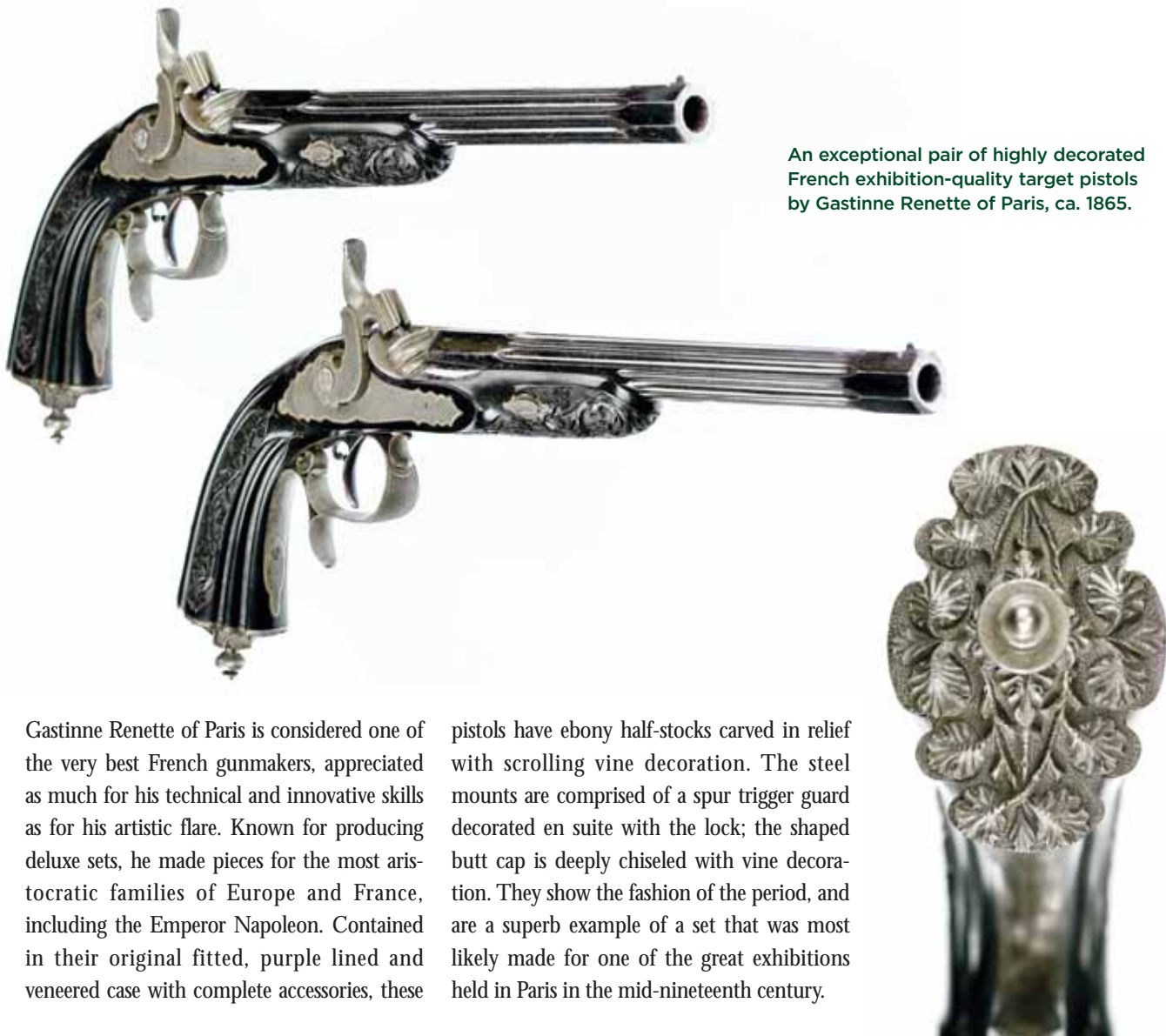


Fine Firearms

Collecting fine firearms has been a tradition among Kings, nobles, gentry, and merchants for centuries. Whether a sporting gun decorated with panels of engraved stag-horn or embellished with inlaid gold and engraving, or dueling pistols with clean lines and pure function, the desire to own and admire remains strong. Throughout history, the highest level of technology has been applied to the development of weapons. When combined with the craftsman's concern for beauty and style, a progressive improvement in functionality that reflects social history is ensured. As with all fields of collecting, certain guidelines should be adhered to when acquiring guns. In the words of Emperor Maximilian II, "Quanta rariora tanta meliora," or to you and I, "The rarer, the better." This, if coupled with a concern for condition and provenance, will ensure you are on the right track.

\$50,000 – \$100,000

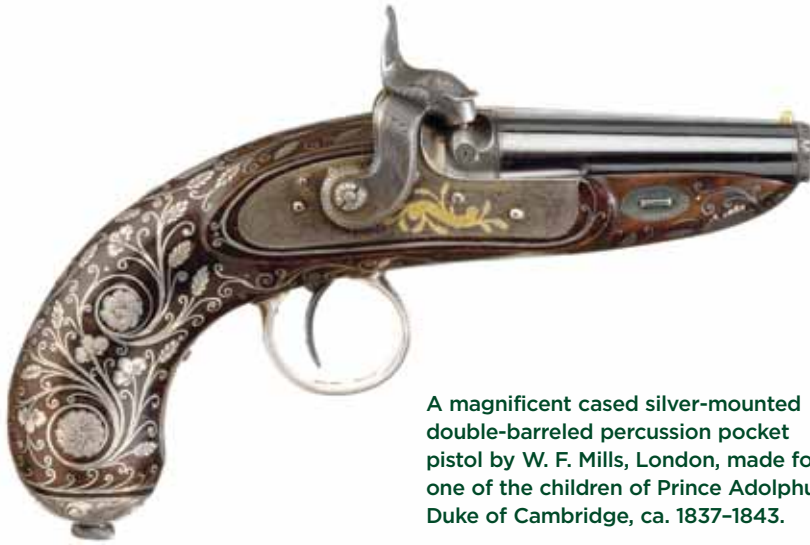


An exceptional pair of highly decorated French exhibition-quality target pistols by Gastinne Renette of Paris, ca. 1865.

