



CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT | PARIS | 30 SEPTEMBER 2016 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE MICHELIN GUIDE FROM 1900 TO TODAY

THE COMPLETE SET OF 108 MICHELIN GUIDES
OFFERED AT AUCTION AT CHRISTIE'S PARIS, ON 5 DECEMBER 2016



Paris – On the upcoming *Books & Manuscripts* auction in Paris on 5 December, Christie's will offer a complete set of the celebrated Michelin Guides. This rare ensemble comprises the 108 existing Guides published between 1900 and 2016, and is estimated at 20,000 to 30,000 euros. Additionally, the set includes the 1939 edition of the Guide that was reprinted by the American Military in 1943, ahead of the June 6 invasion in Normandy the following year.

The Michelin Guide – In 1900, the Michelin brothers come up with the idea of creating the celebrated Red Guide to “provide motorists travelling through France all the useful information to supply their automobile, to fix it, where to sleep and eat, and which means exist to communicate, by mail, telegraph or telephone”. While collecting multiple technical recommendations, the Guide evolves little by little. From 1923, it turns to hotels and gastronomy, with the attribution of celebrated stars, still today an international reference.

Some editions of the Michelin Guide were never published. It includes the years from 1915 to 1918 during the First World War, the year of 1921, and from 1940 to 1944 because of the Second World War. In 1945, after WWII, the Guide's work is enormous: towns were destroyed, bridges demolished and some roads were inaccessible. However, the Guide was published on the day the Armistice was signed, and included all relevant information about the roads' status as well as times and fees of ferryboats.

Public viewing: Friday 2 and Saturday 3 from 10am to 6pm. and Sunday 4 from 2pm to 6pm

Auction: Monday 5 December 2016 in the afternoon

Christie's: 9 avenue Matignon – 75008 – Paris

Note to the editors: Short history of the Michelin Guides

In the early 1900s, the Guides focus on automobile. It lists the roads' conditions, indicates where to find tires, inner tubes, gas, a mechanic, etc. Garages and gas stations did not exist until 1918, so the Guide lists groceries, bakeries, hardware stores, etc. and also surgeons and pharmacists, whose skills could prove useful. The Guide also includes one or two hotels per town, its telegraph station and the nearest railway station. At first, hotels' ratings indicate their prices, three stars being the most expensive.

From 1902 to 1907, a road map is included into the Guide. It showed the main roads, even if tarmac roads only appeared from 1919 and they were not yet named. From 1920 to 1931, Michelin decides to place corner bollards to indicate directions and so they planted 77,000 signs all over France.

At the beginning of the 20th century, French hotels are quite mediocre in terms of hygiene, except for establishments in main cities and thermal and seaside resorts. The Guide then starts focusing on hotels that are worthy of its reader. It includes relevant information such as the number of bedrooms, if lightning is electric or still with candles, if the water is cold or warm, if the restrooms are private or shared, if it includes heaters, etc. Ratings are still according to prices.

In 1922, the "Recommended Hotels and Restaurants" section appears. In 1926, the small black star next to a hotel indicates a "hotel that has a renowned cuisine". In 1931, ratings evolve to the current system of three stars. In 1933, the definition is clear and definitive. One star stands for "A very good restaurant in its own category", two stars indicate an "Excellent cooking and [is] worth a detour", and finally, three stars highlight an "Exceptional cuisine and worth a visit". From the 1930s, discrete inspectors seek the best. Since then, and still today, the Red Guide remains the worldwide reference for gastronomy.

Full caption of lot:

COMPLETE SET OF MICHELIN GUIDES (1900-2016), INCLUDING THE RARE 1943 REPRINT FOR AMERICAN MILITARY. 108 BOOKS 12° AND 8°, EDITOR'S RED BUCKRAM.

108 guides in total (no guides were published in 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1921, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944).

The 1902 to 1907 guides include a folding road map at the end.

Estimate: €20,000-30,000

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Images on request

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