

Unique Louis XVI solid mahogany low bergère (*bergère du débotté*) with anchor inventory brand marks identical in form to those used for the duc de Penthièvre. The arched back moldings join to “S”-form armrests that terminate in well-carved protruding ram heads. The thick, solid mahogany slab seat is shaped to comfortably accommodate a sitter since it was never softened with upholstery.





A representation of Hercules's Nemean lion skin, scooped out to support the sitter's legs, is "nailed" to the front of the seat like a hunting trophy; the muzzle is in the center, and the paws, one showing the top of the foot and the other the footpad, hang at the sides.

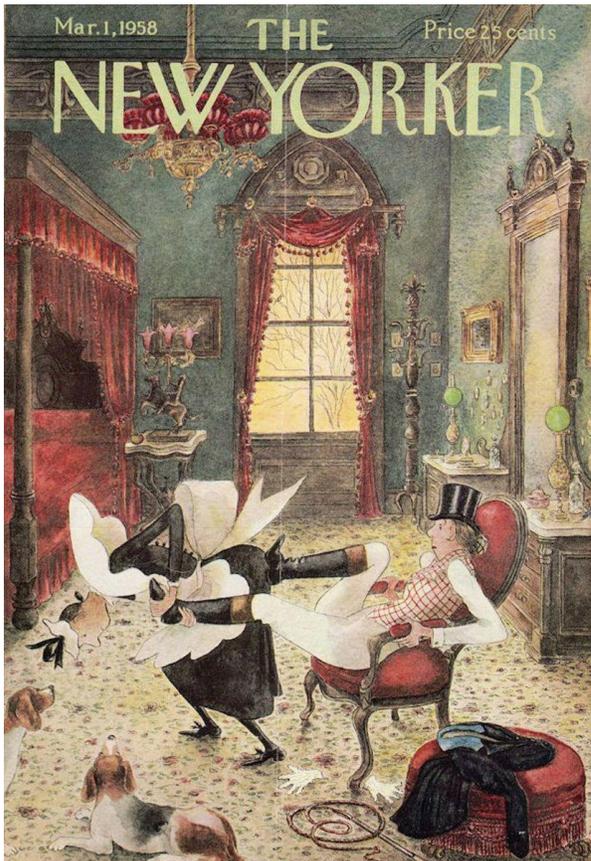




Simulated fabric drapery and trim is placed around the seat. The unusual acanthus-leaf headed tubular armrest supports terminate in round rosettes and are bound with ribbon at the top and stop-fluted. The concave supports allow the ram heads to be conveniently gripped by the person seated in the chair. The stop-fluted legs, headed with simple capitals and acanthus leaves, are unusually short and the back legs have a strong backward cant that is rare in French chairs.

This unique model must have been very expensive at its origin, in view of its material, sophisticated design, and highly skilled execution. The bergère, *sui generis*, was commissioned by a specific individual for a specific site and for a specific purpose, most likely to afford the owner a comfortable place to sit without soiling precious upholstery with grimy clothing – a refined form of “mud-room” furniture.

Putting on boots is much easier than removing them, especially if one wants to do it elegantly, and the chair would have been useful for facilitating their removal. The low seat causes the legs to extend outward and the sitter would use the protruding ram heads as braces to prevent sliding forward while his boots were being pulled off.



The chair is attributed to Georges Jacob, although its unusual features and unique design make a definitive attribution difficult. Jacob was the favored maker of unique site-specific solid mahogany chairs that were never to be upholstered, for example those made for Marie-Antoinette's dairy at Rambouillet.

Two identical branded marks are burned into the underside of the seat. Each depicts an "A" and a "4" flanking an anchor. This brand has the same form as a number of known inventory brands used by the duc de Penthièvre.



The duc de Penthièvre was the son of one of the two legitimized sons of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan, and perhaps the richest man in France. By inheritance from his father, the comte de Toulouse, he became Governor of Brittany, the *Grand Amiral de France* (Grand Admiral of France), and the *Grand Veneur* (Grand Huntsman), an important position in the *Maison du Roi*. Because of his position as admiral, the anchor became his emblem and is found on portrait engravings and some portrait paintings. It can be seen on some of his made-to-order porcelain, as a mark on ceramics from his own manufactory at Sceaux, on furniture (a chair, now at Chantilly, made for the shell-incrusted grotto within the *Chaumière* at Rambouillet, features an anchor in full relief on the back), his regiment's flag, embossed book covers, and his coats of arms. As far as is known, only Penthièvre used the anchor as a personal emblem during the 18th century.

