

ACQUISITION OF A SNUFFBOX BELONGING TO MADAME ADÉLAÏDE IN SÈVRES PORCELAIN, DELIVERED IN 1786

Versailles, 2 December 2025
Press Release

On 2 December 2025, during an auction in the United Kingdom, the Château de Versailles acquired, thanks to the patronage of the Société des Amis de Versailles, a rare soft-paste porcelain snuffbox commissioned by Madame Adélaïde, daughter of Louis XV and aunt of Louis XVI. This object of exceptional quality significantly enriches the group of works related to the daughters of Louis XV preserved at the Château de Versailles.

A ROYAL WORK OF GREAT REFINEMENT

Of oval form, the porcelain snuffbox features a "beau bleu" ground — the name given to a shade of deep blue defined at Sèvres in 1778 and which became one of the manufactory's signatures. The lid and base of the box are adorned with two miniature cartouches depicting the princess's dogs, including Vizir, her small apricot-coloured lion dog, notably described in the memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne.

The piece was decorated by Nicolas-Pierre Pithou the Younger, one of the finest painters at the manufactory, and decorated by the Parisian goldsmiths Charles Ouzille and Pierre-François Draï, renowned suppliers to the Crown. The manufactory archives make it possible to trace the entire commission, from its creation to its delivery in January 1786.

A RARE ACQUISITION FOR THE NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Through this acquisition, the Château de Versailles strengthens an already remarkable ensemble devoted to Madame Adélaïde and the daughters of Louis XV. Highly sought after on the art market, royal snuffboxes of this quality — often dismantled to recover their mounts and precious stones — are almost impossible to identify.

The arrival in the collections of the Château de Versailles of such a prestigious and intimate object represents an exceptional event.



*Oval snuffbox in soft-paste Sèvres porcelain with chased and engraved gold mount.
Royal Manufactory of Sèvres, 1785, and Paris, 1785–1786 (for the gold mount by Ouzille and Draï).
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PRESS CONTACT

Hélène Dalifard, Violaine Solari, Barnabé Chalmin Doré de Nion, Rosalie Mouzard
+33 (0)1 30 83 75 21
presse@chateauversailles.fr

AN EXAMPLE OF REFURNISHING: THE COLLECTIONS OF MESDAMES AT THE CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

Since the completion of their restoration in 2013, the apartments of Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire have provided the Château de Versailles with an ideal setting in which to display — and continue to acquire — works and objects that once belonged to the daughters of Louis XV. Thanks to the support of its patrons and the Société des Amis de Versailles, these rooms rank among the most richly refurnished spaces in the Château, offering an eloquent and authentic evocation of the refined taste of the princesses of France.

MADAME ADÉLAÏDE'S COMMODE

This commode was delivered by Jean-Henri Riesener in 1776 to Madame Adélaïde for her private apartment in the Palace of Versailles. Sold during the revolutionary sales in 1795, it subsequently entered various private collections before being donated to Versailles by the Société des Amis de Versailles in 2018, thanks to the exceptional bequest of Mme Simone Baraille and to those of Mmes Micheline Cavallo and Monique Genneret.



Commode, Jean-Henri Riesener, 1776
© Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN © Christophe Fouin

MADAME VICTOIRE'S VASE GARNITURE

The five Sèvres porcelain vases belonging to Madame Victoire, painted around 1772 by Charles-Nicolas Dodin after compositions by François Boucher, regained their original position in the princess's bedchamber at Versailles in 2013. These pieces, with their characteristic green ground, form a garniture adorning the mantelpiece. A masterpiece for Mesdames' Rococo taste, the ensemble exemplifies the refinement of Sèvres and contributes to the historical restitution of the apartments of Mesdames, restored since 2012. The central vase and the two en vases were acquired in 2012 thanks to patronage of LVMH. The two intermediate vases have been on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 2013.



Pair of vases, Manufacture royale de porcelaine de Sèvres, 1786
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MADAME ADÉLAÏDE'S "ETRUSCAN" VASES

In 1787, Madame Adélaïde purchased this pair of vases of so-called "Etruscan" form with a banded body. They feature two handles formed by intertwined serpents and painted decoration on a white ground depicting scenes in the antique manner. The princess placed them in her Grand Cabinet at the Château de Bellevue, now lost. This exceptional pair was able to enter the collections of the Château de Versailles in 2000 thanks to the Société des Amis de Versailles.



Vase Garniture, Manufacture royale de porcelaine de Sèvres, 1772
© Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN © Christophe Fouin



Déjeuner, Manufacture royale de porcelaine de Sèvres, 1775
© RMN-GP (Château de Versailles) © Gérard Blot

THE CHINESE DÉJEUNER

This déjeuner — that is, a service for a single person — is dated 1775 and may be the example sold to either Madame Adélaïde or Madame Victoire, who, like their father, had a predilection for pieces from the Sèvres manufactory, particularly those featuring Chinese-inspired decoration. Sold during the Revolution, this déjeuner returned to the château de Versailles in 1984.

THE CENTRAL VASE FROM MADAME ADÉLAÏDE LAPIS-LAZULI-GROUND GARNITURE

This vase formed part of a five-piece garniture made in 1781 and purchased by Madame Adélaïde in 1783 for her apartments at Versailles, before exchanged in 1784. This is the central vase. Characterized by a blue ground imitating lapis-lazuli, these vases were gilded by Vincent on a ground applied by Schradre. Seized during the Revolution, the garniture was dispersed. The central vase was donated by M. Hubert de Givenchy through the Société des Amis de Versailles in 1994. The four other vases are now in the British Royal Collections.



Vase, Manufacture royale de porcelaine de Sèvres, 1781
© Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN © Christophe Fouin

ABOUT THE SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS DE VERSAILLES

Founded in 1907 to address the state of disrepair of the palaces of Versailles and Trianon, the Société des Amis de Versailles has been recognized as a public-interest organization since 1913. With 5,200 members and the support of numerous patrons, it has worked for more than a century with passion and commitment to enrich the collections, support restoration projects and promote the Château and Estate of Versailles.

The Société des Amis de Versailles is currently conducting a fundraising campaign for the restoration of the Tour de Marlborough.

www.amisdeversailles.com

THE ACQUISITION POLICY OF THE CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

As a national museum, the Château de Versailles has the mission of contributing to the enrichment of public collections through the acquisition of cultural property on behalf of the French State. Purchases, donations, and bequests enable the museum to bring in works and objects that shed new light on the existing collection, enhance its coherence, and fill its gaps. The fields covered are wide-ranging, and the Château de Versailles pursues in particular a proactive policy aimed at refurbishing the palace. Wherever possible, it seeks to acquire pieces of furniture and present them to the public in spaces whose appearance are as closely as recalls that of the former royal residence.