Gastinne Renette of Paris is considered one of the very best French gunmakers, appreciated as much for his technical and innovative skills as for his artistic flare. Known for producing deluxe sets, he made pieces for the most aristocratic families of Europe and France, including the Emperor Napoleon. Contained in their original fitted, purple lined and veneered case with complete accessories, these

pistols have ebony half-stocks carved in relief with scrolling vine decoration. The steel mounts are comprised of a spur trigger guard decorated en suite with the lock; the shaped butt cap is deeply chiseled with vine decoration. They show the fashion of the period, and are a superb example of a set that was most likely made for one of the great exhibitions held in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century.

\$100,000 – \$200,000



A magnificent cased silver-mounted double-barreled percussion pocket pistol by W. F. Mills, London, made for one of the children of Prince Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, ca. 1837-1843.



W. F. Mills, the maker of this magnificent little pistol, was gunmaker to Queen Victoria. The use of gold, silver, ivory, and rosewood show that there was no expense spared in the construction and decoration of this set. It is in mint condition, and the

fact that it was made for a member of the British Royal family contributes to the desirability of this jewel-like pistol. The presence of the emblematic flowers of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the principality of Wales

indicates its royal provenance, further reinforced by the display of heraldry. The almost excessive attention to detail shows London gunmaking of the period at its finest.

\$200,000 – \$300,000



An important Austrian wheel-lock sporting rifle stocked by the "Meister der Tierkopfranke," ca. 1635.

The "Meister der Tierkopfranke" or "master of the animal-head scroll," as he came to be known, was one of the most successful gun stockers of his age. He received regular patronage from the imperial court at Vienna, where it is likely that he was *hofbefreit* or "officially favored." Of the eight surviving examples of his work in the Hofjagd-und Rustkammer in Vienna, no less than three are believed to have been the personal

property of the Emperor Ferdinand III (1637-1657). As can be seen from this outstanding example of his work, the defining feature of his style is a dense, crisply carved pattern of swirling scrolls, in many cases terminating in the heads of monsters or animals. Interspersed between these scrolls are animals of the chase, fabulous beasts, and sometimes symbolic figures, identifiable here as Justice, Abundance, and Venus attended

by Cupid. Equally characteristic of his style is the roundel that decorates the cheekpiece. Here it takes the form of a delightful pattern of floral tendrils inlaid in engraved mother-of-pearl and horn. Work by a master such as this rarely comes to the market. That a hunting gun with such a profusion of decoration was made for use demonstrates the opulence, extravagance, and privilege of the age in which it was created.

\$300,000 – \$500,000



A superb oval-barreled Russian flintlock sporting gun by G. Kuprin, Tula, ca. 1765.



The pristine condition of this gun presents a rare opportunity to appreciate the crisp chiseling, rich gold inlay, and wonderful burnish that characterized the brilliant metalwork of the Tula school of gunmakers. Although the State Small Arms Factory of Tula was founded by Peter the Great in 1705 with the purpose of producing service weapons for the Russian army, the most gifted of its craftsmen, among them Kuprin, were permitted to make arms for presenta-

tion to foreign rulers and dignitaries by the imperial court. In the second half of the eighteenth century, a technique of diamond cutting steel was developed and Tula arms began to be in great demand. The mastery of the Tula armorers and craftsmen was unrivalled throughout Europe. The guns made at Tula show clear evidence of the stylistic influence of the many immigrant German workers employed there. It is seen in the form of their stocks and mounts, in

their chiseled ornament, and here in the profuse silver inlay in the stock, which ultimately derived from the early eighteenth-century pattern books of Nicholas Guerard of Paris. This gun shows the virtuosity of its maker, with its elliptical barrel serving no purpose except to be stylish. In its high finish and flowing leaves inlaid into the surface in two colors of gold, it offers a superior example of the decoration for which Tula is so prized.




\$500,000 – \$1,000,000



Although the North German city of Brunswick has long been recognized as an important center for the production of fine armor, it is only in recent years that its high standing as a manufacturer of firearms has come to be appreciated. So outstanding was the work of the gunmakers of Brunswick and the neighboring towns of Goslar and Wolfenbüttel in the sixteenth century, they were able to export their

wares to such major arms producing centers as Nuremberg and Dresden. The presence of their guns in the greatest princely armories of Europe — most probably given as diplomatic gifts — affords some indication of the high esteem they were held in by their contemporaries.

This carbine is finely damascened in gold and silver with running foliage, flower heads, and pellets on a blued ground. The

walnut stock is inlaid with, among other things, an engraved horn plaque representing a kneeling knight receiving the Holy Spirit. This exquisite quality and detail of craftsmanship, coupled with the carbine's fantastic condition and provenance (the armory of the Princes of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt), gives a contemporary buyer the rare opportunity to acquire a museum-quality piece. 



An important and exceptionally long German wheel-lock pistol, Brunswick, ca. 1555.

Redmond Finer runs, with his younger brother Roland, the London shop of Peter Finer Antique Arms and Armour. Working alongside his father for the past ten years, Red is a familiar face at the prestigious American and European antiques shows at which the Finers exhibit. Visit www.peterfiner.com.