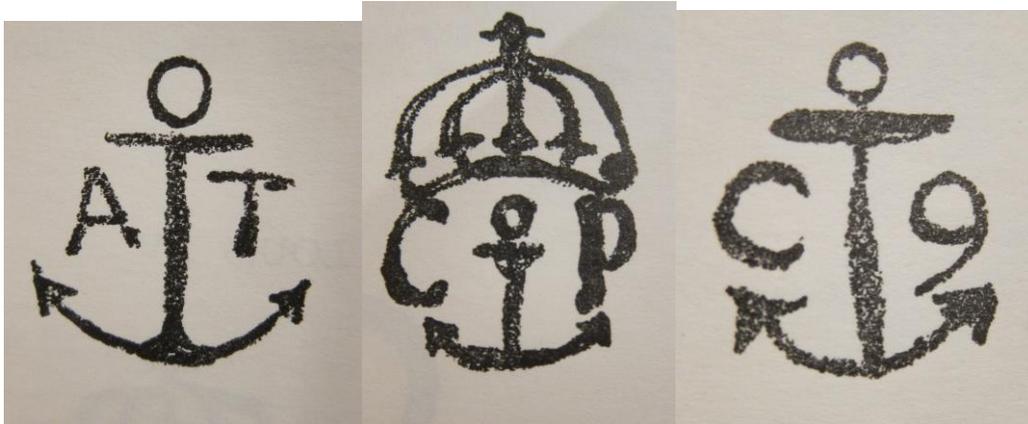


Although not a partisan of the hunt, the duke took his position as *Grand Veneur* very seriously, especially since Louis XV and Louis XVI were passionate hunters. In 1783, in a grand act of *noblesse oblige*, he ceded ownership of his beloved ancestral château, Rambouillet, to Louis XVI because the King had said that the use of its vast forests for hunting “made him happy.” The duc de Penthièvre simply answered, “Then, it is yours.” His only condition was that he be allowed to transfer the remains of his ancestors from Rambouillet to a mausoleum in the chapel of the Collégiale Saint-Étienne de Dreux, near Anet, another of his possessions. Louis XVI then built the famous dairy and modernized rooms in Rambouillet to entice Marie-Antoinette to visit since she had found the château too “Gothic.”



The duc de Penthièvre and his daughter in a garden. By Jean-Baptiste Charpentier.

The identified Penthièvre inventory brands feature an anchor between letters or, in one case, a numeral. Most use the first and last letter of the residence: thus “A” and “T” for “Anet”, “C” and “P” for “Chanteloup” and “S” and “X” for Sceaux. One exception is the rebus “9” for “neuf” (a pun on “new” and “nine” in French) for “Châteauneuf.” Another brand dispenses with the first and last letter code, using “A” and “B” for what is generally considered the mark of Amboise, although Arc-en-Barrois could be an alternate reading.



[Anet]

[Chanteloup]

[Châteauneuf-sur-Loire]

From Nicolay: *L'Art et la Manière des maîtres Ébénistes*; Paris, 1959. P. 130 and P.132



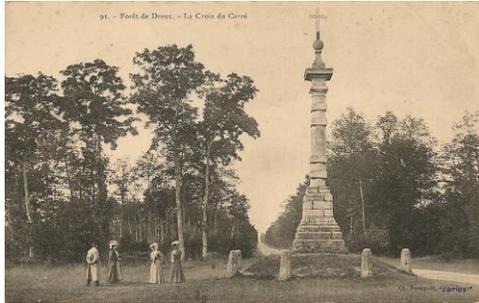
Penthièvre “A+4” inventory brand mark

The duke owned forty-three residences (François Quéré: *Les Roussel*; Faton, Dijon, 2012. Page 54), and several important ones began with the letter “A”. Since beginning with the initial letter of the dwelling is consistent across the branding code, we must assume that the bergère came from either the *château d’Amboise*, the *château d’Anet*, the *château d’Arc-en-Barrois*, the *château d’Armainvilliers* or the *château d’Aumale*. Since two of these châteaux end in “e” and two end in “s,” the numeral might have been a way to differentiate between them, although it is difficult to find an explanation for a “4” as the chosen designator.

