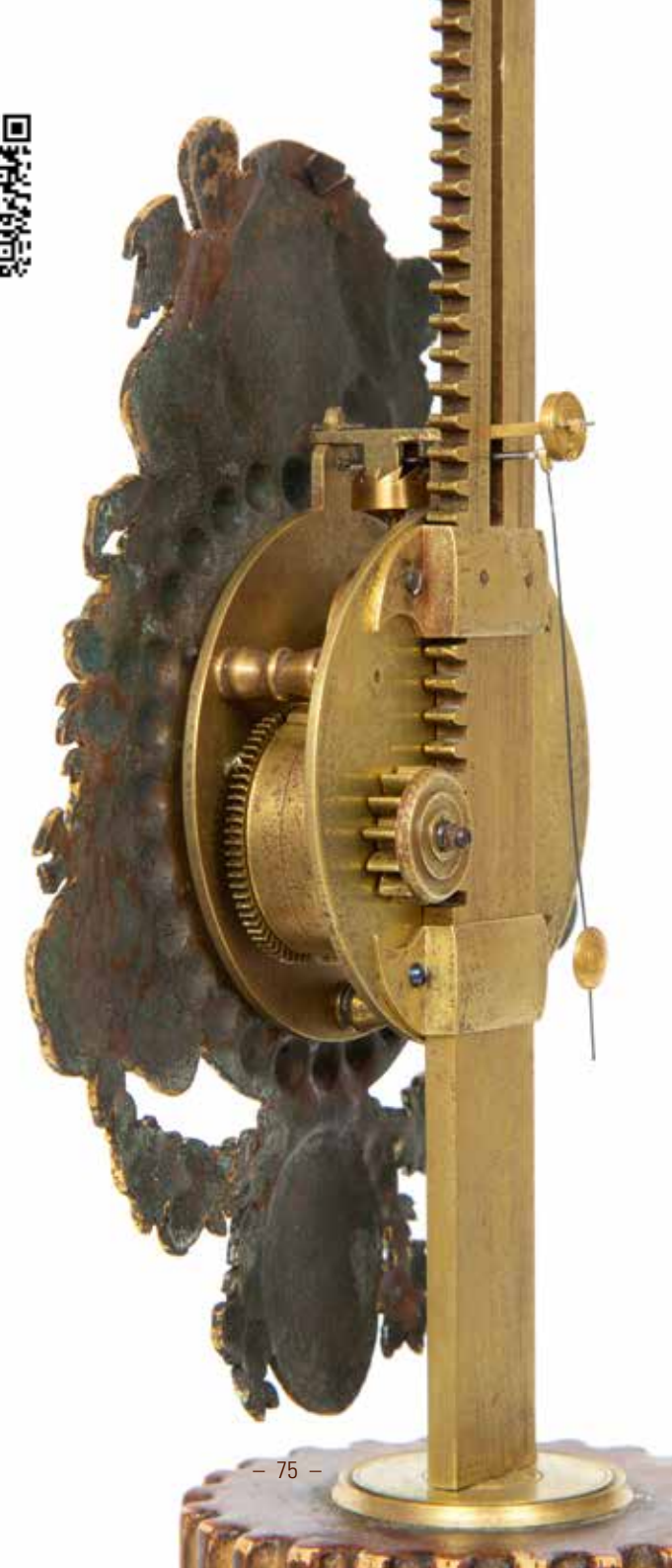


A SMALL FRENCH GILT BRASS RACK
MANTEL TIMEPIECE BY MOSBRUCKER A
SAVERNE, CIRCA 1770



Rack clocks have a novelty quality about them because of the unusual way they are driven. Most rack clocks are driven by their own weight, which powers the movement. In this instance it is a little more complicated. This lovely clock is driven by a barrel spring, which is wound by pushing the whole down along the rack. This results in the clock slowly moving upwards while the spring unwinds, instead of the more common downward movement.

