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Engraving of a barometer and a thermometer of sculpted wood presented during the Great Exhibition of 1878



Paul Baudry, Portrait d'Albert Beurdeley, 1862, Orsay Museum



Alfred Emmanuel Beurdeley, King's bureau from a model by Œben and Riesner, circa 1890, private collection



Alfred Emmanuel Beurdeley, Sarrancolin marble and bronze mantel from the Vanderlbilt's mansion, circa 1893, Galerie Marc Maison

The Beurdeley are one of the most important dynasty of luxury furniture maker from the 19th century, spreading on three generations.

Born in a modest family,**Jean Beurdeley** (1772 – 1853) settles in 1804 rue Saint Honoré in Paris as a curiosities and furniture merchant, made by biggest artists and later himself.

The business is taken in 1840, after the store and workshop move on the corner of rue Louis Le Grand and the Boulevard des Italiens, by his son **Louis-Auguste-Alfred Beurdeley** (1808 -1882). He develops significantly the business which becomes then a high luxury furniture making place, and participates to the first Great Exhibitions in Paris in 1855 et 1867 where he wins a bronze medal then a gold one. Provider of the Imperial Garde-Meuble, the house receives many important official orders such as in 1853, for the wedding of **Emperor Napoleon III** and the **Empress Eugenie**, the creation of furniture, also presented during the Great Exhibition of 1855, and other furniture for the Palais des Tuileries or the Saint-Cloud castle.

Third and last of the dynasty,**Alfred-Emmanuel-Louis Beurdeley** (1847-1919) takes the succession of his father in 1875, after being his collaborator. He keeps the store on the corner of the rue Louis-le-Grand and the boulevard des Italiens, the famous Pavillon de Hanovre but move the workshops on the 20 and 24 rue Dautancourt. Thus, he specializes in the making of luxury furniture copied on old models from the Mobilier National with some very subtle changes, also makes some original furniture and distinguishes himself for his bronze making skills.

His participations to the Great Exhibitions are also crowned with success, he wins in 1878 in Paris, a new gold medal and is made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1883 in Amsterdam. He exhibits his work again in Paris in 1889 and for the last time in Chicago in 1893 where he presents a copy of the King bureau by Œben and Risener.

Thanks to his rewards, his work reputation crosses the ocean, the house, thus known in the rest of the world, receives, after the Royal and Imperial orders, the ones of the rich american industrials like the Vanderbilt settled in New York where a shop has been opened.

Cornelius Vanderbilt II bought the mansion of his grand-father in New York in 1877 and from the early 1890's he started an ambitious renovation work and massive extension asking the best artists of the world. **Alfred-Emmanuel Beurdeley** was commissioned to create furniture et diverse decorative art to furnish the Manhattan mansion and also the Newport cottage. He realized for the business man, a copy of the pair of consoles from Georges Jacob for the comte d'Artois, a copy of Marie-Antoinette's table and a fireplace inspired by a model by Pierre Contant d'Ivry for the Salon of the duchesse d'Orléans in the Palais Royal, dated 1752 – 1753.

The American adventure of the early 1890's marks the end of the Beurdeley house because **Alfred-Emmanuel** closes down his business in 1895. An important part of the furniture and works of art is scattered in auctions between 1897 et 1898, while the rest is kept to furnish his private mansion of the Rue de Clichy. Art lover and major collector, his collection of engravings was one of the most important in Europe in the end of the 19th century, counting more than 28 000 stamps. He sells a part in 1888 composed of nearly 6000 architectural draws to the Académie centrale du dessin technique in Saint Petersburg, today kept in the Hermitage museum.

See also

Jules Allard — Charles-Guillaume Diehl — Louis Malard — Gilt bronze — Napoleon III style — The 1878 World's Fair — The 1889 World's Fair

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Stamp



Louis Auguste Beurdeley, Console (from a pair), circa1845, Musée Condé in the Chantilly castle



Louis Auguste Beurdeley, Cabint with painted panels, circa 1870, Musées des Arts Décoratifs of Paris



Photograph of the Beurdeley display in the Chicago Exhibition in 1893



Stamp