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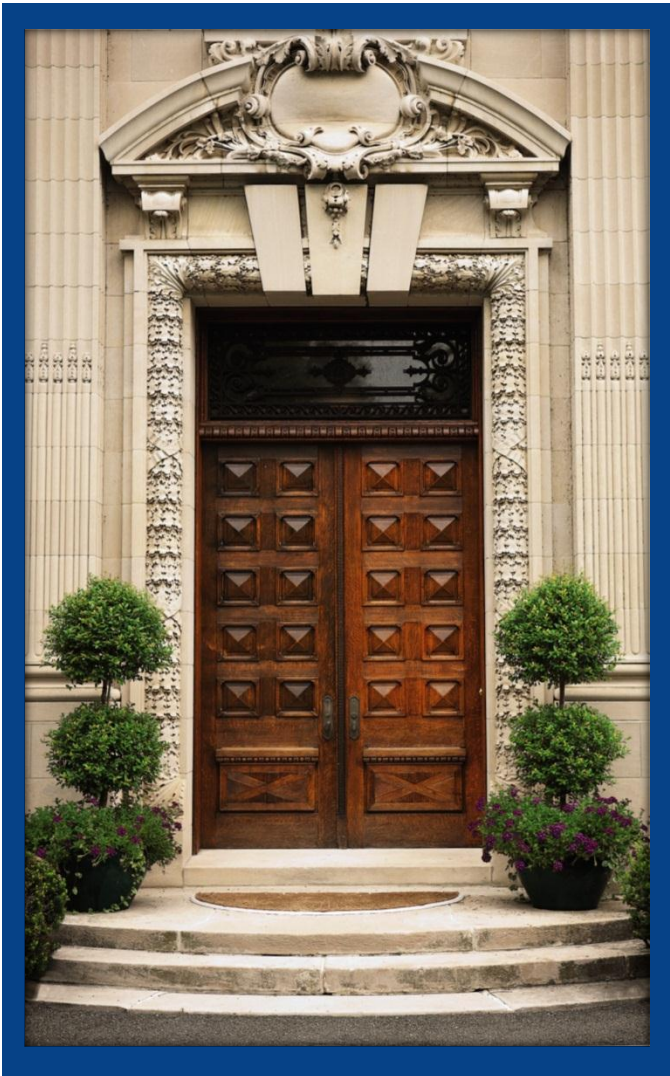
Press Release  
**CHRISTIE'S**

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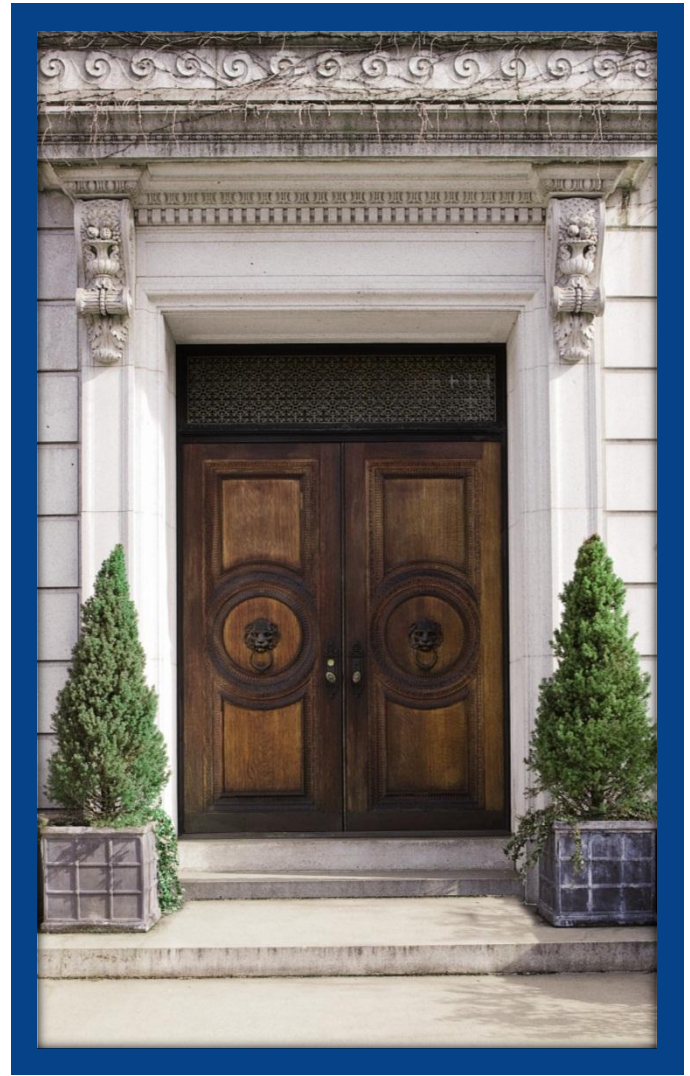
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## A TASTE FOR LUXURY: Two Great Houses from America's Gilded Age



