

Factsheet

Princess Margaret's Possessions on display in Apartment 1A

Described as “historic and unparalleled” by auction house Christie’s, the sale of property belonging to Princess Margaret in June 2006 astounded collectors worldwide. Historic Royal Palaces purchased five lots during the sale to display in the Princess’s former home at Kensington Palace, Apartment 1A.

- **Venetian Blackamoor Torchères (lot 680)**

Princess Margaret displayed this pair of Venetian giltwood, mecca and polychrome-decorated Blackamoor figures (dated late 18th/early 19th Century) in her drawing room in Apartment 1A. Curators will return the torchères to the drawing room for visitors to view after conservation work is undertaken to stabilise both artefacts.

- **The Royal Menu (lot 397)**

The series of manuscripts, all hand-written in pencil by Princess Margaret’s chef, are bound in red book, the front cover of which is stamped with a gold ‘M’ beneath a coronet. The daily menus give a choice of three dishes per course, and still show the princess’s indicated choice with occasional written annotations. The Royal Menu is displayed in the kitchen of Apartment 1A that was designed by Lord Snowdon.

- **Three bottles of Kensington Palace white wine (lot 789)**

The white wine was made from grapes grown in the princess’s private garden at Kensington Palace. Each bottled has a label designed by Princess Margaret, with the initial ‘M’ below coronet, inscribed *Kensington Palace, 1976, a white wine from Kensington Palace bottled in Jubilee year*. These bottles are also displayed in the kitchen, alongside the Royal Menu.

- **Collection of Continental blue-opaline glass (lots 693 & 695)**

Princess Margaret collected this distinctive blue-opaline glass and displayed it throughout her apartment when she lived there. Dated between mid-19th to 20th

century, the lots purchased included a pair of candlesticks with frill rims enriched in gilding, a set of goblets, a vase and two carafes.

The Royal Ascot Racecourse balustrading (withdrawn from sale at the last hour) can also be seen by visitors to Apartment 1A from the Garden Room.

Historic Royal Palaces' Conservation Director John Barnes said "Historic Royal Palaces believe that sharing stories of the people who lived in our buildings is every bit as important as conserving the buildings themselves. The Christie's auction was a one-off chance to acquire some of Princess Margaret's possessions which otherwise would have been lost to private collections. Intense competition meant we were unable to acquire as many objects as we might wish, but the high sale prices certainly reflected the huge level of public interest in Princess Margaret and her life. We opened Princess Margaret's apartment at Kensington Palace to visitors in 2004, and we plan to return the pieces acquired back to the princess's rooms."