

For Immediate Release
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THERE'S MORTAR CANES AT CHRISTIE'S

European Furniture, Decorative Objects & Walking Sticks
Wednesday 5 November 2003
Oak & Country Furniture including a Collection of Mortars
Wednesday 12 November 2003



A selection of canes modelled as dogs
Estimates range £250 - £600



A selection of mortars
Estimates range £150 - £10,000

South Kensington - Christie's is delighted to announce the sale of a remarkable selection of mortars from the collection of Robert Spalding. Spalding's expertise, aided by his passion for collecting, has ensured a collection of uncompromising quality, which is undoubtedly the most important of its type to appear on the auction market in the last 50 years. The collection is expected to fetch in excess of £100,000 with estimates ranging from £150 to £10,000.

Robert Spalding, a government scientist and Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, has been an avid collector for over half a century. He has acquired many significant pieces from antique

markets and auctions around Great Britain and also on the Continent. Manufactured across Europe and the Middle East, some of the mortars date from as early as the Medieval Period.

Sale highlights include an early 16th century Venetian bronze mortar probably from the Alberghetti Foundry estimated at £5,000–8,000, an extremely rare English or Scottish bronze mortar, 13th century (estimate: £3,000–5,000) and two Iberian ivory mortars, circa 16th century (estimates: £1,000–2,000 and £1,500–2,000).

Other items in the collection to enhance domestic bliss or add a touch of rustic chic to the country kitchen include coffee grinders, candlesticks and even a German rhino horn chalice dating from the late 17th /early 18th century (estimate: £1,500–2,500).

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This sale will feature Part I of a magnificent single owner collection of walking sticks. The total collection, which comprises 1500 examples, will be offered over three sales and is expected to realise up to £150,000. Amassed over 25 years by Giovanni Monari, an Italian travel agent, every type of stick imaginable is represented with handles made from a variety of materials including ivory, horn, wood, whalebone and silver.

Many of the 500 examples to be offered in this sale are carved with animal motifs including a large variety of canine canes whilst others feature an array of facial expressions, ranging from distinguished knights to clever caricatures.

For the swashbuckling, there's a selection of 19th century swordsticks while for the intrepid adventurer, we offer nothing short of James Bond ingenuity – complex gadget sticks that transform into umbrellas, camera tripods and seats.

There are even sticks that double as a compass, a telescope and a fishing rod. For the self-confessed DIY experts, we have the ultimate mobile workshop tool – the stick that is also a saw. With estimates ranging from £100–1,000, there's something to suit all tastes and wallets, providing the perfect opportunity to purchase that unique Christmas present.

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*Images available on request
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