

# The OLD MONTREAL ANTIQUE SHOW

held October 15, 16 & 17, 2010



The Bonsecours Market in Old Montreal is an elegant venue with historic significance. Dealers are located on two levels with an open and spacious atrium creating a welcoming atmosphere.

## By Robin Pridham

Old Montreal was treated to a rainy and blustery weekend on the 15th, 16th and 17th of October, the weekend of the "Old Montreal Antique Show" (OMAS). The Bonsecours Market located at 325 de la Commune Street was the location for this 2nd annual extravaganza, which has quickly gained the reputation as one of the premier antique shows in Eastern Canada.

As we approached the Bonsecours Market along the cobblestone streets that make up old Montreal, the clickety clack of horse hooves pulling curious tourists in beautifully decorated carriages could be heard as they passed by, the occupants bundled up to shield themselves from the inclement weather.

Stéphan Gagnon, show promoter extraordinaire of the Old Montreal Antique Show (and owner of "La Belle Gueule De Bois" in , once again spared no expense to create a remarkable experience for those queued in line to gain entrance through the massive oak doors of the old market that are representative of the grandeur that awaits inside. As the line progressed under cover of the chic white tents that protected entrants from the harsh Friday evening rain and wind, an amazing world of quality was only steps away.

Friday evening is a special night at the OMAS, where a premium ticket will gain you entrance to not just an antique show, but a social experience. Upon entrance into the lower market, notes of Vivaldi plucked from the strings of a talented quartet

drifted through the air, as very polite servers dressed in customary black and white, offered champagne and hors-d'oeuvres from gleaming silver platters. There was a palatable buzz in the air as the show filled to capacity with those who had been anticipating this venerable feast for the eyes for weeks. And they were not disappointed.

Twenty two invited dealers from Ontario and Quebec could be found on two levels, each representing the absolute best in their respective fields. A significant cross section of periods was represented at the show. The best in Canadiana, early Quebec (French regime), Georgian period, quality Victorian plus some of the best Art Nouveau and Art Deco money could buy.

Peter Baker from Elgin Quebec was representative of the style of booth layout that permeated the show. Carpets, lighting, furniture and smalls all

arranged in a format that made the viewer feel as though they were in a room from the mid 1800s. Peter's eye for quality and the unusual were found throughout his display with buyers responding in kind. Gérard Bourguet from Quebec City offered an outstanding selection of the finest early Quebec furniture and artifacts. His display of early armoires, tables and lighting, much of it dating from the French regime, was consistent with the

antiques of investment quality available to those with a discerning eye and well proportioned cheque book. Again all arranged in a style that beckoned you to enter and stay awhile.

Clay Benson of Smith's Creek Antiques in Port Hope Ontario made the five hour trip down the 401 to display his two piece Nova Scotia pine dish dresser. It was beautifully displayed, adorned with vintage smalls that made you think it was still in the historic home it originated from some one hundred and fifty years ago. Barry Ezrin of Moffet Ontario was elated with his Friday evening results after selling one of the more significant pieces in his booth. He remarked that having the correct provenance landed credibility and was instrumental in closing the sale.

Brian Davies of Knowlton Quebec fo-



Left: An outstanding pair of bénitiers offered by La Belle Gueule de Bois. Large and impressive in as found condition. (Did I mention there was a pair!)

cused on rare smaller items of high quality. You will always find something to peak your fancy in Brian's booth and this show was no exception. An exceptionally large and historic sterling centre piece sold early on Friday night, setting the tempo for Brian's show.

If it was French Art Deco you were after, then you had to look no further than the amazing booth of Anne and Philippe Pallafray from Ile d' Orleans near Quebec City. With years of experience as auctioneers in Paris, you can now experience their haute couture Deco style at shows right here in Canada. The Pallafray's are representative of the avant-garde trend in antiques with a shift in focus from collectors to decorators. Beautiful period statement pieces that would light up any room in your house could be found throughout their booth. Sales were brisk for the Parisian auctioneers throughout the weekend.

Robin and Josée Pridham of "Pridham's" in Vankleek Hill Ontario brought an outstanding array of high quality and unusual items with a strong focus on the Decorative Arts. A display cabinet filled with Tiffany glass was contrasted against the mystical energy of 19th century rosewood "Foo Dog" weighing in at some eighty pounds, an amazing example.

This is only a cross-section, an example, un apercu, of the diversity and quality you can expect from the OMAS. Room-like display booths emulate what can be, with a focus on quality and rarity, the two components that make an item exceptional. A willingness to help the buyer position the item in their mind's eye, understanding that there is a shift in focus towards "decorating", as well as collecting. The bar is set high with this show, as it needs to be. In a time of uncertain fiscal reality and a changing demographic in terms of who is buying what, you need to think outside of the box. Stéphan Gagnon has done just that with this show and is to be truly commended for his efforts. This is definitely a show to keep your eye on if you are interested in a successful model for moving forward.

Right: Clay Benson of Smiths Creek Antiques in Port Hope arrived with this very impressive 2-piece Nova Scotia dish dresser C.1850. A substantial piece with original colour and plenty of wonderful wear. Offered at \$16,500, this piece clearly fell into the "investment quality" category.



Left: Found in the booth of Pridham's was this very rare mahogany fire place screen in its naturalistic form. Dovetailed into a mahogany pedestal it would surely be the focal point of any room. Offered at \$2850.00



Above: Croydon House Antiques of Enterprise, Ontario offered this very unique folk art piece titled "The ice carver" C. 1950. Originally found in St-Jean-Port-Joli, it was tagged at \$750.00. It sold at the show.



Stéphan Gagnon frames his unique and outstanding chest of drawers found in Rimouski, QC. Featuring original blue overpaint, hairy pawed ball and claw feet and forged nails in "as found" condition.



Above: A real show stopper was this C.1800 exceptional armoire québécoise. Made in the "Adam" style with leaves and flowers it boasted its original colour with no restoration. Offered by Gérard Bourget Antiquaire Inc of Quebec City at \$130,000.00 It SOLD at the show.



Left: The Pallafrays of Ile d'Orleans had a booth full of exceptional French Art Deco pieces. This Bronze reclining nude had everything going for it. French in origin with a wonderful green patina and impressive size. Enrich your life with this spectacular piece.