Most rack clocks are from southern Germany, Switzerland or Austria; in other words, the Alpine region. Our little clock here was made in France, but the name of the maker and the way the movement is built clearly indicate German heritage. The few examples known to us all come from the north-eastern part of France. The symbolism in the gilt brass surround all seem to point to love and marriage and this clock might well have been a wedding present.





A MINIATURE GERMAN SORG WALL TIMEPIECE, CIRCA 1840

Cute, small and collectable. A clockmaker named Joseph Sorg started making these small clocks around 1830 in the Black Forest. His 'unique selling points' must have been small size and something hard to describe that come close to 'endearing'. The amusing thing is that many people still react very enthusiastically when they see this kind of clock, which proves that these selling points still apply. Small clocks are rare by definition, because a first clock in a house would be large enough to be looked at by the inhabitants. Since clocks were expensive, not many could afford a second, which explains why they are so rare. Because this little clock lacks striking work but does have an alarm, it was probably made for a bedroom or servant quarters. Fun to look at and a competent timekeeper, this small endearing clock is a little gem for your home.





A RARE VICTORIAN ENGRAVED GILT BRASS TABLE CLOCK, MANOAH RHODES,
CIRCA 1860



With obvious oriental influences and elegant engraving, this table clock stands out in form and execution from most other clocks of the period. The style and engraving comes closest to the work of Thomas Cole. He specialized in mostly smaller engraved gilt timepieces, often with a strut which could be used for travel or as a desk timepiece. Often, these clocks lacked striking work and were thus timekeepers only. Cole sold under his own name but was also sold by other makers under their name as retailer. Although similar at first glance, this clock is of a form that is not known from Cole, and the engraving seems to have a more 'Indian' influence than Cole's clocks. All in all, this English clock, with its unusual shape, engraving and striking work, is a rare and beautiful example of Victorian clockmaking.



A FINE JAPANESE SHITAN 'SHAKU DOKE' PILLAR CLOCK, FIRST HALF NINETEENTH CENTURY

Japanese craftsmen are known for their skill and strive for perfection. Looking at this 'pillar clock', the craftsmanship shows in the finely engraved and pierced-brass front plate and well-made parts of the movement, and the sharp lines of the beautifully made case. Much less obvious is how to read the time. Japanese timekeeping before 1873 differs very much from our Western timekeeping. Since the day is divided into six night and six day hours, their length differs with the seasons. In winter the day hours are short, and in summer they are long. Japanese clockmakers, who copied the technique from clocks brought to Japan by Portuguese Jesuit monks, had to adapt their clocks to this way of timekeeping. In this case the 'hand' of the clock indicates the time on the vertical scale on the 'pillar' of the clock. The movement in the top part runs regularly by means of a pendulum. But there are 'numerals' that can slide up or down, which need to be adjusted every two weeks to make the clock compatible with Japanese timekeeping. Of course, it is very hard to read the time from this beautiful work of art, but the craftsmanship, moving mock pendulum and interesting background make it a treasure to possess.





A MAGNIFICENT FRENCH LOUIS XVI ORMOLU AND BRONZE MANTEL CLOCK, STUDY, PIOLAINE

French classicism during the reign of Louis XVI was inspired by the art and culture of the ancient Romans and Greeks. In the higher echelons of society it was important to know about this culture and its philosophy. Therefore, it is no surprise that studying the ancient was something many did, and it was held in high regard. The classically inspired figures of the young man writing and young woman reading personify 'study'. Although we know that the design of this well-proportioned mantel clock was by François Rémond, he was not the creator of the two figures. They were designed a few years earlier by another well-known artist, Simon-Louis Boizot. They appear as pendant figures in both bronze and porcelain. Rémond incorporated them into his design, of which the drawing still exists. Both in design and theme this clock is a beautiful example of Louis XVI applied art. It was executed in the highest quality and a testament to French craftsmanship of the late eighteenth century.





AN EARLY DUTCH WALNUT CARVED LONGCASE CLOCK BY FROMANTEEL AMSTERDAM, CIRCA 1690



Christiaan Huygens invented the pendulum movement in 1657, which was executed by Salomon Coster, a Hague clockmaker. It is amazing how quickly the invention of the pendulum movement spread throughout Europe in the following few years. It was an important innovation, because clocks became much more accurate overnight. In France, the invention became known probably because a few clocks were damaged in transport and needed local repair. The Parisian clockmaker Hanet, who was asked to do the repairs, thus saw the invention.

