

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO AUCTION

REDISCOVERED 18TH-19TH CENTURY MADEIRA FROM THE CELLAR OF THE LIBERTY HALL MUSEUM

ONE OF THE LARGEST COLLECTIONS OF EARLY MADEIRA IN THE UNITED STATES

7 DECEMBER 2018 | NEW YORK



Pictured above: Lenox Madeira discovered in the cellar of the Liberty Hall Museum. Featured lot: **Lenox Madeira, imported by the Late Robert Lenox Esq. via Philadelphia in 1796, bottled in the Summer of 1798, Re-bottled in June 1888** (estimate: \$6,000-8,000 per bottle).



Pictured above: Demijohns located in the attic of the Liberty Hall Museum. Featured lot: **Madeira 1846, Old Sercial in demijohn, recorked in 1871 and in October 2018** (estimate: \$35,000-55,000 per 5-gallon demijohn).

New York – Christie's announces the sale of a selection from one of the most extensive early collections of Madeira in the United States, dating to the 18th-19th centuries. Recently rediscovered at The Liberty Hall Museum at Kean University, New Jersey, a selection will be included in the auction *Finest Wines and Spirits, Including The Liberty Hall Museum Collection of Historic Madeira and an extraordinary Collection of Pre-prohibition Whiskey* on December 7 at Christie's New York.

Discovered during a six-month refurbishment project, almost three cases of Madeira wine from 1796 and approximately 40 demijohns from the 1820s, were discovered from the Liberty Hall Museum in 2015. During the wine cellar restoration, the museum exposed the original brick flooring that had been covered by a layer of concrete, and removed an extra wall, likely erected during the Prohibition era, to reveal numerous cases that had been nailed shut for nearly a century.

The December 2018 Christie's auction will include an offering from this historic discovery, highlighted by a selection of demijohns that were recorked in October 2018 in partnership with APCOR, The Portuguese Cork Association, and catalogued under the expertise of Francisco Albuquerque, Winemaker for the Blandy's Madeira Wine Company, S.A., and Edwin Vos, Head of Wine at Christie's. Featured lots include **Lenox Madeira, imported by the Late Robert Lenox Esq. via Philadelphia in 1796, bottled in the Summer of 1798, Re-bottled in June 1888** (estimate: \$6,000-8,000 per bottle); **Madeira 1846, Old Sercial in demijohn, recorked in 1871 and in October 2018** (estimate: \$35,000-55,000 per 5-gallon demijohn).



Edwin Vos of Christie's (left) and Francisco Albuquerque, Winemaker for the Blandy's Madeira Wine Company, sample the Madeira from one of the 1820s demijohns.

Edwin Vos, Head of Wine, Continental Europe, Christie's comments: "Christie's is honored to be entrusted with the sale of this incredibly rare selection of early Madeira. Putting together this auction has been a true collaboration with our partners at the Liberty Hall Museum, APCOR, and the Madeira Wine Company. The journey from discovery to the uncorking, tasting, and cataloguing of these century-old vintages has presented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our specialist team and an extremely rare buying opportunity for collectors."

Francisco Albuquerque, Winemaker for the Blandy's Madeira Wine Company, S.A., remarks: "This is a landmark moment, as this discovery not only represents one of the largest collections of early Madeira in the United States, it also signifies the timelessness and lasting quality of Madeira wine. These vintages are approximately 200 years-old and yet they still retain the nuanced qualities and notes found only in Madeira coupled with the finish of time. This auction offers a remarkable opportunity to not only own a piece of history, but to experience it."

Bill Schroh, Jr. Director of Museum Operations, Liberty Hall Museum at Kean University comments: "In the fall of 2015 the museum began a restoration project of the wine cellar of Liberty Hall. The cellar was filled with lots of dusty bottles and wooden cases of liquor that hadn't been opened for at least 100 years. Little did we know that we would uncover several cases of Robert Lenox's Madeira from 1796. We had no idea what we had until we began to do the background research and realized we had something very rare for the United States."

Joao Rui Ferreira, President, The Portuguese Cork Association comments: "The relationship between wine and cork is one of the oldest and longest relationships in history, and this collection of Madeira dating back to the 18th and 19th century exemplifies this. No other material has the ability to preserve the contents for 200 plus years and have it be possible to enjoy today. A single natural cork has 800 million cells which gives it its impermeability, flexibility, sealing capacity and resilience; this is why it is impossible to imitate cork in a synthetic material."

The discovery represents one of the largest known early collections of Madeira in the United States and one of the most extensive in the world. America's original 13 colonies imported about 95 percent of Madeiran wine produced on the autonomous islands of Portugal, according to historical accounts. Madeira was a popular beverage for elites in colonial and early America (George Washington was a noted collector, as was Thomas Jefferson).

Much of the discovered Madeira is still labeled with handwritten tags and can be referenced in the thousands of Liberty Hall documents dating more than 200 years. Notably, some of the wine included in the present collection was ordered by Robert Lenox, Esq., a banker and financier who was known to import Madeira in barrels or large bottles called demijohns, and then bottle and label it once it arrived.

Additional background and detailed lot information will be shared ahead of the sale. The Liberty Hall Museum will additionally be holding a public exhibition dedicated to this discovery with dates to be announced in the coming weeks. To read more about the discovery, visit the Christie's online feature [Discovered: One of the largest collections of early Madeira in the United States](#).

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Public Exhibition:

New York, 20 Rockefeller Center
30 Nov, 10am - 6pm
1 Dec, 10am - 6pm
2 Dec, 10am - 6pm
3 Dec, 10am - 6pm
4 Dec, 10am - 5pm
5 Dec, 10am - 5pm

Auction:

New York, 20 Rockefeller Center
Finest Wines and Spirits, Including The Liberty Hall Museum Collection of Historic Madeira and an extraordinary Collection of Pre-prohibition Whiskey
7 December 2018

About the Liberty Hall Museum

Liberty Hall Museum, originally constructed in 1760, was built as a country getaway by the then prominent New York lawyer, William Livingston. Livingston would go on to serve in the First and Second Continental congresses, become New Jersey's first elected governor and sign the United States Constitution. The Kean family was the second generation to live at Liberty Hall, taking over the original estate in 1811. Multiple generations of the Keans continued to live at the estate until 1995, while the home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1973. The family has worked to preserve and enhance the estate's invaluable character.

About APCOR

The Portuguese Cork Association ([APCOR](#)) exist to promote natural cork and its products. APCOR is the employers' association of the cork sector that represents, promotes and carries out research in the Portuguese cork industry. It was created in 1956 and is based in Santa Maria de Lamas, in the council of Santa Maria da Feira, at the heart of the cork industry around 30 kilometers from Porto, Portugal's second largest city. Membership of the association is open to all companies operating in the fields of production, marketing or export of cork products. The organization advocates on behalf of the Portuguese cork industry worldwide and is the driving force of an industry based on tradition, innovation and sustainability.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2018 that totalled £2.97 billion / \$4.04 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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