A stronger possibility is that there was a dependency within one of the “A” holdings that was separate enough from the main house to warrant its own inventory. This would be analogous to the inventories of the Trianons, which were written separately from those of the château of Versailles. After the transfer of Rambouillet to Louis XVI, nearby Anet became one of Penthièvre’s favored venues. There is a famous 8-sided *pavillon de chasse*, called the “*Pavillon du Carré*” (“The Pavilion of the Square”) deep in the woods at the central hunting crossroads of the 8200 acre forest of Dreux, which is part of the *domaine* of Anet. It is situated about 6.8 kilometers, or a little more than 3 miles, from the main château.



A stone cross, formerly known as “*La Croix du Carré*,” had been constructed there. In 1688, it was moved by order of Louis XIV to a new location in the forest, and is now known as “*La Croix de la Tasse*” for its new location at a differently named crossroads.



The network of *allées* through a hunting forest was cut with radiating star-form crossroads to facilitate the *chasse à courre*, an ancient, codified form of hunting practiced by the European aristocracy. Men on foot and riders on horseback followed hounds that chased game to exhaustion. When the prey was run down, it was dispatched with a spear or dagger in the *hallali*. The forest was punctuated with open areas and the roads made it easier for those on horses to follow the hounds and runners. A part of the highly ritualized *chasse à courre* was the “*débotté*”—the removal of the boots at the end of the hunt. Two pages were required at Versailles for the King’s *cérémonie du débotté*, which involved much protocol. To be invited to the event was a rare privilege.

“*The Hunts of Maximilian*,” a famous series of tapestries in the Louvre, celebrate the *chasse à courre* and were considered the most important of all the tapestries Louis XIV acquired. The compositions were repeated many times at Gobelins for dissemination to royal châteaux. In 1733, Louis XV commissioned the painter Oudry to design a similar series of tapestries called “*The Hunts of Louis XV*.” One of them depicts the king putting on his hunting boots, *Le Botté du Roi* in a meeting point of radiating *allées* in the forest of Fontainebleau. A drawing in the Morgan Library in New York and a sketch in the Musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris show versions of the King’s *Botté*.





The charming *Pavillon du Carré*, a still-existing brick and stone building, was more than a mere *rendez-vous de chasse* where the hunt would start and finish. It was built in 1756 by the duc de Penthièvre's cousin, the comte d'Eu, shortly after he had inherited Anet from his brother, the prince de Dombes. It is constructed out of the same brick and stone as much of the château of Anet, but with the positioning of the materials reversed.



The duc de Penthièvre became the owner of the château and its dependencies, including the *pavillon*, after the death of the childless comte d'Eu in 1775. Lavishly decorated and furnished, the *pavillon* had a large single room on the ground floor, small rooms on the first floor, and an observation deck on the roof with each side oriented towards one of the eight radiating *allées*.



It was called “*Le Pavillon du Quarré Charmant*” or “*Le Pavillon du Carré Charmant*” (the “Pavilion of the Charming Square”) in the 18th century, and “*Le Pavillon du Carré*” (the “Pavillon of the Square”) in the 19th century. In the 1808 biography of Penthièvre, his manservant, M. Fortaire, describes a visit to Anet by Prince Henry of Prussia in 1784. He was the brother of Frederick the Great, and one of the most important royal foreigners to visit France: (In translation)

Prince Henry departed Anet on the third day, after dinner, in a brilliant procession of carriages and horsemen. He was accompanied to a beautiful *pavillon* named for the *Quarré Charmant*, erected in the middle of the forest. From the height of the *pavillon*, where there is a beautiful platform or terrace made of lead and decorated with balustrades and vases, one can see a multitude of roads whose lengths are lost to view and which pierce the forest for its whole extent in all directions; there is nothing similar in any other forest. It was there that Prince Henry took leave of our princesses (the duke’s daughter-in law, the duchesse de Lamballe and his daughter, the duchesse de Penthièvre) and M. de Penthièvre. The prince made his way that evening to Versailles and saw M. de Penthièvre in Paris before leaving France on November 3, 1784. (M. Fortaire: *Mémoires pour servir a la vie de M. de Penthièvre*; Imprimerie Delance, Paris 1808. Page157.)

It would not be difficult to interpret “4”-“*Quatre*” as the differentiator for an octagonal building (geometrically, where two juxtaposed squares set at a 45° angle overlap one another) that is centered on crossroads in a large square clearing (Search: Google Maps: Dreux “*Pavillon du Carré*”). The *allées* cross at 90° and radiate outward in a symmetrical star pattern like a compass rose. The building is raised on a mound with a pair of opposing wide staircases for access to the upper floor and the observation deck.