A little less accidental was the introduction of the pendulum movement in England. A contract still exists between Ahasuerus Fromanteel and Salomon Coster. Fromanteel's son was apprenticed to Coster and, in turn, would be taught about the pendulum movement. After his return, Fromanteel senior devised the longcase clock, which became very popular with the well-to-do in the 1660s. Around 1675 the first clockmakers came over from London to introduce the longcase clock to Holland. Soon after, Ahasuerus sent two of his sons to Amsterdam to set up shop. Therefore, this fine piece is actually the product of a seventeenth-century multinational company. The English examples were adapted to the Dutch interiors. The dials were copied from the 'Hague clocks', with their velvet and intricately pierced and engraved hour hands. The cases were appointed with fine foliate carving to match Dutch baroque furniture. In this way, a Dutch invention initiated longcase clockmaking in England, which, after a little while, initiated longcase clockmaking in Holland. Both now and then, an important and beautiful clock to be enjoyed by the fortunate owner.





A MINIATURE SWISS GUILLOCHE ENAMEL 'CERCLE TOURNANT' TABLE CLOCK,
CIRCA 1900



At the end of the nineteenth century the Swiss started to make miniature clocks aimed at high-end customers looking for exclusive objects and presents. These clocks are often made from solid silver, which was then engraved, aided by a apparatus following a pattern. The technique is called 'guilloché' in French. Over the engraved surface a coloured translucent enamel was applied, which resulted in a deep shiny, playful surface. The Russian jeweller Fabergé became famous for this technique. In the case of this little clock, small cartouches with classical figures and putti were even added, which makes the decoration even more elaborate. Another interesting feature is that the time is not indicated by the usual hands on a conventional dial. Here, a revolving, numbered chapter ring shows the time against a fixed pointer. This uncommon 'cercle tournant' or turning circle was typical of a limited number of French Louis XVI clocks. It makes this little gem an even more interesting possession.

