

The Times Collecting Money

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The new year is upon us and with it, the start of the art fairs. On January 23 to 28 the Winter Decorative Antiques and textiles Fair takes place in Battersea Park, London with the emphasis on French furniture and design.

French design in this period was dominated by two women. The first, Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV's mistress, encouraged the king to adopt the rococo fashions of the time, 1715 to 1774 - a style known as Louis Quinze. But it was the next period,

1774 to 1793, that produced the most desirable furniture, which is still popular, albeit stratospherically expensive, today.

Marie Antoinette, the consort to Louis XVI, is credited with promoting the neoclassical style known as Louis Seize. The look is straight classical lines, combined with luxurious wall hangings and slenderly proportioned furniture painted in light colours. Adopted by the court, the style caught on among the aristocracy.

"It is the most popular and the most expensive area of French furniture, but it does hold its value" says George Perez-Martin of Brownrigg, the Petworth dealer.