



WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections

## WADDESDON HIGHLIGHTS A UNIQUE COLLECTION OF RIESENER CHEST OF DRAWERS

**Wednesday 23 March – Sunday 23**



Jean-Henri Riesener, Chest of drawers (detail), 1776; Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust) Bequest of James de Rothschild, 1957; acc. no. 2251. Photo: Hugo Maertens © The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor

Waddesdon is unique in the world for having **three** extraordinary chests of drawers by Jean-Henri Riesener (1734-1806), two of which belonged to members of the French Royal family. They are displayed in the White Drawing Room at Waddesdon for this special exhibition: **A Closer Look: Spotlight on French Royal Furniture by Jean-Henri Riesener (1734-1806)**. Curated by Dr Ulrich Leben and Emily Roy.

The display allows visitors to look closely at these magnificent pieces and to learn about their design, technical construction and fascinating history. It provides a rare opportunity to look in 360° at objects normally placed against walls.

You can see the magnificent chest of drawers commissioned by the Comtesse de Provence, sister-in-law of Louis XVI, magnificently veneered in purple heart, with marquetry of tulipwood, mahogany, sycamore, ebony, boxwood, casuarina, holly and burl wood with gilt-bronze mounts and marble top. She ordered this chest of drawers from Riesener on 8 February 1776 and it was delivered to her apartment in Versailles the following month. This was astonishingly fast for such a complex piece of furniture.

Also a chest of drawers for Louis XVI youngest sister Madame Elisabeth (1764-1794) for her coming of age at just 14 years old!



Jean-Baptiste—André Gautier d'Agoty (1740-1786), *Marie-Joséphine de Savoie (1753-1810, Comtesse de Provence)*, oil on canvas, 1777, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, inv. No MV7852. © RMN – Grand Palais (Château de Versailles)/Gerard Blot.



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The exhibition includes a specially commissioned digital animation showing the construction of Madame Elisabeth's chest of drawers and two films, produced by the J. Paul Getty Museum, showing the making of intricate marquetry and gilt-bronze mounts.

The display marks the beginning of a research project – in collaboration with the **Wallace Collection** and the **Royal Collection** - which aims to learn more about Riesener, the techniques and materials he used, and the world of buying and making furniture in 18<sup>th</sup>-century France.

The curators would like to thank the following for their help with the preparation, design and installation of the exhibition: Colin Bailey, Vincent Bastien, Alexis Borde, Max Coppoletta, Frédéric D'Arras, Mike Fear, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Jürgen Huber, Helen Jacobson, Lindsay Macnaughton, David Mlinaric, Miriam Schefzyk, Christoph Vogtherr, and the Collections, Facilities, IT and Marketing Departments.

**Images can be found here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7rgwblwzs2pcgnz/AAAi-V7Iypoh8hOZo6PkP06ua?dl=0>

**Video can be found here:**

<https://youtu.be/UI-GsIzkjIY>

**Study Sessions and Tours**

**French 18<sup>th</sup> Century furniture at Waddesdon Thursday 15 September 2016**

**A Closer Look: Spotlight on French Furniture by Jean-Henri Riesener**

**Wednesday 25 May, Thursday 28 July, Friday 23 September**

Join our curators for an informed insight into this year's special displays and exhibitions. Most events run from 10.45 am – 12.15 pm, with coffee on arrival at 10.15am. £25 including normal admission charges. £15 for National Trust members and National Art Pass holders.

For details, times prices and booking see [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk) or call 01296 653226

-Ends-

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**Visitor information and opening times:** [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)

Waddesdon Manor, Waddesdon, Near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0JH

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### **Free bus service from Aylesbury Vale Parkway station**

To encourage the use of public transport, Waddesdon will start a free daily bus service open to all visitors to Waddesdon Manor. The bus will collect from Aylesbury Vale Parkway (AVP) train station at 11.03 each morning (Wednesdays to Sundays) to link up with the 09.57 train from London Marylebone.

The bus will depart from the Welcome Pavilion in the Waddesdon car park at 4.15pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in good time to connect with the 16.43 from AVP (which arrives at Marylebone at 17.48). On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays the departure time is 4.45pm from the Welcome Pavilion as the train from AVP leaves at 17.15 (arriving at Marylebone at 18.20).

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. Waddesdon Manor was built from 1874 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his outstanding collection of art treasures and to entertain the fashionable world. It combines the highest quality 18<sup>th</sup>-century French decorative arts, magnificent English portraits and Dutch Old Master paintings with one of the finest Victorian gardens in Britain, famous for its Parterre and ornate working Aviary. The house was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957 and is now managed by a family charitable trust, The Rothschild Foundation, under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild.
2. Waddesdon is one of the most visited historic houses among England's National Trust properties. The collections are a reflection of the passions of the Rothschilds who created and have cared for Waddesdon, from Ferdinand de Rothschild, who built the Manor in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to Jacob, the present Lord Rothschild.
3. In recent years, Waddesdon has hosted a vibrant and varied exhibitions programme which both reflects and complements the collections, history of the house and the Rothschild family. Recent highlights include *Predators and Prey: A Roman mosaic from Lod, Israel* (in partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority and the British Museum), *Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac and the Portrait Bust in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Britain* (in partnership with the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), and *Waddesdon at War* (all 2014); *Sacred Stitches: Ecclesiastical Textiles in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor* (2013); *Taking Time: Chardin's Boy Building a House of Cards and Other Paintings* (2012); *Playing, Learning, Flirting: French 18th-Century Board Games* (2012) and *Fantasy from the Fire: Sixteenth-Century Maiolica in the Waddesdon Collection* (2011-2013). The developing programme of contemporary art has encouraged artist responses to the historic collections and interiors as well as to the gardens at Waddesdon. In 2012, **Edmund de Waal** made new works for the historic ground floor rooms, including two large-scale vitrines, which have been acquired by The Rothschild Foundation for Windmill Hill. In 2013, Catalan artist **Joan Sallas** created *Folded Beauty*:



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*Masterpieces in Linen*, reviving designs for magnificent Baroque table centrepieces, but including his own contemporary versions. The 2013 carpet bedding and a contemporary wild flower planting scheme were designed by artist **Philippa Lawrence**, inspired by the collection of historic lace and textiles at Waddesdon, and in 2014 we worked with artist **Jan Dunning** on a trail inspired by the experiences of evacuee children and a collaboration with contemporary lace-makers, *Imagine...Lace at Waddesdon*.