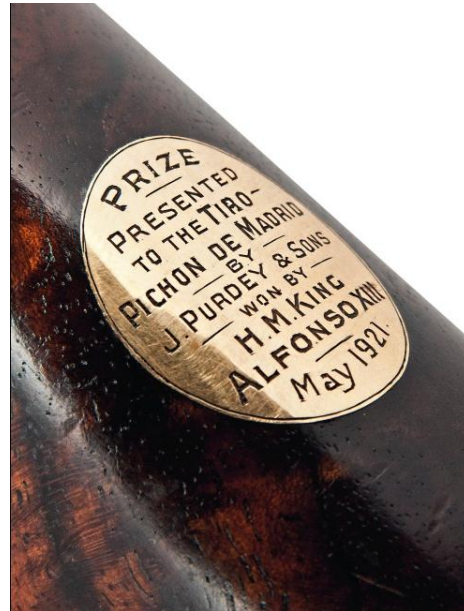


CHRISTIE'S

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FROM THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD OF THE LATE KING ALFONSO XIII OF SPAIN: A FINE AND RARE COLLECTION OF FIREARMS LEADS CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON DECEMBER SALE OF SPORTING & MILITARY FIREARMS



*Details of a very fine 12-bore toplever pigeon hammergun by J. Purdey & Sons bearing the Spanish Royal Arms and presentation escutcheon
Estimate: £20,000-25,000*

South Kensington – Christie's announces the December sale of *Sporting & Military Firearms*, which will be held at South Kensington on 15 December 2014. The sale presents two important collections: the first the Giovanni Gilardi collection, alongside a collection of firearms belonging to the late the King Alfonso XIII of Spain. This collection represents an unrivalled opportunity for collectors to own a piece of Spanish royal history. From flintlock to sidelock, the sale features sporting and military firearms that span two centuries of development and innovation, from the late 18th through to the late 20th century. Estimates range from £200 up to £125,000 and the pre-sale viewing will be open from 9 through to 15 December.

The auction features an unparalleled group of firearms from the royal household of the late King Alfonso XIII of Spain. This exceptional collection illustrates the King's passion for shooting in many forms and his appreciation for fine firearms whilst embracing new technologies. King Alfonso XIII was an extremely accomplished shot who hunted throughout Europe in the company of fellow monarchs and heads of state. The broad range of firearms in the collection includes acquisitions from his trips, and bears testament to his

patronage of some of the finest makers of the time, such as James Purdey & Sons in London and Victor Sarasqueta of Eibar, whom he appointed as his Royal Gunmaker in 1902. Many of Victor Sarasqueta's pieces are represented in this collection, and highlights include a very fine 12-bore toplever pigeon hammergun (estimate: £1,500-2,000, *illustrated left, including detail right*). Whilst the majority of the monogrammed guns in the collection can be attributed to Alfonso XIII, there are examples, noticeably amongst the small bore shotguns, bearing the crowned monograms of his sons Alfonso, Prince of Asturias, Jaime, Juan and Gonzalo.

The Spanish King was a champion live pigeon shot, a sport connected with the royal household since 1864, with many Real Sociedad de Tiro de Pichón being established in cities throughout Spain. The group offered in the December sale includes four live pigeon guns, one of which by J. Purdey & Sons was, according to its dedication, won in 1921 by the King in a live pigeon competition in Madrid (estimate: £20,000-25,000, *details illustrated page one*).

The collection of Giovanni Gilardi represents a lifetime interest in the study and collection of firearms, charting the evolution of the 18th century flintlock through to late 19th century cartridge loading repeater, with special emphasis on military longarms. The rapidity of industrial development witnessed in the 19th century is well illustrated through service longarms from Great Britain, the United States, Scandinavia and Continental Europe including many rare patterns seldom seen at auction, offering collectors a rare opportunity to view and acquire such an extensive and varied group. Highlights include a rare Danish 11mm lobnitz patent 'm.1841' breech-loading percussion service carbine (estimate: £600-800, *illustrated below*).



2014 marks the 200th anniversary of James Purdey establishing his business, James Purdey & Sons, in London. Arguably the most famous and respected name in sporting guns, Purdey continues to enjoy an exceptional reputation as a leader in the market. The December sale includes 13 lots of fine Purdey rifles and guns, including three pairs of guns and one pair of rifles made for a private collector, all with bespoke engraving and in new and unused condition. One of these is a magnificent pair of Ken Hunt gold-inlaid 12-bore single-trigger left over and under sidelock ejector trap guns, completed in May 1996 (estimate: £115,000-125,000, *illustrated left*).

PRESS CONTACT: Katy Richards | +44 (0) 207 752 3121 | krichards@christies.com

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