Large curved chest of drawers from the Louis XV period

Stamped François MONDON born in 1694

Dimensions : H. 85.5 cm x W. 147 cm x D. 68 cm

François MONDON, born in 1694, occupies a special place among 18th-century French cabinetmakers. Like Doirat and Migeon, Mondon made a name for himself during the Regency period, working in Paris in his workshop on Rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine. He immediately specialized in the manufacture of chests of drawers, even though this type of furniture had only just appeared at the end of the 17th century. Originally from the Dauphiné region, he initially produced straight, often fairly simple, Regency-style chests of drawers, reminiscent of those made by Thomas Hache from Grenoble. but he achieved mastery in Paris around 1730 by producing Louis XV-style chests of drawers with powerful curves. He worked for Migeon, but signed his best pieces, some of which can be found in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Lyon, the Palace of Versailles, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

I don't like the term "tomb chest" to describe our chest of drawers: this term covers too wide a range of chests of drawers, whose only common feature is the double curve of the front, both horizontal and vertical. The vast majority of "tomb chests" are pieces of furniture with straight sides, slightly curved fronts, almost identical dimensions, and unoriginal, poorly crafted bronze fittings. These chests were manufactured almost in series until 1760, and today they have lost much of their value. This decline in prices is all the more pronounced given that curved chests of drawers with marquetry have a high restoration cost, often well above their market value. For this type of chest of drawers, it is therefore only worth considering exceptional, rare pieces for which high-quality restoration really makes sense.

Our chest of drawers was made in Paris around 1740, at the height of François Mondon's talent. Its generous dimensions create a spectacular effect. Yet the balance between depth, height, and width, all three of which have been increased, remains perfect. The meticulous marquetry consists of multiple frames and butterfly wings, crafted from the finest violet wood. The pronounced curves, both on the front and sides, create a violin shape that counterbalances the substantial volume of the piece. The front opens onto five drawers in three rows, the top row concealing a small secret drawer between the

side drawers. Separating the drawers and punctuating the sides, five brass flutes give the piece a slender silhouette.

The bronze trim on this chest of drawers is breathtakingly rich: it was custom-designed for this piece, with unique decorative elements. Rather than providing a lengthy description of the 16 bronzes, I invite you to observe their original character, the precision of their engraving, and the quality of their gilding in the photos.

This piece by MONDON is in remarkable condition. It has retained its entire frame and more than 95% of its veneer. Its bronze fittings are all original, but have been largely regilded. The chest of drawers is topped with its beautiful original marble, a Belgian Rance with a predominantly brown/red color and white and gray veining. Most of the veneer has been removed and replaced to allow for the perfect restoration of the frame and drawer runners. A traditional French polish was applied before the bronzes were replaced. This sustainable restoration was carried out by one of the best Parisian workshops and took nearly 200 hours of work.