## My Wishlist:2025-08-23--05-08 1188

## Rocaille-style table from the villa Les Cèdres (ref.12746)

Table plate: H. 100 cm/62.14"; W. 161.5 cm/100.04"

This table in Louis XV style was made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It can be identified as the "center table in carved and gilded wood, of sinuous form, apron and legs openwork with very rich vine tendril decor" that was sold on November 27, 2019, at the Hôtel des Ventes de Monte-Carlo, and was therefore located at the villa Les Cèdres in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, one of the former residences of the King of the Belgians, Leopold II (1835-1909).

This property, initially called the villa Les Oiseaux and later the villa Les Cèdres, was successively owned by the mayor of Villefranche-sur-Mer, Leopold II, and then Alexandre Marnier-Lapostolle and his descendants. It subsequently passed into the hands of the Italian group Campari before being sold to a Ukrainian businessman in 2020.

Leopold II bought the villa in 1904 and entrusted the renovation work to the architect Aaron Messiah (1858-1940) the following year. He installed his young mistress, Blanche Zélie Joséphine Delacroix, known as Caroline Lacroix, then aged twenty-three. The young girl, from a very modest background, was only sixteen when Leopold II fell madly in love with her. He showered his "Très-Belle" with sumptuous gifts. In 1906 and 1907, Blanche Delacroix gave birth to two sons, Lucien and Philippe, whom the king acknowledged even though his paternity could be contested. Having become a widower in 1902, he married Blanche Delacroix and gave her the title of Baroness of Vaughan, just a few days before he died from complications following surgery.

Aaron Messiah was very active in Nice, his hometown, where he settled in 1884. He built several villas for Leopold II; for the villa Les Cèdres, whose wings he renovated and replaced all openings with large bays, he chose a historicist approach.

This choice is reflected in the villa's furniture. It is particularly noticeable regarding the table that was in one of the salons, itself emblematic of the eclecticism implemented.

This center table in Louis XV style with its serpentine top features rich giltwood carving on the apron and legs. At the center of the apron, two birds stand out against a shell. Around the legs, characterized by curves and counter-curves, vine tendrils coil and flourish on the openwork sides of the apron. The tops of the legs are each adorned with a bird perched on the vine in different positions, some pecking at the grapes within their reach. The short sides of the table are decorated with palmettes imitating a shell. The curves and counter-curves defining the structure of this piece, which nevertheless maintains its symmetry, and its naturalistic decorations, are all echoes of the Rococo art at its peak, from which the cabinetmaker drew inspiration.

Dimensions: Width: 172 cm Height: 79 cm Depth: 106 cm