There are also many uses in French where “*carré*” carries the meaning of “four”: a *battalion carré* faces opposing troops on four sides; in card games a *carré de dames* is a hand of four Queens; a *phrase carré* in music has four equal measures; *vers carré* is a verse composed of four equal parts; a square has four equal sides and four right angles.

Many other examples could be cited. In addition, “*Quarré*” is only one letter removed from the word “*Quatre*”.

In all texts on symbolism, the number “4” is directly associated with the square and the cross. (For example: Chevalier and Gheerbrant: *Dictionnaire des Symboles*: “*Les significations symboliques du quatre se rattachent a celles du carré et de la croix.*” [“The symbolic signification of ‘four’ is linked to those of the square and the cross.”] Page 794. Gardin and Olorenshaw: *Petit Larousse des Symboles*, in an entry about the square: “*Le carré, inséparable du chiffre 4...*” [“The square, inseparable from the number 4...”] Page 116. Also, in an entry about “*quatre*”: “*Représenté par le carré, la croix ou l'équerre...*” [“Represented by the square, the cross or the T-square...”] Page 521.)

The use of the number “4” is therefore apt when applied to a building located on crossroads and called “Pavilion of the Charming Square,” especially when one considers that the person who invented the codes for Penthièvre’s possessions had the wit to use “9” for “neuf”.

It is also possible that the place name, “*Quarré Charmant*” evolved directly from the old French for “crossroads” (now *carrefour*), which was “*Quarré fourc*”, as illustrated in a quote from *Lancelot and the Lake*: “*Illec dessus a ung quarré fourc de sept voyes,*” (“Thence onto a crossroad with seven ways.”)

All etymologies of the French language put the origin of the term *carrefour* as “*quarré*” from “four” and “*fourc*” meaning “fork”. See for example Nicot:

Thresor de la langue françoise, 1606: Quarrefour, m. acut. *C'est un endroit és villes ou villages, où quatre ruës se rapportent, et font teste en quarré l'une à l'autre, Compitum, Quadriuium, [Crossroads, Four ways] Ce mot vient de quarré et fourc, ou bien de Quatre et Fourc, ce que rapporte plus à l'essence de la chose, estant proprement appelé quarrefour, l'endroit et place où quatre fourcs sont teste à teste, et par ce que telles places et endroicts sont pour la plus part en quarré, on prononce quarrefour, pour quatre fourcs.*

[“Quarrefour, m. noun. It is a place in towns or villages, where four roads join, and oppose each other in a square, *Compitum, Quadriuium*, This word comes from square and fork, or rather Four and Fork, which gets to the essence of the thing, being properly called crossroads, the place where four forks are opposed, and because such village-squares and places are for the most part square-shaped. It is pronounced “quarrefour” [i.e. with no accent], for four forks.”]

The building was as highly regarded in the 19th century as it had been in the eighteenth and was worth separate consideration when discussing Anet. Paul-Honoré Nuques, the notary of the duc de Penthièvre and possibly the inventor of the anchor inventory system, sent a letter from Anet on February 12, 1802 to the duchesse d’Orléans (the duc de Penthièvre’s daughter and heir), who, having survived the revolution, was then in exile in Soria, Spain. Discussing the situation at Anet, he wrote:

“*Si madame trouve son château et ce qui en d’épand dévastés horriblement, au moins j’espère, trouvera-t-elle le pavillon de la forêt de Dreux et toute cette forêt en bon état...*”

[“If Madame finds her chateau and its dependencies horribly devastated, I hope at least she will find the *pavillon* in the Dreux Forest and all the forest in a good state...”]
(Archives de la famille d’Orléans, boîte 56.)

In August 1821, the future King, Louis-Philippe (the duc de Penthièvre’s grandson, the son of his daughter, the duchesse d’Orléans) described it:

“...une grande salle à cheminée très belle au rez-de-chaussée, six chambres au 1er étage et des bâtiments détachés comptant cuisine et écuries avec un potager. Il y a en outre de très bons communs et dépendances près du pavillon, formant l’habitation du garde Drevet.”