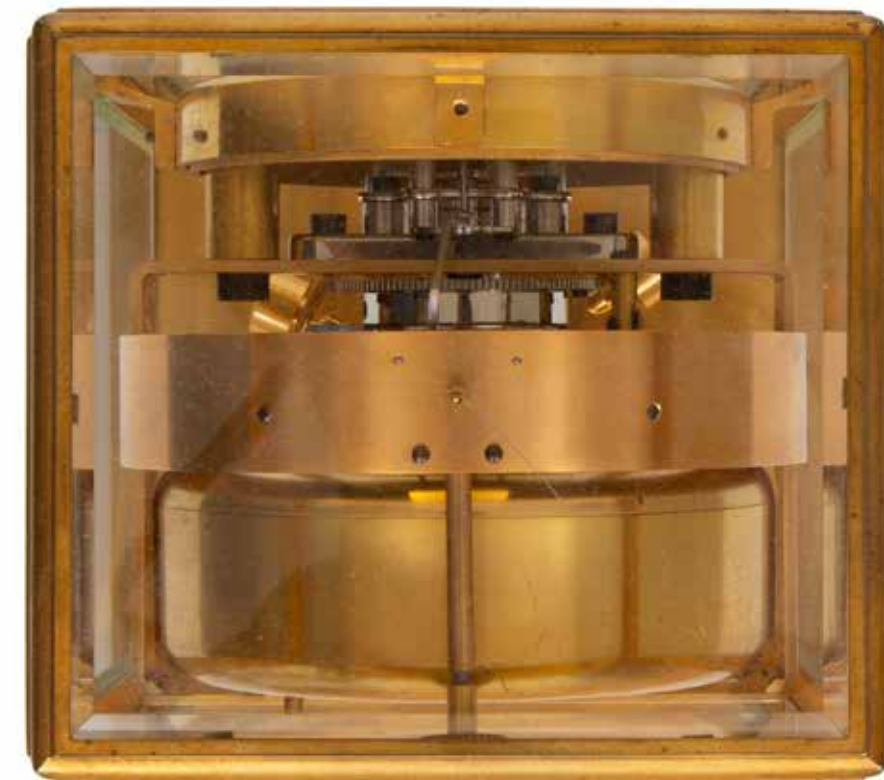




A SWISS GILT BRASS ATMOS CLOCK, JEAN-LOUIS REUTTER, CIRCA 1935



The Swiss engineer Jean-Louis Reutter invented the Atmos clock in 1928. He greatly improved the torsion pendulum that is often used in common anniversary clocks. He combined this balance with a movement driven by a small spring. This spring is wound by an ingenious mechanism. Because of the name 'atmos' many people mistakenly think the clock is driven by changes in barometric pressure, but in fact the clock runs on changes in temperature. A mercury-filled tube housed in the drum tilts with temperature changes and causes the drum to turn. This turning of the drum is used to wind the spring driving the mechanism. Since there are always temperature changes, this clock needs no winding and is therefore a 'pendule perpétuelle', a perpetual clock. The combination of mesmerizing motion of the slowly turning balance and the elegant design make this technical marvel a beautiful and interesting object in your interior.





A FRENCH EMPIRE ORMOLU URN MANTEL CLOCK, ANGEVIN À PARIS, CIRCA 1800.



This unusual model has a number of qualities that make it stand out from others. First there is the obvious quality of the bronze work and gilding which shows the craftsmanship of the men that worked on it. But there is more that makes this clock attractive. Although Empire clocks are made in the full round as it is said, the design is mostly made to be viewed from the front. This is not very strange since most of these clocks were made to be placed on a mantel piece with a view point from the front. But this clock with its ornaments on all sides and its annular shape seems to be made to be viewed from all sides. It makes it easier to find a good spot for this fine object. Just imagine this lovely antique piece on a modern table in the centre of a room. A beautiful highlight with history and class.



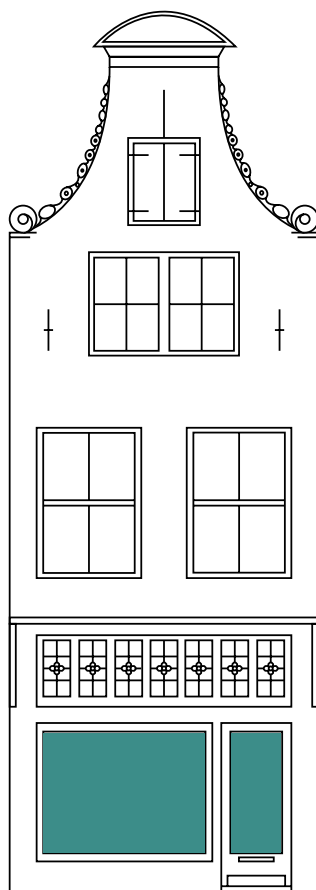


A FRENCH PATINATED 'WINDMILL' INDUSTRIAL MANTEL CLOCK BY GUILMET
CIRCA 1880.

The clocks that we now refer to as 'industrial clocks' were obviously made to bring joy to anyone who saw them. Made for a group of clients that wanted to entertain and amaze their family or visitors. Some might think of them just as 'funny' but that would not do justice to these clocks. There is a more common type of windmill clock, but this version is really rare. It also shows that besides entertaining or funny, it is also nicely designed and well made. All the details in the depiction of the timbers and the boards of the roof are testament to that. Together with the contrasting colours and marble base it is a joy to behold. And with the windmill blades turning, it becomes a visual spectacle. A piece that will extract a reaction from most, a true conversation piece.







COLOFON

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Author:
Jos Meis

Photography:
Arend Velsink
Jos Meis

Lay-out:
A10design

Editing:
Laurens Gude

Gude & Meis Antique Clocks
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 60
1017 DH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
+31 (0)20 612 9742
info@gudemeis.com
www.gudemeis.com