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Carved pear wood hand mirror, by Allard and Chopin for the World's Fair of 1867. The Art Journal published a picture of this mirror and spoke of Allard and Sons as one of the most "Eminent cabinet houses of Paris".



Music Room at The Breakers. The Breakers was the summer house of Cornelius Vanderbilt II and his wife Alice, built between 1893 and 1895, in Newport. Designed by R. Hunt. Jules Allard cooperated with the decorator Codman.



Morning Room at The Breakers. All the wall decoration - pilasters, cornices, panels - were created by Allard and sons.



Grand Staircase, Marble House. The large bronze chandelier and most of the lighting were designed by Jules Allard.

A family of cabinetmakers:
Jules Allard is the most important member of the *"Maison Allard"* family company. His father, Célestin Allard, died in 1854, and had been known as a cabinetmaker and upholsterer since 1832. Célestin seems to have had a flourishing business in Paris and had also opened a branch in Brussels. He mainly produced furniture, but he offered his services as an interior decorator as well. Célestin Allard participated in all the **major national exhibitions from 1844 through 1849** and won an honorable mention in the exhibition of 1849.
Upon his death, his widow Marguerite-Victoire Lefèvre took over the family business, which became know as the *"Mme Veuve Allard"* (*"Mrs Widow Allard"*) company until 1860.
At this date she turned the company over to **Jules Allard**. From then on, the company expanded fast and was very successful in developing an international clientele and gaining a good reputation from the critics.
Jules Allard partnered with his two sons in 1875. From then on, the company was known as *"Jules Allard et Fils"*. Fernand Allard maintained the company until 1909.

Jules Allard and the World's Fairs:
Mme Veuve Allard had already been present at the World's Fair of 1855 , where the jury praised *"the elegant lines, solid structure and nice arrangements of the ornaments"*. The furniture she presented received an honorary mention from the jury.
Jules Allard participated in all the following World's Fairs until 1889, as well as several international exhibits of Fine Arts and Decorative Arts. He was awarded a **silver medal** at the World's Fair of 1867 .
Ultimately he gained full recognition for his art in the **World's Fair of 1878** when he not only received a **gold medal** but also became a **knight of the Légion d'Honneur**, the highest distinction in France. Documents at the National Archives attest that he was highly esteemed by his contemporaries. Grohé, a famous cabinetmaker, was one of the major voices to back his nomination.
A letter Jules Allard wrote to the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce contains many interesting facts about the development and importance of his company. It mentions that **he was at the head of a 400-people workforce** and that it took two years to prepare one of his pieces presented at the World's Fair of 1878.

The New World:
In 1878, in the World's Fair Jury report, Jules Allard is presented as a creator of *"complete furnishings, decorations, cabinetry, sculpture, seats, tapestries and drapes."* It was undoubtedly the diversity and quality of his productions that were compelling to the public at the exhibits. It may also be at this time that Allard met the famous English decorator **Richard Morris Hunt**. In fact, **as of 1880, Allard worked with Hunt on several very prestigious interior decors in the United States, mainly for the wealthiest families of the East Coast in New York and Newport, Rhode Island.** Following Hunt's advice, **Allard opened a branch in New York in 1885** . At the head of major projects, Allard realized how difficult it was to create large French-style decors in America. The manpower was available but not the French know-how, passed down from generation to generation back in Paris. Therefore, he made most of his commissions in his Paris workshop and shipped them over by boat.
Jules Allard also collaborated with the decorator **Ogden Codman**, and he undertook some projects independently. The names of those for whom he designed and built were some of the most famous of the wealthy East coast "aristocracy", such as coal magnate Edward Jules Berwind and different members of the **Vanderbilt** family.
Jules Allard worked on the designs for the ***Marble House*** and ***The Elms*** **in Newport**, and on those for **Cornelius II Vanderbilt and William K. Vanderbilt's mansions in New York City**. He created the famous Louis XVI-style music room decor that made him famous and made his American career take off for the latter's wife, Alva Vanderbilt.
While cabinetry remained the Allards' specialty, the American branch of the company had a lot more to offer. Jules Allard created entire rooms and all the decorative details, such as the paneling, marble, and lighting of these magnificent homes. Thanks to the quality of his work and his diversity in style, he became one of the most sought-after designers of his time.

He led the decoration of the Berwind **estate on Fifth Avenue in New York City and designed the monumental fireplace sculpted by Louis Ardisson.**

See also

Louis Ardisson — Edward Julius Berwind — The 1878 World's Fair — The 1889 World's Fair — Louis XVI style — Beurdeley — Charles-Guillaume Diehl

See our antique furniture



Gold Ballroom, Marble House, the most decorated out of any of the Newport Mansions, is extraordinary, created by Jules Allard, carved gilded wall panels, large chandeliers, mirrors and mythological figures.



Extraordinary mantel by Jules Allard et Louis Ardisson coming from the Berwind Estate, 5th Avenue in New York.