[“...a very beautiful room with fireplace on the ground floor, six rooms on the floor above with separate buildings including a kitchen, stables and a kitchen garden. There are in addition very good commons and dependencies close to the pavillon forming the habitation of the Drevet guard.”] (From an online publication: *Forêt domaniale de Dreux*, <http://udtl.dreux.pagesperso-orange.fr/RANDO/foret.pdf>.)

It is interesting to note that the building had its own stables, separate kitchen and kitchen garden, and separate quarters for the use of its guards, thus emphasizing its connected but independent status and its importance. These two groups of buildings are probably also extant, as revealed by Google Maps where they are called “*Maison Forestière du Pavillon A and B.*”

For a later 19th century description see: Roussel and Pfnor: *Histoire et description du château d’Anet depuis le dixième siècle jusqu’à nos jours*. Jouast, Paris 1875. Page 190. (In translation) “...The large room on the ground floor is very beautiful; it is decorated with sculpture depicting bird hunting, hunting to hounds, falconry, etc... Emblems, allegories and the accessories of hunting frame these rich sculptures. Consoles formerly decorated the panels between each window; these consoles were supported by relief sculpture also representing the hunt. All this rich decoration was gilded on a white ground. Today, this magnificent ornamentation is partially destroyed; the consoles and all the furniture were sold 21 floréal l’an II of the République (10 May 1794). The rotten and worm-eaten sculpture is in a deplorable state; it is falling into total ruin...”

To protect it from further deterioration, the duc d’Aumale (the son of Louis Philippe, and therefore the great-grandson of the duc de Penthièvre and the owner of the *pavillon* by descent) had the *boiserie* removed to his estate at Chantilly in 1881. He had it installed in an octagonal building he had specially constructed that abutted *La Maison de Sylvie*.



The *pavillon* continues to serve as a *rendez-vous de chasse* and has also become a meeting point for nature walks. It was declared a *Monument historique* in 1969 and, today, is an important tourist stop for visitors to Dreux and Anet.



Since mahogany is a very hard tropical wood, it resists woodworm - actually the larvae of beetles that devour and recycle wood in the forest. As was noted in the Roussel and Pfnor extract, the constantly open French doors of a *pavillon* in the middle of a forest must have been an invitation to xylophagous forest beetles to lay eggs on wood products. A solid mahogany chair, while expensive, would have resisted such an onslaught. Its unique construction, making it more durable than a framed *bergère*, supports the idea of a “working” chair, strong enough for serial multiple users.

An alternate theory suggests that in his role as Grand Admiral, the *bergère* could have been ordered for use on a ship in order to preclude the growth of mildew on cloth in a ship’s damp environment, but the lack of any carved nautical motif or emblem of authority makes this highly unlikely. Moreover, unlike his father, the previous Grand Admiral, he did not have a flagship and seems never to have set foot on a ship.

There is no question that the anchor inventory mark must be associated with Penthievre since his was the only 18th century inventory to use it and there is no reason to add an inventory mark at a later date for an inventory that was unknown. Since Anet was his favorite country house after the loss of Rambouillet and one of the most richly decorated, it is logical to assume that the “A” stands for “Anet.” The *bergère*’s most probable use, as a chair associated with the hunt is in keeping with Penthievre’s position as *Grand Veneur*. It was most likely used for the *déboité* in the separately inventoried hunt-dedicated *pavillon* designated by the Penthievre “A + 4” mark.

The unusual form of the “4”, with the diagonal not connected to the vertical element, includes a “t”, possibly a visual pun for the expected second Anet designator “T”, as well as a physical representation of a cross within the numeral. The substitution of a “t” for an “r” in “*quarré*” makes it “*quatre*” – 4.

The attribution of the Penthievre “A + 4” inventory mark to this particular, separate but important, dependency of Anet is the most logical explanation for this previously unrecorded mark. An origin in *Le Pavillon du Carré* explains the particular attributes of this *bergère du débotté*, whose form follows its function.

(There are also two single *fleur de lis* brands, marks that according to Nicolay appear on some royal pieces.)

Ex collection: duc de Penthievre
Étienne Levy
Garrick Stephenson

Illustrated: Philippe Jullian : *Le Style Louis XVI* ; Baschet et Cie., Paris, n.d.. Page 181, N° 6. (Here described as being for his admiralty ship.)

France Antiquités Magazine: March, 2001. Page 15 (Here attributed to Sené and said to have been made for Penthievre’s flagship.)

Height back - 39" (99 cm.)

Width - 23" (58 cm.)