Blairsdene, Peapack, New Jersey  
Designed by Carrère and Hastings



The Henry Cook Mansion, 973 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York  
Designed by McKim, Mead & White

**New York** – Christie's is pleased to present *A Taste for Luxury: Two Great Houses from America's Gilded Age* on June 21. The private collection includes furniture, tapestries, old master paintings and drawings, silver and porcelain from two exquisite residences: The Henry Cook mansion at 973 Fifth Avenue, designed by McKim, Mead and White; and the country estate of Blairsdene in Peapack, New Jersey by Carrère and Hastings. The interiors of both residences are miraculously still intact and remain elegant reminders of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and of the great families and fortunes - as well as the great architects - that built them. Comprised of over 270 lots, this sale is expected to realize in excess of \$3.5 million and is the perfect opportunity for collectors at all levels to participate in America's Gilded Age.

Just steps away from Museum Mile, **973 FIFTH AVENUE** is located in one of the most glamorous and sought-after neighborhoods in New York City and the house truly has a history to match. In the early twentieth century, the entire block upon which 973 Fifth Avenue sits was owned by speculator Henry Cook. After selling all the other properties on the block, Cook hired renowned architect Stanford White, of McKim, Mead & White, to design himself a house on the last remaining plot. 973 Fifth was later purchased by Payne and Helen Whitney, the owners of 972 Fifth Avenue (also designed by Stanford White), and they were able to enjoy both 972 and 973 Fifth Avenue as a single residence until 1949.

The interiors of 973 Fifth Avenue are in remarkable condition, with period rooms having maintained their original functions despite the ever-changing architectural milieu of New York. The dining room on the *piano nobile* and the Louis XVI Drawing Room, which was supplied by the iconic Gilded Age decorating firm Allard & Fils to White's design, are still dazzling entertaining spaces, adding to the home's reputation as a Gilded Age oasis.



Built by Carrère and Hastings for Mr. and Mrs. C. Ledyard Blair and their four daughters, **BLAIRSDEN** was, and remains, one of America's grandest Gilded Age country houses. Blair went to great lengths to create a true country destination, leveling hilltops, building dams, creating lakes and forests, and even installing new railroad tracks leading to Blairsden.

While the world around it has evolved into a complete suburbia with large-scale country houses having almost entirely vanished, Blairsden remains virtually unchanged. The grand architectural bones of the house remain wonderfully intact, from the carved limestone fountains, to the deluxe lighting fixtures by the celebrated firm of E.F. Caldwell & Co., which illuminate the grand galleries and reception halls. Only one owner separates the present owners from C. Ledyard Blair himself, and although most of the collection was sold in a series of auctions in 1949, they have accomplished a masterful job of filling the great house with the collection it deserves. The fine and decorative arts, like those at 973 Fifth, are perfectly suited to their surroundings.



**A Pair Of Late Louis XVI Ormolu And Verde Antico Ewers**  
 Circa 1790-1800  
 Estimate: \$60,000 - 90,000



**A North Italian Giltwood Side Table**  
 Genoa, Circa 1730-40  
 Estimate: \$70,000 - 100,000



**A Fine Pair Of George IV Silver-Gilt Wine Coolers**  
 Mark Of Paul Storr, London, 1827  
 Estimate: \$100,000 - 150,000



**A French Chinoiserie Tapestry**  
 Beauvais, Circa 1722-1724, By Noel-Antoine Merou  
 Estimate: \$100,000 - 150,000



**Eighteen illustrations for Ovid's Metamorphoses**  
 By Godfried Maes (one of 18 illustrated)  
 Estimate: \$40,000-60,000



**A Pair Of Louis XVI Ormolu, Patinated Bronze And Bleu Turquin Marble Three-Branch Candelabra**  
 Circa 1785, After A Model By Etienne Maurice Falconet  
 Estimate: \$150,000 - 250,000

**Auction:** *A Taste for Luxury: Two Great Houses from America's Gilded Age*

21 June 2012

**Viewing:** Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York

16-20 June 2012

[Please click here for the complete eCatalogue for the sale.](#)

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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*Images available on request*

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A Charles X Ormolu Mantel Clock  
Circa 1825  
Estimate: \$12,000-18,000